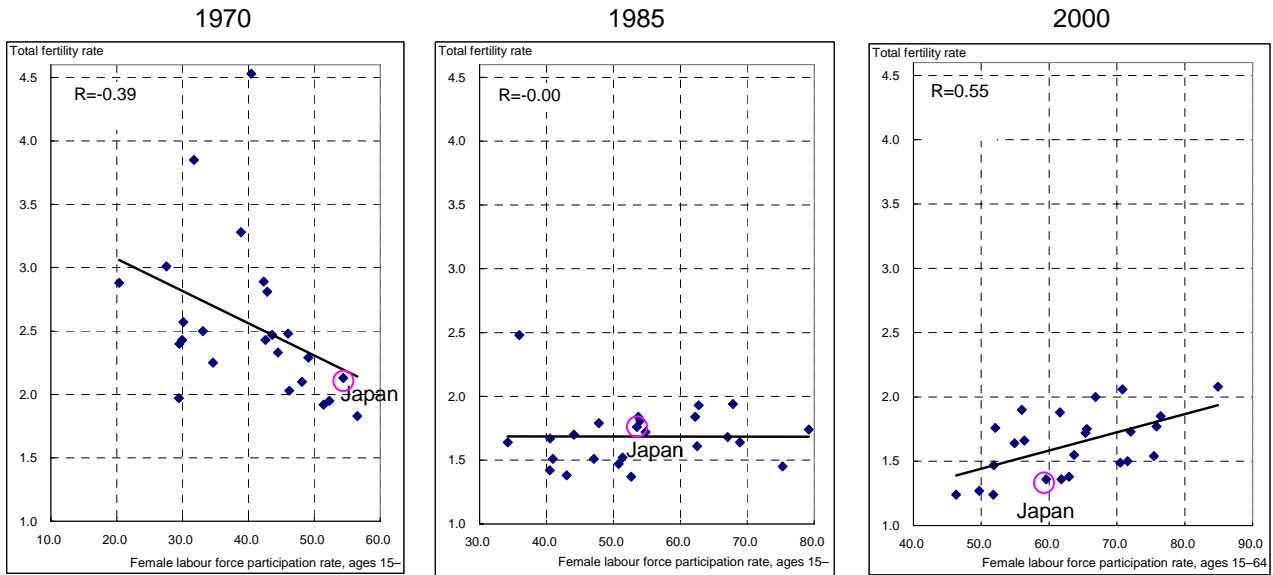


Brief summary

International comparison of the social environments regarding declining birthrates and gender-equality
 (Special Committee on the Declining Birthrate and Gender-Equality
 Council for Gender Equality)

1 According to data from the OECD countries, in 1970, the higher the female labour force participation rate, the lower the birthrate tended to be. In 2000, however, tendency for countries with higher rates of female labour force participation to have higher birthrates was evident. This demonstrates that there is no firm relationship between the female labour force participation rate and the birthrate such that when one goes up the other does as well. Instead, it is apparent that there are social environments (policies, systems, values, etc.), affect both.

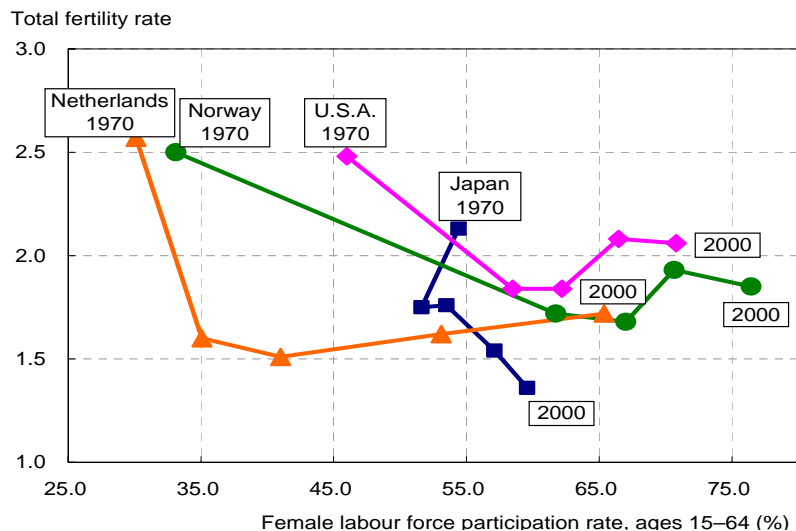
Figure 1. Female labour force participation rate and total fertility rates in 24 OECD countries: 1970, 1985, and 2000



Sources: Compiled from "Recent Demographic Developments in Europe 2004"; Japan: "Vital Statistics"; Australia: "Births, No. 3301"; Canada: "Statistics Canada"; South Korea: "Annual Report on the Vital Statistics"; New Zealand: "Demographic Trends"; U.S.A.: "National Vital Statistics Report"; and "ILO Year Book of Labour Statistics."

