

# Education, Regular Employment, and Partnership Formation in Japan

Noriko O. TSUYA

This study examines the effects of education and regular employment on partnership formation in Japan, using panel data from the 2004 National Survey on Marriage and the Family and its follow-up in 2007. Focusing men and women aged 18-49 in 2004, the study examines, in multivariate context, the effects of educational attainment and entry into regular employment (full-time employment with job security and fringe benefits) after graduation on: current employment and income, cohabitation, and first marriage timing. The results of the analysis are summarized as follows. First, higher education and obtainment of regular employment as the first job after graduation are positively associated with current regular employment and higher income, and this association is stronger among men than among women. Second, entry into regular employment after graduation significantly increases the likelihood of first marriage among men, while it reduces the likelihood of cohabitation among women. Third, higher education significantly decreases the likelihood of cohabitation of both sexes, and also greatly reduces the likelihood of first marriage among women.

These results imply that, especially among men, employment security and stability during the early adulthood is linked not only to employment stability and financial security later in life course, but also to the higher likelihood of first marriage. The findings also suggest that increasing educational attainment not only contributes to career development and higher earning power of young men and women, but also discourages women's partnership formation. Since the expansion of higher education has been more rapid among young women than among young men, this in turn implies that women's rising educational attainment is one of the major factors of rapid declines in marriage in Japan in recent years.