Parent-Adult Child Relationships in Japan

Hachiro Nishioka*

Abstract

Japan is going to be a ‘super’ aged society in the 21st century. One of the biggest questions facing Japan is how a family can support its elderly members and to what extent the family should be responsible for their care. The purpose of this paper, which represents part of the effort to respond to and address the needs of an aged society, is to examine the current trends in mutual support and assistance between parents and their adult children. Special focus has been given to care and assistance provided by adult children to their parents. The study uses recent research data and compares it with trends in other countries.

In Japanese society, the physical space and substance of care between the generations has traditionally been more intimate than in many other western societies. In other words, care for parents has, in most cases, meant physical care by living with parents in the same house (co-residence). In this context, the paper attempts to analyze the determinants of living arrangements that form the foundation of the care and assistance provided by the child generation to the parent generation.

The study found that the determinants of parent-adult children co-residence are mainly normative factors such as the position in the sibling compositions. In fact, low-income families show higher rates of co-residence with their parents than high-income families. This suggests that greater choice is available with greater economic means.

The socialization of care provision is being promoted with the introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance System in April 2000. If co-residence with parents is determined by economic factors as well as normative factors, and co-residence is indispensable in providing care to old parents, the issue must be handled very carefully, paying special attention to the status of traditional family care provision.

1. Introduction

Japan is going to be a ‘super’ aged society in the 21st century. One of the biggest questions facing Japan is how a family can support its elderly members and to what extent the family should be responsible for their care. The purpose of this paper, which represents part of the effort to respond to and address the needs of an aged society, is to examine the current trends in mutual support and assistance between parents and their adult children. Special focus has been given

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* National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.
to care and assistance provided by adult children to their parents. The study uses recent research data and compares it with trends in other countries. A comparison with other countries will also be made based on recent surveys, notably, “The International Survey on Living and Consciousness of Senior Citizens (1st to 4th)” by the Management and Coordination Agency, and the second “National Survey on Family in Japan (NSFJ)” by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

2. International Comparison on the Living Arrangements of Aged People

The Japanese family system emphasizing the stem family will be reviewed here in comparison with other countries, referring to the result of the aforementioned international comparative surveys (1st to 4th).

The survey was conducted four times in the past targeting about 1,000 people aged 60 and over. The family types showed that single-person households and couple-only households increased in Japan, while three-generation households fell. Distinctive differences between countries can be found in the number of three-generation households. As is widely known, Korea and Japan had similar rates, and European countries resembled the USA, except for Italy which showed a little different tendency. The backgrounds for the family system itself are different. In Japan and Korea, we have a common family-orientation based on traditional Confucian ethics from China, and although changes are taking place, they are not yet so overwhelming as to replace the traditional system with new systems.

According to the survey, the greater majority of co-residence families were living with a married child and his/her family in both Japan and Korea. A notable difference between the two countries was found in the ratios of those who were living with married daughters’ families. In Korea, the Confucian influence on family preferring sons appeared to be more strongly reflected (Tables 1 and 2).

Opportunities to interact with children and grandchildren showed declines according to the surveys conducted in Japan over the years, as the rates of the elderly who preferred “living always with grandchildren and children” continuously decreased. In comparison with other countries, Japan and Korea stood out with high numbers of people placing importance on parent-child relations, or, furthermore on three-generation relations. It is difficult to draw a conclusion only from the responses to this question, but it may be said that the social structure of each country is reflected whether vertical relations among members of different generations are valued or horizontal relations between husband and wife are accorded a higher value. In Europe, Italy shows a different tendency (Table 3).
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</tbody>
</table>

