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Delay in marriage and income inequality in Japan: The impact of the increased number of unmarried adults living with their parents on the household economy

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Delay in Marriage and Income Inequality in Japan:
The Impact of the Increased Number of Unmarried Adults Living with Their Parents on the Household Economy

Sawako Shirahase (University of Tokyo)

Abstract

The continuous decline in the fertility rate has been witnessed since 1980 in Japan. Japan's total fertility rate in 2005 is 1.32, which is far below the replacement rate, 2.08. One of the main reasons for declining the fertility rate is the delay in marriage or even shy away from marriage among young adults. In this paper, looking at youth in terms of their relation to the household, we will examine the economic disparities of unmarried adults living with their parents in Japan in comparative perspective with Europe and U.S. The countries which I analyze in this paper are France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, U.K., U.S., and Taiwan, compared with Japan. The paper consists of two parts. First, I will examine economic disparities among households with unmarried adults, and second, the determinants of co-residence with their parents will be scrutinized.

The degree of the Japanese youth unemployment rate is not as high as those in European countries, but it is commonly found that the youth tend to be targeted by economic downturns, and that they are exposed to high economic risk. Young unmarried people do not always live alone, but share their households with their family, mostly their parents. Less than 20 percent of unmarried adults live alone in Japan, and in Italy and Taiwan, its corresponding figures are even lower than that in Japan. The proportion of income derived from unmarried adults in the household economy is more or less negatively associated with family income. Therefore, unmarried adults are not always dependent on their parents in the household but there are cases in which unmarried adults are the ones who support the family income by living with their parents, particularly in low-income groups. The economic role of unmarried adult children in the household differs by the level of household economy.

In determining if unmarried adults live with their parents, the economic factor is important for both men and women. Since their individual income is not high enough to have their independent households, they stay in their parental home. The most interesting finding in this analysis is on the gender role in living arrangement with their parents. Unmarried female adults are less likely to stay in their parental home if their mothers are at work, while there is no significant impact of mother's work on their male counterparts. Unmarried daughters are like to be expected to take over the mother's role in the households when she is in the labor force, so there is a gendered allocation of family role for unmarried adults. Thus, the economic levels of unmarried adults and the gender constrain in allocating family roles were important in determining the living arrangement with the parents.

Key words: Income Inequality, Co-residency of unmarried adults with Parents, Delay in marriage

1. Introduction

The debate concerning young people in Japan from the 1990s onwards, whether it be within the framework of employment or of the falling fertility rate, has tended to focus on young people as individuals. On the other hand, concerning the increasing delay in marriage or non-marriage of young people, the notion of the "parasite single" has been discussed in connection with the household (Miyamoto, Iwakami, and Yamada, 1997; Yamada 1999). There is a certain uniqueness to this argument in that non-marriage behavior among young people is discussed, focusing on their relationship with their households, or parents. According to Yamada (2004), there are winners and losers in terms of the residential pattern with parents: The former can afford to stay in their parental home. However, I wonder if it is appropriate to examine the situation of youth only from the perspective of polarization. Sakamoto (2004) has shown, based on his analyses of a panel survey, that the real situation faced by young people cannot be understood by "the image of the rich parasite single," and Shirahase (2003; 2005), based on her empirical analyses on unmarried adult children, has also urged caution against following stereotypical images about youth encouraged by the media. Up to the mid-1990s, it was non-marriage and late marriage of young people that explained most of the fall in the fertility rate (Hiroshima 2000). Why are they not eager to marry? That was the first question that had to be posed concerning the problem of the current generation of youth.

The delay in leaving the parental home could have an effect on the non-marriage or late marriage of young people. It is a reasonable decision to make for young people if they do not need to worry about living expense and doing household chores if they stay in the parental home rather than setting up a new household and supporting their family. Thus it was thought that the fertility rate continued to fall as the young came to remain with their parents. However, we are not sure of the apparent causal relationship between delay in leaving the parental home and the increasing non-marriage rate; Does the delay in leaving the parental home cause the delay in marriage, or do people stay in their parental home longer because they marry late? , Shigeno and Okusa (1997) and Kitamura and Sakamoto (2002) suggest that in the case that the relationship with the parents and the level of economic well-being in the home is favorable, the probability of getting married among women would be lowered. There is probably no objection to considering that there is some connection between the timing of leaving the

parental home and of marriage.

Suzuki (2000) clearly shows that a delay in the timing of leaving home, can be found, based on his analyses of the "Third National Survey of Household Changes in Japan" (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 1999), and that it is not only due to a delay in marriage, but also due to urbanization, under which young people no longer have to leave their parental home for education and work. In the "Fifth National Survey of Household Changes in Japan" carried out in 2004, it was indicated that although in general, the timing of leaving home has been growing later recently, the extent of the delay is shrinking (Nishioka et al. 2006). Proceeding to higher education, employment, and marriage are as ever the main reasons for leaving the parental home, and over two-thirds of the young people born between 1970 and 1974 leave the parental home before marriage for educational or employment reasons. In contrast, up until now around 70 percent of women did not leave the parental home before marriage, but in 2004, less than one quarter of young people left the parental home to go to school, and those that leave home due to marriage have for the first time fallen to just over 40 percent (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2006; Nishioka et al. 2006).

In Europe and the U.S., young people who are unable to become independent are also a serious social problem. In 2002, *Newsweek* even published a special issue on how dependent the young people have become on their parents (Tyre et al. 2002). Unlike at the beginning of the 20th century, when Hall (1904) first focused on "adolescence," that period of "adolescence" has become longer and more complex (Furstenburg et al. 2005). If we look at economic conditions of youth in southern Europe, their poverty rate is high (Kangas and Palme 2000; Smeeding and Phillips 2002). The poverty rate in the U.K. being high among late teens can be associated with their disadvantageous condition early in their early life course (Jones 2002). This means that a state of poverty remains for a long period through the life cycle. Further, the relatively high poverty rate among young people would be associated with leaving their parental home (Aassve, Iacovou, and Mencarini 2006).

The increase in the number of those with higher education, the delay in marriage age, and the decline in the household size (a reduction in the number of siblings) are not peculiar to Japan, but are commonly found as a demographic transformation in Europe and the U.S.

However, the way of looking at the youth problem in Japan differs from that of Western countries. In the 1980s, many European countries claimed the necessity to reconstruct the welfare state, and the rise in youth unemployment indicated the crumbling away of the welfare state system, which had held full employment to be one of its laurels (Esping-Andersen 1999; Kopi and Palme 1998; Pierson 2001) In Europe, the youth employment problem was discussed within the framework of the theory of the welfare state. By contrast, in Japan the attention on the youth problem was given to the falling fertility rate. As the bubble economy collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s, the youth unemployment rate centering on the late teens and early twenties accelerated. This attracted peoples' interest as seen in the media as expressions of the "employment ice age"[1] and the "lost generation" (Asahi Newspaper). Nevertheless, compared with Western countries, youth unemployment rate is still low in Japan. It is, however, only in Japan and Germany that the youth unemployment rate has been rising steadily from the beginning of the 1990s. What we would like to emphasize by stating the conclusion first is that the problems surrounding youth, including social and economic disparities, are certainly not peculiar to Japan, but are social problems that we may also share with Western countries.

Thus, in this paper, looking at youth in terms of their relation to the household, we will examine the economic disparities of unmarried adults living with their parents in Japan in comparative perspective with Europe and U.S. Those aged 20 and over who have never been married, but are not students will be analyzed. However, due to the growing length of staying in the parental home, unmarried adults as a whole are heterogeneous in their characteristics. In 2006, the average age at first marriage of men was 32, and for women 29.6, and the unmarried percentage of both young men and women in their early 20s was high at 90 percent, with just under 50 percent of men and about 60 percent of women being unmarried in their late 20s. There being this large number of unmarried persons in their 20s, the unmarried adults in their 20s and 30s are distinguished by referring to them as "younger unmarried adults," and those in their 40s and older are referred to as "older unmarried adults." In fact, as Shirahase (2005; 2006) stated, when unmarried adult children exceed 40 years of age, the proportion of those claiming that their parents with whom they live have problems with health increases, and their role in the household tends to change into care-givers. Further, the socio-economic situation of

[1] Term used in the November 1992 issue of the *Shuushoku Jaanaru* (Employment Journal).

the adult children tends to become worse as their age increases. Although the data analyzed in this paper is cross-sectional, and basically provides static evidence, we would like to explore the situation of unmarried adults in a more dynamic manner on the basis of these analytical results.

