

Comparative Studies of the National Population Projections in Industrialized Countries

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The purpose of this study is to compare the framework, methodology and results of national population projections in industrialized countries. From these results, I would like to make clear the recent trends of projection methodology and to find the features of Japanese population projections.

The frameworks of Japanese population projections, such as projection horizon, cycle and alternative variations, are very typical compared to other industrialized countries. However, reflecting recent demographic trends, features of Japanese national projections have made an impression in terms of levels of assumptions and results of the projections. Because of the world's lowest fertility and mortality assumptions, population decline in Japan will start earlier and faster than in other countries. With respect to population composition, aging will develop rapidly and the age pyramid of population in 2050 will have the narrowest bottom in Japan.

It is found that there are differences in the methodology of fertility projections between Japan and the United Kingdom. Japan regards marriage trends as important with regard to future fertility trends, whereas the United Kingdom almost never refers to them in fertility analysis. Due to differences in levels and trends of fertility, Japan and the United Kingdom selected different projection models.

In future demographic perspectives of Japan, it shows population decline and aging progressing more than any other country in the world. Japan will need to explore new avenues for original countermeasures to tackle the future situation in all social fields.