

Multistate Life Tables on Marital Status: A Period and Cohort Analysis of the Japanese Life Course from 1980 to 2021 and Birth Cohorts from 1965 to 1985

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This study applied multistate life table models to analyze marriage, divorce, remarriage, spousal status, and death among men and women in contemporary Japan. The multistate life table of nuptiality has a methodological advantage as it includes recurrent and reversible demographic events such as marriage and divorce. Multistate life tables on marital status for each year from 1980 to 2021 show that the average periods of never-married and divorced periods significantly increased, whereas the average marriage and widowhood periods showed little change. These changes were decomposed into variations in mortality and transition rates, reflecting changes in marriage and divorce rates between 1980 and 2019. The study found that changes in transition rates were large for both the extension of the average never-married period and the change in the average marriage period for both men and women. Regarding changes in the average widowhood period, the effect of transition rate changes was significant for men, while the effect of mortality rate changes was significant for women. Furthermore, for the multiphase life table by cohort, our study confirmed that the average period of never-married increased, and the average period of being married decreased. Additionally, upon decomposing the factors for individuals born in 1965 and 1985, it was found that changes in marriage and divorce by cohort were primarily due to changes in transition rates.

Keywords: marriage, multistate life tables, life course, decomposition

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