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Modernization and Divorce in Japan

Motonobu Mukai

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MODERNIZATION AND DIVORCE IN JAPAN

By

Motonobu Mukai

**Thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University**

**In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
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Approved by

**Dr. Kenneth P. Ambrose, Department Chairperson
Dr. Richard A. Garnett, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Frederick P. Roth**

Marshall University

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ABSTRACT

“MODERNIZATION AND DIVORCE IN JAPAN”

By Motonobu Mukai

Divorce rates in Japan have increased since the mid-1960s, and even more rapidly since the 1990s. Divorce rates decreased throughout the period of industrialization, although modernization theory has argued that economic development brings pervasive cultural changes (including higher divorce rates). However, values regarding family are also influenced by the persistence of traditional values. Before WWII in Japan, a decreasing divorce rate was influenced by political ideology, which deliberately intended to change traditional ways of marriage and divorce. After WWII, however, this ideology diminished, and material affluence has led to an individualistic view that in turn has led to higher divorce rates since the 1960s. Moreover, the Japanese cultural beliefs have been transformed from a group-orientation to a more individualistic orientation, triggered by the long stagnation of the 1990s. Modernization has brought autonomy to the Japanese. Today divorce is a reflection of autonomous and rational decision to pursue individual happiness.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In modern society, especially in advanced nations, people have more opportunities than ever before and, in everyday life, make their big or small choices in both conscious and unconscious ways. Historically, industrialization has improved peoples' lives, at least in material terms, and its influence has spread all over the world. Today people can find products from advanced nations in rural developing nations and also can use the Internet globally. Economic power influences people in both material and cognitive ways. At the same time, however, people's lives are shaped by their cultural norms and values. Some sociologists think it is not easy for people to drastically alter their norms and values in the face of industrialization. It takes a while for such a transformation to occur as the Demographic Transition Theory makes clear. Economic power, one of the most influential forces in society, does not drastically change cultural norms and values as much as it affects material ways of life.

Cultural norms and values include attitudes toward marriage and divorce. These cultural norms and values are a reflection of peoples' attitude toward marriage and divorce in society. Human beings are social animals and form their own families. Males and females get married when they decide to do so, usually following their cultural norms and values when they get married. For example, those younger than 10 years old sometimes married in Medieval Japan for parents' political reasons. It is the same with divorce. People who seek a divorce follow their cultural norms and values. Cultural norms and values also change with political or economic influences over time.

Divorce seems to be a personal and private matter like suicide. However, its consequences influence not only individuals and their children, if they have any. Then it is much better to consider divorce as a social phenomenon. As a social matter, divorce includes various components. Divorce, like marriage, is an important vital statistic. Marriage and divorce, as well as birth and death, are the bases of family formation. Marriage creates a new family and divorce involves the marital dissolution of couples and the disruption of existing families. In modern societies, marriage and divorce are mostly registered and administered by government. In addition, issues related to custodial parenting and social welfare are serious consequences of divorce. Divorce influences demographics and family formation in many ways.

The divorce rates in Japan have been increasing recently and the surge in these rates has been remarkable during the past decade. The divorce rate increased from 1.28 per 1,000 population in 1990 to 2.30 in 2002 (see Figure 1.1). Compared with other advanced nations, especially with the United States, divorce rates in Japan were relatively low after World War II. More recently, however, divorce rates in Japan have become as high as divorce rates in other advanced nations (see Figure 1.2). Among advanced countries, historically Protestant countries tend to have higher divorce rates than others. Historically, however, divorce rates in Japan were not as low as after WWII. In fact, the divorce rates during the Meiji Period (1868-1912) were higher than those at present. According to Goode (1993), Japan was one of the stable high-divorce-rate societies, but industrialization contributed to a decrease in the divorce rates in Japan during the Meiji Period.

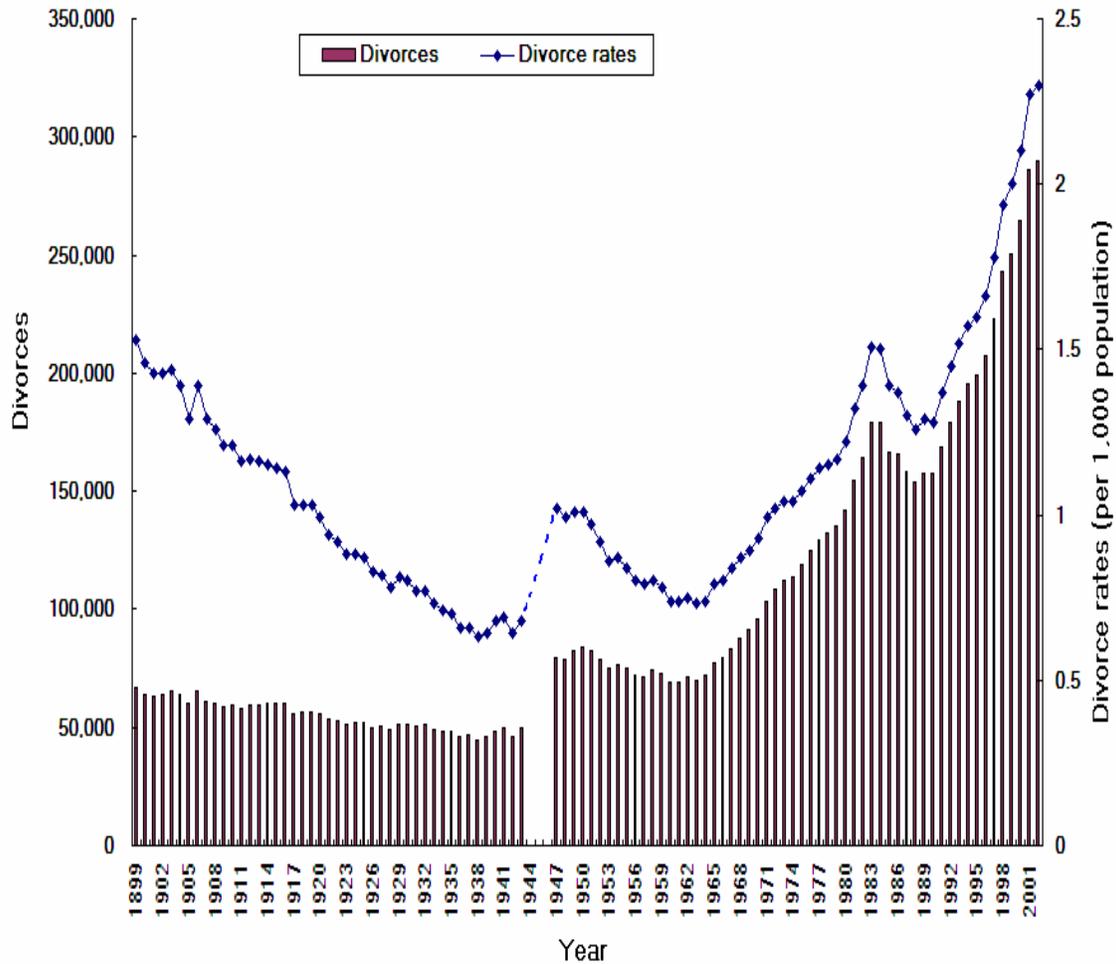


Figure 1.1 Trends in divorces and divorce rates (per 1,000 population): 1899-2002. The data are from Nihon Teikoku Tokei Nenkan [The 38th Statistics Yearbook of Imperial Japan and Vital Statistics of Imperial Japan] by the Cabinet Statistics Bureau for materials of 1943 and before, and Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for materials covering 1947 and later. It should be noted that the data from 1944 to 1946 are omitted due to incompleteness according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

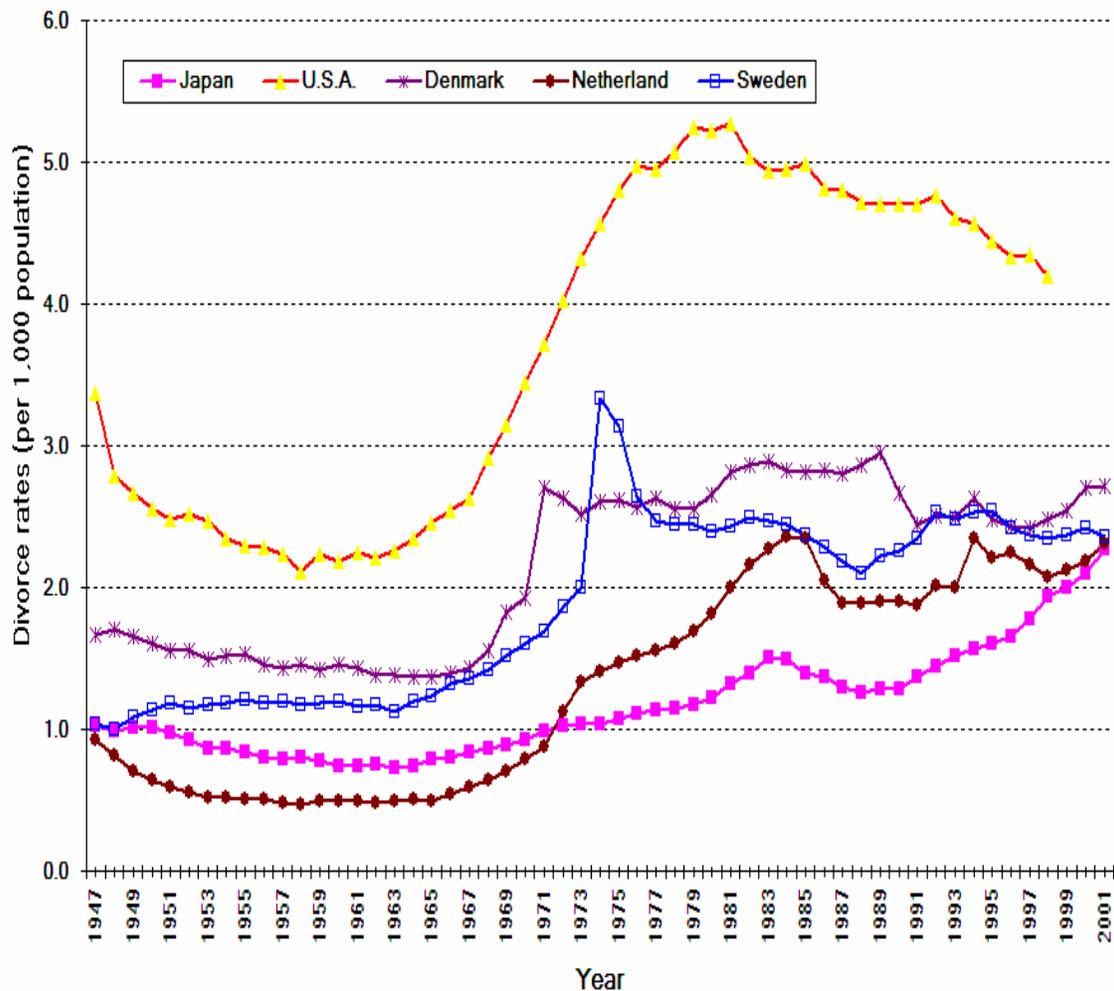


Figure 1.2 Trends in divorce rates per 1,000 population in advanced nations: 1947-2001. The data are from United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1958, 1968, 1976, 1990, 1991-1997, and 2001.

Japan's divorce rates decreased throughout the period of industrialization but reversed this trend beginning in the mid-1960s (see Figure 1.1). Furthermore, Japan was the first non-Western nation to achieve industrialization since the 1850s and today it is one of the most advanced nations in the world. In sociologists' views, industrialization, through material affluence, brings more choices than ever before. As a result, it enables people to be more individualistic as Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies asserted. In

Western nations, industrialization brought cultural changes and divorce rates increased as a result of those changes. However, Japan's case is considered to have led to a decrease in divorce rates throughout most of industrial period. From the viewpoint of modernization and cultural changes, it is important to consider the divorce in Japan, by investigating likely causes of the divorce rate in Japan. It also suggests a certain direction when we consider present modern societies.

The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to investigate the possible causes of increasing divorce rates in recent Japan. Moreover, it will seek to explain the causes of decreasing divorce rates in the past. Such decreases are an important key to understanding the reasons for recent increases in divorce rates.

The thesis is based on modernization theory. Many have commented on the relationship between modernization and cultural values. Max Weber studied the influence of religion and economics in the growth of rational capitalism. Emile Durkheim described mechanical and organic solidarity and Ferdinand Tönnies described the differences between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Karl Marx considered how industrialization instigated changes in traditional values. In general, modernization theory has argued that economic development brings pervasive cultural changes, but every system sustains some cultural values which are an autonomous influence on society even if industrialization would be achieved. Every system's values are greatly influenced by economic development and it converges in a certain direction. It does not, however, necessarily produce the same result, because societies sustain some traditional values and norms. As a result, each system has different processes or consequences that result from

modernization. Different processes or consequences are influenced by the persistence of traditional values.

Definition of Divorce in Japan

A divorce system is different from one country to another, so it is difficult to compare divorce rates by each country. Some countries necessitate a court judgment to get a divorce. In Japan, divorce by mutual agreement is very common and it has been traditionally admitted. A court judgment has not been needed necessarily. Both spouses who agree with divorce have only to submit a one page divorce form to a local government office where the couple lives. The paper needs two adults' signatures, but they do not have to take any responsibility for a couple's divorce. The process of divorce is quite simple. Most divorces in Japan are by mutual agreement. However, when both spouses do not agree in a divorce, in such cases as child custody disputes, there are other types of divorce.

In Japan, there are four legal types of divorce: divorce by mutual agreement ("kyogi rikon"), divorce by conciliation ("chotei rikon"), divorce by adjustment ("shinpan rikon"), and judicial divorce ("saiban rikon"). Conciliation happens when both spouses intend to get a divorce but do not reach an agreement. They can have talks at domestic relations courts. When the conciliation is not concluded, the courts can replace it with judgment. It is called divorce by judgment. On the other hand, judicial divorce is the one in accordance with the section 770 of the Civil Code of Japan. It is specified as follows: (1) when either spouse is unfaithful to the other, (2) when either spouse is abandoned maliciously by the other, (3) when the whereabouts of either spouse has been unknown for more than three years, (4) when either spouse is seriously mentally ill and

has little chance of recovery, and (5) when either spouse has other serious reasons that would make it difficult to continue either his or her marriage life. As seen in Appendix A, most divorces have been historically based on mutual agreement. There were 289,836 divorces in 2002, and 91.2 percent were by mutual agreement between both spouses.

A Family Registration System Called “Koseki” in Japan

In Japan, the law requires all households to report vital matters such as birth, marriage, divorce, adoption, death, and disappearance to their local authority, and the information is entered into a detailed family tree that encompasses everyone within their jurisdiction. All Japanese people are registered in a family registration system called “koseki”. The history of the Japanese family registration system is old, dating to the seventh century, but the Meiji government started the modern family registry in 1872, which required all Japanese people to have a family name. Before the Meiji Period, all people did not have a family name.

In 1948, the present family registration system began, which is based on a couple of husband and wife, while the old family registry was based on the “ie” household (a traditional extended family). The head of household in the old registry was literally changed into the first on the list in the new family registry. Although the law on a family registration became effective in 1948, its register was practically changed between 1957 and 1965 because of the postwar confusion. Also, a residence registration system was established in 1952 for the convenience of governmental services, because the family registration system provides only vital registration for governmental control but cannot provide the people with administrative services in a community nor quickly response to various demands among them. In 1967, this residence registry was connected with the

family registration system and today it supplements a family registry. The modern family registration system in Japan has been strictly administered by the government, so data on vital statistics have been reliable. Most data in the thesis are provided by the Japanese government.

CHAPTER II

Analyses of Divorce in Japan and Literature Review

The divorce rate in Japan was 3.38 per 1,000 population in 1883, decreasing thereafter until World War II. In 1938, the divorce rate reached its minimum of 0.63 per 1,000 population. Although the divorce rate slightly increased during and after World War II, it eventually reached its nadir of 0.73 per 1,000 population in 1963. Since 1963, the divorce rate has increased reaching 2.30 per 1,000 population in 2002. There was a slight peak in 1983, but it should be ignored when considering age-standardized divorce rates for the married population (per 1,000 married population). Divorce rates per 1,000 population are useful especially when available data are limited and when comparison between countries is considered. However, these rates are influenced by the difference of age structures of the population in countries. In order to eliminate this and compare divorce rates in populations with different age structures, age-standardized divorce rates for the married population are useful. Divorce rates for the married population are calculated by dividing the number of divorces by married population classified by gender.

Considering age-standardized divorce rates for 1,000 married population, the lowest level after WWII occurred in 1965 with a rate of 2.54 for males and 2.55 for females respectively. The highest level occurred in 2000 with a rate of 15.2 for males and 15.9 for females respectively (see Figure 2.1). These rates show that there was a slightly decreasing rate of divorce until the mid-1960s and then an increasing rate of divorce until the present. For the sake of convenience, I have divided the analysis into two periods:

Period 1 (Chapters III and IV), from the Meiji Period until the middle of the 1960s and Period 2 (Chapters V-VIII), from the middle of the 1960s until the present.

The Meiji Period started in 1868, when the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868), which had suffered from the pressure of foreign nations since 1850s, returned its regime to the Emperor. This is called the Meiji Restoration. A new government, headed by the Emperor, was established in 1868. The Meiji government urged industrialization in order to protect Japan from being colonized by Western nations.

