

The Impact of a Knowledge-based Economy on Families in Japan

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Abstract

The present study shows that advances in the knowledge-based economy have had a negative impact on families in Japan, resulting in later marriages and lower birthrates. The outline of the study is as follows. In the first section, I examine theories of post-industrial society, the knowledge-based economy, and service work. I argue that in order to understand the challenges that Japanese families are facing, it is important to consider both the increase in service-provision work in a knowledge-based economy and developments of Japanese social policies that are based on the idea of a male breadwinner/female homemaker family model. In the second through the fourth sections, I analyze survey data to show that the discrepancy between social policy assumptions concerning the family and the actual employment patterns of wives and husbands has had negative impacts on families in Japan, particularly families with small children and those with a full-time working wife. In the final sections, I discuss the policy implications of these findings.

Key words: post-industrial society, the knowledge-based economy, service work, Japanese social policies, the gender division of labor at home, wife's marital satisfaction

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Introduction

Japanese society is facing the dual challenge of late marriages and low birthrates. Table 1 shows that the total fertility rate in Japan was maintained above 2 until 1970, but it continued to drop after 1975 and in 2001 it fell as low as 1.33, which is very low compared to selected other countries shown in Table 2. In addition to the low birthrate, young Japanese people are delaying or avoiding marriage. According to Table 1, in the year 2001 the average age at first marriage was 29 for males and 27.2 for females. The birthrate increased and the age at first marriage grew younger in the 1960s and early 1970s, but since the year 1975 the birthrate has dropped and the marriage age has risen. The 1960s and early 1970s are known as the high economic growth period in Japan whereas the period since the mid-1970s onward can be characterized by low economic growth and advances in a knowledge-based economy.

Table 1 Changes in total fertility rate and the average age of first marriage in postwar Japan

	Total fertility rate	The average age of first marriage	
		Husband	Wife
1950	3.65	25.9	23.0
1955	2.37	26.6	23.8
1960	2.00	27.2	24.4
1965	2.14	27.2	24.5
1970	2.13	26.9	24.2
1975	1.91	27.0	24.7
1980	1.75	27.8	25.2
1985	1.76	28.2	25.5
1990	1.54	28.4	25.9
1995	1.42	28.5	26.3
2000	1.36	28.8	27.0
2001	1.33	29.0	27.2

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, *Vital Statistics*

The purpose of the present study is to show that advances in the knowledge-based economy have had a negative impact on families in Japan, resulting in later marriages and the lower birthrates. The outline of the study is as follows. In the first section, I examine theories of post-industrial society, the knowledge-based economy, and service work. I argue that in order to understand the challenges that Japanese families are facing, it is important to consider both the increase in service-provision work in a knowledge-based economy and developments of Japanese social policies that are based on the idea of a male breadwinner/female homemaker family model. In the second through the fourth sections, I analyze survey data to show that the discrepancy between social policy assumptions concerning the family

Table 2 Selected statistics of the selected six countries

	Japan	Malaysia	China	Australia	US	France
Total fertility rate ^(a)						
(1990-1994)	1.5	3.6	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.7
(1995-2000)	1.4	3.3	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.7
GNP growth rates (%) ^(b)						
(1991)	3.0	9.5	9.2	-0.7	-0.5	1.1
(1992)	0.9	8.9	14.2	2.1	3.0	1.2
(1993)	0.5	9.9	13.5	3.8	2.7	-0.9
(1994)	1.0	9.2	12.7	4.8	4.0	1.8
(1995)	1.6	9.8	10.5	3.5	2.7	1.9
(1996)	3.3	10.0	9.6	4.3	3.6	1.1
(1997)	1.9	7.3	8.8	3.7	4.4	1.9
(1998)	-1.1	-7.4	7.8	5.2	4.3	3.5
(1999)	0.8	5.8	7.1	4.8	4.1	3.2
(2000)	1.5	8.5	8.0	3.1	4.1	4.2
The proportion of working populations by industries (%) ^(c)						
(2000)						(1994)
Primary Industry	5.1	18.4	46.9	4.9	2.6	4.7
Secondary Industry	30.7	31.7	17.1	21.2	22.1	25.6
Tertiary Industry	64.2	50.0	36.0	73.9	75.3	69.6
Wage ratios of women to men (manufacturing) (%) ^(d)						
(1990)	41	49	...	82	68	79
(1992/1997)	...	58	...	85	...	79

Source: (a) United Nations, *Statistical Yearbook 1999*.

(b) International Monetary Fund, *International Financial Statistics Yearbook 2002*.

(c) International Labour Office, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2001*.

(d) United Nations, *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*.

and the actual employment patterns of wives and husbands has had negative impacts on families in Japan, particularly families with small children and those with a full-time working wife. In the final sections, I discuss the policy implications of these findings.

