

Patterns and Covariates of Partnership Formation in Japan

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This study examines the patterns and covariates of partnership formation in Japan, using data from the 2004 National Survey on Marriage and the Family. The results of the analysis are summarized as follows. First, while birth cohort is in general negatively associated with the age-specific probability of first marriage, age is negatively associated with the likelihood of cohabitation and premarital pregnancy, especially among women. To the extent that these age differences capture cohort changes, these results suggest further decreases in first marriage and future increases in cohabitation and premarital pregnancy. Second, education significantly reduces the probabilities of first marriage, cohabitation, and premarital pregnancy, especially among women. Third, cohabitation is strongly and positively associated with the likelihoods of first marriage, premarital pregnancy and, among men, premarital birth. Altogether, these results imply further changes and increasing variability in partnership formation patterns in Japan.