2. Data

In this paper, France, German, Italy, Sweden, Taiwan, the U.K., and U.S. are compared with Japan. The data which I will analyze are the Basic Survey of People's Living in 2001, and National Survey of Lifecourse Change in Japan and Luxembourg Income Study for other countries[2]. In examining the extent of income inequality, I focus on disposable income, which I calculate by subtracting tax and social insurance payments from total gross income. In all societies including Japan, I use disposable income with the equivalent scale of elasticity 0.5.The extent of economic well-being is mainly represented by the poverty rate in this paper, which is the proportion of those whose disposable income is less than the median income of the entire households, following the way of its measurement in LIS.

1. Youth unemployment and non-marriage or late marriage

< Table 1. about here >

Table 1 shows the percentage of unmarried people by age group. Looking at Japan's percentage of unmarried people by age in comparison with other societies, Japan has an especially low unmarried rate for women in their late thirties and onwards. With regard to Japanese men, no great difference can be noted in comparison with others, and so it would seem that the important find from Table 1 is that the U.S. has the lowest percentage of unmarried people from the 20s onwards. The U.S. is known as a high marriage rate, high divorce rate country. In fact, the marriage rate in the U.S. in 2006 was 7.3, higher than any other country in the comparison, and the divorce rate was also high, at 3.60 (National Institute

[2] Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) is a cross-national data archive that harmonizes microdata. Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database, http://www.lisproject.org/techdoc.htm (multiple countries; August, 2008). I appreciate their technical support.

of Population and Social Security Research 2008).[3] For reference, Japan's marriage rate in 2005 was 5.8 and the divorce rate was 2.04. Sweden's marriage rate was 4.8 (2001) and the divorce rate 2.24, but since in Sweden, whether or not people are legally married is based on personal opinion, the actual number of married and divorced people might be underestimated to some extent.

< Figure 1. about here >

Figure 1 shows trends in the unemployment of youth between the ages of 20 and 24 for Europe, the U.S. and Japan. Let us look at men first. The rise in unemployment rate from the latter half of the 1990s is large, but even so, when compared with that of Europe, Japan's male youth unemployment rate is low. Sweden's youth unemployment rate shows a great rise coming into the 1990s, reflecting the serious economic recession during the 1990s. Although it is not as great as the men, the Swedish women's unemployment rate also rose in a similar manner. As Sweden's economy later recovered, the youth unemployment rate fell, but a further rise in the youth unemployment rate was again seen as the country entered the 2000s. Although the unemployment rate for female youth in Italy and France shows an improvement after the late 1990s, it is still high. From the above, if we measure one facet of the youth employment problem by unemployment rate, the degree of the Japanese youth employment rate is not as high as those in European countries, but it is an important point that the problem in the youth labor market represented by the unemployment rate is commonly found not only in Europe and the U.S. but also in contemporary Japan. The youth tend to be targeted by economic downturns, and thus have in common that they are exposed to high economic risk.

3. Where are unmarried adults?

The trend towards late marriage or non-marriage among young people and the youth employment problem tend to be examined as individual problems. However, most of the young people live with family members, and their economic and social situation is more or less associated with the household type to which they belong. In Japan, the main reasons for leaving the parental home are to go on to higher education, get a job, and get married. The

[3] Marriage rate and divorce rate are given as the values per 1,000 of the population. Since 1947, the denominator of the marriage rate and divorce rate is the population of Japanese nationals.

weight of receiving higher education and getting a job as reasons for leaving the parental home has declined due to urbanization (Suzuki 2001). In fact, the numbers of young people who go to college, leaving home to attend university, are becoming smaller.

Italy is similar to Japan from a demographic point of view, in that young people tend to stay in their parental home until they get married. In Italy, roughly 80 percent of 18 to 30-year-olds claim difficulty in leaving their parental home due to economic reasons (Asahi Newspaper, August 2008). Making matters worse after the economic recession in Italy in the 1990s, companies shifted to short-term labor contracts, bringing about a further deterioration in the economic situation of the youth.

< Figure 2. about here >

So where, exactly, are the unmarried adults? Let us look at the structure of the households to which unmarried adults belong.[4] Figure 2 shows the distribution of the structure of households with unmarried adults. We exclude students from our analyses. In 2001, the proportion of households with an unmarried person in Japan present was 30 percent, and the figures in Germany, Taiwan, and France, are quite similar to Japan. The U.S. had the lowest proportion of households with unmarried adult, that is, 26.7 percent, and Sweden had the highest at 38.1 percent. Now let us look at the proportion of households with unmarried adults, distinguishing younger unmarried adult in their 20s and 30s with the older ones aged 40 and over. Taiwan has the highest proportion of younger unmarried adults, and Sweden the lowest. Japan follows just after the UK, where younger unmarried adults are relatively numerous. The difference in the proportion of households with younger unmarried adults may be associated with the difference in the degree of aging of the population. In fact, in Taiwan, where population aging is not as far advanced as in Japan, Europe, and the U.S., even with reference to the same "unmarried adults," they are still at a relatively young stage. In contrast, in Sweden, the relative proportion of older unmarried adults is high. This is because in Sweden, compared with other countries, the number of people in the prime of life and elderly people who remain unmarried throughout

[4] The analytical unit of this study is the household. Thus, the analysis will specifically focus on households with unmarried adults on the basis of whether or not an unmarried adult is a household member. I would like to mention that it differs depending on whether one looks at the data on the basis of individual units. Further, there are cases in which there are more than one unmarried person in the household. In those cases we only consider whether or not there is/are unmarried adults in the household.

their lives and who continue to live alone is high. Further, since there is no legal penalty between legally married and unmarried couples, the actual number of unmarried adult may be overly stated, since they actually have a stable relationship with a steady partner even if they do not claim they are married. Therefore, we have to bear in mind the Swedish marital system in examining unmarried adults.

< Figure 3. about here>

Figure 3 shows the distribution of household structures with unmarried adults. In Japan, 20 percent of households with unmarried adults are single-person households, and the majority, nearly 80 percent, live with parents, or live with others, such as siblings. Thus the majority of unmarried adults live with their parents, rather than live alone, and therefore it is necessary to examine unmarried adults in relation to their family, particularly parents, in contemporary Japan. The countries in which the proportion of unmarried adults living alone is lower than Japan are Taiwan (13.7%) and Italy (19.4%). It is pointed out that Japan shares the important role of the family with southern Europe (Nishioka 2006), as a familialistic-type welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1999), and a strong tendency of unmarried adults to remain with the parental home is commonly seen in these nations. In both Japan and Italy one sees a delay in transition to adulthood as a postponing of independence from parents. Taiwan, another Asian country, also shows a low proportion of unmarried adult living alone, similarly to Japan. It may be a custom for young adults to stay in the parental home until they get married, and consequently, the majority of unmarried adults live with their parents simply because they have not gotten married.

< Table 2. about here>

There are substantial differences in the structures of households with younger and older unmarried adults. A large majority of younger unmarried adults live with their parents, but among older unmarried adults, the proportion of one-person households becomes larger. The countries where there is the greatest rise in the proportion of older unmarried adults living alone when compared to younger unmarried adults are Taiwan and Italy, where the increase in older unmarried adults has been four times as large as the growth of younger unmarried adults. In contrast, although the proportion of younger unmarried adults living alone is low in Japan, thus similar to Taiwan and Italy, the proportion of older unmarried adults living alone does not

rise as much as in the other two countries. The proportion of all households with unmarried adult rose in Japan from 25 percent in 1986 to 30 percent in 2001. While there was no dramatic change in the household structure depending on the proportion of households with unmarried adults, when we distinguish unmarried adults into “younger” and “older,” slightly different pictures emerge.