Whom do they count on for support in their daily life? (Table 4) Answers to this question were analyzed from three angles, namely “to receive care when sick,” “to talk with them when they are in trouble,” and “to ask for economic assistance.” Both in Japan and Korea, the top three in the respective categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person expected care to provide</th>
<th>Japan 1990</th>
<th>USA 1990</th>
<th>Korea 1990</th>
<th>Thailand 1990</th>
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<td>45.8</td>
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<th>USA 1990</th>
<th>Korea 1990</th>
<th>Thailand 1990</th>
<th>Germany 1990</th>
<th>UK 1990</th>
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<td>15.9</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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were “spouse,” “children with whom they live together” and “children from whom they live apart.” It is noted that while the Japanese elderly choose to depend on the children living under the same roof, the Korean elderly preferred to turn to children living apart from them for help. This result is in accordance with other studies on families in Korea. The study by Prof. Ik Ki Kim, for example, explains that the contemporary lifestyle of an extended family has only limited function in providing nursing care for sick parents.

In the USA, few elderly couples live with their adult children. Naturally, they have counted on “relatives and kin other than their own children,” and “close friends,” and the rates of dependence on these people are much higher than in Korea and Japan. There are great differences between Western countries and East Asian countries in the type of human relationships that the elderly consider important, and the sphere of their daily activities. The survey questioned the elderly people’s consciousness about the family system in designated countries, and differences in behavior patterns can be inferred from the results.

3. Determinants of Parents-Adult Child Co-residence

3.1. Trends of the Living Arrangements of the Elderly

The composition of a family and the size of a household of elderly people vary in generations and depending on the culture of the society in which they live. This is closely connected with the question of socialization of livelihood support and care for the elderly. In Japan, the number of single-person households and couple-only households among the elderly has increased remarkably, while three-generation households have decreased and small-size families are on the rise (Figure 1). In the 21st century, Japan will be a society of super-aged population. According to the household projection we made, the number of households consisting of an elderly couple or a single elderly person is predicted to increase. The change in the structure of elderly households will progress further. Specifically, the results of the recent “National Survey on Family in Japan” reveal that people aged above 60 today belong to larger families with more than four members. The number is greater among older people. Among people aged 70 and above, about 40 percent live in households with more than five members, and more than half of people aged 75 and above belong to households consisting of four and more members. Nearly 70 percent of over 60 year olds belong to households with three or more members (Figure 2). Although the ratio of aged people living with their children has been declining in recent years, the lifestyles of elderly people in Japan are quite different from those of the elderly
in Europe and America. This implies that the family is playing an important role in providing support and care to the elderly in Japan.

Figure 1 Trends of the living arrangements of the aged population in Japan (65 years old and over)


Figure 2 Elderly population by household type

### 3.2. Awareness of Caring for Elderly Parents

The National Survey on Family among married women contained the question, “Do you think it is better for aged parents to live with their son and his wife?” Those who replied negatively to this increased by ten points from the previous survey, but the number of those in favor or against this practice were nearly equal when including those who responded as being somewhat in favor of the practice (Figure 3). Three quarters of the respondents were affirmative on the notion that “family should give care to aged parents”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife's age</th>
<th>Complete approval</th>
<th>Basic approval</th>
<th>Basic opposition</th>
<th>Complete opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>47.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 29</td>
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<td>42.0</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>34.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–69</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(1) —It is better that aged parents live together with their son and his wife—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife's age</th>
<th>Complete approval</th>
<th>Basic approval</th>
<th>Basic opposition</th>
<th>Complete opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>59.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 29</td>
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<td>62.7</td>
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<td>30–39</td>
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<td>20.5</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2) —Families have to care of aged parents—


Figure 3 Opinion on family support as seen by wives
Traditionally, the need to provide support and care for elderly parents has been met exclusively by kin. But in recent years, broader-based care service systems involving kin, care providers in the private sector and public sector services have been established. However, only comparatively well-off people can afford private sector services. The rapidly increasing aged population puts pressure on the public pension and insurance systems. Therefore, it is most likely that families will continue to perform important roles in providing care for the elderly population.

