

## Who Marries Whom in Japan?

### Impacts of Asymmetric Preferences by Gender on Assortative Mating

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#### 1. Previous Studies and Research Questions

Previous studies on marriage timing for women in Japan argue that a declining marital rate has been caused by highly educated women's retreat from marriage, while recent studies (Fukuda 2009) suggest that the effect of women's higher education on marriage timing varies with their age. Given the women's rigorous preference towards male candidates of the same or higher education, it is reasonable to assume that the number and association of educational homogamy among couples, particularly for those who are highly qualified, will increase, while theories on trends in assortative mating with a different focus (Sweeney 2002; Esping-Andersen 2009) also predict this trends. However, some studies suggest highly educated women in recent cohorts choose hypogamy: marrying a partner whose educational qualification is lower than themselves. Therefore, it is needed to examine *who marries whom* in terms of their educational qualifications, in addition to examining those highly educated women's propensity to marry. This study examines whether these trends are observed in Japan.

#### 2. Data and Methods

In order to test our hypotheses on assortative mating, we use the Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey 2015. Since our interest is to examine not only women's propensity to marry by education but the outcome of mate selection, we use two-step analysis (Yamaguchi 1991: 169-173). First, a survival analysis is used to examine the transition from being single to marriage. Second, given the occurrence of marriage, a logistic regression is used to capture the conditional probability of experiencing (1) homogamy, (2) hypergamy, or (3) hypogamy versus the other two types of assortative mating. Risk set of this study starts from age 16 to 49 and focuses on female first marriage.

#### 3. Results

Preliminary results suggest three things. First, highly educated women are more advantageous than other groups in terms of their marital propensity at age 30 and older. Second, a declining trend in educational homogamy is not observed, in contrast to the past studies using log-linear models. Third, junior college graduates in recent cohorts have more propensity of marrying down, rather than marrying up. The last result is a new finding that suggests the social position of female junior college graduates has been less privileged and less attractive for women themselves and their male candidates possibly through a decreasing demand for those female graduates in labor market and women's better access to university.

#### References

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