< Table 3. about here>

Table 3 shows the change in the distribution of the households with younger unmarried adults and older unmarried adults present. Hardly any conspicuous features can be noted in the change in the structure of households with younger unmarried adults, the majority, 80 percent, living in the parental home since the mid-1980s. In contrast, shifting our attention to the households where older unmarried adults are present, we can see a change in which the proportion of those living with the parents has increased steadily. In the mid-1980s, nearly half of all unmarried adults lived alone. However, that proportion has fallen such that in 2001, the majority of households with older unmarried adults present involved young people living with their parents. From this result, we suspect that an increasing number of older unmarried adults have continued to stay in the parental home.[5]

< Figure 4. about here >

In what income strata do we find unmarried adult children? Figure 4 shows the proportion of households with unmarried adults by deciles of household income excluding their own income when there are unmarried adults. It was obvious that many households where unmarried adults are present tended to be in the low-income group for all the countries, including Japan. However, in countries such as Italy, Taiwan, and Japan, there are substantial proportions of households with unmarried adults throughout income groups. A relatively high proportion of those with unmarried adults can be seen in relatively high income groups. In Japan, in particular, there was found to be a second peak in the high income group at the eighth and ninth deciles. In the UK also, although not as pronounced as for these top three countries, there were comparatively many unmarried adult children in high-income group households., On the

[5] The pattern of household mobility can only be rigidly clarified with a panel survey, but we can speculate on the household dynamism associated with unmarried adults, based on our cross-sectional large-scale data.

contrary, in the U.S., France, Germany, and Sweden, there was a negative relationship between household income and the presence of an unmarried adults in the household. It is also not surprising that there are substantial numbers of households with unmarried adult children in the low-income group at the first and second deciles is associated with a large number of single-member households. Even taking this into account, the overall proportion of single-member households in Italy, Taiwan, and Japan is low, and even if these single-member households are eliminated, many cases of unmarried adults can still be found in low-income group households (Shirahase 2005). What we get from Figure 4 is that two peaks are found for the proportion of households with an unmarried adult child by income decile, one in the low-income group and one in the high-income group. Italy has a similar pattern. It does not always mean, however, that there are no unmarried adults in the middle stratum, and that the households with unmarried adults are polarized. This is a rather easy interpretation. What is confirmed here is that households with unmarried adults are diverse and not limited to the better-off groups.

< Figure 5. about here >

All the countries, including Japan, show a negative relationship between the proportion of the income derived from unmarried adults and the income level. However, we should note that in Taiwan, Italy, and France, similarly to Japan, the overall proportion of income derived from the unmarried adult children is relatively small. While this is less pronounced in Japan than in Italy and Taiwan, the proportion of income earned by unmarried adults in low-income groups is low when compared with Germany and Sweden, and we suspect that even in low-income groups unmarried adult children are economically dependent on their parents. Further, since the proportion of income of the unmarried adult in the total household economy is negatively associated with the level of household income, it must be also possible that the unmarried adults are the ones who support the household economy by living with their parents in low-income households. Thus, the position of the unmarried adults child within the household differs by the level of parental income. Such a situation can be seen not only in Japan, but also in other countries.

4. Unmarried adult children living in the parental home in Japan

< Figure 6. about here >

I would like to discuss the economic position of unmarried adult children living with parents in a bit more detail in Japan. Figure 6 shows the trend in the proportion of the income of unmarried adult children in the total household income by household income excluding their income among those with unmarried adult children in Japan If we first look at younger unmarried adults, the overall pattern remains the same at the three points of time. We do not see any particular group in which the proportion of income by unmarried adult children shows a striking change. However, turning our attention to households with older unmarried adult children, we obtain different results. The proportion of income by the unmarried adult children is increasing particularly rapidly in the low-income group among those with older unmarried adults aged 40 years and over. Thus, we can surmise that the position of unmarried adult children differs depending on the stage of their life course. Younger unmarried adult children are in the transition phase to adulthood and are likely to be economically dependent on their parents, primarily because their parents are in the prime age in their working lives. On the other hand, as they enter the late stage of being unmarried children, they find that their parents are aging and their health conditions are becoming problematic. They are no longer the ones who are taken care of by their parents. Thus, Figure 6 suggests that the role of unmarried adult children in the household changes by parental economic and physical condition.

Nevertheless, just because the individual has passed through into older unmarried adulthood does not always mean that he or she has suddenly reached the position where the parents have become his or her dependents. In fact, in the high-income group, the proportion of income by unmarried adult children remains low, similarly to the case of younger unmarried adult children, and there are unmarried adult children who can keep depending on their parents and enjoy economic security by staying in the parental home. In contrast, there are unmarried children who support the household economy particularly in low-income groups, and their role becomes more crucial when they enter the late stage as unmarried adult children. Further, a rise in the proportion of household income derived from the older unmarried adult can be seen in the middle-income group. It can be regarded as a prevailing phenomenon in which the number of unmarried adult children staying in the parental home overall increased in the whole society.

< Figure 7. about here >

What does it mean economically that unmarried adult children are in the household? I would like to compare the poverty rate between those with unmarried adult children and those without. In order to take into account the family stage, only households whose heads are 50 years old and over will be examined in this analysis. Figure 7 presents the poverty rate of households with younger or older unmarried adults by household structure. The most important finding from Figure 7 is that, the extent of economic vulnerability, represented by the poverty rate, differs according to the life stage of the unmarried adult or you can say, the life stage of the parents. The poverty rate among households with younger unmarried adult children is lower than in those without them, but when we look at households with older unmarried adults, the poverty rate becomes higher than that of households without unmarried adult.

One possible reason why the poverty rate among households with younger unmarried adult children is lower than that among those without them is because there are more working members in the households with unmarried adult children (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2001). While they stay in the parental home, the majority of unmarried adult children are at work, and consequently they contribute something to the household economy. However, as the parents are ageing and they retire, and their adult children remain unmarried due to unfavorable economic conditions, say, working at low wages, the level of household economy becomes disadvantageous. We suspect that a prolonging of the period when unmarried adult children are in the parental home is closely associated with the increase in the extent of economic hardship[6]

< Figure 8. about here>

Figure 8 shows differences in poverty rate between male and female unmarried adults when living alone or living with parents. The gender differences for younger unmarried adults are not very large. Living alone entails a high poverty risk for both men and women, and especially the increase in poverty rate among unmarried male adults living alone should receive more attention. Coming to older unmarried adults, the poverty rate becomes high for all kinds of households. Among those living alone, the increase in poverty rate is greater for

[6] We assume here that the older unmarried adult remains in the same household over a prolonged period of time. It is also possible that there are cases where the child will leave the parental home and return again later, but it is not possible to clarify these detailed household changes from the data used here. Even so, in many cases the event of returning to the parental home is induced by some undesirable incident such as divorce or unemployment.

males than females, and although the poverty rate itself is higher for unmarried female adults living alone, the rate of change for males is greater. We should not make light of the fact that lifelong unmarried females living alone face a high poverty risk, but we should also not overlook the fact that the poverty risk is also rising for lifelong unmarried males living alone.

< Figure 9. about here >

Thus far we have focused attention on unmarried adults in Japan, and have looked at the changes in economic vulnerability. Here, we would like to examine the extent of economic risk represented by the poverty rate for unmarried adults from a comparative perspective. Figure 9 shows the poverty rate for younger and older unmarried adults who either live alone or co-habit the parental home. Concerning younger unmarried adulthood, with the exception of the U.S. and Italy, the poverty rate is higher for those living alone compared with those living with parents, and it appears that co-residency with parents functions to prevent falling into poverty for unmarried adults. The differences between countries become larger for older unmarried adults than the younger unmarried adults. Especially among households with younger unmarried adults in Taiwan, the poverty rate remains low where unmarried adults are present in the household regardless of whether the person is living alone or co-habiting with parents. However, if we turn our attention to households where older unmarried adults are present, Taiwan especially shows a striking increase in poverty rate. In Italy, the rise in poverty rate is great especially for those living alone. In Japan, although the extent of the differences is not as large as that in Italy, the poverty rate among older unmarried adult children is high. In a country where very few people remain single throughout life and there is a strong sense of stigma attached to non-marriage, it is in many cases closely associated with economic vulnerability.

In addition to poverty rate itself, the difference in poverty rate when moving from younger to older unmarried adulthood is great in Italy, Taiwan and Japan, and the common point is that in each of these three countries the welfare state is strongly dependent on the role of the family. Especially in Taiwan, the difference in poverty rate between the younger unmarried adults and older unmarried adults is quite large, and we reckon there is a social stigma being attached to living alone as a older unmarried adult, and such a strong social stigma can be closely associated with a high poverty risk. Japan is peculiar in the large

difference in the poverty rate between households with younger and older unmarried adults. In countries which have implemented a welfare state based on a high expectation towards a large role for the family, the prolonged length of stay in the parental home, while remaining unmarried, leads to a higher risk of poverty. It can be interpreted as meaning that there is a high economic penalty against deviating from the standard life course in which they are expected to leave their parental home when getting married at a certain age in a family-oriented society such as Japan.

