

Nuptiality in Thailand : An Analysis Based on the 1980 Population Census Data

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Age at marriage and the proportion marrying are important determinants of levels of fertility, and hence population growth, in all countries. A study based on 1970 census data for Thailand established that nuptiality behavior was associated with a wide range of social and demographic variables and that there was considerable variation between regions. Even though 1980 population census data has been available for some time there has been no attempt to provide an updated overview of the relationships between nuptiality and characteristics of Thai society. In this paper the 1980 populations census data at the provincial level are used to examine these relationships. The analysis is conducted for the whole kingdom and separately for each region. Findings from the analysis indicate that educational levels, measured as the percentage of women who have completed primary school education, have very limited effects on either the average age at marriage (SMAM) or the proportion of women aged 20-24 who were single. One variable which is amenable to policy intervention, the percentage of females in non-agricultural occupations, was found to be positively associated with nuptiality indicators for most regions. Another variable found to have a strong and consistent effects on nuptiality was the sex ratio. The greater the availability of males (higher sex ratio) the more likely that women, on average, marry at younger ages. The importance of cultural factors in determining nuptiality behavior was clearly demonstrated for the Southern region of Thailand where it was found that the higher the proportion of Buddhists in the provinces the later the average age at marriage.