

Annual Population and Social Security Surveys in 2021
The Sixteenth Japanese National Fertility Survey

Marriage Process and Fertility of Married Couples
Attitudes toward Marriage and Family among Japanese Singles
Summary of the Survey Results on Married Couples/ Singles

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Numerical data for each of the graphs in this summary can also be found at the following web page (Japanese only).

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Highlights of the Survey

[Sample] Unmarried men and women aged 18 to 54 and married women under the age of 55 living in 1,000 districts (census tracts) selected randomly from all survey districts established for the 2021 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions of the People on Health and Welfare.

[Period of Survey] June 2021 (Information as of June 30)

[Number of Responses]

Survey of Singles: 14,011 questionnaires distributed, 7,826 valid responses (55.9% response rate)

Survey of Married Women: 9,401 questionnaires distributed, 6,834 valid responses (72.7% response rate)

[Key Findings]

Views on Marriage and Childbearing among Never-married Persons

- The percentage of never-married persons aged 18-34 who reported that they “intend to get married someday” decreased regardless of gender, age, or “lifestyle” reflected in personal tastes and preferences (men: 81.4%, compared to 85.7% in the previous survey; women: 84.3%, compared to 89.3% in the previous survey).
- The percentage of never-married persons who were in a dating relationship remained unchanged at 21.1% for men and decreased slightly to 27.8% for women compared to the previous survey. At the same time, 1 in 3 never-married persons has no desire to be in a dating relationship. Six out of 10 men and women have ever been in a dating relationship with a person of the opposite sex (60.0% of men and 64.8% of women).
- For the first time since the survey was conducted, the most common response of both men and women for the ideal “women’s life course” was “balancing work and family”.
- In terms of desired traits in a potential marriage partner, men increasingly indicated a woman's financial ability to be either important or a consideration (48.2% vs. 41.9% in the previous survey), while the percentage of women who considered a man's housework and childrearing attitudes and ability to be important has increased significantly (70.2% vs. 57.7% in the previous survey).
- The average number of children desired decreased for all age groups (1.82 vs. 1.91 in the previous survey for men; 1.79 vs. 2.02 in the previous survey for women).
- Support for the views that “if one gets married, one should have children” and “femininity and masculinity are necessary” declined significantly.

Marriage, Childbearing, and Child-rearing among Couples in First Marriage

- The percentage of couples in first marriage who met at their workplace or through friends decreased, while couples who met through Internet services such as SNS and matching apps now account for 13.6% of recent marriages.

- The number of children ever born to couples with wives aged 45-49 decreased (1.81 children compared to 1.86 children in the previous survey), reflecting the effect of later marriage.
- The average number of children a couple expected to have remained unchanged (2.01 children in both this and the previous survey).
- The percentage of women who chose “child-rearing and education is too costly” as the reason for not having their ideal number of children decreased. Still, it remained the most commonly chosen reason.
- The percentage of couples who have undergone tests/treatment for infertility increased from 18.2% to 22.7%. 6.7% of couples married for less than 5 years were undergoing tests/treatment for infertility as of the time of the survey.
- The percentage of wives who continued to work before and after the birth of their first child rose from about 50% to almost 70% over the past five years, reaching 69.5% for wives who gave birth between 2015 and 2019. 79.2% of those remaining employed used childcare leave.

The Japanese National Fertility Survey is conducted every five years by the Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Tokyo (IPSS) to capture changes in behaviors and attitudes regarding marriage and childbearing in Japan. The sixteenth survey was conducted in June 2021. The main results of this survey are summarized as follows.

(1) Willingness to form a family, measured as reported desire to marry and desired number of children among never-married persons, or intended number of children among married couples, has declined considerably. For example, the share of those who desire to marry at some point among never-married women aged 18-34 declined from 89.3% to 84.3%. The average desired number of children among this group of never-married women declined from 2.02 to 1.79. The average number of intended children among couples who married within the last five years also declined from 2.04 to 1.95 (Figure 1-1, Figure 3-3, Figure 4-2, Figure 7-2). Those who thought it was not necessary to marry or have a child also increased, while more people prioritized individual lifestyles and values than in previous surveys (Figure 1-5, Figure 1-6, Figure 1-7, Figure 3-5, Figure 4-1, Figure 7-6, Figure 12-2, Figure 12-4). Meanwhile, the percentage of intended pregnancies rose (Figure 8-3), suggesting an increase over time in more deliberate planning of conception. The percentage of couples receiving infertility treatment increased further from the previous survey (the number of couples who had undergone tests/treatment for infertility rose from 1 in 5.5 to 1 in 4.4, and 6.7% of couples married within the last five years had undergone tests/treatment for infertility as of the time of the survey) (Figure 8-4). The final number of children born to couples (the average number of children born to married women aged 45-49) fell from 1.86 to 1.81, partly due to the increasing trend toward later marriage in this generation (Figure 6-3).

(2) Another notable finding is that gender role attitudes and behaviors both changed considerably, resulting in increasing similarity between men and women. With respect to employment trajectories, women increasingly remained in their jobs after marriage and/or childbearing, with the percentage of women who continued their work increasing from about 50% to 70% (Figure 9-4). We also see for the first time a visible increase in husbands who took childcare leave. For instance, among couples with wives who were

regular employees, the percentage of husbands who took childcare leave increased from 1.7% to 6.3% (Figure 9-8). The number of husbands who performed housework on a daily basis has also increased. Again, among those whose wives were regular employees, 40% performed housework on a daily basis, while the share was only 20% among those whose wives are not employed (Figure 9-10, Figure 9-11). These behavioral changes are also reflected in attitudes. For example, for both never-married men and women, balancing work and family is the most frequent response to the question about women's most desirable life course in terms of marriage, childbirth, and work (Figure 3-1). As men increasingly emphasized the contribution of women in family finances or women increasingly emphasized men's housework/parenting role or appearance (Figure 3-2), the gender difference in behaviors and attitudes decreased.

(3) Another notable change from the last survey is the context in which respondents met their dating partner or spouse. In the current survey, those who answered that they met their dating or marital partner through friends or workplace decreased, reflecting an increase in the use of online platforms. For example, more than one in ten never-married men and women who were currently dating answered that they met their partners online (11.9% for men and 17.9% for women), and 13.6% of couples married between late 2018 and early 2021 met their partner through these internet-based services (Figure 2-4, Figure 5-3). In addition, a wide range of changes in behavior related to spouse selection has occurred, including a slight increase in arranged marriages (albeit at low levels) and a slight decline in the mean age of those marriages (Figure 5-1).

I. Results of the survey of singles

This section summarizes the main findings from the survey of singles. Results are based on never-married men and women aged from 18 to 34 unless otherwise noted.

1. Those who answered “intend to get married someday” declined for all age groups.

In the 2000s, the share of never-married persons who thought they “intend to get married someday” has been stable. In the current survey, however, the share has declined from the last survey (from 85.7% to 81.4% for men and from 89.3% to 84.3% for women) (Fig.1-1). The decline is seen regardless of gender and age groups (Fig. 1-2, Fig.4-2), suggesting that the social situation as of the time of the survey may have affected the consciousness of a wide range of respondents. Looking at the intention to get married within a year by employment status, there was a tendency for a lower percentage of men to answer “want to get married within a year” for part-time workers compared to regular employees (Fig. 1-4).

In terms of advantages of marriage that the never-married thought of, “having children and a family of my own,” which has shown an increase until the last survey, has declined, while “being financially secure” slightly increased (Fig.1-5). As for the advantages of being single, the answers “having the freedom to what I do and how I live my life” and “being carefree, not having the responsibility to provide for a family” have increased (Fig.1-6). Those under the age of 25 tended to report they did not have a strong motivation to marry. For those aged 25 or over, the most frequent answer was they did not meet an appropriate partner, while among never-married women, the share of those who reported they did not get along with the opposite sex and they wanted to enjoy their hobby has increased slightly (Fig. 1-7).

2. One in five never-married men and about one-third of never-married women had a female or male dating partner, respectively, or were currently engaged. The share has been declining since the early 2000s. About 60% of the never-married have had a dating partner, while one-third did not desire to have a dating partner.

The share of never-married persons who answered they had a dating partner or a fiancé(e) of the opposite sex was 21.1% for men and 27.8% for women. These numbers have declined from 2005 for men (27.1%) and from 2002 for women (37.1%) (Fig. 2-1). 72.2% of men and 64.2% of women reported not having an opposite-sex dating partner. It should be noted that those who answered “not particularly interested in a relationship with the opposite sex” increased to 33.5% for men and 34.1% for women (Fig 2-2).

For those aged 25-29, more than 60% of never-married men and 70% of never-married women had had a dating relationship with the opposite sex (Fig 2-3). About 60% of never-married men and 65% of women aged 18-34 had had such experiences.

Asking those who had a dating partner or fiancé(e) as of the time of the survey about where or how they met, the most frequent answer (about 30%) was they met at school (Fig. 2-4). We also found that those who answered “through friends or siblings” or “at work or in a work-related context” decreased, while the share of those who met their partner online accounted for more than 10% (11.1% for men, 17.3% for women).

Among never-married persons aged 25-29, 63.6% of men and 61.2% of women had ever experienced sexual intercourse, which was stable compared with the last survey, but the percentage declined among those aged 30-34 (Fig. 2-5).

3. For women’s desirable “life course” regarding marriage, childbearing, and work, the share of those who answered “re-entry after childrearing” or “full-time housewife” declined, while “balancing work and family” increased.

“Balancing work and family” accounted for 34.0% (increased from 32.3% in the last survey) of the “desired life course” among never-married women, and this life course became the most frequent answer for the first time. “Re-employment after childrearing” and “full-time housewife” decreased, while the share of those who answered “continue working without getting married” or “double income no kids (DINKS)” as a desirable life course also increased. It should be noted that 39.4% of never-married men answered that “balancing work and family” was a life course they wanted their partner to choose. It also accounted for the largest percentage for the first time (Fig.3-1).

In terms of spouse selection criteria, both men and women emphasized “personality,” “competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare,” and “understanding of and support for your work.” For other criteria, there was an increase in men’s emphasis on “income and other financial resources.” Meanwhile, there was an increase in women’s emphasis on “competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare” and “appearance.” (Fig. 3-2)

Among those who intended to marry, the average number of desired children, which has declined since 1987 with some fluctuation, was 1.82 for men and 1.79 for women. For women, the desired number of children fell below 2 for the first time (Fig. 3-3).

Those who were never married and desired to have a child were asked the reasons for their answer. The share of men and women who answered “it is natural to get married and have children” has declined. In addition to that, the share of answers “I want to have children of someone I love” or “children will stabilize the marital relationship” also declined (Fig. 3-5).

4. With respect to the never-married persons’ lifestyles, those who answered, “I have hobbies or life work (career) that make my life worthwhile” or “I don't think I would be lonely even if I continued to live alone” increased.

We asked never-married men and women about their lifestyles. The share of individuals who answered, “I have hobbies or life work (career) that make my life worthwhile” or “I don't think I would be lonely even if I continued to live alone” increased, while “I have many friends with whom I can easily hang out,” “I have little money to spend on things I want or do what I like,” or “I often sacrifice my personal life for work,” decreased (Fig. 4-1).

Looking at the percentage of never-married people who thought that they “intend to get married someday” by lifestyle, we found that the willingness to get married has dropped significantly in this survey for all lifestyles (Fig. 4-2).

II. Results of the survey of married couples

In this section, we present the main findings from the survey of married couples. Results are based on couples with wives under the age of 50 unless otherwise noted.

5. Opportunities to meet “at work or in a work-related context” decreased during the pandemic. Meanwhile, one in five newly married couples met online.

The average age couples met was 26.4 for men and 24.9 for women. The average duration of the relationship before marriage was 4.3 years. Both trends increased over the surveys, but these numbers did not change from the last survey this time (Fig. 5-1). It should be noted, however, that the respective age of couples when they met among those who married through arranged marriage was slightly lower than in the previous surveys (decreased from 35.6 to 33.9 for men and from 32.3 to 31.7 for women). The current survey added “through the internet” for the first time to the question of where or how the couples met. For the couples who met online, the average age was 27.8 for husbands and 26.2 for wives, which was higher than that of couples who were in love marriage (i.e., all couples except those meeting through an arranged marriage matchmaking, through a matchmaking service or meeting online) (25.3 for husbands and 23.8 for wives). The duration of the relationship was shorter for the couples who met online than those in love marriages (2.8 years versus 4.9 years).

Looking at where or how the married couples met each other, 6.0% of marriages formed from July 2015 to June 2018, and 13.6% of marriages formed during periods that corresponded to the pandemic (July 2018 to June 2021) were of couples who met online (Fig.5-3). For the couple formed during the pandemic, meeting “at work or in a work-

related context,” which accounted for about 30% of all marriages in previous surveys, decreased from 28.2% to 21.4%.

6. The average number of children born to married couples who are expected to end their reproductive years (completed number of children ever born, the number of children born to wives aged 45-49) decreased from the last survey.

We define completed fertility as the average number of children born to couples who have been married for 15 to 19 years and are likely to end their reproductive period. The number decreased from the last survey (from 1.94 to 1.90) (Fig. 6-1). The number of children born to couples with wives 45-49 years old also declined from the last survey (from 1.86 to 1.81) (Fig. 6-3). Among these couples, 9.9% did not have a child, and 19.4% had only one child (Fig. 6-4).

Looking at the number of children born to wives aged 45-49 by population density, there was a decrease regardless of where they lived. The number was 1.74 for those living in a high population density area, while it was 1.97 for those not living in such an area, falling below 2 for the first time (Fig. 6-7).

Looking at the number by region, it decreased in every region, but the number tended to be higher in Western Japan (2.08) or the Nagoya region (1.86), while it was lower in the Osaka region (1.63) (Fig. 6-8). Looking at the number of spouse pairing patterns by education, there was an increase among those who were both highly educated, thus narrowing the gap by educational pairings (Fig. 6-9).

7. Both desired and planned number of children decreased among newly married couples. For the reasons to have a child, those answering “it is natural to get married and have children” and “children will stabilize the marital relationship” decreased.

Wives’ average number of desired children declined gradually, marking 2.25 in the current survey. The average number of planned children was stable (2.01) (Fig. 7-1). It should be noted, however, that both numbers tended to decrease with the duration of the marriage. For example, among couples who had been married for less than five years, the desired number of children was 2.11 and the planned number of children was 1.95 (Fig. 7-2).

We asked about reasons for having a child to those whose desired number of children was one or more. The most frequent answer was “having children makes my life more enjoyable and enrich my mind.” Meanwhile, “it is natural to get married and have children” and “children will stabilize the marital relationship,” which has declined over the years and also in this survey (Fig. 7-4).

We also asked about reasons why couples were not able to have a child. The most frequent answer was “because it costs too much to raise and educate children” (Fig.7-5). This number continued to be higher among couples with wives younger than 35, while fewer people chose this answer in the current survey if the wife was aged 35 or older. Instead, these couples increasingly chose “because I have not been able to get pregnant, even though I want children” or “because I cannot bear the psychological and physical burden of child-rearing any longer” (Fig.7-6).

8. About 40% of all couples and 50% of couples who wanted to have a child had had sexual intercourse over the last month. One-third of married couples have ever worried about infertility. Those who had experienced infertility tests or treatments increased from one in 5.5 to one in 4.4. Over 6% (6.7%) of couples who had been married less than five years were having infertility tests or treatment as of the time of the survey.

The current survey asked married couples whether they had had sexual intercourse with their spouse over the last month. The number was 37.9% among married couples with wives under 50 years old. The number was 53.3% for those who want to have a child (Fig. 8-1). 58.3% of couples used contraception, most of which were modern contraception techniques, including using a condom. Only 61.3% of couples who had an intention to manage their fertility (planning to postpone or stop childbearing) used such modern contraception, and 37.5% of married couples had a risk of having a pregnancy earlier than they expected or an undesired pregnancy (Fig. 8-2).

The percentage of those who worried about infertility increased from 35.0% to 39.2% in this survey. The percentage of those who had ever gone through infertility treatment increased from 18.2% (one in 5.5) to 22.7% (one in 4.4). 6.7% of couples who married within the last five years had ever had infertility tests or treatment (Fig. 8-4).

9. Among wives who were working when they realized that they were pregnant with the first child, the percentage of those who were also working when the child was one year old has increased from about 50% to 70%. 43% of the mothers who had their first childbirth between 2015 and 2018 took childcare leave, while 3.7% of the fathers did. For the first time, the percentage of wives who used daycare centers surpassed half of all who had their first child between 2015 and 2018.

The share of wives who worked after childbearing has increased dramatically. 70.4% of wives among couples who plan to have another child did so, an increase from 53.2% in the last survey (Fig. 9-1). For those who did not plan to have an additional child, the share of wives with their youngest child aged 0 to 2 who were working increased to 67.0%. With respect to employment status, the share of regular employment increased from 22.8% to 38.1%.

The continuous employment rate after childbirth among married women who were working when they realized they were pregnant has received attention as an indicator to assess the government's policies for declining fertility. This number has increased from 57.7% (the first childbirth cohort of 2010-2014) to 69.5% (cohort of 2015-2019) (Fig.9-4). Among those who took childcare leave, the number was 55.1%. Looking at employment status, 83.4% of women in regular employment continued their work after their first childbirth (childbirth cohort of 2015-2019). The corresponding figure was 40.3% for women in nonregular employment (including part-time and dispatched employment), which increased from 27.9% for the childbirth cohort of 2015-2019, still showing a gap compared with their counterparts in regular employment.

The survey also asked what kind of childcare support parents had used until their first child reached 3 in age across children's birth cohorts (Fig.9-6). For parents of children born between 2015 and 2019, 43.0% of wives and 3.7% of husbands used childcare leave.

Those who used daycare services increased to 51.9%, reaching more than half for the first time. When limited to wives who continued to work as regular employees, 93.1% (88.2% in the previous survey) of wives and 6.3% of the husbands used childcare leave. Husbands' use of childcare leave had been around 1% over the years, but there was a clear increase in the current survey. Wives' use of daycare services was 78.8% (80.8% in the last survey), and use of shortened work hours was 48.1% (48.4% in the last survey). The share of husbands who did housework or childcare regularly until their child reached 3 years in age has increased over the fifteen years. For example, when their wives worked as regular employees, about 40% of husbands did housework regularly.

III. Work, living, and attitudes among never-married persons and married couples

The earlier sections discussed attitudes toward marriage and family among never-married men and women, temporal changes in marriage and fertility processes or attitudes among married couples. This section presents how living conditions or life values among them changed.

10. The share of regular employment among never-married persons after school graduation has increased since the 2010 survey. For couples' work arrangements, the share of housewives has decreased to 22.8% among women in their 30s. The share of both spouses working as regular employees has increased from one in five 20 years ago to one in three.

Looking at employment status among never-married persons aged 25 to 34 at the time of school graduation or the survey, the share of regular employment was lowest in the 2010 survey for both men and women, and it has increased since then (Fig. 10-1).

Looking at work arrangements among couples with wives in their 30s or 40s, the composition of couples with husbands who were either self-employed or regular employees and wives who were non-employed has decreased since the 1970s. Instead, the share of "husbands working as regular employees and wives working as part-time" or "both husbands and wives working as regular employees" increased (Fig.10-4). In the 2010 survey, the share of couples with husbands working as regular employees and wives non-employed was 36.8% among wives in their 30s; the share of couples with both partners working as regular employees was 18.1%. In the current survey, the former was 22.8%, while the latter was 34.1%. As such, the pattern of employment status has been reversed.

The living arrangements of couples and their mothers until their child was three years old also changed. Since the late 1990s, living close to the wife's mothers (living separately in the same municipality) or living with or living close to the husband's mother decreased. Meanwhile, the share of living separately in different municipalities has increased. For example, from 2015 to 2018, the share of couples living separately from the wife's mother was 63.6%, and the share of those living separately from the husband's mother was 57.2% (Fig. 10-9).

11. Interaction with children and positive attitude toward parents' or friends' marriage decreased among women.

The survey asked never-married persons whether they had ever interacted with a baby or small child. More women than men reported they had such experiences, and 60% of never-married men and slightly more than half of the never-married women answered they did not have such experience. The share actually increased from the last survey for women (Fig.11-1). The respective percentage of women who responded "I feel envious of marital relationships like that of my parents" and "when I look at my friends who are married, I think they seem happy" decreased. The latter response decreased from 60% in the last survey to 50%. The data show that those who have more interaction with children or have a positive feeling about marriage around them tend to have a higher intention to marry (Fig. 11-2).

12. Traditional ideas regarding marriage and family have increasingly received less support. In particular, the support for the statements "if one gets married, one should have children" and "in any society, femininity and masculinity are necessary to some extent" declined considerably.

In almost all aspects, the share of individuals supporting traditional ideas regarding marriage and family decreased. For never-married persons, the share of those who supported the statement "if one gets married, one should have children" decreased from 67.4% to 36.6% for women and from 75.4% to 55.0% for men. The support for the statement "in any society, femininity and masculinity are necessary to some extent" also declined considerably, from 82.5% to 55.9% for women and from 84.4% to 68.3% for men (Fig. 12-2). Meanwhile, about 70% of never-married men and women supported the statement "for married men, spending time with family is more important than success at work." (Fig. 12-1)

Also, for attitudes among married women, the respective share of support for the statements "in any society, femininity and masculinity are necessary to some extent" and "if one gets married, one should have children" decreased (from 85.3% to 63.1% for the former and 66.6% to 45.8% for the latter) (Fig. 12-4).

Overview of the Survey

(1) The purpose and history of the survey

In June 2021, the 16th Japanese National Fertility Survey was conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. The survey is conducted to determine current situations and background to marriage and/or fertility of married couples, which are not available in other public statistics, and also to obtain the basic data necessary to develop relevant policies and project the future population. The first National Fertility Survey was conducted in 1940 (prewar), and the second in 1952 (postwar). Since then, it has been conducted every five years, investigating married couples' marriage process and fertility. Since the 8th survey (1982), a survey of singles has been conducted simultaneously with that of married couples. This summary report presents the preliminary results of the 16th Survey of Singles and the Survey of Married Couples.

The current survey was originally scheduled to be conducted in June 2020, five years after the 15th survey conducted in 2015, but was postponed for one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and conducted in June 2021.

(2) Survey methodology and questionnaire collection

The Survey of Single Persons (Unmarried Men and Women) covered single persons aged 18 to 54. The survey of married couples was conducted on married couples with wives under 55 years of age (respondents were wives). This is a nationwide sample survey, and facts as of June 30, 2021, were examined. The survey was conducted in 1,000 randomly selected areas from the 1,106 survey areas of the 2021 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) (stratified random sampling from the 2015 census areas). All single persons aged 18 to 54 living in all households in these districts were the subjects of the single persons survey, and married women aged under 55 were the subjects of the married couples survey¹. The upper age limit for singles and wives of married couples, which was less than 50 years old until the previous survey, was raised to under age 55 in the current survey.

The survey was conducted by respondents filling out the distributed survey forms themselves and submitting them in sealed envelopes. For the survey of singles, 8,401 questionnaires were collected out of 14,011 distributed² (number of survey targets),

¹ Households in the unit areas within selected survey areas were excluded if they were also selected for distribution of the income questionnaire of the 2021 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions in order to reduce the burden of respondents. However, in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hyogo Prefectures, where a state of emergency was declared in April 2021 to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the survey was conducted without taking the above measures due to a change in the survey schedule.

² In the previous surveys, surveyors visited all the households within the survey areas to identify the target persons living in each household and distributed the appropriate number of survey forms. However, in this survey, due to the spread of COVID-19, there were many cases in which surveyors were unable to identify the survey targets because they were unable to directly contact the residents in the households, resulting in a large discrepancy between the number of surveys distributed and the actual number of target respondents residing in the survey areas. As such, the number of survey forms distributed to the target population (the number of questionnaires distributed) was estimated based on the number of surveys distributed in the previous survey as follows:

Estimated number of questionnaires distributed = Number of questionnaires distributed in the previous survey

× Rate of increase in the number of subjects nationwide from the previous survey

× Rate of increase in the number of the survey areas from the previous survey.

For the survey of single persons, the number of single men and women under the age of 55 nationwide was estimated to be 26,996,000, based on the estimated population of 2020 by sex and marital status in the "Household Projection for Japan (2018 Projections)" (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2018). The figure was 1.14 times the 23,702,000 eligible persons under age 50 in the previous survey. The number of survey areas increased from 900 in the previous survey to 1,000 (1.10 times), but the number of unit areas was approximately 1.08 times the

resulting in a response rate of 60.0% (84.5% in the previous survey). 575 invalid responses were excluded, yielding 7,826 valid responses and a valid response rate of 55.9% (76.5% in the previous survey). For the survey of married couples, 7,060 responses were collected out of 9,401 questionnaires distributed³, resulting in a response rate of 75.1% (91.4% in the previous survey). After excluding 226 invalid responses, there remain 6,834 valid responses, yielding a valid response rate of 72.7% (87.8% in the previous survey).

In this report, results are shown on never-married persons aged between 18 and 34 for the single-person survey and on the couples in their first marriage for the married couples survey. Note that for the survey of married couples, couples with wives under 50 were targeted until the previous survey, and wives under 55 in the current survey. As such, the results of the 16th survey in the report mainly cover couples with wives under age 55 who got married before age 50.

Note that the figures of the previous survey in this summary report may differ slightly from those published in the past summary reports. This is because the method used to create the variables in the 16th survey was applied to the variables in the past surveys to secure consistency and comparability across surveys. When comparing the results of past surveys with those of the 16th survey, please refer to the figures of past surveys in this Summary Report. The final “Survey Report” to be compiled will include the results that were not included in this “Summary of Results.” Note that the method of creating variables may be reconsidered to ensure accurate results, and hence, the figures presented in this “Summary of Results” may be updated.

Table I. Numbers of questionnaires distributed and returned, and valid response rate

| | Survey of Singles | Survey of Married Couples |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Number of subjects surveyed | 14,011 | 9,401 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 8,401 (response rate 60.0%) | 7,060 (response rate 75.1%) |
| Number of valid responses | 7,826 (valid response rate 55.9%) | 6,834 (valid response rate 72.7%) |

previous survey since the unit areas where income questionnaires of the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions were distributed were excluded from this survey. Since 11,442 questionnaires were distributed to singles in the previous survey, the number of questionnaires distributed in the current survey is estimated to be 14,011, based on the above formula.

³ The number of questionnaires distributed to the married couples was similarly estimated. The number of married women under 55 years of age nationwide was estimated to be 14,838,000, 1.16 times the 12,745,000 eligible (under 50 years of age) in the previous survey based on the 2020 population by gender and marital status in the “Household Projection for Japan (National Survey)” (2018 estimate). As mentioned above, the number of unit areas was approximately 1.08 times the previous survey. Given that the number of questionnaires distributed to married couples in the previous survey was 7,511, the number of questionnaires distributed in the current survey is estimated to be 9,401, based on the above formula.

Table II. Number of never-married persons, by sex and age (Survey of Singles)

| Age | Number of never-married persons in the 16th survey | | (Reference) Number of never-married persons in the 15th survey | |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Total | 3,408 (100.0 %) | 3,082 (100.0 %) | 3,942 (100.0 %) | 3,424 (100.0 %) |
| Subtotal(18-34) | 2,033 (59.7) | 2,053 (66.6) | 2,705 (68.6) | 2,570 (75.1) |
| 18-19 | 302 (8.9) | 322 (10.4) | 419 (10.6) | 381 (11.1) |
| 20-24 | 700 (20.5) | 799 (25.9) | 923 (23.4) | 1,023 (29.9) |
| 25-29 | 579 (17.0) | 549 (17.8) | 788 (20.0) | 754 (22.0) |
| 30-34 | 452 (13.3) | 383 (12.4) | 575 (14.6) | 412 (12.0) |
| 35-39 | 379 (11.1) | 298 (9.7) | 458 (11.6) | 323 (9.4) |
| 40-44 | 320 (9.4) | 259 (8.4) | 445 (11.3) | 299 (8.7) |
| 45-49 | 386 (11.3) | 263 (8.5) | 334 (8.5) | 232 (6.8) |
| 50-54 | 290 (8.5) | 209 (6.8) | - (-) | - (-) |

Table III. Number of couples in first marriage, by the wife's age and by duration of marriage (Survey of Married Couples)

| Age of wife | Number of married couples in the 16th survey | (Reference) Number of married couples in the 15th survey |
|--------------------|--|--|
| | Total | 5,482 (100.0 %) |
| Subtotal(Under 50) | 4,351 (79.4) | 5,334 (100.0) |
| Under 20 | 1 (0.0) | 4 (0.1) |
| 20-24 | 37 (0.7) | 75 (1.4) |
| 25-29 | 321 (5.9) | 397 (7.4) |
| 30-34 | 660 (12.0) | 820 (15.4) |
| 35-39 | 925 (16.9) | 1,203 (22.6) |
| 40-44 | 1,102 (20.1) | 1,547 (29.0) |
| 45-49 | 1,305 (23.8) | 1,288 (24.1) |
| 50-54 | 1,131 (20.6) | - (-) |

| Duration of marriage | Number of married couples in the 16th survey | (Reference) Number of married couples in the 15th survey |
|----------------------|--|--|
| | Total | 5,482 (100.0 %) |
| Less than 5 years | 719 (13.1) | 894 (16.8) |
| 5-9 | 907 (16.5) | 1,064 (19.9) |
| 10-14 | 1,037 (18.9) | 1,141 (21.4) |
| 15-19 | 953 (17.4) | 1,241 (23.3) |
| 20-24 | 976 (17.8) | 716 (13.4) |
| 25 years or more | 764 (13.9) | 152 (2.8) |
| Not known | 126 (2.3) | 126 (2.4) |

(3) The representativeness of the sample

In order to examine the representativeness of the sample of the 16th survey, we compared the respondents' age and marital status composition and regional composition with data from the 2020 Population Census conducted by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Despite a 9-month gap between this survey and the Census, the Census data is most desirable for comparison and verification. The figures from the “Result with Imputation on 2020 Population Census (Reference Table)” (total population) were used for comparison. The data on never-married men and women under 35 years old and married women, the main subjects of this report, are examined below.

With respect to the age structure, the percentage of never-married men in their early 20s in this survey is somewhat smaller than in the Census. Meanwhile, the percentage of never-married men and women in their 30s in this survey is larger than in the Census. The percentage of married women in their late 20s and early 30s is smaller in this survey than in the Census. The percentage of married women living in the Kanto and Kinki regions is smaller in this survey than in the Census, while the percentage of married women living in the Tohoku and Chubu regions is larger in this survey than in the Census. However, although there are some tendencies in over- and under-representations, the differences are within a few percentage points, and this survey is considered to be relatively well-representative for a sample survey of this type. Therefore, it can be concluded that analysis of this survey's samples will yield valid results with respect to the quantitative attributes of the population. However, in analyses where precise results are required, it is necessary to devise ways to ensure that this is achieved accurately by controlling for age, region, and other attributes.

Table IV. Age composition by marital status: The 16th Survey and the 2020 Population Census

| 【Male】 | | |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Age | Survey of Singles | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 18-19 | 8.9 | 0.3 |
| 20-24 | 20.5 | 2.6 |
| 25-29 | 17.0 | 6.5 |
| 30-34 | 13.3 | 15.1 |
| 35-39 | 11.1 | 18.0 |
| 40-44 | 9.4 | 24.0 |
| 45-49 | 11.3 | 0.5 |
| 50-54 | 8.5 | 33.1 |

| 【Male】 | | |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Age | Population Census | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 18-19 | 8.6 | 0.1 |
| 20-24 | 22.0 | 2.7 |
| 25-29 | 17.8 | 6.5 |
| 30-34 | 12.6 | 11.8 |
| 35-39 | 10.4 | 18.3 |
| 40-44 | 9.8 | 28.2 |
| 45-49 | 10.6 | 0.7 |
| 50-54 | 8.3 | 31.7 |

| 【Female】 | | | |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Age | Survey of Singles | | Survey of Married Couples |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed | Wife |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 18-19 | 10.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 20-24 | 25.9 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| 25-29 | 17.8 | 3.3 | 5.3 |
| 30-34 | 12.4 | 7.3 | 11.4 |
| 35-39 | 9.7 | 11.8 | 16.5 |
| 40-44 | 8.4 | 18.9 | 20.3 |
| 45-49 | 8.5 | 28.8 | 24.4 |
| 50-54 | 6.8 | 29.5 | 21.4 |

| 【Female】 | | | |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Age | Population Census | | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed | Married |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 18-19 | 10.6 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| 20-24 | 26.5 | 0.9 | 1.3 |
| 25-29 | 18.8 | 3.2 | 6.7 |
| 30-34 | 11.7 | 7.0 | 12.6 |
| 35-39 | 8.9 | 11.9 | 16.7 |
| 40-44 | 8.2 | 18.1 | 19.6 |
| 45-49 | 8.6 | 28.1 | 22.7 |
| 50-54 | 6.6 | 30.8 | 20.3 |

The 16th Japanese National Fertility Survey

Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Result with Imputation on 2020 Population Census (Reference Table)"

Table V. Regional composition by marital status: The 16th Survey and the 2020 Population Census

| 【Male】 | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Region | Survey of Singles | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Hokkaido | 3.0 | 5.5 |
| Tohoku | 8.7 | 9.6 |
| Kanto | 35.1 | 32.8 |
| Chubu | 20.4 | 21.6 |
| Kinki | 13.0 | 12.0 |
| Chugoku/Shikoku | 7.9 | 9.1 |
| Kyushu/Okinawa | 11.9 | 9.4 |

| 【Female】 | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Region | Survey of Singles | | Survey of Married Couples |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed | Wife |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Hokkaido | 2.9 | 5.5 | 5.0 |
| Tohoku | 6.8 | 7.7 | 7.0 |
| Kanto | 35.2 | 28.1 | 35.7 |
| Chubu | 20.4 | 16.1 | 20.9 |
| Kinki | 14.2 | 16.1 | 12.3 |
| Chugoku/Shikoku | 9.0 | 9.9 | 8.6 |
| Kyushu/Okinawa | 11.4 | 16.6 | 10.5 |

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| 【Male】 | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Region | Population Census | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Hokkaido | 3.7 | 4.5 |
| Tohoku | 6.1 | 7.2 |
| Kanto | 39.7 | 32.3 |
| Chubu | 17.5 | 18.1 |
| Kinki | 15.8 | 16.0 |
| Chugoku/Shikoku | 7.6 | 9.3 |
| Kyushu/Okinawa | 9.6 | 12.5 |

| 【Female】 | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Region | Population Census | | |
| | Never-married | Separated/Widowed | Married |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Hokkaido | 3.9 | 5.0 | 3.8 |
| Tohoku | 5.7 | 7.5 | 6.2 |
| Kanto | 39.1 | 30.4 | 36.3 |
| Chubu | 15.7 | 17.6 | 18.6 |
| Kinki | 17.4 | 16.5 | 16.3 |
| Chugoku/Shikoku | 7.5 | 9.4 | 8.2 |
| Kyushu/Okinawa | 10.7 | 13.5 | 10.6 |

Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Result with Imputation on 2020 Population Census (Reference Table)"

The prefectures included in each region are as follows.

Hokkaido: Hokkaido

Tohoku: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima

Kanto: Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa

Chubu: Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie

Kinki: Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, Wakayama

Chugoku・Shikoku: Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi

Kyushu/Okinawa: Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa

Section I Results of the Survey of Singles

Part I presents the survey results of singles regarding their attitudes toward marriage and childbearing, relationship status, desired life course image, and lifestyle. The main sample consists of never-married men and women between 18 and 34.

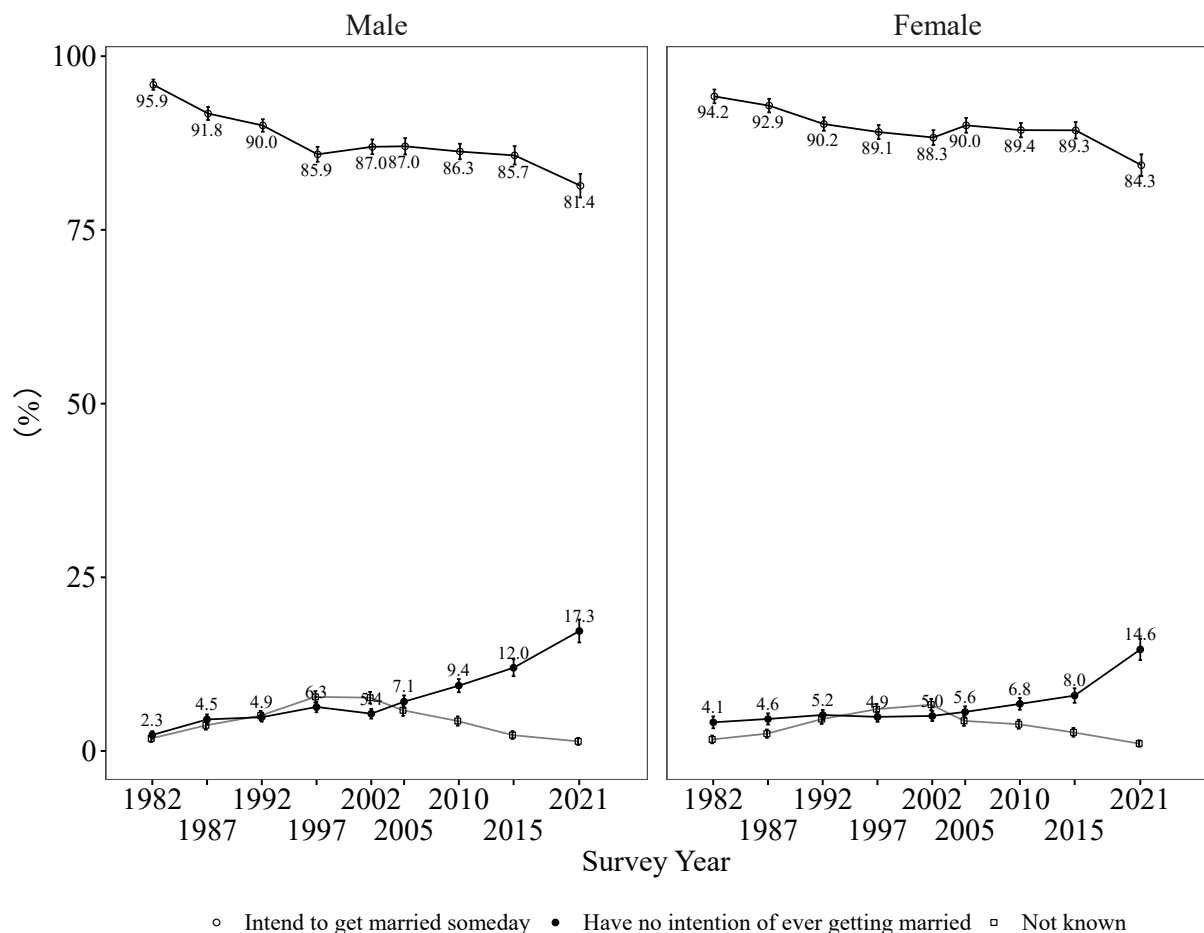
1. Thoughts on Marriage

1.1 Intention of getting married

The number of men and women who “intend to get married someday” decreased from the previous survey.

The percentage of never-married persons who intend to marry someday has remained relatively stable since the 11th survey in 1997. In contrast, this survey shows a decrease from the previous survey for both men and women, with 81.4% of men aged 18-34 (85.7% in the previous survey) and 84.3% of women of the same age (89.3% in the previous survey). On the other hand, the number of never-married persons who say they “have no intention of ever getting married” has continued to increase since the beginning of the 2000s, with 17.3% of men and 14.6% of women in the 16th survey.

Figure 1-1. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (2,732), women (2,110) in the 8th (1982) survey; men (3,299), women (2,605) in the 9th (1987) survey; men (4,215), women (3,647) in the 10th (1992) survey; men (3,982), women (3,612) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,897), women (3,494) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (3,139), women (3,064) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (3,667), women (3,406) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "Thinking about your whole life, which of the following describes your thoughts on marriage?" (1. Intend to get married someday, 2. Have no intention of ever getting married.)

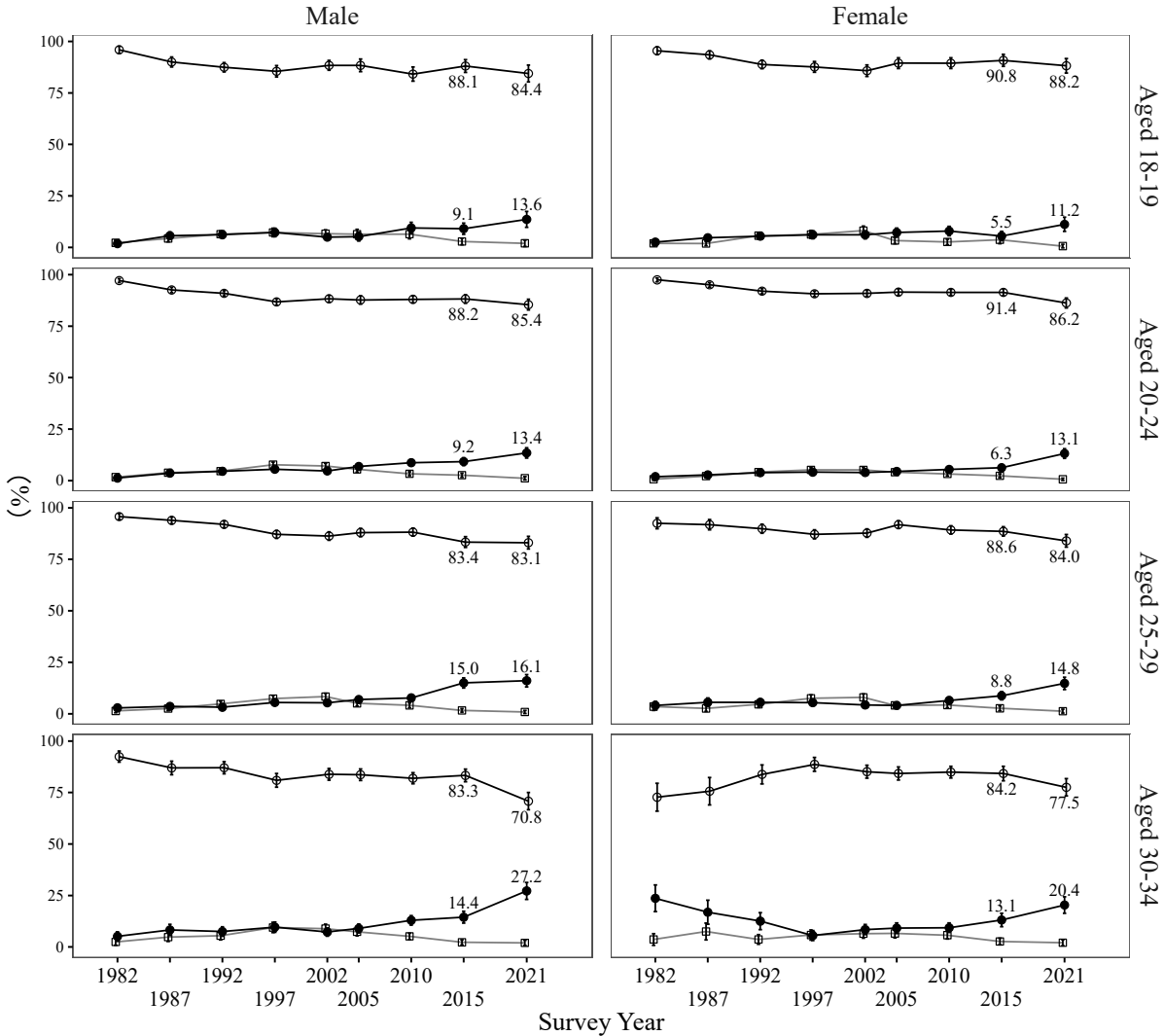
[Figure 1-1. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey]

The number of never-married people who think they “intend to get married someday” declined, regardless of sex and age group.

This section shows the never-married persons’ lifetime intention to marry by age group. For both men and women of all ages, the percentage of never-married persons who say they “intend to get married someday” has decreased since the previous survey, a marked change compared to the changes seen up to the 15th survey. The decrease was particularly marked among men aged 30-34 (83.3% in the previous survey and 70.8% in this survey), women aged 30-34 (84.2% in the previous survey and 77.5% in this survey), and women aged 20-24 (91.4% in the previous survey and 86.2% in this survey).

The fact that there has been a decrease in this survey, regardless of gender or age, suggests that the social conditions of the time when the survey was conducted may have affected the attitudes of a wide range of generations.

