

How Has Women's Social Stratification Changed? Focusing on Education, Occupation, Income, and Wealth

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1. Introduction

- ❑ In postwar Japan, as in many other countries, women's positions within the social stratification system have undergone substantial transformation.
 - ✓ Educational attainment has increased.
 - ✓ Employment conditions have improved.
 - ✓ Then women's capacity for earning income has expanded accordingly.
 - ❑ However, it has been pointed out that gender differences persist across these indicators (Matsuoka 2019; Nagase 2024).
- Against this background, institutional reforms aimed at achieving gender equality have been promoted in Japan, such as the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and ongoing discussions on the abolition of the Category III insured system.

1. Introduction

- ❑ However, the existing discussions appear to lack the following perspectives.
 - ✓ How can equality between men and women at the individual level be measured?
 - What is the most appropriate way to define women's social stratification?
 - ✓ What is required of social security policies to achieve gender equality?
 - Is it sufficient merely to promote equality at the individual level?
 - ✓ How does the advancement of gender equality affect family formation?
 - What has family formation meant for women in the past?
- ❑ This study explores these questions through an exploratory analysis of changes in women's social stratification.

2. Literature Review

□ How Has Women's Social Stratification Changed in Previous Studies?

- ✓ **Education:** Women's access to higher education has expanded substantially, although a persistent gender gap remains (Ishida 2007; Matsuoka 2019).
- ✓ **Employment Status:** The proportion of women in regular employment has increased; however, labor market segmentation continues to characterize gender differences in employment (Yu 2009; Nagase and Brinton 2017).
- ✓ **Income:** Women's wages have risen over time, yet a considerable gender wage gap persists (Nagase 2024).
- ✓ **Wealth:** In Japan, marriage does not necessarily confer an advantage in terms of asset accumulation (Niimi 2021).

2. Literature Review

□ Previous studies suggest that it is particularly important to focus on income, because...

- ✓ Japan has long been characterized by the male breadwinner model,
- ✓ and social security policies have historically discouraged women's full labor force participation and earnings.

→ This study aims to clarify two main points in order to address the questions raised above:

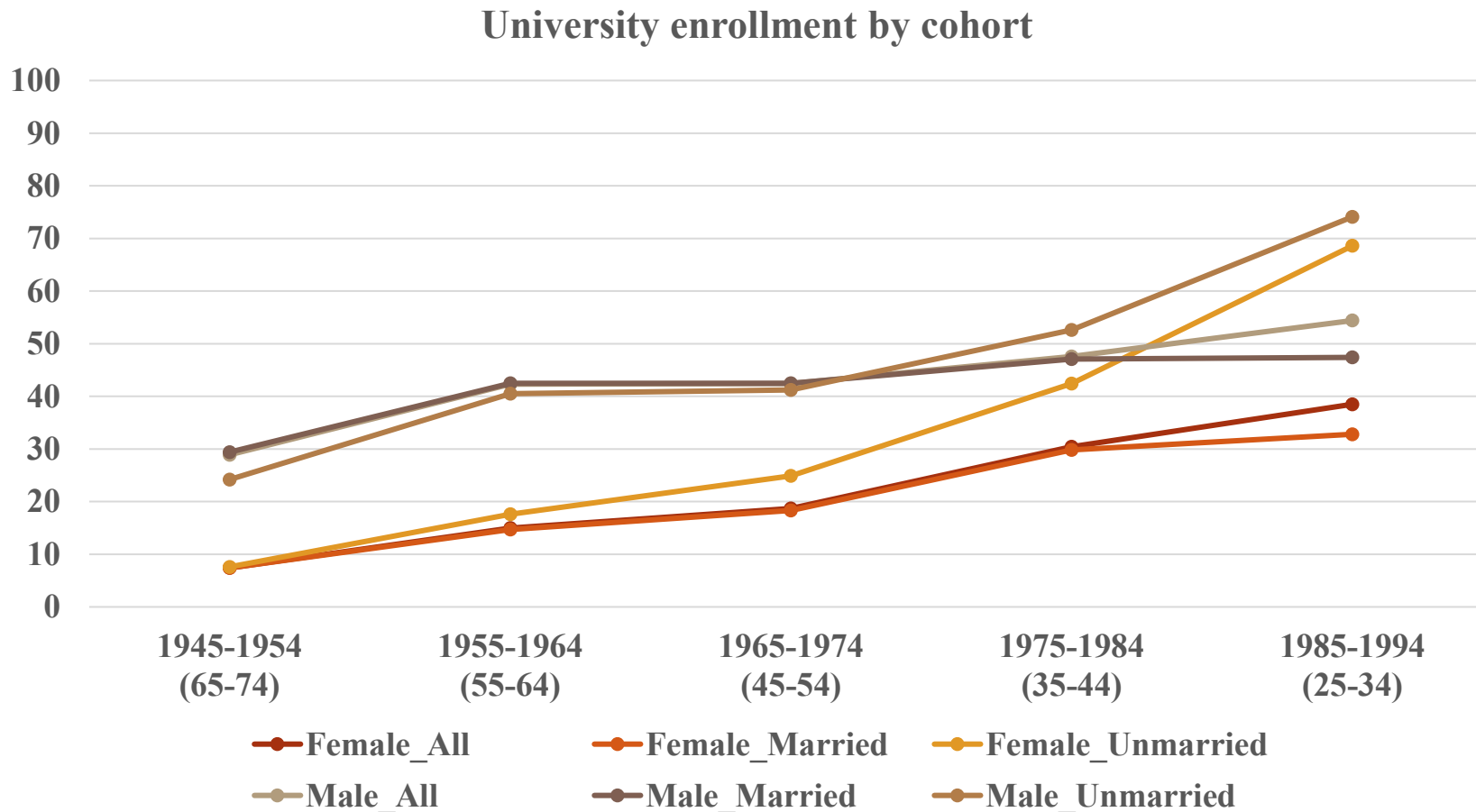
1. To reexamine the transformation of women's social stratification in postwar Japan from a multidimensional perspective while comparing with men.
2. To discuss changes in gender differences and future directions based on the analytical results.