Compared with living alone, there is a general tendency for the poverty rate to be lower for households where the unmarried adult children live with the parents. Therefore, co-residency with parents used to be regarded as a means of poverty evasion for unmarried adult children. However, co-habiting the parental home does not grant immediate dispensation from poverty, and it must not be forgotten that there is the possibility that the parent and child will fall together into poverty. As we have seen in Figure 5, the trend is for the proportion of the household income derived from the unmarried adult children to be higher in the lower income group (household income minus the income of the unmarried adult child). If so, rather than the unmarried adult child being the recipient of an economic benefit by living with the parental home, the parents are the ones who receive benefits from living with their unmarried adult children in low-income group.

5. The meaning of co-habiting the parental home

Thus far we have examined households with unmarried adults by focusing on economic disparities. However, co-habiting with parents is not simply an economic matter, but has a social meaning as living with parents to some extent. In closing this paper, we would like to examine what it is that governs co-habitation in the parental home, and what meaning co-habiting or not co-habiting with parents may have an impact on the marriage behavior of young people in Japan. The data used in this section are derived from the “Japanese Life-course Panel Survey (JLPS)” conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Tokyo in 2007. This survey consists of a young persons’ panel whose subjects were males and females between the ages of 20 and 34, and a middle-aged persons’ panel whose subjects were males and females between the ages of 35 and 40. See Ishida et al. (2007) for details of the

survey.

In this analysis, we take unmarried persons over 20 years of age as the subjects and, in order to maintain consistency with the foregoing analysis, those who were students at the time of the survey are excluded from the analysis. Of the unmarried adults at the time of the study, 77.2 percent were co-habiting with parents, and of those not living with the parents, 78.8 percent were living alone. Firstly, who is living with the parents in the parental home? We will examine the factors determining co-habitation with parents. The table 4 is the result of a logit analysis in which the dependent variable is whether respondents live with the parents or not. Here we show the results by gender. The explanatory variables included in our analysis are age, educational credentials of the father (compulsory education as base, and then a high school graduation dummy and a university graduation or higher dummy are entered), the father's occupation at age 15 of respondents (with blue collar occupation as base, a professional and management dummy, and a white collar occupation dummy), the extent of participating in household chore by father in housework at the age of 15 of respondents (both housework and childcare delegated to the mother (1), other (0)), current living circumstances (from well-off (5) to poor (0)), educational credentials of respondents (as with the father's educational background, with dummy variables for high school graduation and university graduation or higher), work status, working time per day, occupation of respondents (with blue collar worker as base, a specialist/management dummy, and a white collar worker dummy focusing on office work and sales), respondents' income (income categories with the highest income category [five million yen or more] as base).[7]

The explanatory variables are divided into two aspects, one on the characteristics of parents and another on those of the respondents. The variables concerning the socio-economic standing of the parents, including class origin, are the father's educational credentials and occupation at age 15, the father's participation in housework and childcare at age 15 of respondents, and the current living circumstances. The first group of variables correspond to the theory of the so-called "parasite single;" if the father has a high educational background, and is engaged in a professional and managerial work rather than a blue collar work, then

[7] The individual's income is surveyed as a rank value. The median point is taken and the average determined as a continuous variable, the average being inserted for missing data.

respondents will be more likely to stay in their parental home, and the better-off the living circumstances are considered to encourage cohabitation with parents. Further, the mother's work condition is also included in our analysis since in the parasite-single theory, it is implicitly assumed that the mother is a full-time housewife. The hypothesis here is that if the mother is a full-time homemaker, then it is easier for the adult child to co-habit the parental home.

The variables related to the characteristics of the unmarried adult child are the status of work, working time, the respondent's educational background, the respondent's occupation, and the respondent's income. The hypothesis related to the matter of unmarried adult children is that the unfavorable situation in the youth labor market makes it difficult for young people to get married and leave the parental home (Bell, Burtless, Gornick, and Smeeding 2007). It is predicted that unmarried adults will be less likely to stay in their parental home when they have a high educational attainment or have a secure job compared to those whose educational attainment is low and whose wage is low, or do not have job. Concerning time, under the parasite single theory, it is expected that the benefits received from the parents are not only economic, but that there are also benefits in terms of time, the mother as full-time homemaker being implicitly assumed. Thus, it is considered that the longer the working time, the more co-habitation in the parental home is encouraged.

< Table 4. about here >

Table 4 shows the result of a logit analysis with the dependent variable of whether the respondents live with their parents or not. If we look at males, the variables that show statistically significant effects are the socio-economic status of the parent, attitudes toward living standards and participation of the father in housework and childcare when the respondent is at the age of 15. Those who think that their living standard is high are more likely to live with their parents than those who do not, so it can be confirmed that favorable economic conditions of the household encourage unmarried adult children to live with their parents. In contrast, when the father of the respondent did not take part in any housework and childcare when they were small, the respondents show a higher tendency to live with their parents. This result can be interpreted to support the full-time housewife mother hypothesis.

Turning our attention to females, the participation of the father in housework and

child-care at age 15 showed no significant effect, but whether or not the mother was currently at work or not presented a significant impact. The unmarried female adult was less likely to remain in the home if the mother was currently working outside the home. As Shirahase has showed (2006), the gender of the adult child in the household does have a significant impact in allocating the role of family; when the mother is working, the daughter rather than the son tends to take over the mother's role in the household. That is, a premise for becoming a parasite single is indeed that the mother is a full-time homemaker, but with regard to females, in the case that the mother is employed, the unmarried female adult will have to play the role of substituting for the function of the mother. In an attempt to avoid that situation, there is a tendency for the unmarried female adult to stay in the parental home. It is a important gender difference in unmarried adult children in the household.

For both males and females, there is a tendency to co-habit the parental home if one's own income is low. Especially males show a negative linear relationship between the unmarried adult's income and the likelihood of living with parents. Put another way, it must be the case that unmarried adults cannot afford to leave their parental home due to the lack of economic security for establishing a separate dwelling of one's own. The economic security with which to form an independent household is an indispensable factor in the physical independence of the youth. It is thus also possible to see here support for the hypothesis that the worse the economic situation of the child, the stronger will become the tendency for co-habitation in the parental home. Thus, economic factors are important when examining the living arrangements of the youth. In addition to that, the interesting result in Table 4 is that for males, the behavioral pattern of the father in the home at age 15 of the child, and for females the mother's current employment status are critical in explaining their living arrangement. Rather rather than being consciousness per se, the interaction with the mother at a young age and the current status of the mother in the home have a significant influence on the unmarried male or female adult. As well as being a matter of economic factors, the structure of division of labor within the household, including role norms, are not without relevance.

< Figure 10. about here >

What degree of difference can we see in the attitude towards marriage between co-habitation or non-co-habitation with parents? Let us look at co-habitation or

non-co-habitation with parents in the cases of the presence or absence of a specific intimate partner. From Figure 10, a high proportion of unmarried adult children, both males and females, co-habiting the parental home replied that they have no specific intimate partner. The difference in the proportion of males and females, whether co-habiting the parental home or not, who state that they have no intimate partner is almost the same. Of the unmarried adults co-habiting the parental home, over 70 percent of males and over 60 percent of females state they have no specific intimate partner. There are probably no grounds for judging whether this figure is high or appropriate. However, we certainly cannot say that six or seven people out of ten replying that they have no particular intimate partner is low.

< Table 5. about here >

How about the intentions towards marriage? The effect of co-habitation in the parental home differs between males and females (Table 5). For unmarried male adults, the proportion co-habiting the parental home who replies that they “definitely want to get married” is lower than for those who live away from home. In contrast, for unmarried female adults, those who co-habit the parental home present a strong wish to be married. This suggests that the meaning in co-habiting the parental home differs for males and females. For females, co-habitation with the parents is a period of pre-marital preparation, and a strong wish to be married is indicated. For males, however, co-habitation of the parental home has the nature of a substitute for marriage, and leads to a lack of feeling toward the necessity of marriage.

< Table 6 about here>

In fact, if we look at reasons for remaining single (Table 6), the number of those who state that they do not feel the necessity of marriage is large among males who co-habit the parental home. On the other hand, regardless of co-habitation or non-co-habitation with the parents, about one-third of females reply that they do not feel the necessity of marriage. As regards the reason for remaining single, large male-female differences are indicated in the anxiety towards economic security for marriage. More adult males than females replied that they remain single because of economic instability for marriage and insufficiency of funds for marriage. The gender norm of the husband supporting the household economy as a breadwinner can be seen.