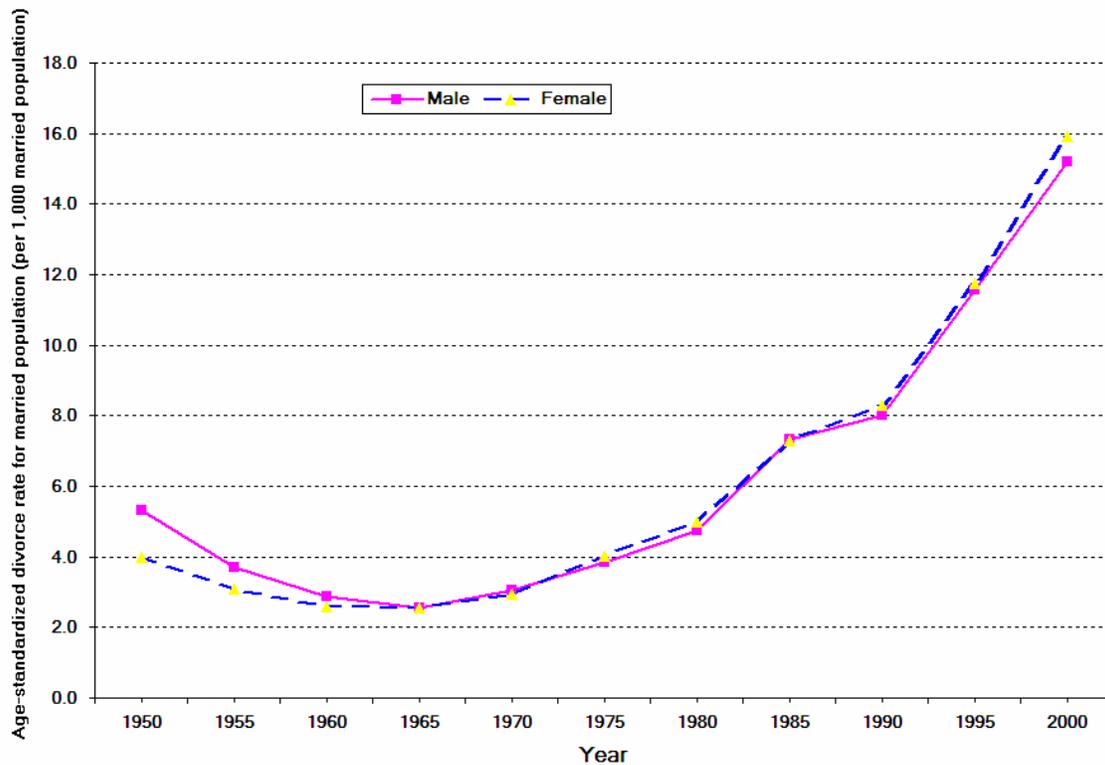


Figure 2.1 Trends in age-standardized divorce rates for married population by gender (per 1,000 married population): 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000. The data for 1950-1995 are from Rikon ni kansuru tokei (Jinko dotai tokushu hokoku) [Vital Statistics Special Report on Divorce] by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (1999): The data for 2000 are from Jinko dotai shokugyo sangyo betsu tokei (Jinko dotai tokushu hokoku) [Vital Statistics Special Report on Industry and Occupation] (2000). Age-standardized divorce rates per married population (per 1,000 married population) are calculated by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare every 5 years.

Sociologists have attempted to explain the decreasing divorce rates in Japan throughout the period of industrialization. Japan was originally a high-divorce-rate society, whose divorce rates were higher than those of the United States during that time, and the divorce rates decreased throughout the period of industrialization. According to Iwasaki (1930), Japan's divorce rate decreased in spite of the Industrial Revolution, an introduction of western individualism, and an increasing number of working women. These three factors contributed to an increasing divorce rate in the United States. Interestingly, though, divorce rates in Japan decreased through industrialization. In 1883, the divorce rate was 3.38 per 1,000 population, and it decreased to 0.68 in 1938. A Civil Code was promulgated in 1890 and came into effect in 1898, and the divorce rate in 1899 was 1.53. The effects of industrialization obviously seemed to have a different effect on the divorce rate in Japan than in Western societies.

Before the Civil Code was implemented in 1898, family laws were governed by local provinces and data on marriage and divorce were kept in a registration called "koseki". The family registry was administered in peoples' birthplace and it was sometimes different from the place where people resided. This is one of reasons people might not register their marriage and divorce in the past. The divorce rate in 1890 was 2.72 per 1,000 population, but the divorce rate in 1899 was 1.53. Since 1899, the figures were taken in places of residence instead of birthplace. This fact largely explains the sudden decline in the number of divorce in 1899. (Iwasaki, 1930)

According to Iwasaki (1930), the decreasing divorce rates in Japan were mainly because of the changing ideas and ideals of the Japanese people, rather than because of the Meiji Civil Code. He insisted that the old idea of divorce by "mutual consent" in

which the wife seldom refused persisted, and therefore the Civil Code did not have a great effect on old ideas of divorce. Rather, attitudes toward divorce among the people, especially women, contributed to a decline in divorce rates throughout the industrial period.

Goode (1993) regarded Japan as one of stable high divorce societies and explained that divorce was institutionalized in society. He insists, however, this “traditional high-divorce family system is not like that of a modern Western society with similar high rates” (p. 218). Also, it was typically a high-remarriage society because the divorce occurred at early age and women were valuable resources for their society. He mentions that “divorce arrangements were institutionalized” (p. 219). The important difference between stable high-divorce-rate societies like Japan and the modern Western high divorce rate societies like the United States is whether or not the divorce arrangements are institutionalized, resulting from whether or not there is a growing population of those divorced but not yet remarried.

Goode also asserted as a reason of decreasing tendency of divorce rates in Japan that formal education and new legal codes imposed the family patterns of the samurai on all Japanese and reject the rural patterns as uneducated and primitive. He claimed that “industrialization contributed to the decades-long drop in the divorce rate”, but that “the foundations of the shift were also deliberate political decisions and legal acts, based on the ideology of the Meiji reformers” (p. 221).

In Japan, divorce rates decreased throughout the period of industrialization. It was different from the Western pattern of modernization. It is a path dependent on cultural change as influenced by modernization. Inglehart and Baker (2000) introduced a core

concept of modernization theory as follows: “Industrialization produces pervasive social and cultural consequences, from rising educational levels to changing gender roles. Industrialization is seen as the central element of a modernization process that affects most other elements of society.” (p. 20) They attempted to figure out the thesis that “economic development has systematic and, to some extent, cultural and political consequences” (p. 20), using data from the World Values Surveys. They concluded as follows: (1) Modernization does not follow a linear path. (2) The secularization thesis is oversimplified. (3) Cultural change seems to be path dependent. (4) It is misleading to view cultural change as “Americanization.” (5) Modernization is probabilistic, not deterministic. Nevertheless, they emphasized that economic development is associated with major changes in prevailing values and benefits.

Their survey measured cross-cultural values as two dimensions between traditional versus secular-rational orientations toward authority; and survival versus self-expression values. Traditional versus secular-rational orientation suggests a difference between preindustrial societies and industrial societies. They characterized all of the preindustrial societies as relatively having low levels of tolerance for abortion, divorce, and homosexuality, a tendency to emphasize male dominance in economic and political life, deference to parental authority, and the importance of family life, and are relatively authoritarian, with a strong emphasis on religion. Advanced industrial societies tend to have the opposite characteristics. On the other hand, “[t]he survival versus self-expression dimension traps a syndrome of trust, tolerance, subjective well-being, political activism, and self-expression that emerges in postindustrial societies with high levels of

security” (p. 25). A central component of this dimension involved the polarization between materialist and postmaterialist values.

According to their global cultural map based on the World Values Surveys in 1995-1998, Japan was located on the cutting edge of secular-rational values but weak on self-expression values, compared to other advanced nations that are historically Protestant. Their survey indicates that today the Japanese totally escape from the traditional values but do not seem to entirely escape from materialistic values and have not found their postmaterialistic values. This recent value location of the Japanese gives a useful guidance for the investigation of divorce through the historical investigation of the Japanese divorce rates.

CHAPTER III

Historical Reasons for Decreasing Divorce Rates before World War II

A Stable High-Divorce Rate Society in Earlier Japan

Before the Meiji Restoration, local custom ruled marriage practice and no state license was required. Therefore, it is impossible to obtain reliable divorce rates for this earlier period in Japan (Goode, 1993). Komuro (2000) also asserts that the modern marriage system in Japan was established during the Meiji Period. There was no modern marriage system before the Meiji Period, and marriages and divorces were not registered by government officials. The Tokugawa shogunate established a parishioner system of Buddhist temples for controlling the people and temples where people were registered and births were certificated. Moreover, it was a common practice for a husband and a wife to retain their family names before 1890. People could get a divorce when a husband wrote a letter of divorce and handed it to his wife. This practice changed when a modern family registration system was established by the Meiji government in 1898.

Furthermore, romantic attachments culminating in marriage were rare. Marriage and love were separate matters. In general, the concept of romantic love is quite a modern concept. Before the Meiji Period, polygamy or a type of marriage in which a husband visits his wife at her house was common in farm villages. On the other hand, a marriage arrangement was common among the samurai warrior class. Male members of the affluent classes often kept mistresses, and in cities many males patronized licensed pleasure quarters. Therefore, romantic liaisons rarely formed the basis for marriage in the past and many males engaged in extramarital affairs outside the family. In pre-industrial

Japan, as in Western nations, rural-agrarian customs predominated and divorce was common. In rural farm village, polygamy and sexual liaisons were the norm and monogamy or a marriage system itself was seldom practiced.

Also, in remote farm villages, class specialization advanced along with the development of a money-based economy at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Rich farmers attempted to avoid the rural customs of marriage since their prosperity would be disrupted by a marital connection with poor family. The idea of chastity for daughters was praised by rich householders because their daughters were regarded as valuable property. Thus, marriage arrangements, at least among propertied classes gradually became more common in farm villages. Moreover, during the Meiji Period, householders attempted to send their daughters to some other villages in order to acquire money. This made the custom of marriage in farm villages difficult. Eventually, rural customs of marriage became declined and the idea of chastity for women was established. In addition to these changes in farm villages, the Civil Code was proclaimed and came into effect in 1898, and with this, rural marriage customs died out.

The Japanese government also made a deliberate effort to change these family patterns, trying to reduce the divorce rates and produce a lower-divorce-rate family system that would be more in harmony with samurai ideals (Goode, 1993). In order to achieve modernization as in Western nations, the government introduced the marriage system in farm villages as in the samurai-class. This was connected with the change in marriage custom in farm villages as explained above. The modern marriage system was established and divorce rates were reduced.

Industrialization during the Meiji Period (1868-1912)

The Meiji government attempted to achieve industrialization immediately after the Restoration. This occurred in several stages: the establishment of weapons factories (1868-1870), the exclusion of foreign capital (1871-1873), aid and preferential treatment for specific private enterprises (1873-1880), and disposal of public enterprises (1880-1885) (Ishii, 1991). These government policies strongly encouraged industrialization in Japan. The Industrial Revolution in Japan was considered to have been achieved between 1900 and 1905. One indication of Japan's economic development is that it went from being a chronic debtor country to becoming a creditor country after World War I.

Thus, Japan's industrialization was urged by the Meiji government because the government needed to avoid being colonized by Western nations. In most Western nations, industrialization was achieved mostly by private companies, not by governments. In Japan, however, it was sponsored by the government and many enterprises were managed for the public welfare rather than individual profit. Corporate management was considered to be service for the state. Due to huge capital demands for industrialization, a stock corporation was developed at a relatively early period of industrialization. It was in this context that the government increased nationalism among the people. The government had a great deal of incentive to urge industrialization.

The Meiji Constitution, modeled upon Prussia's, was promulgated in 1889 and put into effect in 1890. Prussia was a less advanced provincality in Europe at that time and was established as a constitutional monarchy because it was based on nationalist and authoritarian ideas (Marfording, 1997). Through the Constitution, the Meiji government introduced a new way of governing the people, based on an ideological perspective that

conceived of the Japanese people as an extended family headed by the Emperor. By introducing this ideology, the government attempted to enhance nationalism among the people. At the same time, the government also attempted to establish a strong family system. Although an extended family headed by a householder was not a new form of family in Japan, in the Meiji Civil Code of 1898 the government assured a householder of strong powers over the members of the family unit. “Under these provisions the family head could expel members from the family unit if they married without his consent, and the husband managed his wife’s property” (Marfording, 1997; pp. 436-437). These family systems were strengthened by governmental propaganda through the education system. This set of ideology did not lead to individualism through industrialization, while industrialization in Western nations brought cultural changes leading to a heightened sense of individualism.

Japanese leaders were well aware of the threat of industrialization because they went abroad to assimilate the entrepreneurial culture and technology which the Western nations possessed. The Japanese government did not intend to accept the Western ideology of industrialization but wanted only to learn and apply industrial technology. This is called “Wakon-Yosai”, which means Japanese spirit combined with Western learning.

The Traditional Extended Family Called the “Ie” Household in Japan

Japanese society is considered to be “very homogeneous, characterized by a hierarchical social order and a strong group-orientation, in which a high value is placed on harmony, consensus, and loyalty to the group” (Marfording, 1997; p. 433). The Tokugawa shogunate governed in accordance with these values. Also, the traditional extended household, called “ie”, contributed to these values. The Meiji government succeeded in utilizing this concept of family into a new system as a style of governing. As in the relation between citizen and state, the individual life of a family member was to be subordinate to the familial unit called “ie” (Wilkinson, 1962).

In Japan, the concept of the ie household is much different from the modern concept of family, which is based on kinship and connected with intimacy to membership. The ie included not only membership, but also its economy plus its resources (Fukutake, 1982). The traditional Japanese society was also composed as the base of the ie household. The organization of a community was built only on the basis of the household, not on the individual of the family (Nakane, 1967). Social status also was determined by the position of the ie household, not by the individuals themselves.

The ie household was also an economic corporation and to avoid depleting resources such as land, inheritance of the intact patrimony by only one child became the standard by the time of the Tokugawa shogunate Period (Befu, 1971). Successors of the ie household were sometimes determined even by adoption if biological heirs were of equivocal ability. The objective was to sustain the ie household itself. Thus, the ie household meant more than an extended family based on blood relationship. Smith (2000) explained, “Although recruitment into the household was primarily birth and

marriage, membership in the household was defined, not by blood, but by coresidence and participation in the ie work” (p. 308) and “the ie, which is once established, was expected to continue through succeeding generation” (p. 307). Here, the ie household had a hierarchical relationship between a householder and other members and also between the stem extended family that succeeded to their household resources and other branch families that did not inherit the estates but that had to support their main household because of loyalty and ancestor worship ceremony. The ie household system consisted of its member’s duties, not their rights.

In the Meiji Constitution, the Emperor was deified and the Japanese people were considered to be the people of the Emperor. Also, the Emperor became the top of Japanese extended family households. Existing family relationship and organization were formally defined and incorporated into the legal system (Wilkinson, 1962). On the other hand, the family law in the Civil Code was fundamentally a codification of customs then prevailing in Japan. The family law stressed the institution of the ie household and the right of the head of the ie household over its members (Steiner, 1950). An agreement by householders was required when family members were enrolled and expelled from the family registration record called ‘koseki’. The family laws did not function for the protection of its family member, and it just worked for registration except regulating the heirship. Consequently, by institutionalization of the family system, the family laws played a significant role to form the people’s consciousness of family orientation (Mizuno, 2000).

Iwasaki (1931) pointed out that, from the perspective of a highlighted female status, the traditional family system was diminished by industrialization at that time, but

it was unlikely to die completely considering the family registration system. Wilkinson (1962) pointed out that even after urbanization occurred, all significant changes in social status such as marriage and divorce were referred to the family registration system in their original birthplace. The head of the ie household had a strong right to exclude a disobedient member from the ie household and was released from the duty to support such a member. Thus, it was considered to keep the family members to the ie household. Although the family system had eroded reflecting a decline in the economic power of the ie household, it was considered to be a potent factor in Japanese lives.

Likely Causes of a Decreasing Tendency in Divorce Rates

Iwasaki (1931) mentioned six factors in explaining decreasing divorce rates; (1) “in-laws”, (2) education, especially the education of women, (3) increasing number of books, magazines, and papers, (4) the influence of movies, (5) Christianity through moral teaching and ideal missionary, and (6) expansion of economic and industrial life.

“In-laws” means conflict between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Traditionally, a married couple lived with a husband’s extended family household, and divorce occurred when a mother-in-law concluded a wife was unable to “conform to the usages of the house” (Iwasaki). Goode also explained that a common cause of divorce was “send-back” divorce. In most cases in-laws decided to send back the young bride if she were not acceptable to the groom’s family. This divorce happened early in the union, usually before the birth of children. Also, in his opinion, rural women in Japan were independent and had not yet become as subservient because they were valuable and productive workers. For this reason, the remarriage rate was high and divorced women

found an alternative way to sustain their lives. Divorce was institutionalized in the past in Japan. (1993)

Iwasaki (1931) suggested “a separate abode for married couples away from the parental house would lessen the troubles with the ‘in-laws’ and in turn decrease the number of divorces” (p. 569). However, he did not explain why a young married couple came to live independently. One of the reasons is that people had to move to urban areas to find jobs because the earlier household economy did not exist anymore (Smith, 2000). Elders lost their economic power because they did not have any effective means with which to bind their children to the household.

Iwasaki also explained that Christianity, which was introduced during the Meiji Period, taught strict monogamy, in contrast with Confucianism, Buddhism, or even native Shintoism, which were more flexible. These religions, rather, encouraged the preservation of the family by concubinage. The practice of concubinage was customary during the pre-Meiji Period. Householders from affluent families often had concubines besides their wives, and it was legitimized for keeping their traditional households called “ie”. In fact, the law recognized it, but it was abolished with the promulgation of the criminal code of 1880.

