

Wife's Work Arrangement and Reproductive Behavior over 30 Years

Miho IWASAWA

A central concern of this paper is the relationship between married women's work arrangement and their reproductive behavior over 30 years. Using the 12th Japanese Fertility Survey data, I document the transition of wife's working status at marriage or the first childbearing, child care support from couple's mother(s), and the difference of the number of children, the timing of childbearing, ideal or planned number of children by working status or career course.

Although the proportion of wives who have taken a childcare leave has been increasing (while two percent of wives having at least one child in the 1970s, 11 percent in the 1990s), the proportion of those who quit their job at marriage or the first childbearing among whole married women has not much changed, remaining over 70 percent. Also, childcare support from a couple's mother, especially from a wife's mother plays an important role in the transition to the second childbearing. More and more mothers have received that support, and in the 1990s, over 70 percent of dual career women depend on her mother(s) for childcare usually or frequently. Although both of the ideal number and the planned number of children of dual career mothers is larger than that of those who are not working while childrearing, it seems to be difficult for working mother to realize the number as they plan.

On the other hand, in the 1990s, we can find that a new situation that the number of non-standard work arrangements has been increasing. Since those women under these work arrangements would more likely to have their children later and fewer children, to promote women of non-standard work arrangements to combine work and childrearing would be as important as to do with those of standard work arrangements.