6. Young people facing difficulties in leaving the nest

Youth is a life stage that involves the transition to adulthood, and this is a theme that has not yet been sufficiently examined in Japan. A person's life is, however, a continuum, and in the transformation from childhood to adulthood, the problem of the unmarried adult child is important because it is a transition period. Youth is not simply a period that they "pass through;" the important point is that how they "pass through" it will have a great influence on later life. It is critical what kind of time the young people experience their job hunting. In fact, those at the lost generation, in which the number of available job opportunities themselves were scarce, are likely to have trouble in their work life. (Kobayashi; Asahi Newspaper). How are they to get through this period? The difference between those who just happen to knock on society's door when the economic climate is good, and those for whom the economy is in recession when they knock, is that, regardless of the level of individual capabilities, they will probably find society will deal them a different hand, and they will perceive a different social scenery through their eyes.

The unmarried adult child also will find him or herself positioned differently, depending on what kind of era he or she passes through, what kind of parents he or she is brought up by, and under what kind of institutions he or she lives. Youth unemployment, has already been discussed, not only in Japan, but also in the Western countries as a serious social issue since the 1980s. In that sense we can say that the problem of youth employment has come to the point where it is shared with the Western countries. However, even though we are talking about the same youth employment problem, it may not be perceived in the same way in different societies. In Japan, young people are often talked of as being "parasite singles," "freeters" (job hoppers), or "NEETs" (individuals Not in Employment, Education or Training), and it is easy to fall into the trap of image-led arguments. In order not to allow the discussion on the current youth problems to come to an end simply as a temporary fashion, we have to conduct empirical analyses based on data.

The time of setting up one's own household and becoming independent is one of life's transition periods. In that sense, it is an unstable time when the youth themselves are in the position of not yet having sufficient skills or pecuniary resources and are strongly

influenced by the state of the macro economy. That disadvantageous position shows itself in the form of a higher unemployment rate than other age groups, and also leads to high job turnover rates and low wage issues. This is true not only in Japan, but is also the common pattern of youth in Western societies. Nevertheless, even though placed in the same unstable life course, the degree of economic vulnerability is not the same in all countries. Especially in countries such as Italy, Taiwan, and Japan, where people are greatly dependent on the role of the family, and where expectations on familial care are strong, the poverty risk associated with the long-term coredicence with parents becomes high. Among the relatively young unmarried adults, a large difference in the economic situation of unmarried adults by country cannot seen, but as the length of co-residency with parents becomes longer, the country-specific differences in the poverty risk among ummarried adults becomes apparent such as in Italy, Taiwan, and Japan. Never-married adults living alone tend to be considered to be a stigma in a way of living. It is important to note that it is in countries with strong family norms and heavy expectations on the role of the family where there is a tendency for differences in lifestyle to be closely associated with a high risk of being at poverty. Why do they not marry? Is it that they do not marry because they do not wish to do so, or is it that they cannot even if they wish to do so? This is the great divide that governs their subsequent economic situation.

It is very often for economic reasons that children do not leave the parental home and become independent. Not making the attempt to depart from the parental home is certainly not due to some “disease of luxury,” but rather due to the lack of a sufficient economic base. What is therefore crucially necessary is that a housing policy and a minimum wage security policy that makes the youth possible to set their own house. Japan has been characterized by an extremely conservative in age stratification. iTherefore, as well as Italy, Taiwan, in Japan that is the country where it is extremely difficult to effect a change of course once an individual veers from the standard life course in the young stage of life. Southern Europe and Asia are societies where the life course model based on age is inflexible. In each of these countries the cornerstone of institutional design has age as the base, and this age stratification governs relationships between the unmarried adult child and the parents (Hogan and Astone 1986). One of the points that we have come to understand in this paper is that in countries like Italy, Taiwan, and Japan, where familial norms are strong and departure from the parental home is

closely linked with marriage, the economic risk associated with the prolongation of the unmarried period is high. The strength of the stigma attached to non-marriage and living alone throughout life appears as a high poverty rate, imposing high penalties for straying from the standard pattern. As a result, in countries where this penalty is high, unmarried adults manifest their feelings by forgoing marriage and the fertility rate continues to drop. Even though the child may veer from the standard course of life, the family will as ever continue to provide care for the child, but as the parents themselves age, their ability to maintain the function of familial and household living security will decline. In this case, the aging parents do not continue to look after unmarried child because they wish to do so, but it is their obligation to take care of unmarried children even if their main income is derived from public pension. In southern Europe, where the role of the family is comparatively large, the poverty rate among the youth is high (Parisi 2008). In effect, this is due to the fact that the poverty risk becomes drastically higher following departure from the parental home, and the young people who have their gaze fixed upon this high poverty risk are in the end choosing to remain with the parents until they are able to stand on their own two feet.

As the globalization of the economy advances, and as the relative wages of the young decline, economic security is necessary in order to take the step forward into marriage, or toward independent life. In fact, many complained of the economic anxiety of setting up a household, and the lower the individual's income, the greater the tendency toward co-habitation with the parents. Although the analysis here is based on cross-sectional data with which it is impossible to specify causal relationships, independence from the parents will not work well unless the economic security is guaranteed for the young people. How society deals with the issues of delayed marriage as well as non-marriage, and how much social institutions can be more flexible towards a variety of people's way of life, should be a key to make our society sustainable in an ageing population.

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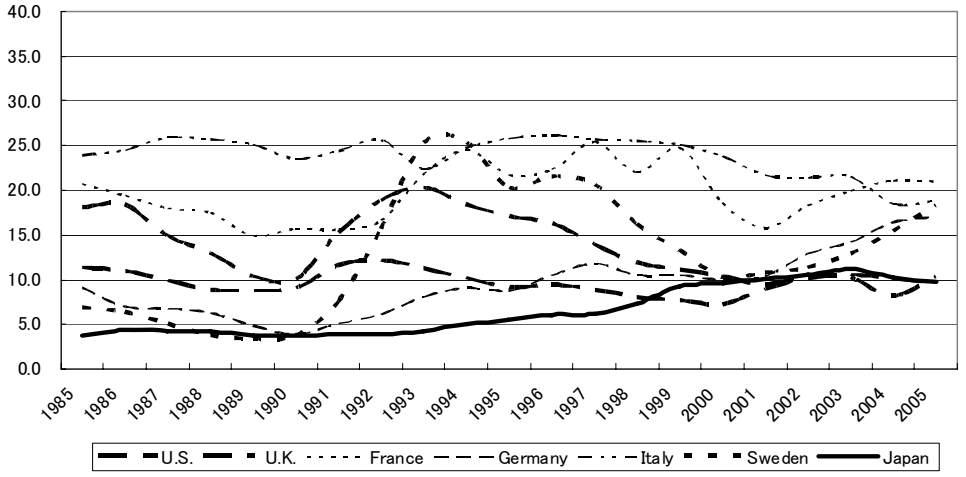
Table 1 Non-marriage Rages by Age group in Sected Countries in 2000 (%)

	France		Germany		Italy		Sweden		U.K		U.S.		Japan	
age group	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	99.98	99.73	99.85	98.79	99.93	99.14	99.94	99.53	99.87	99.32	98.49	95.86	99.54	99.10
20-24	97.34	91.15	94.67	85.33	97.09	87.19	97.91	93.37	95.50	88.39	83.73	72.79	92.90	87.97
25-29	75.11	61.19	75.82	56.94	78.76	56.38	86.93	74.92	73.48	57.93	51.72	38.89	69.36	54.00
30-34	48.30	38.02	49.00	31.53	45.41	28.08	64.41	50.48	44.74	31.39	30.13	21.95	42.91	26.58
35-39	33.48	25.44	29.13	17.49	25.13	16.26	47.74	36.23	27.99	18.68	20.32	14.26	26.22	13.94
40-44	22.23	16.41	18.20	10.76	16.24	11.35	35.54	25.81	16.37	10.67	15.67	11.78	18.69	8.64
45-49	14.84	11.37	12.55	7.47	11.75	8.78	26.61	18.60	11.82	7.24	11.97	9.99	14.84	6.31
50-54	10.29	8.35	9.18	5.37	9.21	7.51	19.36	12.52	9.11	5.13	6.57	6.92	10.30	5.33
55-59	8.38	6.92	7.74	4.75	8.48	7.39	13.75	8.48	7.88	4.62	5.68	5.57	6.08	4.32
60-64	8.74	6.47	6.33	5.03	7.89	7.63	10.85	6.70	7.14	4.79	5.27	4.17	3.89	3.86
65-69	8.75	6.82	4.74	5.94	7.62	8.69	10.21	6.01	7.34	5.43	5.19	3.52	2.56	3.96
70-74	8.35	7.44	3.54	7.67	7.29	9.95	10.32	6.04	7.48	6.25	3.29	3.94	1.68	4.01
75+	7.21	7.93	4.23	11.49	6.31	11.13	9.45	7.65	6.08	7.51	4.15	3.53	1.02	2.55