Also, Christianity brought the girls’ high schools to Japan as early as 1870. During the Tokugawa shogunate, there were some schools established by the government and feudal domains. However, these schools were mostly based on Confucianism, and all the schools were for males from affluent samurai class families. There were no schools for females, although there were private elementary schools called a “temple school” among children of townspeople. However, it was Christianity that brought advanced

schooling for girls in the early 1870s. Most of girl's high schools and colleges were established either by missionary or the Christian Japanese. Iwasaki insisted that Christian educated women had been leaders of women's movement, so Christianity had a great effect on decreasing divorce rates throughout the period of industrialization.

Iwasaki also described the effects of economic forces. The Industrial Revolution and the ever increasing participation of women in both industrial and professional fields had been one of the factors in reducing the divorce rate. The increasing number of young women drawn from their homes into the ranks of business and into factory was responsible to a certain extent for a growing independence on the part of Japanese women to drift from the old moral ideas that were supported by the old family system. Japanese young women were no longer as accepting of marriage as inevitable and as the only occupation open to them. They would only marry when the suitor could offer a good home and kindness. Therefore, more committed marriages reduced divorce among young couples. (Iwasaki, 1931)

However, this concept seems too advanced when the situation is considered at that time. A householder still exerted a major influence over the members of the family unit as guaranteed by the Civil Code. Also first-marriage-age for brides was 23.0 years old in 1910, after the Industrial Revolution was completed, and 23.2 in 1930, almost when Iwasaki's article was published. If female participation in both industrial and professional fields played a significant role in decreasing divorce rates through their improvement in social status, consequently the first marriage age for brides would be increased, as in modern advanced societies. However, this fact indicates that there was

little difference over these 20 years. It was not until after World War II that female social status was improved.

Iwasaki insisted that economic development contributed to a decrease in divorce rates. As explained above, however, political ideology rather than economic power contributed to the decrease of divorce rates in the past in Japan. This political ideology was accomplished through moral education at schools. The government introduced moral education at school until the end of World War II. This education spread out during decades, so it contributed to a decrease in divorce rates until the 1960s. Thus, the political ideology that led to Japan's industrialization also had a great effect on formation of the cultural values.

Modernization in the past brought a lot of cultural changes. However, the modernization in Japan was promoted by political ideology. It was introduced by a form of westernized lifestyle. At the beginning of the Meiji Period the government prohibited entrenched samurai customs such as a topknot hairstyle and wearing a sword. The government attempted to revise uneven treaties with Western nations and one measure of this was modernization of lifestyle as well as industrialization and maintaining strong armed forces. Also, a new education system was introduced by the Meiji government functioning to have people modernized. General education, as a whole, did not produce autonomous ideas but was instead a form of political indoctrination. Social influences among ordinary people were limited. Political ideology took the initiative in modernization and industrialization and it succeeded. Therefore, unlike in Western nations, spontaneous cultural change of values was very limited, although political

ideology changed traditional values. Therefore, at that time autonomous ways of thinking were considered to be limited even though industrialization brought materialistic prosperity.

Is Japan a deviant case in the world, as was often the case with its economy? Every system is actually different because it is influenced by some traditional aspects. There is no system that is not still influenced by traditional and cultural factors even though globalization has advanced rapidly. In other words, there is by no means exact convergence, although it has a certain direction. Modernization and Westernization are different, even though Western nations seem to have had a huge influence on other parts of the world. In general, a system does not change nor need to be changed when it works well. However, it does change or need to be changed when it does not work well any more. In Japan, the system needed to be changed, so the system was changed by the government in the past.

The government attempted to establish Japan as an industrialized nation, but it did not need to accompany industrialization with individualism. In fact, it did not want to encourage individualism among the Japanese people, in order to become a strong nation with a strong military. Also, democracy based on individualism was not needed by the government.

Individualism appeared in the context of allowing each individual to have a choice. In Western nations, there was a background of Christianity, which is based on each individual's faith. In Japan, however, a hierarchical social order and a strong group-

orientation were established during the Tokugawa Period and these characteristics were rearranged by the Meiji government and merged with a new control system headed by the Emperor. This new control system did not produce individualism, as in Western nations, through industrialization. Individualism did not appear right after industrialization because of political ideology, although some cultural changes were brought about by industrialization. One of the reasons why industrialization in Japan reduced the divorce rates was that individualism did not accompany industrialization. In fact, modernization urged by the government brought a new attitude toward marriage, and therefore old traditions in rural villages declined. This is a likely cause of declining divorce rates before World War II.

The American occupation of Japan following WWII established a new Constitution and the revision of the Civil Code. These new laws envisioned a new modern family system. For instance, the New Constitution “includes a long catalogue of individual rights provisions, designed to protect the individual from the exercise of public power. These articles are incompatible with the cultural ideology of group orientation, hierarchy, harmony, consensus, and loyalty to the group.” (Morfording, 1997; p. 439) Also, the prewar family system was expunged in the new Constitution, but among ordinary citizens it would take a while to accept new attitudes. Goode (1993) pointed out,

it was not until the 1960s that many of results of the previous decades of changes had become apparent: the lessened power of the elderly, more elders living their grown children’s household, high levels of education for both men and women, a growing approval of free choice in marriage, low fertility, a growing percentage of women working after marriage, and even a modest feminist movement. (p. 235)

CHAPTER IV

Changes in the Environment around World War II

Demographic Transition in Japan

Political ideology had great effects on modernization in Japan throughout the period of industrialization and created new cultural values regarding marriage and divorce, but demographics also should be considered in the relation with modernization.

Figure 2.1 shows crude birth rates, crude death rates and natural increase rates.

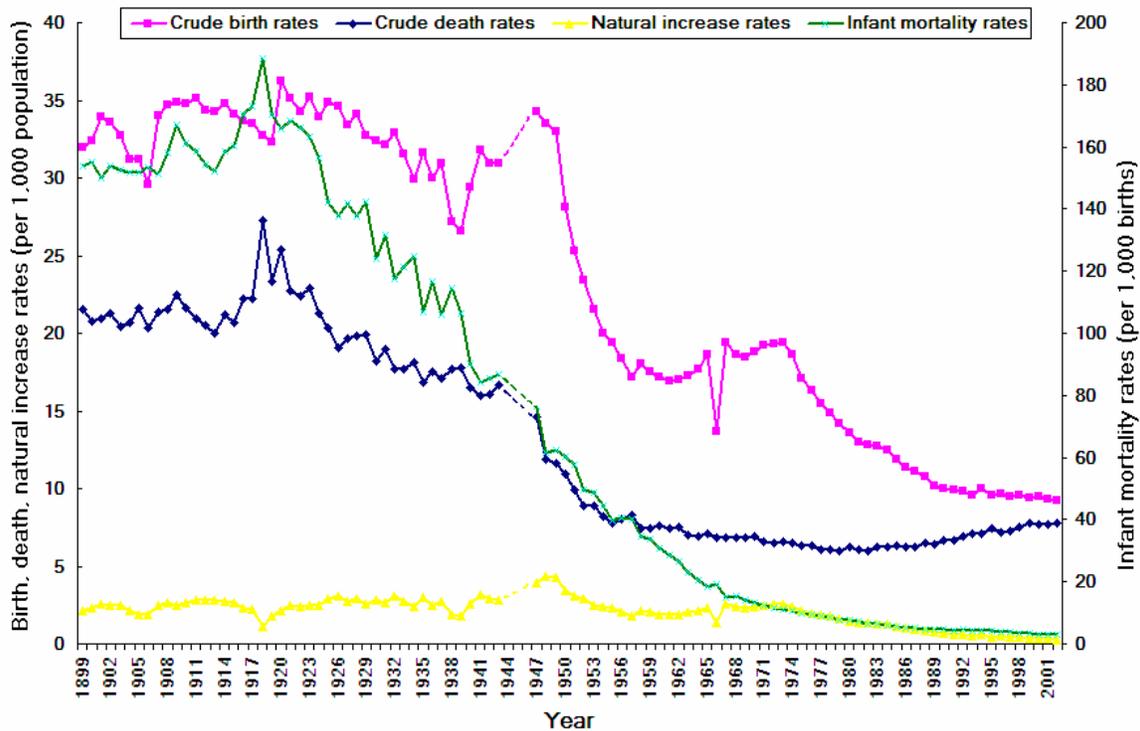


Figure 4.1 Trends in crude birth rates, crude death rates and natural increase rates (per 1,000 population) and infant mortality rates (per 1,000 births) in Japan: 1873-2002. The data are from Nihon Teikoku Tokei Nenkan [The 38th Statistics Yearbook of Imperial Japan and Vital Statistics of Imperial Japan] by the Cabinet Statistics Bureau for materials of 1943 and before, and Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for materials of 1947 and after. It should be noted that the data from 1944 to 1946 are omitted due to incompleteness according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

During the period from 1873 to 1945, Japan was in several conflicts such as the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, World War I (1914-1918), and World War II (1938-45). These wars influenced demographics through the peoples' consciousness and through birth, death and immigration. Concerning the birth rates, there were two baby booms. The first baby boom occurred between 1947 and 1949, and the second baby boom occurred between 1971 and 1974. These baby booms reflected the increase of marriage rates at the same time (Figure 4.1). Also, there was a sudden drop in the crude birth rate in 1966 because it was a year in which people believed the superstition of Chinese Taoist thought that women who are born in that year kill their husbands. So husbands and wives attempted to avoid bearing babies.

Considering these factors, it is reasonable that crude death rates started to decline in 1918, at the same time when infant mortality rates started to decline. On the other hand, crude birth started to decline in 1949 after the first baby boom, although the second baby boom occurred between 1971 and 1974 when the first baby boom generation got married and bore babies. As marriage rates do not increase, attitudes toward marriage and fertility have changed (see Figure 4.2). This shows that attitudes toward marriage have changed and low has fertility occurred in Japan. There is about a thirty year time lag between a decline in death rates and a decline in birth rates. It is considered as a cultural lag as in Demographic Transition Theory. After the second baby boom between 1971 and 1974, natural increase rates declined to a low level, and it would be considered that the demographic transition leveled off as industrialization deepened.

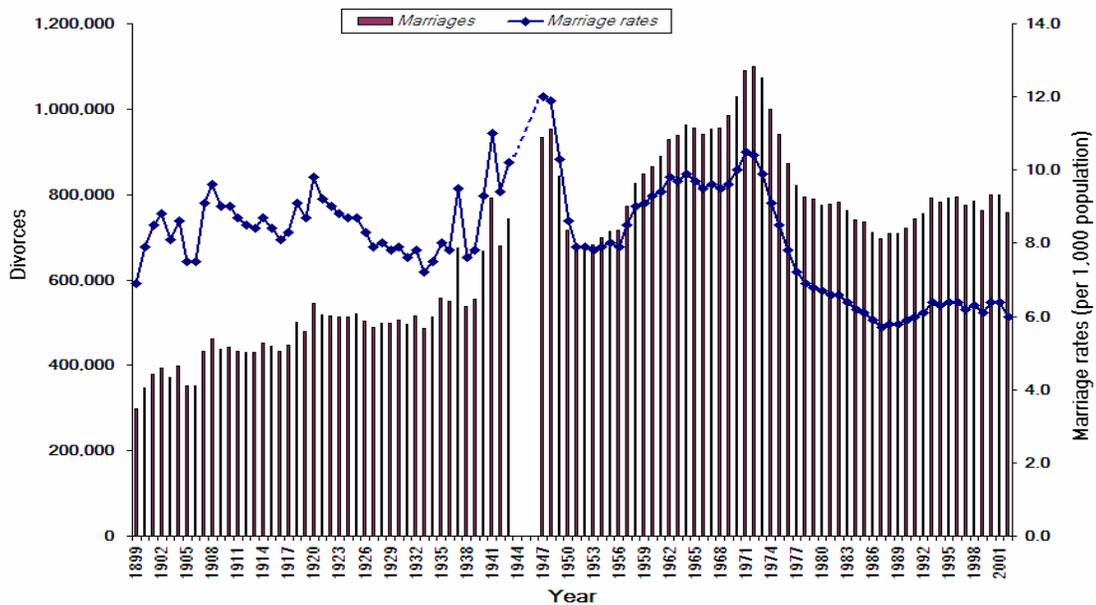


Figure 4.2 Trends in marriage rates (per 1,000 births): 1899-2002. The data are from Nihon Teikoku Tokei Nenkan [The 38th Statistics Yearbook of Imperial Japan and Vital Statistics of Imperial Japan] by the Cabinet Statistics Bureau for materials of 1943 and before, and Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for materials of 1947 and after. It should be noted that the data from 1944 to 1946 are omitted due to incompleteness according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

Demographic Transition Theory describes demographic transition throughout industrialization and it is a useful tool to investigate modernization. Countries which have achieved industrialization virtually always have experienced demographic transition, but countries which have experienced demographic transition have not necessarily achieved industrialization. Japan achieved industrialization and thereafter demographic transition occurred. Economic development led to the demographic transition in Japan.

One of the examples of modernization is a change in birth rates. Economic development brought the change in attitudes toward having babies. As seen in the demographic transition, the birth rate in Japan started to decrease after 1949. In Japan, a decline in birth rates was brought about by contraception and abortion. Abortion is

literally a medical operation to end a pregnancy so that the baby is not born alive, and has always been legitimized in Japan. The trend in correlation between total fertility rates and abortion rates strongly suggests changes in people's attitudes toward having babies because abortion is a reflection of people's decision making (see Figure 4.3). There was little influence of political ideology in reducing birth rates, compared to a decline in divorce rates. It was considered to be brought about by modernization through industrialization.

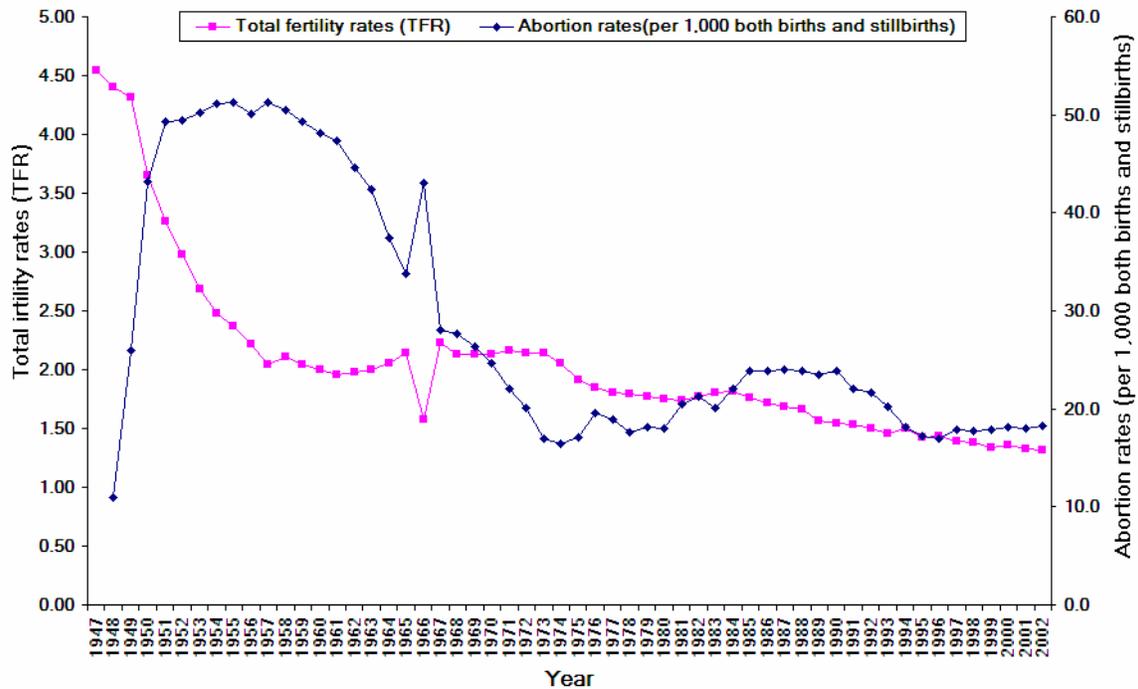


Figure 4.3 Trends in total fertility rates and abortion rates (per 1,000 both births and stillbirths): 1947-2002. The data are from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. It should be noted that the data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

On the other hand, industrialization led by political ideology was finally connected with a modern marriage system which led to a decline in divorce rates, and this modern marriage system itself was also brought about by political ideology. Therefore, a

decline in divorce rates in the past was brought about by political ideology rather than economic development throughout industrialization. Considering the demographic transition and its cultural lag, if industrialization had led to cultural changes, change in divorce rates would have begun much later than when a decline in divorce rates had been supposed to begin. However, divorce rates started to decrease during the Meiji period before industrialization was achieved, and it is difficult to conclude that economic development brought a decline in divorce rates in Japan through changing cultural values.

Rather, it is possible to say that a decline in divorce rates in the past was brought about mainly by the political ideology of modernization, which urged the decline of traditional values, and not by economic development through industrialization. The decline of traditional values regarding marriage began at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate due to the economic divide in farm villages, and a new attitude toward marriage and divorce was accomplished by government's policies and education. Thus, there was a decreasing tendency in divorce rates until the mid-1960s.

After birth rates decreased, divorce rates reached a turning point in the mid-1960s. It is reasonable to consider that economic development, and not political ideology, brought cultural changes after World War II. The change in divorce rates, more specifically, an increase in divorce rates, was brought about by economic prosperity in which people began to enjoy. Also, the new Constitution and the Civil Code after World War II promoted conditions that encourage people to liberate themselves from the constraints of traditional family values.

