

# An Analysis of Marriage Decline and Changes in Marriage Structures in Japan since the 1970s using Multiple Decrement Life Tables on First Marriage

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Since the 1970s, first marriage rates in Japan have declined and fewer marriages are formed compared with several decades ago. So, what kinds of first marriage have been lost during that time and what kinds of marriage have become predominant? We apply a life table analysis by cause of death to marriage formation by the type of first marriage, and demonstrate changes in the composition ratio of each type of marriage over every five years. We produce multiple decrement marriage tables using female first-marriage hazard based on the Japanese Vital Statistics and the Population Census of Japan, and cross tabulations by age at first marriage and the type of that marriage from the Japanese National Fertility Surveys. We observe changes in celibacy rates and composition ratios of first marriage at age 50, and life table first marriage rates by the type of marriage. We found that most marriages lost since the 1970s are those associated with the Japanese post-war family model: (1) marriages through arranged introductions or through the workplace, (2) marriages as the beginning of a reproductive process or co-residence with a partner, (3) marriage with an older husband (age hypergamy), (4) marriages based on traditional gender roles (marriage with a husband working for a midsize or large company and a full-time housewife), and (5) the patrilineal stem family with the eldest son. On the other hand, the hazard of some types of marriage – marriage preceded by cohabitation, marriage with a husband or a wife of a non-regular worker, marriage with a husband or a wife of a professional worker, and marriage of the eldest son co-residing with the wife's parents – has been rising, and, accordingly, the composition ratios have increased as well. We also found that marriage through a network of friends, marriage preceded by pregnancy, marriage to a younger or less educated husband (age and educational hypogamy), and a conjugal family household of the eldest son have increased. However, judging from the fact that type-specific marriage rates for these marriages have not increased, these changes are caused by the increase in the exposure population due to a decline in other conventional marriages.