

Chapter 3 Section 1: Current Status and Challenges Regarding Women's Employment and Childcare

— International and Domestic Comparison of Labor Force Participation Rate

- Women's labor force participation rate in Japan has accelerated an increase since 2013 (Figure 22). The rate for women with children below the age of 6 is 10 (France) to 16 (U.K.) percentage points lower than that for those without such children. The gap in Japan in 2018 was estimated at 14 points, similar to levels in countries selected for comparison (Figure 23).
- Women's labor force participation rate has been growing in all regions in Japan, though with rate levels differing by region (Figure 24). Interregional gaps in women's labor force participation rate are attributable primarily to gaps for women with children. This is remarkable for women aged 30 or more (Figure 25).

Figure 22 Women's labor force participation rates in selected countries

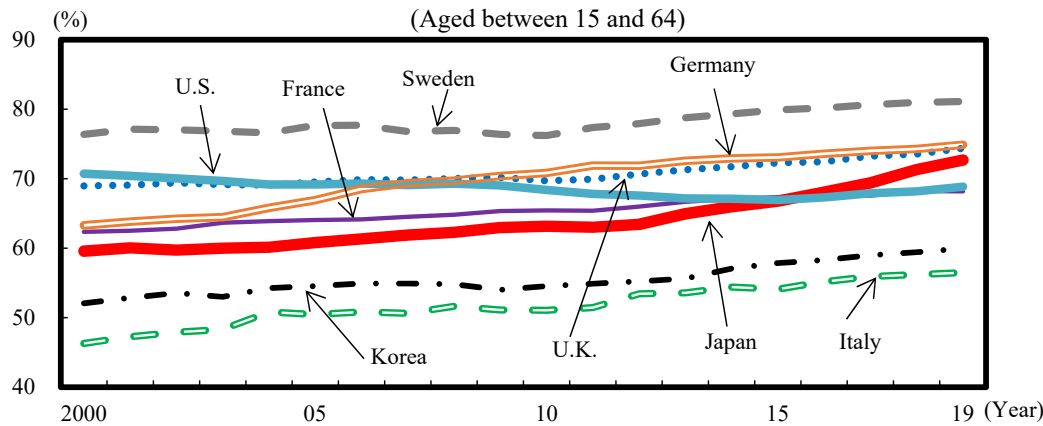


Figure 24 Women's employment rates by region in Japan

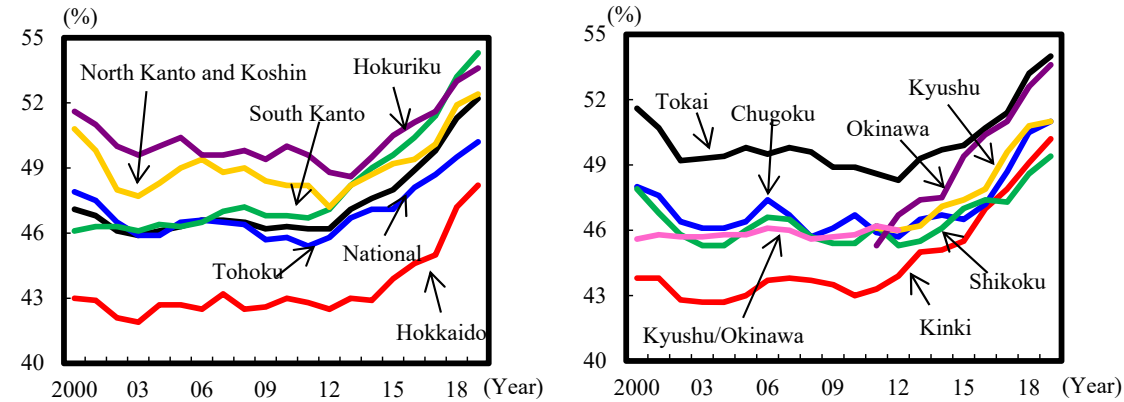


Figure 23 Employment rate for married women with and without children in selected countries