1. The Knowledge-based Economy in the Context of Postwar Japan

1-1. The Knowledge-based Economy and Service Work

Daniel Bell, the famous author of a book on post-industrial society, argues that in industrial society, economic activity is concerned with producing and providing goods, whereas in post-industrial society, it is concerned with providing services based on knowledge. With the coming of post-industrial society, there is a shift away from manufacturing and toward service industries, some of which involve specialized knowledge. People's primary involvement in post-industrial society is with other people rather than with raw materials or machinery (Bell, 1973).

In Japan as well as in other industrial societies, there has been a gradual shift from a manufacturing economy toward an economy centering on providing services (see proportions of working populations by industries in the selected six countries in Table 2).

The postwar high-economic growth began in the late 1950s in Japan and came to an end in the mid-1970s. The period that preceded the high growth era (namely, the period before the late 1950s) can be characterized as one with a mixed agricultural and manufacturing economy. This was followed by the high-growth period (from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s) which is characterized as having a manufacturing economy, and finally followed by a period of the post high-economic growth which began after the mid-1970s continuing to the present. The present period can be characterized as one in which society is transforming toward a service economy. Table 3 shows that working populations in the primary industries (agriculture, fishing, forestry, etc.) accounted for the largest part of the total working population in the 1950s, but they dropped sharply in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast, working populations in the tertiary (service-related) industry continued to increase and came to account for more than a half of the total working population in 1975. Table 4 shows that within the tertiary industry in Japan, two categories are prominent in terms of their proportion of the working population. One is *wholesale and retail trade and eating and drinking places* and the other is *services*. The proportion of the working population in

wholesale and retail trade and eating and drinking places was almost constant at around 20% from 1970 to 2000, whereas those in *services* almost doubled in the same period.

Table 3 Working populations by industries in postwar Japan

	Primary industry (%)	Secondary industry (%)	Tertiary industry (%)	Total (%)
1950	48.5	21.8	29.6	100
1955	41.1	23.4	35.5	100
1960	32.7	29.1	38.2	100
1965	24.7	31.5	43.7	100
1970	19.3	34.0	46.6	100
1975	13.8	34.1	51.8	100
1980	10.9	33.6	55.4	100
1985	9.3	33.1	57.3	100
1990	7.1	33.3	59.0	100
1995	6.0	31.6	61.8	100
2000	5.3	29.6	63.9	100

Source: Statistics Bureau, *Population Census*.

Table 4 Working populations in the tertiary industry in Japan

	(%)						
	Electricity, gas, heat supply and water	Transport and communication	Wholes and retail trade, eating and drinking places	Financing and insurance, real estate	Services	Government (not elsewhere classified)	Total of the tertiary industry
1955		4.7		18.6	11.5	3.2	38.1
1960		5.4		20.3	12.9	3.2	41.8
1965		6.2		21.3	13.7	3.3	44.6
1970	0.6	6.2	19.3	2.6	14.6	3.3	46.6
1975	0.6	6.3	21.4	3.3	16.5	3.7	51.8
1980	0.6	6.3	22.8	3.6	18.5	3.6	55.4
1985	0.6	6.0	22.9	3.8	20.5	3.5	57.3
1990	0.5	6.0	22.4	4.3	22.5	3.3	59.0
1995	0.6	6.1	22.8	4.2	24.8	3.4	61.9
2000	0.5	6.3	22.8	4.0	26.8	3.5	63.9

Source: (1955-1965) Statistics Bureau, *Labor Force Survey*.
(1970-2000) Statistics Bureau, *Population Census*.

Daniel Bell predicted that since the services that are provided in the post-industrial society are based on scientific knowledge, professionals who deal with such knowledge will play a central role in society and an increasing number of people will have such occupations. In this argument, Bell seems to regard new service occupations in the post-industrial society as similar to professionals in the classical sense, such as doctors or lawyers who enjoy autonomy, independence, prestige, wealth and power based on professional training and specialized knowledge. The actual consequences of the service economy, however, contradict Bell's forecast. Most new service occupations are in the secondary, competitive labor market that offers low pay, minimal training and little opportunity for advancement.

Other authors, focusing on the aspect of service-providing work in a knowledge-based economy, argue that service work may be characterized as the spatial and temporal proximity between the production and the consumption of services (Urry, 1990). This characteristic relates to two other features of service work. First, since service products cannot be stocked for later consumption, demand for service workers constantly fluctuates in accordance with the increase and decrease of service demands by consumers. Therefore, in order to save labor costs, employers prefer non-standard employees such as part-time workers or seasonal workers over full-time standard employees (Ihara, 1999). In many cases, non-standard employees are lower paid than standard employees. Women, particularly married women, tend to prefer non-standard employment since they have responsibilities of housework in addition to paid work. In addition, low pay is more acceptable to women than to men because married women can depend on their husbands' earnings.

The second feature of service work is that because of the proximity of the provider to the consumer of services, the social interaction between them becomes part of the product. In such interaction, the cultural expectations of consumers have particular significance in structuring the form of service delivery (Adkins, 1995; Urry, 1990). Front-line workers in service industries have high contact with customers, and these workers are encouraged to care for customer needs; namely, to be friendly, warm, to make them feel happy, and so on (Adkins, 1995). In other words, service employment often involves carrying out such "emotional work" in relation to consumers (Hochschild, 1983). Since women are more intensively socialized than men are to do such work in daily life, women rather than men are more likely to be employed in service occupations (Adkins, 1995; Hochschild, 1983;

James, 1989).

