

# **Marriage Late or Forgone: The case of Lebanon**

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This paper investigates marriage patterns, particularly the rates of marriage and marital homogamy in Lebanon. The legacy of sixteen years of civil war has resulted in imbalances between males and females and institutionalization of migration particularly among young men. This along with the increased levels of women's education has affected the marriage market for both men and women. We hypothesize that those with higher levels of education will have lower marriage rates, higher levels of women never-married by age 35, and lower marital homogamy.

This study uses data from the Lebanese Family Health Survey (PAPFAM) 2004 conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, in collaboration with Central Administration of Statistics as part of an agreement with the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM). The Family Health Survey collected data from 5532 households in Lebanon. Data was also collected from 3365 ever married women between ages 15-54 years with an overall response rate of 96.2%. Data on the households and persons in the household rosters are used. We will look at the experiences of men and women age 15 to 35 years.

Prior research using earlier 1996 Population and Housing Survey has shown that the prevalence of marriage among Lebanese women with advanced education is low and marital homogamy is less common. These discordant marriages increase with the women's age (Saxena, Kulcycki and Jurdi 2004). This research have speculated a potential marriage squeeze where three out of often women and four out often men were still single in Lebanon in the age group 30-34. The sex differential narrows and in fact crosses over in the 35-39 age group at which one in every five of all men and of all women is still single. A sizeable fraction of women pass through their reproductive years without entering a marital union: 15 percent of women aged 40-44 were still single in 1996 (Saxena, Kulcycki and Jurdi 2004). The percentage of single women in the 35-39 age group who were still single has infact increased since 1996 to reach 21 percent (Rashad et al 2005). This places Lebanon in a situation that is quite different and peculiar compared to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, where marriage is typically universal, especially for women

This project extends this prior research by specifically identifying the impact of education on the rates of marriage and marital homogomay for both men and women. We will determine the impact of the education using information on, a) the ratio of the percentage of persons age 20-29 with completed secondary education to the percentage of persons

age 30-39 who have completed secondary school b) Mate availability ratio using the proportion of single males per 100 single females (to determine where the legacy of the civil war and the increasing level of migration among males have distorted the marriage market).

Our paper examines three outcomes: a) ever-married vs. never-married, b) the proportions of men and women remaining never-married by age 39, and c) the homogamy of spouses in regards to age, education, and employment status. We will first examine the prevalence of marriage for men and women across Lebanon. We will calculate marriage rates using synthetic cohort techniques (once we have inspected the data to make sure this is appropriate). We will examine variations in the percentages of men and women never married by age 35-39, then variations in sexual disparities in lifetime singlehood. Finally, we will examine variations in the level of marital homogamy for currently married men and women (standardizing for age).

This phase of the analysis should provide evidence about whether level of education leads to reductions in rates of marriage, greater numbers of women and men single for life (and whether impacts are greater on women), and reductions in marital homogamy. In a second phase of the analysis we will estimate discrete time hazards model of marriage using the measure of level of education as an independent variable with controls for the usual sociodemographic factors. Logistic regression models will be used to examine the effects of the same factors on lifetime singlehood and marital homogamy.