

The Survey of Japanese Value Orientations: Analysis of Trends over Thirty Years

KONO Kei

The Survey of Japanese Value Orientations program was initiated with the broad aims of identifying basic Japanese attitudes and monitoring changes in those attitudes in a continuing manner over the long term. The first survey was conducted in June 1973, when the country was enjoying a boom in economic growth just prior to the 1973 oil shock.

AIMS AND DESIGN OF THE SURVEY

The purpose of the survey program has been stated as follows. “Even if we limit our purview to the period since 1945 and Japan’s defeat in World War II—the greatest historical turning point for modern Japan since the Meiji Restoration of 1868—we can see that the processes of large-scale industrialization and development in communication and information systems nurtured by postwar democracy inevitably had a tremendous impact on people’s attitudes. On the other hand, although postwar Japan has undergone social change on a scale and at a pace seldom seen in world history, the strength of that impact has not been such as to prevent the continuation of traditional ways of thinking and behavior developed and sustained by Japan’s own unique milieu and history. It can be argued, rather, that the persistence of traditional ways of thinking is shaping the transformation of contemporary Japanese attitudes and making the process more complex. Ours is an era of complex and overarching processes of change. In conducting a public opinion poll as a tool for measuring popular attitudes, the volatile nature of the times demands that we constantly clarify how those attitudes, too, are changing. In this sense, the survey program has served an important purpose.”¹

The survey’s primary aim is to determine the extent to which traditional Japanese ways of thinking and behavior continue to prevail. Its secondary aim

¹ Kojima Kazuto and Kazama Daiji, “Gendai Nihonjin no seikatsu ishiki to seiji ishiki” [The Survey of Japanese Value Orientations 1973], *NHK Hoso Bunka Kenkyujo nenpo* [NHK Annual Bulletin of Broadcasting Culture Research], 1974.

is to identify attitudinal changes and new ways of thinking that have emerged amid the radical transformation of Japanese society since World War II. In order to monitor the changes in Japanese attitudes over the long term, the survey has been conducted every five years using the same format (same questions, method, and target population). The most recent survey, conducted in 2003, was the seventh in the series.²

This essay reports on the status of Japanese value orientations at the start of the twenty-first century in light of the evolution of those orientations over the past thirty years.

Given the survey's aim of long-term monitoring of changes in Japanese people's attitudes about society and their own lives, the following five guidelines were established for the composition of the survey questionnaire:

- It should cover the most important areas (topics) of value orientation;
- It should make possible a systematic understanding of attitudinal characteristics;
- It should target attitudes considered likely to change over the long term;
- It should target attitudes with significant social impact;
- It should target attitudes measurable by statistical survey methods.

Furthermore, in order to examine general rather than partial or localized trends of attitudinal change, the questions were devised to cover a broad spectrum of topic areas, including basic values, politics, economy/society/culture, family and gender relations, and communication (see Figure 1). Nor does each question necessarily apply to only one area. The question on whether or not a husband should help out in the kitchen, for example, applies to both the “family relations” and the “authority vs. equality” areas; and views on the kind of language one should use with one's elders relate to “communication” as well as to “authority vs. equality.”

Some items have been added to the questionnaire over the years. The item “important media,” under Area 4, was introduced with the 1983 survey; the items “views on marriage” (Area 3), “preferred foreign countries and reasons for preference,” and “experience with foreigners” (Area 6) with the 1993 survey; and the items “human relations (close friends)” (Area 2) and “exchange/contact with other countries” (Area 6) with the latest survey in 2003.

The total number of questions was 66 in 1973 and 1978, 60 in 1983 and 1988, 68 in 1993 and 1998, and 69 in 2003.

² The 2003 survey was conducted and its results analyzed by Kono Kei, Nakase Takemaru, Kato Motonori, and Aramaki Hiroshi of the Public Opinion Research Division of NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.

Figure 1. Content of Questionnaire

- (1) Basic values
 - Life credos
 - Means of achieving fulfillment in life
 - Authority vs. equality
 - Efficiency vs. empathy
 - Image of ideal person
 - (2) Economy, society, and culture
 - Spending and saving
 - Human relations (relatives, neighbors, work colleagues, close friends)
 - Ideal job
 - Work and leisure
 - Leisure (present, future)
 - Beliefs, religion
 - (3) Family and gender relations
 - Image of ideal home
 - Husband-wife and parent-child relations
 - Old age
 - Gender equality in education
 - Attitudes toward sex
 - Views on marriage
 - (4) Communication
 - Important media
 - (5) Politics
 - Knowledge (of institutions)
 - Sense of political efficacy (elections, direct action, public opinion)
 - Association and activism (in the workplace, in the community, in politics)
 - Political activities
 - Support for political parties
 - Political issues
 - Feelings toward emperor
 - Nationalism (patriotism, sense of national superiority)
 - (6) International-mindedness
 - Preferred foreign countries and reasons for preference
 - Experience with foreigners
 - Exchange/contact with other countries
 - (7) Attributes, miscellaneous
 - Degree of satisfaction in life (individual circumstances, life in general)
 - Occupation (of respondent, of person who provides respondent's livelihood)
 - Educational background
 - Marital status
 - Field conditions (duration of interview, degree of cooperation)
-