Figure 1-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey and age



○ Intend to get married someday ● Have no intention of ever getting married □ Not known

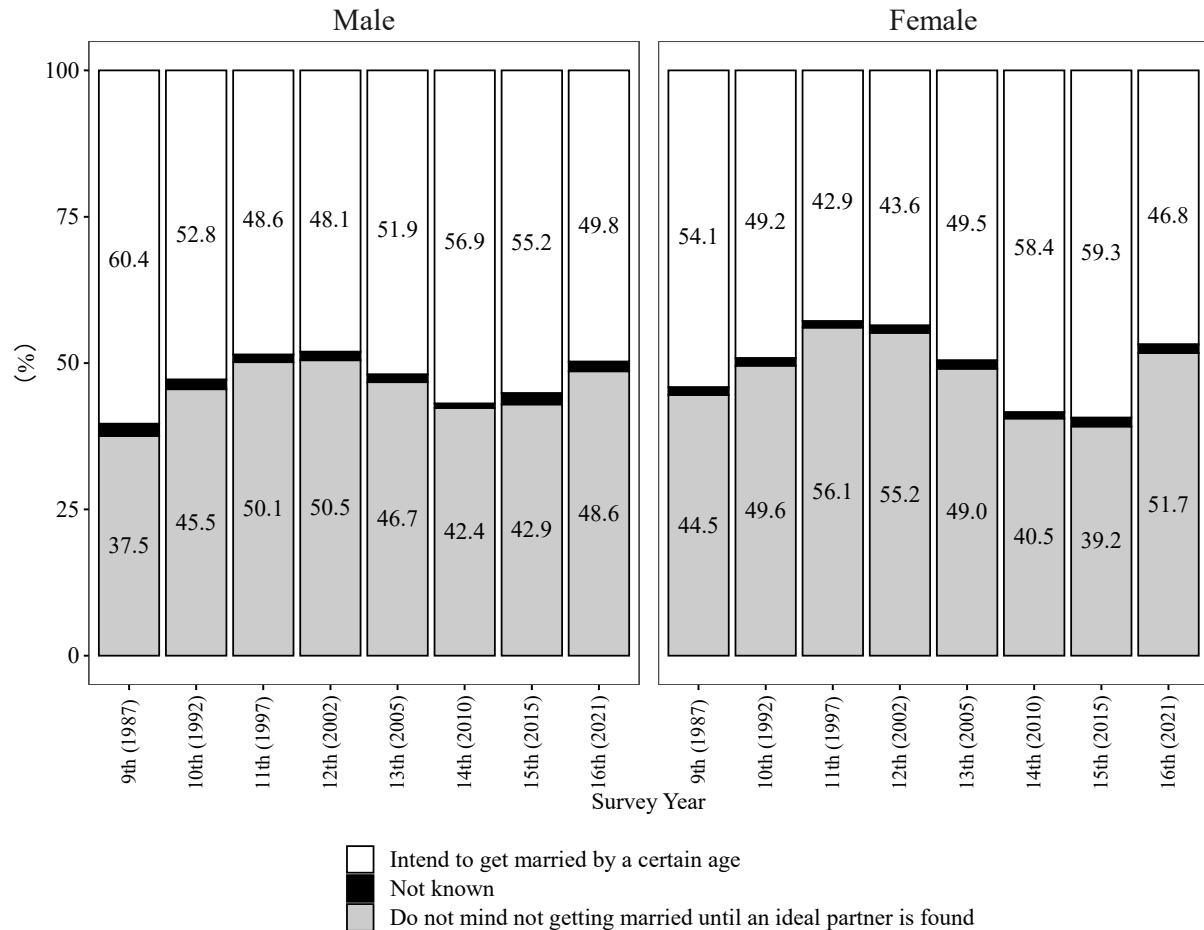
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. Question: "Thinking about your whole life, which of the following describes your thoughts on marriage?" (1. Intend to get married someday, 2. Have no intention of ever getting married.)

[Figure 1-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey and age]

Almost 50/50 on deciding when to marry: age or ideal partner.

Among never-married persons who intend to get married, the percentages of those who think they “intend to get married by a certain age” and those who say that they “do not mind not getting married until an ideal partner is found” were almost evenly split. Compared to the previous survey, the percentage of both men and women who “do not mind not getting married until an ideal partner is found” increased to 48.6% for men and 51.7% for women.

Figure 1-3. Views on marriage among never-married persons who intend to marry, by survey



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34 responding that they "intend to get married someday." The respective number of cases was as follows: men (3,027), women (2,420) in the 9th (1987) survey; men (3,795), women (3,291) in the 10th (1992) survey; men (3,420), women (3,218) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,389), women (3,085) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (2,732), women (2,759) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (3,164), women (3,044) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,319), women (2,296) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (1,654), women (1,731) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "Again, thinking about your whole life, which of the following describes your thoughts on marriage?" (1. Intend to get married by a certain age, 2. Do not mind not getting married until an ideal partner is found.)

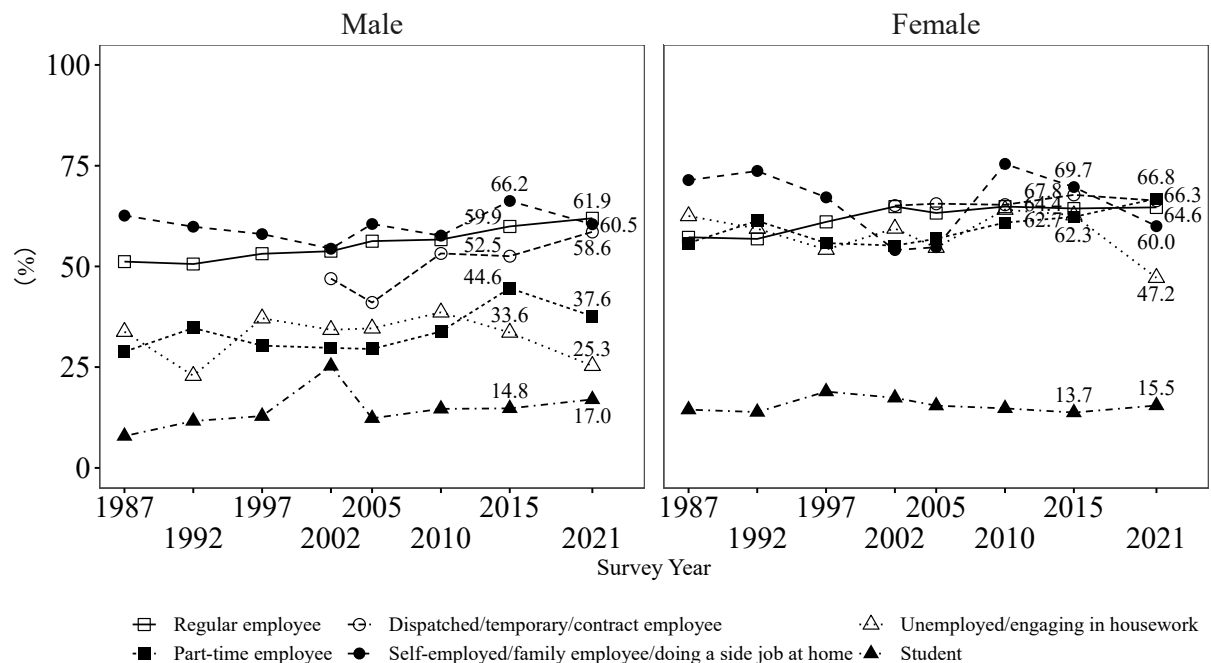
[Figure 1-3. Views on marriage among never-married persons who intend to marry, by survey]

Men's intention to get married within a year differs by employment status.

Looking at the intention to get married within a year by employment status, around 60% of men indicated their intention to get married within a year among regular employees, self-employed/family employees/those doing a side job at home, and dispatched/temporary/contract employees. On the other hand, the percentages of part-time workers and unemployed/those engaging in housework expressing the intention to get married within a year were low: 37.6% for part-time workers and 25.3% for unemployed/those engaging in housework. Compared to the previous survey, the number of men who intended to get married within a year decreased among self-employed/family employees/those doing a side job at home, part-timers, and unemployed/those engaging in housework.

For women, differences by employment status were not as significant as those for men, with about two-thirds of all respondents expressing the intention to get married, whether they were regular employees, part-time workers, or self-employed/family employees/those doing a side job at home. Among the unemployed/those engaging in housework, 47.2% expressed the intention to get married within a year, down from 62.7% in the previous survey.

Figure 1-4. Percentage of never-married persons who have the intention to marry within a year, by survey and employment status



Note: The percentages in the figures above indicate the proportion of respondents stating that they "want to get married within a year" or "do not mind getting married if I find an ideal partner" among never-married people aged 18-34 responding that they "Intend to marry someday." The classification of "Dispatched/temporary employee" was first added as an option in the 12th Survey. "Contract employee" was added from the 13th Survey. The respective number of cases was as follows: For the 15th (2015) survey: men (Regular employee: 1,155, Part-time employee: 166, Dispatched/temporary/contract employee: 118, Self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home: 80, Unemployed/engaging in housework: 122, Student: 583); women (Regular employee: 1,078, Part-time employee: 273, Dispatched/temporary/contract employee: 183, Self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home: 33, Unemployed/engaging in housework: 126, Student: 532). For the 16th (2021) survey: men (Regular employee: 904, Part-time employee: 93, Dispatched/temporary/contract employee: 70, Self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home: 43, Unemployed/engaging in housework: 75, Student: 406); women (Regular employee: 840, Part-time employee: 184, Dispatched/temporary/contract employee: 95, Self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home: 25, Unemployed/engaging in housework: 89, Student: 439). The percentages for all never-married persons (male and female) aged 18-34 were the 15th (2015) survey (45.5%, 52.6%), the 16th (2021) survey (46.9%, 50.8%). Question: "Then, what do you think about getting married within a year from now?" (1. Want to get married within a year, 2. Do not mind getting married if I find an ideal partner, 3. Do not intend to get married yet)

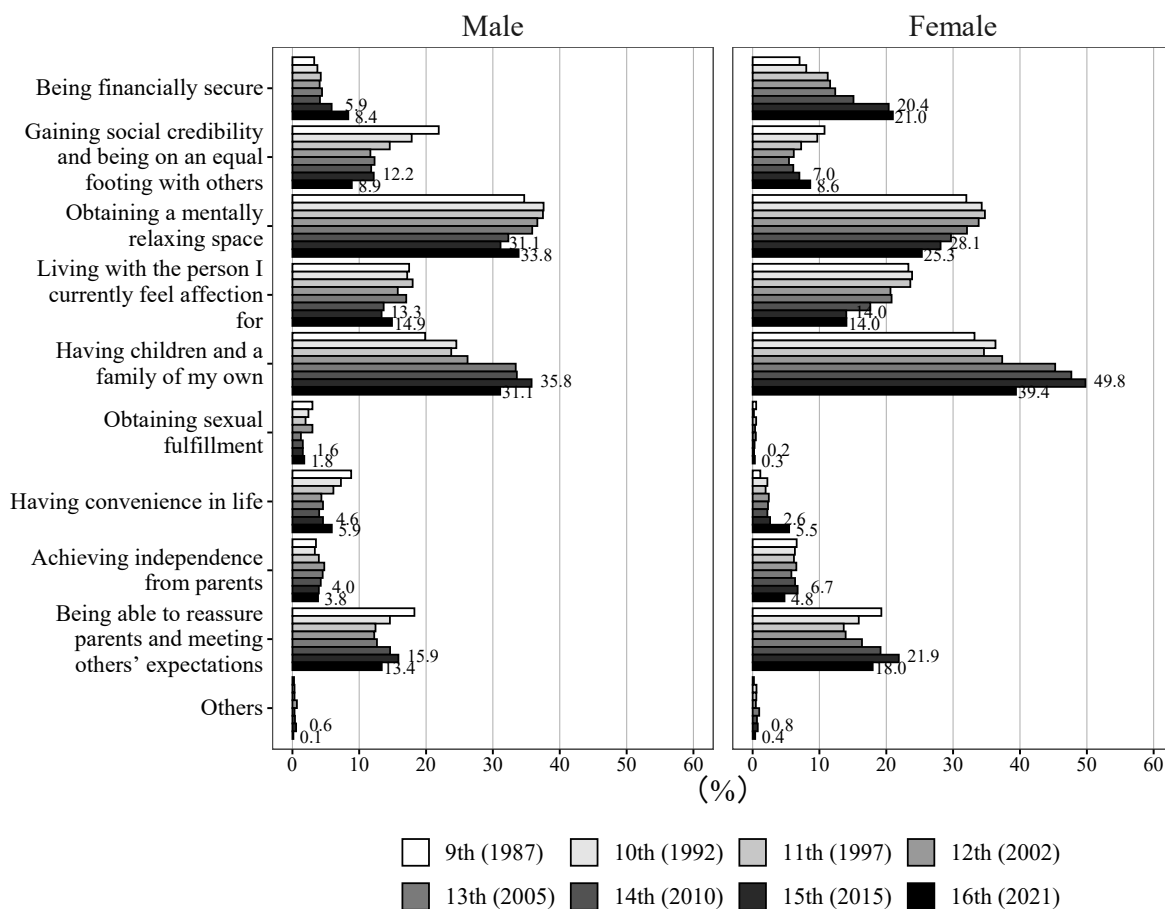
[Figure 1-4. Percentage of never-married persons who have the intention to marry within a year, by survey and employment status]

1.2 The merits of marriage and of remaining single

Advantages of getting married: “Having children and a family of one’s own” declined, while “being financially secure” increased slightly.

In terms of specific advantages of getting married, the number of respondents who chose “having children and a family of my own,” which had increased almost consistently since the 9th survey (1987), started to decline, with 39.4% of the female respondents choosing this answer, decreasing by almost 10 points from the previous survey. Among men, the number of respondents who chose “obtaining a mentally relaxing space” slightly increased to 33.8%, exceeding “having children and a family of my own” (31.1%). As in the previous survey, the number of men and women who chose “being financially secure” increased slightly.

Figure 1-5. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “advantage of marriage,” by survey



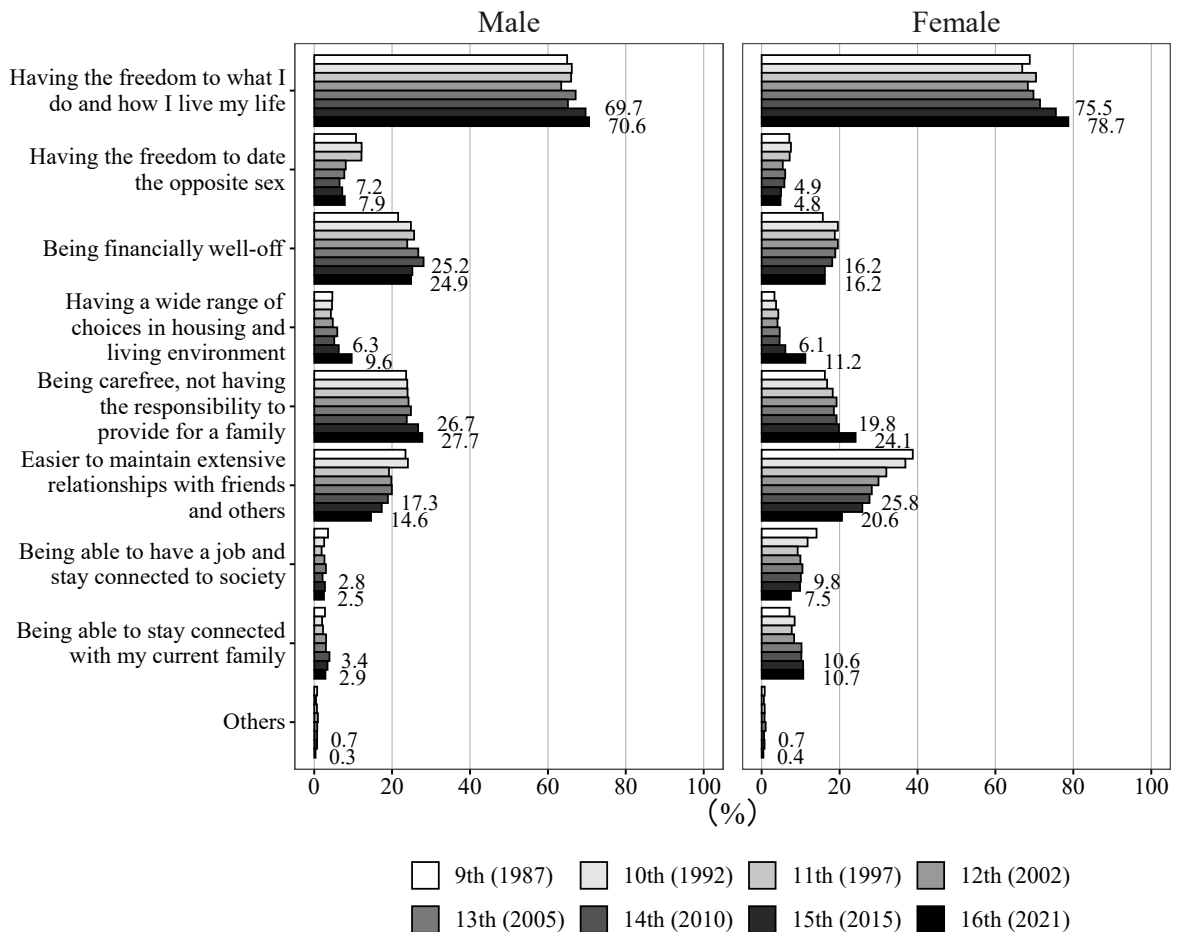
Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34. They indicate what percentage of respondents consider each item as a major marriage advantage (choose up to two). The percentage of never-married persons who responded that getting married has advantages are as follows: 9th: men 69.1%, women 70.8%; 10th: men 66.7%, women 71.4%; 11th: men 64.6%, women 69.9%; 12th: men 62.3%, women 69.4%; 13th: men 65.7%, women 74.0%; 14th: men 62.4%, women 75.1%; 15th: men 64.3%, women 77.8%; 16th: men 63.3%, women 70.9%. Question: "Do you think getting married has any advantages for you now? Please circle the appropriate number in the box below. If you chose '1. Has advantages', please choose up to two specific advantages from the box on the right and write down the numbers in the answer column on the right end."

[Figure 1-5. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “advantage of marriage,” by survey]

The biggest advantage of a single life: “Having freedom” continues to increase.

Looking at specific advantages of single life, “having the freedom to what I do and how I live my life,” which has been the most frequently cited advantage since the 9th survey (1987), increased slightly in this survey to 70.6% for men and 78.7% for women. The percentage of respondents choosing “easier to maintain extensive relationships with friends and others” continues to decline. In addition, an increasing number of respondents chose “not having the responsibility to provide for a family” and “having a wide range of choices in housing and living environment.”

Figure 1-6. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “advantage of single life,” by survey



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34 and indicate what percentage of respondents consider each item as a major single life advantage (choosing up to 2). The proportions of those who consider that single life has advantages were as follows: 9th: men 83.0%, women 89.7%; 10th: 83.6%, 89.0%; 11th: 82.7%, 88.5%; 12th: 79.8%, 86.6%; 13th: 83.8%, 87.2%; 14th: 81.0%, 87.6%; 15th: 83.5%, 88.7%; 16th: 84.1%, 90.3%. Question: "Now, on the other hand, do you think single life has any advantages over married life for you at this moment? Please circle the appropriate number in the box below. If you chose '1. Has advantages,' please select up to two specific advantages from the box on the right and write down the numbers in the answer column on the right end."

[Figure 1-6. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “advantage of single life,” by survey]

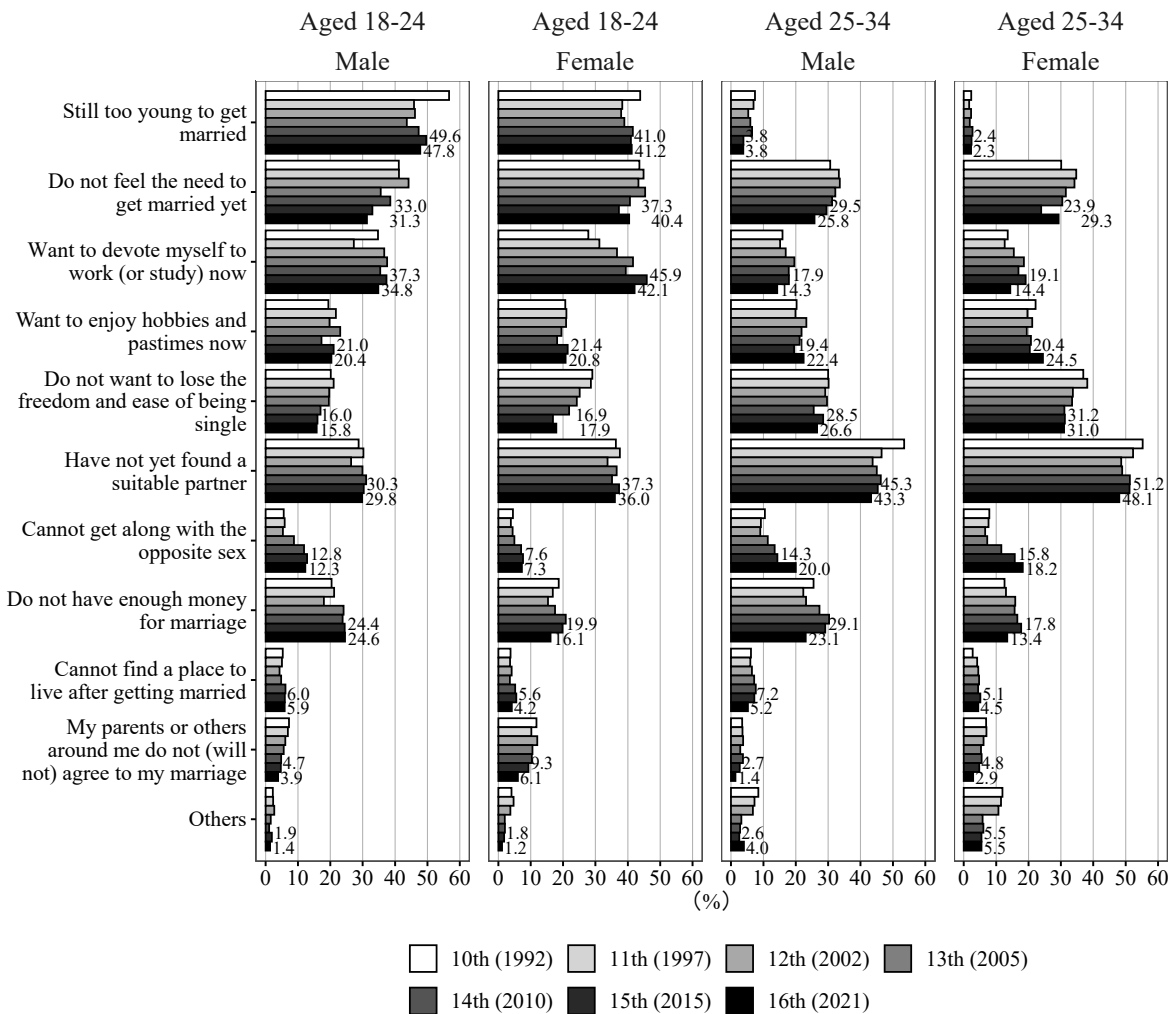
1.3 Reasons for remaining single

Reasons for remaining single are lack of positive motivation to get married, and for those over 25, lack of a suitable partner.

The survey asked never-married persons intending to get married about their reasons for staying single. For the younger age group (18-24 years old), a lack of positive motivation to get married was cited as the most frequently selected reasons. Specifically, the top reasons given included “I am still too young to get married,” “I don’t feel the need to get married yet,” and “I want to devote myself to work (or study) now.”

Among those aged 25-34, “I have not yet found a suitable partner” was selected most frequently: 43.3% for men and 48.1% for women. The percentage of respondents who chose “I cannot get along with the opposite sex” has increased since the 13th survey in 2005. In addition, “I want to enjoy hobbies and pastimes now” increased for both men and women in the current survey.

Figure 1-7. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “reason for staying single,” by survey and age



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34, and indicate what percentage of respondents listed each item as a reason (choosing up to 3) for being single. Question: "Which of the following reasons, if any, account for your being single at present? Please choose up to 3 reasons that apply to you the most from the box on the right and write down the numbers in the answer column on the right end. (If you are engaged and planning to get married, please enter '12' in the column for 'biggest reason.')

[Figure 1-7. Percentage of never-married persons choosing each “reason for staying single,” by survey and age]

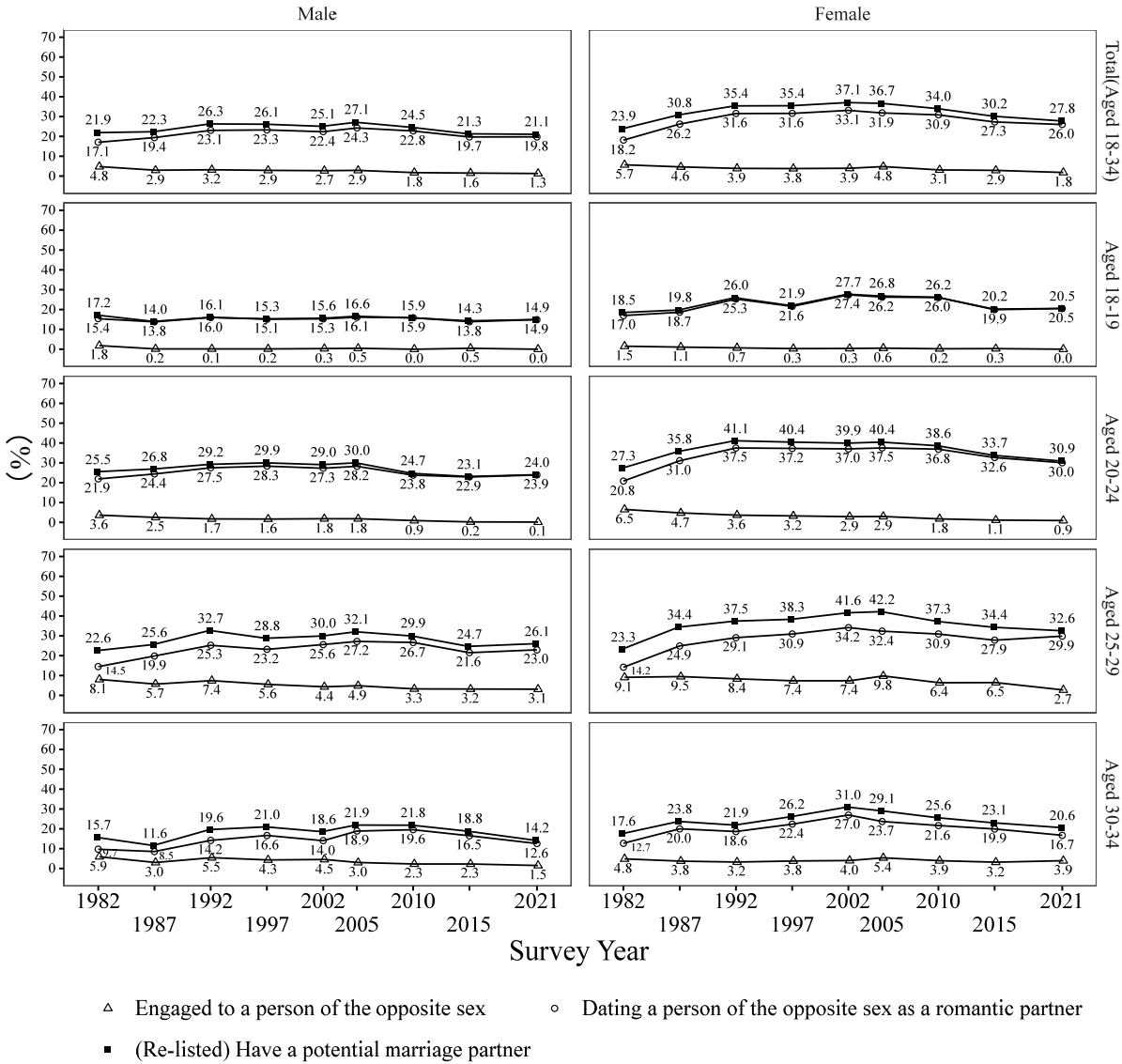
2. Relationships with the Opposite Sex

2.1 Relationships with the opposite sex

The percentage of never-married persons with a dating partner or a fiancé(e) peaked in the early 2000s. In the current survey, the percentage remained unchanged at 20% for men, while it decreased slightly from the previous survey at just under 30% for women.

The survey asked respondents about their relationships with the opposite sex. The percentages of both men and women who responded that they are in a dating relationship with the opposite sex or engaged have declined since their peak in the early 2000s. In the current survey, the percentage remained almost unchanged at 21.1% for men between 18 and 34, while for women, it declined to 27.8% from the previous survey.

Figure 2-1. Relationships with the opposite sex among never-married persons, by survey and age



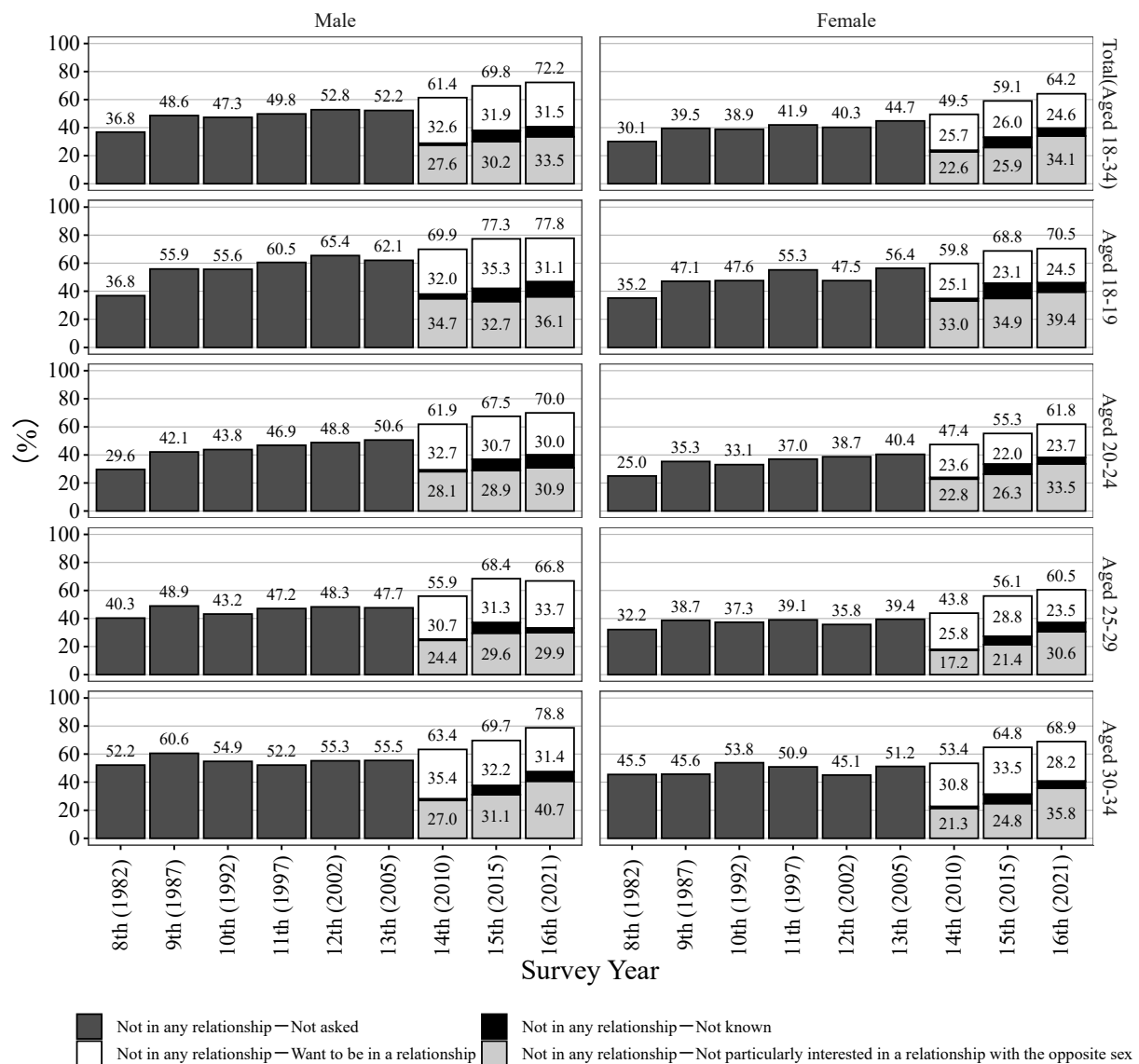
Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The graphs indicate the percentage of never-married persons who chose either "engaged to a person of the opposite sex" or "dating a person of the opposite sex as a romantic partner." Question: "Are you dating someone of the opposite sex?" (1. Not in a relationship with anyone of the opposite sex, 2. Dating a person of the opposite sex as a friend, 3. Dating a person of the opposite sex as a romantic partner, 4. Engaged to a person of the opposite sex.)

[Figure 2-1. Relationships with the opposite sex among never-married persons, by survey and age]

Increase in the number of never-married persons without a dating partner of the opposite sex who is not interested in a relationship.

The percentage of never-married men and women aged 18-34 who did not have a dating partner (neither a friend/dating partner nor fiancé(e) of the opposite sex) at the time of the current survey was around 70% (indicated by the height of the bar graph in the figure). Since the 14th survey, these never-married persons have been asked about their desire to be in a relationship with the opposite sex. The percentage of those men and women who “want to be in a relationship” is slightly less than 50% in total. Meanwhile, the percentage of never-married men in each age group was in the range of 30%, and for never-married women, the range of 20%. In other words, one out of three never-married persons aged 18-34 is “not particularly interested in a relationship with the opposite sex.”

Figure 2-2. Percentage of never-married persons not involved in a relationship and their desire to date, by survey and age



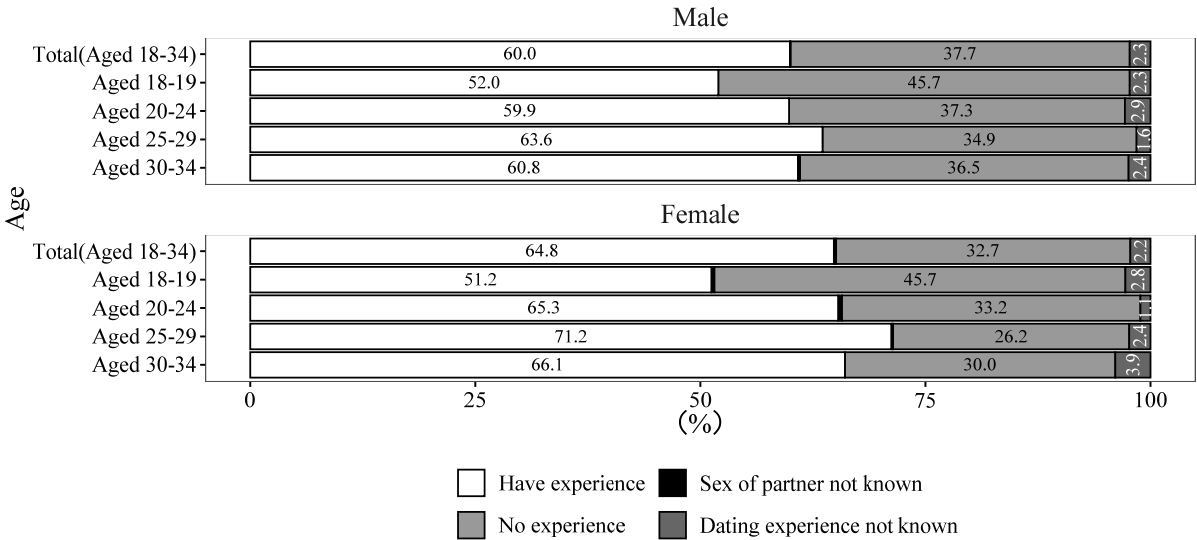
Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The graphs indicate the percentage of never-married persons not in a dating relationship (engaged to a person, or having a romantic partner or friend of opposite sex). The question on the desire to be in a relationship with the opposite sex has been asked since the 14th Survey. Question: "Are you dating someone of the opposite sex?" If not, "Do you desire to be in a relationship with the opposite sex." (1. Want to be in a relationship, 2. Not particularly interested in a relationship with the opposite sex.)

[Figure 2-2. Percentage of never-married persons not involved in a relationship and their desire to date, by survey and age]

Never-married persons in their late 20s who have had a dating partner of the opposite sex: over 60% for men and 70% for women.

This survey asked never-married persons about their dating experience. The percentage of never-married persons aged 18-19 who have ever dated a partner of the opposite sex was 52.0% for men and 51.2% for women. The percentage of never-married persons aged 25-29 was the highest, at 63.6% for men and 71.2% for women. 60.0% of men and 64.8% of women aged 18-34 had been in a relationship with the opposite sex.

Figure 2-3. Percentage of never-married persons with dating experience, by age: 16th survey (2021)



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The respective number of cases was as follows: men aged 18-34 (total) (2,033), women aged 18-34 (total) (2,053); men aged 18-19 (302), women aged 18-19 (322); men aged 20-24 (700), women aged 20-24 (799); men aged 25-29 (579), women aged 25-29 (549); men aged 30-34 (452), women aged 30-34 (383). Question: "We would like to ask you about your dating experience." (1) Experience of being in a dating relationship (1. No, 2. Yes), (2) Sex of partner (1. Male, 2. Female). "2. Female" for the male respondents and "1. Male" for the female respondents are considered the opposite sex. Cases in which the answer to (1) was unspecified were defined as "Dating experience not known," and cases in which the answer to (2) was unspecified among those who had been in a relationship were defined as "Sex of partner not known."

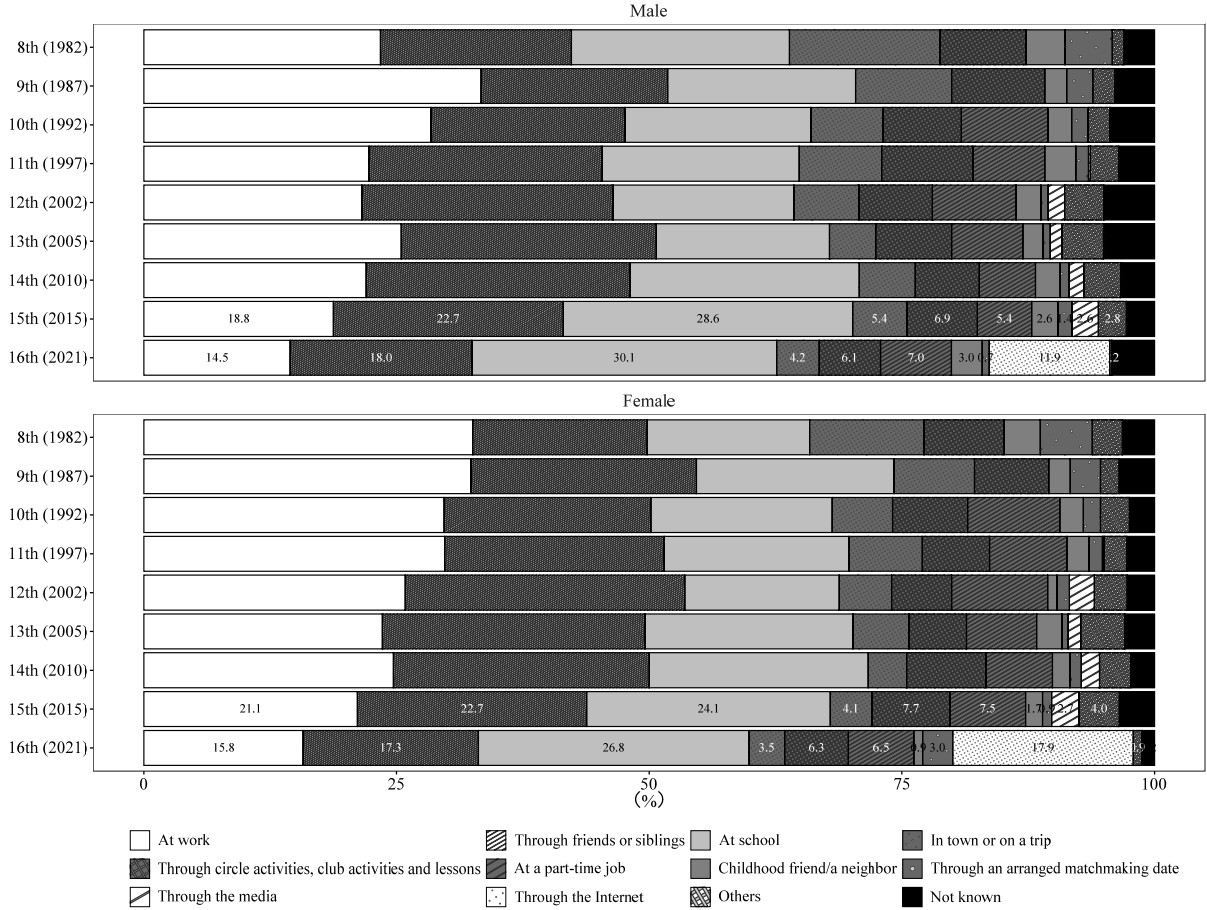
[Figure 2-3. Percentage of never-married persons with dating experience, by age: 16th survey (2021)]

2.2 Where and how never-married persons met their dating partner

The most common way and/or place never-married persons met their dating partner or fiancé(e) is through school. The percentage of encounters through friends and work decreased in this survey, while more than 10% of encounters occurred through SNS, apps, and other Internet services.

The survey asked never-married persons who were dating partners or engaged couples as of the time of the survey how they met their dating partners. The most common answer for both men and women was “at school,” up slightly from the previous survey. The percentage of men was 28.6% in the previous survey but increased to 30.1% in this survey, while the percentage of women was 26.8%, an increase from 24.1% in the previous survey. On the other hand, “through friends or siblings” and “at work or work-related context” decreased by about 5 points each from the previous survey for both men and women. In addition, the 16th survey added a new option, “through the Internet,” for cases not covered by the existing options, referring to the use of online services that provide a place for personal interaction, such as social networking services (SNS) and matching applications. With 11.9% of men and 17.9% of women responding “through the Internet,” more than one in ten never-married men and women with a dating or engaged couple met their dating partner through an Internet-based service.

Figure 2-4. Percentage distribution of way and/or place never-married persons met their dating partner, by survey (Those with a dating partner or fiancé/fiancée)



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34 who have a dating partner or fiancé/fiancée. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (576), women (776) in the 15th survey; men (428), women (571) in the 16th survey. "Through an arranged matchmaking date" means having a partner "through an arranged matchmaking date with marriage in mind" or "through a marriage matchmaking service." In the 8th and 9th surveys, "at a part-time job" was not included in the options. "Through the media," extracted from additional comments that were categorized as "Others" in the 11th through 15th surveys, includes (web)sites and the Internet. "Through the Internet" means "through the Internet (other than the channels listed above)," is a new item added in the 16th survey. A note in the answer column states, "Through the Internet" refers to cases where the couple met through social networking services, websites, apps, etc." Question: "How and when did you meet your (closest) dating partner?" "At school", "At work or in a work-related context", "Childhood friend/a neighbor", "Outside of school through circle activities, club activities, lessons, etc.", "Through friends or siblings", "Through an arranged matchmaking date with marriage in mind (including introduction by relatives, superiors, and so on)", "Through a marriage matchmaking service (including online)", "In town or on a trip", "At a part-time job", "Through the Internet (other than the channels listed above) -> Please specify", "Other -> Please specify"

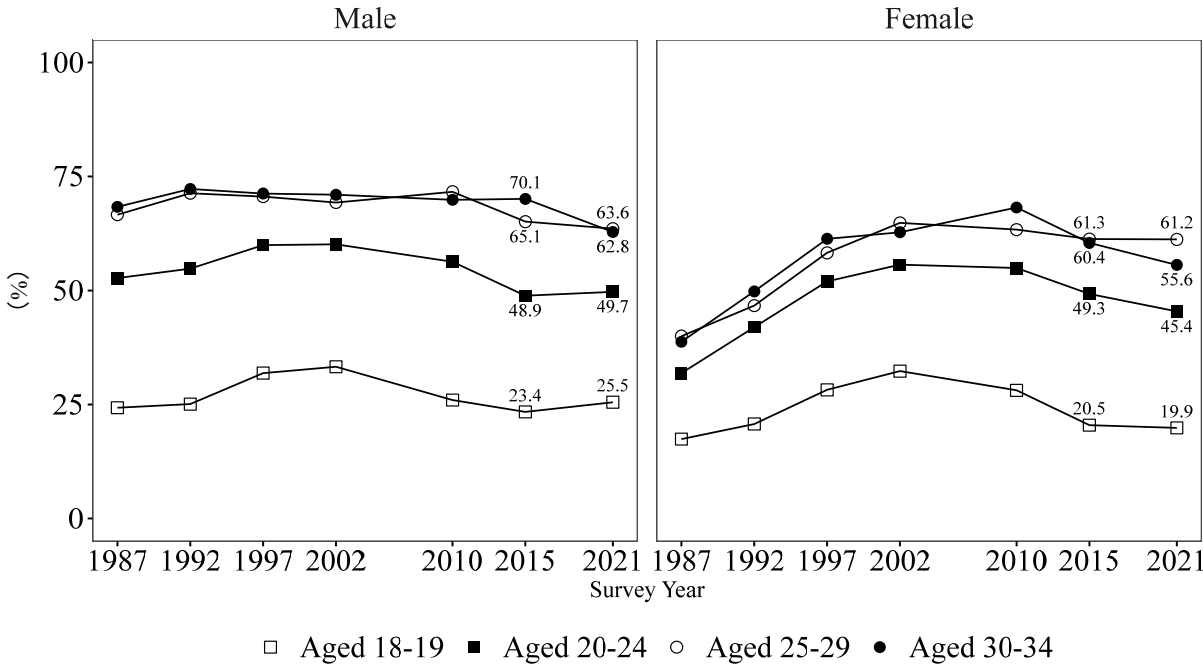
[Figure 2-4. Percentage distribution of way and/or place never-married persons met their dating partner, by survey (Those with a dating partner or fiancé/fiancée)]

2.3 Experience of sexual intercourse

The percentage of never-married men and women in their late 20s who have had sexual intercourse remains at 60%.