These characteristics of service occupations can be observed in Japan as well. Table 5 compares employment characteristics of the manufacturing industry with those of the two prominent service-related industries in Japan, namely *wholesale and retail trade and eating and drinking places* and *services*. First, more women work in the two service-related industries (51.5% and 53.0% respectively) than in manufacturing (33.6%) (see b/a in Table 5), and more women are employed in these service-related industries (51.6% and 53.6% respectively) than in manufacturing (32.4%) (see d/c in Table 5). Second, there are more non-standard employees in the two service-related industries (20.0% and 16.0% respectively) than in manufacturing (8.2%) (see e/c in Table 5). Finally, although women tend to be concentrated in non-standard employment even in the manufacturing industry (65.6%), this concentration is more intense in service-related industries (73.0% and 72.9% respectively) than in manufacturing (see f/e in Table 5).

Table 5 Women and non-standard employment in the tertiary industry in Japan

((a)-(f): In ten thousands of persons)

	Total		Employees		Non-standard employees		b/a (%)	d/c (%)	e/c (%)	f/e (%)
	(a)	Female (b)	(c)	Female (d)	(e)	Female (f)				
Wholesale and retail trade, eating and drinking places	1438	741	1186	612	237	173	51.5	51.6	20.0	73.0
Services	1804	957	1570	841	251	183	53.0	53.6	16.0	72.9
Manufacturing	1222	411	1131	366	93	61	33.6	32.4	8.2	65.6
Total of all industries	6330	2594	5331	2161	727	483	41.0	40.5	13.6	66.4

Source: Statistics Bureau, *Labor Force Survey (2000)*.

Table 6 shows the results of the *Part-time Workers Survey* that was conducted in Japan in 1995. This survey asked part-time workers the reasons why they work as part timers. According to Table 6, the reason given by the largest proportion of respondents was that they prefer to work only at times that are convenient for them (55.8% for female respondents and 52.4% for male respondents). As for female respondents, the number of those giving

this response was followed in frequency by those that said they prefer shorter working hours/days (27.9%) and those saying that they cannot work on a full-time basis because of responsibilities such as housework or childcare (19.8%). Percentages of male respondents who mentioned shorter working hours/days and housework/childcare responsibilities are much smaller than those of female respondents (10.8% and 0.5% respectively). The same survey, which was conducted in 1995 and 2000, asked employers the reasons for employing part timers. According to the results in Table 7, the largest number of employers mentioned low labor costs as a reason (38.3% in 1995 and as many as 65.3% in 2000), followed by those mentioning that they need additional workforce in order to cope with the busiest hours in the work day (37.3% in 1995 and 39.2% in 2000) and those saying that tasks are easy (35.7% in 1995 and 31.4% in 2000). These results show that employers' tendency towards seeking low labor costs by employing part-timers was intensified between 1995 and 2000.

Table 6 Reasons for choosing to work as a part-timer

	(Multiple answer)	
	Female (%)	Male (%)
I prefer to work only when it is convenient for me.	55.8	52.4
Working hours/working days are short.	27.9	10.8
Good pay, good working conditions.	7.7	14.5
I am interested in the job.	18.0	24.8
It is easy to quit the job.	7.8	10.1
I could not find any full-time jobs.	14.3	11.9
I cannot work full time because of housework or childcare responsibilities.	19.8	0.5
I cannot work full time because of my responsibility to care for the sick or the elderly.	2.0	0.5
I am not healthy enough to work on a full-time basis.	5.9	6.2
I have friends/acquaintances who work as part-timers.	6.8	7.2
Other	8.3	18.9

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, *Part-time Workers Survey (1995)*.

Table 7 Reasons for employing part-time workers

	(Multiple answer)	
	1995 (%)	2000 (%)
Low labor costs.	38.3	65.3
To cope with increasing business.	29.8	17.1
It is difficult to recruit standard employees.	10.7	5.8
It is easier to recruit a part-time work force than a standard workforce.	19.9	17.8
To cope with the busiest times in a year.	9.3	27.3
To cope with the busiest hours in a day.	37.3	39.2
To recruit staff who has specific experiences, knowledge, or skills.	13.2	12.2
Tasks are easy.	35.7	31.4
It is easy to dismiss part-timers when business decreases.	12.4	16.4
As a means of re-employing female workers who retired for childbirth or childrearing.	5.8	5.1
As a means of extended employment for retiring employees.	4.4	7.3
Other	9.0	6.5

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, *Part-time Workers Survey (1995, 2000)*.

