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**Gender Role Attitudes in Japan: Age, Period, and Cohort
Analysis**

Martin Piotrowski / Akiko Yoshida / Lauren Johnson / Rick Wolford

University of Oklahoma / University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

This study sheds light on the (much debated) mechanism of attitudinal change by separating the effects of age, cohort, and period, and analyzing a case of non-Western society, Japan. Using data from the 2000-2012 Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS) (sample size: 24,331), we test the hypothesis that age, period, and cohort have distinct impacts on individuals' attitudes toward gender roles, disentangling the effects of each. We employ the Age-Period-Cohort (APC) statistical model and analyze women and men separately, controlling for marital status and other relevant variables. Our analysis shows that age, period, and cohort indeed have independent effects. For age, the probability of holding a non-traditional attitude declines as individuals get older, and this is the case for both men and women. Period effects are generally linear and positive: the probability of holding a non-traditional attitude is higher in more recent years (while the results also imply impacts of certain events of particular years). The cohort effect was the most profound and surprising: the probability of holding a non-traditional attitude increases from the oldest (born 1911-1929) to the middle cohorts (born 1950-1959) but then declines from this peak for the youngest cohorts (born 1980-1992). This applies to both men and women, although the rise and fall is more pronounced for men than for women. All the observed differences are statistically significant. This study suggests that attitudinal change is less straightforward than what is predicted by some prominent theories (e.g., the Second Demographic Transition theory) built on observations of Western societies. The implication of our research is that it is important to consider historical context shaping the experiences of birth cohorts (e.g., postwar democratization and progressive social movements experienced or observed in the childhood and early adulthood of the 1950s birth cohort of Japan) in understanding individuals' attitudes toward gender roles.