Among never-married persons aged 18-34, 53.0% of men and 47.5% of women have had sexual intercourse (see note in the following figure). By age group, 63.6% of men and 61.2% of women in their late 20s have had sexual intercourse (compared to 65.1% of men and 61.3% of women in the previous survey), almost unchanged from the previous survey. Among men and women aged 30-34 and women aged 20-24, there has been a decline in the percentage of those who have had sexual intercourse since the previous survey.

Figure 2-5. Percentage of never-married persons with sexual intercourse experience, by survey and age



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The percentages are of all respondents, including those who did not answer the question. The figures for those aged 18-34 are for men, 54.2% in the 15th survey and 53.0% in the 16th survey, and for women, 50.3% in the 15th survey and 47.5% in the 16th survey. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (3,299), women (2,605) in the 9th (1987) survey; men (4,215), women (3,647) in the 10th (1992) survey; men (3,982), women (3,612) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,897), women (3,494) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (3,667), women (3,406) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. The results of the 13th (2005) survey are not shown in the figure because the question wording was different. Question: "Have you ever had sexual intercourse with the opposite sex?" (1. Yes, 2. No)

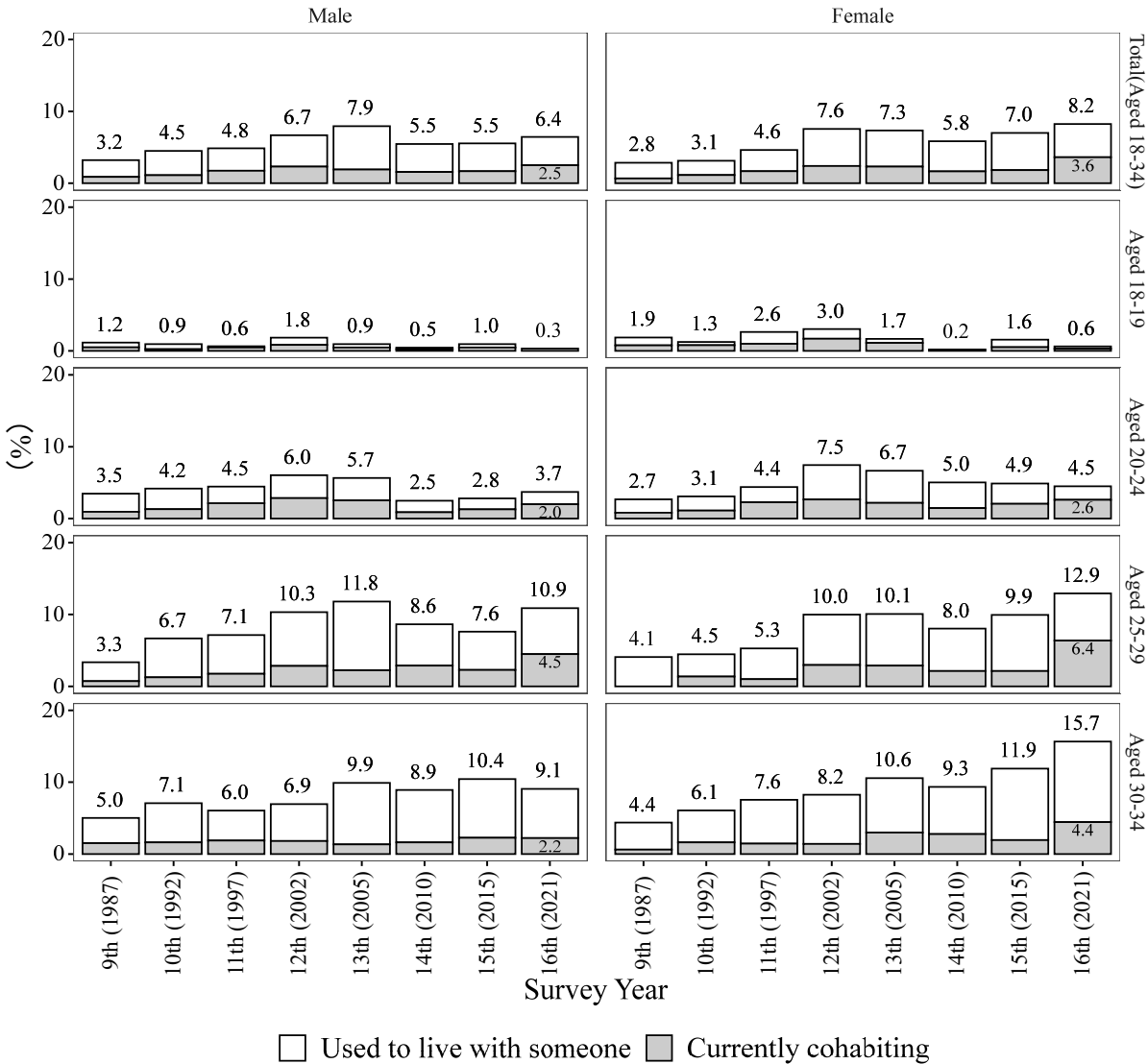
[Figure 2-5. Percentage of never-married persons with sexual intercourse experience, by survey and age]

2.4 Experience of cohabitation

10.9% of men and 12.9% of women have experienced cohabitation in their late 20s.

The survey asked never-married persons whether they have ever cohabited. Among never-married persons aged 18-34, the percentage of those who have cohabited (the sum of “used to but not anymore” and “currently”) was 6.4% for men and 8.2% for women. The percentage of men who have ever cohabited has generally remained unchanged across all age groups, with 10.9% of those in their late 20s. Among women, the percentage rose to 12.9% for those in their late 20s and 15.7% for those in their early 30s.

Figure 2-6. Percentage of never-married persons who have experienced cohabitation, by survey and age



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The percentages are of all respondents, including those who did not answer the question. The figures show the percentages of respondents who have experienced cohabitation for all survey years and the percentages of those who were cohabiting as of the time of the survey for the 16th survey. The percentages of those who were cohabiting among never-married persons aged 18-19 were as follows: men 0.3%, women 0.3%. Question: "Have you ever cohabited with a person of the opposite sex without submitting a marriage registration paper?" (1. None, 2. I used to live with someone but not anymore, 3. Currently cohabiting.) [Figure 2-6. Percentage of never-married persons who have experienced cohabitation, by survey and age]

3. Desirable Life Course

3.1 Women's life course regarding marriage, childbearing, and work

Women's Ideal Life Course: “balancing work and family” is the most common, “non-married employment” is increasing, and “re-employment” and “full-time housewife” are decreasing.

The survey asked women about their ideal life course (ideal life course) and their expected life course (expected life course) in terms of the combination of marriage, childbearing/child-rearing, and work in their future lives.

Life course image shown in the response options:

- Continue to work without getting married (Non-married Employment Course)
- Get married but continue to work without children (DINKs Course*)
- Get married, have children and continue to work (Balancing Course)
- Get married and have children, but leave work after marriage or childbearing/child-rearing, and return to work after raising children (Re-employment Course)
- Get married and have children, leave work upon marriage or childbirth, and do not work afterward (Full-time Housewife Course)
- Other (write in freely)

(*DINKs stands for “Double Income No Kids,” and refers to couples who work together and intentionally do not have children.)

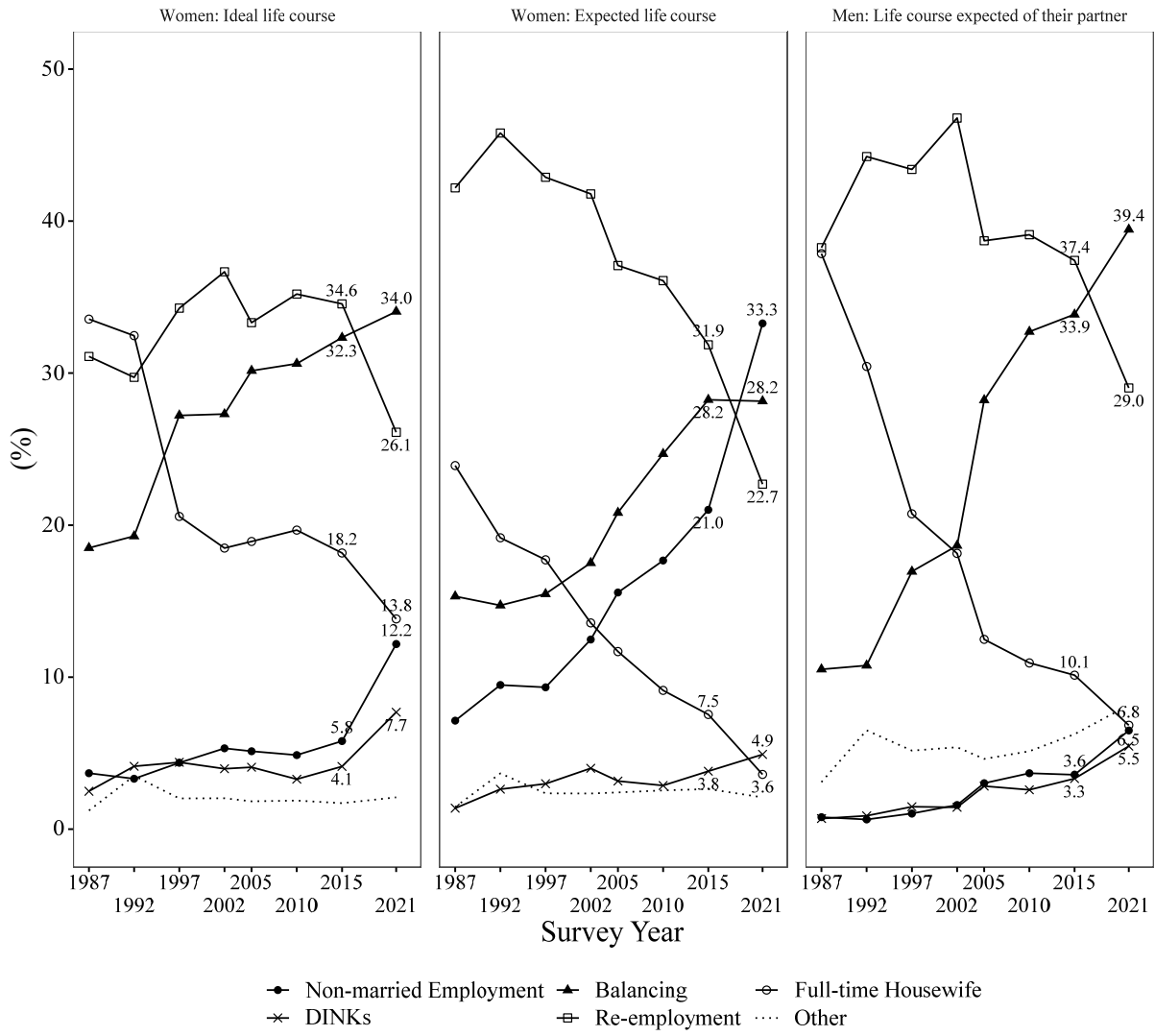
In the “Ideal Life Course” category, the “Balancing Course” increased from 32.3% in the previous survey to 34.0%, the highest percentage for the first time in this survey. The “Re-employment Course” decreased to 26.1% from 34.6% in the previous survey, and the “Full-time Housewife Course” decreased to 13.8% from 18.2%. In this survey, the number of respondents who considered the “Non-married Employment Course” and “DINKs Course” ideal increased.

In terms of “Expected Life Course,” the “Re-employment Course” decreased to 22.7% from 31.9% in the previous survey, while the “Balancing Course” remained unchanged at 28.2% in the previous and current survey. Meanwhile, the “Non-married Employment Course” increased from 21.0% in the previous survey to 33.3%, the highest percentage among all courses.

More men want their partners to take a “Balanced Course,” almost 40%, the highest percentage among all.

The survey asked men about their desired life course for their female partners. While the “Re-employment Course” decreased from 37.4% to 29.0%, and the “Full-time Housewife Course” decreased from 10.1% to 6.8%, the “Balancing Course” increased from 33.9% to 39.4% as the highest percentage among all the options.

Figure 3-1. Ideal/Expected life courses of never-married women and life courses that men expect of their women partners, by survey



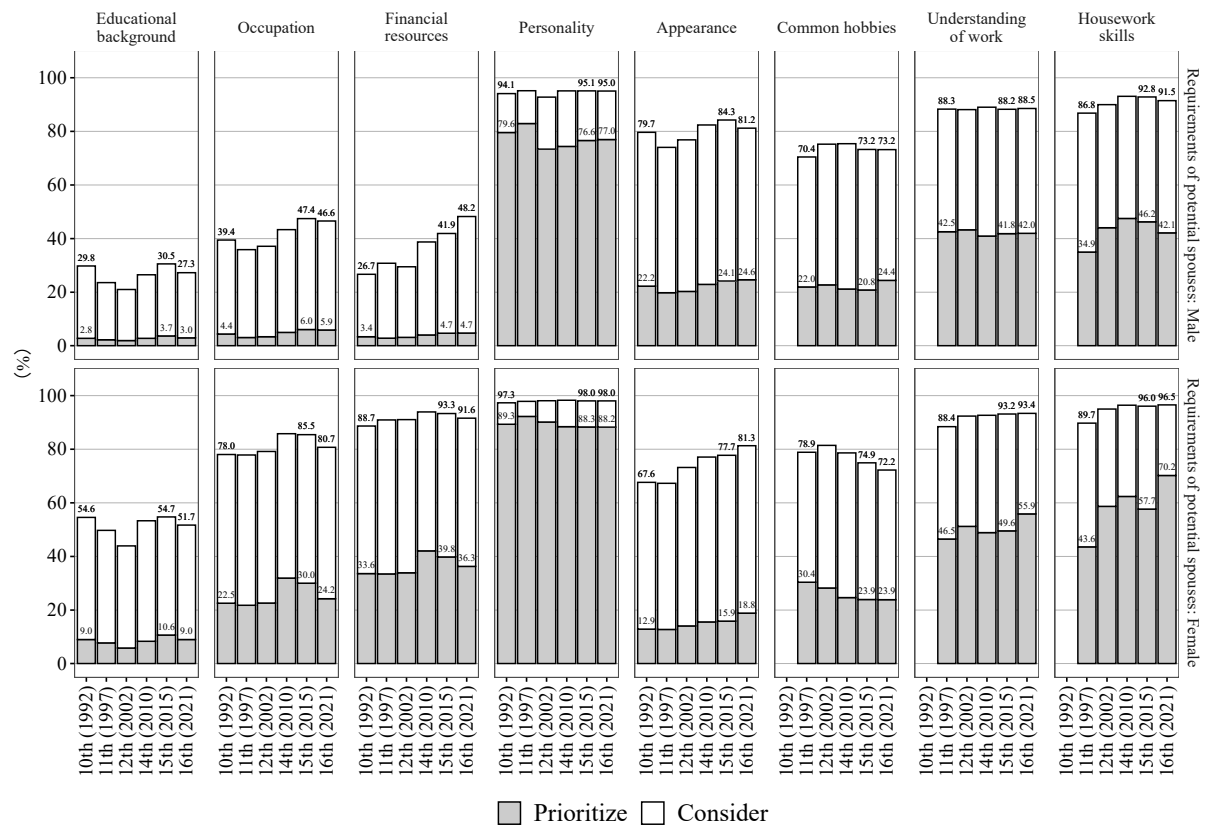
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The figures for NA are omitted. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (3,299), women (2,605) in the 9th (1987) survey; men (4,215), women (3,647) in the 10th (1992) survey; men (3,982), women (3,612) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,897), women (3,494) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (3,139), women (3,064) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (3,667), women (3,406) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: (1) Ideal life course for women: (for the 9th (1987) and 10th (1992) survey) "Regardless of your real life, what type of life is your ideal?" (for the 11th (1997) through 16th (2021) survey) "Which type of life is your ideal?" (2) Expected life course for women: (for the 9th (1987) survey) "Looking back on your past, which type of life do you think you are likely to lead?" (for the 10th (1992) survey) "Looking back on your past, which type of life do you think you would actually lead?" (for the 11th (1997) through 16th (2021) survey) "Regardless of your ideal, which type of life do you think you would actually lead?" (3) Life course expected of their partner for men: (for the 9th (1987) through 12th (2002) survey) "What type of life do you want women to lead?" (for the 13th (2005) through 16th (2021) survey) "What type of life do you want your partner (or wife) to lead?" [Figure 3-1. Ideal/Expected life courses of never-married women and life courses that men expect of their women partners, by survey]

3.2 Criteria for potential spouses

Criteria for a spouse: The percentage of men requiring “financial resources” for women increased, while the percentage of women requiring “competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare” and “appearance” for men increased.

The criteria of “personality” is found to be important by the highest percentage of men and women, followed by “competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare” and “understanding of and support for my work.” 70% of the women found “competence in and attitude toward housework and child-rearing important. Compared to men, women tend to find it important and would consider potential spouses' educational background, occupation, and financial resources more than men. This tendency has not changed since the 10th survey (1992). The following changes have been observed since the 1990s. More men find it important and would consider their potential spouse’s “income and other financial resources” (from 26.7% in the 1992 survey to 48.2% in 2021), and more women find “competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare” important in their potential spouse (from 43.6% in the 1997 survey to 70.2% in the 2021 survey). In addition, while the percentage of women who find it important or would consider their potential spouse’s “appearance” has increased (from 67.6% in the 1992 survey to 81.3% in the 2021 survey), the percentage of women who find it important or would consider “having common hobbies” with potential spouses has decreased (from 78.9% in the 1997 survey to 72.2% in the 2021 survey).

Figure 3-2. Percentage of never-married persons who find it important or would consider each criterion for potential spouse, by survey



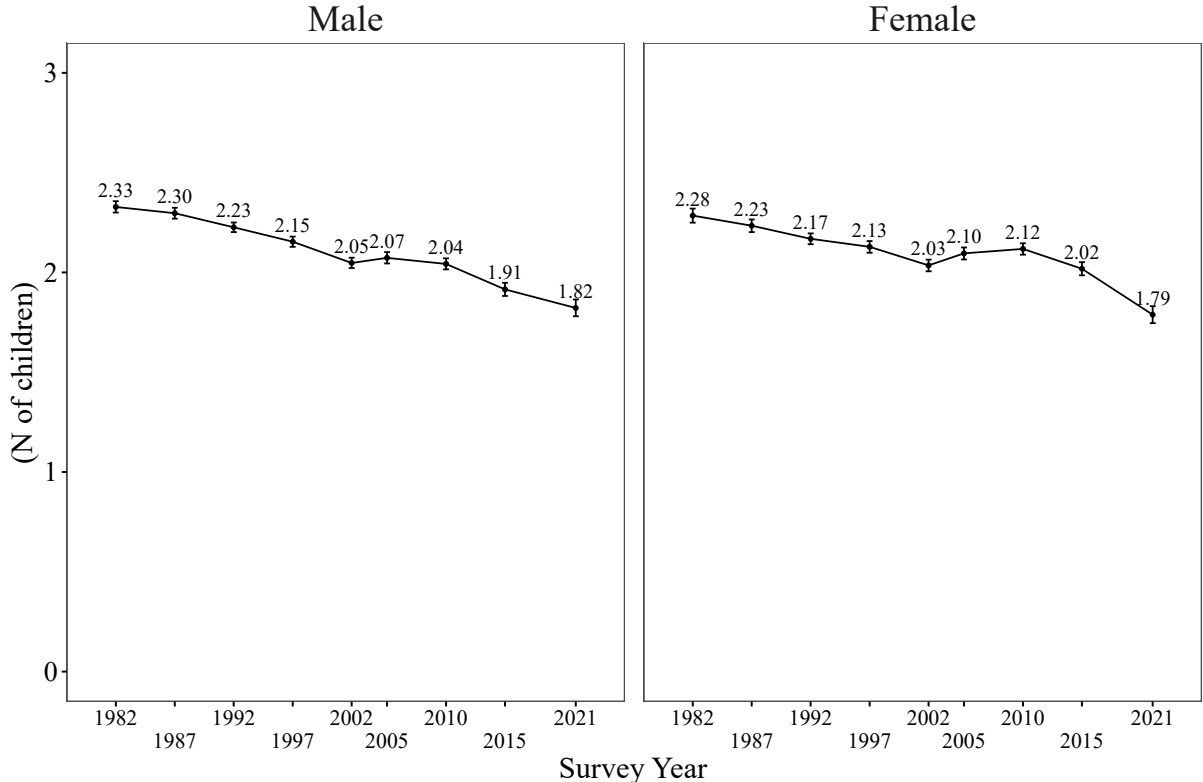
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34 who answered 'intend to get married someday'. Question: "When deciding on a marriage partner, how important are the following items (1) to (8)? Please circle one number for each. <1. Educational background of the partner (Educational background) 2. Partner's occupation (Occupation) 3. Partner's income and other financial resources (Financial resources) 4. Partner's personality (Personality) 5. Partner's appearance (Appearance) 6. Having common hobbies (Common hobbies) 7. Partner's understanding of and support for your work (Understanding of work) 8. partner's competence in and attitude toward housework and childcare (Housework skills)> (1. I find it important, 2. I would consider it, 3. I do not find it relevant)." [Figure 3-2. Percentage of never-married persons who find it important or would consider each criterion for potential spouse, by survey]

3.3 Desired number of children and reasons for having children

The desired number of children of never-married persons continues to decline, and this trend is more pronounced among women.

The survey asked never-married persons how many children they would like to have (the desired number of children). The average number of children desired by never-married men and women aged 18-34 who intend to get married has generally continued to decline since 1982: 1.82 for men and 1.79 for women, falling below 2 for the first time in this survey.

Figure 3-3. Average desired number of children of never-married persons, by survey



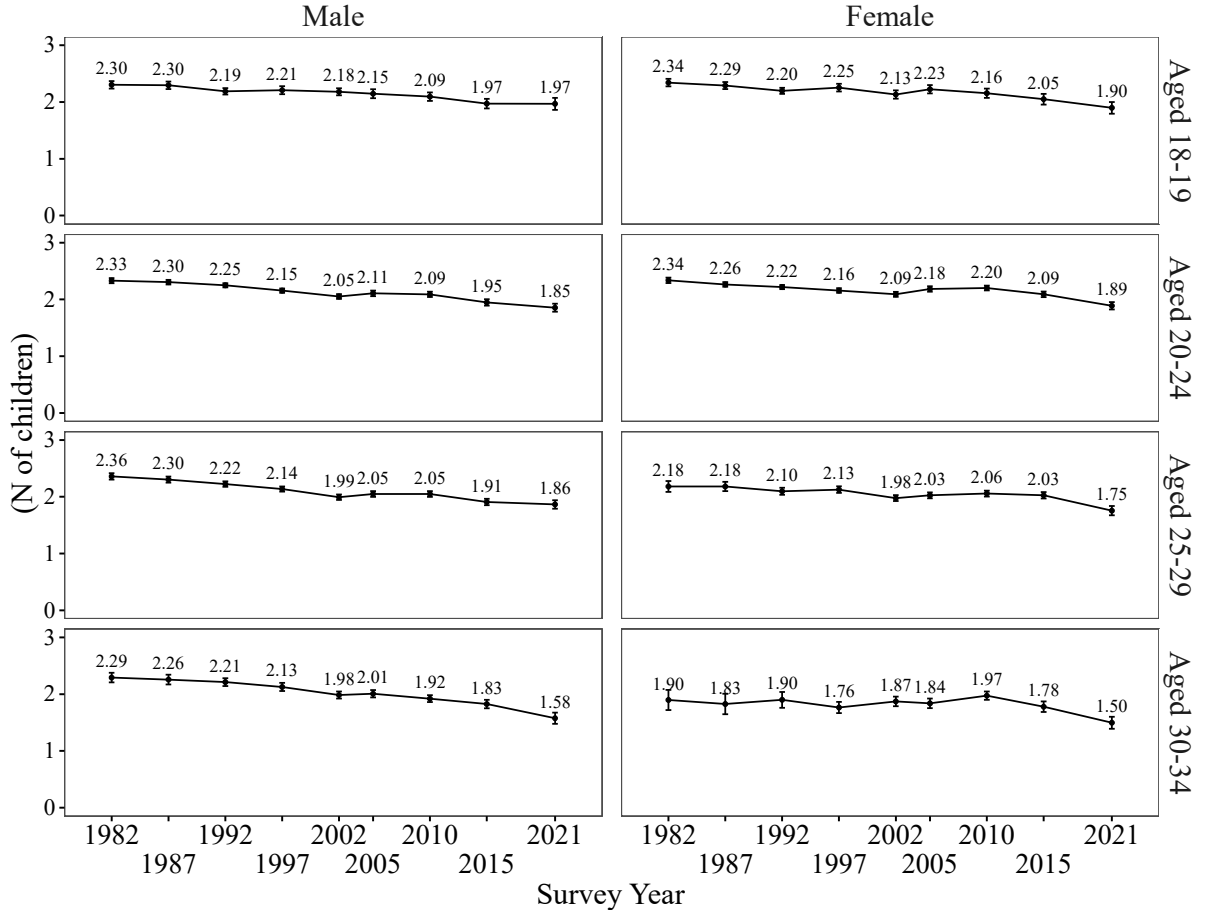
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34 who responded that they "intend to get married someday". The average was calculated by excluding those who did not answer the desired number of children and recoding responses of "5 or more" to 5. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The respective number of case was as follows: men (3,270), women (3,001) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (2,652), women (2,698) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (3,084), women (2,993) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,263), women (2,263) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (1,613), women (1,690) in the 16th (2021) survey. The average desired number of children for never-married persons aged 18-34 who responded that they 'have no intention of ever getting married' were as follows: men (0.65), women (0.71) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (0.80), women (0.57) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (0.59), women (0.49) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (0.49), women (0.33) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (0.31), women (0.21) in the 16th (2021) survey. Meanwhile, the average desired number of children for all never-married persons were as follows: men (1.96), women (1.96) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (1.98), women (2.01) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (1.90), women (2.00) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (1.74), women (1.88) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (1.56), women (1.55) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "(1)How many children would you like to have? (0. Do not want any children 1. 1 child, 2. 2 children, 3. 3 children, 4. 4 children, 5. 5 or more: () children)."

[Figure 3-3. Average desired number of children of never-married persons, by survey]

The average desired number of children by never-married men and women is below 2 for all age groups.

The average number of children desired by never-married women who intend to marry by age has generally continued to decline for all age groups. In this survey, the average number of children desired for both men and women in all age groups was below 2. The declines are substantial for men in their early 30s, and women in their early 30s and late 20s, falling from 1.83 to 1.58, from 1.78 to 1.50, and from 2.03 to 1.75, respectively.

Figure 3-4. Average desired number of children of never-married persons, by survey and age



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34 responding that they "intend to get married someday." The average was calculated by excluding those who did not answer the desired number of children and recoding responses of 5 or more to 5. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The numbers of cases for the 15th (2015) and 16th (2016) surveys are as follows (15th, 16th): age 18-19: men (356, 253), women (339, 275); age 20-24: men (798, 579), women (927, 678); age 25-29: men (645, 474), women (658, 453); aged 30-34: men (464, 307), women (339, 284). The average desired numbers of children for all never-married persons for the 15th and 16th surveys were as follows (15th, 16th): age 18-19: men (1.85, 1.73), women (1.95, 1.72); age 20-24: men (1.81, 1.65), women (1.97, 1.66); age 25-29: men (1.68, 1.61), women (1.89, 1.52); age 30-34: men (1.66, 1.23), women (1.58, 1.24).

[Figure 3-4. Average desired number of children of never-married persons, by survey and age]

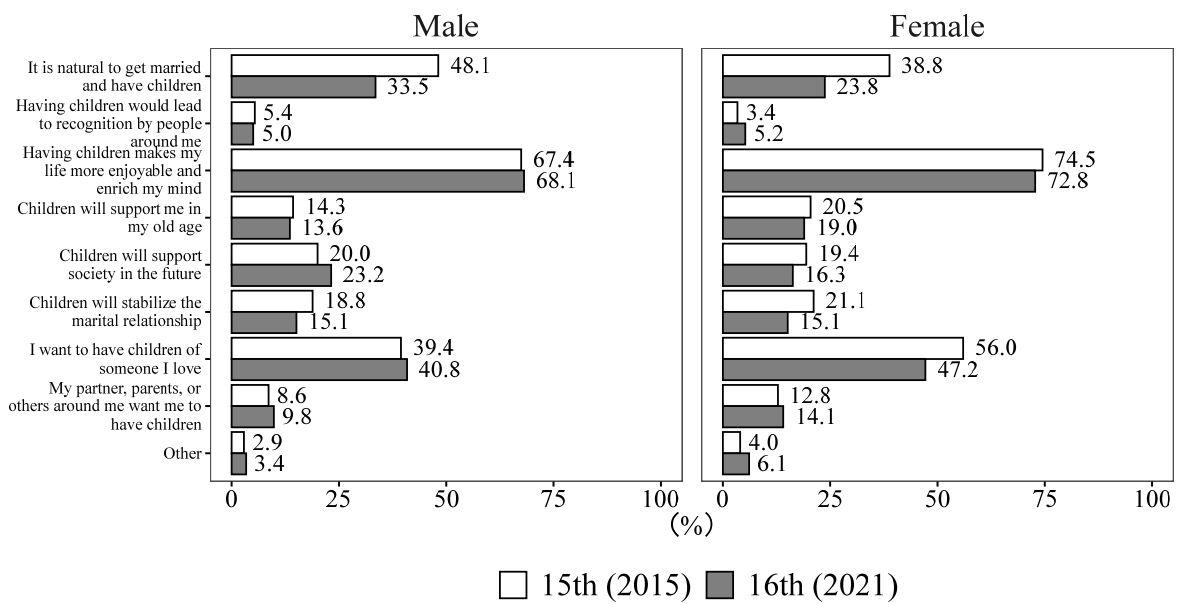
Reason for having children cited by never-married persons: “Because it is natural” declined significantly for both men and women.

The survey asked never-married persons who wish to have children about their reasons. As in the previous survey, “because having children makes my life more enjoyable and enriches my mind” was selected most often by both men and women, at around 70%.

Among men, about 40% selected “because I want to have children of someone I love,” while “because it is natural to get married and have children” decreased from 48.1% in the previous survey to 33.5% in this survey. The percentage of respondents who chose “because children will support society in the future” increased slightly from 20.0% to 23.2%.

Among women, “Because I want to have children of someone I love” decreased from 56.0% to 47.2%, “Because it is natural to get married and have children” decreased from 38.8% to 23.8%, and “because children will stabilize the marital relationship” decreased from 21.1% to 15.1%, respectively.

Figure 3-5. Reasons for having children of never-married persons, by survey



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-34 who responded that they "intend to get married someday" and whose desired number of children is 1 or more. Those who did not answer the question were excluded from the calculation of percentages choosing each reason. Since the question allows multiple answers, the sum of the percentage choosing each reason exceeds 100%. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (1,990), women (2,029) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (1,393), women (1,435) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "What are your reasons for wanting to have one or more children? Please circle all the reasons below that apply to you, and circle twice the most important reason."

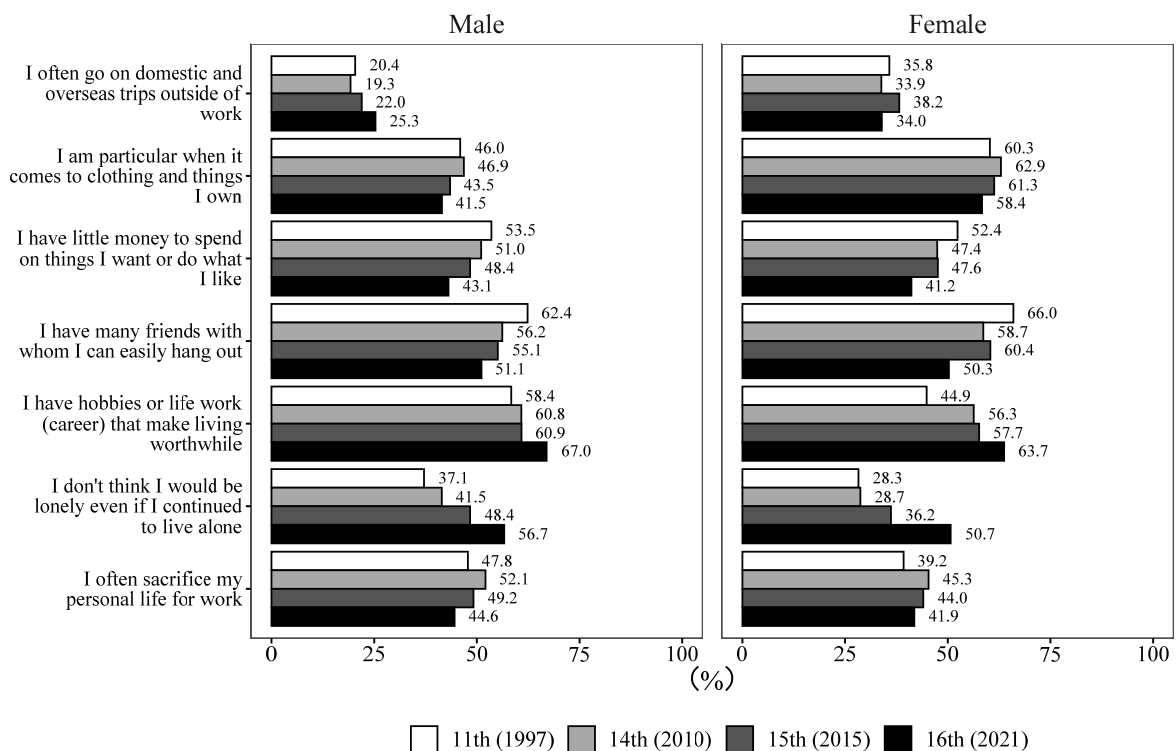
[Figure 3-5. Reasons for having children of never-married persons, by survey]

4. Lifestyle of Never-married Persons

More never-married persons responded “I have hobbies or life work that make living worthwhile” and “I do not feel lonely living alone”.

The survey asked about the lifestyles of never-married persons, including socializing, consuming, working, and having hobbies. The percentages of men and women (67.0% and 63.7%, respectively) said they “have hobbies or life work that make living worthwhile” was the largest among all the response options, up about 6 points each from the previous survey. The percentage of respondents who “do not think they would be lonely even if they continued to live alone” also increased, with the increase being particularly big among women, rising from 36.2% in the previous survey to a majority of 50.7%. On the other hand, the percentage of both men and women who say they “Have many friends with whom I can easily hang out” decreased from 55.1% to 51.1% among men and from 60.4% to 50.3% among women. Other responses that saw declines for both men and women were “I am particular when it comes to clothing and things I own,” “I have little money to spend on things I want or do what I like,” and “I often sacrifice my personal life for work.”

Figure 4-1. Percentage of never-married persons to whom each lifestyle applies, by survey

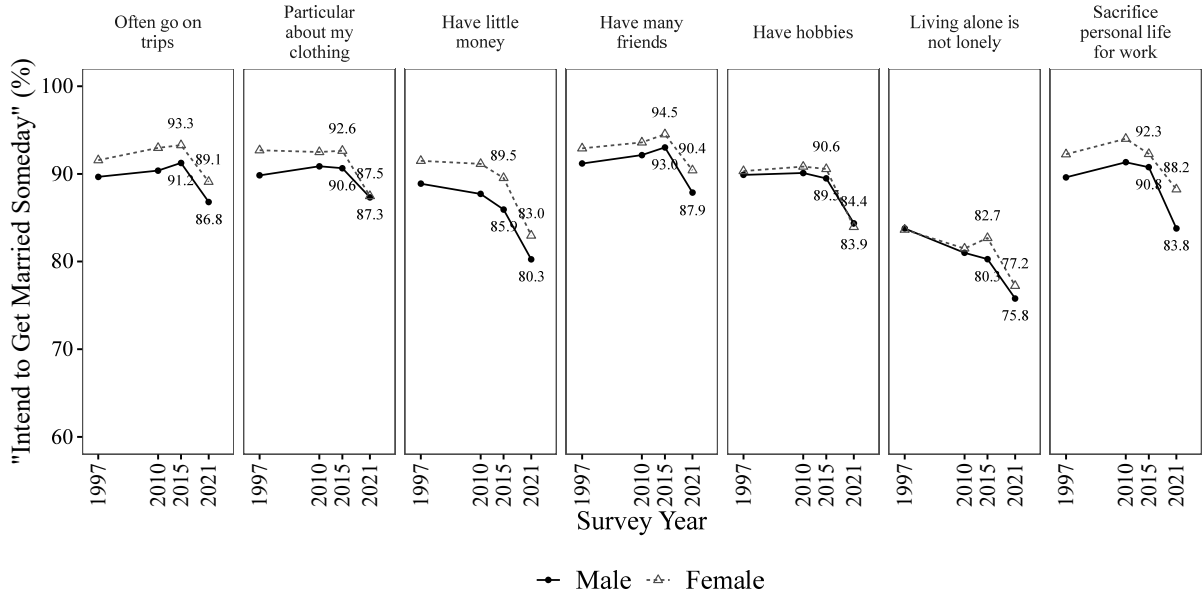


Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The figures shown are the sum of percentages of respondents who chose "it applies to me" and those who chose "it applies to me somewhat." Only those having a job answered "I often sacrifice my personal life for work." The respective number of cases was as follows: men (3,982), women (3,612) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,667), women (3,406) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "We would like to ask you some questions about your lifestyle. Please circle the one number in the right column that applies to you for each of the following items (1) to (7)." ([My response to the ideas on the left] 1. It applies to me, 2. It applies to me somewhat, 3. It doesn't quite apply to me, 4. It doesn't apply to me at all.) [Figure 4-1. Percentage of never-married persons to whom each lifestyle applies, by survey]

The percentage of never-married persons who “intend to get married someday” with active lifestyles such as “often go on trips,” “particular when it comes to clothing and belongings,” and “have many friends” also decreased in this survey.

Never-married persons’ willingness to get married differs depending on their lifestyle. For never-married persons who answered “agree” or “somewhat agree” to each of the lifestyle-related questions, we compared the percentage of those who answered “intend to get married someday” with respect to their lifetime intention to get married. In previous surveys, the percentage of never-married persons who answered “intend to get married someday” tended to be higher among those with active lifestyles, such as “have many friends with whom I can easily hang out,” “often go on domestic and overseas trips outside of work,” and “am particular when it comes to clothing and things I own.” In the current survey, even never-married persons with these lifestyles showed a decline in their intention to get married. The never-married persons with such lifestyles as “I have little money to spend on things I want or do what I like,” “I have hobbies or life work that make living worthwhile,” “I don’t think I would be lonely even if I continued to live alone,” and “I often sacrifice my personal life for my work” also showed a further decline in their intentions to get married.

Figure 4-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons to whom each lifestyle applies, by survey (Percentage of those who answered “intend to get married someday”)



Note: The figures show the percentage of never-married persons aged 18-34 who answered they "intend to get married someday," among those who selected "it applies to me" or "it applies to me somewhat" for each lifestyle question. For all never-married persons aged 18-34, the percentage of those who answered they "intend to get married someday" was respectively 85.7% for men, and 89.3% for women in the 15th survey, and 81.4% for men, and 84.3% for women in the 16th survey. The number of cases choosing each lifestyle in the 16th (2021) survey was as follows: "I often go on domestic and overseas trips outside of work": men: 515, women: 697; "I am particular when it comes to clothing and things I own": men: 844, women: 1,198; "I have little money to spend on things I want or do what I like": men: 876, women: 845; "I have many friends with whom I can easily hang out": men: 1,039, women: 1,032; "I have hobbies or life work (career) that make living worthwhile": men: 1,362, women: 1,308; "I don't think I would be lonely even if I continued to live alone": men: 1,152, women: 1,041; "I often sacrifice my personal life for work": men: 598, women: 561 (only those having a job). Question for lifestyle: "We would like to ask you some questions about your lifestyle. Please circle the one number in the right column that applies to you for each of the following items (1) to (7)." Question for lifetime intention to marry: "Thinking about your whole life, which of the following describes your thoughts on marriage?" (1. Intend to get married someday, 2. Have no intention of ever getting married.)

[Figure 4-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons to whom each lifestyle applies, by survey (Percentage of those who answered "intend to get married someday")]

Section II Results of the Survey of Married Couples

Part II, based on the results of the survey of married couples, presents the data on the process of marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth, attitudes toward the number of children, working styles of husbands and wives, housework and childcare, and use of childcare support systems by married couples during childbearing and child-rearing years (mainly married couples with wives under 55 years old married before age 55).

5. Marriage Process

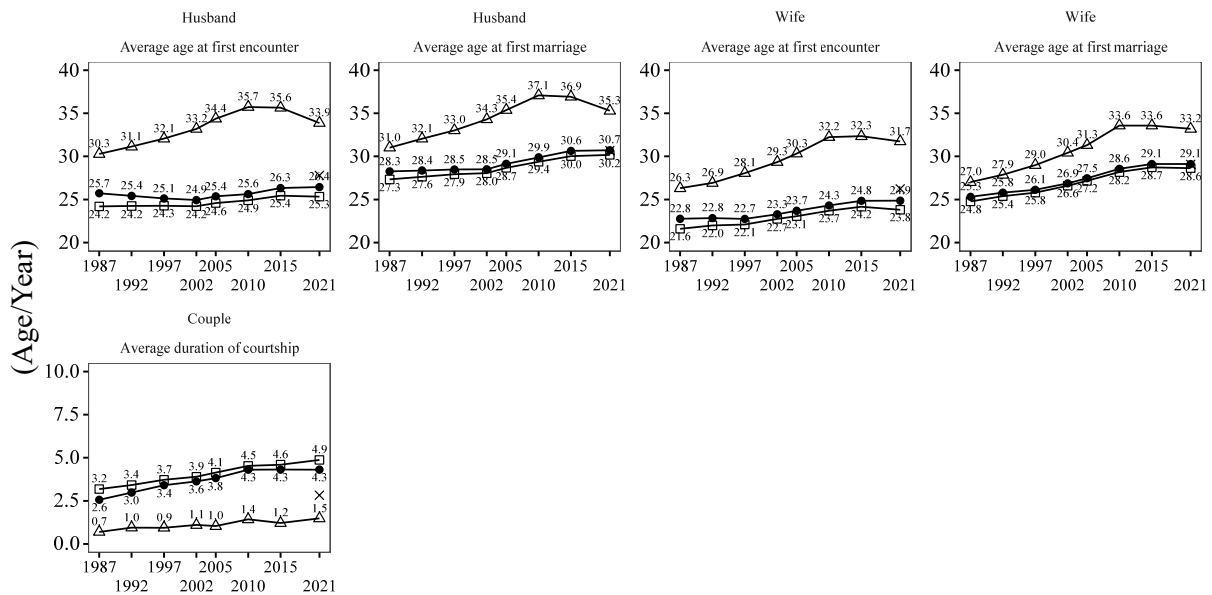
5.1 Age at first encounter/first marriage and the length of courtship

The average age at first encounter remained unchanged at 26.4 years for men and 24.9 years for women, and the average length of courtship at 4.3 years.

For couples in their first marriage who married in the last five years as of the time of the survey, the average age at which the couple first met (the average age at first encounter), the average age at first marriage, and the average length of courtship are shown. The average age at first encounter has been on an upward trend in the past, but the level in the current survey was almost unchanged from the previous survey. The average length of courtship has also shown no increase, remaining flat at around four years.