The survey is designed to indicate attitudinal changes not within a specific social sector but throughout the society as a whole. To achieve the broadest possible representation in terms of age and geographic location, the survey's target population is the national population aged 16 (the usual age of completion of compulsory education) and over (see Figure 2).

Furthermore, to facilitate rigorous comparisons over time from one survey to the next, a number of "points to remember" were identified at the time of the first survey in 1973 and are still observed today.³ In this way, the effects of the conditions of the survey's implementation on the data acquired are mini-

Figure 2. Overview of Survey Series

	Period	Target population	Respondents		Method	No. of valid responses
1st	June 16–18, 1973	National population aged 16 and over	Stratified two-stage random sampling	5,436 (18 × 302 spots)	Face-to-face interview	4,243 (78.1%)
2nd	June 24–25, 1978					4,240 (78.5%)
3rd	Sept. 3–4 1983					4,064 (75.3%)
4th	June 25–26, 1988			5,400 (12 × 450 spots)		3,853 (71.4%)
5th	Oct. 2–3 1993					3,814 (70.6%)
6th	Oct. 17–20, 1998					3,622 (67.1%)
7th	June 28–29, 2003					3,319 (61.5%)

³ The "points to remember" in implementing the survey were:

- Sample: For each round of the survey, select a new sample of 5,400 people aged 16 and older (12 people x 450 spots, selected by stratified two-stage sampling).
- Survey period: Conduct the survey from May to July (changed to either September or October for the third, fifth, and sixth surveys due to national elections held in these survey years).
- Instructions to implementing staff: Through briefings or meetings, ensure that all implementing staff receive the same instructions on conducting the survey.
- Survey materials: Do not alter the content of either the questionnaire, the response item list, the request for cooperation form or the implementation manual unless there is a major flaw or impediment in it.
- Survey method: Conduct the survey by face-to-face interviews.

mized by making those conditions as uniform as possible from one survey to the next.

THE BASES OF CHANGE IN VALUE ORIENTATIONS

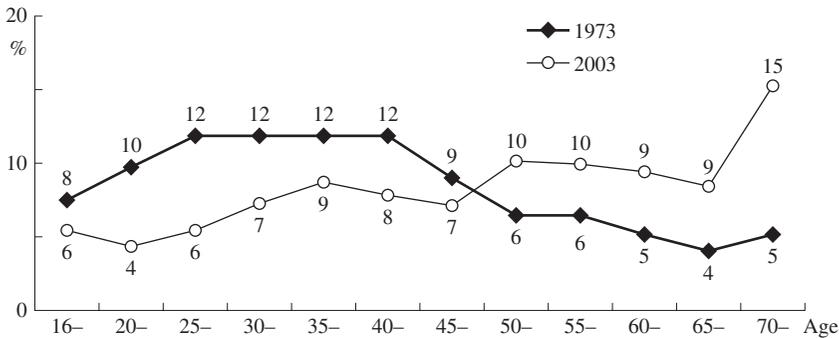
The changes in Japanese value orientations indicated by this survey are equivalent to variations in the distribution of attitudes among the Japanese people as a whole. More specifically, they are variations in the distribution of various opinions, ways of thinking, and attitudes among Japanese men and women aged 16 and over, as extrapolated from the findings of a scientific public opinion survey.

These variations in the distribution of attitudes may be attributed to changes in the composition of the Japanese population and in Japan's political, economic, and social conditions. It is useful, therefore, to begin with an overview of the societal changes of the past thirty years as the background to changes in attitudes over the same period.