In family sociology, the relationship of the elderly with their families has been studied from the viewpoint of whether they live together with their children or live separately. There is a counter-move to this that the concept should be reviewed. With the traditional concept that “the elderly should live with their family,” it is difficult to understand the emerging diversity in the ways that elderly people live. Researchers supporting the move insist on the pressing need to change the image of elderly people. Certainly, the generations set to begin their senior citizenship at present, and those who will become senior citizens in the first quarter of the 21st century have different backgrounds in their younger days in education, the sphere of their activities and variety in experience. The numbers living alone, and living as a couple, are also predicted to increase. Therefore, it is a matter of course that the situations of individual elderly people be taken into perspective. But, in Japanese society, the physical space and substance of care between the generations has traditionally been more intimate than in many other western societies. In other words, care for parents has, in most case, meant physical care by co-residence. In this context, next, the paper attempts to analyze the determinants of living arrangements.

3.3. Children Taking Care of Parents and Parents-in-law (Support from Children to Parents)

The overwhelming majority of children living with their parents help their parents with household chores, such as shopping, cooking and washing (Table 5). Comparing wives who live with their husband’s parents with those who live with their own parents, the wives in the latter group help with the household work a little more. As expected, more wives talk about their troubles to their own parents than to their husband’s parents. When parents are sick, the ratio of wives who extend their care to parents is a little higher in the group of wives living together with their own parents than wives living together with their husband’s parents, including providing economic support for daily life and for entering hospitals or care institutions. Wives living apart either from their own or their husband’s parents have more frequent communication with their own parents in all aspects than with the husband’s side. Among others, a higher ratio of wives consult with
Table 5: Children taking care of parents and parents-in-law (support from children to parents)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shopping for meals and washing</th>
<th>Give care when sick</th>
<th>Listen to worries and troubles</th>
<th>Pay hospital/facility expenses</th>
<th>Support livelihood expenses</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Wife</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 and over</td>
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<td>67.5%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
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<td>230</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

their own parents when they have trouble. Logically speaking, children living away from their parents can extend economic support to their aged parents equally as children living with their parents. In actual fact, they give less economic support. It is easily understood that children living with their parents are intensively bearing the burden of physical, economic and mental support to them. When living separately, frequency of contact with the father is limited in all aspects, and a high number of children give no support to their fathers.

### 3.4. Determinants of Parent-Adult Child Co-residence

Given such a need, in Japan, living together or apart is a criterion in recognizing a group of people as a family or not. Using the second National Survey on Family in Japan, I would like to analyze what factors make adult-children and their parents decide to live together to obtain hints for future forms of living with elderly parents. Based on the data of wives’ responses, the subjects of both husband’s and wife’s parents are analyzed, and factors for married adult children to decide to live with parents are examined. In other words, a dual-value variable, “wives (married women) live with either of their parents or not” is used as a dependent variable for the analysis (Variables containing any deficiency are excluded). As a factor leading to the decision to live together involves or possibly involves multiple variables, the logistic regression analysis method was used (The list of variables input is shown in Table 6).

First, the analysis on the backgrounds of respective husband’s and wife’s parents was made from the husband’s parents position. Significant results were obtained from the area of living, and the type of areas. Particularly, the probability of fathers living with their children was lower in DID areas (densely populated areas) than in NON-DID areas (not densely populated areas) while in extended family areas and other areas, the probability was higher. In all areas, it was found that co-residence was supported in the areas where the stem family is considered to hold a dominant position.

When observing the data from the variable of the socio-economic position of the couple, the probability of co-residence is higher when husbands are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing, and lower in households with other kinds of occupations. By wife’s employment status, the probability of co-residence was higher in households where wives are working on a full-time basis than in households maintained by non-working housewives. By wife’s age, the probability rose as wives became older.