Looking at trends by marriage type – “love marriage,” “arranged marriage,” and “through Internet services” (referring to marriages in which the couple met through internet tools that connect individuals online, such as social networking sites and apps, and which was newly added to the options in this survey) – the age at first encounter and age at first marriage in “arranged marriages” were lower in the current survey. The average age at the first encounter in “through Internet services” was 27.8 for husbands and 26.2 for wives, slightly higher than in “love marriages” (25.3 for husbands and 23.8 for wives), and the average length of courtship in marriages “through Internet services” was 2.8 years, shorter than in “love marriages” (4.9 years) (see note to Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1. Average age at first encounter and first marriage and duration of courtship, by survey and way/place married couples met (couples in first marriage who married within five years prior to each survey)



- All marriages (Total) □ Love marriage △ Arranged marriage × Through Internet services

Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage who married within five years prior to each survey. Data shows couples with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The average is calculated by adding 0.5 years to the age and duration. "Love marriage" was determined by the ways/places couples meet. The respective number of cases for the average age at first marriage of the wife in the order of "all marriages (Total)," "love marriage," and "arranged marriage" was as follows: 1,289, 947, 314 in the 9th (1987) survey; 1,342, 1,102, 223 in the 10th (1992) survey; 1,145, 997, 123 in the 11th (1997) survey; 1,221, 1,090, 91 in the 12th (2002) survey; 885, 774, 63 in the 13th (2005) survey; 963, 856, 56 in the 14th (2010) survey; 738, 641, 56 in the 15th (2015) survey; 656, 517, 62 in the 16th (2021) survey. For those who chose "through Internet services," the number of cases was 73, and the average age at first encounter was, for husbands: 27.8; for wives, 26.2; the average age at first marriage was, for husbands: 30.7; for wives, 29.1; and the average duration of courtship was 2.8 years.

Question: "Please circle the appropriate number and enter the number in the underlined box for ... (2) the date you were married." Question: "(1) When did you and your husband first meet?"

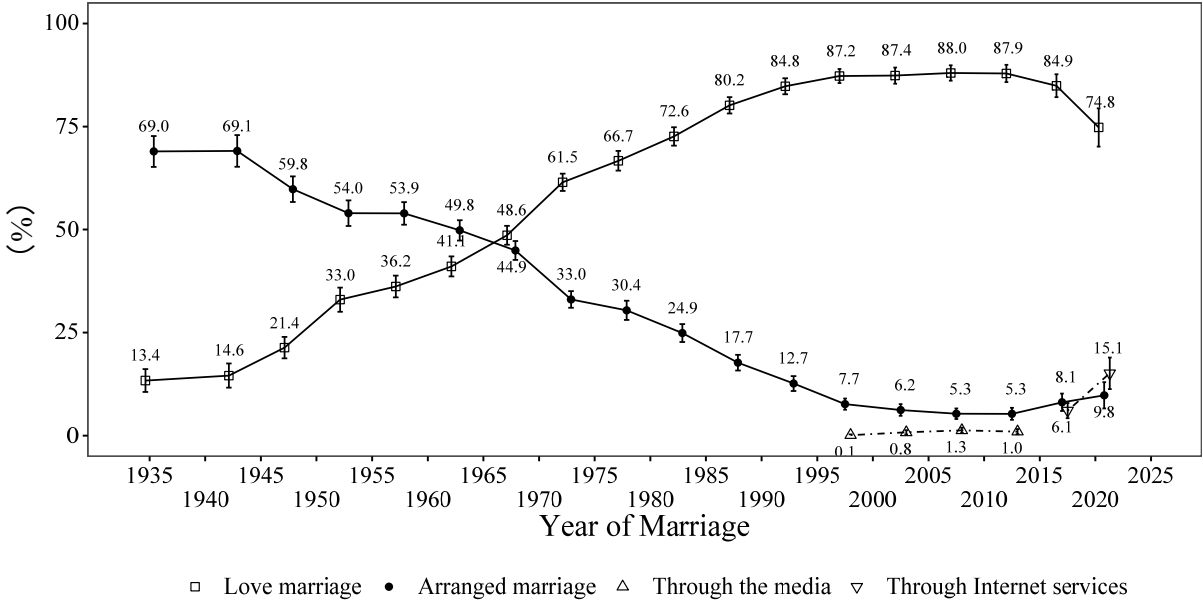
[Figure 5-1. Average age at first encounter and first marriage and duration of courtship, by survey and way/place married couples met (couples in first marriage who married within five years prior to each survey)]

5.2 How did couples meet?

The percentage of husbands and wives meeting each other “through Internet services” (SNS, apps, etc.) is increasing, and the percentage of traditional “love marriages” is decreasing.

In addition to the traditional categories of “arranged marriage” and “love marriage,” the current survey added a new option, “through Internet services,” as the way husbands and wives met. This option refers to cases where the couple met using social networking services (SNS), matching applications, or other services that provide online opportunities for personal interaction and that do not fit into the traditional options. Looking at changes in the way for meeting by year of marriage, the percentage of couples who met “through Internet services,” shown in the lower right of the figure, has increased rapidly since 2015, surpassing that of “arranged marriages” in the most recent year (15.1% for “through Internet services” and 9.8% for “arranged marriages”). The percentage of traditional “love marriages” has declined as new opportunities to meet the opposite sex have emerged.

Figure 5-2. Percentage of love marriage and arranged marriage, by year of marriage



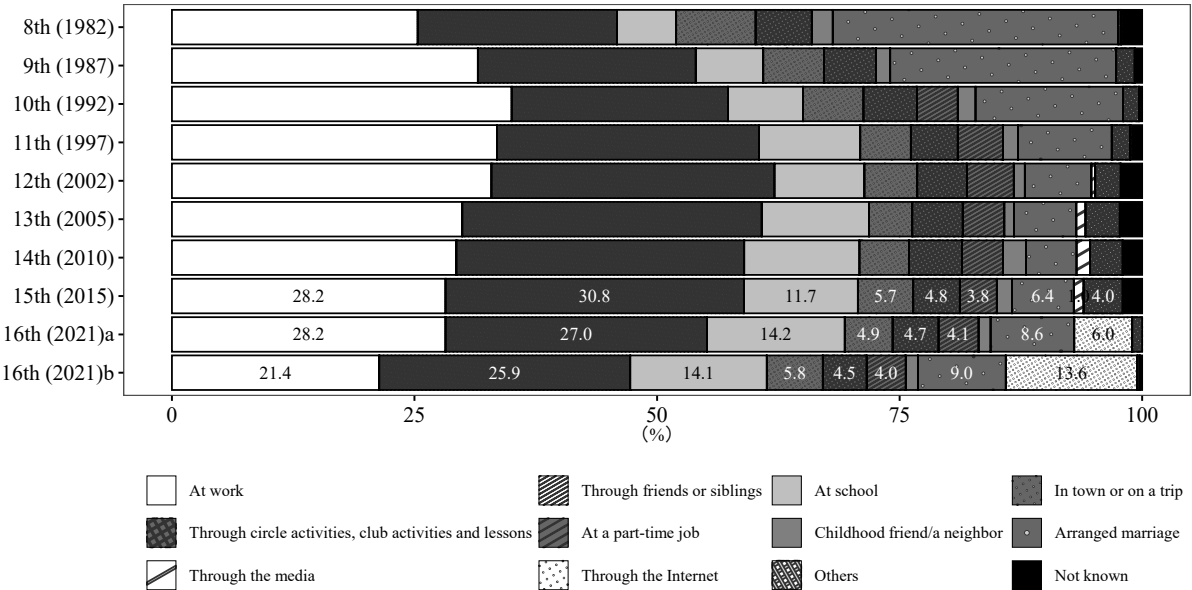
Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage. Data shows couples with wives both over and under 50 (the 7th survey), those under 50 (8th through 15th survey) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The data are based on 7th Survey (1970-74 from 1930-39), 8th Survey (1975-79), 9th Survey (1980-84), 10th Survey (1985-89), 11th survey (1990-94), 12th survey (1995-99), 13th survey (2000-04), 14th survey (2005-09), 15th survey (2010-14), and 16th survey (2015-18 and 2019-21[by June]). Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. As to how/where couples met, data was compiled by classifying those who responded "through an arranged introduction" or "through a marriage match-making agency" into "arranged marriage," and those who gave other responses - i.e., "at school," "at the workplace or through work," "childhood friend/neighbor," "through various activities (hobbies, etc.) or an adult education class," "through friends or siblings," "around town or during a trip" or "through a part-time job" - into "love marriage." "Through the media" is a subset of the responses written by the respondents choosing "other" in the 11th through 15th survey that represent content such as websites and the Internet. "Through Internet services" was given as a new option in the 16th survey ("through the Internet (other than the above)"). The note below the answer column reads ""Through the Internet" refers to cases where you met through social networking services, websites, apps, etc.." Couples who responded "other" or "not known" to the question on the ways/places they met were omitted from the graph.

[Figure 5-2. Percentage of love marriage and arranged marriage, by year of marriage]

Marriages formed “at work” have decreased in the last three years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 13.6% of newlyweds meet “through Internet services” such as SNS, apps, etc.

Looking at how husbands and wives met by survey year, the percentage of “at work or in a work-related context,” which had been the top response, decreased from 28.2% in the previous survey to 21.4% for marriages between July 2018 and June 2021 (2021b), which includes the period when marriage was declining under the COVID-19 pandemic. The percentage of “arranged marriage matchmaking meeting” increased from 6.4% in the previous survey to 9.0% in 2021b(*). It was 6.0% for “through Internet services” (using SNS, apps, etc.), a new option added to the current survey, for marriages between July 2015 and June 2018 (2021a) and 13.6% for 2021b.

Figure 5-3. Percentage of ways and/or places married couples met, by survey (Couples in first marriage who got married within five years prior to each study [For the 16th survey, those who got married within six years prior to the survey])



Note: The figures shown are for couples who have been married for less than 5 years with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or couples who have been married for less than 6 years with wives under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). For the 16th survey, the sample is divided into two groups by the time of marriage. (2021)a: married between July 2015 and June 2018; (2021)b: married between July 2018 and June 2021. The number of cases were as follows: 894 in the 15th (2015) survey, 486 in the 16th (2021)a survey, 398 in the 16th (2021)b survey. "Arranged marriage" indicates marriage "through an arranged matchmaking date with marriage in mind" or "through a marriage matchmaking service." In the 8th and 9th surveys, "at a part-time job" was not included in the options. "Through the media," extracted from additional comments that were categorized as "others" in the 11th through 15th surveys, includes websites and the Internet. "Through the Internet" means "through the Internet (other than the channels listed above)," a new item added in the 16th survey. A note in the answer column states, "'Through the Internet' refers to cases where the couple met through social networking services, websites, apps, etc." The results of the 16th survey not shown in the graph (a, b) are as follows: (1.2%, 1.3%) for the "childhood friend/a neighbor", (1.0%, 0.3%) for the "others", (0%, 0.3%) for the "not known". Question: "How and when did you and your husband meet?" Items: "At school", "At work or in a work-related context", "Childhood friend/a neighbor", "Outside of school through circle activities, club activities, lessons, etc.", "Through friends or siblings", "Through an arranged matchmaking date with marriage in mind (including introduction by relatives, superiors, and so on)", "Through a marriage matchmaking service (including online)", "In town or on a trip", "At a part-time job", "Through the Internet (other than the channels listed above) -> Please specify", "Other -> Please specify"

[Figure 5-3. Percentage of ways and/or places married couples met, by survey (Couples in first marriage who got married within five years prior to each study [For the 16th survey, those who got married within six years prior to the survey])]

(*) According to the Vital Statistics (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare), the number of first marriages for wives under age 50 in 2020 dropped significantly to 330,000 from 380,000 in 2019. Note that the values for 2021b in the chart are based on a situation with fewer marriages occurring than in previous years, and an increase in the composition ratio does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of marriages occurring.

6. Fertility of Married Couples

6.1 Completed number of children

“The completed number of children” is defined as the final number of children born to a couple (this corresponds to the average number of children born to couples). In this survey, the average number of children born to couples married for 15-19 years with little or no plans to have additional children is defined as the completed number of children, and aggregate results are presented. Until the previous survey, this indicator was calculated for couples with wives under 50 years old as of the time of the survey; this survey presents results for couples with wives under 55 years old (*). In addition, “the average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49” is also calculated for couples with wives aged 45-49, which is shown later in this report.

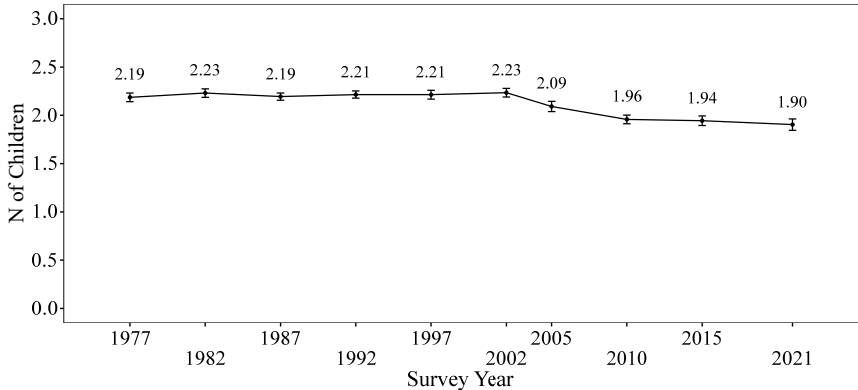
* Note on raising the maximum age limit for wives as of the time of the survey in calculating the completed number of children

When calculating the completed number of children for couples who have been married for 15-19 years, limiting the wife’s age as of the time of the survey to less than 50 years would exclude some couples who married when the wife was between 30 and 34 years old and couples who married at 35 years old or older. According to marriage statistics from the “Vital Statistics” (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare), for married couples who had been married for 15-19 years in past surveys, the percentage of couples where the wife is between 30 and 34 years old at first marriage has ranged from 4 to 13% of married couples where the wife is under 50 years old at marriage. However, in the 16th survey, among couples who have been married for 15-19 years (married between 2001 and 2006), the trend toward late marriage further increased, with the percentage of wives married between the ages of 30 and 34 increasing to about 20%. Therefore, in the 16th survey, the upper age limit for the calculation was raised from under 50 to under 55, and the completed number of children was calculated by including all couples whose wives were married between the ages of 30 and 34. The calculation of the average number of children born to wives under 50 in the 16th survey is shown in the footnote. The figure is overestimated since it excludes a portion of the couples who married when the wife was 30 to 34 years old and have a relatively small number of children.

The Completed number of children of married couples continues to decline.

The completed number of children of couples who have been married for 15-19 years remained stable at around 2.2 until the 2002 (12th) survey but has since declined, reaching a low of 1.90 in the current survey.

Figure 6-1. Completed number of children of married couples, by survey (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)



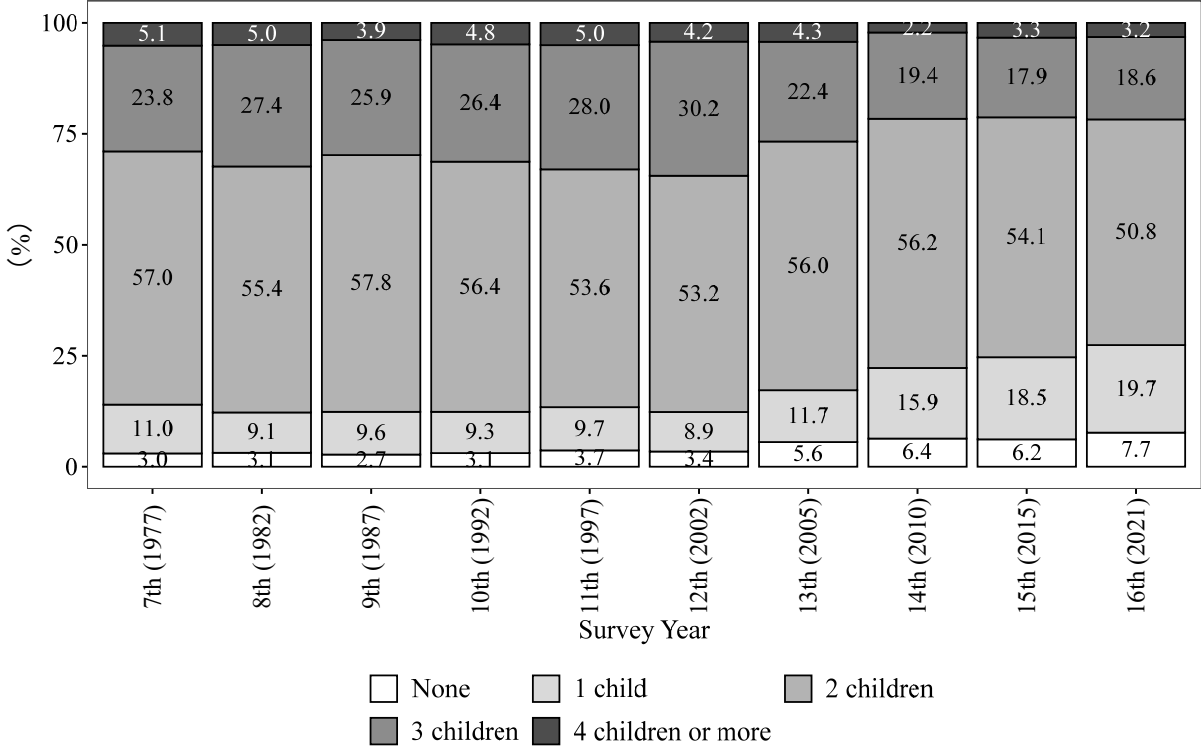
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage who have been married for 15-19 years. Data shows couples with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. For the 16th (2021) survey, the average number of children for couples with wives under 50 (married before age 35) is 1.99. It does not include all couples with wives who married at age 35 or older and some of the couples with wives who married between age 30 and 34. The respective number of cases was as follows: 1,427 in the 7th (1977) survey, 1,429 in the 8th (1982) survey, 1,755 in the 9th (1987) survey, 1,849 in the 10th (1992) survey, 1,334 in the 11th (1997) survey, 1,257 in the 12th (2002) survey, 1,078 in the 13th (2005) survey, 1,385 in the 14th (2010) survey, 1,232 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 948 in the 16th (2021) survey. The average age at first marriage for wives married before age 35 was as follows: 23.9 in the 7th (1977) survey, 23.9 in the 8th (1982) survey, 23.9 in the 9th (1987) survey, 24.2 in the 10th (1992) survey, 24.8 in the 11th (1997) survey, 25.1 in the 12th (2002) survey, 25.4 in the 13th (2005) survey, 25.8 in the 14th (2010) survey, 26.1 in the 15th (2015) survey, 27.0 (married before age 35) and 27.8 (married before age 40) in the 16th (2021) survey.

[Figure 6-1. Completed number of children of married couples, by survey (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)]

The percentage of couples who have completed childbearing with one child continues to increase.

Looking at the distribution of the number of children born to couples who have been married for 15-19 years (a duration of marriage in which the childbearing period is considered almost complete), the percentage of couples with one child has been gradually increasing since the 2005 (13th) survey and accounted for about 20% of the total, or 19.7% in the current survey. The number of childless (0 children born) couples also increased to 7.7% (6.2% in the previous survey). Along with this increase in the number of couples with no children and those with one child, the percentage of couples with two children declined to 50.8% in the current survey (54.1% in the previous survey).

Figure 6-2. Percentage distribution of couples by number of children, by survey (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)



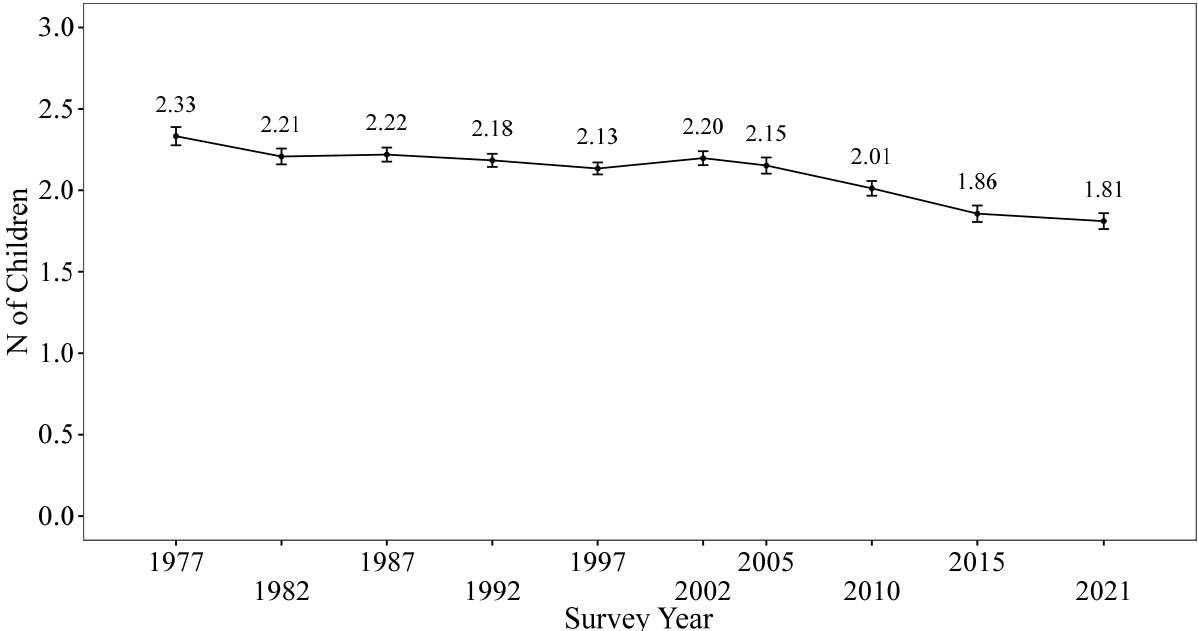
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage who have been married for 15-19 years. Data shows couples with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). It does not include couples who did not state the number of children. For the 16th (2021) survey, the percentages of couples by number of children for couples with wives under 50 were as follows: none (5.5%), 1 child (18.1%), 2 children (52.9%), 3 children (20.2%), 4 children or more (3.4%).

[Figure 6-2. Percentage distribution of couples by number of children, by survey (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)]

The average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 also declines.

Since women rarely have children beyond the age of 45, the average number of children born to a couple with wife between 45 and 49 years of age can be regarded as the final number of children born when the wife is 50. This value has been declining since the 2002 (12th) survey and was 1.81 in the current survey.

Figure 6-3. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey

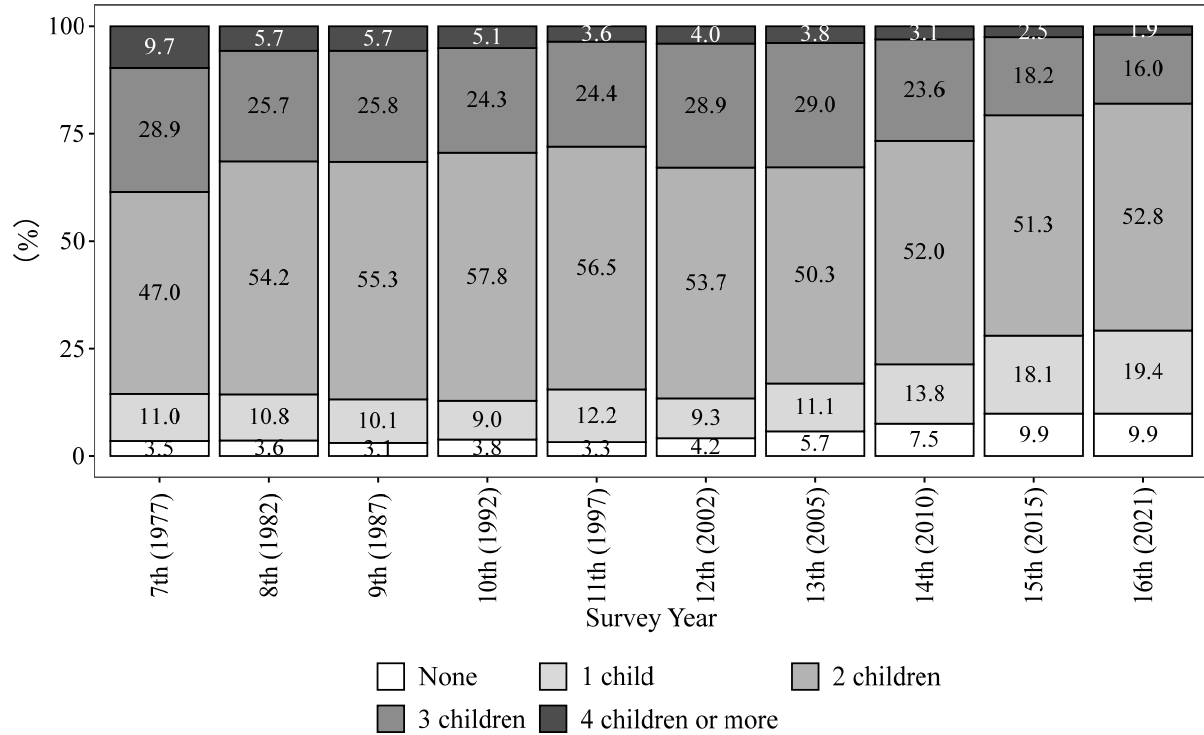


Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 45-49. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The respective number of cases was as follows: 1,232 in the 7th (1977) survey, 1,302 in the 8th (1982) survey, 1,472 in the 9th (1987) survey, 1,619 in the 10th (1992) survey, 1,846 in the 11th (1997) survey, 1,469 in the 12th (2002) survey, 1,274 in the 13th (2005) survey, 1,568 in the 14th (2010) survey, 1,275 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 1,297 in the 16th (2021) survey.
[Figure 6-3. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey]

The percentage of couples with one child increases among couples with wives ages 45-49.

Looking at the distribution of the number of children born to couples with wives between 45 and 49 years of age, the percentage of couples with one or two children increased, and the percentage with three or more children decreased from the previous survey.

Figure 6-4. Percent distribution of couples with wives aged 45-49 by number of children, by survey



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 45-49. Data does not include couples who did not answer the question on the number of children.

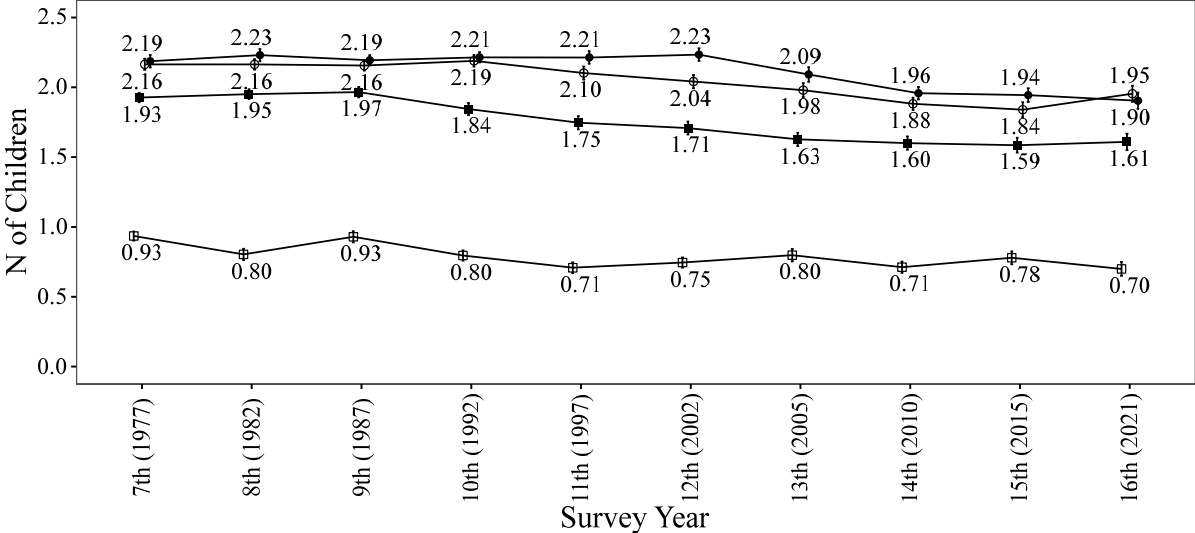
[Figure 6-4. Percent distribution of couples with wives aged 45-49 by number of children, by survey]

6.2 Number of children of couples in the childbearing period

The average number of children born to couples who have been married for 5-9 years and 10-14 years has stopped declining.

The average number of children born to couples is shown by the years since marriage, i.e., the duration of the marriage. The number of children born in marriages lasting less than 15 years, including many couples who have not yet completed childbearing, has remained mostly unchanged, but there are some signs of reversal.

Figure 6-5. Number of children of married couples, by survey and duration of the marriage



□ 0-4 years ♦ 5-9 years ○ 10-14 years • 15-19 years

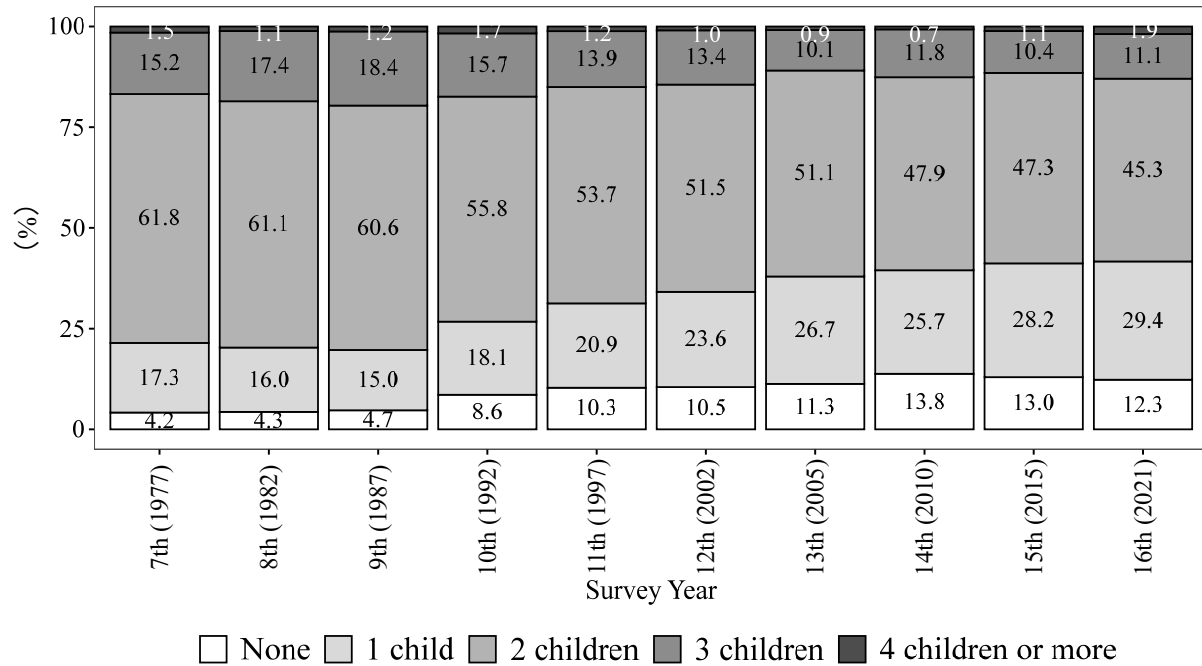
Note: Figures shown are for couple in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The respective number of cases was as follows: Duration of marriage 0-4 years (883 in the 15th (2015) survey, 716 in the 16th (2021) survey), 5-9 years (1,056 in the 15th (2015) survey, 902 in the 16th (2021) survey), 10-14 years (1,128 in the 15th (2015) survey, 1,033 in the 16th (2021) survey), 15-19 years (1,232 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 948 in the 16th (2021) survey).

[Figure 6-5. Number of children of married couples, by survey and duration of the marriage]

The number of couples with one child in the childbearing period continues to increase.

Looking at the distribution of the number of children born to couples who have been married for 5-9 years and who are in the childbearing period, the percentage of couples with one child has been slowly increasing since the 1990s. This trend continued in the current survey, with the percentage of couples with one child increasing to 29.4% (from 28.2% in the previous survey). On the other hand, the percentage of couples with no children peaked at 13.8% in the 2010 (14th) survey and has been gradually declining.

Figure 6-6. Percentage distribution of couples by the number of children, by survey (Duration of marriage: 5 to 9 years)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage who have been married for 5-9 years with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). Data does not include couples who did not answer the question on the number of children. The respective number of cases was as follows: 1,957 in the 7th (1977) survey, 1,757 in the 8th (1982) survey, 1,608 in the 9th (1987) survey, 1,549 in the 10th (1992) survey, 1,276 in the 11th (1997) survey, 1,325 in the 12th (2002) survey, 1,233 in the 13th (2005) survey, 1,334 in the 14th (2010) survey, 1,056 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 902 in the 16th (2021) survey.
 [Figure 6-6. Percentage distribution of couples by the number of children, by survey (Duration of marriage: 5 to 9 years)]

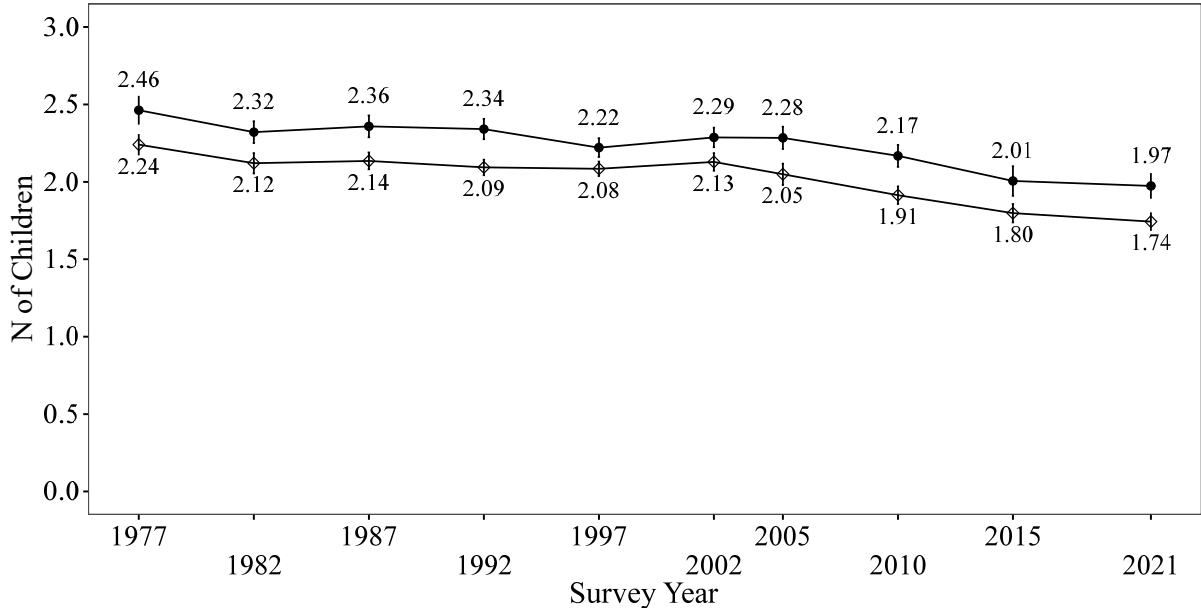
6.3 The number of children born to married couples with wives aged 45-49 by socioeconomic status

Below, we present the average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 by major socioeconomic status (place of residence as of the time of the survey, educational attainment of husband and wife, and experience of using childcare leave).

The number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 is less than 2, even in non-densely inhabited districts (non-DID).

The average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by densely inhabited district (DID) classification of residence as of the time of the survey (DID is a classification that indicates a more urban area; see note for more details on classification). Since the 2000s, there has been a continuous decline in the number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, with residence both in DID and non-DID. The average number of children born is consistently lower for couples residing in DID than in non-DID. In the current survey, the average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 residing in non-DID fell below two for the first time to 1.97.

Figure 6-7. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and by residence (Densely Inhabited District (DID) or non-DID) as of the time of the survey



• Other areas (non-DID) ◇ Densely Inhabited District (DID)

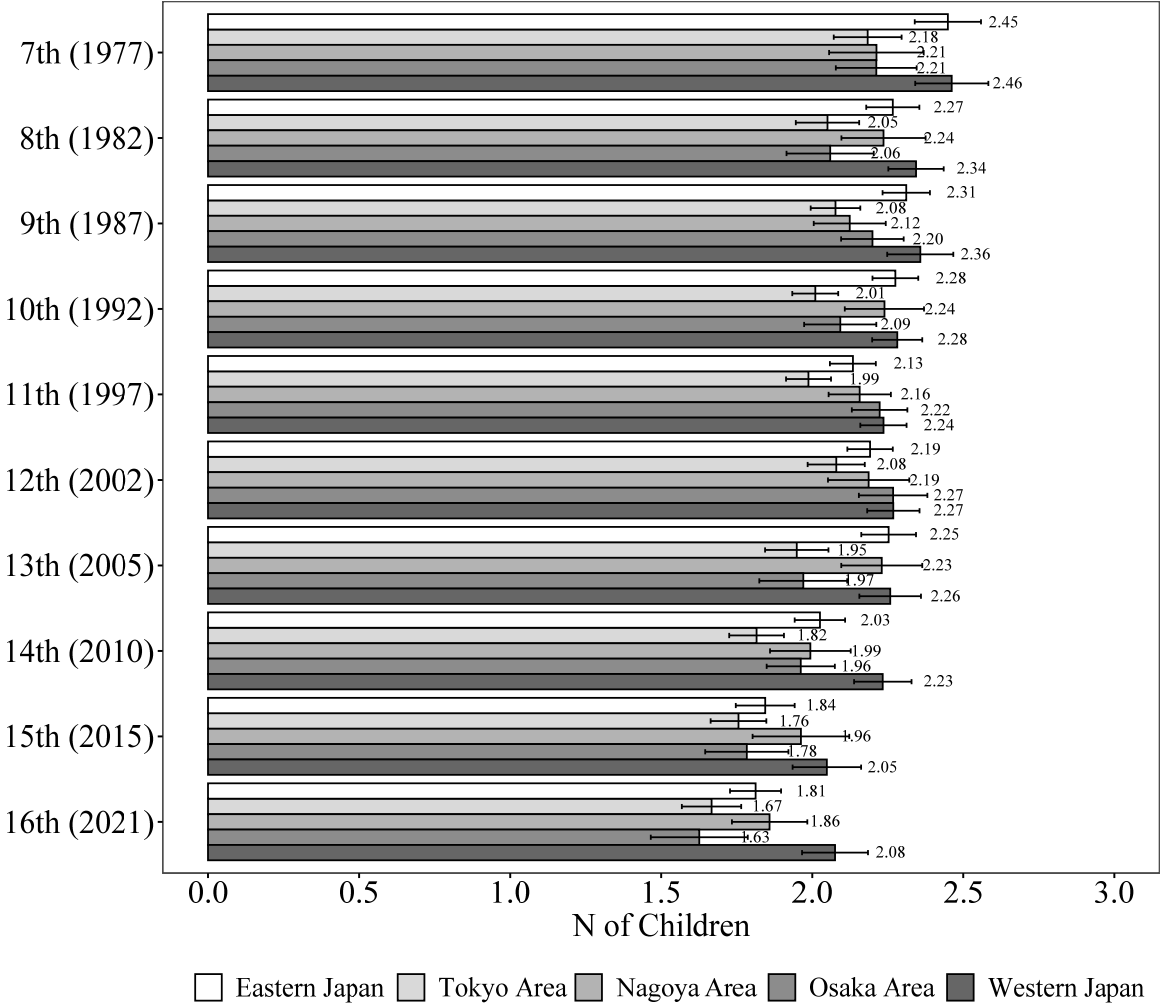
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 45-49. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Densely Inhabited Districts (DID) are those 1) containing basic unit blocks, etc. with a population density of 4,000 or more per square kilometer, such districts being adjacent to each other in a municipality and 2) consisting of the above adjacent basic unit blocks, etc. population of which is 5,000 or more at the time of the Population Census of Japan. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The respective number of cases was as follows: Non-DID (360 in the 15th (2015) survey, 381 in the 16th (2021) survey), and DID (915 in the 15th (2015) survey, 916 in the 16th (2021) survey).

[Figure 6-7. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and by residence (Densely Inhabited District (DID) or non-DID) as of the time of the survey]

The number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 in Western Japan tends to be higher.

Comparing the average number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49 among the five regional blocs, the figures for the “Tokyo area” and the “Osaka area” were relatively low in this survey, with the lowest being 1.63 children in the “Osaka area.” Among the three metropolitan areas, the figure for the “Nagoya area” was relatively high at 1.86 in this survey. The highest figure among the five regional blocs was found in “Western Japan,” at 2.08 in this survey and was the only one among the five regional blocs with a figure exceeding 2.

Figure 6-8. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and the regional bloc of residence (as of the time of the survey)

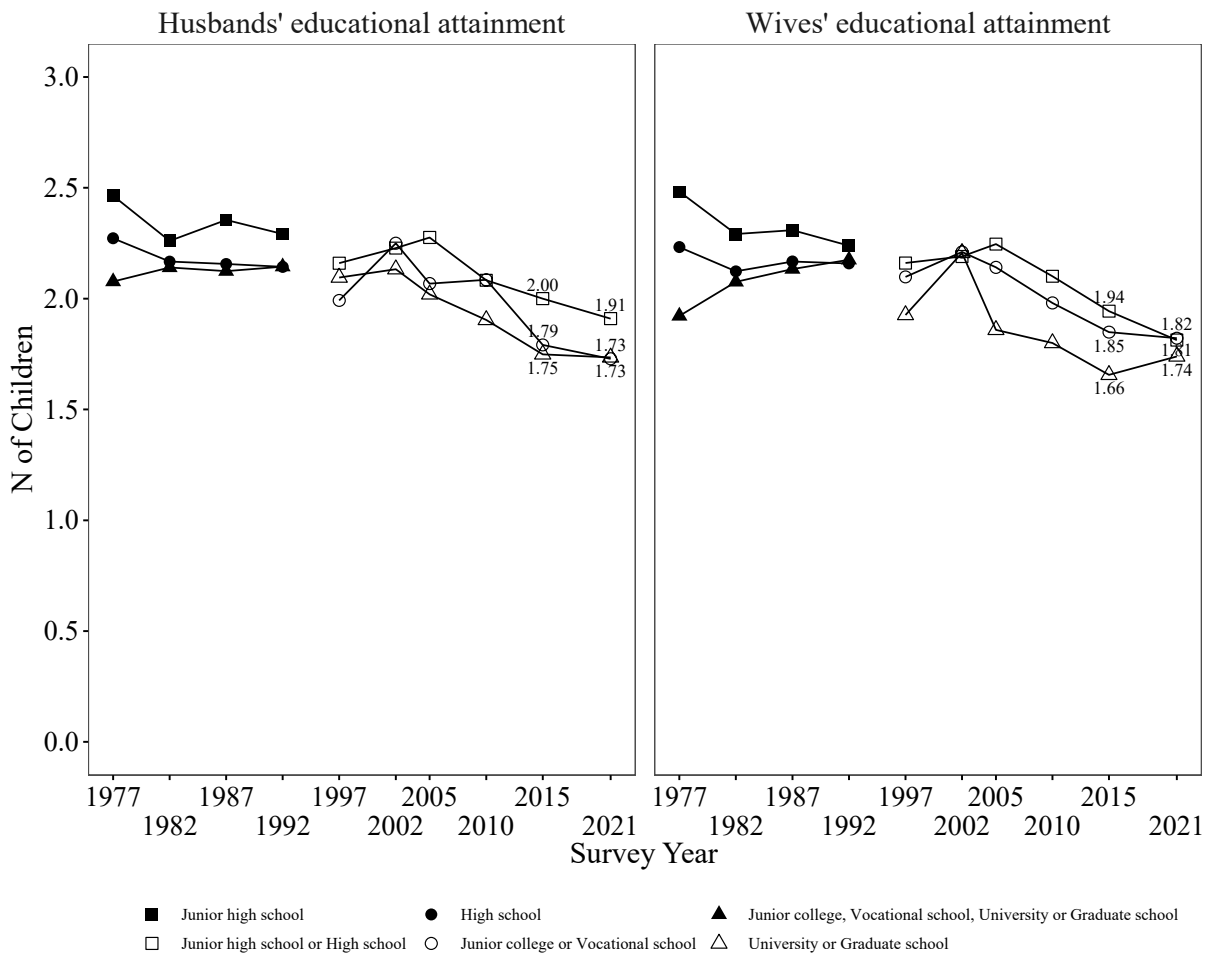


Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 45-49. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Tokyo Area includes Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo and Kanagawa. Nagoya Area includes Gifu, Aichi and Mie. Osaka Area includes Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo and Nara. Eastern Japan includes Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano and Shizuoka. Western Japan includes Shiga, Wakayama, Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi, Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima and Okinawa. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. The number of cases in the 16th (2021) survey was as follows: Eastern Japan (389), Tokyo Area (363), Nagoya Area (170), Osaka Area (123), and Western Japan (252). [Figure 6-8. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and the regional bloc of residence (as of the time of the survey)]

The number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by education attainment of the husband and wife, showed a slight narrowing of difference by education for wives.

Looking at the number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by the educational attainment of the husband and wife, the average number tended to be lower for both husband and wife with higher educational attainment in general, until the previous survey. However, in the current survey, the number of children born to couples in which the wife has a college degree or higher rose from 1.66 in the previous survey to 1.74, showing a narrowing of difference by educational attainment.