3. Analytical Results

□ Data: National Survey of Family Income, Consumption and Wealth 2019

- ✓ Conducted by: Statistics Bureau of Japan, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. <https://www.stat.go.jp/data/zenkokukakei/2019/index.html>
- ✓ Nationwide survey capturing household income, consumption, savings, and asset holdings.
- ✓ One of Japan's most comprehensive datasets on household economic structure.
 - National coverage: Representative sample of Japanese households.
 - Data structure: Household-level data with tabulations by deciles/quintiles.
 - Indicators: Annual income, wealth composition, and demographic stratification.
 - Purpose: To assess the distribution and determinants of household economic well-being.

3. Analytical Results



3. Analytical Results

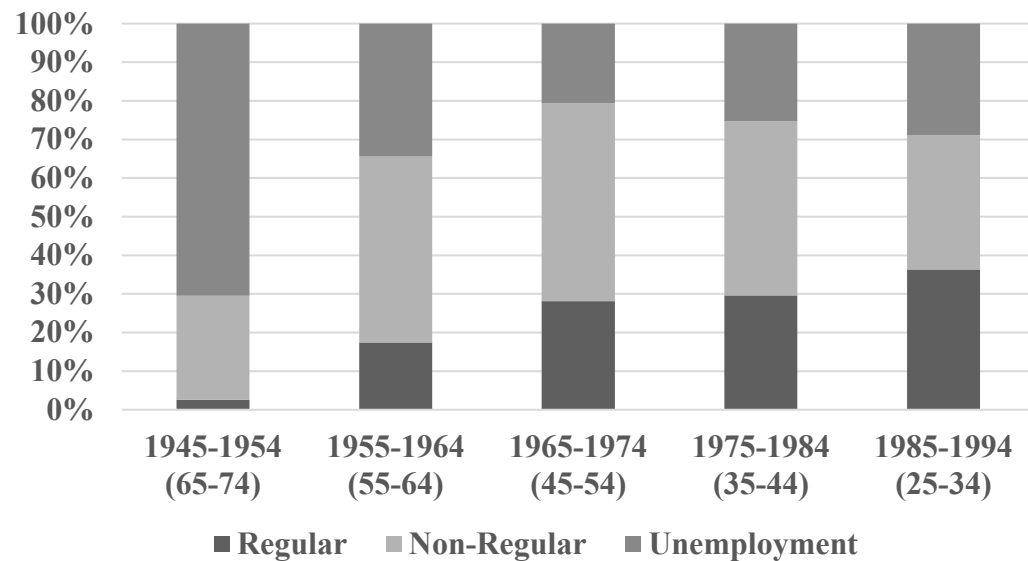
Employment status by cohort (Female_All)