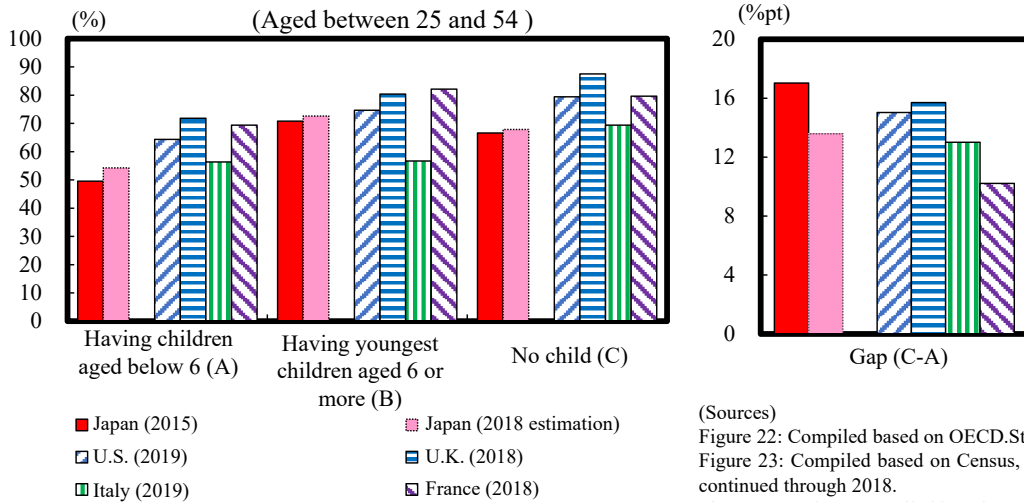
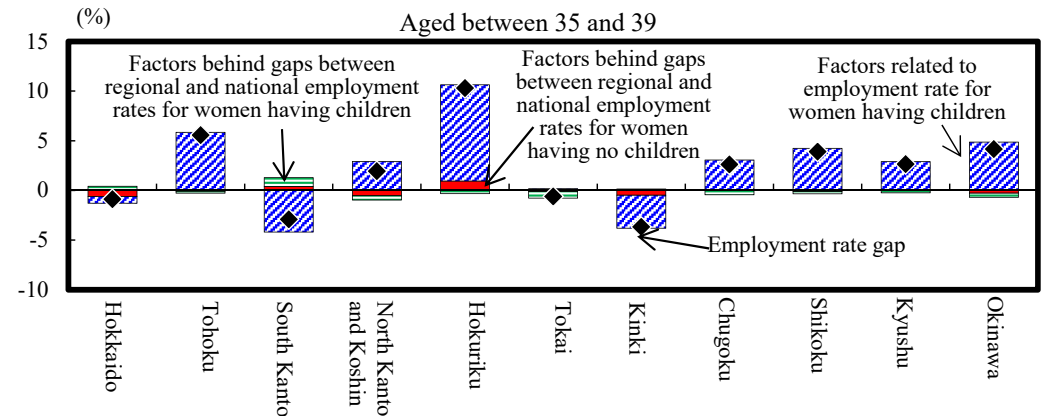


Figure 25 Factors behind gaps between regional women employment rates and the national average (2015)



(Sources)

Figure 22: Compiled based on OECD.Stat.

Figure 23: Compiled based on Census, MIC, and ILO.Stat. The estimate for Japan in 2018 is based on an assumption that the growth pace (2.5%) in the 2010-2015 period continued through 2018.

Figures 24 and 25: Compiled based on Census and Labor Force Survey, MIC.

Chapter 3 Section 1: Current Status and Challenges Regarding Women's Employment and Childcare — Effects of Childcare Support

- Childcare center capacity has been substantially expanded to allow women to work whether they live with families, leading to a downtrend in the number of small children waiting for childcare center vacancies to open for them (Figure 26). At the same time, the childcare leave system has increasingly been utilized, bringing about a rise in the number of those receiving childcare leave benefits (Figure 27). However, childcare leave users' share of men is extremely low (Figure 28).
- A challenge is to maintain the birthrate at a certain level while encouraging women to continue working. Although the total fertility rate has been slackening in other countries as well (Figure 29), countries and regions with higher labor force participation rates for women tend to have higher total fertility rates (Figure 30). Earlier studies indicate that working has been balanced with childbirth as environments have been developed to make it easier for women to work and bear children. Women's labor force participation does not affect birthrates.

