Older Adults Who Live Apart Together (LAT): A Comparison of Single, Dating, LAT, Cohabitation, Remarriage, and First Marriage

Huijing Wu (huijinw@bgsu.edu)
Bowling Green State University
Department of Sociology

Introduction

- Partnerships have become more diverse among older adults in recent decades.
- Most older singles are categorized as unpartnered but they may go out on dates or be in LAT relationships.
- LAT relationships are acceptable in European countries. Research about LAT relationships in the U.S. is limited.

LAT Relationships

- LAT is characteristically defined as a chosen, committed to each other for the long term and cohabitors.
- LAT relationships are a new family form.
- LAT relationships have unique meanings for older adults.

Current Study

- Compare LAT relationships with single, dating, cohabitation, remarriage, and first marriage.
- Distinguish the differences among daters, LATs and cohabitators.

Method

- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS), 2011
- Analytic sample was 9,665 respondents who were aged 50 and older.
- Analytic strategy:
  - Examine demographic characteristics by relationship type.
  - Examine what factors are related to being a dater, LAT, and cohabitor by using multimonial logistic regression.

Descriptive Results

- Nearly 3% of older adults aged 50 and older are in LAT relationships.
- Among unmarried partnered older adults, they are more often in LAT relationships (39%) than either dating relationships (31%) or cohabitation (30%).

Descriptive and Multivariate Statistics

- LATs more often have experience of widowhood than LATs.
- Older adults who are divorced or widowed tend to be in LAT relationships rather than dating relationships or cohabitation.
- Unmarried partnered older adults who have resident children are less likely to be cohabitors than LATs.

Conclusions

- Future research may examine expectations of cohabitation and marriage among LATs.

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