Figure 6-9. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and educational attainment of wife and husband



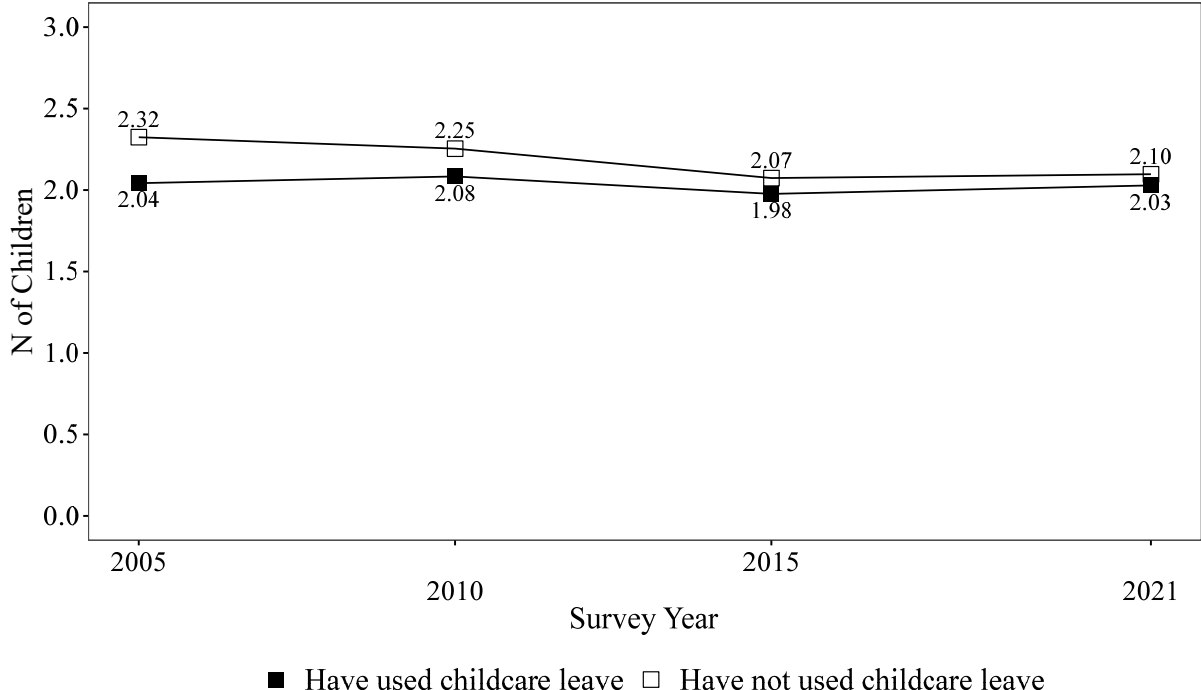
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 45-49. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Educational Attainment consists of three categories: "Junior high school", "high school", "junior college, vocational school, university or graduate school" in the 10th (1992) survey and earlier, "junior high school or high school", "junior college or vocational school", "university or graduate school" since the 11th (1997) survey. The respective number of cases was as follows: With respect to wives in the 15th (2015) survey, junior high school or high school (567), junior college or vocational school (483), university or graduate school (221). With respect to husbands in the 15th (2015) survey, junior high school or high school (521), junior college or vocational school (206), university or graduate school (541). Regarding wives in the 16th (2021) survey, junior high school or high school (417), junior college or vocational school (566), university or graduate school (280). Regarding husbands in the 16th (2021) survey, junior high school or high school (477), junior college or vocational school (232), university or graduate school (547).

[Figure 6-9. Number of children born to couples with wives aged 45-49, by survey and educational attainment of wife and husband]

No decline in the number of children born to wives who continued to work before and after the birth of their first child using the childcare leave system.

The average number of children born was calculated for wives who were employed before and after the birth of their first child (when the pregnancy was discovered and when the child was one year old) and who were 40-49 years old as of the time of the survey, by whether or not they used the childcare leave system. In 2005, the average number of children born to wives who continued to work using the childcare leave system was 2.04, significantly lower than 2.32 for wives who continued to work without using the childcare leave system (including self-employed and part-time workers). In the current survey in 2021, the average number of children born to wives who did not use the childcare leave system declined to 2.10, while the average number of children born to wives who used the childcare leave system remained unchanged at 2.03, indicating a narrowing gap between the two groups.

Figure 6-10. Number of children of married couples, by survey and the wife’s use of childcare leave after giving birth to the first child (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)

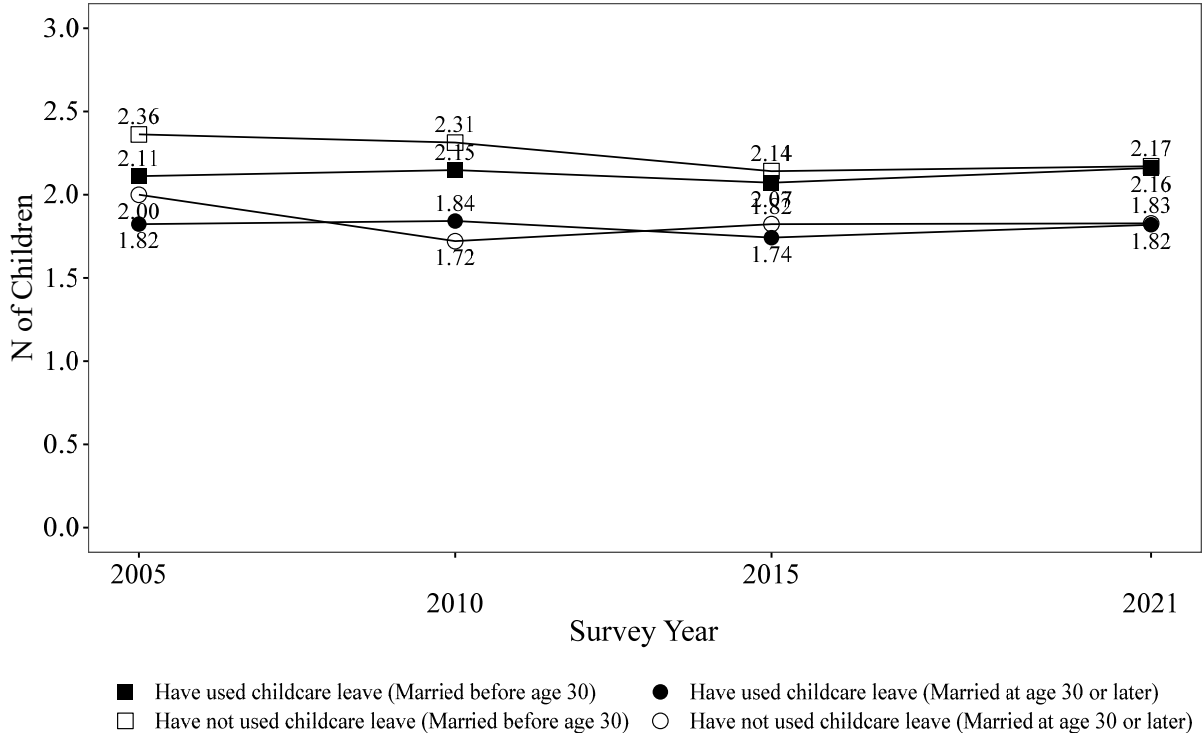


Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child and have one or more children. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Employment includes regular employee, part-time worker, temporary worker, self-employed, work for family business and working on the side. The respective number of cases was as follows: have used childcare leave (used) 142, have not used childcare leave (not used) 459 in the 13th (2005) survey; used 262, not used 448 in the 14th (2010) survey; used 337, not used 299 in the 15th (2015) survey; and used 496, not used 268 in the 16th (2021) survey.
 [Figure 6-10. Number of children of married couples, by survey and the wife’s use of childcare leave after giving birth to the first child (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)]

The difference in the number of children born by whether or not the childcare leave system was used narrowed regardless of the wife’s age at first marriage.

The average number of children born to wives aged 40-49 was compared among wives who continued to work before and after the birth of their first child, separately for couples whose wives’ age at first marriage was less than 30 and for couples whose wives were 30 years old or older, by whether or not they used the childcare leave system. Looking at wives whose age at first marriage was under 30, the average number of children born to wives who used childcare leave was lower than that of wives who did not use childcare leave in 2005, but the number of children born to those who used the childcare leave system rose slightly thereafter, and by 2021 there was no difference between the two groups.

Figure 6-11. Number of children of married couples, by survey, the wife’s age at first marriage and use of childcare leave after giving birth to the first child (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child and have one or more children. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Employment includes regular employee, part-time worker, temporary worker, self-employed, work for family business and working on the side. The numbers of cases were as follows: In the 13th (2005) survey, have used childcare leave: married before age 30: 107, married at age 30 or later: 34; have not used childcare leave: 411, 48. In the 14th (2010) survey, have used childcare leave: 203, 57; have not used childcare leave: 402, 43. In the 15th (2015) survey, have used childcare leave: 234, 97; have not used childcare leave: 240, 51. In the 16th (2021) survey, have used childcare leave: 304, 183; have not used childcare leave: 199, 58.

[Figure 6-11. Number of children of married couples, by survey, the wife’s age at first marriage and use of childcare leave after giving birth to the first child (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)]

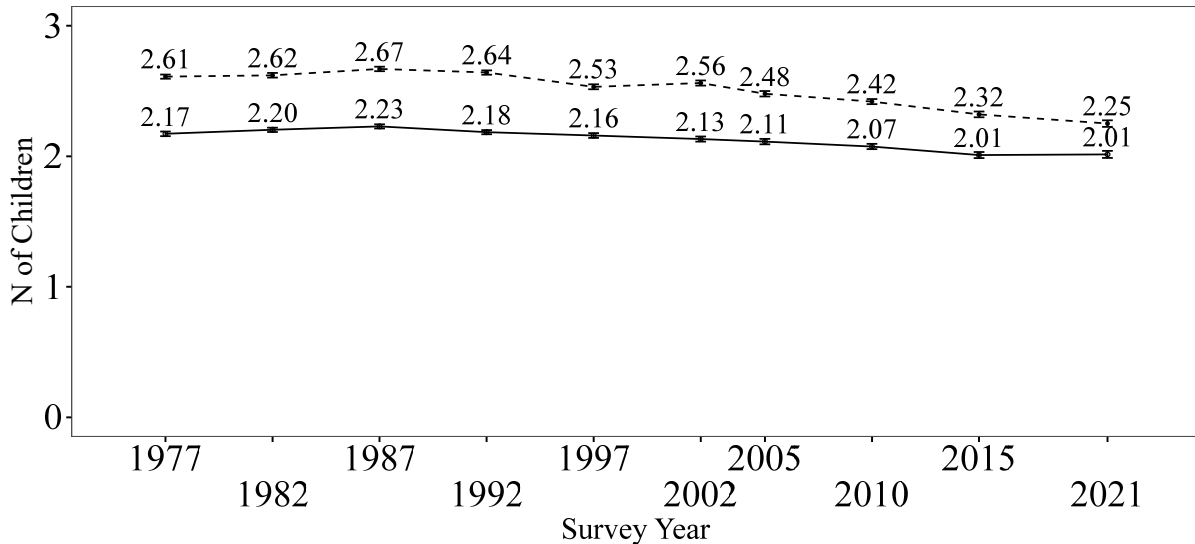
7. Views on Number of Children

7.1 Ideal and intended number of children of married couples

The average ideal number of children continues to decline gradually, while the average intended number of children remains unchanged from the previous survey.

The average ideal number of children for a couple has been slowly declining since the 2000s. In the current survey, too, the average ideal number of children declined slightly from 2.32 in the previous survey to 2.25. On the other hand, the average intended number of children has been on a gradual downward trend since the 1990s, but in the current survey, the number was 2.01, which was the same as in the previous survey.

Figure 7-1. Average ideal and intended number of children of married couples, by survey



— Average intended number of children -- Average ideal number of children

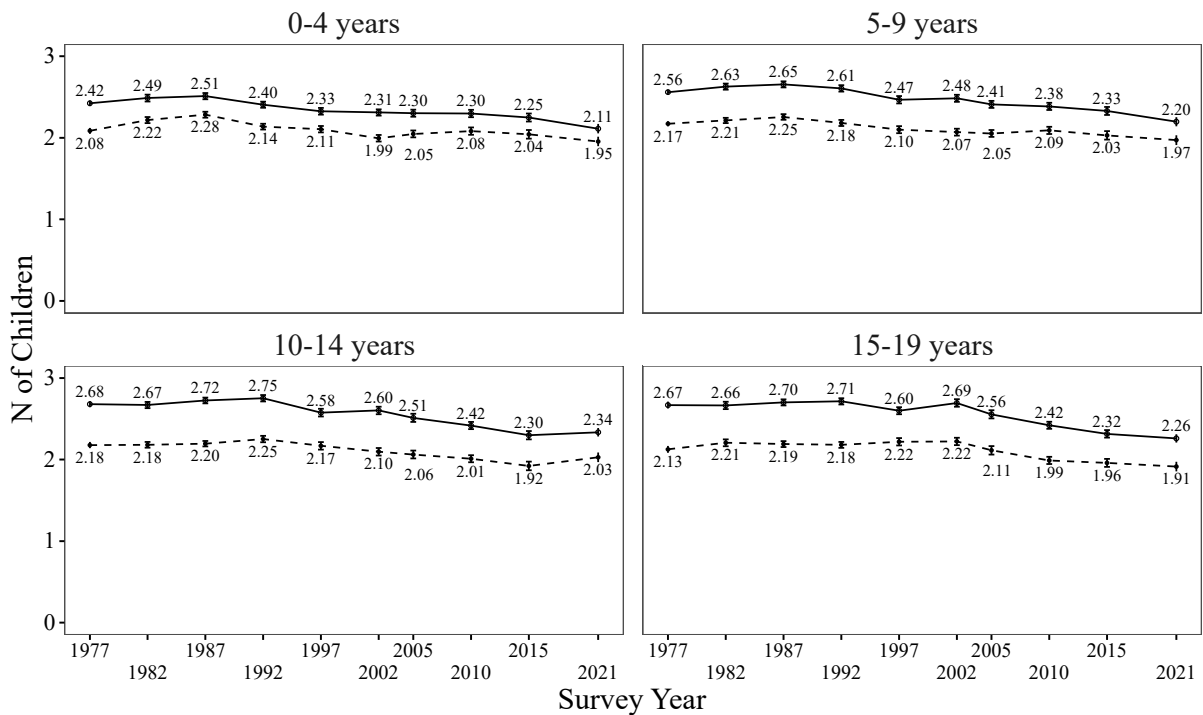
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage (with wives under 50 years old). The intended number of children was calculated by adding the number of children already born and the number of additional children intended. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the ideal or intended number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. For comparison with the desired number of children for never-married women, the average ideal/intended number of children for couples with wives aged under 35 was as follows: For average ideal number of children, 2.52 in the 7th (1977) survey, 2.59 in the 8th (1982) survey, 2.61 in the 9th (1987) survey, 2.54 in the 10th (1992) survey, 2.43 in the 11th (1997) survey, 2.43 in the 12th (2002) survey, 2.40 in the 13th (2005) survey, 2.41 in the 14th (2010) survey, 2.43 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 2.29 in the 16th (2021) survey. For average intended number of children, 2.18 in the 7th (1977) survey, 2.25 in the 8th (1982) survey, 2.31 in the 9th (1987) survey, 2.21 in the 10th (1992) survey, 2.18 in the 11th (1997) survey, 2.11 in the 12th (2002) survey, 2.15 in the 13th (2005) survey, 2.24 in the 14th (2010) survey, 2.28 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 2.17 in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: (1) Ideal number of children: "For you and your husband, what is the ideal number of children you would like to have?" (0. None, 1. 1 child, 2. 2 children, 3. 3 children, 4. 4 children, 5. 5 children or more () children.) (2) Intended number of children: "Then, how many children do you and your spouse plan to have in total?" (0. None, 1. 1 child, 2. 2 children, 3. 3 children, 4. 4 children, 5. 5 children or more () children.)

[Figure 7-1. Average ideal and intended number of children of married couples, by survey]

The average ideal and intended number of children continues to decline for couples married for less than 10 years duration.

Trends in the ideal and intended number of children are shown by the number of years since marriage, i.e., marriage duration^(*). For couples who had been married for 10-14 years, there was a slight increase in both the ideal and intended number of children. On the other hand, for couples who had been married for less than 10 years, both the ideal and intended number of children declined slightly, and the average intended number of children was below 2.

Figure 7-2. Average ideal and intended number of children of married couples, by survey and duration of marriage



— Average ideal number of children -- Average intended number of children

Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The intended number of children was calculated by adding the number of children already born and the number of additional children intended. The average was calculated by excluding couples who did not answer the ideal or intended number of children and recoding responses of 8 or more to 8. Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. For the average ideal number of children, the number of cases for each duration of marriage was as follows: 0-4 years: 864 in the 15th (2015) survey, 708 in the 16th (2021) survey; 5-9 years: 1,034, 879; 10-14 years: 1,093, 1,002; 15-19 years: 1,176, 916. For the average intended number of children, the number of cases for each duration of marriage was as follows: 0-4 years: 858 in the 15th (2015) survey, 703 in the 16th (2021) survey; 5-9 years: 1,020, 871; 10-14 years: 1,096, 1,008; 15-19 years: 1,187, 922. Question: (1) Ideal number of children: "For you and your husband, what is the ideal number of children you would like to have?" (0. None, 1. 1 child, 2. 2 children, 3. 3 children, 4. 4 children, 5. 5 children or more () children.) (2) Intended number of children: "Then, how many children do you and your spouse plan to have in total?" (0. None, 1. 1 child, 2. 2 children, 3. 3 children, 4. 4 children, 5. 5 children or more () children.)

[Figure 7-2. Average ideal and intended number of children of married couples, by survey and duration of marriage]

^(*) Since the number of couples with a high age at first marriage has been increasing in recent years, in the 16th survey, calculations are made by the duration of marriage for couples with wives aged under 55 (but aged under 50 at marriage) (before the 15th survey, calculations were made for couples with wives aged under 50).

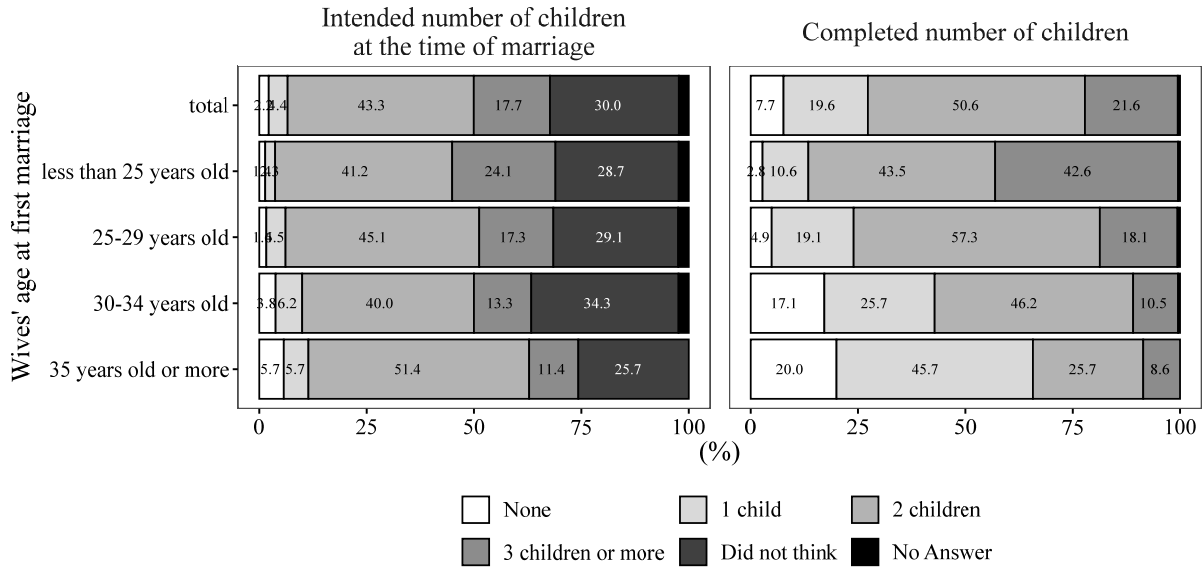
7.2 Intended number of children at time of marriage and actual completed number of children

Comparing the intended number of children at the time of marriage to the actual completed number of children, the higher the wife’s age at first marriage, the larger the difference between the two, and the less the intended number realized.

The current survey asked couples how many children they intended to have when they married. Looking at the distribution of the intended number of children at marriage of couples married 15-19 years, two children was the most common, accounting for about 40-50%, and nearly 20% answered three or more. About 30% of the couples said they had not considered it in particular. Looking at this by age at first marriage, the higher the age at first marriage, the greater the percentage showing intention to have one or fewer children, and the smaller the percentage showing intention to have three or more children.

On the other hand, looking at the distribution of the number of children born to couples married for 15-19 years, the percentage of “one or fewer” children, which was less than 10% for the intended number of children at the time of marriage (6.6%), has reached nearly 30% (27.3%) for the actual completed number of children, indicating a gap between the intended and actual situation. The higher the age at first marriage, the larger this gap tends to be.

Figure 7-3. Percentage distribution of the intended number of children at the time of marriage and completed number of children of married couples, by the wife’s age at first marriage: 16th survey (2021) (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 55 who are married before age 50, and have been married for 15-19 years. The number of cases was as follows: total (953), less than 25 years old (216), 25-29 years old (492), 30-34 years old (210), and 35 years old or more (35). Question: "When you got married, how many children did you intend to have in total?", "We would like to ask you about the children you and your husband have. Please fill in the number of children in the underlined columns below. Total number of children you have given birth to so far is ()."

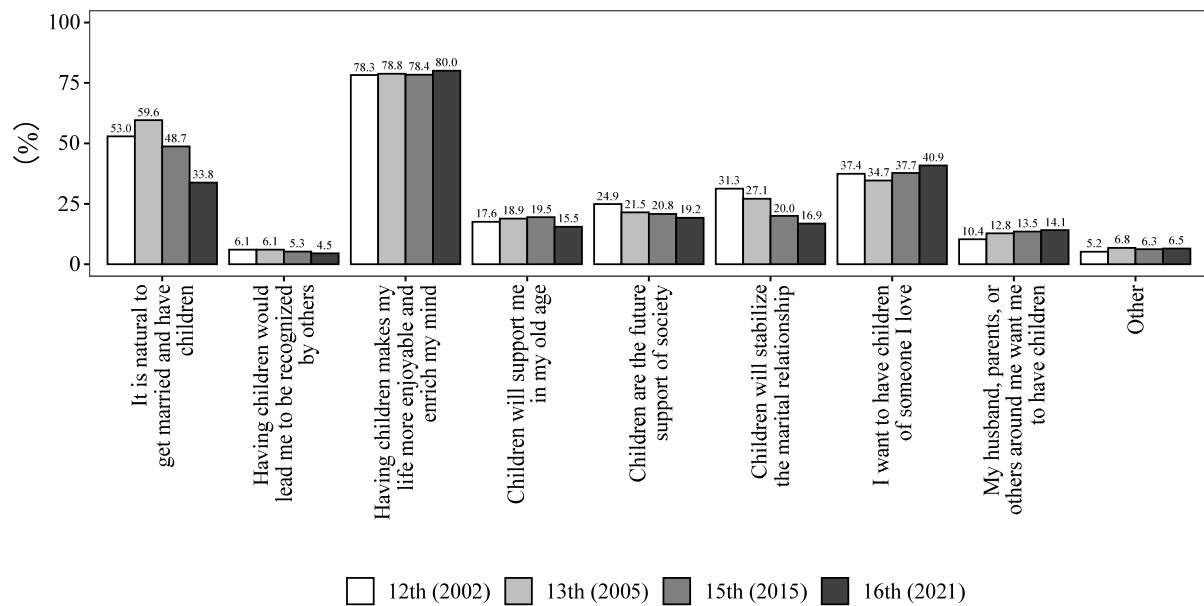
[Figure 7-3. Percentage distribution of the intended number of children at the time of marriage and completed number of children of married couples, by the wife’s age at first marriage: 16th survey (2021) (Duration of marriage: 15 to 19 years)]

7.3 Reasons for having children

The most common reason for having children is that “having children makes my life more enjoyable and enriches my mind,” while the choice of “it is natural to have children” and “children will stabilize my marital relationship” decreased.

Couples with at least one ideal number of children were asked about their reasons for having children. The most consistently chosen response in each survey has been “having children makes my life more enjoyable and enrich my mind,” which about 80% of the couples chose. The percentages for “it is natural to get married and have children” and “children will stabilize the marital relationship” have declined in recent surveys. The percentages for “children will support me in my old age” had gradually increased until the previous survey but declined in the current survey.

Figure 7-4. Reasons for having children chosen by married couples, by survey



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage whose ideal number of children is one or more (with wives under 50 years old). Those who did not answer the question (i.e., "not known") were excluded from the calculation of the percentage choosing each option. As multiple answers were permitted, the total value exceeds 100%. The number of cases was as follows: 6,455 in the 12th (2002) survey, 5,188 in the 13th (2005) survey, 4,647 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 3,843 in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "What are your reasons for thinking that one or more children is ideal? Please circle all the reasons below that apply to you, and circle twice the most important reason."

[Figure 7-4. Reasons for having children chosen by married couples, by survey]

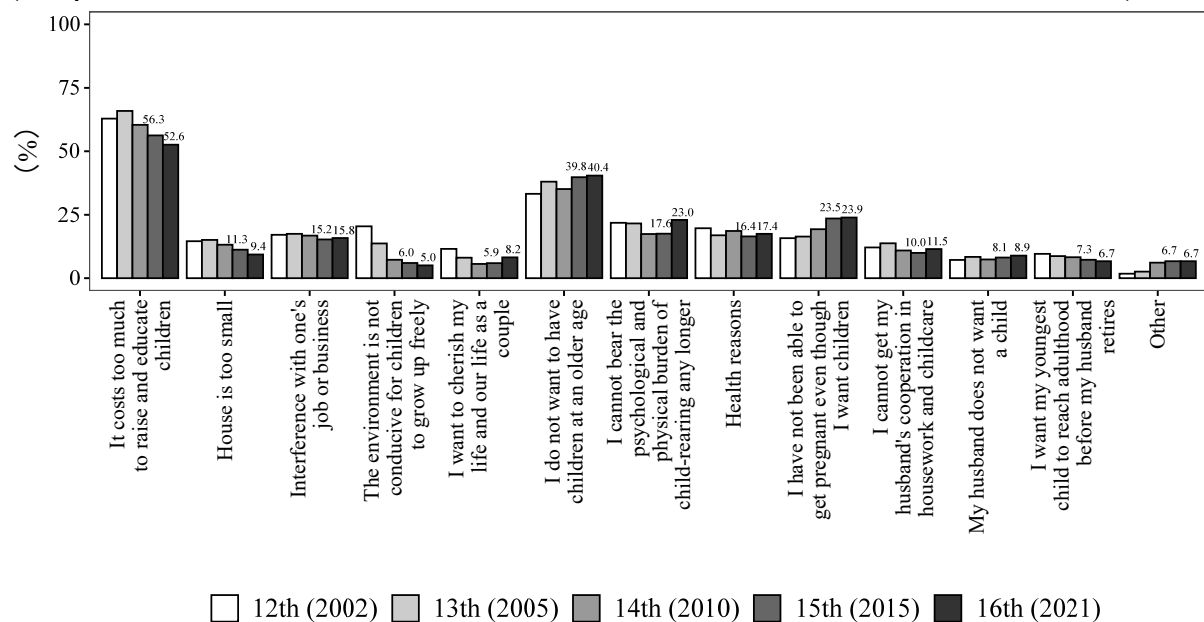
7.4 Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children

The percentage choosing “it costs too much to raise and educate children” as a reason for not realizing the ideal number of children remained high among couples with wives under 35 but declined among couples with wives 35 and older.

Among the reasons for not realizing the ideal number of children, the highest percentage chose an economic reason: “it costs too much to raise and educate children,” at 52.6%. The percentage choosing “because the environment is not conducive for children to grow up freely” has decreased in recent years.

Comparing by wife’s age (Figure 7-6), a higher percentage of couples with wives aged under 35 cited economic reasons (cost of raising and giving education to children, housing, and work), while a higher percentage of couples with wives aged 35 years old or older cited physical reasons, such as “I do not want to have children at an older age” and “I have not been able to get pregnant even though I want children.” Looking at changes by wife’s age group by survey year, for couples with wives aged 35 or older, the percentage choosing “because it cost too much to raise and educate children” decreased, while “because I cannot bear the psychological and physical burden of child-rearing any longer” increased. On the other hand, for couples with wives under 35, the percentage choosing “because it costs too much to raise and educate children” remained high, while the percentage choosing “because I want to cherish my life and our life as a couple” has increased since the 2010 (14th) survey.

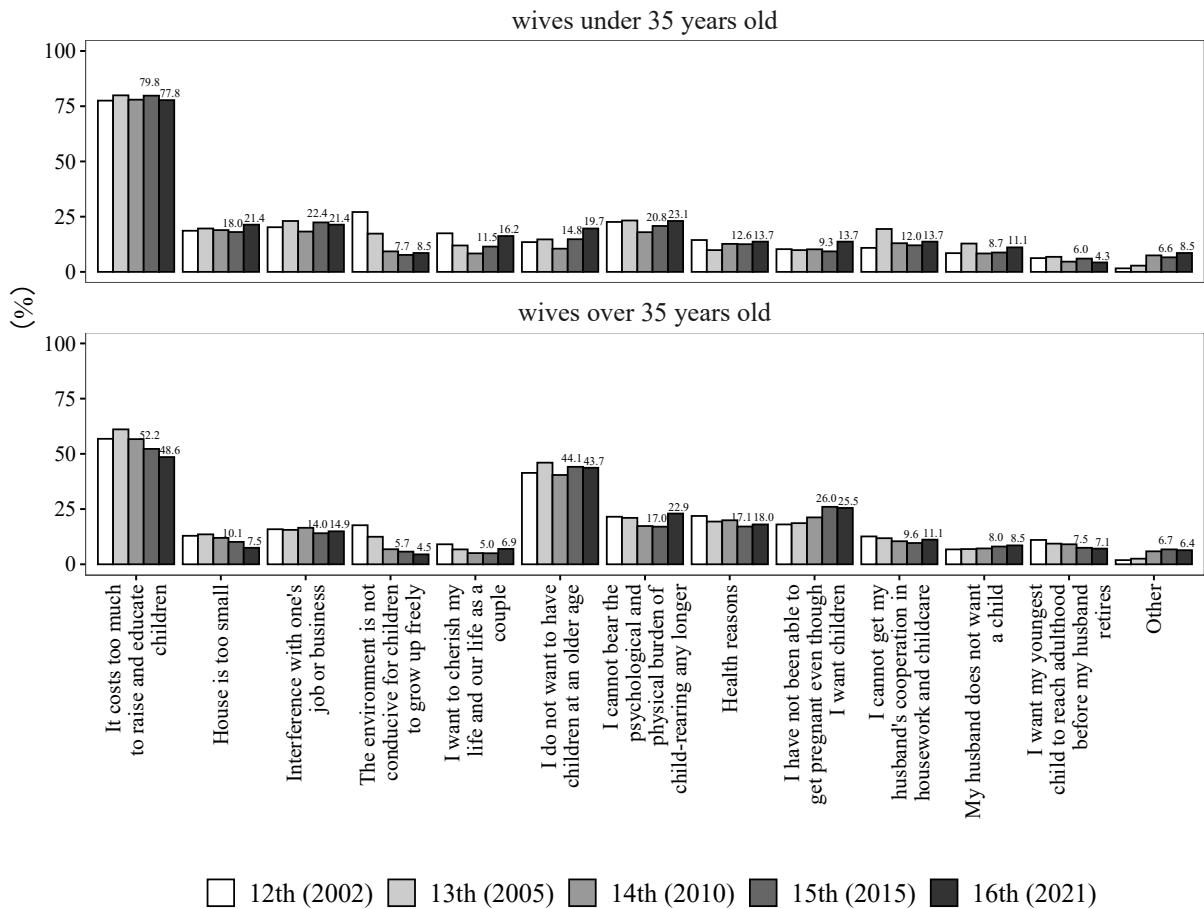
Figure 7-5. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by survey (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage whose intended number of children is less than the ideal number of children (with wives under 50 years old). Those who did not answer the question (i.e., "not known") were excluded from the calculation of the percentage choosing each option. As multiple answers were permitted, the total value exceeds 100%. The number of cases was as follows: 2,134 in the 12th (2002) survey, 1,831 in the 13th (2005) survey, 1,835 in the 14th (2010) survey, 1,253 in the 15th (2015) survey, and 854 in the 16th (2021) survey. The percentage of couples in first marriage whose intended number of children is less than the ideal number of children was as follows: 37.3% in the 12th (2002) survey, 35.3% in the 13th (2005) survey, 32.8% in the 14th (2010) survey, 30.2% in the 15th (2015) survey, and 24.5% in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "Why is the number of children you intend to have fewer than the ideal number of children? Please circle all the reasons below that apply to you, and circle twice the most important reason."

[Figure 7-5. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by survey (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)]

Figure 7-6. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by survey and the wife's age (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)



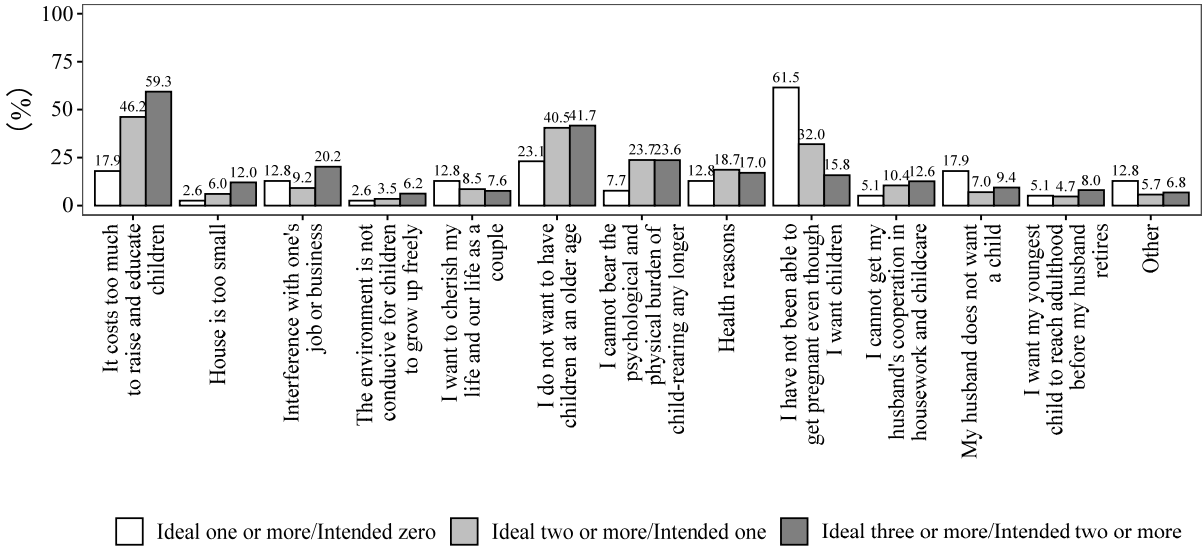
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage whose intended number of children is less than the ideal number of children (with wives under 50 years old). Those who did not answer the question (i.e., "not known") were excluded from the calculation of the percentage choosing each option. As multiple answers were permitted, the total value exceeds 100%. The number of cases (wives under 35 years old/wives over 35 years old) was as follows: the 12th survey (624/1,510), the 13th survey (468/1,363), the 14th survey (323/1,512), the 15th survey (183/1,070), and the 16th survey (117/737). Question: "Why is the number of children you intend to have fewer than the ideal number of children? Please circle all the reasons below that apply to you, and circle twice the most important reason."

[Figure 7-6. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by survey and the wife's age (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)]

The most common reason for not having three children is because “it costs too much to raise and educate them,” and the most common reason for not having even one child is “I have not been able to get pregnant even though I want children.”

We examined whether the reasons for not realizing the ideal number of children varied with the combination of the ideal number of children and the intended number of children. For couples with three or more ideal children and two or more intended children (most of these couples have a combination of three ideal children and two intended children), economic reasons were a barrier to having three or more children, with the largest percentage of 59.3% stating that “it costs too much to raise and educate children.” On the other hand, 61.5% of the couples with one or more ideal number of children but zero intended number of children chose “I have not been able to get pregnant even though I want children.”

Figure 7-7. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by combination of ideal and intended number of children: 16th survey (2021) (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage whose intended number of children is less than the ideal number of children (with wives under 50 years old). Those who did not answer the question (i.e., "not known") were excluded from the calculation of the percentage choosing each option. As multiple answers were permitted, the total value exceeds 100%. The number of cases was as follows: ideal one or more/intended zero (39), ideal two or more/intended one (316), and ideal three or more/intended two or more (499). Question: "Why is the number of children you intend to have fewer than the ideal number of children? Please circle all the reasons below that apply to you, and circle twice the most important reason."

[Figure 7-7. Reasons why couples do not realize their ideal number of children, by combination of ideal and intended number of children: 16th survey (2021) (Couples whose intended number of children is less than their ideal number of children)]

8. Pregnancy and Childbirth Situations

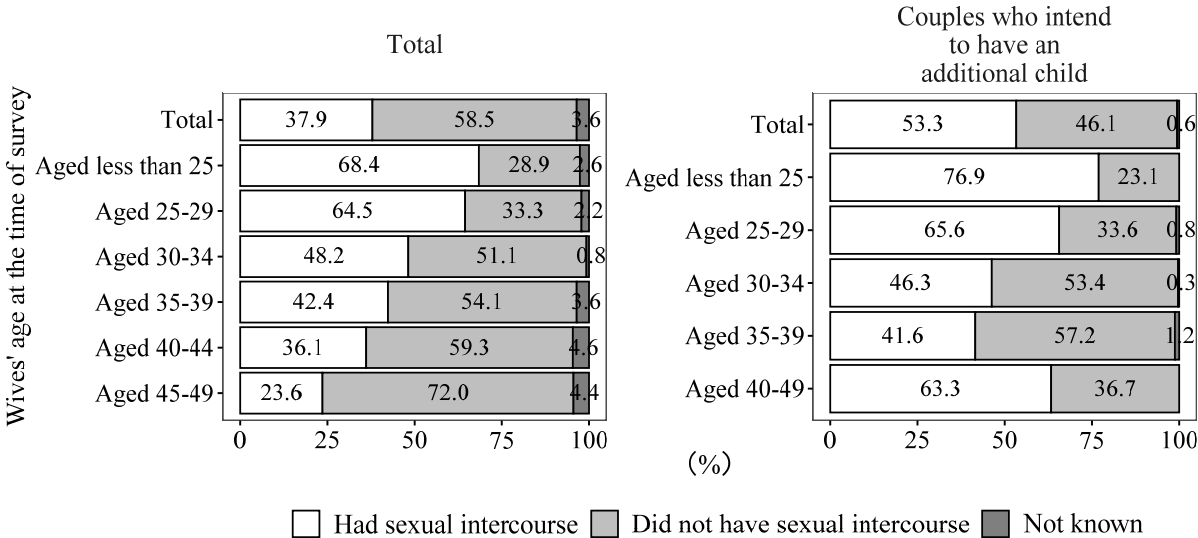
8.1 Sex life and contraception of married couples

37.9% of couples with wives aged under 50 had sexual intercourse in the past month, likewise 53.3% of couples who intended to have children.

Among couples with wives aged under 50, 37.9% had had intercourse in the past month. The percentage exceeded 60% for couples with wives in their 20s but less than 50% for couples with wives in their early 30s. Defining “no intercourse in the past month” as “sexless,” the percentage of “sexless” couples is about 60% for couples in first marriage with wives aged under 50.

When the figures are calculated for couples with at least one additional intended child, the percentage of those who had had intercourse is higher, and the percentage of “sexless” couples is 46%.

Figure 8-1. Marital sexual intercourse within the past month, by the wife’s age: 16th survey (2021) (All couples and those who intend to have an additional child)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage (with wives under 50 years old). "Couples who intend to have an additional child" indicates those couples who have been married for less than 10 years and wish to have an additional child. The number of cases (for "total") was as follows: Total (4,351), aged less than 25 (38), aged 25-29 (321), aged 30-34 (660), aged 35-39 (925), aged 40-44 (1,102), and aged 45-49 (1,305). The number of cases (for "couples who intend to have an additional child") was as follows: Total (842), aged less than 25 (26), aged 25-29 (253), aged 30-34 (337), aged 35-39 (166), and aged 40-49 (60). Question: "We would like to ask if you and your husband have had sexual intercourse within the past month, and also about contraception. (1) Sexual intercourse in the past month" (1. Did not have sexual intercourse, 2. Had sexual intercourse.)

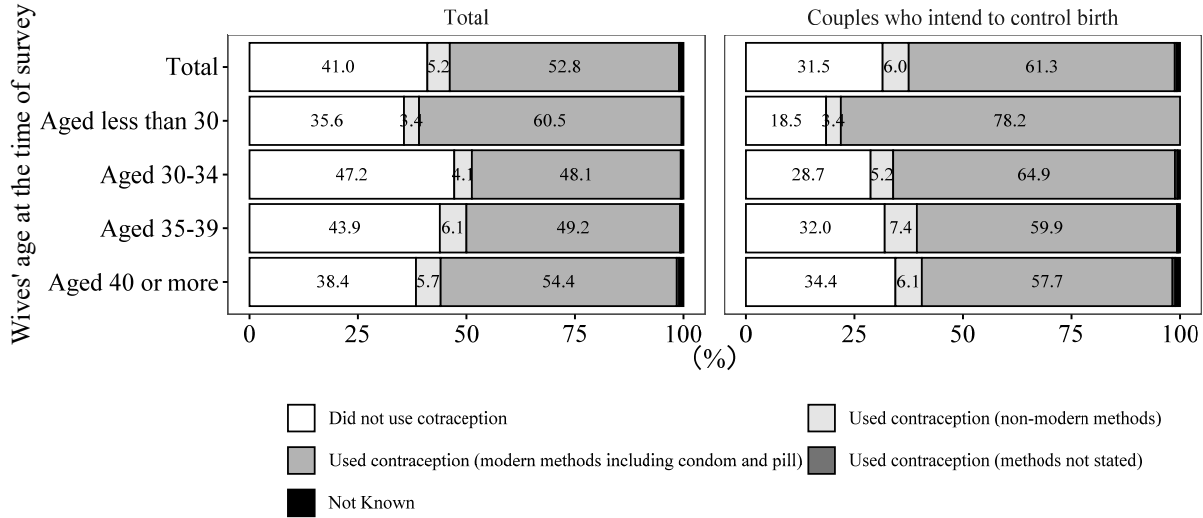
[Figure 8-1. Marital sexual intercourse within the past month, by the wife's age: 16th survey (2021) (All couples and those who intend to have an additional child)]

About 60% of the couples used contraception, with the majority using modern contraceptive methods such as condoms and the pill.

Couples who had had intercourse in the past month were asked about their contraceptive use and the methods they used. The number of couples who practiced contraception was 58.3% of all couples (see note for details). By wife’s age, couples with wives under 30 years old had the highest percentage at 63.9%, while those with wives in their early 30s had the lowest percentage at 52.5%. The majority of contraceptive methods used were modern contraceptive methods^(*).

Among the couples with intention to control birth (i.e., couples who intend to have children in the future but did not wish to do so at this moment, namely, those with the intention of postponing birth) and couples who did not intend to have children in the future (i.e., intention of stopping birth), only 61.3% had used modern contraceptive methods, indicating that 37.5% of couples were at risk of experiencing unwanted or earlier than intended pregnancy.