Figure 26 Number of small children waiting for childcare center vacancies and childcare center capacity (national total)

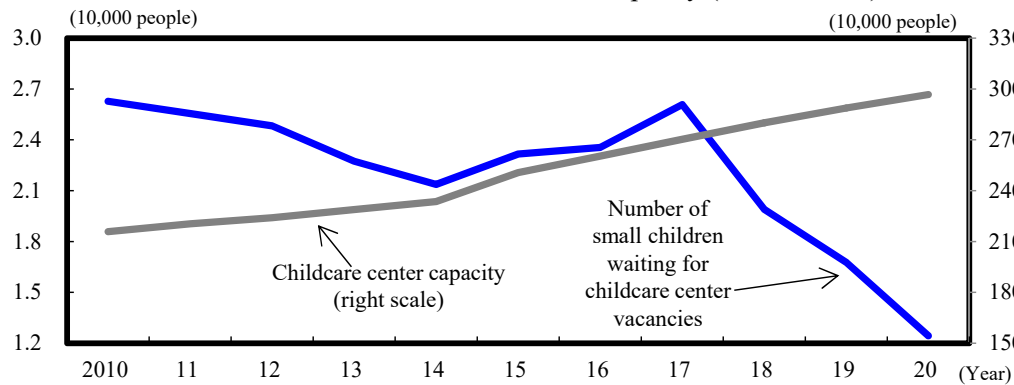


Figure 29 Total fertility rate trends by country

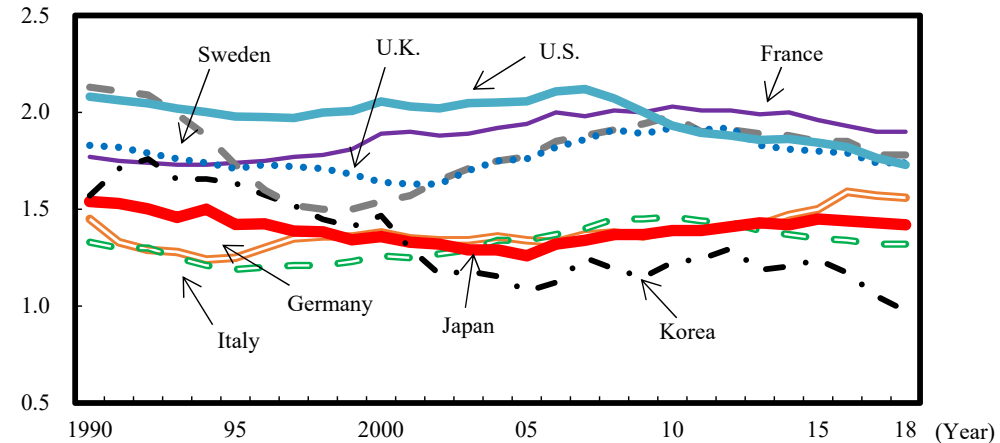


Figure 27 Changes in the number of childcare leave benefit receivers

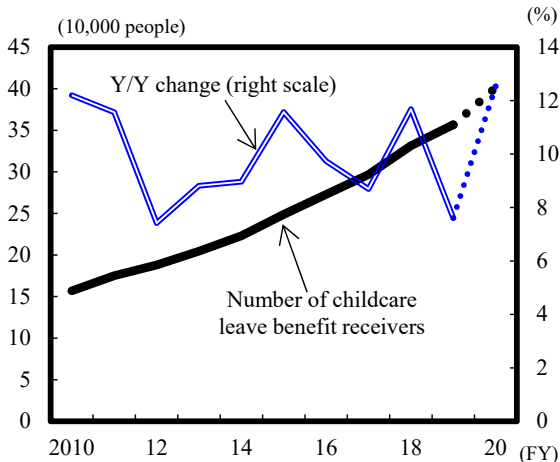


Figure 28 Changes in shares for male and female childcare leavers

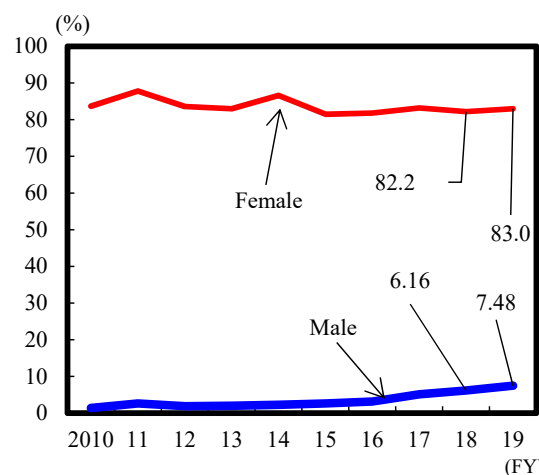


Figure 30 Relationship between total fertility rate and women's employment rate (OECD countries, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018)