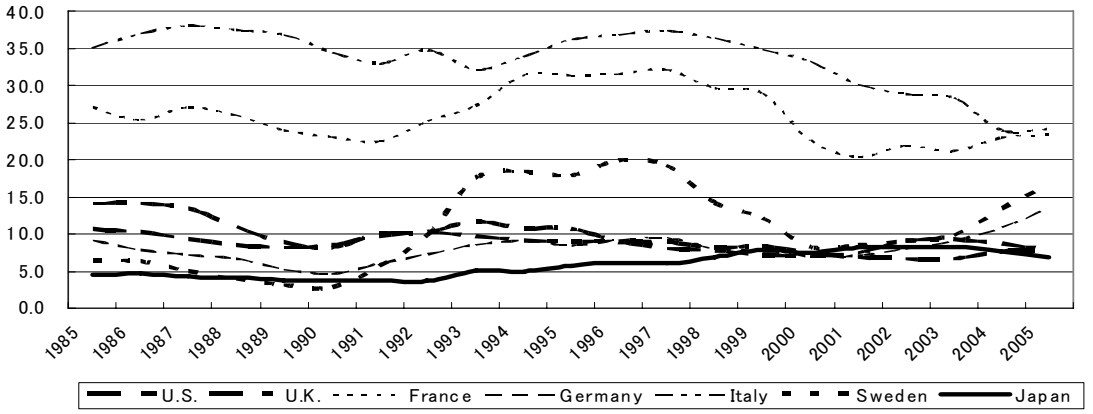
Note: U.S. Census data, Japan Census Data U.S. UN for others

Figure 1 Trend in Male Unemployment Rates among Youth aged 20 to 24 (%)



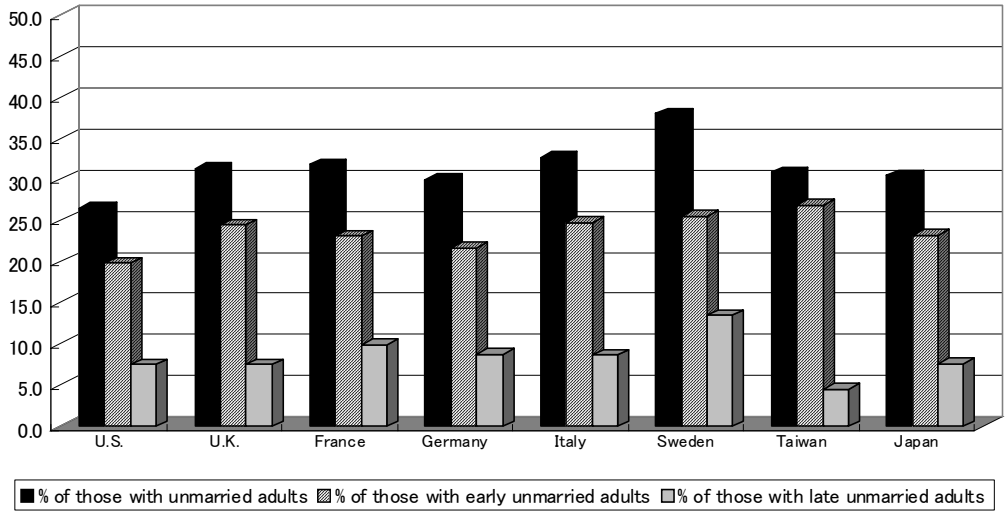
source: Labor Force Statistics (OECD)

Figure 1 Trend in Female Unemployment Rates among Youth aged 20 to 24 (%)



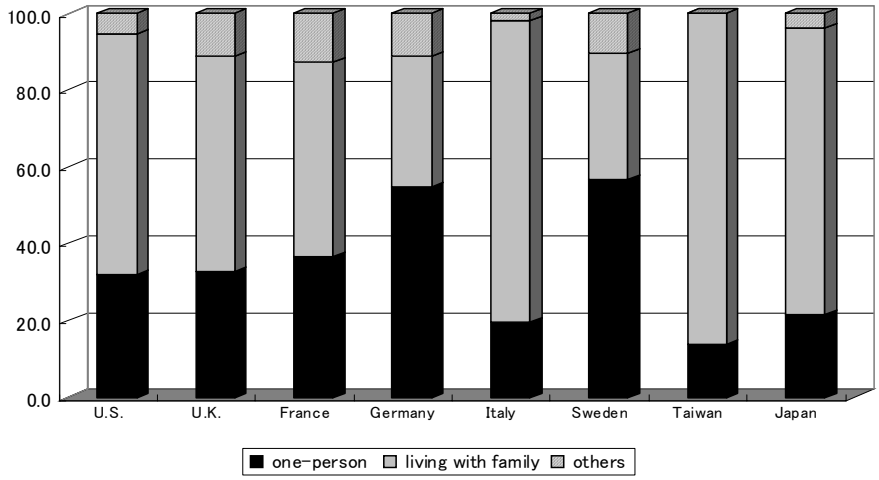
source: Labor Force Statistics (OECD)

Figure 2 The Proportion of the Households with Unmarried Adulds (%)



source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 3 The Household Structure of those with Unmarried Adults (%)



source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Table 2 The Household Structure with Early and Late Unmarried Adults (%)

	U.S.	U.K.	France	Germany	Italy	Sweden	Taiwan	Japan
early unmarried adults								
one-person	24.1	23.3	28.1	44.4	9.1	50.3	8.3	15.4
living with family	70.1	64.2	57.5	42.6	89.2	38.3	91.6	82.2
others	5.8	12.5	14.5	13	1.7	11.4	0	2.4
late unmarried adults								
one-person	49.6	60.1	52.6	77.7	47	64.7	44.1	38.7
living with family	45.9	32.9	39	14.3	49.6	26.8	55.9	52.1
others	4.5	7	8.5	8	3.4	8.6	0	9.1

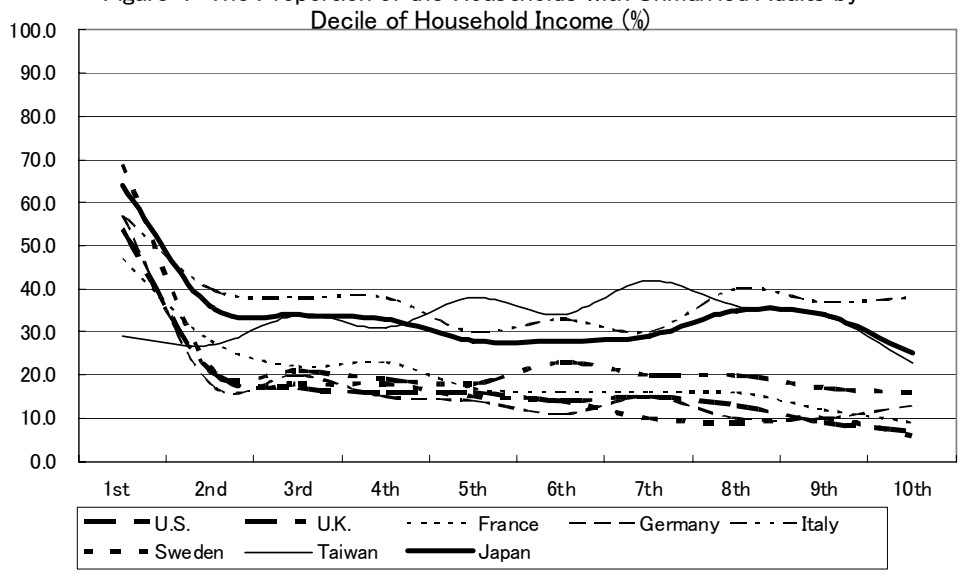
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Table 3 The Household Structure of those with Eerly and Late Unmarried Adults (%)

	1986	1995	2001
	those with early unmarried		
one-person	14.5	18.2	15.4
living with family	83.3	80.0	82.2
others	2.2	1.8	2.4
	those with late unmarried		
one-person	49.1	42.6	38.7
living with family	39.9	49.4	52.1
others	11.1	8.1	9.1