Effect of the New Constitution and the Revision of the Civil Code

Defeat at the end of World War II brought Japan a new Constitution and a revision of the Civil Code. These changes in the legal system were ordered by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers during the occupation of Japan following WWII. A new Constitution was promulgated in 1946 and came into effect in 1947, and the revision of the Civil Code, especially the abolishment of the ie household system, became effective in 1947. The law of the ie household system is different from the present family law. A head of the ie household was given strong powers over its members for family registration but formally lost them under the new Civil Code.

A new Constitution was created in the light of democratic principles. The emperor system still survived, but the Emperor is recognized as a symbol of the Japanese people: “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power” (“The Constitution of Japan”, Article 1, 1946). In addition, the Constitution includes individual rights provisions, designed to protect the individual from the exercise of public power as follows:

All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs. (Article 13)

All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin. (Article 14)

Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis. (2) With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes. (Article 24)

Article 13 declares individual rights in the balance of the public welfare, and it is far from the rights of the ie household under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (Meiji Constitution). Article 14 declares equal rights of individuals although the old civil code was based on unequal treatment of the sexes, that is, the subordination of females under males. In addition, Article 24 directly declares individual rights and an equal treatment of both sexes in the family relationship. Marfording points out, “These articles are incompatible with the cultural ideology of group orientation, hierarchy, harmony, consensus, and loyalty to the group” (1997, p.439). Based on this ideology, the civil code was revised. (See Steiner, 1950)

A Conjecture on Divorce Rates during the Postwar Confusion

Between 1947 and the early 1960s, there were both increases and decreases in the divorce rate, and this was different from the previous decreasing tendency before WWII. A reasonable conjecture is that this was caused by a postwar confusion and the revision of the Civil Code, especially a new family law. Under the Meiji Civil Code, an agreement of the head of household was need when family members got a divorce. However, a new Civil Code does not need such an agreement, so a couple can get a divorce without their householder’s agreement. During a short period, an increase which was different from previous tendency in the divorce could be caused by a couple who wanted to get a divorce but who did not under the old Civil Code. Also, during the postwar confusion after WWII, there were a lot of people who returned from outside of the original territory of Japan (see Appendix B), so this might increase divorces as well as marriages. There was a temporary drop in first marriage rate of bride in 1955 and thereafter a surge of first

marriage rate of both brides and grooms (see Figure 6.2). A decreasing rate of first marriage meant an increasing rate of remarriage and literally remarriage occurs after divorce. Therefore, there is a possibility that a rapid upsurge in remarriage rates is partly related to an increase in divorce rates. There is a possibility that confusion caused an increase in marriage and divorce rates. However, this is only a conjuncture.

Likely Causes of Increasing Divorce Rates after the Mid-1960s

The divorce rate reached its nadir in 1938 and during a period of confusion after World War II divorce rates slightly increased, but crude divorce rates marked a turning point in 1963 (see Figure 1.1). The age-standardized divorce rate for the married population also marked a turning point in 1965 (see Figure 2.1). This occurred as old systems declined and were replaced by new systems after World War II. The important difference between the prewar industrialization and the postwar industrialization is whether individualism was brought about with economic development. As political ideology which controlled people was weakened and eventually died out, material affluence through economic development became dominant and greatly influenced Japanese ways of life. There was a sign of individualism after WWII. An individualistic view leads people to have autonomy to pursue their individual happiness based on rational choice. Economic development (Chapter V) brought family transition (Chapter VI) and influenced attitudes toward marriage and divorce (Chapter VII).

CHAPTER V

Economic Development after World War II and Its Driving Force: The “Japanese Economic System” as a New Dominant System

Economic Development after World War II

A period of postwar confusion ended and the divorce rate reached its minimum in the mid-1960s. During the occupation by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, there were several socio-economic reforms, such as the dissolution of the financial conglomerates called “zaibatsu”, antimonopoly legislation, agricultural land reform, and the enactment of labor law. A devastated Japanese economy was resurrected by special procurements for the Korean War in the early 1950s and became the sources of an economic recovery. “Japan is not postwar any more,” the Economic Planning Agency declared in the Economic Survey of Japan, issued in 1956. In the decade following WWII, Japan experienced a remarkable economic recovery. The level of the national income in 1955 was about 1.5 times higher than the highest prewar level (Economic Planning Agency, 1956). Its remarkable growth rates lasted until 1973 when the “oil crisis” dampened economic development.

The gross domestic product (GDP) of Japan declined right after World War II, but the remarkable economic development was achieved in the 1950s. In 1955, the real GDP was 47,075 billion yen but increased to 485,971 billion yen in 2000, increasing about ten times over 45 years. Japan achieved the second largest GDP in the world in 1967 and now has become one of the global economic giants. During the oil crisis in 1973, growth declined to -1.2 %. After the crisis, the growth rates in real GDP recovered for a while,

but decreased when the bubble economy was burst in 1989. At present, Japan has continued to suffer from the aftereffects, such as huge debts owed to creditors.

Real GDP per capita also increased from 1955 (see Figure 5.1). From 0.53 million yen in 1955, it increased to over 1 million yen in 1964 (1.08 million yen). In 1973 it was over 2 million yen (2.11 million yen) and steadily increased to over 3 million yen (3.01 million yen) in 1987. There has been a steady increase in real GDP per capita since 1955. Attention should be paid to the fact that these real GDP per capita rates did not reflect a rise or fall at the price level, but it shows that Japanese individuals' standard of living in a material way have increased since the end of World War II.

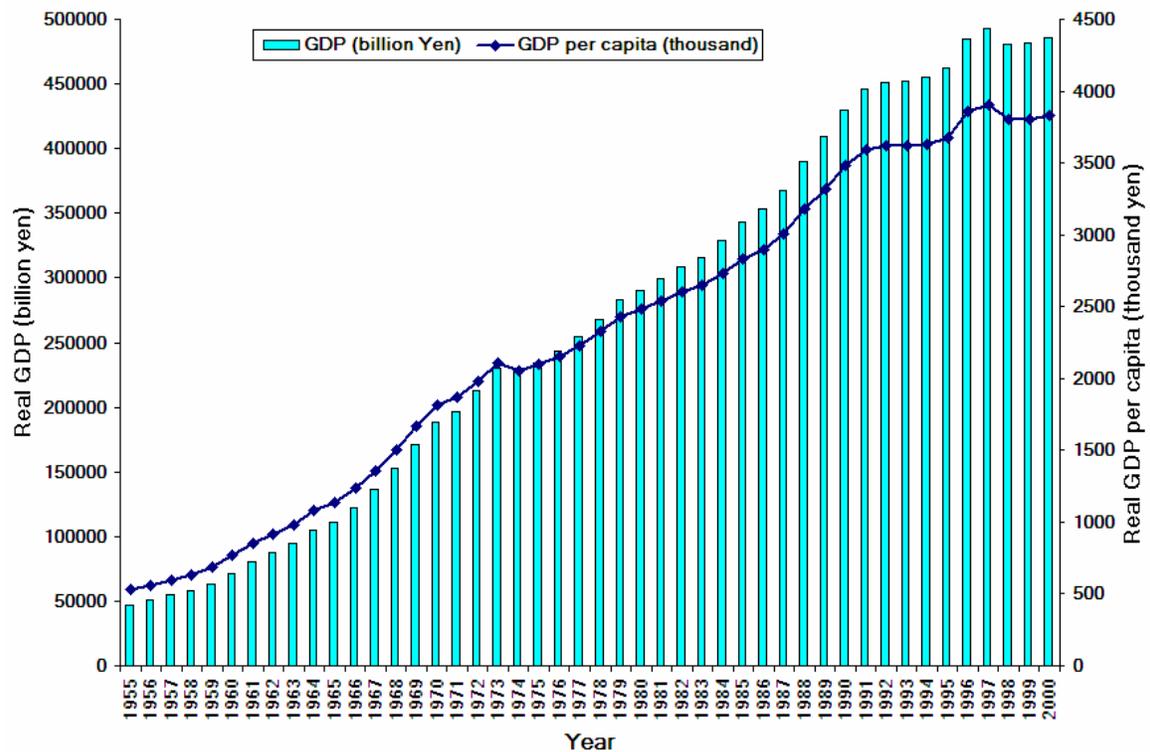


Figure 5.1 Trends in real GDP (in billions of yen) and real GDP per capita (in thousands of yen): 1955-2000. The data are from SNA National Accounts by the Government of Japan, Cabinet Office, Economic and Social Research Institute.

Factors Involved in the Rapid Growth of Japanese Economic Development

Divorce rates in Japan have continued to increase since the mid-1960s because economic development brings cultural changes in values among the Japanese. Japan succeeded in catching up with the Western powers by the late 1960s, when Japan became the second largest industrial power in the world. Throughout this period of economic development, the government played a vital role by not only regulating industries but also by intervening in the market-based activity of postwar Japan, although it was different from direct support in industrialization at the beginning of the Meiji Period. This rapid growth of economic development was not only supported by aggregate demand factors of the economy, huge demands from an increasing number of population in Japan and export to foreign countries, but also achieved by three interrelated factors; labor, capital, and technology on the supply side (Ishi, 1999).

First of all, an ample supply of high quality labor contributed to the rapid growth of Japan's economy. Ishi pointed out, "Japan was a country endowed with a relatively abundant labor supply, reflecting the great number of repatriations from overseas territories and the rapid population due to a 'baby boom'" (p. 250). The population increased from 72.1 million in 1945 to 111.9 million in 1975 (see Appendix B). In addition to an increasing labor force, workers were well trained, industrious, and hard-working, because the Japanese education system provided a high quality labor force with a high level of equality and uniformity. The Japanese educational system emphasized cooperation in accordance with the prewar legacy, and equality as a new concept. However, Japanese society set a greater value on the academic career of an individual than on his real ability. As a result, education stressed cramming and placed emphasis on

memorization. This education contributed to a lot of good workers with a high level of equality and uniformity, although it did not provide innovative persons to the labor market. In 1975, the advancement rate to upper secondary school etc. was 91.9 percentage, and the advancement rate to undergraduate institutions and junior colleges except technical colleges was 38.4 percentage (Japanese Government Policies, 2002). It was a high level compared to other advanced nations.

Moreover, economic development required enormous capital, which was provided by borrowing from banks. In fact a tax structure in Japan encouraged citizens to deposit in banks and it enabled banks to acquire enormous amounts of capital to provide loans to private economic organizations. “[T]he extraordinarily high rate of investment was well matched by that of domestic savings” (Ishi, p. 251). Furthermore, Japan did not have to develop its own technology. The postwar economic development depended heavily on the importation of foreign technology and was achieved by applying this technology. “[T]he process of catching up with the advanced technology greatly benefited Japan in its achievement of postwar economic growth” (Ishi, p. 251). Japan had only to follow as Western nations developed their economy, and it is so called the “Japanese economic system” that made the most of these three factors and worked efficiently to accomplish the rapid economic growth after WWII.

The “Japanese Economic System” during the Postwar High Economic Development

The Japanese economy was a rational system in the context of high economic development and in many ways regulated and influenced a Japanese way of life. Japanese employees had great loyalties to their organizations as especially a typical male employee was called a “salaried man”. The Japanese virtually based their lives on corporations after

World War II. Therefore, it is very important to consider the Japanese economic system. The Japanese economic system is often considered as a unique system, which is different from other economic systems of capitalism, but it contributed to the rapid economic growth in Japan.

First of all, Japan had a specific goal to catch up with Western countries. The Japanese government, corporations, and citizens had a strong incentive to accomplish the economic recovery in order to escape from the postwar poverty. Government policies are usually made in such a way as to promote public benefits, but the Japanese government policies were made to promote more direct corporation profits rather than citizen benefits. Economic recovery was the priority, and citizen benefits were, as a result, accomplished by the economic recovery. In deciding policies, all the government had to do was to follow the model of Western countries and to give some incentives to corporations and citizens. Historically, the Japanese government had policies to grow industries, while the United States did not have them, but instead made laws to protect industries against other foreign companies in response to lobbyists' requests and interests. The Japanese government had a lot of regulations, and sometimes without provisions. For example, the government had strict regulation about the number of banks, the business of each bank, and changes of rates of interest. Until the 1990s, no banks were thought to go bankrupt because of government regulation and protection. Similarly, by following government policies, Japanese corporations were able to make products that performed more efficiently than Western ones. They improved existent products rather than developing new innovations.

Secondly, Japan had an efficient economic system called the “Japanese economic system” in order to accomplish their economic growth. Part of that system is that corporations pursued their own profits. In corporations in other countries like the United States, shareholders’ opinions are reflected through their management, but in most large-scale Japanese corporations, the shareholders did not give their opinions on the corporation’s management. Because they held each other’s shares, they did not meddle in their management as main shareholders. As a result of the separation of ownership and management of corporations, as well as the holding of each others’ shares, Japanese corporations could pursue their profits from a long-term perspective. For instance, by saving retained earnings instead of paying cash dividends, it was possible to invest equity capital on a large scale, without issuing additional shares and borrowing from banks.

This low influence of shareholders’ decision-making was connected with the “main bank system” and the holding each other’s shares. A corporation mainly deals with a primary bank or a few primary banks which cover most of the financing, and a bank which mainly deals with a corporation is called a “main bank” to the corporation. Corporations usually had at least one main bank, and the main bank worked as indirect financing instead of direct money markets such as the stock market and the bond market. Corporations had a high demand for financing; their profits were generated by just outputting good products because of a high demand of the postwar consumption. In addition, regulations such as Japan’s tax structure encouraged individuals to deposit money in banks rather than to invest in stocks, and the banks could gather a lot of funds relatively easily. The “main bank system” worked well during the high growth rate period. Furthermore, leading shareholders who were members of the corporate group called

“keiretsu”, the central part of which is the main bank in many cases, functioned as stable and silent shareholders by holding each other’s shares.

Thirdly, Japan had a good labor force in order to accomplish its economic growth. Most large-scale Japanese corporations had the “Japanese labor system” which was characterized by lifetime employment, seniority wage, and in-house labor unions. Generally, an employee who had risen in the corporation, under lifetime employment and seniority wage, became an executive officer. It was rare to recruit an external manager. When new graduates were engaged, they usually had job rotation as a generalist instead of being a specialist. They had a strong work ethic to make a success of life within the corporations. Moreover, Japanese corporations aimed to advance the interest of their employees rather than to maximize profits. For example, they had devoted many resources to employees, which never generated profits. This is one of reasons why the Japanese companies were considered to be a family-like organization. Fringe benefits such as houses provided by their corporations made the workplace comparable to a family-like organization; managers were like a parent and employees were like children. “Japanese corporations were cooperative organizations of workers and managers” (Noguchi, 1998). Also, these relationships between employers and employees made in-house labor unions weak and function primarily for the corporation rather than for its employees, and the employees received benefits from their corporation.

In addition, the labor market except for new graduates was so small that it was difficult for people to change their jobs. There was a labor market for small-scale companies, but it was not common for large-scale corporations to hire those except fresh graduates as new employees. Most new employees were recent graduates because

corporations wanted new graduates who were not specialized, allowing them to educate new employees for their organization. Therefore, skills that workers developed were peculiar to their corporation and tended not to be useful at other corporations. Also, in the lifetime employment and the seniority wage system, their salary increased disproportionately higher to their performance as they continued to work at the same company. Salary usually increases in proportion to workers' age because their skill and their loyalty to their organization increase in proportion to their age. In Japanese large-scale corporations, however, most of the older workers received a disproportionately higher salary than their performance because the salary system pays a better salary to older employees. As a result, continuing to work at the same corporation accrues more benefits than transferring to another corporation. These factors made the labor market so small and workers stayed with their organization. This stable labor force consequently contributed to the Japanese high growth economy.

The combination of these components relating to the Japanese economic system led to Japan's remarkable postwar economic development, but these are "not 'intrinsic Japanese' and most of them were introduced as the wartime system during the years around 1940" (Noguchi, 1998).

The Origin of the "Japanese Economic System"

Before World War II, the Japanese economic system was generally more similar to the Western economic system than is the present one. Corporations were managed in order to maximize profit for their shareholders, not for the corporations themselves, because primary shareholders managed the corporations in many cases. In other words,

ownership and management of corporations was relatively coincident. However, Noguchi (1995) pointed out:

This corporate structure was changed drastically in the process of preparation for the war. Under the 1938 National Mobilization Act (Kokka Sodo-in-ho), limitations on dividends were imposed, shareholders' rights were limited, and corporations were restructured so as to serve the collective interests of employees. (p. 404)

Besides a cooperative relationship between management and employees, the practices such as lifetime employment, seniority wage and in-house labor unions became prevalent and accelerated by government initiatives during the wartime. Also, regulations on financial industry and the origins of the present government structures such as the tax system were introduced during the same period. (Noguchi, 1993 & 1995)

Furthermore, these wartime systems and mechanisms survived as a basic structure even after the occupation and reform by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Although the military was entirely dismantled, the Japanese bureaucratic system was left intact and it contained the relics of the wartime regime. The origin of the "Japanese economic system" was the wartime regime, and therefore the Japanese economic system, combined with the group-oriented nature of the Japanese, was suitable for the recovery in the context of the cooperation between the government and citizens. (Noguchi, 1993 & 1995) From the prewar period, the economic organization also reflected familism, an attitude toward attaching importance to family rather than an individualistic orientation. As industrialization in Japan was encouraged and nationalism was also enhanced by political ideology, "[t]he emergence of an industrial elite was not so much the result of a rational, competitive sorting of individuals as it was the cooperation of strategically

placed family units” (Wilkinson, 1962). Such a group-orientation enabled employees to adopt the Japanese economic system without excessive friction.