Employment status by cohort (Male_All)



Employment status by cohort (Female_Married)



Employment status by cohort (Male_Married)



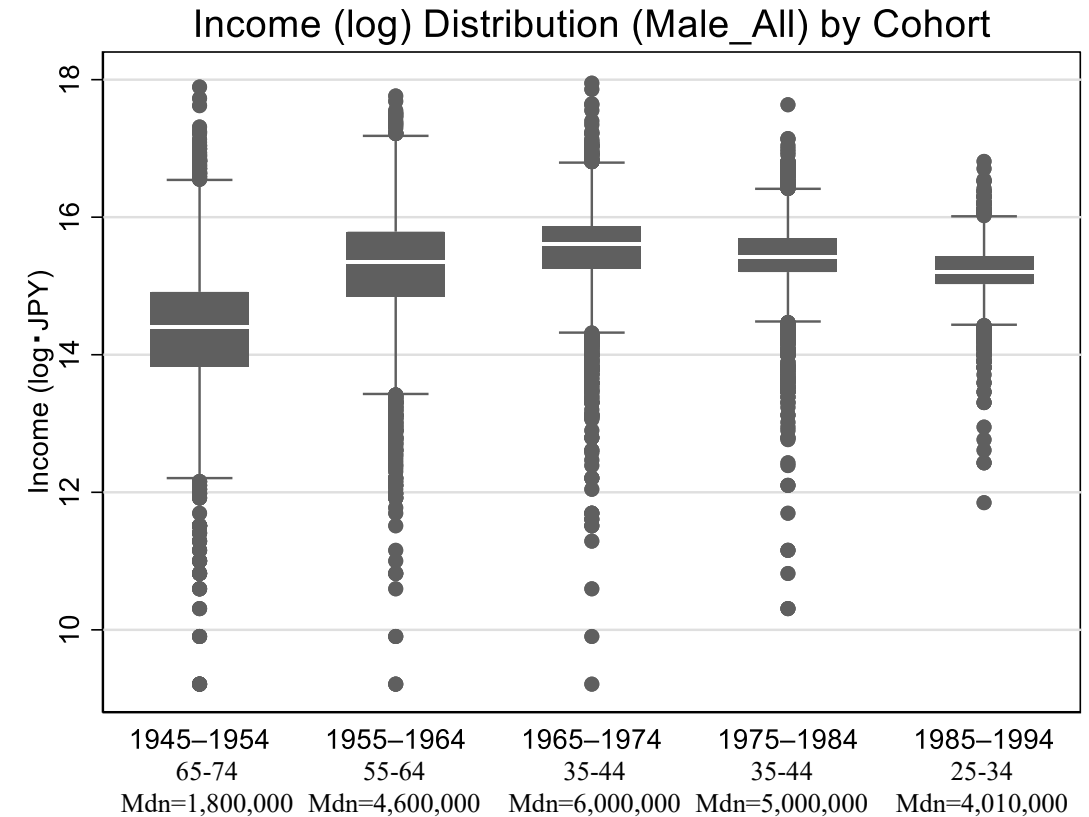
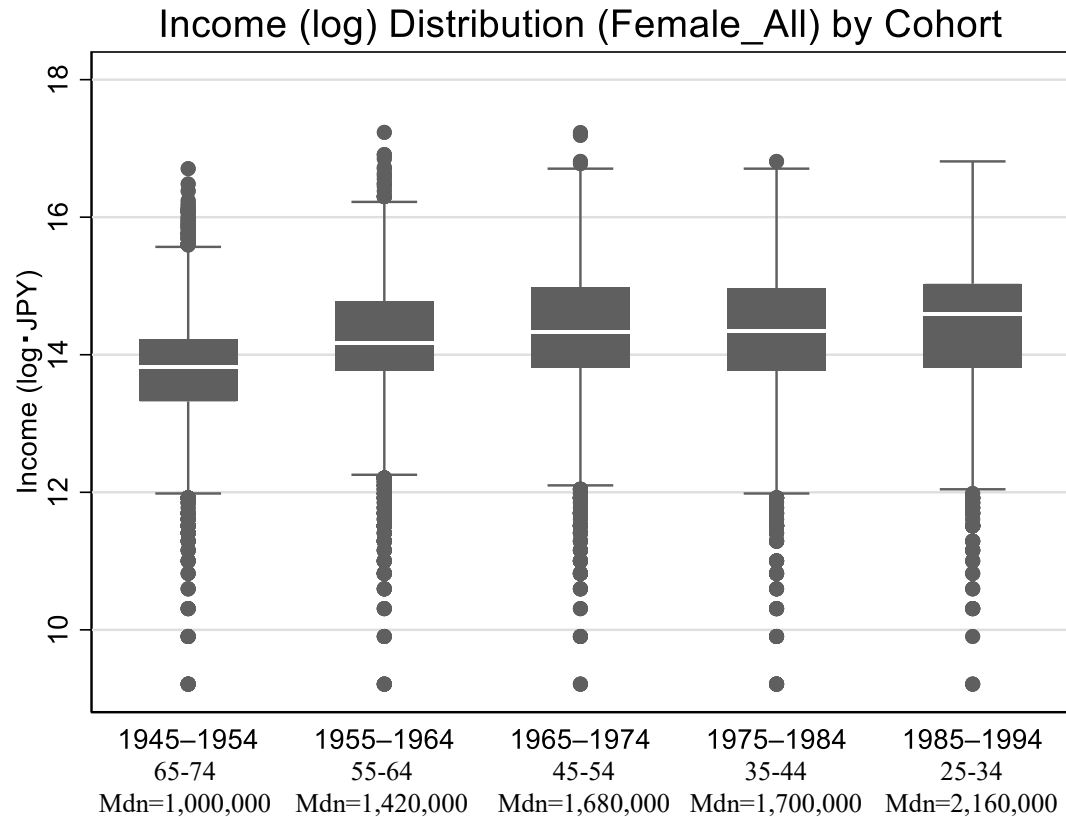
Employment status by cohort (Female_Unmarried)