Figure 8-2. Contraceptive practices within the past month, by the wife’s age: 16th survey (2021) (All couples and those who intend to control their pregnancies)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage who have had sexual intercourse within the past month (with wives under 50 years old). "Couples who intend to control birth" includes those couples who do not intend to have children in the future (intend to stop birth) and who intend to have children in the future but did not wish to do so at this moment (intend to postpone birth). Modern methods indicate either condom, pill (oral contraceptive), IUD/ring, sterilization or spermicide (tablets, films, etc.). The number of cases (for couples who have had sexual intercourse within the past month) was as follows: Total (1,649 for "total", 1,229 for "couples who intend to control birth"), aged less than 30 (233, 119), aged 30-34 (318, 174), aged 35-39 (392, 297), and aged 40 or more (706, 639). The total percentage of "used contraception" regardless of methods (for couples who have had sexual intercourse within the past month) was as follows: Total (58.3%), aged less than 30 (64.0%), aged 30-34 (52.5%), aged 35-39 (55.6%), and aged 40 or more (60.6%). The total percentage of "used contraception" regardless of methods (for couples who intend to control birth) was as follows: Total (67.8%), aged less than 30 (81.5%), aged 30-34 (70.7%), aged 35-39 (67.7%), and aged 40 or more (64.5%). Question: "We would like to ask you whether or not you and your partner have had sexual intercourse within the past month and about contraception." (1) Sexual intercourse in the past month (1. Did not have sexual intercourse, 2. Had sexual intercourse.) (2) (for respondents who answered "2. Had sexual intercourse" for (1)) Use of contraception (the most recent experience) (1. Used contraception, 2. Did not use contraception.) (3) (for respondents who answered "1. Used contraception" for (2)) Did you use any of the following methods of contraception: condoms, pills (oral contraceptives), IUD/rings, sterilization, spermicides (pills, films, etc.)? (1. Yes, 2. No) [Figure 8-2. Contraceptive practices within the past month, by the wife's age: 16th survey (2021) (All couples and those who intend to control their pregnancies)]

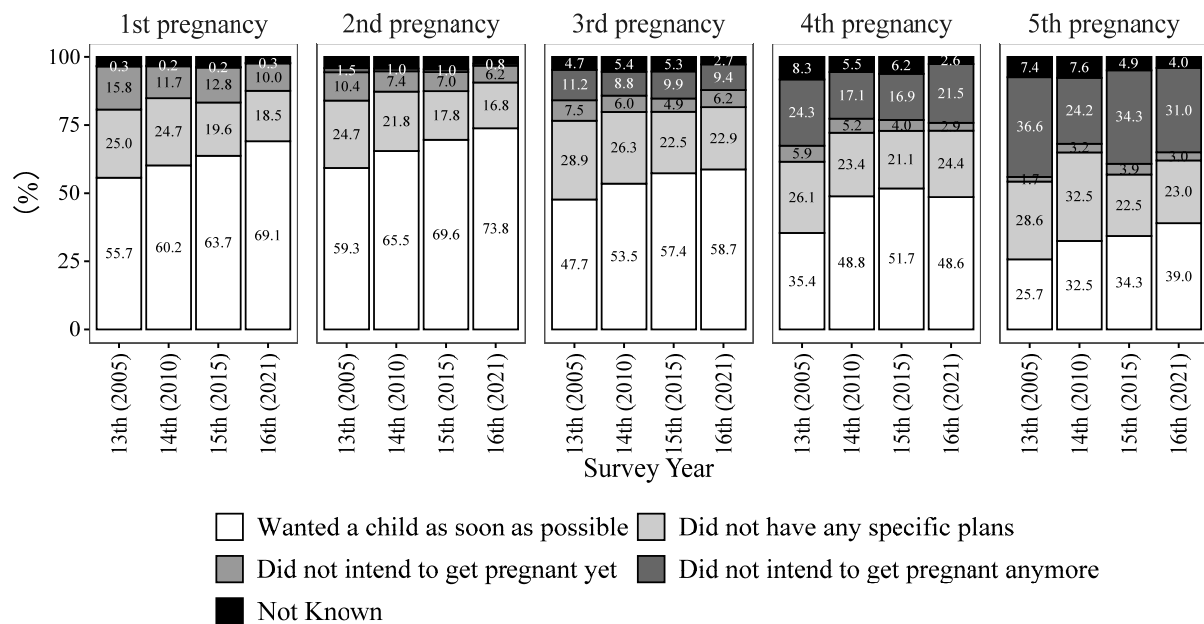
(*) Modern contraceptive methods include condoms, the pill (oral contraceptives), IUDs and rings, sterilization procedures, and spermicides (pills, films, etc.). These have relatively higher contraceptive efficiency than other methods.

8.2 Pre-pregnancy plans

While the percentage of unintended pregnancies is declining, they account for more than 10% of third pregnancies, and the percentage of wanted pregnancies is increasing.

The survey asked about the couple’s plans prior to conception for all the pregnancies (“wanted a child as soon as possible,” “did not intend to get pregnant yet,” “did not intend to get pregnant anymore,” or “did not have any specific plans”). Looking at the pre-conception plans by pregnancy order, the percentage of “unintended pregnancy,” which includes “did not intend to get pregnant yet” (earlier than intended pregnancy) and “did not intend to get pregnant anymore” (unwanted pregnancy), is lowest in the second pregnancy and highest in the third and subsequent pregnancies. Overall, the percentage of unintended pregnancies has tended to decrease in recent years as the percentage of “wanted to have a child as soon as possible” increases. However, among unintended pregnancies, the percentage of “did not intend to get pregnant anymore” still accounts for about 10% in the third, 20% in the fourth, and 30% in the fifth pregnancy.

Figure 8-3. Plans before pregnancy, by survey and order of pregnancy



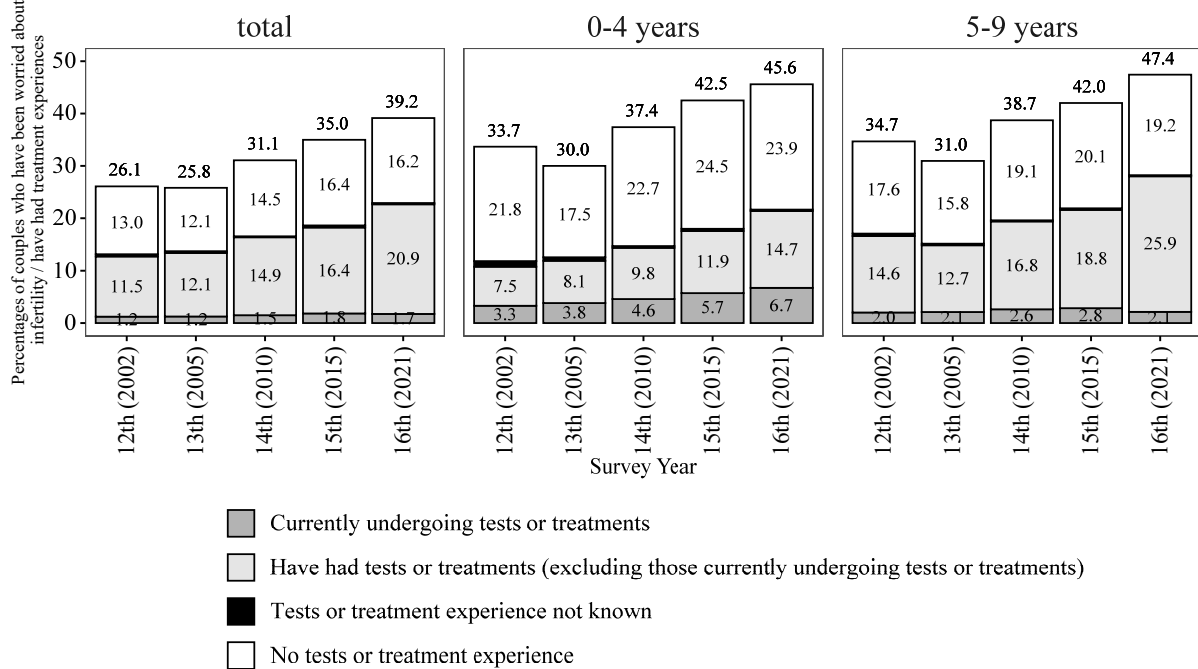
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage whose pregnancy outcome before 5th pregnancy is identified and consistent with the number of births (with wives under 50 years old). Data includes pregnancies up to the 5th pregnancy of these couples. The number of cases in the 16th survey was as follows: 1st pregnancy (3,821), 2nd pregnancy (2,917), 3rd pregnancy (1,316), 4th pregnancy (418), and 5th pregnancy (100). Question: "For all pregnancies and childbirths that you have experienced with your husband, please circle the number that applies to (1) the outcome of the pregnancy, (2) the time of pregnancy/childbirth, and (3) your plans before pregnancy." [Figure 8-3. Plans before pregnancy, by survey and order of pregnancy]

8.3 Concerns about infertility and treatment experience

More than one in three couples worried about infertility. The number of couples who had been tested or treated for infertility increased to 1 in 4.4 couples. 6.7% of couples who had been married for less than five years were undergoing tests or treatment for infertility.

The percentage of couples who have ever worried about infertility increased from 35.0% in the previous survey to 39.2% in the current survey (more than one in three couples) for all couples (total number). The percentage of couples who had been tested or treated for infertility (the sum of “currently undergoing tests or treatments” and “have had tests or treatments in the past (excluding currently undergoing tests or treatments)”) also increased from 18.2% (1 in 5.5 couples) in the previous survey to 22.7% (1 in 4.4 couples) in the current survey. 6.7% of couples who had been married for less than five years were undergoing infertility-related tests or treatment at the time of survey.

Figure 8-4. Percentage of couples who have been worried about infertility and treatment experience, by survey and duration of marriage



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage (with wives under 50 years old). Percentage of couples who have been worried about infertility is shown. The couples whose duration of marriage is not known are included in the total. Question: "Do you and your husband have any concerns or worries about infertility? Have you ever been treated for infertility? Please circle one number for each." (1) Whether you have any concerns (1. Have never worried about not being able to have children, 2. Have worried in the past about not being able to have children, 3. Currently worried about not being able to have children) (2) (For those who have answered 2 or 3 for (1)) whether you have ever had infertility treatments (1. Worried [about infertility], but never sought medical treatment, 2. Have had tests or treatments in the past, 3. Currently undergoing tests or treatments)

[Figure 8-4. Percentage of couples who have been worried about infertility and treatment experience, by survey and duration of marriage]

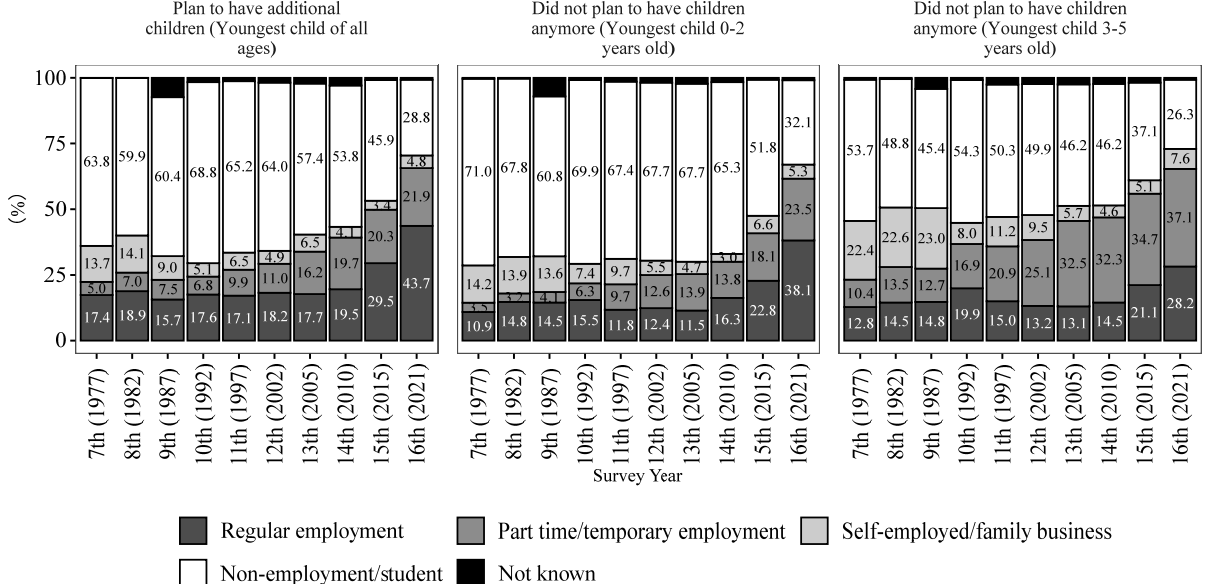
9. Child-rearing Conditions

9.1 Wives' employment and childbirth

The percentage of wives working after childbirth rose significantly, with the percentage of wives with the youngest child under two years old exceeding 60%.

We examined the wife's employment status after childbirth by the couple's willingness to have additional births and by the age of the youngest child. In the current survey, 70.4% of wives who still intended to have additional children were working, up significantly from 53.2% in the previous survey. Looking at the employment status of wives of couples who did not plan to have children anymore (couples who have completed the birth period) by the age of the youngest child, the percentage of wives with youngest child aged 0-2 increased from the previous survey (47.5%) to 67.0% in the current survey. The percentage of wives with the youngest child aged 3-5 who were working, which is a group known to include many who would start working again, had also increased to 72.9% in the current survey (61.0% in the previous survey). With respect to employment status, wives in regular employment, who had a relatively high employment continuation rate, increased in all stages of child-rearing as indicated by the age of the youngest child.

Figure 9-1. Employment status of wife after childbirth, by survey, intention of having additional children, and stage of child-rearing (age of youngest children)



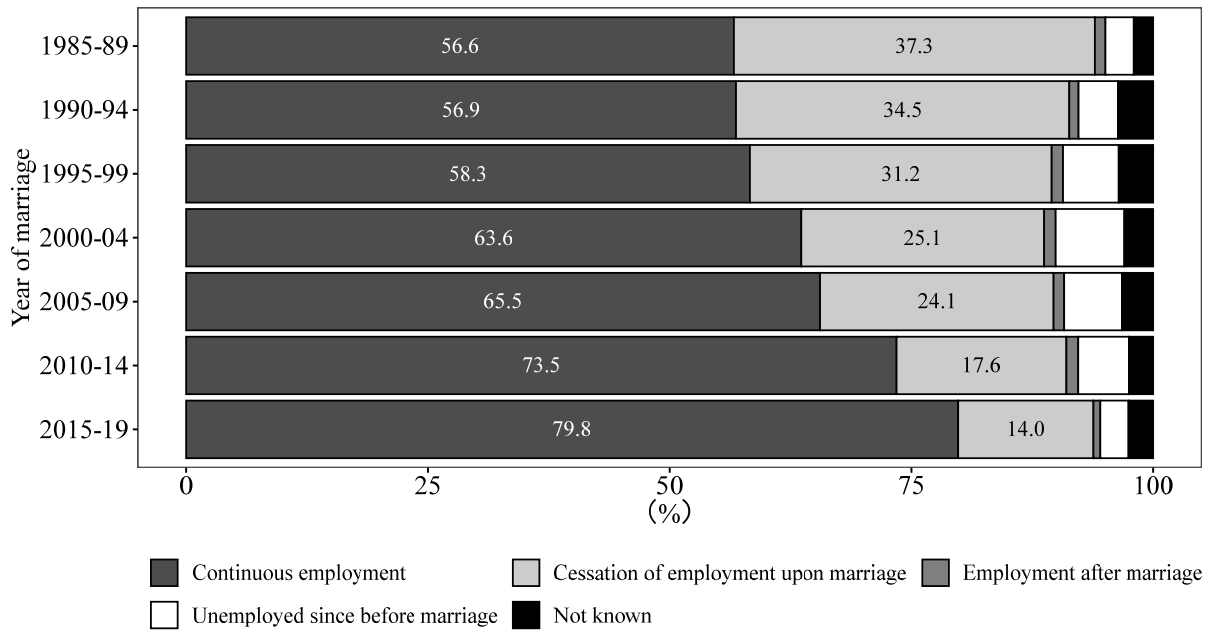
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with at least one child and with wives under 50 years old. They exclude pregnant wives and couples who did not answer the age of their youngest child. The number of cases for the 16th survey was as follows: Plan to have additional children (youngest child of all ages) 538; Did not plan to have children anymore (youngest child 0-2 years old) 430; Did not plan to have children anymore (youngest child 3-5 years old) 528. "Part time/temporary employment" for the 16th survey includes "working (employment status not known)."

[Figure 9-1. Employment status of wife after childbirth, by survey, intention of having additional children, and stage of child-rearing (age of youngest children)]

The percentage of wives who continued to work before and after marriage rises to about 80%.

Looking at changes in wives' work status before and after marriage^(*) (i.e., when they decided to get married and immediately after marriage) by year of marriage, the percentage of those who were working at both time points among all wives was 79.8% for wives of couples married between 2015 and 2019 (even if they changed jobs, they were counted as continuing if they were employed at both time points). The same figure was about 60% for those who married in the period up to around 2000, but for recently married couples, nearly 80% of wives continued to work after marriage.

Figure 9-2. Change in work status of wife before and after getting married, by year of marriage



Note: The figures are shown for couples in first marriage in shorter than 15 years after their marriage in 11th, 13rd, 14th, 15th, and 16th survey. Data shows couples with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The number of cases was as follows: 1985-89 (1,294), 1990-94 (2,499), 1995-99 (3,247), 2000-04 (3,539), 2005-09 (3,027), 2010-14 (1,959), 2015-19 (858). Change in employment shows change in the employment status of wives before and after their marriage. (Even if the job has changed, as far as the wife is employed at both points in time, she is included in the "continuous employment" category.)

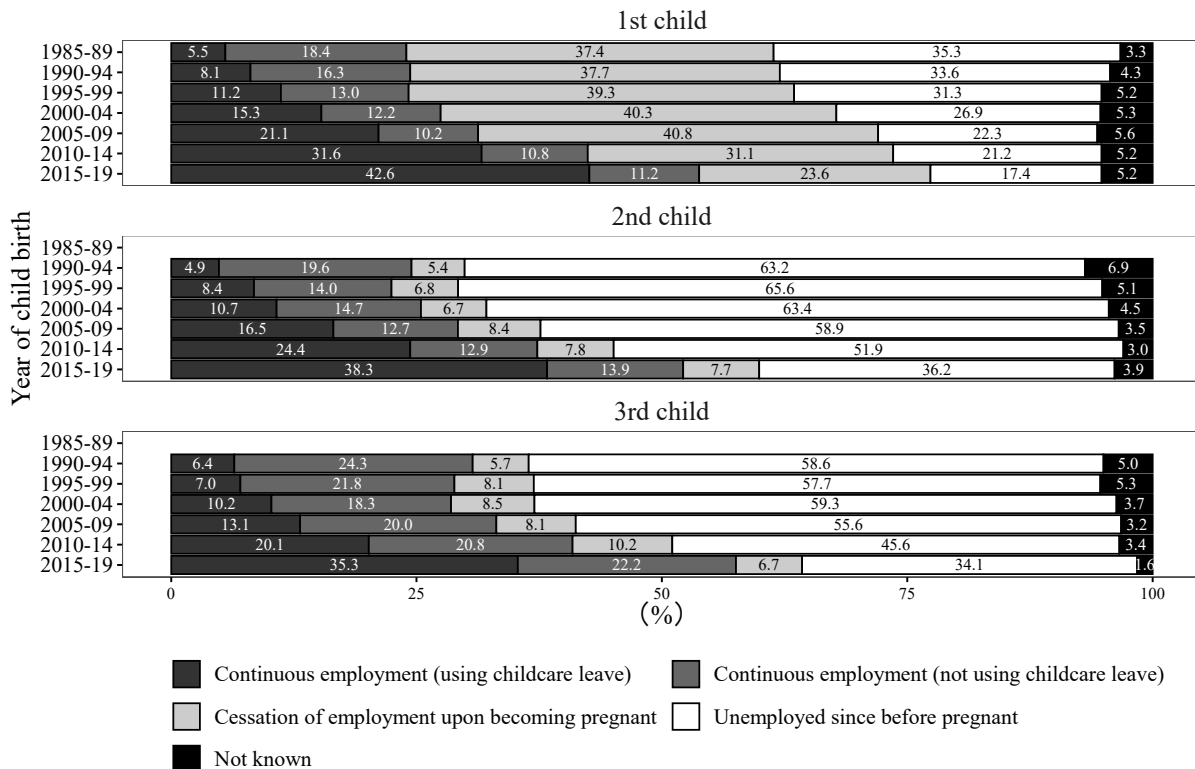
[Figure 9-2. Change in work status of wife before and after getting married, by year of marriage]

(*) Changes in the work status of the wife before and after the marriage are defined as follows: "Continuous employment": employed when the marriage decision was made and also employed immediately after marriage; "Cessation of employment upon marriage": employed when the marriage decision was made and unemployed immediately after marriage; "Employment after marriage": unemployed when the marriage decision was made and employed immediately after marriage; "Unemployed since before marriage": unemployed when the marriage decision was made and unemployed immediately after marriage.

The percentage of wives who continued to work after the birth of their first child, regardless of whether or not they were working before the pregnancy, rose to over 50%.

Among all wives who had given birth to their first child, including those who were unemployed before pregnancy, the percentage who continued to work has been increasing in recent years. (Even if they changed jobs, they were counted as continuing if they were employed at both time points).^(*) The figure for the wives whose first child was born in 2015-19 (total of those with and without the use of childcare leave system) was 53.8%, up about 11 percentage points from 42.5% in 2010-14 to over 50%. The percentage of wives who used the childcare leave system and continued working also increased significantly from 31.6% in 2010-14 to 42.6% in 2015-19.

Figure 9-3. Change in work status of wife before and after giving birth, by year of birth of child



Note: The figures are shown for couples in first marriage with one or more children (with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey)). Data shows couples with the child aged 1 or older but below 15 in the 12th to 16th survey (1st child) and in the 13th to 16th survey (2nd child and 3rd child). Change in employment shows change in the employment status of wives when they became aware of their pregnancy and when their child became 1 year old. (Even if the job has changed, as far as the wife is employed at both points in time, she is included in the "continuous employment" category.) "Unemployed since before pregnant" includes couples whose wife was employed when their child became 1 year old. Couples who did not state whether they had used childcare leave are included in the "continuous employment (not using childcare leave)". The sum of rates for continuous employment regardless of whether using childcare leave or not was as follows: For those whose year of child birth lies between 2010 and 2014, 1st child (42.5%), 2nd child (37.3%), 3rd child (40.9%). For those whose year of child birth lies between 2015 and 2019, 1st child (53.8%), 2nd child (52.2%), 3rd child (57.5%). The number of cases was as follows: For those whose year of child birth lies between 2010 and 2014, 1st child (1,729), 2nd child (1,375), 3rd child (472). For those whose year of child birth lies between 2015 and 2019, 1st child (751), 2nd child (671), 3rd child (252).

[Figure 9-3. Change in work status of wife before and after giving birth, by year of birth of child]

^(*) Changes in the work status of the wife before and after giving birth are defined as follows for couples for whom each of the first to third children is one year old or older:

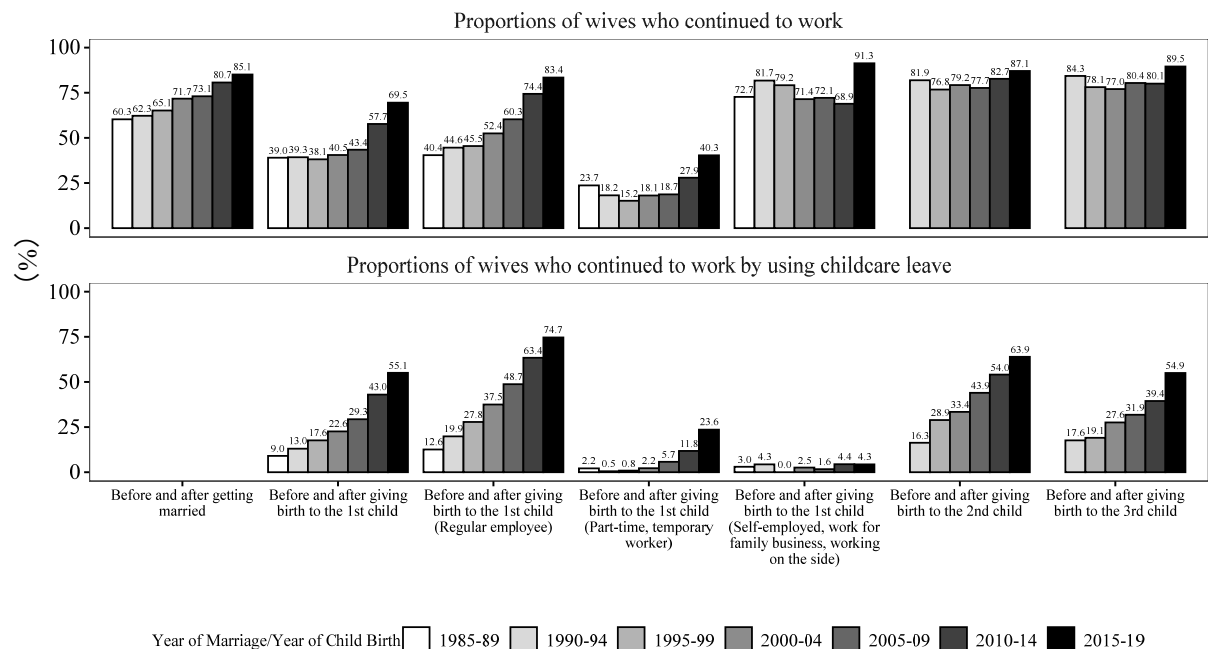
- "Continuous employment (using childcare leave)": employed when finding out about the pregnancy, took childcare leave, and employed when the child was one year old;
- "Continuous employment (not using childcare leave)": employed when finding out about the pregnancy, employed at the time the child was one year old, without taking childcare leave;
- "Unemployed since before becoming pregnant": unemployed when finding out about the pregnancy and unemployed at the time the child was one year old.

The employment continuation rate of wives who were employed when they found out about pregnancy with their first child increased to 69.5%.

The percentage of wives who were employed when they learned they were pregnant with their first child and who were still employed when their first child was one year old (the employment continuation rate) increased significantly from 57.7% of wives who had their first child in 2010-14 to 69.5% of wives who had their first child in 2015-19. Wives who used the childcare leave system and continued working accounted for 55.1% of the total (43.0% five years ago). In other words, the percentage of those who used the childcare leave system among those who continued to work was 79.2% (74.5% five years ago).

Looking at the employment continuation rate before and after giving birth to their first child by employment status, the employment continuation rate for wives in regular employment has been increasing since the 2000s, with 83.4% of wives who gave birth to their first child in 2015-19 in regular employment. The continuation rate for wives in fixed-term employment, such as part-time and temporary employment, has also increased since the 2010s, reaching 40.3% in 2015-19, but there is still a large difference from wives in regular employment.

Figure 9-4. Percentage of wives who continued to work after getting married/giving birth and that of wives who continued to work and used the childcare leave system, by work status before getting married/pregnancy (Wives who were working when they decided to get married or when they found out about pregnancy)



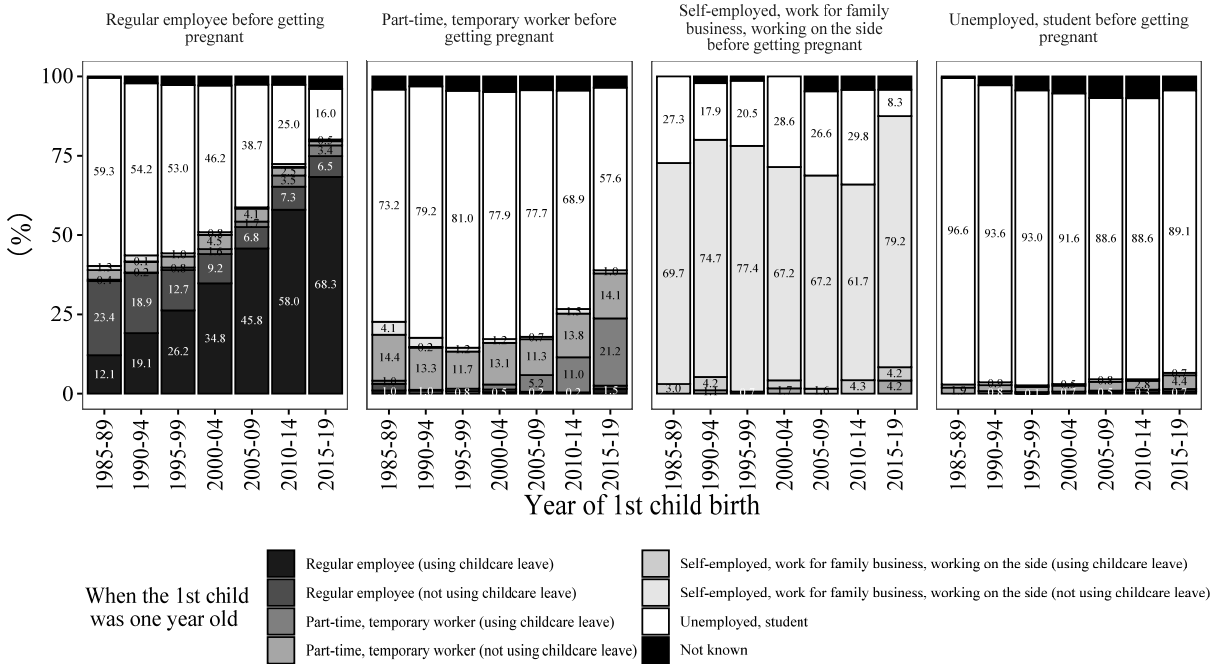
Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). Data show wives who were already working before marriage or pregnancy. (1) For the proportions of wives who continued to work after marriage, couples married for less than 15 years in the 11th survey and the 13th to 16th surveys were aggregated. (2) For the proportions of wives who continued to work after giving birth, couples with at least one child and with the child aged 1 year or older and under 15 years in the 12th to 16th surveys (for the first child) and in the 13th to 16th surveys (for the second and third child) were aggregated. The number of cases for those whose year of marriage/child birth lies between 2015 and 2019 was as follows: before and after getting married (805), before and after giving birth to the 1st child (581), before and after giving birth to the 1st child (regular employee) (367), before and after giving birth to the 1st child (part-time, temporary worker) (191), before and after giving birth to the 1st child (self-employed, work for family business, working on the side) (23), before and after giving birth to the 2nd child (402), before and after giving birth to the 3rd child (162).

[Figure 9-4. Percentage of wives who continued to work after getting married/giving birth and that of wives who continued to work and used the childcare leave system, by work status before getting married/pregnancy (Wives who were working when they decided to get married or when they found out about pregnancy)]

The percentage of wives in regular employment before pregnancy with their first child who used the childcare leave system and continued to work rose to 70%. The corresponding percentage of wives in non-regular employment also increased to 20%, indicating an overall increase in the use of the childcare leave system.

Differences in wives' employment status when their first child was one year old by their employment status when they found out about the pregnancy of the first child are shown by the year of first childbirth. The percentage of wives who were in regular employment at both the time points and who used childcare leave rose from 58.0% for wives who had their first child in 2010-14 to 68.3% for wives who did so in 2015-19. (Wives who did not use the childcare leave system decreased from 7.3% in 2010-14 to 6.5% in 2015-19.) The percentage of wives who used the childcare leave system and were part-time or temporary workers at both time points increased from 11.0% in 2010-14 to 21.2% in 2015-19 (13.8% in 2010-14 and 14.1% in 2015-19 for wives who did not use childcare leave). The percentage of wives who were part-timers or temporary workers when their pregnancy was discovered but were regular employees when their first child was one year old remained virtually unchanged, ranging from 1 to 2%. Wives who were self-employed or family employees when they found out about their pregnancy had a high employment continuation rate, with more than 80% still working when their child was one year old. The percentage of wives unemployed when their pregnancy was discovered but employed when their first child was one year old increased slightly from 4.6% to 6.6% in 2015-19.

Figure 9-5. Wife's employment status and use of childcare leave when the first child was one year old, by employment status before pregnancy with the first child, and the year of birth of the first child



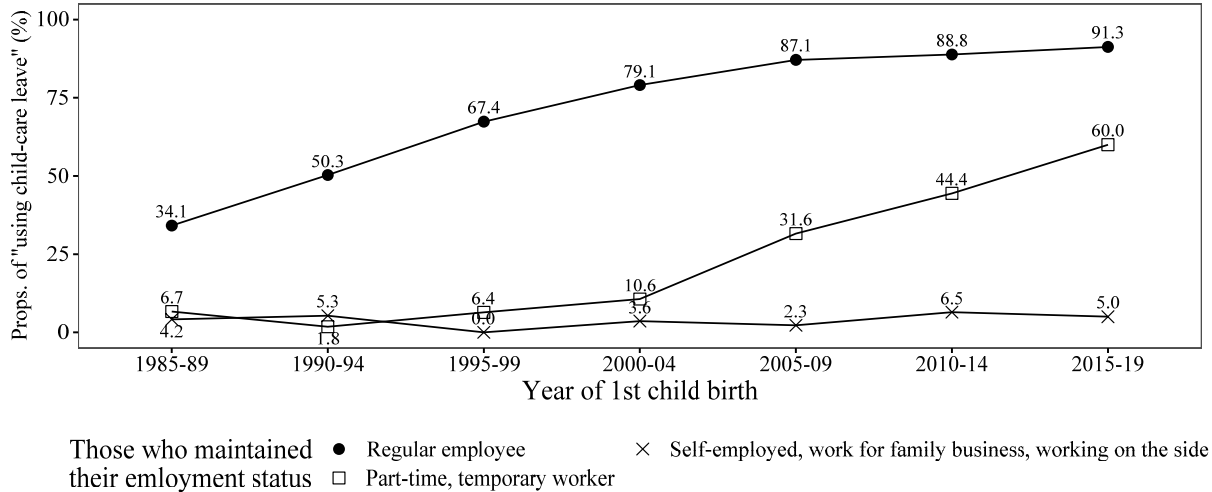
Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). Data shows couples with the 1st child aged 1 or older but below 15 in the 12th to 16th survey. Couples who did not state whether they had used childcare leave are included in the "not using childcare leave". The number of cases was as follows: For those whose year of child birth lies between 2010 and 2014, regular employee before getting pregnant (797); part-time, temporary worker before getting pregnant (472); self-employed, work for family business, working on the side before getting pregnant (47); unemployed, student before getting pregnant (394). For those whose year of child birth lies between 2015 and 2019, regular employee before getting pregnant (382); part-time, temporary worker before getting pregnant (198); self-employed, work for family business, working on the side before getting pregnant (24); unemployed, student before getting pregnant (137).

[Figure 9-5. Wife's employment status and use of childcare leave when the first child was one year old, by employment status before pregnancy with the first child, and the year of birth of the first child]

The percentage of wives who were in the same employment status when they found out about their pregnancy and when their first child was one year old and used childcare leave reached over 90% for those in regular employment and increased dramatically to 60% for part-timers or dispatched workers.

Here, the change in the percentage of wives whose employment status did not change between when they discovered their pregnancy and when their first child was one year old (status continuers), and who used the childcare leave system is examined: The percentage of wives who continued to work as regular employees who had their first child in 2010-14 rose from 88.8% to 91.3% of those who had their first child in 2015-19. On the other hand, among wives who were part-timers or dispatched workers at both time points, the use of the childcare leave system was rare until 2000-2004. However, with the enforcement of the revised Child Care and Family Care Leave Law in 2005, it became possible for fixed-term contract workers who met certain requirements to take childcare leave. Since then, the percentage of workers who use the childcare leave system and continue working has increased. Among wives whose children were born in 2015-19, the percentage of those who used the childcare leave system and continued to work as part-time or temporary workers rose significantly from 44.4% in 2010-14 to 60.0%.

Figure 9-6. Percentage of wives who used childcare leave among those who maintained the same employment status between the time of discovering their pregnancy and when the first child was one year old, by employment status and year of birth of their first child



Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). Data shows couples with the 1st child aged 1 or older but below 15 in the 12th to 16th survey. Couples who did not state whether they had used child-care leave are included in the "not using child-care leave". "Those who maintained their employment status" indicate those whose employment status before getting pregnant of 1st child and that when 1st child was 1 year old are the same. The number of cases was as follows: For those whose year of 1st child birth lies between 2010 and 2014: regular employee (520); part-time, temporary worker (117); self-employed, work for family business, working on the side (31). For those whose year of 1st child birth lies between 2015 and 2019, regular employee (286); part-time, temporary worker (70); self-employed, work for family business, working on the side (20).

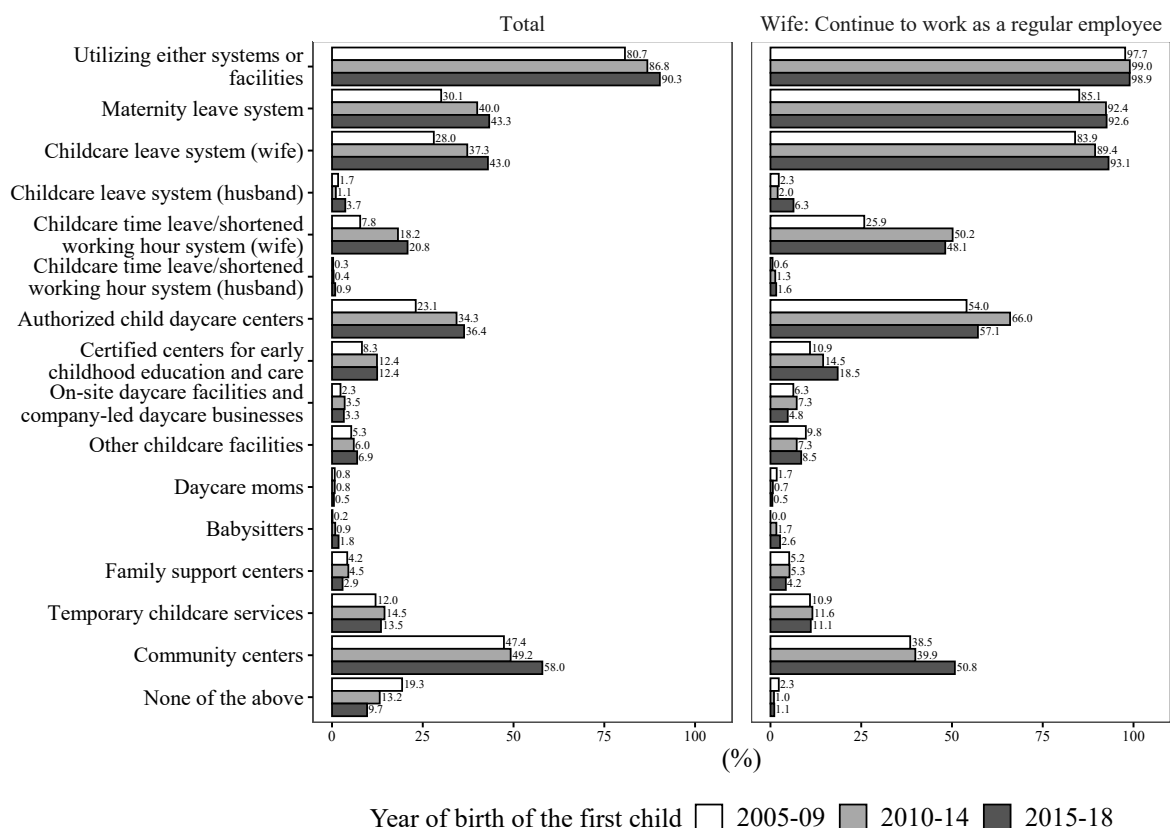
[Figure 9-6. Percentage of wives who used childcare leave among those who maintained the same employment status between the time of discovering their pregnancy and when the first child was one year old, by employment status and year of birth of their first child]

9.2 Utilization of childcare support systems and facilities

The number of couples using childcare support systems and facilities has been increasing.

We asked about childcare support systems and facilities used by the respondents until their first child turned three years old. The percentage of couples who used any of the options in the figure has been increasing in recent years, with 90.3% of all couples (total) who gave birth to their first child between 2015 and 2018. Since 2005, the utilization rates of “maternity leave system,” “childcare leave system (for wives),” “childcare time leave/shortened working hour system (wives),” “authorized child daycare centers,” and “places for parent-child interaction and consultation in the community” have particularly increased. The usage rate of local parent-child interaction and consultation services has increased significantly, with 58.0% of married couples and 50.8% of wives who continue to work full-time having used such services in the current survey.

Figure 9-7. Childcare support systems/facilities used before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child: 16th survey (2021)



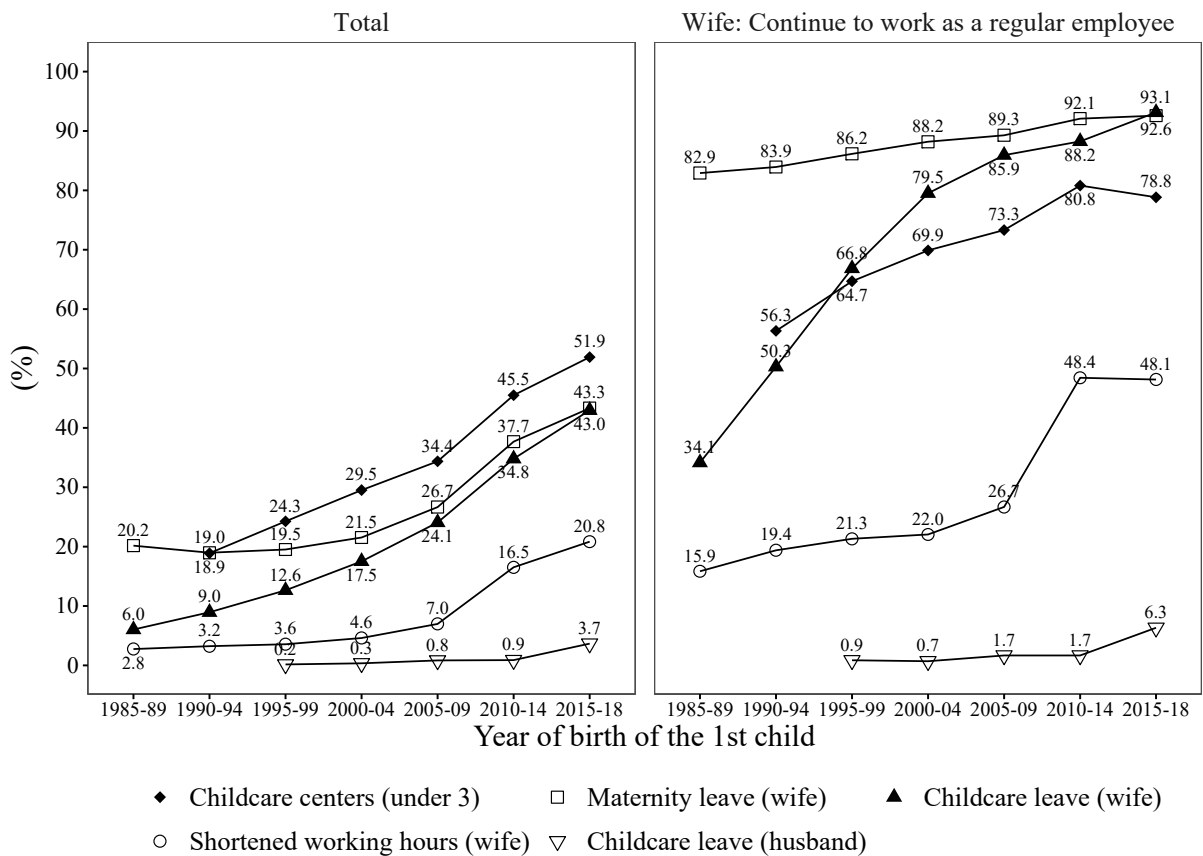
Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 55 married before age 50. The data shows couples with the first child aged 3 years or older but under 15 years in the 12th to 16th surveys. "Wife: continue to work as a regular employee" refers to those were regular employees at two points of time: "when you found out you were pregnant with your first child" and "when the first child turned one year old." In the questionnaire, "other childcare facilities" is indicated as "other unlicensed childcare facilities (nursery, baby hotel, etc.), certified childcare centers", and "community centers" as "childcare support centers, open space places and other places for parent-child interaction and consultation in the community". The respective number of cases and average number of systems/facilities used were as follows: For "total," 2005-09 (642, 1.71), 2010-14 (912, 2.23), 2015-18 (547, 2.48). For "wife: continue to work as a regular employee," 2005-09 (174, 3.35), 2010-14 (303, 3.89), 2015-18 (189, 4.00). Question: "During the period until your child turned 3 years old, ... (2) did you use any of the following systems or facilities?"

[Figure 9-7. Childcare support systems/facilities used before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child: 16th survey (2021)]

More than half of the couples used childcare centers by the time their first child turned three years old, and the percentage of husbands using childcare leave also increased in the current survey.

Trends in the use of childcare support systems, which are surveyed continuously, are shown. The percentage of couples who used daycare centers etc. (see note to chart for composition) until the child turned three years old was 18.9% for couples whose first child was born in 1990-94, but for couples whose first child was born in 2015-18, the percentage was more than 50%, at 51.9%. For couples with wives who continued to be regular employees, the percentage rose from 56.3% to 78.8% over the same period. The percentage of husbands using childcare leave increased significantly for the first time among couples whose first child was born in 2015-18, rising from 0.9% to 3.7% for all couples (total) and from 1.7% to 6.3% for couples with wives who continued to be in regular employment, compared to couples whose first child was born between 2010-14.