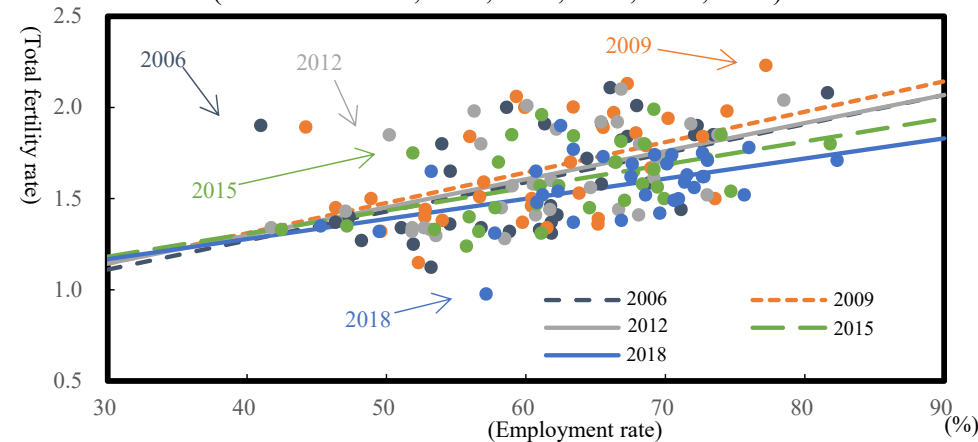


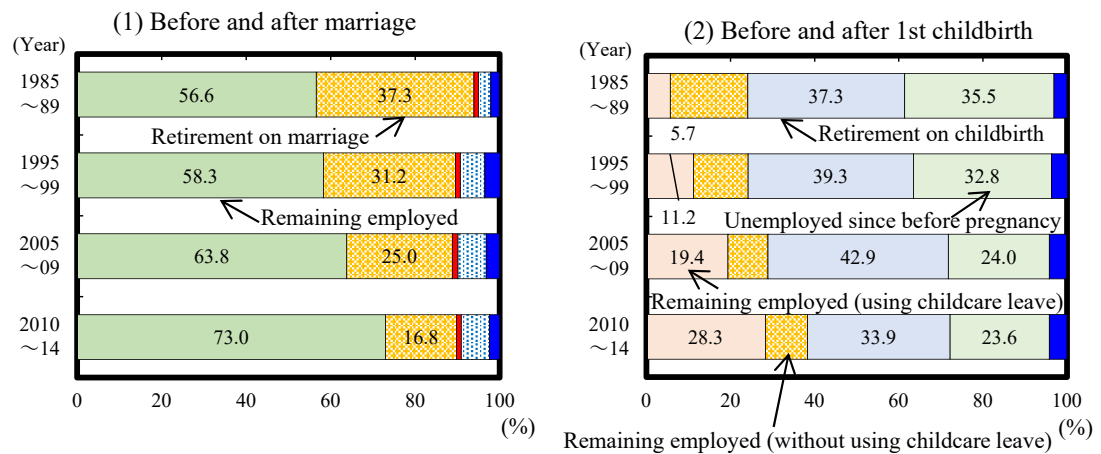
Figure 26: Compiled based on Census, Employment Status Survey, and Population Estimates, MIC, and a report on childcare center conditions, MHLW. Figure 27: Compiled based on Monthly/Annual Reports on Employment Insurance Services, MHLW. Data for FY2020 are estimates based on results between April and July. Figure 28: Compiled based on Monthly Labour Survey, MHLW. Figure 29: Compiled based on World Bank. Figure 30: Compiled based on World Bank, and OECD.Stat.

Chapter 3 Section 2: Status and Challenges Regarding Women's Continued Employment, Marriage, and Childbirth

— Key Points and Challenges Regarding Continued Employment

- Marriage and childbirth represent turning points for working women. The number of women who retired upon marriage has followed a downtrend. However, 30% of working women choose to retire when bearing their first child. The rate for women to remain employed even after childbirth is far higher for regular employees than for part-time and temporary employees (Figure 31). The government should support initiatives for non-regular employees to acquire regular employee status at their request, diffuse childcare leave among non-regular employees, and improve their treatment.
- Earlier studies point out that the promotion of husbands' housework and childcare would be positive for second and later childbirths (Figure 32). During the current COVID-19 pandemic, changes have been seen in how to share housework and childcare roles between husbands and wives. The number of households citing an increase in husbands' roles accounted for more than 25% of the total household survey coverage. This trend should be encouraged (Figure 33).