The Japanese Economic System as a Dominant System

Consequently, political ideology influenced a basic formation of the Japanese economic system and in turn the Japanese economic system through economic organizations has regulated the Japanese way of life for several decades, as the Japanese economic organizations are considered to have a group-orientation. Actually, since the end of WWII, most Japanese males have based their lives on their jobs, and especially their companies. As the percentage of employees has greatly increased from 42.4 % in 1953 to 84.5 % in 2003, most Japanese have worked for a company (see Figure 5.2). In addition, females also have been involved in the company-oriented society because about 30 percent of females who are 15 years old and over have been consistently a full-time housekeeper, who mostly relies on a husband’s salary. Otherwise, most females also have worked for a company in an employed status. Such a working environment and other circumstances such as the new Constitution and material ways of life simultaneously transformed family formation in Japan.

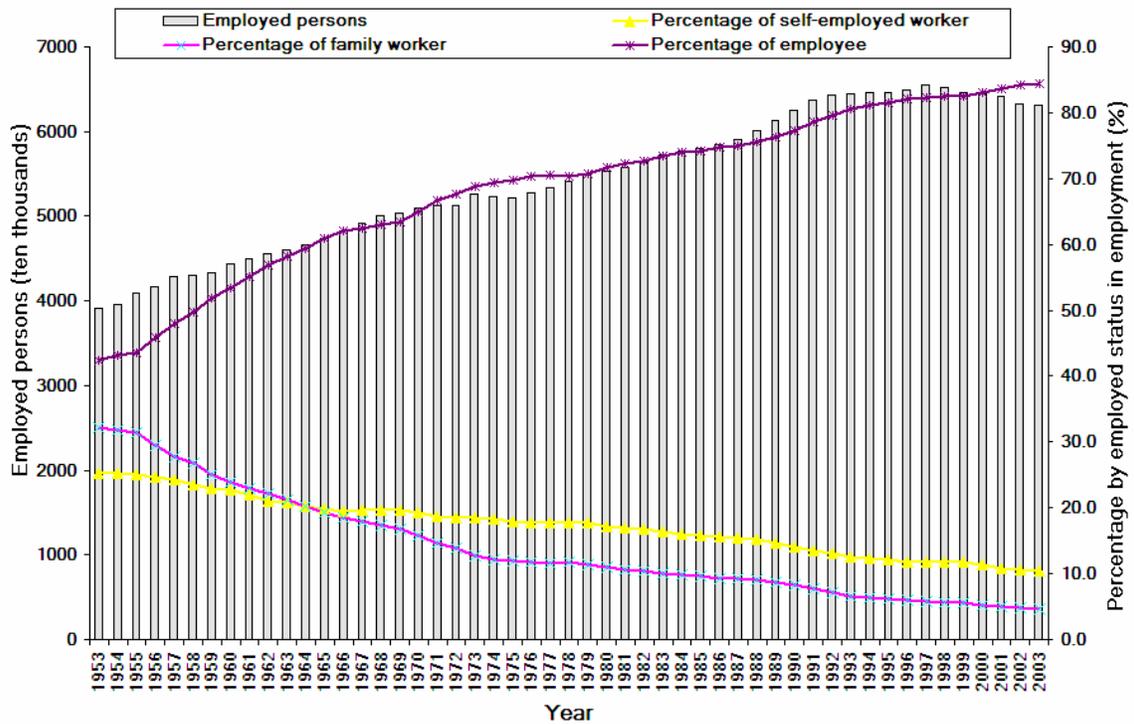


Figure 5.2 Trends in employed persons and percentage by status type in employment: 1953-2003. The data are from Labour Force Survey by the Management and Coordination Agency (MPHPT), Statistics Bureau. In calculations, figures are used as the monthly average of the year. Also, employed persons include status in employment not reported.

CHAPTER VI

Family Transition in Japan

One of the most drastic changes after World War II concerns households. Marriage and divorce as well as birth and death are directly connected with family formation. Before WWII, political ideology had a huge influence on family formation through authoritative householders and moral education in schools, but material ways of life through economic development greatly influenced family formation after WWII. This resulted in an increasing number of aging people and divorces, and a decreasing number of babies and marriages. These phenomena change types of households, which closely tied its members with its organization.

Family transition is an important key in considering an increase in divorce rates. It suggests a decline in traditional values and a rise in new norms through the change of peoples' attitudes in forming a family. As population increased, the number of ordinary households also increased (see Figure 6.1). Ordinary households refer to ones which exclude quasi-households from all types of households. Quasi-households include institutions such as school dormitories, hospitals, and juvenile institutions for custody.

According to the Population Census of Japan, there were 11.1 million ordinary households in 1920, increasing to 45.5 million in 2000. Meanwhile, the population was 55.5 million in 1920 and almost 127 million in 2000. Ordinary households increased 4.1 times during this period, while the population more than doubled. Also, the average number of persons per ordinary households decreased from 4.89 in 1920 to 2.71 in 2000 and family became smaller. Among ordinary households, the percentage of family type of household has also changed greatly. The percentage of nuclear family households slightly

increased from 55.3 % in 1955 to 60.1 % in 2000. It should be noted that other relative households decreased from 38.2 % in 1920 to 13.9 % in 2000 and that one-person households increased from 6.0 % in 1920 to 25.6 % in 2000.

Relative households are divided into two groups: nuclear family households and other relative households. Other relative household refers to a household which is not a nuclear family. A nuclear family is defined as a married couple only, a married couple with their child or children, a father with his child(ren), or a mother with her child(ren). Therefore, extended family households such as three-generation households account for most of the other relative households. Usually, extended family households are considered to be larger than nuclear family households because extended family households include more than two generations, such as a couple with their parent(s) and a couple with their child(ren) and parent(s). Figure 6.1 shows that there is an approximate offset between extended family households and one-person households, and indicates that the persons per ordinary household decreased since 1920 as both the percentage of extended family households decreased and the percentage of one-person households increased.

Dissolution of the extended family produces more than two nuclear families. For example, dissolution of a couple with their parents produces two couples of households. Dissolution of a couple with their parent produces a couple household and one-person household. In Japan, an extended family household used to be a common type of household. In the pre-modern era, the “ie” household included not only membership but also economic functions, so the ie household meant more than an extended family household. However, industrialization gradually weakened the function of the ie

household because the role of the household as an economic organization gradually declined throughout industrialization, although householders still existed as an authority to their members when they gave an agreement to registration. After WWII, the family laws were changed under the new Constitution and the revision of the Civil Code, and the agreement by a householder was not needed at the registration. The ie household was completely dissolved from the perspective of controlling family members. The ie household moved toward a family based on a couple of husband and wife as in Western nations, which is connected through intimacy among members. A type of extended family still exists, but it is not like the ie household during the Meiji Period and its members make their decision on marriage and divorce on their own.

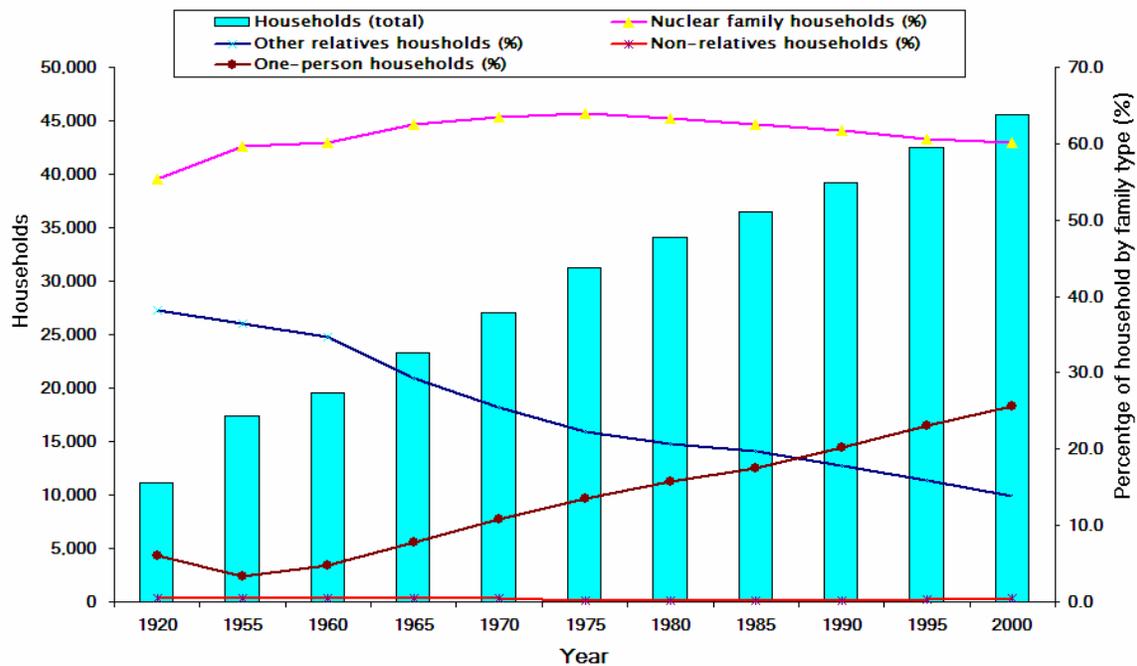


Figure 6.1 Trends in number and percentage of households by family types of ordinary households: 1920-2000. The data for 1955-1920 are from Population Census of Japan by the Ministry of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Statistic Bureau. The Data for 1920 are from *Setai kosei to sono chiiki-sei* (1985). It should be noted by 1% sampling tabulation in 1955 and 1960; by 20% sampling tabulation in 1965 and also excluding Okinawa prefecture.

Urbanization

Urbanization has also led to the dissolution of an extended family. Gradual dissolution of the ie household occurred through industrialization. As agricultural family corporations in farm villages gradually declined in the face of industrialization, people moved to urban areas. During the Tokugawa shogunate, there were strict limitations on internal migration and occupation. During the Meiji period, however, people could migrate from their birthplace to other areas and could choose their livelihood independently.

The percentage of the labor force employed in agriculture decreased from 77 % in 1872 to 48 % in 1930 as people moved to urban areas such as Tokyo and Osaka. Out of 47 prefectures, Tokyo and Osaka represented 11 percent of the population in 1920 and 17 percent in 1940. (Population Redistribution and Urbanization, 1943) Urbanization was encouraged after WWII, especially between 1960 and 1974. The ratio of unemployed in the labor force by sex was less than 2.0% (see Figure 6.2). These low unemployment rates suggest that there was enormous demand for labor in urban areas where industrialization occurred. The rapid growth of economic development encouraged urbanization after WWII, especially during the intense development period between 1965 and 1973. As householders lost economic power in their economic organization to maintain their members, extended families also declined. The percentage of family worker status in employment decreased from 32.3 % in 1953 to 4.7 % in 2003 (see Figure 5.2). This decreasing percentage of family worker status in employment indicates a decline in economic power of households as economic organizations. The declining power of householders virtually enabled people to gain more opportunity to choose their

life course autonomously. It also enabled them to choose getting married and divorced of their own free will.

Industrialization and urbanization have transformed the Japanese family. As Smith (2000) explains, the traditional ie system was outlawed by the postwar Constitution, and urban housing is too small for large families, but the most important reason why the old unilineal household structure with nonpartible inheritance has died out is that there is no longer a patrimony to keep intact. Most Japanese are no longer self-employed and have no family business to pass down to the next generation. Instead of the traditional ie household, Japanese companies as an economic organization have greatly regulated and influenced people in their status as employees. Under the “Japanese economic system”, the companies have various effects on employees, not only as an economic organization but also on many other aspects of their lives, such as throughout companied owned-houses and dormitories for single employees. In a sense, Japanese companies have become not only an economic organization, but also partly a community in which employees live.

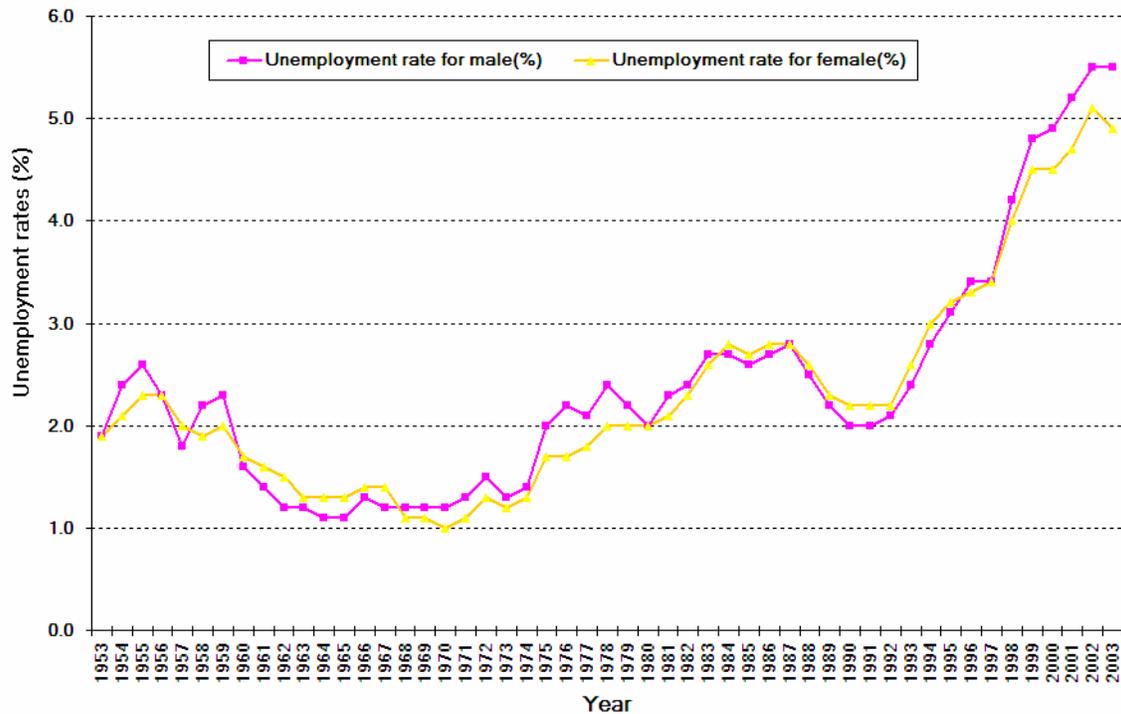


Figure 6.2 Trends in ratio of unemployed in labor force by sex: 1953-2003. The data are from Labour Force Survey by the Ministry of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT), Statistics Bureau. It should be noted that the figures are used as a result of the monthly average of the year and are also calculated as follows: Unemployment rate (%) = Unemployed person / Labor force * 100.

Nuclear Family Households

The nuclear family is symbolic in Japan because it meant sloughing off the ie household. The number of nuclear family households greatly increased from about 6.2 million in 1920 to 27.3 million in 2000 (see Figure 6.3). One of the reasons is that the dissolution of the extended family household produced more than two family households. Urbanization and a decline in traditional values of the ie household or extended family help to explain an increasing number of not only nuclear-family households but also one-person households as well. However, the percentage of nuclear-family households has remained at almost the same level and there has been no drastic change.

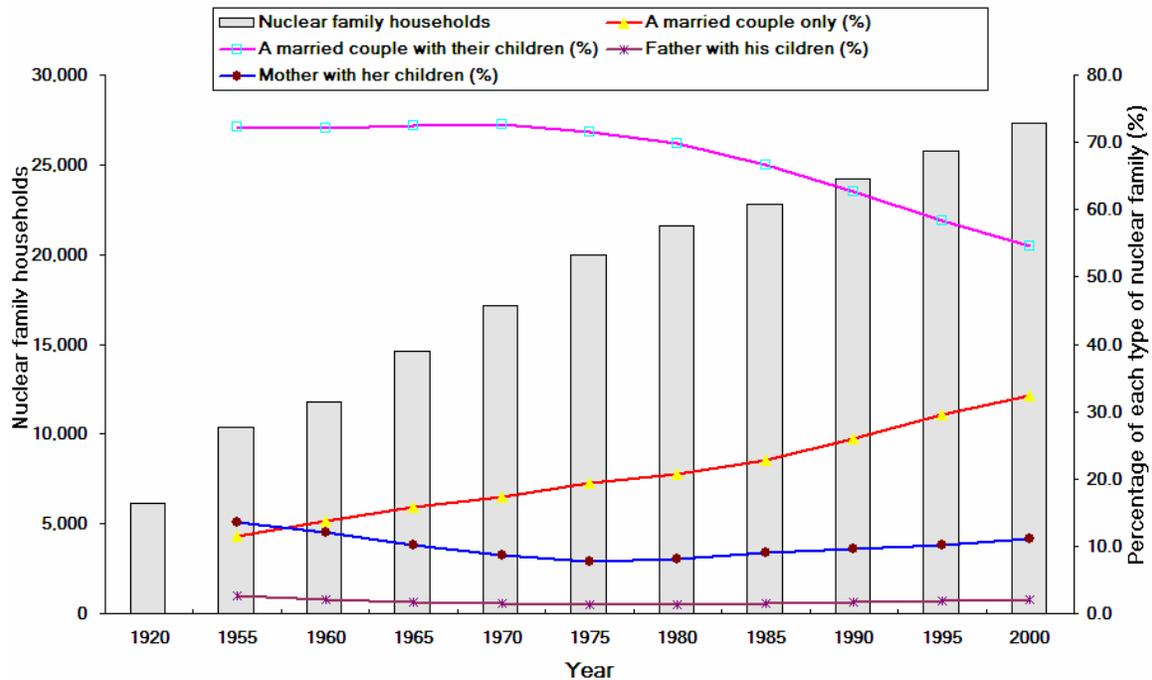


Figure 6.3 Trends in ordinary households by type of nuclear family: 1920-2000. The data for 1955-2000 are from Population of Census by the Ministry of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Statistics Bureau. The Data for 1920 are from *Setai kosei to sono chiiki-sei* (1985). It should be noted by 1% sampling tabulation in 1955 and 1960; by 20% sampling tabulation in 1965 and also excluding Okinawa prefecture.