Figure 9-8. Percentage of couples who used childcare support systems/facilities before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child



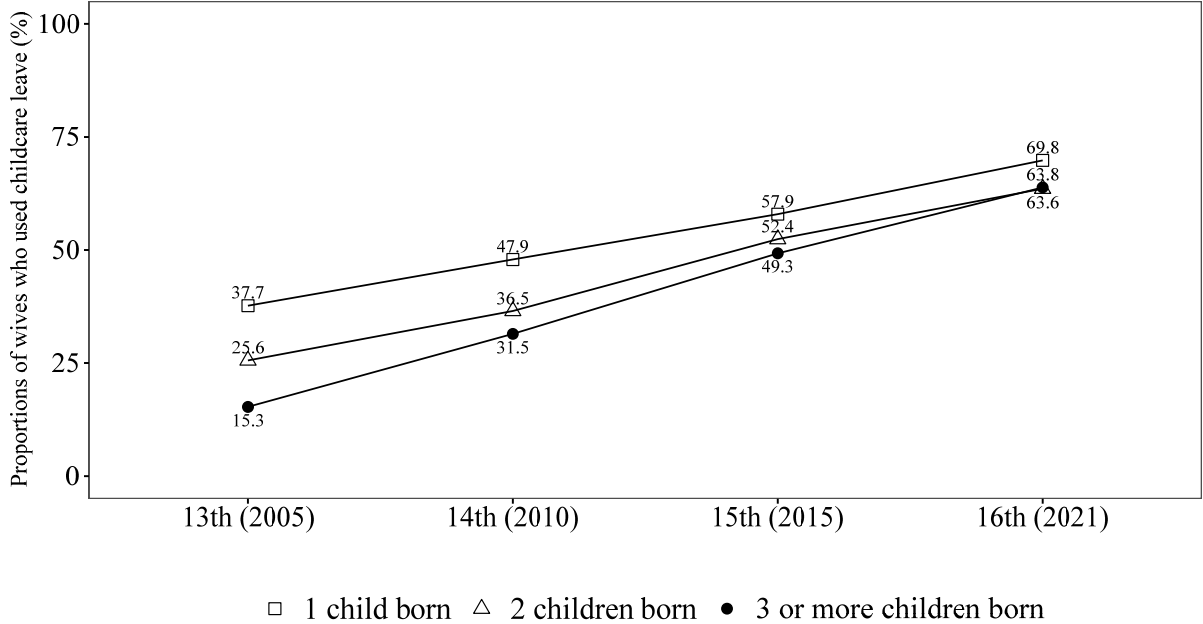
Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The data shows couples with the first child aged 3 years or older but under 15 years in the 12th to 16th surveys. For "childcare leave (husband)," data in the 14th to 16th surveys were aggregated. For "childcare centers (under 3)," comparative data in the 13th to 16th surveys were aggregated. "Childcare centers (under 3)" includes authorized child daycare centers, certified centers for early childhood education and care, on-site daycare facilities and other childcare facilities, but excludes temporary childcare services. The respective number of cases was as follows. For couples whose 1st child was born between 2010 and 2014: "Total" 1,356; "wife: continue to work as a regular employee" 417; and, for 1st child born between 2015 and 2018: 547, 189. Question: "Before your child turned 3 years old, (1) did you live with your mother or that of your husband's? And (2) did you use any of the following systems or facilities?"

[Figure 9-8. Percentage of couples who used childcare support systems/facilities before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child]

The percentage of wives who used the childcare leave system among wives who continued to work with three or more children increased from 15.3% in 2005 to 63.8% in 2021.

The use of the childcare leave system is increasing among wives who are balancing work and child-rearing. Among wives in their 40s who continued to work before and after the birth of their first child and had two children, the percentage of those who used the childcare leave system was 25.6% in 2005 and rose to 63.6% in the current survey in 2021. Among wives in their 40s with three or more children, the percentage of those who used the childcare leave system was 15.3% in 2005 (the 13th survey) but rose to 63.8% in the current survey in 2021. The use of the childcare leave system is increasing among mothers raising children while working.

Figure 9-9. Percentage of wives who used childcare leave after giving birth to the first child, by survey and number of children (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child and have one or more children. Employment includes regular employee, part-time worker, temporary worker, self-employed, work for family business and working on the side. The respective number of cases (1 child born, 2 children born, 3 or more children born) was as follows: the 15th survey: 145, 353, 138; the 16th survey: 159, 428, 177.

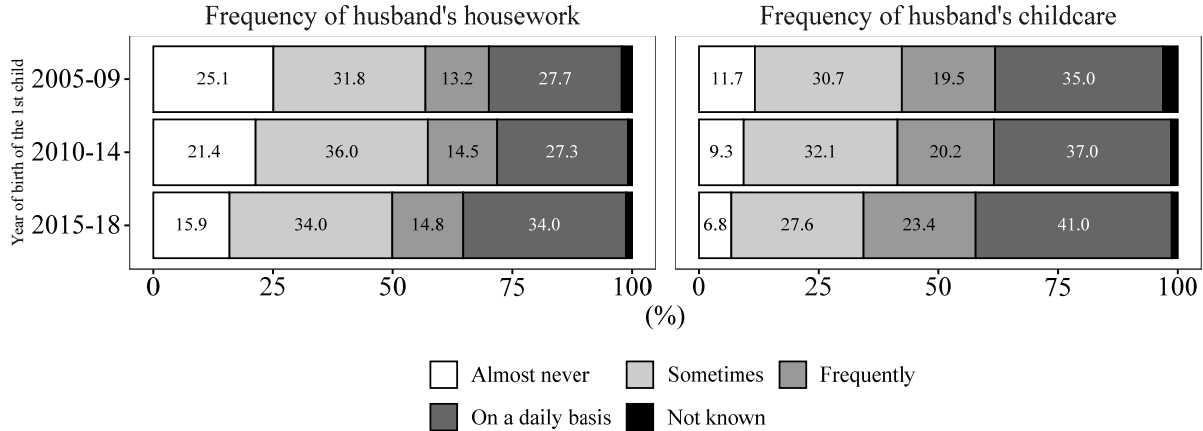
[Figure 9-9. Percentage of wives who used childcare leave after giving birth to the first child, by survey and number of children (Wives aged 40-49 who continued to work after giving birth to their first child)]

9.3 Husbands' housework and childcare

The frequency of housework and childcare performed by husbands has been increasing since the mid-2000s.

The frequency of housework and childcare performed by the husband until the first child turned three years old was examined. Looking at the distribution of husbands' frequency of doing housework and childcare by year of birth of their first child, the total of "frequently" and "on a daily basis" showed a tendency to increase in more recent years. The percentage of husbands who performed housework and childcare "frequently" or "on a daily basis" until the child turned three years old was 41.0% for housework and 54.5% for childcare for couples whose first child was born between 2005 and 2009 but increased to 48.8% for housework and 64.4% for childcare for couples whose first child was born between 2015 and 2018. In addition, the percentage of husbands who "almost never" do housework or childcare has decreased, falling below 10% to 6.8% in childcare for couples whose first child was born between 2015 and 2018.

Figure 9-10. Frequency of husbands' performance of housework and childcare before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child: 16th survey (2021)



Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 55 married before age 50. The data shows couples with the first child aged 3 years or older but under 15 years. Question: "Before the child turned 3 years old, ... how often did your husband do housework and childcare?"

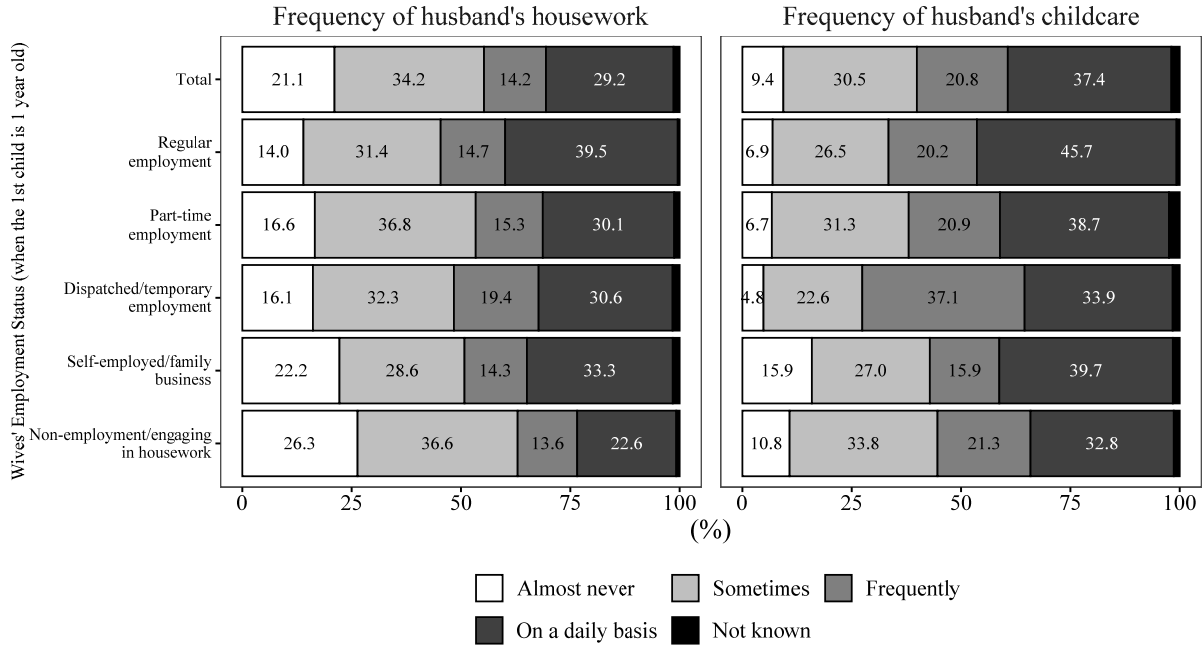
[Figure 9-10. Frequency of husbands' performance of housework and childcare before the first child turned three years old, by year of birth of the first child: 16th survey (2021)]

40% of husbands in couples where the wife is a regular employee do housework on “a daily basis.”

The frequency of housework and childcare performed by husbands until their children turned three years old was examined for each wife’s employment status when their first child was one year old. About 50% of husbands either “almost never” or “sometimes” performed housework, even when their wives were working. However, about 40% of husbands of couples in which the wife is a regular employee performed housework “on a daily basis.” There was a difference in the frequency of husbands’ performance depending on their wives’ employment status.

The percentage of husbands who “almost never” did childcare was much lower than that for housework, and more than half of the husbands did childcare “frequently” or “on a daily basis”, regardless of the wife’s employment status.

Figure 9-11. Frequency of husbands’ performance of housework and childcare before the first child turned three years old, by the wife’s employment status when the first child was one year old: 16th survey (2021)



Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 55 married before age 50. The data shows couples with the first child aged 3 years or older but under 15 years. "Total" includes the cases where the employment status of wives is "other/not known." Question: "Before the child turned 3 years old, ... how often did your husband do housework and childcare?"

[Figure 9-11. Frequency of husbands' performance of housework and childcare before the first child turned three years old, by the wife's employment status when the first child was one year old: 16th survey (2021)]

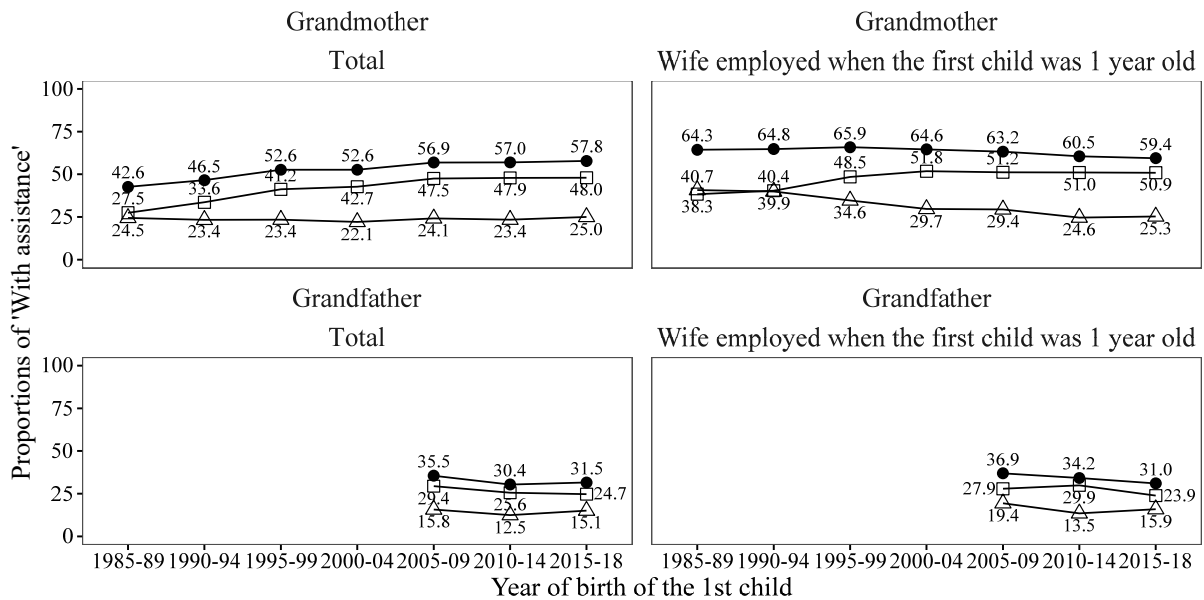
9.4 Childcare assistance from grandparents

60% of couples raising infants receive help from their mothers (child's grandmothers). Grandfathers also play a certain role.

The percentage of couples in which the husband or wife's mother (child's grandmother) helped raise the child until the first child turned three years old is rising and was 57.8% for all couples (total) with children born during 2015-18. Grandmothers play an important role as childcare providers. Looking at the composition, the percentage getting help from grandmothers on the husband's side remained unchanged at just over 20%, while the percentage of help from grandmothers on the wife's side rose. On the other hand, among wives who were employed when their first child was one year old, the percentage of wives who received help from their husbands or wives' mothers has been slowly declining since the 2000s. This may be due to the diversification of the child-rearing environment, such as the increased use of child-rearing support systems and facilities available to dual-earner couples, including childcare leave and shortened working hour systems.

The current survey also asked about the frequency of help from the couple's fathers (the child's grandfathers). About 30% of the couples received help in child rearing from the husband's or wife's fathers. Grandfathers also play a certain role in child-rearing.

Figure 9-12. Percentage of couples who received childcare assistance from their parents (grandparents of children) before the first child was three years old, by year of birth of the first child



- With assistance from wives' parents (grandmothers/grandfathers of children)
- △ With assistance from husbands' parents (grandmothers/grandfathers of children)
- (Re-listed) With assistance from either wives' or husbands' parents (grandmothers/grandfathers of children)

Note: The figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The data are shown for couples with the first child aged 3 years or older but under 15 years in the 12th to 16th surveys (for receiving assistance from grandmothers) and in the 16th survey (for receiving assistance from grandfathers). The percentage of "with assistance" represents the proportion of couples who received childcare assistance from the mother or father of the husband or wife "on a regular basis" or "frequently." The numbers of cases of receiving assistance from grandmothers were as follows: children born 2010-2014: Total 1,334; wife employed when the first child was 1 year old: 588. Children born 2015-18: 540, 281. The numbers of cases of receiving assistance from grandfathers were as follows: children born 2010-2014: Total 892; wife employed when the first child was 1 year old: 424. Children born 2015-18: 536, 277. Question: "Before the child turned 3 years old, how much help did you and your husband receive from your mother and father and those of your husband's before the child turned 3 years old?"

[Figure 9-12. Percentage of couples who received childcare assistance from their parents (grandparents of children) before the first child was three years old, by year of birth of the first child]

Section III Employment, Residence, and Attitudes of the Never-married and the Married

Part I outlined the views and attitudes of never-married persons regarding marriage and family. Part II outlined changes over time in the process of marriages and births of married couples, as well as in the status and attitudes toward child-rearing. Part III shows the changes in the living conditions and attitudes of never-married men and women and married couples.

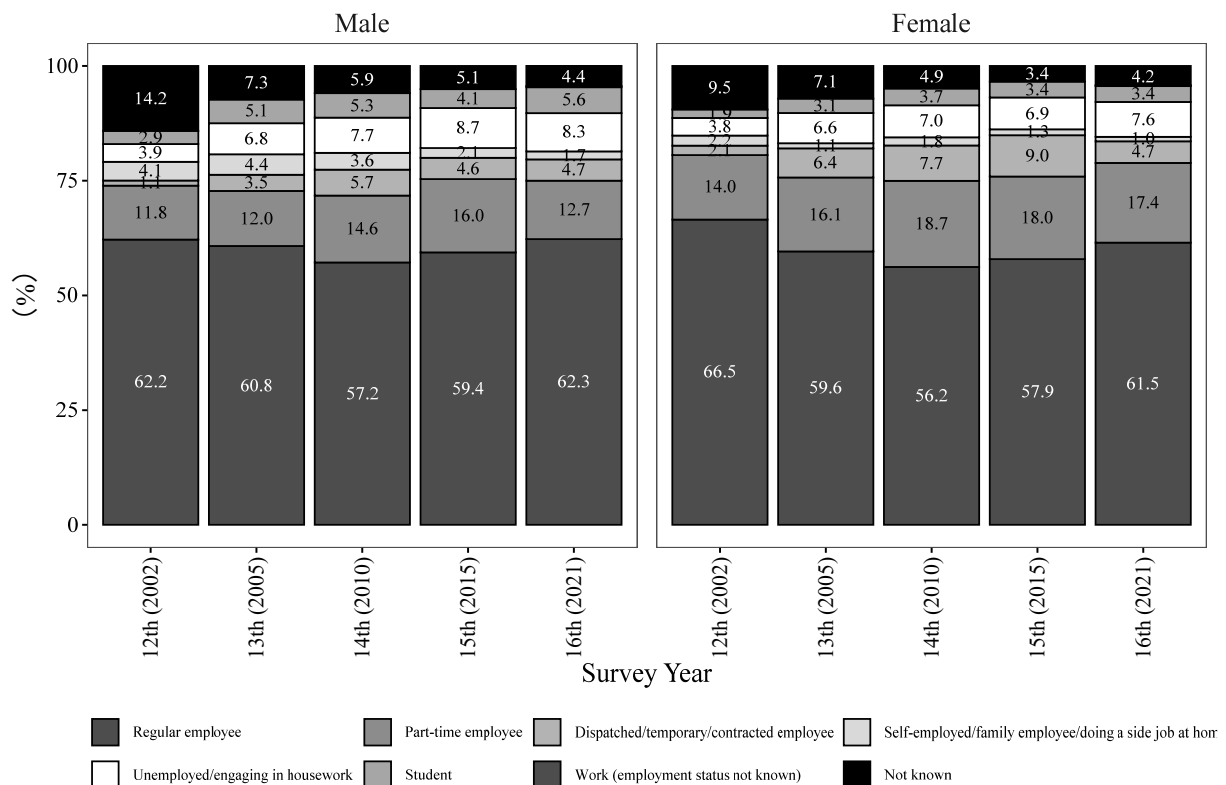
10. Employment Status and Co-residence with Parents

10.1 Employment status of never-married persons, husbands, and wives

The number of never-married persons working as regular employees at the time of graduation increased compared to the survey 10 years ago.

The survey examined the employment status of never-married persons aged 25-34 after graduating from the last school they attended (post-graduation). The percentage of regular employees for both men and women was lowest in the 2010 (14th) survey, at 57.2% for men and 56.2% for women. Since then, the percentage has begun to rise, with the percentage of regular employees in this survey at 62.3% for men and 61.5% for women. The percentages of part-time, dispatched, and other non-regular employees have declined somewhat since their increase in the 2010 survey. Less than 10% of men and of women were unemployed or engaging in housework (8.3% for men and 7.6% for women in this survey).

Figure 10-1. Employment status of never-married persons aged 25-34 after graduating from the last school attended, by survey



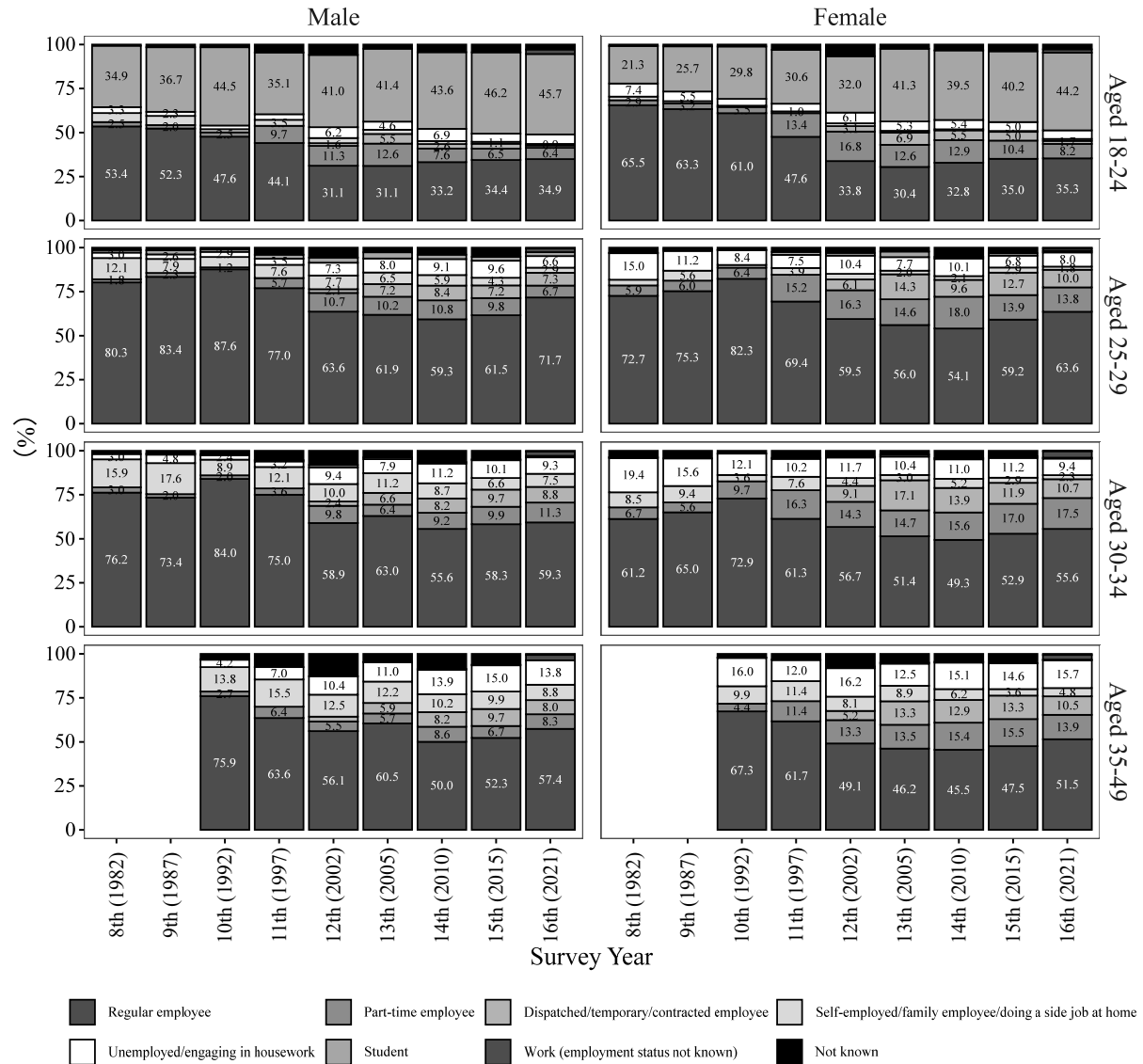
Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 25-34. The respective number of cases was as follows: In the 12th (2002) survey, men 1,786, women 1,509; in the 13th survey, men 1,692, women 1,336; in the 14th survey, men 1,873, women 1,505; in the 15th survey, men 1,363, women 1,166; and, in the 16th survey, men 1,031, women 93. Question: "We would like to ask you about your employment status and that of your parent(s). For yourself, please answer about two time periods, and for your parent(s), about the current situation. Circle one number for each of the following: (1) employment status, (2) type of work, and (3) number of employees at the company for yourself, and for your parents, company size. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.)" (a. Immediately after graduating from the last school attended)

[Figure 10-1. Employment status of never-married persons aged 25-34 after graduating from the last school attended, by survey]

The percentage of regular employees as of the time of the survey has increased compared to 10 years ago. However, the percentage of non-regular employees is higher for women.

Looking at the current (as of the time of the survey) employment status of never-married persons by age, the percentage of regular employees has declined from the 1980s to the 2000s, but has reversed since the previous survey and is returning to the level of the early 2000s in all age groups in the current survey. In all age groups, the percentage of non-regular employees (part-timers, dispatched workers, etc.) is higher among women, and among those aged 35-49; the percentage of unemployed/engaging in housework has remained at around 15% for both men and women since the 2000s.

Figure 10-2. Employment status of never-married persons, by survey and age



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 18-49. The respective number of cases was as follows: In the 15th survey: men aged 18-24 (1,342), aged 25-29 (788), aged 30-34 (575), aged 35-49 (1,237); women aged 18-24 (1,404), aged 25-29 (754), aged 30-34 (412), aged 35-49 (854). In the 16th survey: men aged 18-24 (1,002), aged 25-29 (579), aged 30-34 (452), aged 35-49 (1,085); women aged 18-24 (1,121), aged 25-29 (549), aged 30-34 (383), aged 35-49 (820). Please refer to the note in the Figure 10-1 for questions in the 16th survey.
 [Figure 10-2. Employment status of never-married persons, by survey and age]

30% of either partner of the couples had non-regular employment or were unemployed when they decided to get married.

The most prevalent combination of employment status at the time of the couple’s decision to get married was that the husband was a regular employee, and the wife was either a regular employee or self-employed/in family employment, which has remained at approximately 60% since the 12th survey in 2002. The second most prevalent type of couple was one in which the husband was a regular employee and the wife was a part-time, dispatched, temporary, or contract employee, accounting for 20.5%, exceeding 20% for the first time in this survey. On the other hand, the percentage of couples in which the husband was a regular employee and the wife was unemployed or a student was 9.1% in the 12th survey (2002), which has since decreased to 3.3% in this survey.

Figure 10-3. Employment status of wife and husband when they decided to get married, by survey



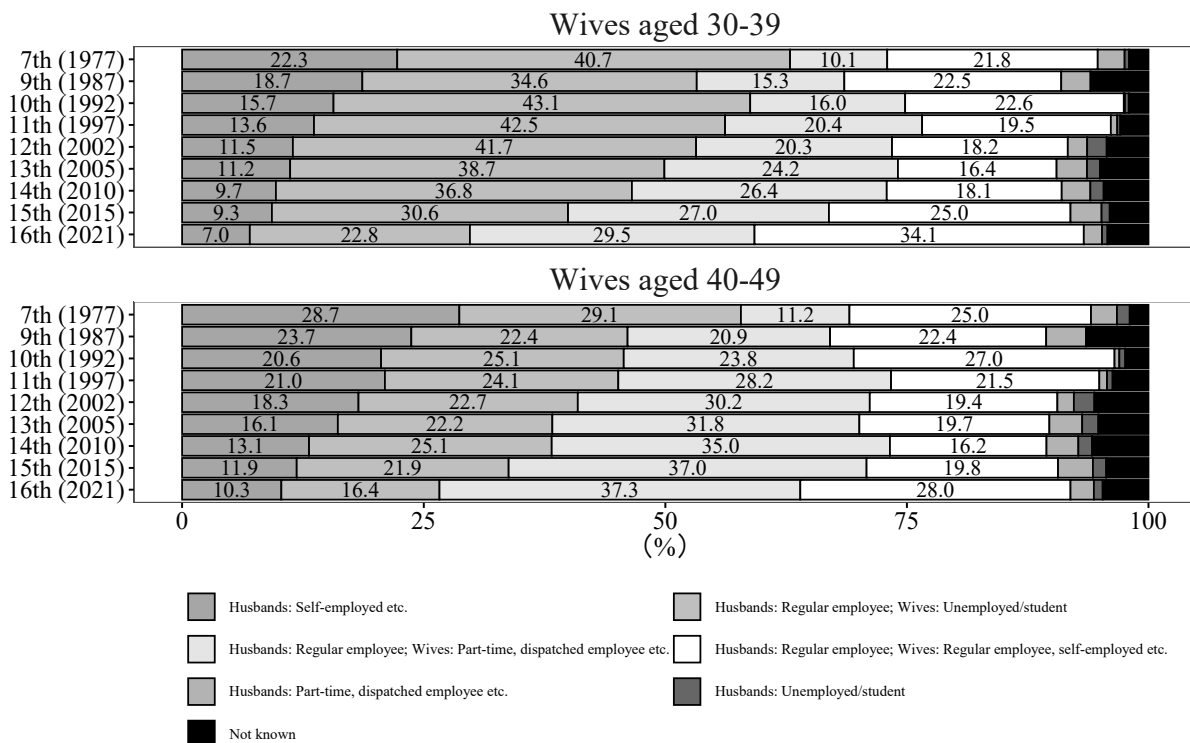
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 years old. "Self-employed etc." refers to "self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home"; "regular employee" refers to "regular employee"; "part-time, dispatched employee etc." refers to "part-time employee" and "dispatched/temporary/contracted employee," and "unemployed/student" refers to "unemployed/engaging in housework" and "student." "Not known" includes couples with husbands' employment being not known and couples with husbands who were regular employees but wives' employment was not known. The classification of "contract employee" was first added as an option in the 13th Survey. The number of cases was as follows: 6,949 in the 12th survey; 5,932 in the 13th survey; 6,705 in the 14th survey; 5,334 in the 15th survey; 4,351 in the 16th survey. Question in the 16th survey: "We would like to ask you about your employment status and that of your parent(s). For yourself, please answer about two time periods, and for your parent(s), about the current situation. Circle one number for each of the following: (1) employment status, (2) type of work, and (3) number of employees at the company for yourself, and for your parents, company size. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.)" (Yourself, b. When you decided to get married; Husbands, f. When you decided to get married)

[Figure 10-3. Employment status of wife and husband when they decided to get married, by survey]

Regular employee couples in their 30s and 40s increased.

The survey examined changes in the combination of the employment status of husbands and wives as of the time of the survey for couples with wives in their 30s and 40s. Until the 2010 (14th) survey, the percentage of couples in which both husband and wife were regular employees (i.e., husband: regular employee; wife: regular, self-employed, or family employee) had remained around 20% for couples with wives in their 30s and 40s, but after 2010, the percentage has turned to an increasing trend. In this survey, 34.1% of couples with wives in their 30s were in this category, which was the most prevalent. Meanwhile, among couples with wives in their 40s, the percentage was 28.0%. The combination of husband with regular employment and wife who was unemployed/engaging in housework or a student was the majority among those wives in their 30s until around 2002 when it was around 40%, but it has been continuously decreasing and was 22.8% in this survey.

Figure 10-4. Employment status of wife and husband, by survey and the wife's age (aged 30-39, 40-49)

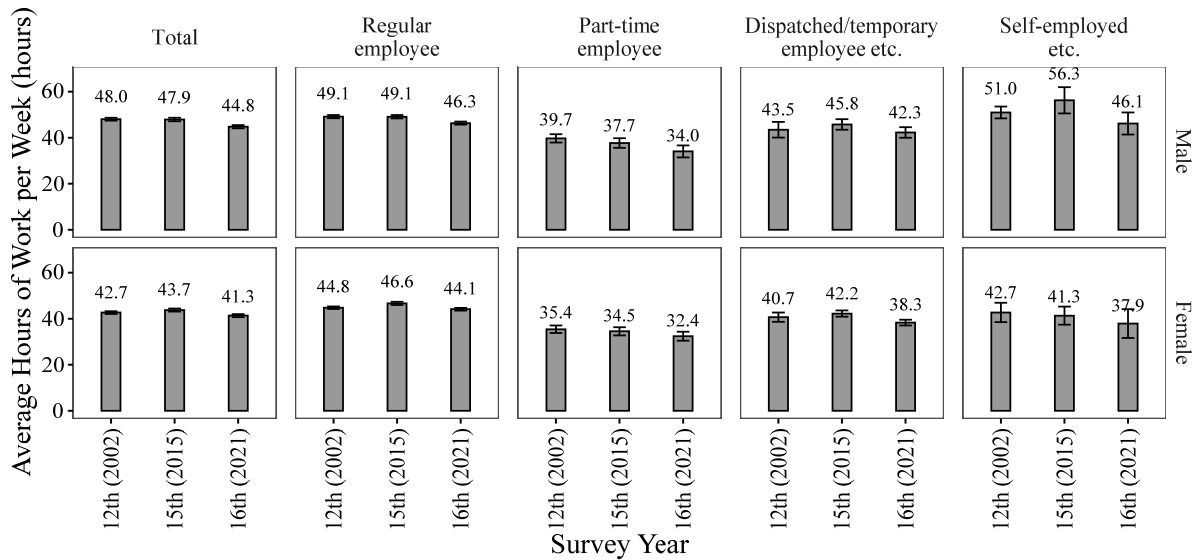


Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 30-49. "Self-employed etc." refers to "self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home"; "regular employee" refers to "regular employee"; "part-time, dispatched employee etc." refers to "part-time employee" and "dispatched/temporary/contracted employee," and "unemployed/student" refers to "unemployed/engaging in housework" and "student." "Not known" includes couples with husbands' employment being not known and couples with husbands who were regular employees but wives' employment was not known. The classification of "dispatched/fixed-time employment" was first added as an option in the 12th survey (contract employee was also added to same classification in the 13th survey). The respective number of cases was as follows (wives aged 30-39 and wives aged 40-49): the 7th survey (3,451; 2,796), the 9th survey (3,924; 3,117), the 10th survey (3,491; 3,912), the 11th survey (2,755; 3,459), the 12th survey (2,899; 2,931), the 13th survey (2,577; 2,644), the 14th survey (2,866; 3,185), the 15th survey (2,023; 2,835), the 16th survey (1,585; 2,407). Question in the 16th survey: "We would like to ask you about your employment status and that of your parent(s). For yourself, please answer about two time periods, and for your parent(s), about the current situation. Circle one number for each of the following: (1) employment status, (2) type of work, and (3) number of employees at the company for yourself, and for your parents, company size. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.)" (Yourself, d. Present; Husbands, g. Present) [Figure 10-4. Employment status of wife and husband, by survey and the wife's age (aged 30-39, 40-49)]

Hours of work per week among never-married persons decreased from the previous survey.

The average hours of work per week among never-married persons aged 25-34 has decreased over the past 20 years, both for never-married persons aged 25-34 (total) and for all employment statuses. However, since this survey (the 16th) was conducted in June 2021, it may reflect temporary changes in working patterns (e.g., requests for leave and shorter hours, increased remote work, etc.) related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 10-5. Average hours of work per week of never-married persons, by survey and employment status (never-married persons aged 25-34 who were working as of the time of the survey)



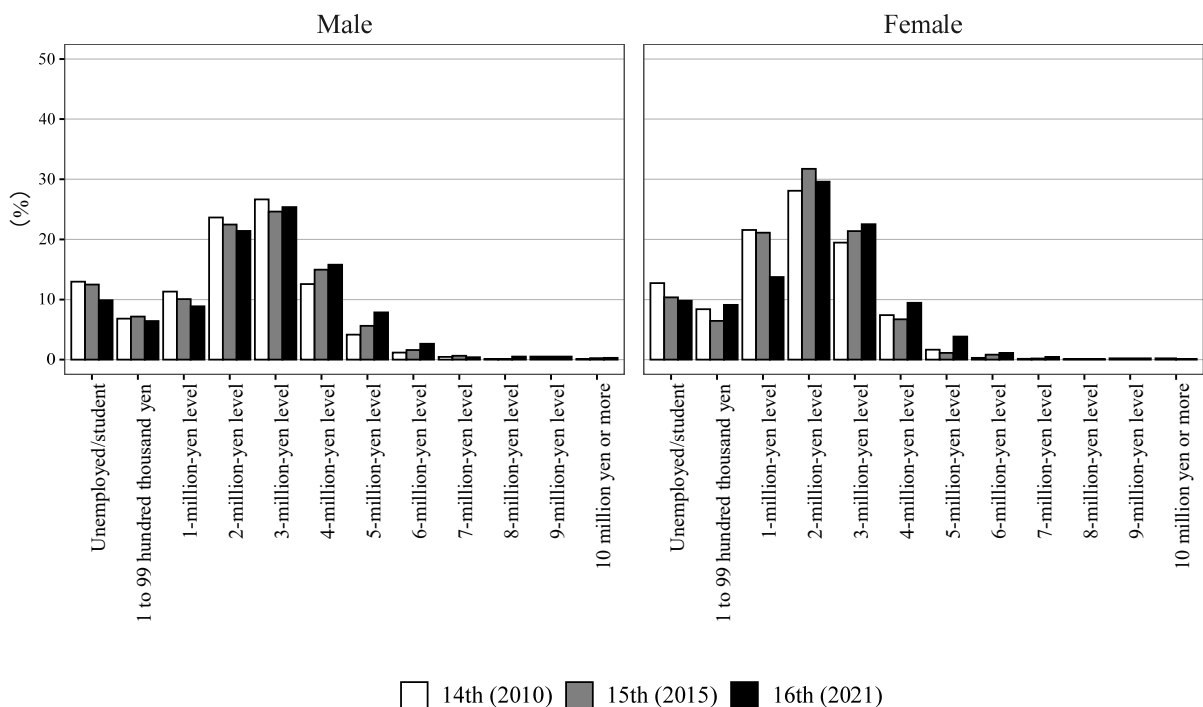
Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 25-34 who were employed. "Dispatched/temporary employee etc." refers to "dispatched/temporary/contracted employee"; "self-employed etc." refers to "self-employed/family employee/doing a side job at home." Error bars on the markers in the figure indicate 95% confidence intervals. Question in the 16th survey: "Please write down your responses in numerical values for (1) to (4) below, and circle the number that applies for (5) regarding your current (paying) job (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.). ((1) Average hours worked per working day, Average per day __ Hours __ Minutes (Please indicate average hours worked, including overtime.) (2) Average number of working days per week, Average per week __ Days)

[Figure 10-5. Average hours of work per week of never-married persons, by survey and employment status (never-married persons aged 25-34 who were working as of the time of the survey)]

Annual income distribution has shifted upward from 10 years ago for both never-married and married persons.

Here we present the employment status and annual income one year prior to the survey for those who were employed as of the time of the survey for never-married men and women aged 25-34 and for husbands and wives of married couples in the same age group. The 25-34 age group is the core generation for marriage and childbearing. Compared to the 2010 (14th) and 2015 (15th) surveys, the distribution of annual income in this survey (2021) has generally shifted upward. In this survey, annual income peaked at 3 million yen for never-married men, 2 million yen for never-married women, and 4 million yen for husbands. Among wives, the most prevalent category was “unemployed/student,” and the majority of wives had an annual income of less than 1 million yen.

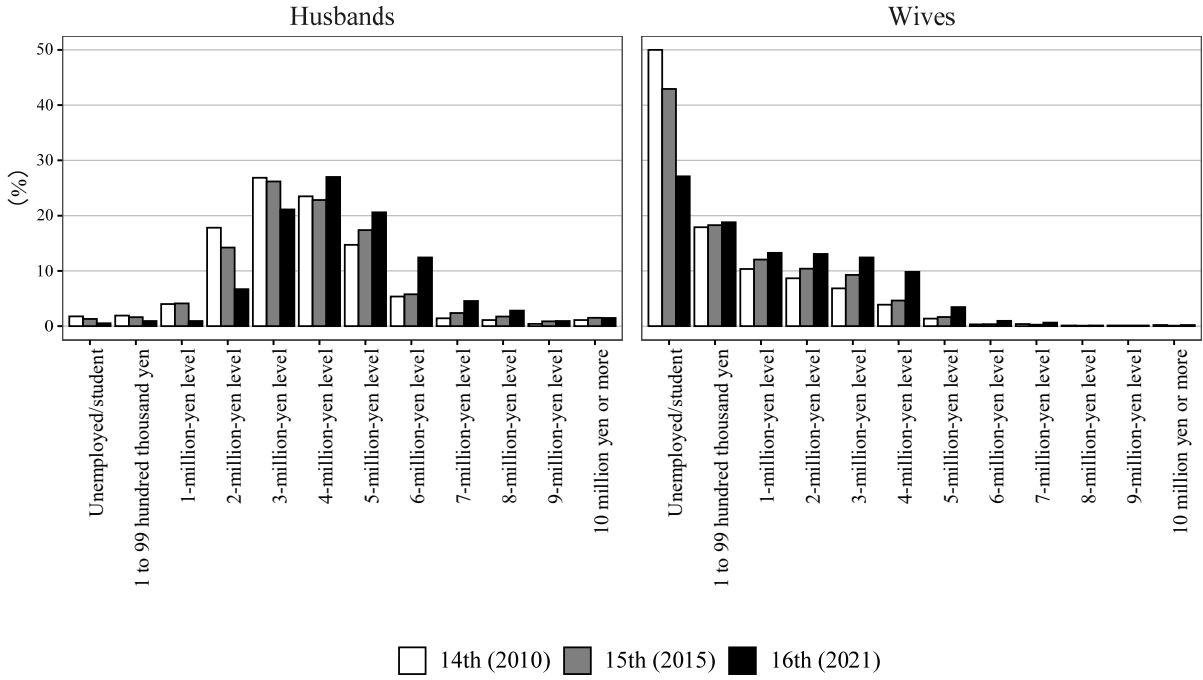
Figure 10-6. Percentage distribution of employment status (as of the time of the survey) and annual income (the year before the survey) of never-married persons, by survey (never-married persons aged 25-34)



Note: Figures shown are for never-married persons aged 25-34. Percentages were calculated by excluding persons who did not answer either their employment status or annual income last year. The respective number of cases was as follows: in the 14th survey, men: 1,704, women: 1,335; in the 15th survey, men: 1,242, women: 1,071; in the 16th survey, men: 981, women: 888. The respective average age was as follows: in the 14th survey, men: 29.5, women: 29.4; in the 15th survey, men: 29.5, women: 29.0; in the 16th survey, men: 29.5, women: 29.3. Question: "We would like to ask you about your employment status and that of your parent(s). For yourself, please answer about two time periods, Circle one number for each of the following: (1) employment status, (2) type of work, and (3) number of employees at the company for yourself, and for your parents, company size. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.) (1) Employment status, b. Present." Question: "Please ... circle the number that applies for (5) regarding your current (paying) job. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.) (5) Annual income last year (2020)"

[Figure 10-6. Percentage distribution of employment status (as of the time of the survey) and annual income (the year before the survey) of never-married persons, by survey (never-married persons aged 25-34)]

Figure 10-7. Percentage distribution of employment status (as of the time of the survey) and annual income (the year before the survey) of wife and husband, by survey (wife and husband aged 25-34)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives aged 25-34 or husbands aged 25-34. Percentages were calculated by excluding persons who did not answer either their employment status or annual income the year before. The respective number of cases was as follows: in the 14th survey, husbands: 1,251, wives: 1,548; in the 15th survey, husbands: 920, wives: 1,144; in the 16th survey, husbands: 748, wives: 926. The respective average age was as follows: in the 14th survey, husbands: 31.2, wives: 31.1; in the 15th survey, husbands: 31.2, wives: 31.2; in the 16th survey, husbands: 31.4, wives: 31.1. Question: "We would like to ask you about your employment status and that of your husband. For yourself, please circle one number for each of the following: (1) employment status, (2) type of work, and (3) number of employees at the company for yourself, and for your husband, company size. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.) Yourself, (1) Employment status, d. Present. Husband (1) Employment status, g. Present." Question: "Please ... circle the number that applies for (5) regarding your current (paying) job and that of your husband. (If you have more than one job, answer about your main job.) (5) Annual income last year (2020)"

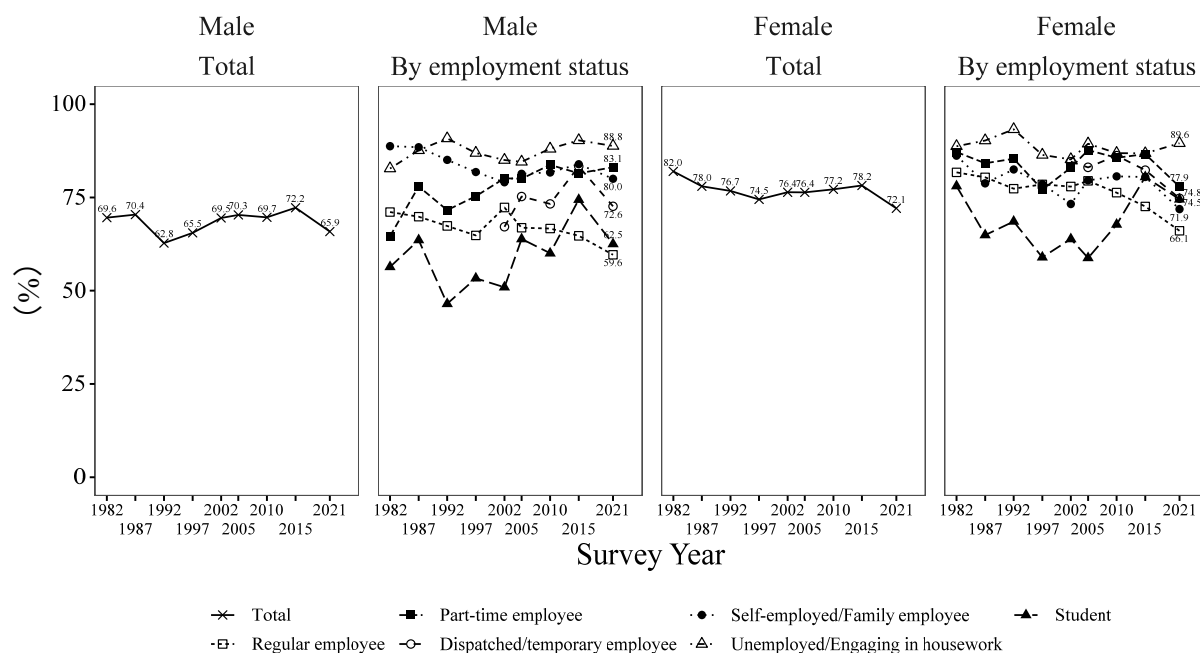
[Figure 10-7. Percentage distribution of employment status (as of the time of the survey) and annual income (the year before the survey) of wife and husband, by survey (wife and husband aged 25-34)]

10.2 Co-residence with parents of never-married persons and couples

The percentage of never-married persons co-residing with parents declined for both men and women.