2 The increase in Japan's rate of female labour force participation from 1970 to 2000 is the smallest of the 24 countries. (Japan increased its rate by 5.2 percentage points, while the average increase was 23.3 points for 24 countries.) On the other hand, the decline in Japan's birthrate was about average rather than small. (Japan declined by 0.8 points, while the average decline was 0.9 points for the 24 countries.)

Figure 2. Changes in female labour force participation rate and total fertility rate in Japan, the U.S.A., the Netherlands, and Norway

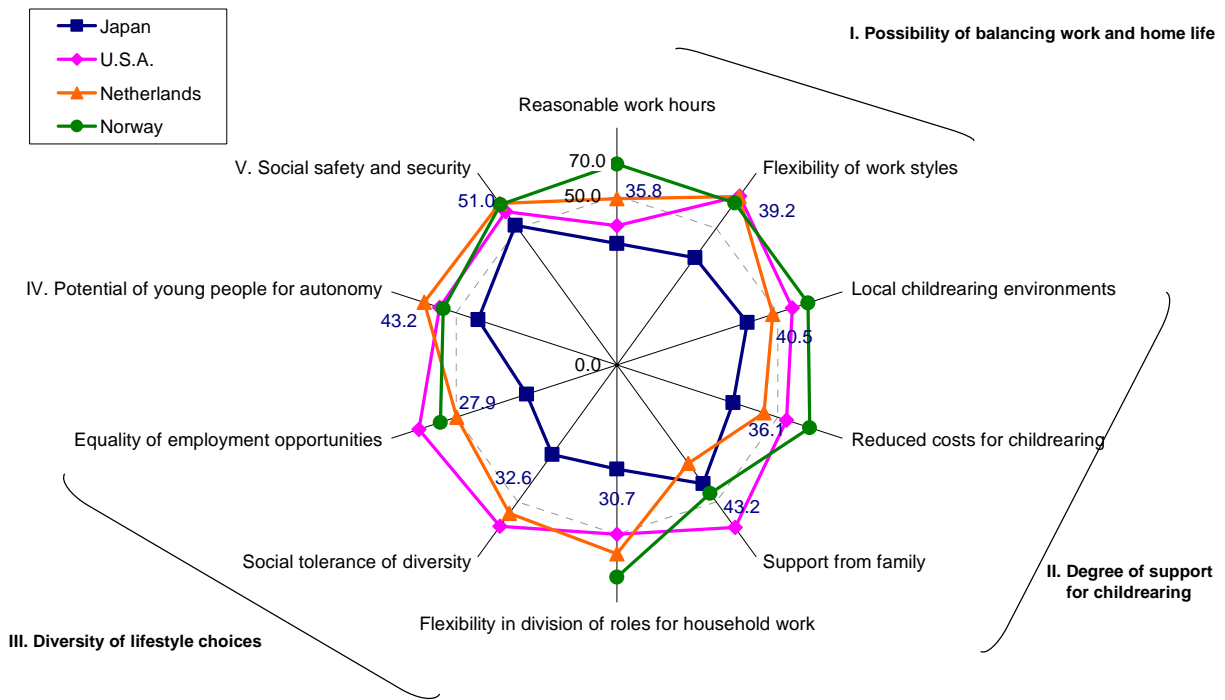


Note: Five time points, 1970, 1980, 1985, 1990, and 2000.

3 Social environments in countries that have both increased female labour force participation rate and restored birthrates over the past 20 years are characterized by progress on support for balancing work and home life, such as reexamining work styles including those of males, and upgrading daycare facilities; on eliminating stereotyped views of gender roles; on male participation in housework and childrearing; and on equalizing employment opportunities.

This suggests that promotion of policies for gender-equal participation will also contribute to measures against the declining birthrate.

Figure 3. Social environment indices for Japan, the U.S.A., the Netherlands, and Norway



Note 1: Numbers shown in blue are Japan's scores.

Note 2: The data were not available for Norway regarding "Social tolerance of diversity".