1-2. The Discrepancy between Actual Employment Patterns and Social Policy Assumptions Concerning the Family in Japan

In addition to the transformation towards a service economy that I discussed above, what is important for the purpose of present analyses is that such a transformation occurred against a particular background in Japan: namely, the increasing discrepancy between social policy assumptions concerning the family and the actual employment patterns of wives and husbands. The social policy assumption concerning the family, namely the male breadwinner/female homemaker family, was established in the high economic-growth period and has continued to be maintained to today. Japanese postwar welfare policies have been built on the basis of this assumption (Ohsawa, 1993). However, in spite of the continued maintenance of this assumption, the actual employment of male workers became increasingly unstable with the end of the high-growth period, which led to a decrease in men's breadwinning capacities. As a result, today's Japanese households depend more on wives' earnings.

However, there have been virtually no policies to help women balance work and family. These background factors are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8 Changes in economy, employment customs, actual employment patterns, policy assumptions about the family, and policy measures to support working women in postwar Japan

		<i>Until the late '50s</i>	<i>From the late '50s to the mid '70s</i>	<i>From the mid '70s to the late '80s</i>	<i>The '90s onward</i>
<i>Economy</i>		Agriculture (and manufacturing)	Manufacturing	Service	
<i>Japanese-style employment customs</i>		No	An increase	A decrease (for smaller-scale companies)	A decrease
<i>Actual employment pattern</i>	<i>Male</i>	Self-employed	An increase in solo breadwinners	A decrease in solo breadwinners	
	<i>Female</i>	Family worker	An increase in housewives	An increase in labor market participation	
<i>Policy assumptions about the family</i>		(No social welfare)	(Model A) Man: sole breadwinner Woman: sole homemaker	(Model B) Man: main breadwinner Woman: sole homemaker and supplementary breadwinner	
<i>Policy measures to support full-time working wives</i>		(No social welfare)	No	(Virtually) No	

Table 8 shows that so-called Japanese-style employment customs such as long-term employment and a seniority-based *family wage* for male employees were gradually established during the high-growth period beginning in the late 1950s (Gould, 1993). The idea of a *family wage* means that employers should pay male employees wages that are high enough to support wives and children on such wages alone. This idea relates to other ideas such as that which holds that wives are supposed to be provided for by their husbands, wives should stay at home to care for their family, and wages for female workers should be lower than those for male workers.

Before the high-growth period, no such customs were practiced in Japanese companies on a large scale. In this earlier period, a large number of men worked as small-scale self-employed laborers in the agriculture sector, and women worked as family workers in the same sector. Social welfare systems had not yet been developed in those days.

With the start of the high economic growth in the late 1950s, customs such as long-term employment and a seniority-based family wage for male employees began to be widely practiced in Japanese companies (particularly in large-scale companies). As a result, more and more men could earn wages that were high enough to provide for an entire family, and more and more married women stayed at home as full-time housewives. Wages for female workers were kept lower than those of their male counterparts, and this continues to be true to today. Table 2 shows that differences between wages for male and female workers are larger in Japan than in selected other countries. Welfare policies such as the national old-age pension and national health insurance, which were developed in this period, were based on the idea of the male breadwinner/female homemaker family. In such national insurance schemes, men have their own entitlements whereas married women are covered by these schemes not through their own entitlement but as dependants of their husbands (Ohsawa, 1993). The construction of public childcare facilities was restrained since wives were supposed to stay at home to care for their children.

In the mid-1970s, just after the oil crisis, Japan's high economic growth came to an end. Japanese companies, particularly small-scale ones, ceased the practices of long-term employment and the family wage because such practices required expensive labor costs. As a result, employment for male workers became increasingly unstable. In the same period, advances in the service economy raised the demand for the part-time employment of married women. Consequently, the actual employment patterns began to change: married women increasingly participated in the labor market, on the one hand, and men who could earn wages high enough to provide for a family by themselves decreased, on the other. In order to maintain a middle class standard of living, household finances relied more on wives' earnings than in previous periods.

In response to this new situation, the Japanese government revised its welfare policies and taxation systems, replacing those based on Model A in Table 8 (namely, men are *solo* breadwinners and women are solo homemakers) with systems and policies based on Model B (namely, men are the *main* breadwinners and women are *supplementary breadwinners* in addition to being solo homemakers). The new welfare policies and taxation systems were more favorable to couples with part-time employed wives or full-time homemakers than those with full-time employed wives. For instance, in the new system, part-time working

wives and non-working wives had their own pension entitlements *without* contributions whereas full-time working wives had to pay full contributions if they wanted to enjoy the entitlements. It has been argued that such unfavorable treatment for full-time working women will discourage women from working on a full-time basis (Ohsawa, 1993).

The Japanese government was reluctant to provide measures to support working wives. Siaroff (1994) classified twenty-three OECD countries using two measures: *female work desirability* and *family welfare orientation*. Female work desirability measures the extent to which it is relatively attractive for women to work, such as whether the ratios of women's wages to men's are high and whether the ratios of female managerial and administrative workers to their male counterparts are high. Family welfare orientation measures the extent to which policies help women balance work and family. This measure is calculated for each country on the basis of statistics such as social security spending, family policy spending, childcare allowance, and maternity and parental leaves. According to data from the late 1980s, Japan is classified with the countries where both female work desirability and family welfare orientation are low.¹⁾ With respect to female work desirability in Japan, Japan's Equal Opportunity Law was in force in 1986, but the law had no effective measures nor punishments to stop discrimination against female workers. As for family welfare orientation, there was no Childcare Leave Law until 1991. The Japanese government was reluctant to provide public childcare facilities on a large scale since childcare policies were still based on the idea that homemaking is entirely a wife's responsibility.