Considering the breakdown of nuclear-family households shown in Figure 6.3, the percentage of households by a married couple with their child(ren) has decreased since 1970, and the percentage of households by a married couple only has increased since 1955. One reason is that Japan has become an aging society. Life expectancy of the Japanese has advanced and it has increased the number of a-married-couple-only households whose householder are aged 65 and over through the dissolution of extended households. Married-couple-only households of householders aged 65 and over increased from slightly less than one million in 1975 to 4.2 million in 2000, while nuclear-family households increased from almost 27 million to 33.7 million for the same period. As a

result, of all married-couple-only households, the ratio of those whose householders aged 65 and over increased from 3.45 % to 12.57 % during the last quarter of the century.

Another reason for such changes is low fertility in Japan. As seen in Figure 4.3, total fertility rates in Japan have a consistently decreasing tendency. The total fertility rate decreased from 4.54 in 1947 to 1.32 in 2002, well below replacement level. Low fertility contributes to a decrease in the percentage of a-married-couple-with-their-children households and an increase in the percentage of a-couple-only households. Low fertility in Japan was technically brought about by contraception and abortion, but the most important factor was changing attitudes toward having children.

According to the 12th basic marriage-and-birth trend survey of married couples, conducted by the National Institution of Population and Social Security Research in 2002, 33.2 percent of those sampled who want to have more than one child answer that a child stabilizes a husband-and-wife relationship and 19.0 percent of them answer that a child supports their lives as they get older, although 81.6 percent of them answer that a child makes their life rich. These results show that family formation is influenced by affection and individualistic views. Also, there is a tendency that the actual number of children has been less than the ideal number of children, for instance, since the 7th survey conducted in 1977. On the 12th survey, 62.9 percent answer that rearing a child is very expensive and it is considered that a couple wants to enjoy life rather than bearing the additional expense of having another child.

This change of attitudes toward having children is brought about by an individualistic orientation through an increase in female status. “Many of the more important value changes affecting fertility are bound up with major educational and job

gains by women, which have led to greater economic independence and increasing emphasis on values of individualism and equality between the sexes.” (Retherford, Ogawa & Sakamoto, 1996; p. 25)

One-Person Households

The number of one-person households also has greatly increased. One reason is that Japan has become an aging society. Households of one-person aged 65 and over increased from 0.6 million in 1975 to 3.1 million in 2000, while people aged 65 and over increased from 8.9 million in 1975 to 22 million in 2000. The ratio of those households aged 65 and over to all one-person households increased from 7.9 % to 17.3 % for the same period. In a sense, an increasing number of one-person households are a reflection of an aging society in Japan.

However, the most important change is that people have changed attitudes toward marriage, and especially toward late marriage. The mean age of first marriage for grooms increased from 27.0 years old in 1910 to 29.1 in 2002. On the other hand, the mean age of first marriage for brides greatly increased from 23.0 in 1910 to 27.4 in 2002 (see Figure 6.4). The mean age of first marriage for both brides and grooms is traditionally old compared to the United States (Goode, 1993), but an increase in the mean age of first marriage for brides reflects different attitudes toward marriage due to economic development. Advanced education and improvement of female status changes attitudes toward marriage and raises the mean age of first marriage for brides. An increasing number of people are still unmarried at their marriageable age socially. According to the 12th basic marriage-and-birth trend survey of singles, 63 percent of those sampled males and 68 percent of those sampled females answer that the important benefit of single life is

freedom of action and a way of life. The comfort of single life postpones the timing of marriage and increases an individualistic view among people. People have more opportunities to choose their life course than ever before.

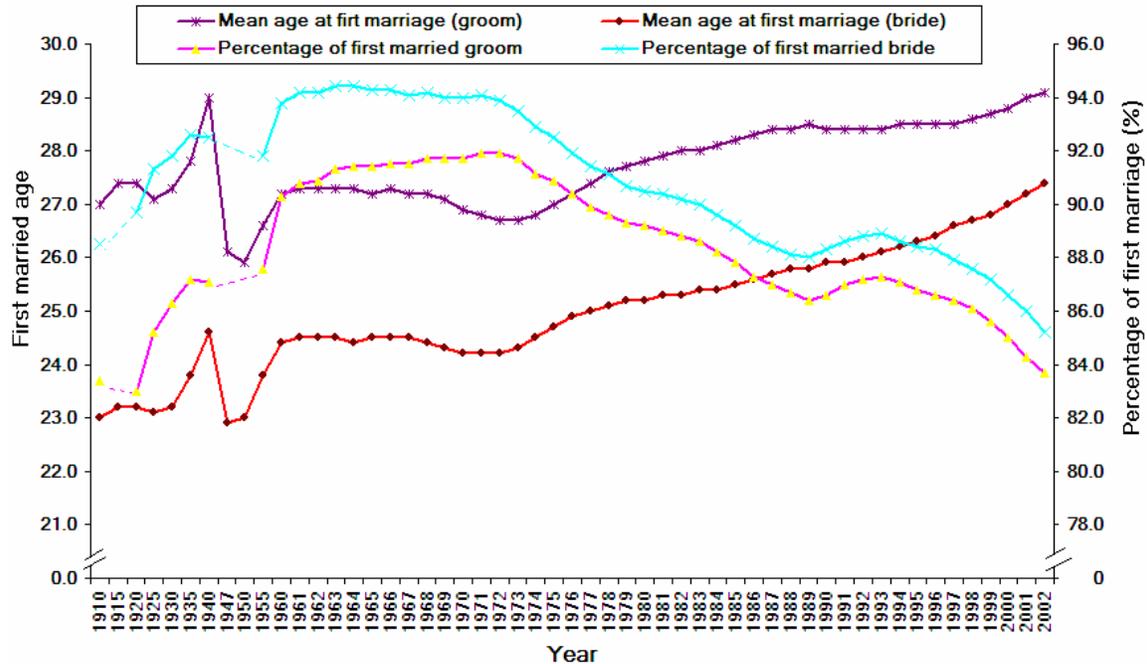


Figure 6.4 Trends in mean age at first marriage (both sexes) and percentage of first married bride and groom: 1910-2002. The data are from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Statistics and Information Department. Data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture. Until 1940, the age is as of the time of registration. For 1947-1967, the age is at the time when couples held their wedding ceremony. From 1968 onwards, the age is the age at when couples held their wedding ceremony or started to live together, whichever is earlier. Only cases in which couples started to live together (wedding ceremony) and made registration in the same year are tabulated.

Summary of Family Transition

In sum, the collapse of the ie household and the transformation of the family occurred most prominently after WWII. The traditional ie household made the individual life of family members subordinate to the familial unit. Under the new Civil Code, family members came to have rights enabling them to live their lives individually, at least without the formal pressure of authoritative householders. Some forms of independent actions were hastened by the postwar urban and industrial expansion. The increasing incidence of nuclear family households disrupted traditional ties of loyalty and economic interest and connected families through bonds of affection. Even though people still have a family orientation, it is much different from the consciousness of the ie orientation. As FY 2001 National Survey of Lifestyle Preferences (Cabinet Office, 2002) shows, affective bonds are the primary motivation for family members to assist one another. 87.2 percent of those sampled primarily take care of family members, but 61.2 percent of those sampled also think the bonds between a parent and a child have become weaker in general. Moreover, 49.2 percent of those sampled think that it is no problem even though a parent-child relationship is like a friendship. Only 7.5 percent of those sampled do not definitely think so, and 18.0 percent of them do not prefer a friendship between a parent and a child. This amply demonstrates that there are few if any authoritative family structures at present.

Also, the number of one-person households has increased dramatically. The increasing number and percentage of one-person households also reflect changing attitudes toward marriage and family. According to the same survey above, 32.6 percent of those sampled agree with the proposition that people can enjoy their lives without

getting married, although 20.9 percent of those sampled do not agree. These single-oriented attitudes are demonstrated by the following results: the percentage of never married for males increased from 2.17 % in 1920 to 12.57 % in 2000 and that for females increased from 1.80 % to 5.82 % for the same period. An increase in one-person households shows that many Japanese, both male and female, do not have as strong a family-orientation but more of an individualistic orientation.

Family transition, such as a decline in extended family households and an increase in one-person households, has proceeded throughout industrialization and it has brought a decline in family-orientation with a corresponding increase in affection and an individualistic view among family members. An individualistic view among people has been a major factor in family transition and recently this individualistic orientation has led to an ongoing family transition. Family transition is a reflection of changes in peoples' attitudes toward family and it meant setting the members free from the family orientation and individualistic orientation among people. An individualistic orientation implies not only an increase in divorce rates but also a decrease in marriage rates, as seen in Figure 6.5. These two trends are vital factors in family formation, and an individualistic orientation strongly influenced these two trends.

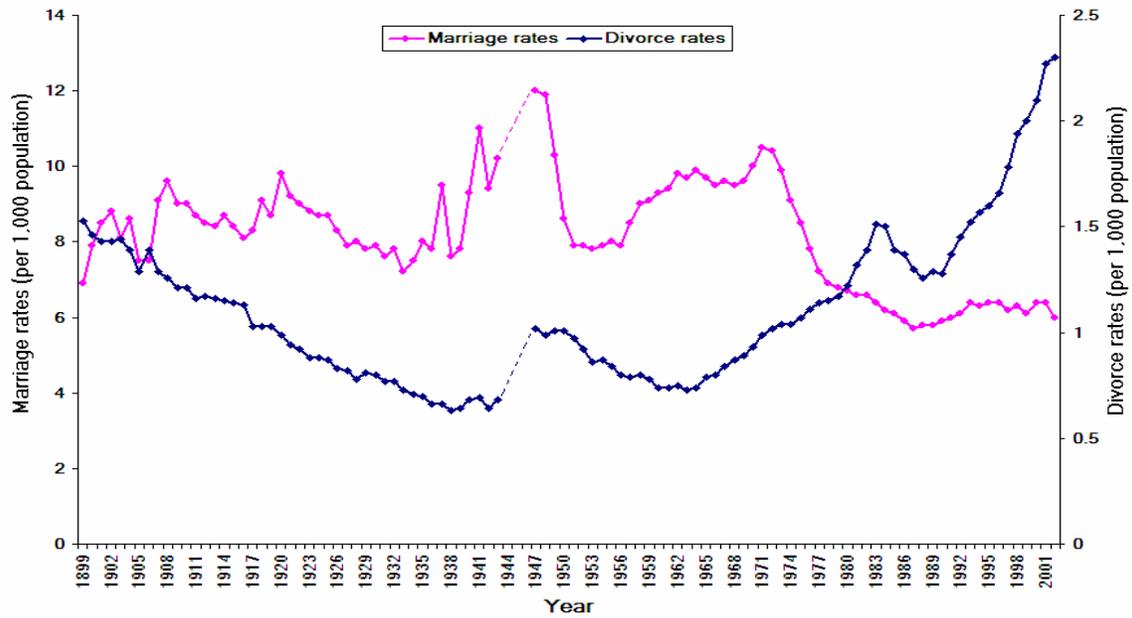


Figure 6.5 Trends in marriage and divorce rates: 1899-2002. The data are from Nihon Teikoku Tokei Nenkan [The 38th Statistics Yearbook of Imperial Japan and Vital Statistics of Imperial Japan] by the Cabinet Statistics Bureau for materials of 1943 and before, and from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for materials of 1947 and after. It should be noted that the data from 1944 to 1946 are omitted due to incompleteness according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

CHAPTER VII

The Changes in Attitudes toward Marriage and Divorce

A Change in Marriage Style: From Arrangement to Love Match

Urbanization through economic development promoted not only family transition but also changed the way of finding a partner. This change also influenced an increase in divorce rates after WWII. During the Meiji Period, although love matches gradually became more common, most marriages had to be approved by householders. Despite a norm of arranged marriages, after WWII, younger people migrated to urban areas, and couples often tended to voluntarily select their own partners. This transition from arranged marriage to love match in marriage style contributes to an increase in divorce by untying the connection of a married couple and the other people concerned.

The love match is a modern marriage style in which a bride and a groom get married by their free will, but arranged marriage is not always based on their free will. Rather, it is sometimes related to family status and family orientation because of the people concerned. In most common cases, voluntary and obliging go-betweens exist. A go-between, who knows the respective families, sends a photograph and biography to the families and acts as an intermediary, sometimes considering their reputation and social status. If the marital candidates are favorably matched and approved by the families, the go-between formally introduces the families of the prospective bride and groom. After the meeting, both candidates start to date with one another until a decision to marry is arrived at, and each candidate notifies the go-between of the decision. If a couple gets married through the go-between, they continue to contact with their go-between and send

a mid and yearend gift annually. An arranged marriage tends to connect a couple with their go-between and the relationship among the parties is sustained. However, this marriage arrangement has declined recently.

According to the basic marriage and birth trend surveys of married couples, between 1930 and 1939, 69.0 percent of sampled married couples got married by arrangement and only 13.4 percent got married as a love match (see Figure 7.1). Between 1965 and 1969, however, 44.9 percent of sampled couples got married by arrangement, while 48.7 percent found a partner without intervention. Clearly, by the late 1960s most marriages were the result of romantic attachments arrived at voluntarily. Certainly, less traditional matches have become more normative, increasing to 87.6 percent of all marriages. By contrast, arranged marriages have declined to only 7.3 percent of the total. The 12th basic marriage-and-birth trend survey of married couples in 2002 shows about one third of all sampled married couples found a partner at their workplace and slightly less than one third were introduced through their siblings and friends. Other couples, except arranged marriage (7.3 %) and unknown cases (4.0 %), met their partner at various places such as schools and circle activities.

Importantly, love matches became dominant by the late 1960s, and it should be noted that divorce rates have increased since the mid-1960s. Love matches are the result of romantic attachments arrived at voluntarily and suggest an autonomous decision-making far from a family-orientation. It implies that an individualistic view occurred among people. It is same as in the case of divorce, and therefore divorce rates started to increase during the same period in which love matches became dominant.

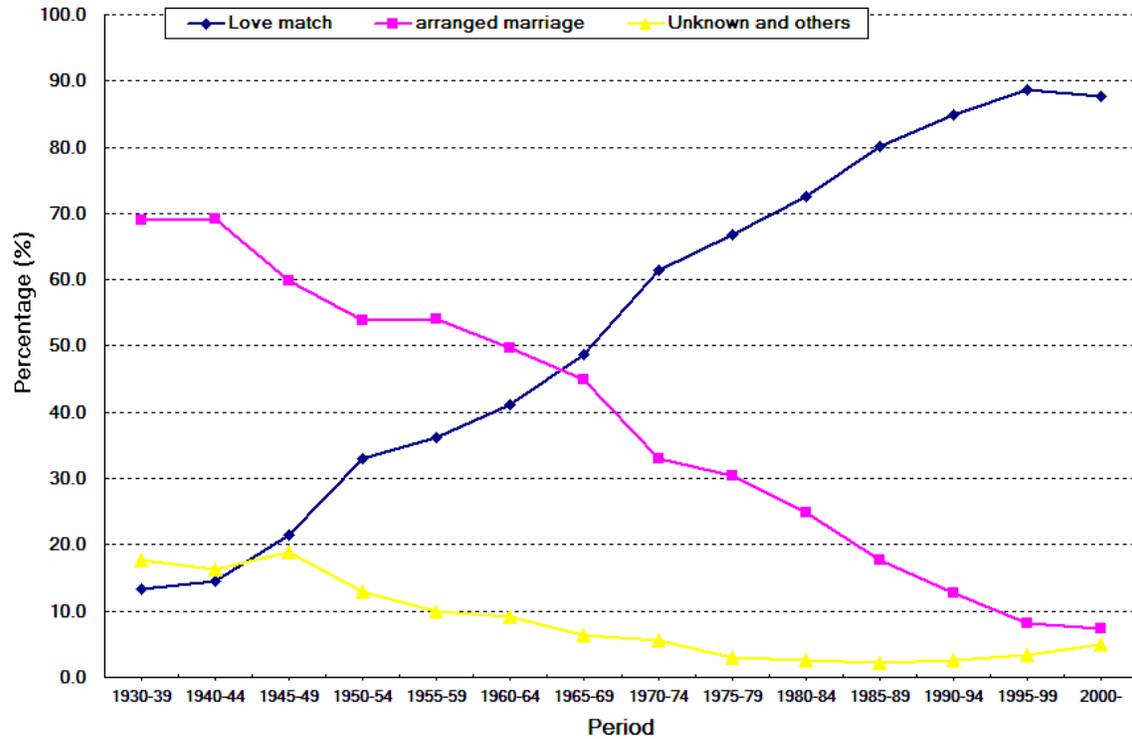


Figure 7.1 Trends in the percentages of love matches and arranged marriages: 1930-2000. The data are from the 7th basic marriage-and-birth trend survey of married couples (from during 1930-39 to during 1970-1974), the 8th survey (during 1975-1974), the 9th survey (during 1980-1984), the 10th survey (during 1985-1989), the 11th survey (during 1990-1994), the 12th survey (during 1995-1999, and 2000-), conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. It should be noted that the data for 2000- are based on availability through June, 2002.

As love matches have become more common, the age difference between brides and grooms has changed. Traditionally, grooms were older than brides, but recently it has changed (see Figure 7.2). The percentage of brides who are older than grooms increased from about 10 % in 1970 to more than 20 % in 2000. During the same period, the percentage of brides and grooms of the same age increased from about 10 % to slightly less than 20 %. Consequently, the percentage of grooms who are older than brides decreased about 20 %, indicating that the traditional values of an older and thus authoritative groom had become less prominent.