When the variables of the siblings of the couples were inputted, the probability of co-residence with parents was by far highest with the first son, and it turns lower in all the rest. In comparison, on the wife’s side, women (including
### Table 6  Logistic regression analysis on co-residence or separate habitation with husband’s or wife’s parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Husband’s father</th>
<th>(2) Husband’s mother</th>
<th>(3) Wife’s father</th>
<th>(4) Wife’s mother</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( b ) exp.(( b ))</td>
<td>( b ) exp.(( b ))</td>
<td>( b ) exp.(( b ))</td>
<td>( b ) exp.(( b ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Husband’s academic background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/lower secondary school</td>
<td>( 0.019 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.019 )</td>
<td>( -0.057 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.944 ) n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special school, technical college, 2-year college</td>
<td>( 0.213 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.237 )</td>
<td>( -0.152 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.859 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife’s academic background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/lower secondary school</td>
<td>( -0.142 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.867 )</td>
<td>( 0.158 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.172 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special school, technical college, 2-year college</td>
<td>( -0.301 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.738 )</td>
<td>( 0.073 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.076 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Husband’s employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed, agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>( -1.366 ) *</td>
<td>( 0.255 )</td>
<td>( -0.812 ) *</td>
<td>( 0.444 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed, other than</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the above</td>
<td>( -1.726 ) **</td>
<td>( 0.176 )</td>
<td>( -0.975 ) *</td>
<td>( 0.577 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td>( -1.808 ) **</td>
<td>( 0.164 )</td>
<td>( -0.961 ) *</td>
<td>( 0.582 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue collar</td>
<td>( -0.955 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.385 )</td>
<td>( -0.571 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.505 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife’s working status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed, family business</td>
<td>( -0.099 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.906 )</td>
<td>( 0.190 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.209 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time, temporary work</td>
<td>( -0.353 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.703 )</td>
<td>( -0.300 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.741 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time work</td>
<td>( 0.595 ) **</td>
<td>( 1.814 )</td>
<td>( 0.386 ) *</td>
<td>( 1.471 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife’s age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>( 0.715 ) *</td>
<td>( 2.044 )</td>
<td>( 0.551 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.735 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>( 1.194 ) **</td>
<td>( 3.300 )</td>
<td>( 1.054 ) *</td>
<td>( 2.809 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and over</td>
<td>( 0.972 ) *</td>
<td>( 2.645 )</td>
<td>( 0.605 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.827 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Husband’s siblings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One child</td>
<td>( 0.113 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.120 )</td>
<td>( 0.131 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.140 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One son and daughters</td>
<td>( 0.393 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.481 )</td>
<td>( 0.166 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.181 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First son on other composition</td>
<td>( -1.860 ) **</td>
<td>( 0.156 )</td>
<td>( -1.780 ) *</td>
<td>( 0.169 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of sons of other composition</td>
<td>( -0.099 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 0.906 )</td>
<td>( 0.190 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.209 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife’s siblings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One child</td>
<td>( 0.493 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.637 )</td>
<td>( 0.140 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.150 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First daughter of daughters-only</td>
<td>( 0.679 ) +</td>
<td>( 1.972 )</td>
<td>( 0.565 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.759 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First daughter but not first child</td>
<td>( 0.808 ) *</td>
<td>( 2.244 )</td>
<td>( 0.655 ) n.s.</td>
<td>( 1.925 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Separate habitation=0, Co-residence=1, including different houses within the same premises)
Table 6 Logistic regression analysis on co-residence or separate habitation with Husband’s or Wife’s Parents (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's employment 1</th>
<th>(1) Husband's father</th>
<th>(2) Husband's mother</th>
<th>(3) Wife's father</th>
<th>(4) Wife's mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>exp(b)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>exp(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed, other than the above</td>
<td>-0.041 n.s.</td>
<td>0.960</td>
<td>-0.021 n.s.</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td>-0.215 n.s.</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>-0.195 n.s.</td>
<td>0.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue collar</td>
<td>-0.193 n.s.</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>-0.114 n.s.</td>
<td>0.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-0.087 n.s.</td>
<td>0.917</td>
<td>0.194 n.s.</td>
<td>1.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's age 2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 64</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–69</td>
<td>0.031 n.s.</td>
<td>1.032</td>
<td>0.534 n.s.</td>
<td>1.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70–74</td>
<td>-0.020 n.s.</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>0.554 n.s.</td>
<td>1.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>-0.023 n.s.</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>0.725 n.s.</td>
<td>2.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care required or not 3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care not required</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care required</td>
<td>0.200 n.s.</td>
<td>1.221</td>
<td>-0.197 n.s.</td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's marital status</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.758</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 million yen</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5–8 million yen</td>
<td>-0.786</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>0.456</td>
<td>-0.086 n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 million yen or over</td>
<td>-1.292</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>-0.397 n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leased house</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned house</td>
<td>3.259</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>26.018</td>
<td>1.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of residence</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON–DID, Semi DID</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DID</td>
<td>-0.805</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>-0.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area by family type 4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family area</td>
<td>1.205</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>5.338</td>
<td>1.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family area</td>
<td>0.740</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2.096</td>
<td>0.138 n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant member</td>
<td>-2.632</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>-3.567</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–2 Log Likelihood</td>
<td>1107.399</td>
<td>1205.444</td>
<td>471.063</td>
<td>856.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Chi-square</td>
<td>638.228</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>486.727</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1: (1) and (2) show husband’s father’s occupation and (3) and (4) show wife’s father’s occupation.
2: Age of parents to whom a dependent variable is applicable.
3: Requirement for care to parents to whom a dependent variable is applicable.
4: Area by family type: Nuclear family area (Hokkaido, Southern Kanto, Keihanshin, Southern Kyushu); extended family area (Tohoku and Hokuriku); areas of other family types (others).
**: p<.01  *: p<.05  +: p<.10  n.s.: p≥.10
the first daughter of mixed siblings) showed stronger support to co-residence, except for the eldest of girls-only siblings. The probability of co-residence with a husband’s parents was found to be higher in the case of couples consisting of the first son and a second or other daughter of girls-only siblings, or combinations of the first son and a daughter of a mixed-sibling family. Both data eloquently reflect the co-residence under the stem family system.