Since the early 1990s, the Japanese economy has experienced a long and serious recession while selected other countries have continued to grow (see GNP growth rates in Table 2). Even large-scale companies are unable to carry out practices such as long-term employment and the family wage because these practices are expensive in terms of labor costs. Male employment has become even more unstable and household finances rely more on wives' earnings than in the previous period.

Welfare policies, however, still continue to follow the assumption that wives are thoroughly responsible for childrearing. Examining Siaroff's study (1994), Fukazawa (2000) argues that even during the 1990s, no effective policy measures were implemented to promote gender equality in the labor market or to help women balancing work and family. Regarding gender equality in the labor market, the Equal Opportunity Law was revised in 1999, but the revised

law has only insufficient measures to stop discrimination against female workers. Regarding policies to help women to balance work and family, the Childcare Leave Law was in effect in 1992. According to the Law, employers should give a parent childcare leave until the child turns one year old. At first, the employer was not required to pay the employee any wages during the leave, but in the 1995 revision, the employer must pay 25% of the employee's normal wage, and in the 2001 revision, 40%. In spite of this law, many new mothers did not return to work after their leave because it was very difficult for them to find an appropriate nursery for their baby. The Japanese government continued to be reluctant to provide public childcare facilities during the 1990s. It is only from the year 2000 that the government began to encourage an increase in the provision of childcare facilities in order to tackle the challenge of the low birth rate. This provision is entirely insufficient, however, because the increase in demand for such facilities is more rapid than the increase in provision. In addition, it is difficult for husbands to return home early and share housework or childcare with their wives. Because Japanese companies reduced the workforce in order to save labor costs, the remaining employees, particularly male standard employees, were forced to work overtime in order to make up for the reduced staff.

Consequently, Japanese working mothers carry out almost all of the household labor by themselves. The amount of time married men spend on housework is very short regardless of whether their wives work full-time, work part-time, or stay at home (Matsuda and Suzuki 2002).

To summarize, in the mid-1970s Japanese society witnessed advances in the service economy that promoted married women's participation in the labor market. In the same period, Japan's economic high growth came to an end, causing increasing instability in male employment and earning capacity. In spite of these new circumstances, the Japanese government failed to implement effective measures to help working mothers balance their employment and childcare, or to facilitate husbands' sharing of housework. Consequently, the contribution of married women to household income is increasing while their husbands' contributions to housework continue to be negligible.

The analyses that follow seek to explore how wives' marital satisfaction is affected by this unbalanced division of labor.

2. Previous Research on the Relationship between Marital Satisfaction and the Division of Housework

Previous research has shown that the extent to which husbands' sharing of housework increases wives' marital satisfaction depends on two factors: wives' gender-role attitudes and wives' paid work. As for gender-role attitudes, it has been shown that if a wife agrees with the traditional idea that men work outside the home and women stay at home, her husband's participation in housework does not affect her marital satisfaction. By contrast, if a wife does not agree with this traditional idea, her husband's involvement in housework increases her marital satisfaction (Greenstein, 1996; Pina and Bengston, 1993; Suemori, 1999).

The present study focuses on the second factor: married women's paid work. Previous studies reveal that for wives with full-time paid work, the husband's participation in housework positively affects the wife's marital satisfaction, while part-time or non-working wives whose husbands help with housework experience no effect on their satisfaction (Ozawa, 1987; Pina and Bengston, 1993). One weakness of these studies is that they do not take husbands' paid work into full consideration, which would lead to a mistaken understanding that it is only wives' paid work, rather than the paid work of both wives' and husbands', that is important in studies of the division of housework. However, many studies have shown that the husband's income level itself has a strong effect on married women's labor participation in Japan. Namely, the higher a husband's income level is, the less likely it is that his wife will participate in the labor market, and if she participates, she is more likely to be a part-timer than a full-timer (Matsunami, 1996). Therefore, the income levels of both wives and husbands should be taken into account when the division of household labor is studied.

In order to take the earnings of both wives and husbands into consideration, the present study introduces a variable called *wives' income contribution to the household*, which is the percentage of a wife's income against the total of her and her husband's income. This study examines whether the effect on wives' marital satisfaction created by their husbands' housework sharing differs according to the extent of the wives' contributions to household income. The hypothesis under examination can be stated as follows: if a wife's income constitutes a substantial part of the household income, her husband's sharing of housework

promotes her marital satisfaction, while if her income contribution is small or zero, her husband's involvement in housework has no effect on her marital satisfaction.