The less traditional values of marriage possibly connect more autonomous women than before with an increasing tendency toward divorce. A decline in arranged marriages and an increase in love matches have developed individualistic views among people and influenced attitudes toward divorce. This transition is one of the direct and most likely causes of increasing divorce rates through changes in attitudes toward divorce.

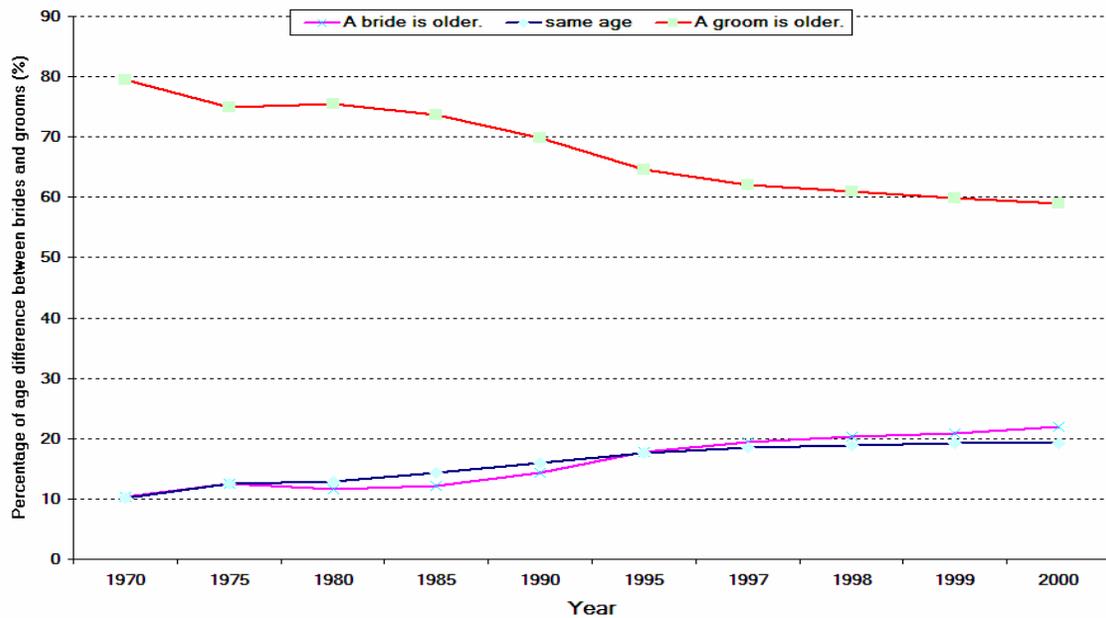


Figure 7.2 Trends in percentage of age-difference between brides and grooms in marriage: 1975-2000. The data are from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Statistics and Information Department.

The Change in Attitudes toward Divorce

The increasing tendency of couples to marry outside the bounds of conventional arrangements has influenced attitudes toward divorce. In the response to a question of whether a married couple should remain married if there is a clash of personalities, 66.0 percent agreed with this statement and 31.2 percent disagreed (the 10th basic marriage-and-birth trend survey of married couples, 1992). On the 11th survey (1997) and the 12th

survey (2002), about 50 percent agreed with this statement but about 45 percent disagreed. A personality clash between couples, which was not accepted well as a reason of divorce, has been becoming a standard of the reason of divorce. Considering that these surveys sampled wives younger than 50 years old, this indicates female attitudes toward divorce have dramatically changed.

Such attitudes are amplified by judicial statistics. According to the 1998 Annual Report of Judicial Statistics by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Court, personality clash was the most important motive for divorce claims among both husbands and wives. On the other hand, an inability to get along well with the family and relatives, the most frequent cause of divorce during the Meiji Period, was ranked eighth. This suggests that people are making these important decisions based on individualistic views rather than family orientation.

Moreover, there has been an increasing number of under-20-year-old children involved in divorce. According to the Statistics on Divorce by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 1998, the rate of under-20-year-old children involved in divorce (per 1,000 population under 20 years old) was 1.91 in 1960 but gradually increased to 9.27 in 1998. In Japan, it was said that children were bonds between spouses, but this tendency shows it is not true at the present. The stigma attached to divorce has been considerably removed.

Furthermore, child custody arrangements in divorce have greatly changed, reflecting a decline in traditional values and a rise in female status. Cases where the husband retained custody of the children decreased from slightly less than 50 percent in 1950 to about 20 percent in 1998. On the other hand, cases where the wife was granted

custody of the children increased from about 40 percent to slightly less than 80 percent during the same period. Because the traditional ie household required a patrilineal household to survive, in most divorce cases, the children would remain with the father's family. After WWII, however, as household relations were increasingly predicated on affective bonds and as female status and income rose, mothers were awarded custody of their children in most divorce cases.

In addition, the duration of living together when a couple gets a divorce has changed (see Figure 7.3). As Goode pointed out, most divorces in the past occurred within a short period after getting married, but recently divorces have increased among couples who lived together for a longer period. In 1950, about 65 percent of divorced couples had been married for less than 5 years after their marriage, but in 2000 slightly more than one third had lived together for the same duration. It should be noted that the percentage by duration of living together for more than 20 years increased from about 3 percent in 1950 to about 16 percent in 2000. This suggests an increasing number of divorces of middle-aged and elderly. In many cases, a wife makes a decision of divorce after children grow up and after a husband leaves his job. It indicates an autonomous decision for females far from the traditional family values.

Attitudes toward divorce have significantly changed since the end of WWII. Divorce became a stigma, as a result of moral education at schools, during the period when divorce rates decreased and thereafter. Chastity for females and an emphasis on a harmonious home were considered as virtues and divorce became a stigma, as seen low divorce rates until the 1980s. However, economic development enabled people, especially women, to have advanced education and brought about more autonomous

ideas of equality for both sexes. Consequently, the postwar material ways of life have brought about an individualistic view among the Japanese, and the Japanese have begun to pursue their own happiness in a rational way, escaping from a family-orientation. In this autonomous context, divorce has become a social norm and is no longer such a stigma.

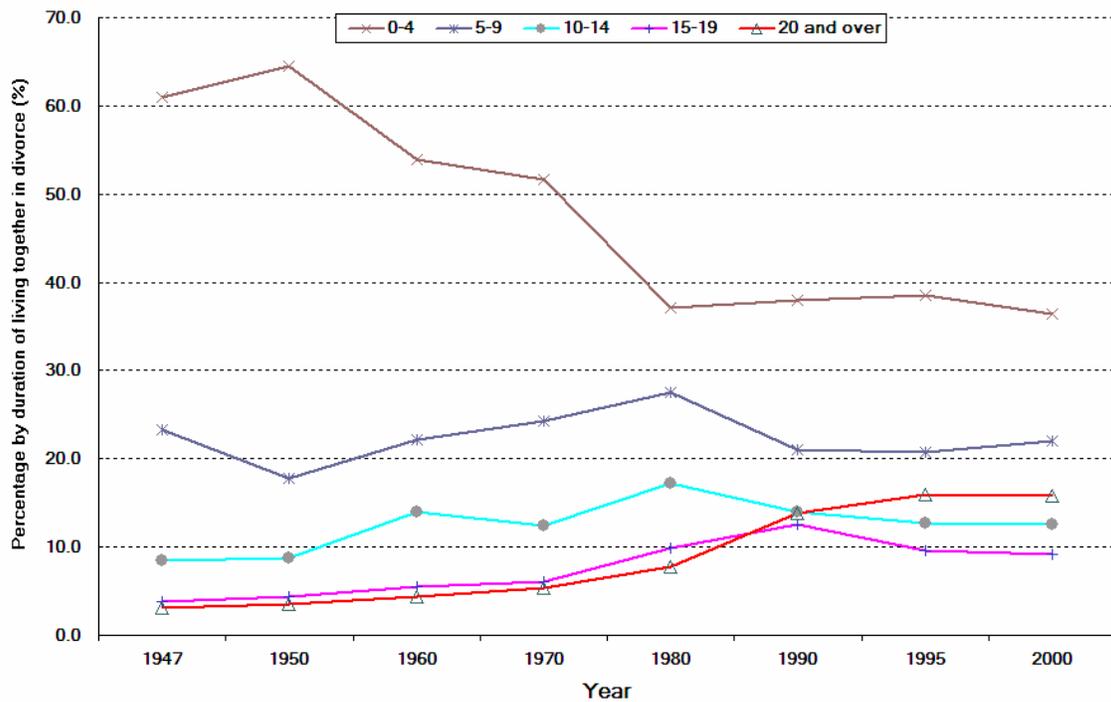


Figure 7.3 Trends in percentage by the duration of living together in divorces: 1947-2000. The data are from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Statistics and Information Department.

CHAPTER VIII

A Rapid Upsurge in Divorce Rates in the 1990s

Individualism as a Norm

These changes in attitudes toward divorce were affected by the rising affluence of the Japanese through economic development. Japan has experienced a rapid upsurge in divorce rates since the early 1990s. Japan is an ethnically homogeneous society and once the people accept a cultural change of values, the change spreads fast during a short period. As stressed by the political ideology during the Meiji Period, female charity was considered as a virtue. Also, a convention that females keep house spreads after WWII as nuclear family increased. High economic development absolutely influenced the ways of life among the Japanese and brought individualism, which was not introduced by political ideology during the Meiji Period. Although, commonly, a change of cultural values gradually spread, a trigger possibly accelerated a rapid upsurge in divorce rates in the context of individualism in high modern society. It was a trigger that people have experienced a collapse of the “Japanese economic system” accompanying a strong individual orientation in 1990s.

The Collapse of the “Bubble Economy” and Changes in the Economic Environment

From 1955 to 1973, Japan’s economic growth rate exceeded an average of about 10 percent per year. After the oil crises, Japan changed its industrial structure from energy-intensive to energy-saving. In the 1980s, the trade surplus with other industrial countries continued to expand, which caused an appreciation of the Japanese yen, and the Japanese government succeeded in achieving the growth of domestic demand by the

request of the internationally coordinated currency adjustments. At the same time, excess money supply by the government caused inflating capital asset values in the form of speculative bubbles. It was considered that stock and real estate prices continued to rise with the past reflection of high growth economy, as the stock average (Nikkei 225 Issues) consistently increased from 2,316.98 yen at the end of January, 1970 to 38,915.97 yen at the end of December, 1989 (see Figure 8.1). However, what is called the “bubble economy”, which did not accompany the substantial economic growth, burst at the end of 1989 and Japan has faced the worst postwar depression because of its aftereffects.

The basic problem of the bubble economy was that corporations, including banks, gradually lost profitable sources after a period of high economic growth. Once Japan had developed its economy to the level of advanced nations, it had to create a new way of economic development which was not a specific end as many advanced nations did. However, because of the unsubstantial bubble economy, corporations also lost an opportunity to change the business structures in accordance with changes in the economic environment. In the United States between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, there were a lot of bankruptcies in savings and loan associations and commercial banks because of bad debts which they could not collect, and the government deregulated banks and other industries to strengthen its economy (Ikeo & Nagata, 1999). Japan also faced the same situation as the United States after the bubble economy collapsed in 1989.

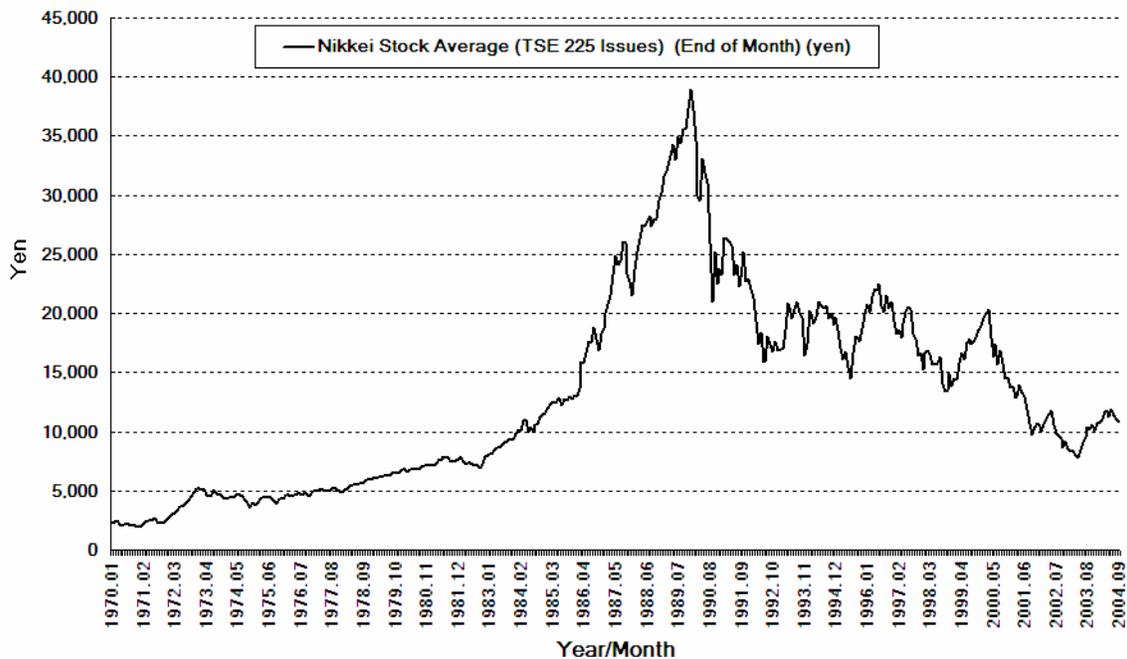


Figure 8.1 Trends in the Nikkei stock average (TSE 225 Issues) (End of Month): Jan. 1970- Sep. 2004. The data are from the long-term time-series data by Bank of Japan.

The burst of the bubble economy included an enormous amount of non-performing loans. The Statistical Handbook of Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau; 2003) briefly describes the aftereffects of the bubble economy as follows:

During the bubble period of the late 1980s, financial institutions extended huge loans backed by real estate collateral, and as the borrowing enterprises made losses due to declining land prices, huge bad debt was created in the loan portfolios of financial institutions. As a result, the capital of financial institutions drastically shrank. In 1997, business failures began to occur among the large banks, and the government injected public money into banks in order to stabilize the financial system in March 1998, and again in March 1999.

Required to improve their capital ratio, financial institutions became reluctant to provide loans. Not only those enterprises with excess liability created during the bubble period, even some companies running ordinary

businesses could not find a source for their working funds and were forced to cease trade.

Lacking sufficient financial resources and business demand, enterprises cut investment and employment, and as a result, people became anxious about their future, restraining consumption and striving to save money. (P. 28)

Thus, some banks and large-scale corporations went bankrupt as a result of the aftereffects of the bubble economy. It was believed that banks and large-scale corporations did not go bankrupt among the Japanese after World War II, especially because the government controlled banks by strict regulations and people believed that finally the government helped their business without causing bankruptcy. Also, the government had the policy, “too big to fail”, in which the policymakers could not fail banks because of the significant risks to other financial institutions. Banks’ behaviors toward loans and companies’ business failures have introduced a lot of bankruptcies since the 1990s. Even today, many banks have faced the problem of resolving the huge amount of bad debt which has not been cleaned yet. Japanese corporations have adapted themselves to the changing environment by finding new profitable sources and reducing the over-borrowing in credits. Banks and corporations have been required to change their business structures and these changes have had a great effect on the Japanese ways of life as affected by the “Japanese economic system”.

The Impact on Individuals

Japanese corporations have been urged to change their business structures and do not have any more tolerance in sustaining excess assets which do not lead to a satisfactory performance. The Japanese economy system is forced to reform to some extent. Many corporations have sold unprofitable lands due to restructuring their business

and these lands were often used as a fringe benefit for employees. In addition, they have sold shares of their corporate groups called “keiretsu”, in order to acquire enough funds for their operation or restructuring their business. Furthermore, they have released not only financial assets such as real estate and stocks, but also intangible assets, that is, human resources. The unemployment rates have been unprecedentedly high recently. The unemployment rate for males increased from 2.0 percent in 1990 to 5.5 percent and that for females also increased from 2.2 percent to 4.9 percent for the same period (see Figure 6.2). Corporations have tried to reduce staff and have expected relatively better performance than before, although they did not have to take such actions as long as economic development continued. Three characteristics of the Japanese economic system have declined and many corporations have restructured their business system to generate higher profits.

When corporate systems are restructured, there is a tendency to reduce excess administrators and managers whose salaries are high as a result of lifetime employment and seniority wages. This is especially the case with the seniority wage in the Japanese labor system, in which as an employee continues to work at his or her company, the wage would increase disproportionately higher. As a result, it is rational decision making to continue to work at the same company because those employees who work for a longer period receive a higher salary than their performance at that time, while it means that those employees who work for just a short period earn a lower salary than their performance. In many Japanese corporations, most administrators and managers are middle-aged males, even after the Equal Employment Opportunity Act came into effect in 1986. The middle-aged males have more risk to lose their job because of the

relationship between their salary and their performance. Today they have struggled to keep their jobs or to transfer to another company, which was not common in the past. They have faced to a competitive situation and have tended to become more individualistic.