Changes in the Composition of Society

Figure 3 shows the composition of the valid survey sample by age for the first (1973) and most recent (2003) surveys. The inversion of the younger and older age brackets in terms of numbers of respondents reflects the growing

Figure 3. Change in Sample Composition by Age



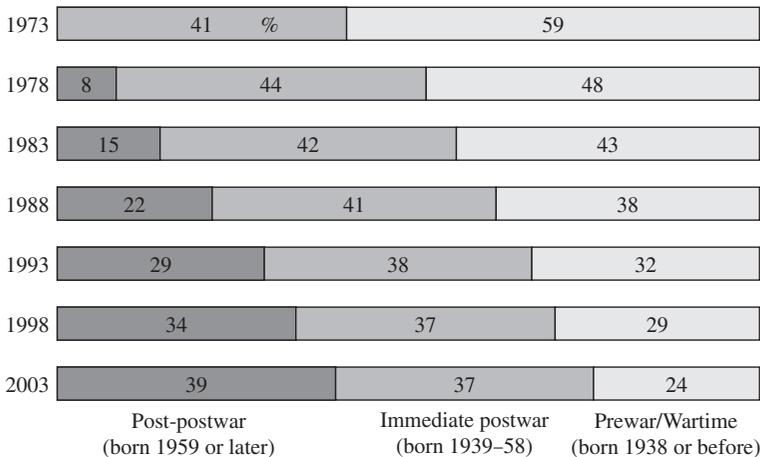
- In order to fulfill the above conditions as thoroughly as possible, implement the survey through NHK's nationwide organization.
- Do not change the method for correcting response errors when collecting, checking, or tabulating the questionnaires.
- Record reasons for failure to implement the survey and other conditions of implementation, and refer to that record when comparing the results of each survey with the others in the series.

trends of birth-rate decline and population aging over the three decades of the survey series.

The end of World War II brought a surge in democratization in Japan and with it sweeping changes in Japanese institutions and ways of thinking. Successive periods, characterized by economic prosperity, economic recession, and the development of communication and information systems, have had a tremendous impact on the Japanese people. Since the nature of shared historical experience presumably has a significant influence on the thinking and behavior of people in each historical period, it is illuminating to consider changes in the generational composition of the sample as well (see Figure 4). For this purpose we have divided the sample into three generations, called the prewar/wartime, immediate postwar, and post-postwar generations. The distinction between the prewar/wartime and the immediate postwar generations is marked by the introduction of the postwar public education system. People born in 1939 were the first to begin elementary school under the new education system. For the purposes of this survey, they are thus the first of the immediate postwar generation, while people born in 1938 or earlier constitute the prewar/wartime generation. To distinguish the immediate postwar from the post-postwar generation, we defined the latter as people who turned 16 years of age in the thirtieth postwar year and everyone younger—or in other words, people born in 1959 or later. The immediate postwar generation is thus comprised of people born between 1939 and 1958.

As Figure 4 shows, the prewar/wartime generation accounted for almost 60 percent of the sample in 1973, but shrank to 24 percent in 2003. Meanwhile,

Figure 4. Change in Sample Composition by Generation



the post-postwar generation has become the largest group, at 39 percent. The generational structure of the sample has thus changed markedly. Looking at this in “life stage” terms, and taking the span of one generation to be thirty years, we see that the so-called “new breed” of Japanese (*shinjinrui*), who were in high school thirty years ago, are now themselves old enough to be parents of high-school-age children.

Let’s look now at the changes in sample composition by occupation (Figure 5) and educational background (Figure 6). In the breakdown by occupation,

Figure 5. Change in Sample Composition by Occupation

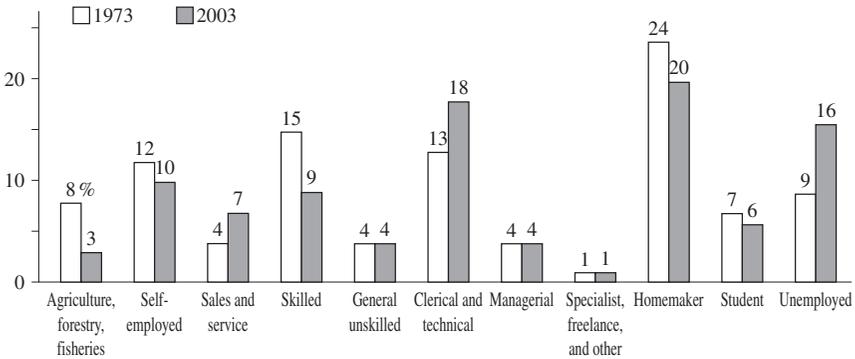
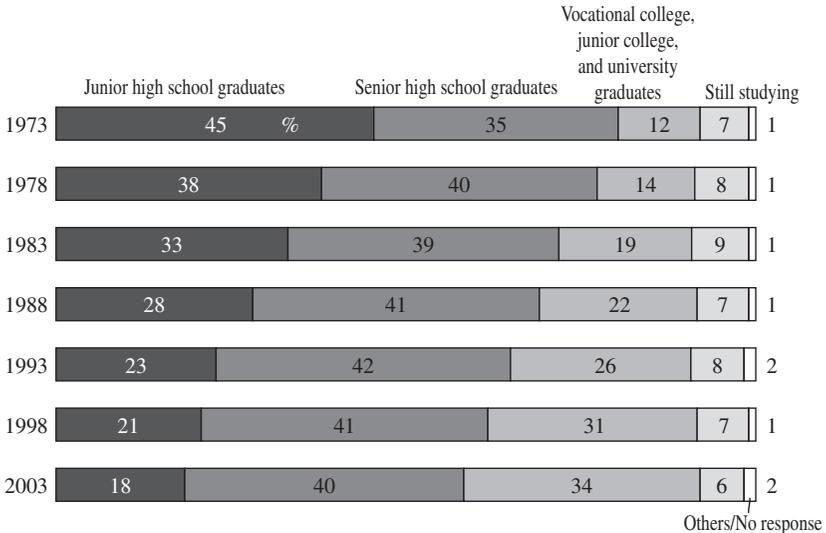