The percentage of never-married persons living with both parents or either parent is shown for never-married persons as a whole (total number) and by employment status. The percentage of both men and women co-residing with their parents had been on an upward trend since the 1990s, but in this survey, it declined from the previous survey (from 72.2% to 65.9% for men and from 78.2% to 72.1% for women). Women were more likely than men to co-reside with their parents. By employment status, the percentage of never-married persons co-residing with their parents declined significantly for men in the “dispatched/temporary employee” and “student” categories. Among women, the percentage of co-residing with parents declined in all except “unemployed/engaging in housework.”

Figure 10-8. Percentage of never-married persons living with parents, by survey and employment status (as of the time of the survey)



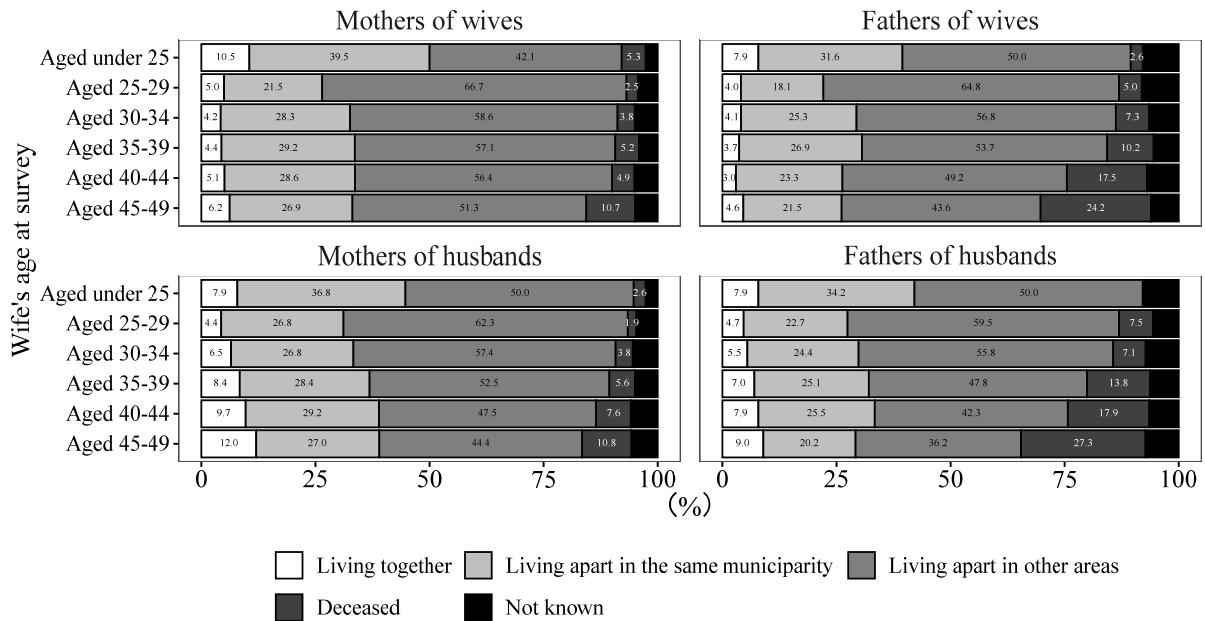
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (2,732), women (2,110) in the 8th (1982) survey; men (3,299), women (2,605) in the 9th (1987) survey; men (4,215), women (3,647) in the 10th (1992) survey; men (3,982), women (3,612) in the 11th (1997) survey; men (3,897), women (3,494) in the 12th (2002) survey; men (3,139), women (3,064) in the 13th (2005) survey; men (3,667), women (3,406) in the 14th (2010) survey; men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. The classification of "dispatched/temporary employee" was first added as an option in the 12th (2002) survey. "Contracted employees" was also added to same classification in the 13th (2005) survey. "Total" includes the cases where the employment status is not known. Question in the 16th survey: "We would like to ask you about ... (2) whether your parent(s) currently live with or apart from you. Please circle the number that applies and fill in the number in the underlined space." (Father/Mother, (2) Currently living with or apart from you, [1. Living together, 2. Living apart in the same municipality, 3. Living apart in other areas, 4. Deceased]). "Living with parents" in the figures are those living with parent(s).

[Figure 10-8. Percentage of never-married persons living with parents, by survey and employment status (as of the time of the survey)]

Couples with older wives tend to live with the husband's parents.

We examined the current residential status of wives and husbands with their respective mothers and fathers by the wife's age. No significant differences were found in the wife's side or husband's side for younger wives, but a slightly higher percentage of couples co-reside with husbands' mothers or fathers. Overall, the percentage of couples co-residing with or living near (living separately within the same municipality) the wife's or the husband's parents is about 30-40%, except for those under 25 years of age.

Figure 10-9. Percentage of couples living with their parents, by the wife's age (as of the time of the survey): 16th survey (2021)



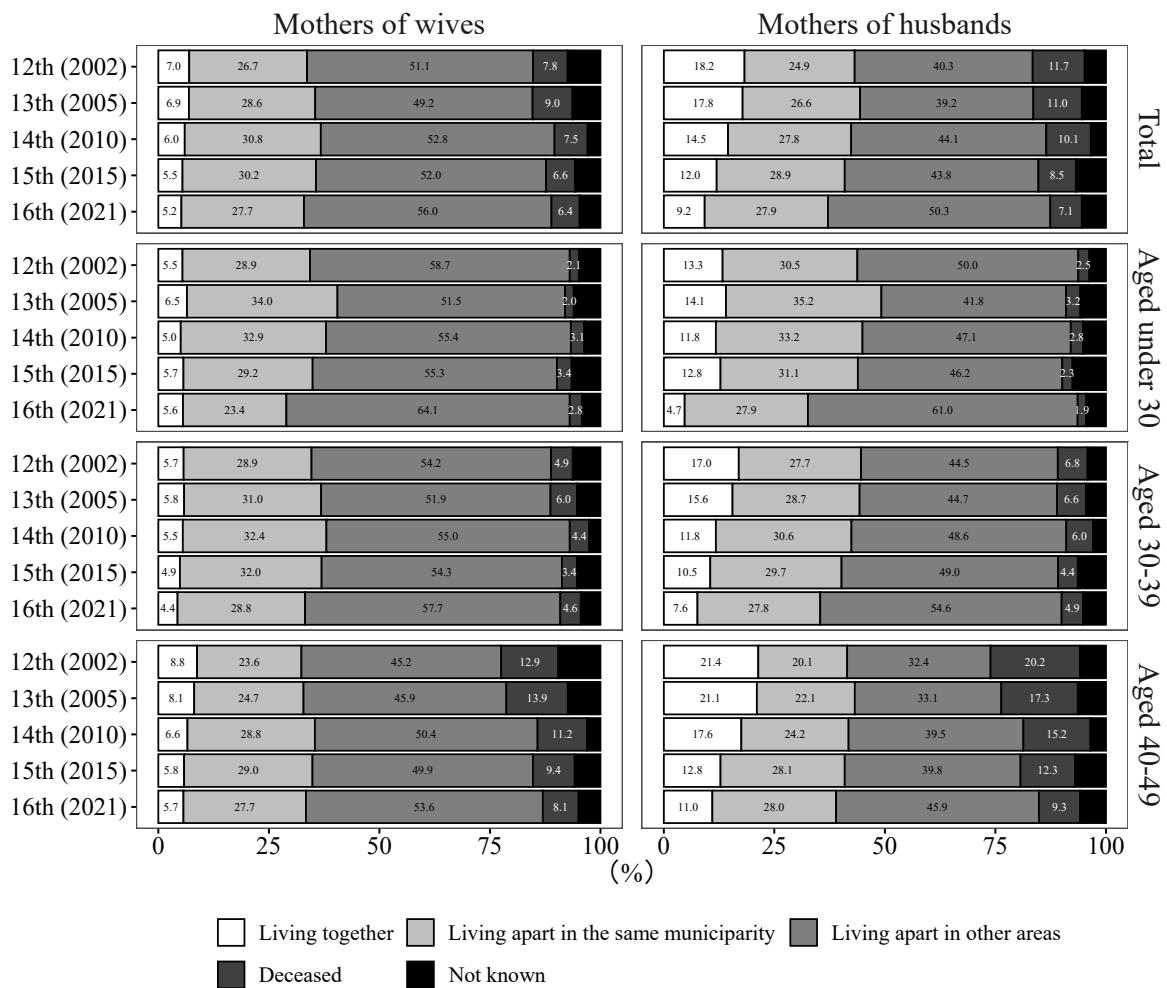
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage (with wives under 50 years old). Question: "We would like to ask you about whether your parent(s) and your husband's parent(s) currently live with or apart from you. Please circle the number that applies." ((1) Your (wife's) mother/(2) Your (wife's) father/(3) Husband's mother/(4) Husband's father, [1. Living together, 2. Living apart in the same municipality, 3. Living apart in other areas, 4. Deceased], c. Present)

[Figure 10-9. Percentage of couples living with their parents, by the wife's age (as of the time of the survey): 16th survey (2021)]

Co-residence with the husband's mother is declining.

Looking at changes in the residential status of the husband's and wife's mothers by the wife's age, the percentage of couples co-residing with the wife's mother has remained almost unchanged, while the percentage of couples co-residing with the husband's mother has declined. The percentage of couples living with the husband's mother was around 20% in the early 2000s but has been declining since then. In this survey, 4.7% of couples with wives under 30 years old, 7.6% of couples with wives in their 30s, and 11.0% of couples with wives in their 40s. The percentage of couples living close to their mothers (living separately in the same municipality) decreased overall from the previous survey for both the wife's and husband's mothers. Among wives in their 40s, the percentage of couples whose mothers are deceased has declined in more recent surveys, while cases in which the mothers are alive and living apart (living separately outside the same municipality) have increased.

Figure 10-10. Percentage of couples living with the wife's and the husband's parents, by survey and the wife's age (as of the time of the survey)



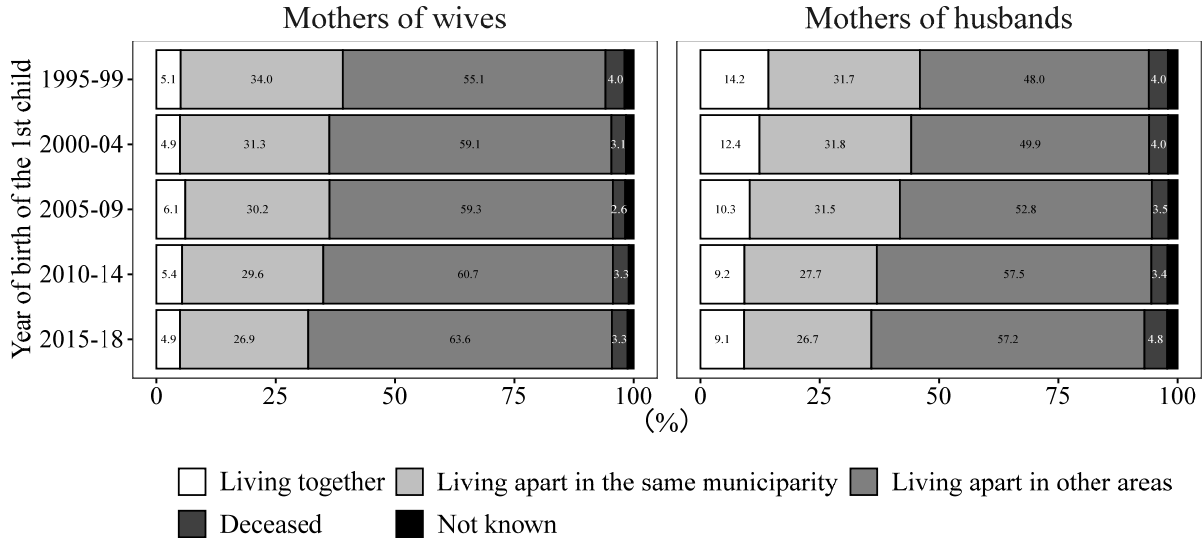
Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 years old. Question in the 16th survey: "We would like to ask you about whether your parent(s) and your husband's parent(s) currently live with or apart from you. Please circle the number that applies." ((1) Your (wife's) mother/(2) Your (wife's) father/(3) Husband's mother/(4) Husband's father, [1. Living together, 2. Living apart in the same municipality, 3. Living apart in other areas, 4. Deceased], c. Present)

[Figure 10-10. Percentage of couples living with the wife's and the husband's parents, by survey and the wife's age (as of the time of the survey)]

An increasing number of couples engaged in child-rearing live far away from their children’s grandmothers.

We examined whether the couple lived with either of the couple’s mothers until the first child turned three years old, by the year of the first child’s birth. The more recent the year of first birth was, the lower the percentage of couples living together or in close proximity (living separately in the same municipality) and the higher the percentage of couples living separately (living far away) in other areas. The percentage of wives living with their mothers remained unchanged at around 5%. On the other hand, 14.2% of couples whose first child was born between 1995 and 1999 co-reside with the husband’s mother, but the percentage declined as the year of birth became more recent, with about 9% of couples whose first child was born in the 2010s.

Figure 10-11. Percentage of couples living with the wife’s and the husband’s parents, by birth year of the first child (before the first child was three years old)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). Data shows couples with the 1st child aged 3 or older but below 15 in the 14th to 16th survey. The respective number of cases was as follows: the year of birth of the 1st child lies between 1995-99 (1,257), 2000-04 (2,310), 2005-09 (2,130), 2010-14 (1,356), 2015-18 (547). Question in the 16th survey: "During the period until your child turned 3 years old, ... (1) did you live with your mother and/or your husband’s mother? Please circle the number that applies to your first, second, and third child." ((1) Living with or apart from mothers, Your mother/Your husband’s mother, [1. Living together, 2. Living apart in the same municipality, 3. Living apart in other areas, 4. Deceased], 1st child)

[Figure 10-11. Percentage of couples living with the wife's and the husband's parents, by birth year of the first child (before the first child was three years old)]

11. Experience Interacting with Children and Evaluation of Marriage Around Them

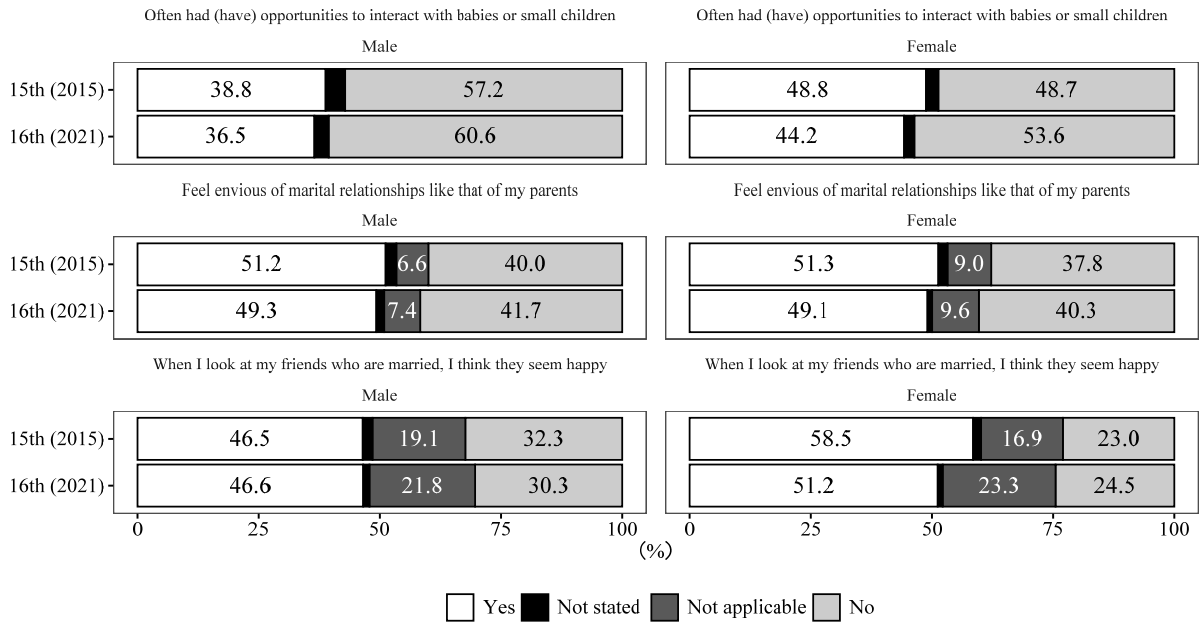
11.1 Never-married persons' previous experience with children and their evaluation of marriage around them

The frequency of interacting with children and positive evaluation of friends' marriage are both higher among women than men but declined among women in this survey.

The survey asked never-married persons if they had ever interacted with babies or small children. Around 40% of never-married persons answered that they had had (or have) frequent opportunities to interact with babies or small children, with a higher percentage among women than men. However, compared to the previous survey in 2015, the percentage of both men and women who "often had (have) opportunities" decreased.

As for their parents' marital relationship and the marriages of friends around them who were married, about half of them answered that they envied their parents' relationships and that their married friends around them seemed to be happy, indicating that they had a favorable view of the marriages around them. The percentage of never-married persons who viewed their friends' marriages positively by responding that they thought their married friends seemed happy was higher among women than men. However, this percentage of women decreased from 58.5% in the previous survey to 51.2% in this survey.

Figure 11-1. Contacts with children and views on marriage of others, by survey (never-married persons)

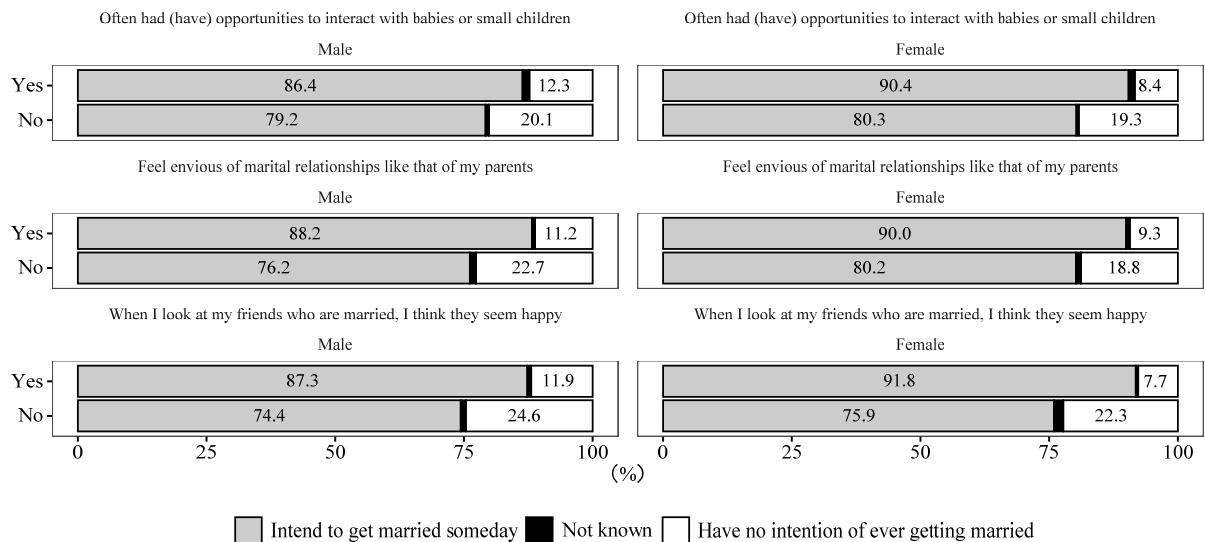


Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The respective number of cases was as follows: men (2,705), women (2,570) in the 15th (2015) survey; men (2,033), women (2,053) in the 16th (2021) survey. Question: "We would like to ask you some questions about your immediate circumstances. ..., please circle the one number that applies to you in the right column. If you do not have (did not have) anyone around you that correspond to the question, please circle 5." (1. It applies to me, 2. It applies to me somewhat, 3. It does not quite apply to me, 4. It does not apply to me at all, 5. The question is not applicable to me.)
 [Figure 11-1. Contacts with children and views on marriage of others, by survey (never-married persons)]

Never-married persons with more experience interacting with children and a positive view of marriage in their surroundings tend to be more willing to get married.

We examined whether never-married persons' lifetime intention to get married differed depending on their experience of interacting with children and their evaluation of their parents' and friends' marriages. Those who had had (or have) frequent interactions with babies or small children, those who had a favorable view of their parent's marital relationships, and those who considered their married friends around them to be happy were more likely to say that they intended to get married someday than those who did not.

Figure 11-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey, contact experience with children and views on marriage of others: 16th survey (2021)



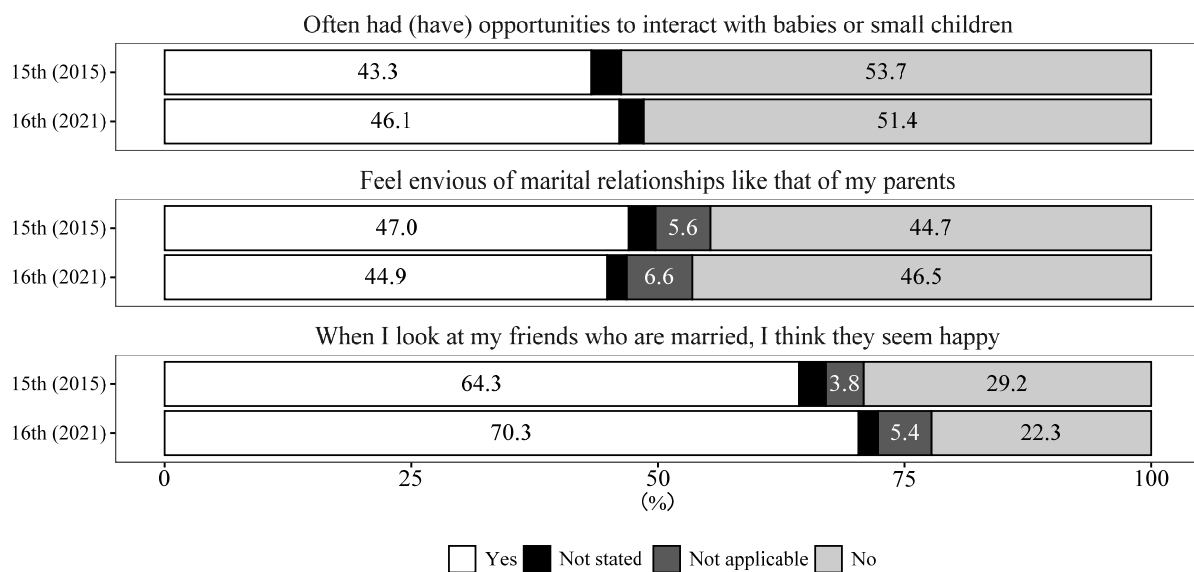
Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. Question: "We would like to ask you some questions about your immediate circumstances. ..., please circle the one number that applies to you in the right column. If you do not have (did not have) anyone around you that correspond to the question, please circle 5." (1. It applies to me, 2. It applies to me somewhat, 3. It does not quite apply to me, 4. It does not apply to me at all, 5. The question is not applicable to me.) Question: "Thinking about your whole life, which of the following describes your thoughts on marriage?" (1. Intend to get married someday, 2. Have no intention of ever getting married.) "Yes" represents the sum of "It applies to me" and "It applies to me somewhat," and "No" represents that of "It does not quite apply to me" and "It does not apply to me at all." [Figure 11-2. Lifetime intention to marry among never-married persons, by survey, contact experience with children and views on marriage of others: 16th survey (2021)]

11.2 Wife's experience of interacting with children before marriage and wife's evaluation of the marriage around her

The percentage of wives who had experience interacting with children before marriage and who gave positive evaluations of the marriages of friends around them increased.

The survey asked wives if they had any interactions with babies or small children before they got married. The number of wives who said they often had opportunities to interact with babies or small children increased from the previous survey, with 46.1% of wives saying they often had opportunities to interact with babies or small children. Positive evaluations of their friends' marriages also increased from the previous survey, with 70.3% of the wives in this survey saying that they thought their friends seemed happy. The number of wives who were envious of marriages like their parents' decreased slightly from the previous survey to 44.9%

Figure 11-3. Contacts with children and views on marriage of others, by survey (wives who have been married for less than 10 years)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage who have been married for 15-19 years. Data shows couples with wives under 50 (the 15th survey and earlier) or those under 55 married before age 50 (the 16th survey). The number of cases was as follows: 1,958 in the 15th survey; 1,625 in the 16th survey. Question: "We would like to ask you some questions about your immediate circumstances before your marriage. ..., please circle the one number that applies to you in the right column. If you do not have (did not have) anyone around you that correspond to the question, please circle 5." (1. It applies to me, 2. It applies to me somewhat, 3. It does not quite apply to me, 4. It does not apply to me at all, 5. The question is not applicable to me.)

[Figure 11-3. Contacts with children and views on marriage of others, by survey (wives who have been married for less than 10 years)]

12. Views on Marriage and Family

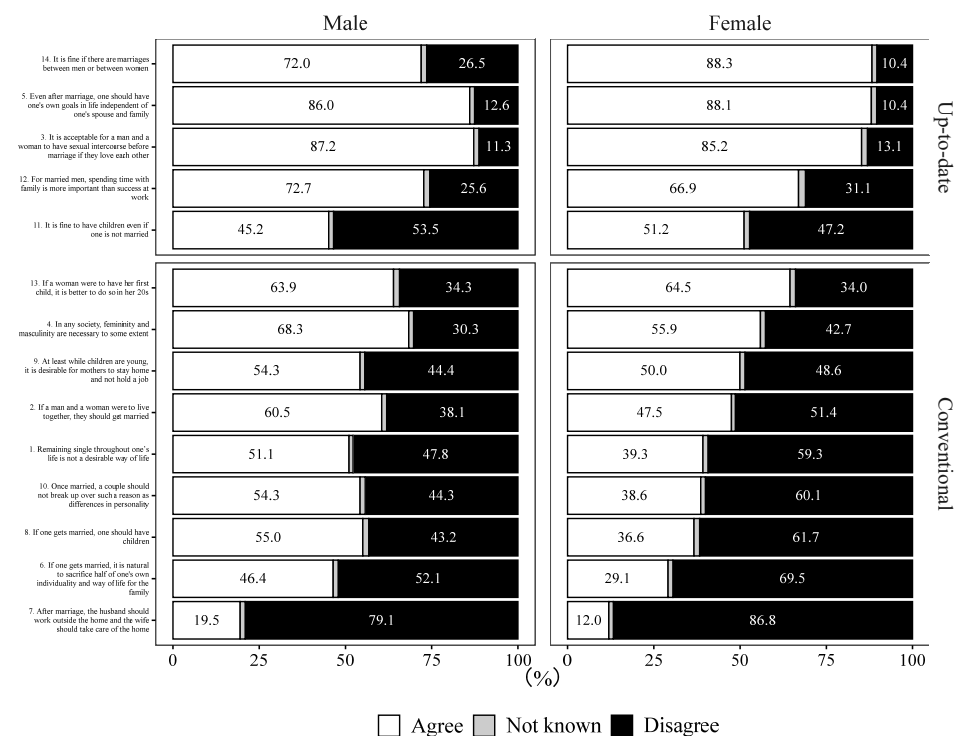
12.1 Never-married persons' views on marriage and family

Gender differences are found in the following opinions: “If one gets married, one should have children,” “it is natural to sacrifice oneself for the family,” and “it is fine if there are marriages between men or between women.”

The survey asked never-married persons about their views on marriage, family, gender, and work. Looking at the percentage of respondents who agreed with the unconventional views (views that are generally less supported in past surveys and among older people), “5. Even after marriage, one should have one’s own goals in life independent of one’s spouse and family” and “3. It is acceptable for a man and woman to have sexual intercourse before marriage if they love each other” were selected by about 90% of respondents, and “12. For married men, spending time with family is more important than success at work” by about 70%, and “11. It is fine to have children even if one is not married” by about half of the respondents.

Regarding conventional ideas (ideas that are generally more likely to be supported by past surveys and among older people), over 50% of both men and women agreed that “13. If a woman were to have her first child, it is better to do so in her 20s,” and “4. In any society, femininity and masculinity are necessary to some extent.” More than half of both men and women disagreed with the following statements: “6. If one gets married, it is natural to sacrifice half of one’s own individuality and way of life for the family” and “7. After marriage, the husband should work outside the home, and the wife should take care of the home.” Views were split evenly on the following items: “9. At least when children are young, it is desirable for mothers to stay home and not hold a job,” “2. If a man and a woman were to live together, they should get married,” “1. Remaining single throughout one’s life is not a desirable way of life,” “10. Once married, a couple should not break up over such a reason as differences in personality,” and “8. If one gets married, one should have children.” The following items showed a significant difference between men and women: “8. If one gets married, one should have children,” “6. If one gets married, it is natural to sacrifice half of one’s individuality and way of life for the sake of the family,” “10. Once one gets married, one should not break up over such a reason as differences in personality” (more men than women agreed), and “14. It is fine if there are marriages between men or between women” (more women than men agreed with this statement).

Figure 12-1. Views on marriage and family among never-married persons: 16th survey (2021)



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The number of each item corresponds to how it is indicated in the questionnaire. The number of cases was as follows: men (2,033), women (2,053). "Conventional" ways of thinking indicate views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys or among older people.

[Figure 12-1. Views on marriage and family among never-married persons: 16th survey (2021)]

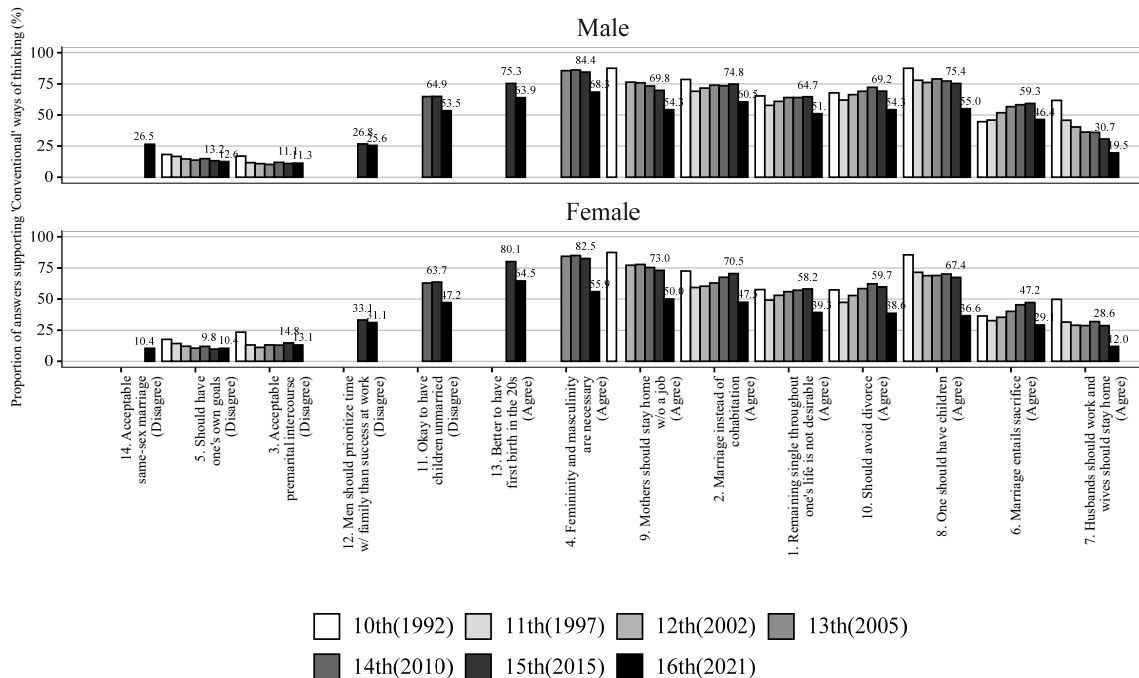
Support for “if one gets married, one should have children” and “femininity and masculinity are necessary” declines significantly.

Looking at changes in the percentage of respondents who support conventional views on marriage, family, gender, and work (views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys and among older people), the percentage of respondents who support these views has declined from the previous survey in almost all items.

The change was particularly large for “8. One should have children (agree),” falling from 67.4% to 36.6% among women and from 75.4% to 55.0% among men. The next largest change was in “4. Femininity/masculinity are necessary (agree),” which dropped from 82.5% to 55.9% among women and from 84.4% to 68.3% among men. It can be said that the consciousness of the need to have children and the commitment to femininity and masculinity has decreased.

For women, a decrease of more than 20 points was observed in these opinions: “2. If a man and a woman were to live together, they should get married (agree),” “9. Mothers should stay home (agree),” and “10. Divorce should be avoided (agree),” and a decrease of more than 15 points, for the following ideas: “1. It is undesirable to be single throughout one’s life (agree),” “6. It is natural to sacrifice themselves in marriage (agree),” “7. husbands should work, and wives should stay home (agree),” “11. It is fine to have children without getting married (disagree),” “13. If a woman were to have her first child, it is better to do so in her twenties (agree).” Among men, the percentages for “9. Mothers should stay home (agree)” and “10. Divorce should be avoided (agree)” decreased by more than 15 points, while those for “2. Men and women should get married if they live together (agree),” “1. It is undesirable to be single throughout one’s life (agree),” “6. It is natural to sacrifice themselves in marriage (agree),” “11. It is fine to have children without getting married (disagree),” and “7. The husband should work, and the wife should stay home (agree)” dropped by more than 10 points. Overall, the decline in support for conventional ideas was greater for women.

Figure 12-2. Views on marriage and family among never-married persons, by survey (percentages of those supporting conventional views)



Note: The figures are for never-married persons aged 18-34. The percentages of those who responded "agree" (the sum of "totally agree" and "somewhat agree") for items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13 are taken as indicating support for the conventional view. Likewise, for items 3, 5, 11, 12, and 14, the percentages of those who responded "disagree" (the sum of "totally disagree" and "somewhat disagree") are taken as supporting the conventional view. "Conventional" ways of thinking indicate views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys or among older people. The respective number of cases was as follows: the 10th survey: men 4,215, women 3,647; the 11th survey: men 3,982, women 3,612; the 12th survey: men 3,897, women 3,494; the 13th survey: men 3,139, women 3,064; the 14th survey: men 3,667, women 3,406; the 15th survey: men 2,705, women 2,570; the 16th survey: men 2,033, women 2,053. Item 4 was asked for the first time in the 13th (2005) survey, item 11 in the 14th, items 12 and 15 in the 15th, and item 14 in the 16th. Item 9 was not included in the 11th survey. See Figure 12-1 for the full text of each item.

[Figure 12-2. Views on marriage and family among never-married persons, by survey (percentages of those supporting conventional views)]

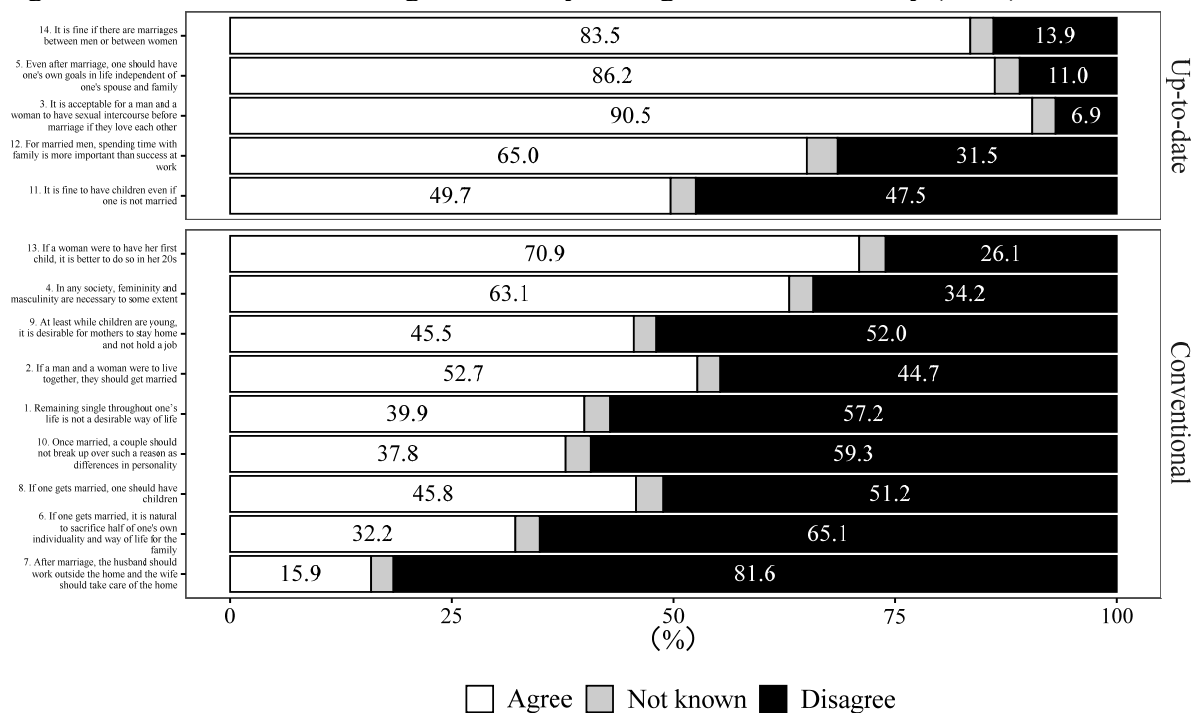
12.2 Wife's views on marriage and family

65.0% of wives agree that "Family is more important to men than job success."

The survey asked the wives of married couples about their views on marriage, family, gender, and work styles. Looking at the unconventional views (generally less supported in past surveys and among older people), more than 80% of respondents supported "3. It is acceptable for a man and woman to have sexual intercourse before marriage if they love each other," "5. Even after marriage, one should have one's own goals in life independent of one's spouse and family," and "14. It is fine if there are marriages between men and women" were supported by more than 80% of the respondents. Two out of three respondents (65.0%) supported "12. For married men, spending time with family is more important than success at work," while the percentage of respondents who supported "11. It is fine to have children even if one is not married" was split between those who support and those who do not support.

Looking at conventional views (generally more likely to be supported in past surveys and among older people), those gaining the most support were "13. If a woman were to have her first child, it is better to do so in her 20s" (70.9% agree), and "4. In any society, femininity and masculinity are necessary to some extent" (63.1% agree). On the other hand, many respondents were opposed to "7. After marriage, the husband should work outside the home and the wife should take care the home" (81.6% disagree), and "6. If one gets married, it is natural to sacrifice half of one's individuality and way of life for the sake of the family" (65.1% disagree). Also split in opinion were found in "2. If a man and a woman were to live together, they should get married" (52.7% agree, 44.7% disagree), "8. If one gets married, one should have children" (45.8% agree, 51.2% disagree), and "9. At least while children are young, it is desirable for mothers to stay home and not hold a job." (45.5% agree, 52.0% disagree). Slightly more were opposed to "1. Remaining single throughout one's life is not a desirable way of life" (39.9% agree, 57.2% disagree) and "10. Once married, a couple should not break up over such a reason as difference in personality" (37.8% agree, 59.3% disagree).

Figure 12-3. Views on marriage and family among wives: 16th survey (2021)

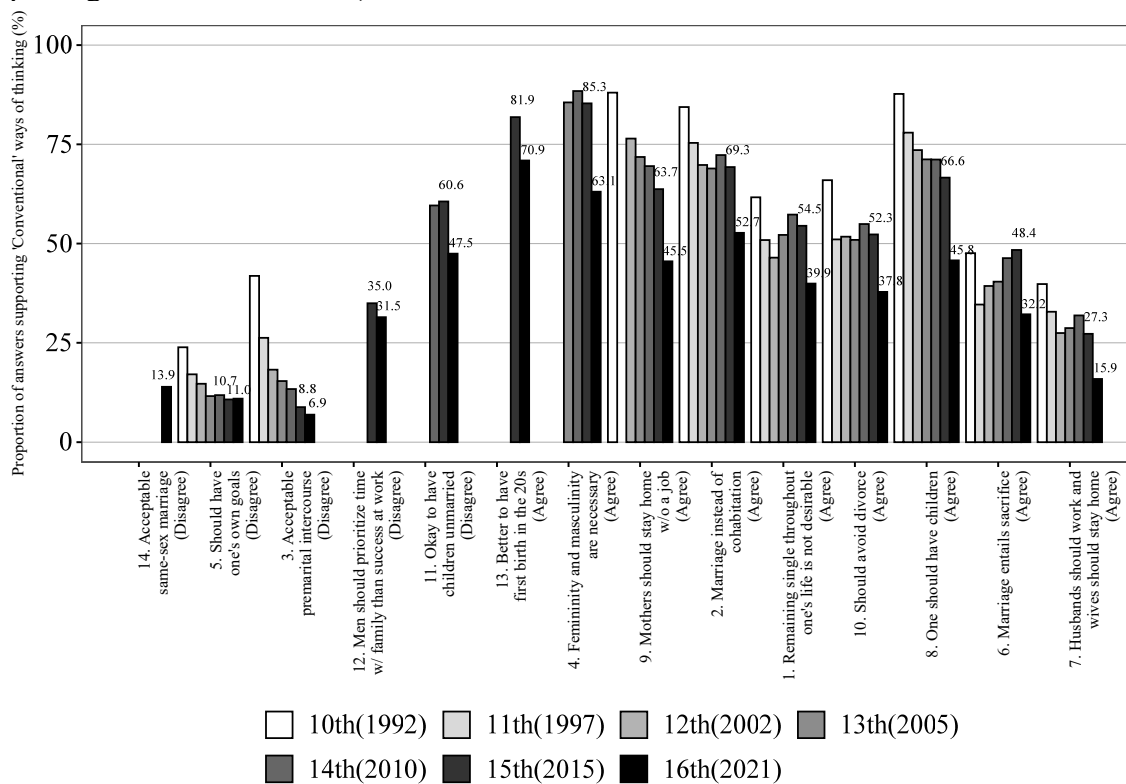


Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 years old. The number of each item corresponds to how it is indicated in the questionnaire. The number of cases was 4,351. "Conventional" ways of thinking indicate views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys or among older people. [Figure 12-3. Views on marriage and family among wives: 16th survey (2021)]

Significantly fewer wives think that “femininity and masculinity are necessary” and that “if one gets married, one should have children.”

Looking at changes in views on marriage, family, gender, and work styles, the percentage of wives who support conventional views (views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys and among older people) declined overall in this survey compared to the previous survey. The declines from the previous survey were particularly large in the percentages supporting “4. Femininity/masculinity are necessary (agree)” (down 22.3 points from 85.3% to 63.1%) and “8. One should have children (agree)” (down 20.8 points from 66.6% to 45.8%). In other items, support for “9. Mothers should stay home (agree),” “2. If a man and a woman were to live together, they should get married (agree),” and “6. It is natural to sacrifice themselves in marriage (agree)” decreased by more than 15 points. Meanwhile, support for the following ideas declined by more than 20 points: “1. It is undesirable to be single all one’s life (agree),” “10. Divorce should be avoided (agree),” “11. It is fine to have children without getting married (disagree),” “7. The husband should work, and the wife should stay home (agree),” and “13. If a woman were to have her first child, it is better to do so in her twenties (agree).”

Figure 12-4. Views on marriage and family among wives, by survey (percentages of those supporting conventional views)



Note: Figures shown are for couples in first marriage with wives under 50 years old. The percentages of those who responded "agree" (the sum of "totally agree" and "somewhat agree") for items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13 are taken as indicating support for the conventional view. Likewise, for items 3, 5, 11, 12, and 14, the percentages of those who responded "disagree" (the sum of "totally disagree" and "somewhat disagree") are taken as supporting the conventional view. "Conventional" ways of thinking indicate views that are generally more likely to be supported in past surveys or among older people. The number of cases was as follows: the 10th survey (8,844); the 11th survey, (7,354); the 12th survey, (6,949); the 13th survey, (5,932); the 14th survey, (6,705); the 15th survey, (5,334); the 16th survey, (4,351).

[Figure 12-4. Views on marriage and family among wives, by survey (percentages of those supporting conventional views)]