3. Data Sample and Variables

The following analysis employs representative data for Japan that was collected in 1999. The respondents were people born from 1920 to 1970, aged 28 to 77 on December 31, 1998. A total of 10500 people (5337 female and 5163 male) were chosen using stratified proportionate sampling. From the 10500 surveys distributed during January to February in 1999, 6985 completed surveys (66.52%) were received.

The present study analyses data from married women aged 64 and under. In order to control for the effect of the presence of small children, the respondents are divided into two groups: those with children aged 12 and under (known here as *a life stage with small children*) and those without children or with children aged over 12 (*a life stage without small children*) (see Table 9). This manner of dividing life stages is based on the fact that after entering junior high school at the age of 12, Japanese children are likely to spend a longer time at school than they did in their primary school days, which makes their mothers' caring workload lighter. Cases in each life stage are further divided into three groups according to the extent of the married woman's financial contribution to the household (see Table 9). The three groups are, first, wives who earn nothing (*a 0% group*), second, those who earn some but less than 30% of the household income (*a less-than-30% group*), and third, those who earn 30% or more of the household income (*a 30%-and-over group*). The reasons for dividing the cases in this way are twofold. In the first place, a contribution of 30% or more of the total household income can be assumed to be substantial. Second, an earlier Japanese study shows that married women who earn 30% or more of the household income have different attitudes toward the division of housework from those who earn zero or less than 30% (Yamato 1995).

The variables used in this study are the wives' marital satisfaction, their ages, their years of education and gender role attitudes, the husbands' emotional support for their wives, and wives' and husbands' housework performance, and their annual income. Details of the measurement of each variable are shown in Table 10 and the means and standard deviations of the variables are shown in Table 11.

Table 9 Divisions of the data sample

Life stage with small children	All cases		
	0% group	Less-than-30% group	30%-and-over group
Life stage without small children	All cases		
	0% group	Less-than-30% group	30%-and-over group

Table 10 The measurement of variables

Variables	Measurement
Marital satisfaction (w)	Very satisfied (4), somewhat satisfied (3), somewhat dissatisfied (2), very dissatisfied (1).
Housework performance (w, h)	Items of housework (cooking, washing, cleaning the bath, caring for children): Does almost everyday (7), 4 or 5 times a week (4.5), 2 or 3 times a week (2.5), once a week (1), almost never (0).
For the life stage with small children	Total responses to the four items (cooking, washing, cleaning the bath, caring for children). (Range: 0-28)
For the life stage without small children	Total responses to the three items of housework (cooking, washing, cleaning the bath). (Range: 0-21)
Husbands' emotional support for their wives	Responses to three statements: "My husband listens to my concerns and worries," "My husband highly appreciates my ability and effort," and "My husband offers me helpful words and advice": Applies (4), somewhat applies (3), applies little (2), does not apply at all (1). A total of responses to the three statements. (Range: 3-12)
Age (w)	28-52 (for the life stage with small children), 28-73 (for the life stage without small children).
Annual income (w, h) (¥: JPY)	¥0 (0), less than ¥1 million (50), ¥1 to 1.29 million (115), ¥1.3 to 1.99 million (165), ¥2 to 3.99 million (300), ¥4 to 5.99 million (500), ¥6 to 7.99 million (700), ¥8 to 9.99 million (900), ¥10 to 11.99 million (1100), ¥12 million and over (1400).
Years of education (w)	Junior high school (9), high school (12), higher education [2 years] (14), higher education [4 years and over] (16).
Traditional gender role attitudes (w)	Attitudes toward the idea that men work outside the home and women are homemakers: Agree (4), weakly agree (3), weakly disagree (2), disagree (1).

(w=wife's, h=husband's)

Table 11 Means and standard deviations of variables

	Total		Wife's income contribution to the household					
	Mean	S.D.	0%		Less than 30%		30% and over	
			Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
With small children								
Marital satisfaction (w)	2.94	.76	3.00	.73	2.90	.76	2.90	.77
Housework (h)	3.76	4.05	3.21	3.37	3.56	3.98	5.24	4.97
Emotional support (h)	8.88	2.35	8.90	2.29	8.84	2.34	8.99	2.43
Age (w)	35.73	4.58	34.93	4.73	36.43	4.48	35.73	4.28
Annual income (h)	567.9	279.0	595.9	274.3	602.3	277.0	441.0	258.8
Years of education (w)	13.06	1.48	13.14	1.43	12.93	1.50	13.15	1.51
Traditional gender role attitudes (w)	13.63	2.08	13.85	2.04	13.55	2.06	13.38	2.14
	2.11	.91	2.35	.85	2.14	.92	1.63	.82
Without small children								
Marital satisfaction (w)	2.92	.77	2.95	.77	2.92	.74	2.88	.81
Housework (h)	1.21	2.61	.76	1.76	1.07	2.39	49.14	8.44
Emotional support (h)	9.00	2.43	9.19	2.33	8.90	2.40	8.99	2.56
Age (w)	49.85	7.61	51.63	7.58	49.30	6.89	49.14	8.44
Annual income (h)	596.0	333.0	654.9	348.9	653.2	314.5	468.6	305.0
Years of education (w)	11.95	1.79	11.96	1.76	11.88	1.77	12.10	1.86
Traditional gender role attitudes (w)	12.42	2.39	12.67	2.44	12.47	2.39	12.16	2.32
	2.29	1.02	2.58	1.02	2.27	.99	2.08	1.03