When variables of the parents’ sides were inputted, only the age of the husband’s mother showed a higher probability of living together as her age advances. Other variables did not bring any significant result.

Finally, household variables were inputted. Co-residence probability was distinctively higher among those who lived in their own houses than those who lived in rented houses. Seen from the annual income of wife’s parents, the result showed that the higher the income, the lower the co-residence probability. There are precedent studies indicating the fact that co-residence probability is lowered as the standards of expenditure of parents’ households rise. Seen from the child’s side in the survey used here, co-residence probability was higher as household income decreased. It is possible to determine that co-residence may occur as a result of economic needs of either parent’s or child’s side.

Next, co-residence with the wife’s parents is examined. Only noteworthy facts are explained here, because other factors were found to be similar to the data of the husband’s side. In the case of co-residence with the wife’s parents, the variables of the husband’s occupation did not affect the result. The sibling compositions of both sides were quite different from the cases of co-residence with the husband’s parents. Among those who lived with their wife’s parents, husbands who were born as second or other sons were significantly high. The wives who lived with their own parents were mostly the eldest of all-daughter families, and co-residence probability of women born as second or other daughters was much lower. This also suggests a continuance of the traditional stem family system.

From the findings of the survey, the highest ratio of women who start living with the husband’s parents directly before or after their wedding, followed by the period of child bearing and rearing. The overwhelming majority of co-residence occurs within ten years of marriage, and the decade after marriage is the period in which couples decide whether to live with either of their parents or not. The inclination for living apart is stronger among younger generations, yet they prefer living within a short distance from their parents (Table 7).

Whether this tendency of preferring to “live apart from parents but living close by” continues until parents’ deaths, or they choose to live together with the remaining parent after the other is gone, should be watched in relation to the progress of the trend of under-replacement fertility.