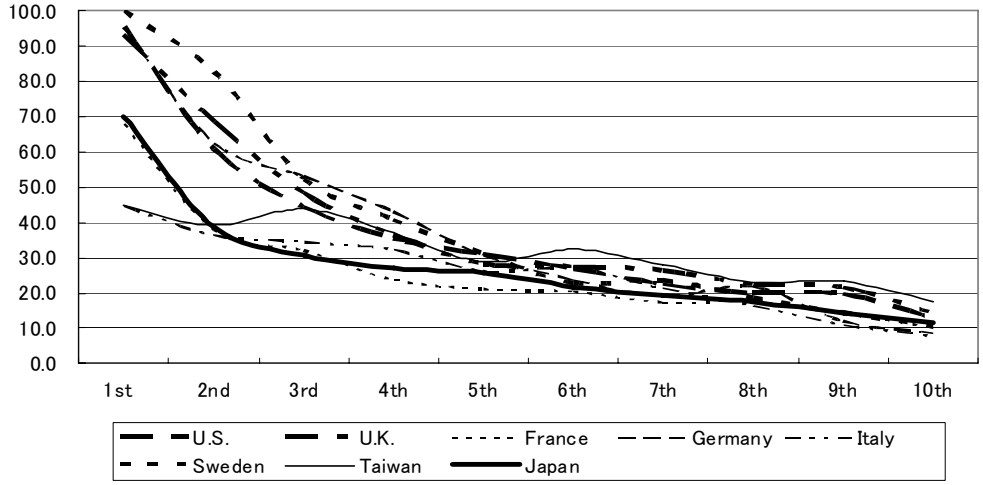
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 4 The Proportion of the Households with Unmarried Adults by Decile of Household Income (%)



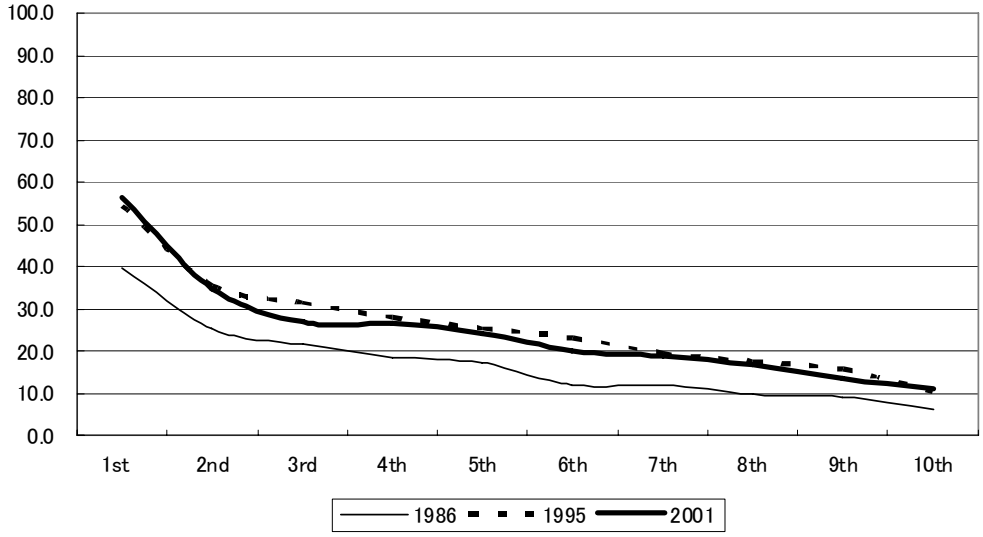
Note: The households whose heads are 50 years old and over are included for the analysis.
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 5 The proportion of income by unmarried adult children by decile of household income among the households (%)



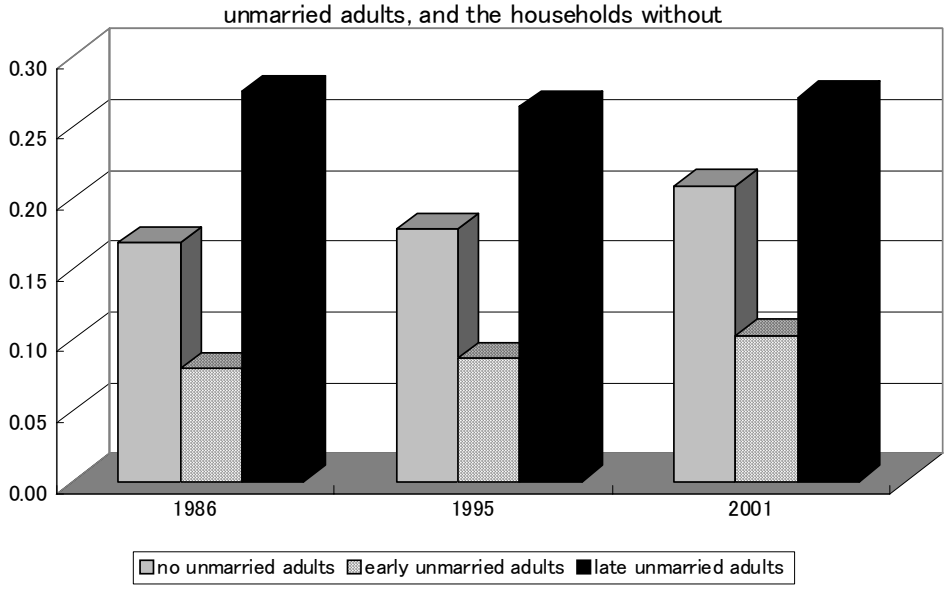
Note: The households with unmarried adult children whose heads are 50 years old and over are only included in the analysis, excluding the one-person households.
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 6 The proportion of income by early unmarried adults by decile of household income (%)



Note: The households with early unmarried adults, excluding one-person households are only included.
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

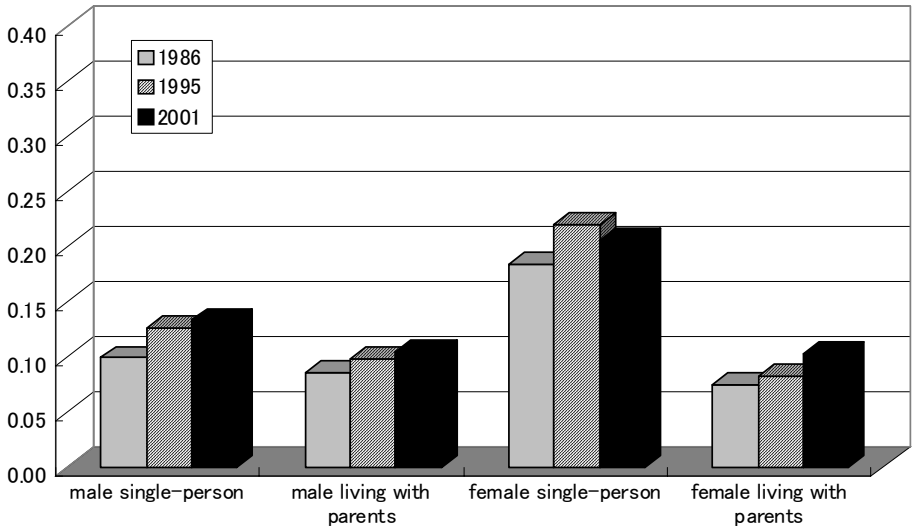
Figure 7 The poverty rates among the households with early and late unmarried adults, and the households without



note: The age of housheolds heads is 50 and over.

