Households - family structure, housing, declining birthrates

Today's Class

- Households: Ie and Koseki
- Marriage, Divorce, Birthrates, Childcare, Adoption
- LGBT+ and International Marriage
- Active Learning
- Types of families/households and the challenges they face
- Summary

The Ie

- Ancestors: Recently dead
- Yome marries in
- Daughters marry out
- Yoshi may marry in
- Yome may marry in

Descendants

From Joy Hendry, Understanding Japanese Society, p. 25.

Festivals and the Life-cycle

- Shichi-go-san
- Coming-of-age
- O-bon festival
- Butsudan
- Marriage
- Family grave

Koseki

- The family register.
- Legal document required for any rights as a member of society.
- Formalizes an individual's position within the organization of the family.
- E.g. 世帯主, 配偶者, 父, 母, 長男, 次男, 三男, 長女, 次女, 三女.

More Single People Households

Figure 2.3

Changes in Household Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>One-person households</th>
<th>Nuclear-family households</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Bureau, MCI.
Table 2.3
Households and Household Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Private households (1,000)</th>
<th>Rate of private households change(%)</th>
<th>Private household members (1,000)</th>
<th>Rate of population change(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>22,539</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>95,419</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>26,247</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>165,129</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>33,996</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>181,040</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>35,824</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>170,040</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>40,070</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>121,334</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>43,940</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>123,646</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>46,342</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>124,723</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The growing phenomenon of kodokushi (solitary death)

Table 2.4
Trends in Elderly Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private households</td>
<td>43,99</td>
<td>46,78</td>
<td>49,06</td>
<td>51,84</td>
<td>53,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly households</td>
<td>12,79</td>
<td>15,07</td>
<td>17,28</td>
<td>19,38</td>
<td>21,73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-person households</td>
<td>2,202</td>
<td>3,632</td>
<td>3,885</td>
<td>4,791</td>
<td>5,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>1,386</td>
<td>1,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>1,742</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>2,814</td>
<td>3,405</td>
<td>4,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear-family houses</td>
<td>5,149</td>
<td>6,783</td>
<td>8,398</td>
<td>10,011</td>
<td>11,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5,459</td>
<td>5,241</td>
<td>4,994</td>
<td>4,539</td>
<td>4,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marriage and Divorce

- Marriage (the change in koseki) vs Weddings (the ceremony).
- A fascinating account of the "Christian" wedding ceremony.
- Married couples must have the same family name which has been challenged in the courts. Sometimes the man changes his name via adult adoption.
- Getting married is easy. Getting divorced can be very tough... Custody of children is given to one parent (80-90% of times the mother). Visitation rights are unenforceable.

Table 2.8
Mean Age of First Marriage

Table 2.9
Proportion of Never Married at Exact Age 50 by Sex %

Fertility Rates

Marriage/Divorce Rates

Older Age of Marriage

**Older Age of Motherhood**

**Reasons for Smaller Families**

- Older age of marriage and first child (greater access to birth control).
- More mobile nuclear families and the reduction of nearby family support (the “obachan” babysitter).
- Lack of childcare places. The issue came to a head in 2016 with the “Die Japan!” blog.
- The cost of raising a child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of births (1,000)</th>
<th>Distribution of mothers’ age (%)</th>
<th>Mean age bearing first child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>1.6 26.5 40.2 18.5 4.2 0.5 26.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>0.9 18.8 51.4 24.7 3.7 0.3 26.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,222</td>
<td>1.4 15.7 43.1 29.1 7.6 1.0 27.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>1.7 13.6 39.5 33.3 10.6 1.1 26.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>1.3 10.4 29.6 31.9 20.5 3.3 29.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>1.2 9.4 26.1 36.3 27.7 5.4 30.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>1.1 8.4 23.7 36.3 22.9 5.6 30.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>1.0 8.4 23.5 36.3 22.9 5.7 30.7</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LGBT+ Rights & Same-Sex Marriage**

- Article 24 of the constitution reads:
  
  Article 24. 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.

  With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorces 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.

- Despite historical and contemporary tolerance of same-sex relationships, same-sex marriage is not enshrined in the constitution.

- From 2015, some municipalities have issued certificates for same-sex couples.
  - But these are “weddings”, not “marriage”, and do not translate into the legal rights of married heterosexual couples. Couples are currently suing to get that right.
  - But, does the Constitution need to change? Conservative Shimomura Hakubun thinks yes, LGBT+ lawmaker Otsuji Kanako thinks no. What is going on?
  - And as in many places, anti-LGBT+ rhetoric persists.
When International Marriage Fails …

- The issue of child abduction by a parent after acrimonious divorce has gained considerable attention.
- The Japanese government’s explanation paints the Japanese parent as the likely victim.
- English-language media has highlighted the cases of foreign fathers battling with Japanese ex-wives in the Japanese courts.
- The moral of the story … make sure your (international) marriage works, or, that you both quickly agree on a mutually-amicable divorce settlement.

