

Abstract: In this paper, we extend research on "diverging destinies" by examining the role of discontinuous maternal employment and experience of divorce in accounting for educational differences in mothers' economic disadvantage in Japan. Using simple decomposition, we show that about one-third of the negative educational gradient in economic disadvantage is explained (in a statistical accounting sense) by differences in employment trajectories and especially divorce. We find little evidence that differences in remarriage and intergenerational support mitigate the role of demographic behaviors in shaping disparities in mothers' economic well-being.