

Trends of Stem Family Households in Japan

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This paper examined demographic impacts on changes of stem family households in Japan. The proportion of stem family households has been declining due to the increase in one person households and family nuclei. However, the household projection conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in 2008 predicted that while the increase in one person households continues, the proportion of family nuclei within households of two or more members will start declining around 2015. This marks the end of increase in family nuclei that continued for more than 50 years. It was shown that this revolutionary change is caused by such demographic factors as population aging and nuptiality decline.

It was shown that patrilocality is modal pattern in stem family households in Japan, although the asymmetry is weaker than in Confucian societies such as China, Korea and Taiwan. According to the Household Changes Surveys, the ratio of matrilocality to patrilocality increased between 2004 and 2009. It was assumed that smaller sibling size due to fertility decline and male marriage squeeze promote the symmetry in stem family households. However, a decomposition analysis showed that such demographic factors accounted for less than 20% of the change. Most parts of the change should be attributed to the change in parental preference or socio-economic sex differences in the child generation.