

An Analysis of Childlessness in Japan

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The purpose of this research is to clarify the long-term trend in childlessness in Japan and its characteristics. In this paper, I analyze childlessness in women only due to data constraints. The proportion of childless women in Japan recorded the lowest value among women born in the 1940s, after having fluctuate around 10% for women born before the Second World War. As for women who were born in the 1960s, the childless rate reached 20%. Regarding childless women, when classified into involuntarily childless and voluntarily childless groups, the proportion of voluntarily never-married women showed the greatest increase in the younger generation. In addition, I analyzed the characteristics of never-married and childless-oriented women aged 25 to 39 using a multivariate analysis. The results suggested that there were many women who gave up on having children due to their low income and the absence of opposite-sex partners. On the other hand, in the analysis of married women between 30 and 49 years old, childlessness and age at first marriage were strongly related. Furthermore, for childless-oriented women, the experience of marriage dissolution and little experience of contact with children were related to selecting the childless-oriented type.

【Key words】 Japanese National Fertility Survey, Childless women, Involuntary childlessness, Voluntary childlessness, Japan