The younger generations tend not to be downsized because of their lower salaries, but today, instead, it is tough to find a job after students graduate from schools. The younger generations tend to improve their own skills and want to be specialists rather than generalists, reflecting the recent economic situation. Before the bubble economy collapsed, most students, especially university students, did not consider their future seriously because when they graduated from a good and famous university, they could get a good job easily and companies secured their employment for their entire careers. Therefore, it was a rational decision to enter a good and famous university to secure their livelihoods. Once they entered the university, they did not have to study hard because universities in Japan were characterized by a situation in which entering was more difficult, but graduation was easier. At present the students and the younger employees more carefully consider their values and estimation of the labor market. The younger generations tend to be serious about their future lives, reflecting the long stagnation. Some try to develop their own skills which do not depend on corporations, and others attempt to find their own lives aside from being economic animals. These characteristics make the younger generations more individualistic than ever before. These attitudes imply that the Japanese have faced a situation that they have to search for postmaterialistic ways of lives.

Importantly, Inglehart and Baker claim that “protracted economic collapse can reverse the effects of modernization, resulting in a return to traditional values, as seems to be happening in the former Soviet Union” (2000, p. 49). However, Japan’s stagnation occurred at a high standard of economic well-being and did not lead to social confusion. A gradual collapse of the Japanese economic system oriented the Japanese system toward the Western system based on individualism. The difference between the Japanese case and the Soviet case should be noted. A gradual collapse of the Japanese economic system is a result of advanced modernization.

The Postwar Transition of Industrial Structure in Japan

The economic environment in Japan has changed. Global mega-competition has had an enormous effect on not only large-scale corporations but also on small businesses. There are various kinds of subcontracted work and even small businesses have been closely related to large-scale corporations. In fact, small businesses are especially influenced by the business climate. Since globalization has influenced every aspect of life today, even small businesses cannot escape from changes in the economic environment. Industrial structures also have been transformed since the end of World War II (see Figure 8.2). Primary industry means agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and secondary industry includes mining, construction, and manufacturing. Tertiary industry includes electricity, gas and water supply, wholesale and retail trade, finance and insurance, real estate, transport and communications, service activities, and government not elsewhere classified. The percentage of those who engaged in the primary industry dramatically decreased from 48.5 in 1950 to 5.0 in 2000. On the other hand, the percentage of those who engaged in tertiary industry dramatically increased from 29.6 % to 64.3 % for the

same period. In the tertiary sector, the percentage of those who engaged in service activities significantly increased from 9.2 % to 27.4 % during the same period (see Appendix C). These facts indicate that Japanese society has been considerably transformed from an agricultural to an industrial society, and even further to a postindustrial society. According to Inglehart and Baker (2000), “[t]he rise of industrial society is linked with coherent cultural shifts away from traditional value systems, and the rise of postindustrial society is linked with a shift away from absolute norms and values toward a syndrome of increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting, postindustrial values” (p. 49). Throughout the transformation from agricultural society to postindustrial society, the Japanese have become increasingly rational, based on individualism. This rational orientation makes people pursue their individual happiness and leads to an increase in divorce rates.

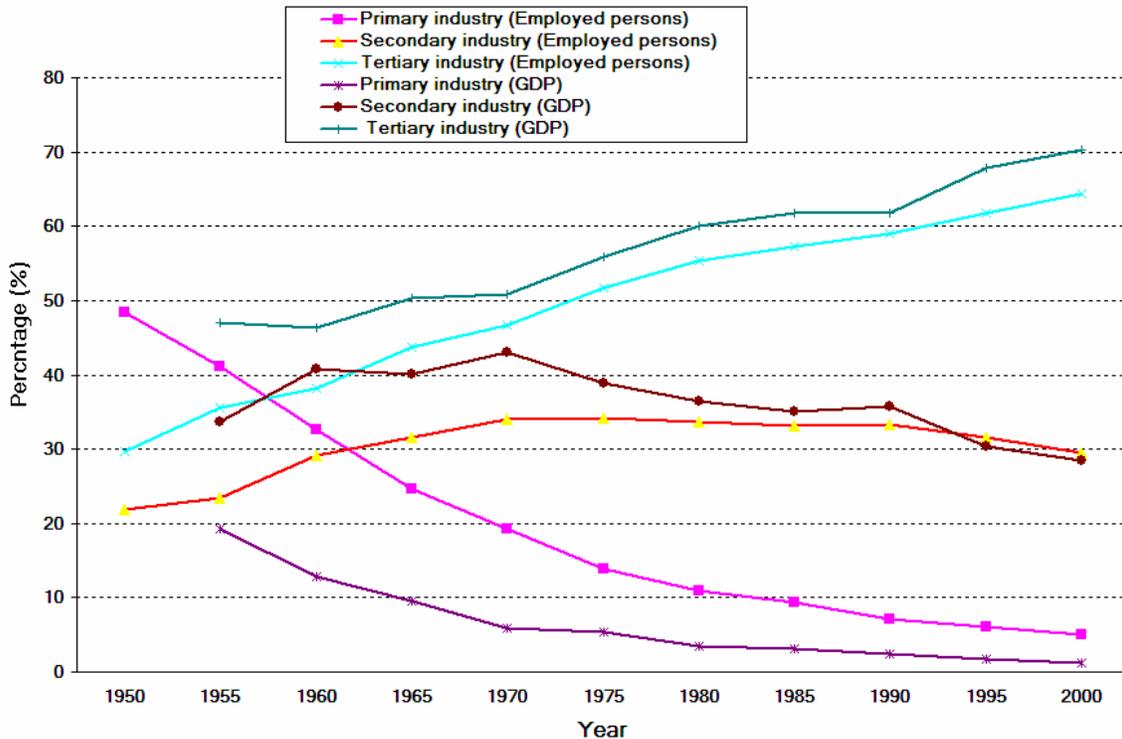


Figure 8.2 Trends in industrial structure (employed persons and GDP): 1950-2000. The data are from SNA National Accounts by the Government of Japan, Cabinet Office, Economic and Social Research Institute; Population Census of Japan by the Ministry of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT), Statistics Bureau. It should be noted that the data on GDP up to 1975 are based on the 1968 SNA, while those from 1980 to 2000 are based on the 1993 SNA.

A System of Japan under Political Ideology

Japan has achieved the goal of catching up with Western countries, and the “Japanese economic system”, which was efficient, no longer functions well. Furthermore, there are few people who have generated new innovations to lead Japan’s economy to a good business cycle. Now Japan has to create a new goal, a new economic system, and a lot of innovators to generate a new economic growth. However, Japan has suffered from the long stagnation and the Japanese economic system has partly begun to dissolve as explained above. The “Japanese economic system”, especially the Japanese labor system,

was not just an economic system but also functioned partly as a community itself. The Japanese employees totally relied on this system, but recently they have increasingly lost any strong faith, except in themselves. This has led to an accelerated rise of individualism and a gradual decline of group-orientation.

Basically, the Japanese do not have strong faith in a religious sense and are traditionally secularized. Instead, the Japanese are traditionally group-oriented and considerably influenced by political ideology. In fact, political ideology is much more useful when people do not notice its influences. During the Meiji Period, Japanese “cultural values were determined by the government, and imposed on the Japanese population, rather than naturally formed” (Marfording, 1997; p. 438), and even after WWII, the Japanese, without notice, were influenced throughout the Japanese economic system originated from political ideology. It was not until the Japanese are faced with a crisis of employment that they have begun to have a strong sense of individualism. This is a process of getting away from the postwar value of the Japanese economic system, introduced as the wartime regime by the political ideology, and also the traditional value of the group-orientation. Moreover, “[v]alue changes often occur in spurts in Japan, in part because values are widely and quickly shared, reflecting a high degree of cultural homogeneity” (Retherford, Ogawa, & Sakamoto, 1996; p. 25). In this context, individuals have begun to pursue their happiness and divorce rates have increased rapidly since the 1990s.

CHAPTER IX

Conclusion

Divorce in Japan is closely connected with the relationship between the social unit and organization throughout economic development. During the Meiji Period, when the modern marriage system was established, a decrease in divorce rates connects the relationship between the ie household and the established nation of Japan. The government promoted the urgent economic development and controlled the Japanese by the ideology of familism, which did not produce individualism. The pre-modern traditional value in a stable high divorce society declined, combined with the householders' authoritative interests, and divorce rates decreased.

After World War II, an increase in divorce rates resulted from the relationship between families, based on a couple of husband and wife, and corporations, not only as economic organization but also as a part of community as well. The "Japanese economic system", originated from the wartime regime, regulated a way of life among citizens and the government controlled the economy and corporations with the traditionally approved "visible hand". Rapid growth of the economy and urbanization transformed the family household and also a marriage style from arranged marriages to love matches. Economic development brought pervasive cultural changes, and the Japanese gradually came to have individualistic orientation. As a result, divorce rates gradually increased.

However, global mega-competition has made this visible hand by the government malfunction and the long stagnation of the Japanese economy has also made the Japanese economic system malfunction. The Japanese economic system that most citizens relied on does not totally sustain itself, and vague social anxiety regarding their employment

and their future have made them more individualistic. Corporations do not secure their employees' livelihoods anymore. Here, the relationship between an individual and the society has begun. Gradually getting away off the traditional group-orientation, an individual has begun to pursue his or her happiness, although it is based on family.

Every individualistic view among the people is not connected with an increase in divorce, but some changes in values have occurred among them. The rapid upsurge in divorce rates has been brought about in this context. Today, divorce rates in Japan are as high as those of advanced countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands. Inglehart and Baker mention that Sweden and the Netherlands seem closer to the cutting edge of cultural change among the advanced nations.

Divorce is becoming a social norm and is no longer a stigma anymore. Japan was a stable high divorce rate society, and therefore, in accordance with modernization of Japan, the divorce rate decreased throughout the period of industrialization. As a result of moral education at school, chastity and a harmonious home were considered virtues and divorce became a stigma, as seen in low divorce rates until the 1980s. The postwar material ways of life have brought an individualistic view among the Japanese, and the Japanese have begun to pursue their own happiness in a rational way, escaping from family-orientation. In this autonomous context, divorce has become a social norm and has ceased being a stigma anymore.

From the perspective between modernization and traditional values on divorce in Japan, the economic development has produced pervasive social and cultural consequences. Group-orientation, one of the traditional values in Japan, which was established during the Tokugawa shogunate, was well controlled by the government and

it still deeply rooted. However, there is a sign of its decline with a rise of individualistic view among the Japanese, who enjoy their material ways of life and who have extensive contact with globalization. Individualism, which used to be weak in Japanese society, is one of the most influential factors in rising rates of divorce. Japan is catching up with the Western standards of individualism, whether it is good or not, some decades after it achieved economic development. Recent divorce rates are as high as those during the Meiji Period. However, its characteristics are essentially different, and it is no longer a traditional way of divorce. Modernization has brought autonomous ways of life among the Japanese. Today divorce is a reflection of autonomous and rational decisions to pursue individual happiness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A Trends in divorces, proportion in legal types of divorce, and divorce rates: 1883-1890

Year	Total number	Percentage (%)				divorce rates (per 1,000 population)
		Divorces by mutual agreement	Conciliation	Divorce by judgment	Judicial judgment	
1883	127,163	...	...	...	...	3.38
1890	109,088	...	...	...	...	2.73
1900	63,828	...	...	...	...	1.46
1910	59,432	99.3	-	-	0.7	1.21
1920	55,511	99.2	-	-	0.8	0.99
1925	51,687	99.3	-	-	0.8	0.87
1930	51,259	99.3	-	-	0.7	0.80
1935	48,528	99.2	-	-	0.8	0.70
1940	48,556	99.2	-	-	0.8	0.68
1947	79,551	99.8	-	-	0.2	1.02
1950	83,689	95.5	3.9	0.0	0.5	1.01
1955	75,267	92.8	6.4	0.0	0.8	0.84
1960	69,410	91.2	7.8	0.1	0.9	0.74
1965	77,195	90.2	8.7	0.1	1.1	0.79
1966	79,432	89.6	9.2	0.1	1.1	0.80
1967	83,478	89.7	9.2	0.1	1.0	0.84
1968	87,327	89.5	9.4	0.1	1.0	0.87
1969	91,280	89.7	9.2	0.1	1.0	0.89
1970	95,937	89.6	9.3	0.1	1.0	0.93
1971	103,595	89.7	9.2	0.1	1.0	0.99
1972	108,382	89.6	9.4	0.1	1.0	1.02
1973	111,877	89.7	9.2	0.1	1.0	1.04
1974	113,622	89.8	9.1	0.0	1.0	1.04
1975	119,135	89.9	9.0	0.0	1.0	1.07
1976	124,512	89.3	9.6	0.0	1.1	1.11
1977	129,485	89.4	9.5	0.0	1.1	1.14
1978	132,146	89.5	9.3	0.0	1.2	1.15
1979	135,250	89.5	9.3	0.0	1.2	1.17
1980	141,689	89.9	9.0	0.0	1.1	1.22
1981	154,221	90.3	8.6	0.0	1.1	1.32
1982	163,980	90.4	8.5	0.0	1.1	1.39
1983	179,150	91.3	7.6	0.0	1.0	1.51
1984	178,746	91.3	7.6	0.0	1.0	1.50
1985	166,640	91.2	7.8	0.0	1.0	1.39
1986	166,054	91.0	7.9	0.0	1.0	1.37
1987	158,227	90.8	8.1	0.0	1.0	1.30
1988	153,600	90.7	8.3	0.0	1.0	1.26
1989	157,811	90.4	8.6	0.0	1.0	1.29
1990	157,608	90.5	8.4	0.0	1.0	1.28
1991	168,969	90.5	8.5	0.0	1.0	1.37
1992	179,191	90.8	8.3	0.0	0.9	1.45
1993	188,297	90.5	8.6	0.0	0.9	1.52
1994	195,106	90.5	8.6	0.0	0.9	1.57
1995	199,016	90.4	8.7	0.0	0.9	1.60
1996	206,955	90.8	8.3	0.0	0.9	1.66
1997	222,635	90.9	8.2	0.0	0.8	1.78
1998	243,183	91.2	7.9	0.0	0.9	1.94
1999	250,529	91.5	7.7	0.0	0.8	2.00
2000	264,246	91.5	7.7	0.0	0.8	2.10
2001	285,911	91.5	7.7	0.0	0.8	2.27
2002	289,836	91.2	7.9	0.0	0.9	2.30

Note: The data for 1883 and 1890 are from Teikoku Ninkan and for 1990 onwards, Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Statistics and Information Department. The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

Appendix B

Table B Total population and population growth: 1872-2001

Year	Population (thousands)	Number of population growth (thousands)						Mean annual rate of growth (%)
		Total	Natural increase			Other		
			Total	Birth	Death	Total	Net migration	
1872	34,806							
1900	43,847	9,041	...	...	...	...	...	0.83
1920	55,963	12,116	...	...	...	...	...	1.23
1925	59,737	3,774	3,935	10,375	6,440	-161	50	1.31
1933	64,450	4,713	4,726	10,796	6,070	-13	49	1.53
1935	69,254	4,804	4,913	10,938	6,025	-109	-237	1.45
1940	71,933	2,679	4,316	10,513	6,197	-1,637	-1,384	0.76
1945	72,147	214	4,033	10,964	6,926	-3,824	-3,233	0.06
1947	78,101	5,954	1,666	4,199	2,533	4,238	4,472	4.04
1950	83,200	5,098	4,986	7,813	2,827	112	501	2.13
1955	89,276	6,076	5,936	9,806	3,870	140	44	1.42
1960	93,419	4,143	4,676	8,256	3,580	-533	-86	0.91
1965	98,275	4,856	4,943	8,420	3,477	-87	-41	1.02
1970	103,720	5,445	5,601	9,051	3,451	-156	12	1.08
1975	111,940	8,220	6,655	10,190	3,535	1,565	-42	1.54
1980	117,060	5,121	5,491	8,989	3,498	-370	-54	0.90
1985	121,049	3,989	4,072	7,723	3,652	-83	7	0.67
1990	123,611	2,562	2,976	6,814	3,837	-414	-43	0.42
1995	125,570	1,959	1,853	6,126	4,268	101	-17	0.31
2000	126,326	1,356	1,386	6,045	4,660	-30	-22	0.21
2001	127,231	365	219	1,185	966	146	146	0.23
2002	127,435	145	195	1,176	980	-51	-51	0.11

Note: The data are from Vital Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Statistics and Information Department. The data for 1947-1972 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.

Appendix C

Table C Trends in industrial structure by numbers engaged: 1950-2000

Year	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Primary industry	48.5	41.1	32.7	24.7	19.3	13.8	10.9	9.3	7.1	6.0	5.0
Agriculture	45.4	38.0	30.1	22.9	17.9	12.6	9.8	8.3	6.4	5.3	4.5
Forestry	1.2	1.3	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Fishing	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4
Secondary industry	21.8	23.4	29.1	31.5	34.0	34.1	33.6	33.1	33.3	31.6	29.5
Mining	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Construction	4.3	4.5	6.1	6.4	7.5	8.9	9.6	9.0	9.5	10.3	10.0
Manufacturing	15.9	17.5	21.7	24.4	26.1	24.9	23.7	23.9	23.7	21.1	19.4
Tertiary industry	28.6	35.5	38.2	43.7	46.6	51.8	55.4	57.3	59.0	61.8	64.3
Electricity, gas, & water supply	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6
Transport and communications	4.4	4.6	5.0	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.2
Wholesale and retail trade	11.1	13.9	15.8	17.8	19.3	21.4	22.8	22.9	22.4	22.8	22.7
Finance and insurance	1.0	1.5	1.6	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.8
Real estate	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.2
Service activities	9.2	11.4	12.0	13.9	14.6	16.5	18.5	20.5	22.5	24.8	27.4
Government not elsewhere classified	3.3	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.4
Establishment not adequately described	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.2

Note: The data are from Population Census of Japan by the Ministry of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT), Statistics Bureau. The data for 1950-1970 do not include Okinawa Prefecture.