Figure 31 Wives' employment changes



(3) By job title before 1st pregnancy

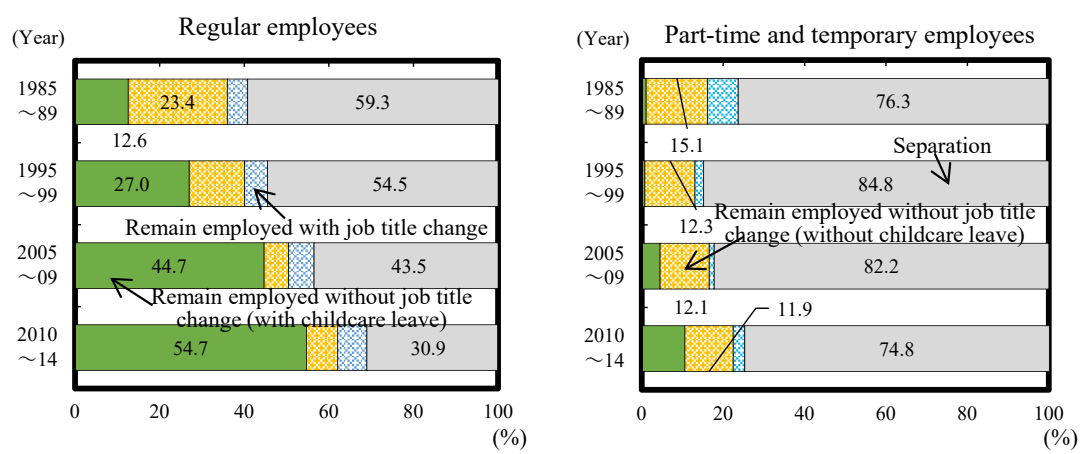


Figure 32 2nd and later childbirths by hours for husbands' holiday housework and childcare in past 13 years (2015)

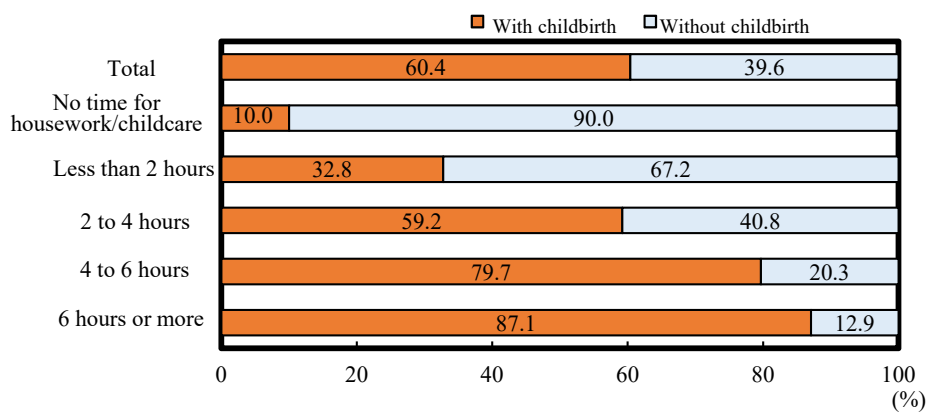
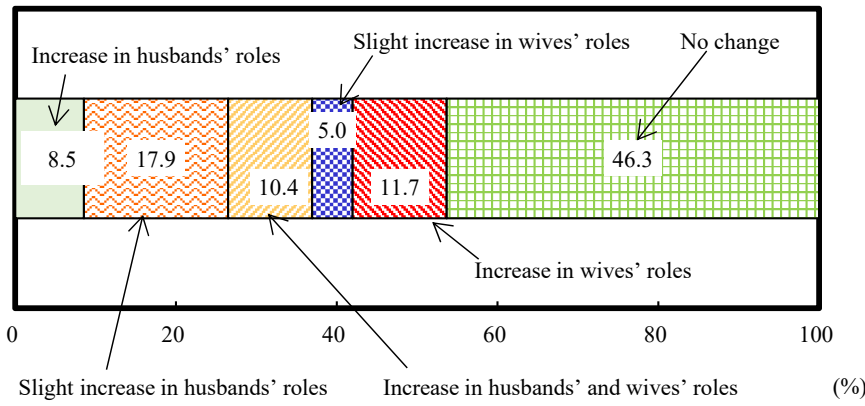


Figure 33 Changes in how to share housework and childcare roles between wives and husbands under COVID-19 (2020)



(Sources) Figure 31: Compiled based on Japanese National Fertility Survey, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. Figure 32: Compiled based on the 14th Longitudinal Survey of Adults in the 21st Century (2002 Cohort), MHLW. Figure 33: Compiled based on a survey on the change in life consciousness and behaviors under the COVID-19 pandemic, Cabinet Office.