Example Households

- There is no “average” family.
- Here are some of the recurrent patterns I have witnessed in real life and via news media.
- NB: Each scenario is a “typical example”, and there may be other sub-variations.
- The housing situation varies a lot depending on rural/urban, metropolitan/regional situations …

Group 1: Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Single People</th>
<th>Nuclear-family households</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Bureau, MOC.
The Care-giving Family

- Grandparent in need of care
- Salaryman breadwinner
- Wife the main care-giver
- School-age kids

**Issues**
- Coping with caring

**Housing Situation:** Family home probably paid off, but the pressure and expenses of caring.

The Irregular Extended Family

- e.g. Grandmother, Great Aunt, school age grandchild

**Issues**
- Whatever personal circumstances caused the unusual arrangements ...

**Housing Situation:** Depends on the family situation.

Group 2: Nuclear families

**Figure 2.1 Changes in Household Composition**

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<td>11.5</td>
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</tbody>
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**Source:** Statistics Bureau, M.C.

The Nuclear Family

- Salaryman breadwinner
- Part-time worker wife
- School-age kids

**Issues**
- Husband—employer and husband—wife relationship

**Housing Situation:** Struggling with a mortgage, or in company housing.

“Parasite Single” (F)

- Elderly parents (pension/part-time)
- Salarywoman or part-timer

**Issues**
- When to get married?

**Housing Situation:** Acceptable if searching for a suitable marriage partner, or in a carer role.

“Parasite Single” (M)

- Elderly parents (pension/part-time)
- Salaryman or part-timer

**Issues**
- When will he move out or get married?

**Housing Situation:** Scrounging rent/food. Potential for friction with parents.
DINK (Double Income No Kids)

- Husband and wife are both "breadwinners"
- No kids

Issues
- Coping with childlessness

Housing Situation: Mortgage quickly paid off. High disposable income.

Newly-weds

- Husband and wife both "breadwinners"
- No kids

Issues
- What to do about starting a family?
- Does the wife quit or continue in work beyond kids?

Housing Situation: Large mortgage or company housing. High disposable income.

LGBT+

- LGBT couple
- Similar to DINK

Issues
- Legal rights as a married couple not recognized.
- Coping with "what others think."

Housing Situation: Landlords, employers and banks probably do not recognize marital status (access to loans etc).

Single Mother (Father Away)

- Husband posted away/abroad by his company (tanshin funin)
- Mother raising the kids on her own.

Issues
- The children's education vs staying together as a family.
- Will the couple adapt to living together again.

Housing Situation: The family home, or company housing.

The Domestic Violence Scenario

- Male breadwinner
- Wife facing an abusive relationship
- School-age kids

Issues
- Getting a divorce is difficult.
- Precarity if a divorce is granted.
- Fear of more violence if she goes back.

Housing Situation: The household head "occupies" the house during separation.

Single Mother (Divorced)

- Single mother
- Juggling (part-time) work and raising school-age kids

Issues
- Precarity
- Poverty
- Exhaustion

Housing Situation: Often in public housing, constantly worrying about money.

Read: Kuwajima, "My husband is a good man when he doesn't hit me" in Allison & Cook (eds) Intimate Japan.
**Single Father**

- Single father (widower)
- Juggling (full-time) work and raising school-age kids

**Issues**
- Career advancement grinds to a halt

**Housing Situation:** In company/private housing, but worrying about for how much longer.

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**Single Retiree (F)**

- Single woman
- Retiree

**Issues**
- Who will care for her?
- The risk of solitary death.

**Housing Situation:** Financial circumstances vary enormously.

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**Single Retiree (M)**

- Single man
- Retiree

**Issues**
- Who will care for him?
- The risk of solitary death.

**Housing Situation:** Financial circumstances vary from wealthy to destitute.

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**“Eligible Spinster”**

- Single woman
- Salarywoman

**Issues**
- What to do about starting a family?
- Will she quit work to marry?

**Housing Situation:** Rental property or company housing. High disposable income.

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**“Eligible Bachelor”**

- Single man
- Salaryman

**Issues**
- How to find a wife when he is “married to work.”

**Housing Situation:** Rental property or company housing. High disposable income.
Freeter (F)

- Single woman
- Freeter

**Issues**
- Securing a good husband a high priority.
- High risk of exploitation.

**Housing Situation:** Rental property. Low disposable income.

Freeter (M)

- Single man
- Freeter

**Issues**
- Feels unable to marry without secure employment

**Housing Situation:** Rental property. Low disposable income.

The Divorced Father

- The father loses access to his children

**Issues**
- Little recourse to see his children or get them back. Especially in trans-border child abduction situations.

**Housing Situation:** The "eligible bachelor" again ... maybe ...

Next Time

- And of course there are the homeless ... to be discussed next time along with:

  - Class – "middle class Japan", wealth and poverty
  - Suggested Reading: Handbook Chapters 13, 15; Sugimoto Chapter 2; Hendry Chapter 6.