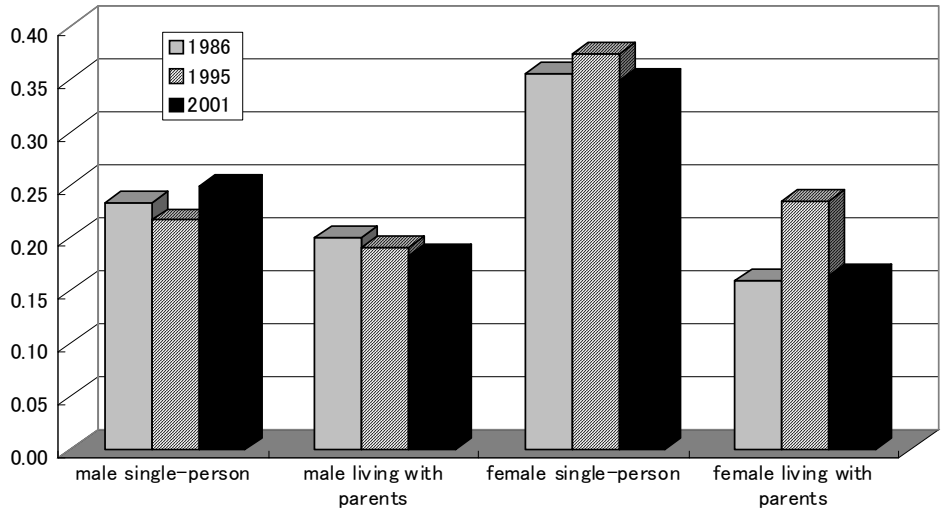
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 8 The poverty rates among households with early unmarried adults by the household type and by gender



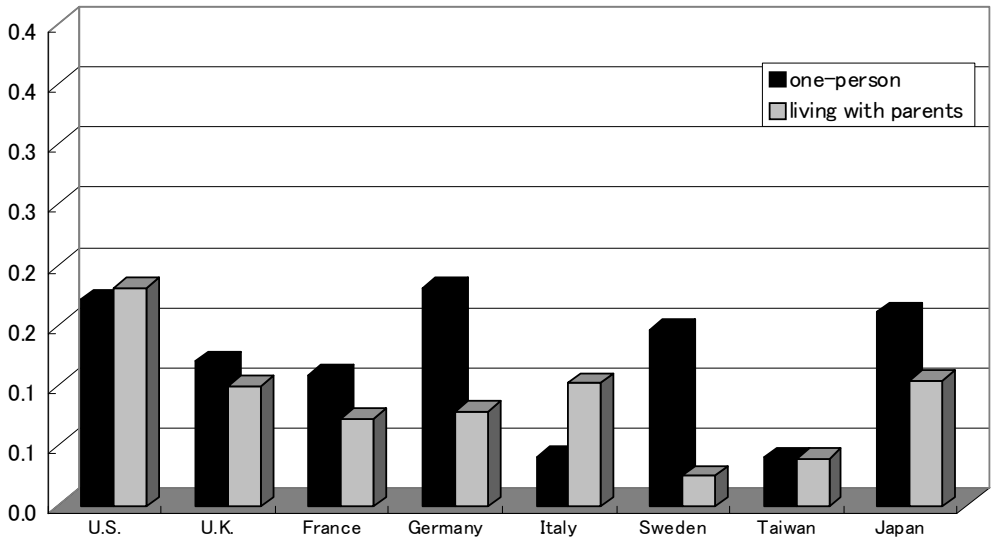
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 8 The poverty rates among households with late unmarried adults by the household type and by gender



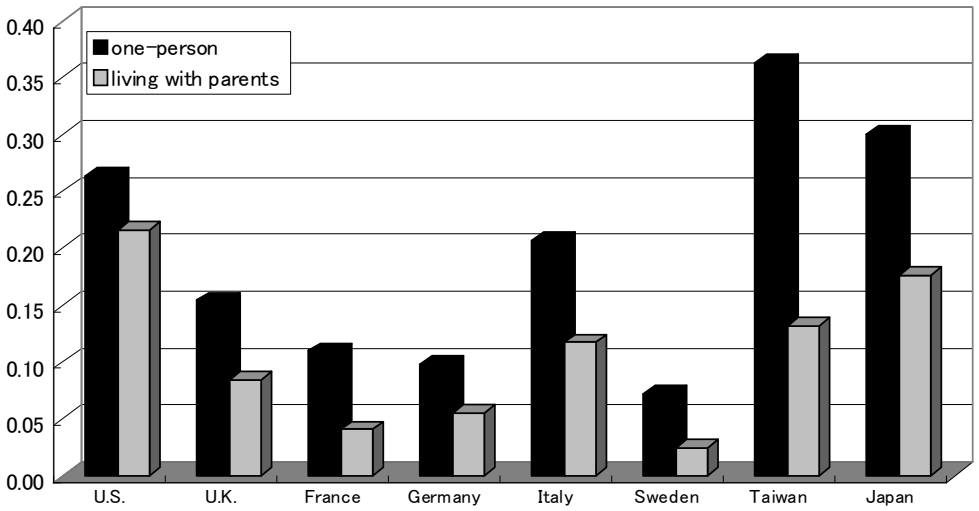
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 9 The poverty rates of the households with early unmarried adults



source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Figure 9 The poverty rates of the households with late unmarried adults



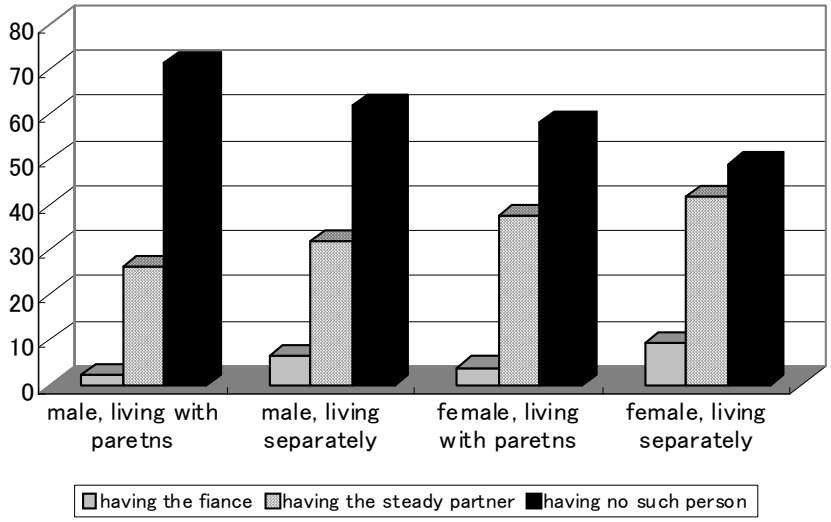
source: National Survey of People's living for Japan, LIS for others

Table 4 Logit analysis on co-residency with parents

	male		female	
	coefficient		coefficient	
age	0.006		-0.025	
father's completion of high school deploma	-0.012		0.412	
father's completion of college degree and beyon	-0.184		0.521	
professional and managerial of father	-0.155		0.250	
white-collar job of father	0.382		0.169	
having father at the age of 15	-0.335		-0.416	
participation in household chore by father	0.898	**	0.253	
mother's work	-0.019		-0.544	*
attitudes towards living standard	0.599	**	0.645	**
completion of high school diploma	-0.130		7.534	
completion of college degree and beyond	-0.708		7.068	
work status	0.580		-0.031	
working hours per day	-0.044		-0.070	
professional and managerial job	-0.483		-0.074	
white-collar job of father	-0.666	*	0.280	
respondent's income-level 1	1.706	**	1.663	**
respondent'sincome-level 2	1.455	**	0.959	
respondent'sincome-level 3	0.949	**	0.193	
constant	-1.096		-7.163	
-2 log-likelihood	618.876		720.958	
Cox & Snell R^2	0.120		0.122	

source: Japanese Life-course Panel Survey (JLPS), conducted by Institute of Social Sciences, University of T
note: respondent's income-level:1=0-154 2=155-299 3=300-499 4=500 and more (10,000 yen).
*statistically significant at the 5% level **statistically significant at the 1% level

Figure 10 Having or not the steady partner by living arrangement with parents (%)



source:Japanese Life-course Panel Survey (JLPS), conducted by Institute of Social Sciences, University of Tokyo

Table 5 Intention to get married by the living arrangement with parents (%)

	male		female	
	living with parents	living separately	living with parents	living separately
definitely want to get married	35.22	41.26	44.48	36.70
if possible, will get married	38.28	37.06	36.12	36.24
it is ok even if I do not get married	13.82	12.94	11.88	16.06
do not want to get married	2.72	3.15	1.82	4.59
have never thought about it	9.97	5.59	5.70	6.42
Pearson χ^2	7.13		10.47*	

source:Japanese Life-course Panel Survey(JLPS), conducted by Institute of Social Sciences, University of T
note: *statistically significant at the 5% level

Table 6. Reasons for staying single by living arrangement with parents

	male			female		
	living with parents	living separately		living with parents	living separately	
feel no necessary to get married	38.06	29.86	**	33.13	35.00	
feel comfortable to stay in parents home	12.27	1.74	**	22.05	5.45	**
feel no confident with economic security in marria	34.35	37.50		16.39	17.73	
lack of economic preparation for marriage	20.83	23.96		12.41	13.18	

source:Japanese Life-course Panel Survey, conducted by Institute of Social Sciences, University of Tokyo
note: **statistically significant at the 1% level