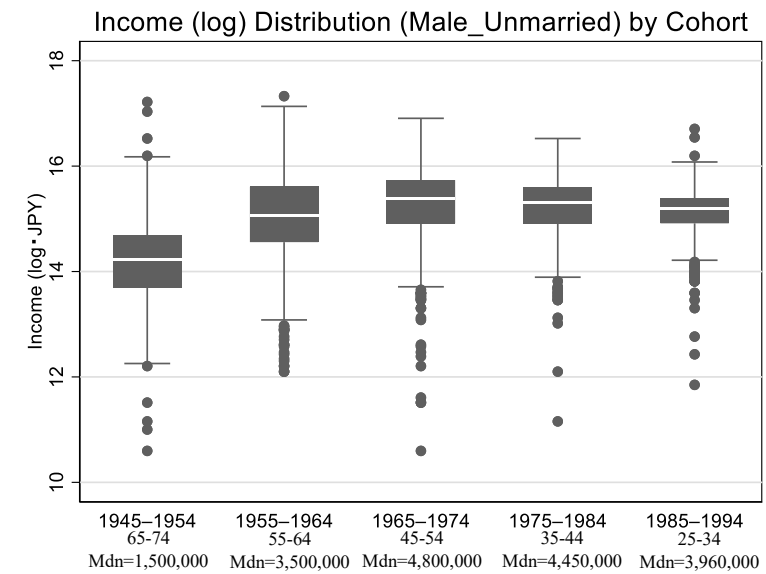
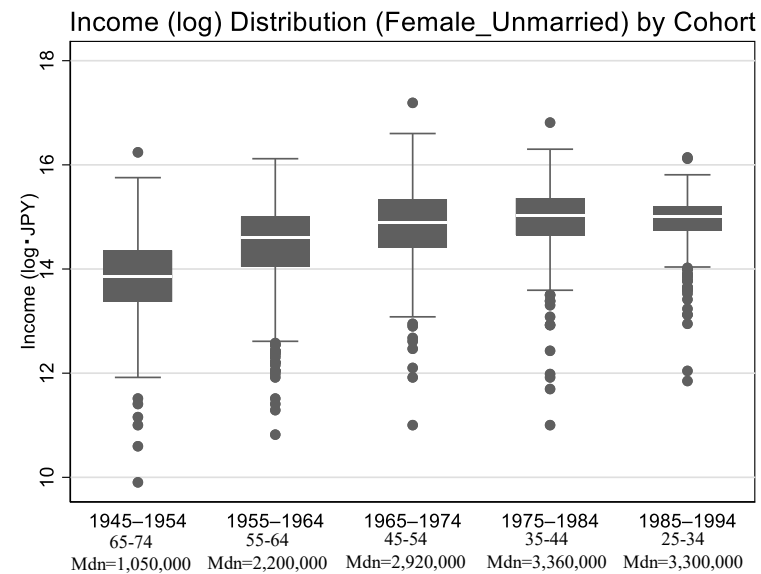
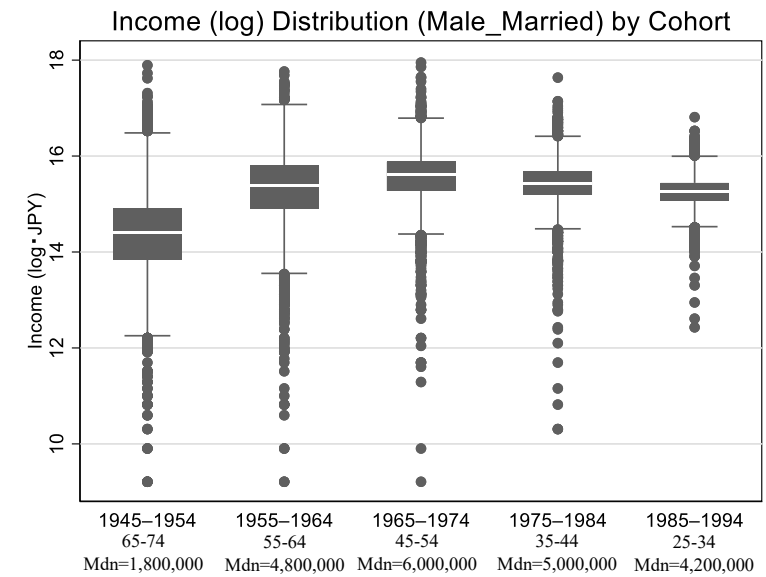
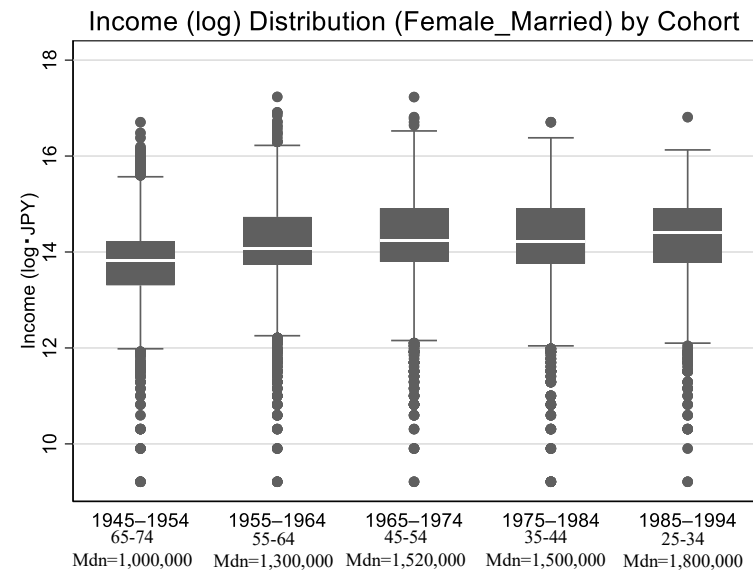


Employment status by cohort (Male_Unmarried)



3. Analytical Results





3. Analytical Results

□ Summary of Descriptive Analysis

- ✓ **Education:** higher educational attainment has become more common among recent cohorts of women.
→ Gender and marital gaps persist.
- ✓ **Employment:** the share of regular employees has increased among younger cohorts, reflecting women's expanding participation in the labor market.
→ Differences by gender and marital status are evident in employment status, with the gender gap being especially pronounced among the married population.

3. Analytical Results

□ Summary of Descriptive Analysis

✓ **Income: Differences exist by gender and marital status.**

→ **Differences among married individuals are particularly pronounced, whereas among the unmarried, the gender gap in income is smaller in more recent cohorts.**

□ **From these findings arises a central question: Why do women choose to marry despite experiencing a decline in social status?**

→ **Focusing on households rather than individuals may provide an answer to this question.**

3. Analytical Results