An additional question was posed in the same survey asking whether
respondents would agree on the use of different family names by husband and wife. More negative answers were given by respondents living with the husband’s parents. In contrast, people living with the wife’s parents gave more affirmative answers. Sibling compositions were also reflected in the answers. Higher than average votes were given by women from families with “only one girl sibling” and “girls-only siblings.” Aside from the intention of the survey organizer asking this question, the consciousness to maintain the stem family seems to be expressed. The vital statistics have determined what surname is used when married. Since around 1990, husbands who have taken the wife’s family name have been on the rise. More in-depth examinations must be made on this, but what can be inferred at this moment is that the adherence to the family name among men is not as strong as before, but, on the other hand, there still remains a strong attachment to keep a “family name” by families that have no son to inherit that name, a factor which should not be ignored (Figure 4).

Table 7  Time when women begin to live with parents (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before marriage</th>
<th>At marriage</th>
<th>2–9 years</th>
<th>10 or more years after marriage</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s parents</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>(802)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s parents</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>(261)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4  Surname used at the time of marriage

4. The Future of Living Arrangements of the Elderly

As mentioned before, the need for support and care for the elderly traditionally has been met entirely by family and relatives, but comprehensive and complex service channels have been made available in recent years involving family, the care service market and public services. The service market is used by comparatively well-off elderly people, and the public pension scheme and health/medical insurance schemes are suffering from the burden of growing expenditure. Under such circumstances, family and relatives will be expected to play an important role continuously in providing care for the elderly.

However, the scale of the network of family and relatives is predicted to shrink rapidly in the near future. People aged 80 and over now reared their children before the 1950s when fertility rates were still high, hence, they appear to have a large network. When the generations who had their children after the 1950s grow old, the scale of the network will begin to decrease. Furthermore, when generations who reared their children after the late 1970s, when fertility resumed a declining trend, reach senior citizen age, their family support network will be further reduced. Since unmarried people have increased in parallel to the further reduction of birth rates, the ratio of elderly people without children shows a sharp rise over a few decades. This tendency may be set off, to some extent, as a result of increasing cases of divorce and remarriage. A child may become associated with more than two real parent’s by his/her parent’s remarriage. Although bonding may be weaker with foster children, it may mean the expansion of the family network from the elderly. Urgent study will be necessary to examine how much the recent divorce and remarriage trends serve to control the reduction of the family network caused by lowering fertility.

In addition to the family network, the spatial distribution of family members is an important factor to meet the needs for care for the elderly. Even if children do not live with their parents, if they live within easy reach, the potential for extending care to their parents in case of physical needs is greater. The downsizing of the family network may suggest a lower probability for having family members within easy reach. However, the typical pattern of living of parents and children during the rapid economic growth period manifested by “children migrating to large cities leaving parents behind in villages” is now disappearing as those who came to cities are now aging in them. A typical living pattern may become that “both aging parents and their children live in cities,” then the distances between family members and relatives may become closer in the future. Another notable trend occurring now is the migration of aged parents to live with or nearby their family members.

The scale and spatial distribution of family networks are determined by many
Parent-Adult Child Relationships in Japan
demographic factors including birth, death, first marriage, divorce, remarriage and migration, which require comprehensive demographic analysis. As seen in the comparison with the USA, the family pattern in Japan is based on the stem family either with the husband's or wife's side. This will continue to be maintained in Japanese society. The degree of adherence to the pattern may be affected by future vital statistics. The survey used here revealed that the probability of co-residence with the husband's parents is higher with couples comprising the first son and the second or other daughter, or those comprising the first son and a daughter of a mixed sibling family, and that with the wife's parents, in turn, is higher with the combination of a daughter of a daughters-only family and the second or other son. The progress of further lower fertility may serve to suppress the traditional co-residence practice, or may lead to the emergence of a completely new yardstick that could overthrow the basis of the family system. Even if people maintain a latent inclination toward living together with their parents as moral norms, they may have to change the practice due to human resources (demographic factors). Continued observation is required in this regard.

Finally, the socialization of care provision promoted with the introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance System in April 2000. If co-residence with parents is determined by economic factors as well as normative factors, and co-residence is indispensable in providing care to old parents, the issue must be handled very carefully paying special attention to the status of traditional family care provision.

References


Lichter, D. T., Fuguitt, G. V., Heaton, T. B., and Clifford, W. B., 1981. “Components of change in