Figure 6. Change in Sample Composition by Educational Background



the salient changes over the past thirty years have been the fall in the share accounted for by agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; the rise in that of clerical and technical workers; the decline in number of fulltime homemakers; and the rise in the unemployed. In the breakdown by education, we see a marked decrease in people whose education went no further than junior high school, and a marked increase in the proportion of university graduates. These results reflect a number of changes in Japanese society—including the shift toward tertiary industry, greater advances by women into the workplace and society, economic recession, and the popularization of higher education—that significantly affect what we have defined as “variations in the distribution of value orientations of the Japanese as a whole.”

The Changing Times

The vicissitudes of economic and political conditions complicate changes in the distribution of attitudes. In the economic realm, such vicissitudes include the effects of the oil shock of 1973 and of the economic downturn that, triggered by the 1993 collapse of the inflated “bubble” economy, deteriorated into a full-blown recession in 1998. In the political and social realms, they include the end of the Vietnam War in 1975; the Lockheed Scandal of 1976; the enforcement in 1986 of the Law on Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women; the death of the Showa Emperor and the fall of the Berlin Wall, both in 1989; the restructuring of Japan’s political scene after the splitting of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1993; the Great Hanshin–Awaji Earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyo cult sarin attack in 1995; the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001; and the Iraq War of 2003.

When a certain trend in Japanese society causes a large proportion of the population to undergo an attitudinal shift in the same direction, it also leads to “variations in the distribution of value orientations of the Japanese as a whole.” In most cases, the source of information about such trends takes the form of the mass media.

THIRTY YEARS OF ATTITUDES BY TOPIC AREA

What are people’s expectations of the nation’s political leadership? The survey asks respondents to choose one of the following seven responses to the question “What is currently the most important issue that politics should address?”

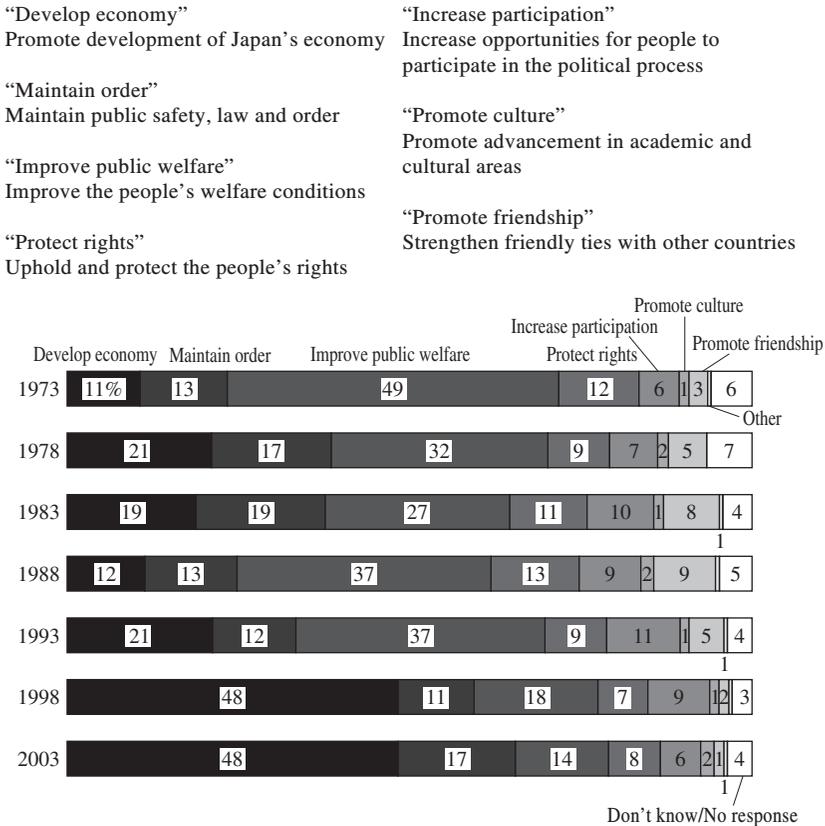
1. Maintain public safety, law and order (“Maintain order”)
2. Promote development of Japan’s economy (“Develop the economy”)
3. Improve the people’s welfare conditions (“Improve public welfare”)