(w=wife's, h=husband's)

4. Analyses

As a preliminary step to clarify the characteristics of each group, the means of both husbands' and wives' income and their performance of given household tasks during a particular week are presented in Table 12. Table 12 shows that firstly, married women with an income contribution of 30% or more are likely to have husbands who earn a lower level of income. In addition, these women are likely to earn a higher income than other married women. Secondly, married women perform most of the housework regardless of the level of their income contributions. Even if a married woman's income contribution to the household is 30% or more, her husband's housework contribution (namely, the percentage of the husband's housework performance against the total of both husband's and wife's housework performance) averages less than 20%. Thirdly, however, it is likely that the higher a married woman's contribution to the household income is, the less housework she performs, and the more her husband does.

Table 12 Means of husbands' and wives' income and housework performance

Life stage	Annual income		Housework performance	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
	Mean (n)	Mean (n)	Mean (n)	Mean (n)
With small children				
0%	600.1 (228)	0.0 (251)	3.2 (239)	25.9 (250)
Less than 30%	596.4 (260)	78.6 (260)	3.5 (245)	24.6 (254)
30% and over	437.1 (124)	349.2 (124)	5.3 (113)	22.8 (122)
Total	565.5 (612)	100.4 (635)	3.7 (597)	24.8 (626)
F	17.843**	563.259**	11.346**	26.366**
Without small children				
0%	646.7 (301)	0.0 (339)	0.7 (319)	18.6 (332)
Less than 30%	648.1 (644)	89.7 (644)	1.1 (604)	18.1 (629)
30% and over	453.9 (432)	360.5 (432)	1.7 (389)	16.3 (415)
Total	586.9 (1377)	1.2 (1415)	1.2 (1312)	17.7 (1376)
F	54.913**	711.899**	13.210**	34.761**

** p<0.01 * p<0.05

Next, multiple regression analyses were conducted with married women's marital satisfaction as an explained variable, their husbands' sharing of housework as an explaining variable, and with their husbands' emotional support, the wives' ages, the husbands' annual income, the couples' years of education and the wives' gender role attitudes as controlling variables. Results of the analyses are shown in Table 13.

First, results of couples *with* small children are examined. For these couples, the husband's sharing of housework increases the wife's marital satisfaction in the 0% group and the less-than-30% group. In the 30%-and-over group, however, the husband's sharing of housework has no effect on the wife's satisfaction. These results are interpreted as follows. The childcare workload is very heavy during the life stage with small children. In such situations, the husband's sharing of housework represents an important enough contribution to increase their marital satisfaction. However, wives who earn 30% or more of the household income are an exception. Most of these wives are likely to work on a full-time basis in paid employment. Earlier Japanese studies have shown that, because daycare availability is insufficient, it is the availability of female relatives (usually a mother or a mother-in-law) who take care of children and do most of the housework that enables married female workers with small children to work full time (Senda, 2002). These mothers or mothers-in-

Table 13 Multiple regression analyses on wives' marital satisfaction

	Wife's income contribution to the household		
	0%	Less than 30%	30% and over
	β	β	β
With small children			
Housework (h)	.126 *	.118 *	.075
Emotional support (h)	.567 **	.549 **	.653 **
Age (w)	.038	-.062	-.067
Annual income (h)	.163 **	.040	.090
Years of education (h)	.070	.060	-.094
(w)	-.080	.024	.165
Traditional gender role attitudes (w)	-.013	.013	.054
Adj. R ²	.361	.363	.463
(n)	(220)	(247)	(119)
Without small children			
Housework (h)	-.041	.060	.105 *
Emotional support (h)	.564 **	.489 **	.554 **
Age (w)	.075	-.011	.034
Annual income (h)	.080	.085 *	.048
Years of education (h)	-.012	-.007	.009
(w)	.097	.030	.040
Traditional gender role attitudes (w)	.100 *	.127 **	-.030
Adj. R ²	.350	.268	.320
(n)	(278)	(582)	(367)

(w=wife's, h=husband's)

** p<0.01 p<0.05

law actually play the role of a full-time domestic help, although they are unpaid. In terms of actual assistance with housework and childcare in these cases, it is not husbands but mothers or mothers-in-law who support such full-time working women with small children. Therefore, their husbands' participation in housework and childcare is not so crucial for them as to significantly affect their evaluation of the marriage. However, if mothers or mothers-in-law who take care of children were unavailable, then these women would give up full-time jobs and become full-time housewives or part-time working wives. Therefore, it can be argued that the lack of husbands' housework sharing has a potential negative impact on the marital satisfaction for full-time working women with small children.

Next, the results of couples *without* small children are examined. For these couples, the results differ from those observed for couples with small children. Table 13 shows that, for

wives who earn 30% or more of the household income, husbands' performance of housework has a positive effect on wives' marital satisfaction, whereas for wives who earn less than 30% of the household income, their husbands' sharing of housework has no effect on their marital satisfaction. This suggests the following interpretation. Housework and childcare workloads are lighter during this life stage than in the life stage *with* small children, so married women in this life stage who are full-time housewives or working on a part-time basis can perform housework relatively easily without assistance from others. Therefore, whether or not their husbands share the housework is not important enough to affect their marital satisfaction. However, if wives work in full-time paid employment, the "second shift" (Hochschild 1989) of housework is burdensome for them. In addition, if a full-time employed wife must handle the second shift of housework without their husband's assistance, it may damage the wife's sense of equality in the marriage. Consequently, their husband's involvement in housework is crucial enough to increase their marital satisfaction.

Finally, the effect of husbands' emotional support on their wives' marital satisfaction is examined. As Table 13 shows, a positive effect is observed in all 6 groups and is stronger than that of any other variables. This result suggests that even if a husband does not share housework, if he does emotional work for his wife, then the wife's marital satisfaction is maintained at a very high level. On the basis of this finding, it can be argued that husbands' emotional work creates the situation in which wives who shoulder all of childcare and/or household tasks without husbands' help are satisfied with their marital relationships even if the relationships are unfair in terms of the division of paid and unpaid work.

5. Conclusion

The results of the analyses can be summarized as follows. In the case of couples *with* small children, a husband's sharing of housework increases his wife's marital satisfaction regardless of the wife's contributions to the household income. For couples *without* small children, the effect of a husband's housework participation upon his wife's marital satisfaction differs according to the level of the wife's contribution to the household income. That is, if a wife's contribution to household income is small or nonexistent, the husband's housework participation has no effect on his wife's marital satisfaction, whereas the same participation increases a wife's marital satisfaction if the wife, in addition to being a homemaker, is also

a wage earner with a higher income contribution to the household.

As discussed above, advances in the service economy have made Japanese households increasingly dependent on wives' earnings. In spite of this, Japanese husbands generally do not participate in housework very often. One reason for this is that no effective policy measures have been implemented to facilitate their sharing. Under these circumstances, what types of marriage are most negatively impacted? Assuming that a married woman's marital satisfaction correlates with her husband's (that is, a wife's low marital satisfaction decreases her husband's satisfaction too), two types of marriage are probably the worst affected: first, *marriages with small children*, and second, *marriages with full-time working wives without small children* (see Table 14). It should be noted that in the second type of marriage, the husband is likely to be relatively lower paid (see Table 12). Therefore, it can be argued that for couples without small children, the consequences of a husband's lack of participation in housework differ according to the husband's income level. For husbands with higher incomes, their reluctance to share housework does not harm their marital relationships whereas the same attitude harms the marriages of men with lower incomes.

Table 14 Effects of husbands' lack of participation in housework on their marriage

Life stage	Wife's income contribution to the household		
	0% (Breadwinner-husband and homemaker-wife)	Less than 30%	30% and over (Dual breadwinners)
With small children	Negative	Negative	Potentially negative
Without small children	No	No	Negative

Husbands' emotional support for their wives could counter the negative effects of their lack of sharing housework to some extent. However, even if the negative effects are weakened in psychological terms, it remains true that wives actually shoulder disproportionate loads of housework and/or childcare. Therefore, it can be argued that husbands' emotional support for their wives makes the wives' double burden apparently unproblematic and endurable.

In closing, let us consider the policy implications of these results. The current policy offers no effective measures to facilitate the sharing of housework by husbands in Japan.

The present analysis shows that this policy has negative impacts on *families with small children and those with a lower-paid husband and a full-time working wife without small children*, whereas the same policy is more favorable to families with a higher-paid husband and a homemaker wife without small children. With advances in the service economy, the number of families that are most favored by the current policy, namely those with a higher-paid husband and a homemaker wife, is actually decreasing. Only a very limited number of families are positively affected by current Japanese family policies. It is understandable that under such disadvantageous circumstances, young Japanese people delay or avoid entering into wedlock and having babies.

Under the impact of a knowledge-based economy and low economic growth, Japanese society requires new assumptions concerning the family that is suitable for the new circumstances. Therefore, current Japanese policy assumptions should be revised to account for the fact that both husbands and wives are both breadwinners and homemakers. On the basis of this new assumption, the government should offer measures to help mothers to balance their employment and childrearing, such as longer childcare leave and a larger number of nurseries that are open to all children in need. In addition, the government should implement policy measures that encourage fathers to share childrearing and housework, such as shorter working hours and paid childcare leave that is targeted at fathers.

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Note

- 1) According to Siaroff (1994), countries besides Japan in which both measures are low include Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. Countries where both measures are high include Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Countries where female work desirability is high while family welfare orientation is low consist of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Finally, countries where female work desirability is low while family welfare orientation is high include Austria, Belgium, France, (West) Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.

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