4. Uphold and protect the people’s rights (“Protect rights”)
5. Promote advancement in academic and cultural areas (“Promote culture”)
6. Increase opportunities for people to participate in the political process (“Increase participation”)
7. Strengthen friendly ties with other countries (“Promote friendship”)

Political Issues Reflecting Stringent Conditions

As shown in Figure 7, in the first survey and every subsequent survey up to 1993, the response chosen by the greatest share of respondents was “improve public welfare,” but in the 1998 and 2003 surveys, it was “develop economy.” The results for these two choices show the greatest variation of all responses over the 30-year history of the survey.

Figure 7. Most Important Current Political Issue



In 2003, Japan's economic climate was grim. From 2001 to 2003, Japan recorded negative year-on-year nominal economic growth for three consecutive years (Cabinet Office, "National Accounts"); there was a surge in bankruptcies of financial institutions and other corporations; public funds were poured into the bailing out of a number of major banks; and a number of reorganizations took place among financial institutions. In 2003, Japan's unemployment rate stood at 5.3 percent (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Employment Status Survey"), the second highest it has been in 50 years (it was highest in 2002); and the employment rate for new university graduates was the lowest ever, at 55.1 percent (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "Basic Survey on Schools").

The trend in the share of respondents who chose "develop economy" for this question is closely linked to the plight of the Japanese economy over the same 30-year period. In 1973, the last year of Japan's economic boom period, only 11 percent of respondents chose this response. Between then and 1978, a period that included the economic disruption caused by the oil shock, that share of the sample virtually doubled, to 21 percent. In 1988, at the height of the "bubble" economy, it shrank again to 12 percent. In 1993, after the bubble's collapse, it increased once more, and in 1998, amid the so-called Heisei Recession, it jumped to more than double the 1993 figure. In 2003, it remained at the same high water mark as in 1998, reflecting the prolonged and serious nature of the slump. A trend can thus be identified whereby few people choose the "develop economy" option when the economy is relatively healthy, while many choose it in times of economic crisis.

In the 2003 survey, the share accounted for by the "maintain order" response increased, overtaking "improve public welfare" for the first time to take second place. Concern about deteriorating conditions of public safety and order is growing. The Cabinet Office's July 2004 "Public Opinion Survey on Public Safety and Order" reports that as many as 55 percent of Japanese do not think "the conditions of public safety, peace and order are good and one can live with peace of mind." When asked what type of crime they are concerned might affect them directly, while many respondents in that survey indicated crimes such as "burglary" and "pickpocketing and purse-snatching," there were also 15 percent who chose "an act of terrorism by an international terrorist group or similar group." We can infer that the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, other recent acts of terrorism around the world, and the decline in the arrest rate in Japan are among the factors fanning this growing sense of insecurity.

Still No Recovery of Sense of Political Efficacy

Many respondents put such tasks as “develop the economy” and “maintain order” at the top of the current political agenda, but a related question concerns the extent to which they think the views of the general public are reflected in political affairs. “Political efficacy” is feeling people have that, to the extent that they appeal to and act upon the political process, it will have a commensurate effect on political reality. The survey asks respondents about the strength of their sense of political efficacy in regard to three forms of political influence: public opinion, direct action (protest demonstrations, petitions, etc.), and voting in elections.

Public opinion

In regard to public opinion, respondents were asked to choose one of the following responses to the question “How well do you think the views and aspirations of the general public are reflected in political affairs?”

1. Very well reflected (Strong)
2. Rather well reflected (Fairly strong)
3. Somewhat reflected (Fairly weak)
4. Not reflected at all (Weak)

Figure 8 shows that, even at the time of the first survey in 1973, respondents who had a sense of the political efficacy of public opinion (the “strong” plus “fairly strong” group) already accounted for a much smaller proportion (22 percent) than those who did not feel it had political efficacy (the “weak” plus

Figure 8. Sense of Political Efficacy: Reflection of Public Opinion (Overall sample)



“fairly weak” group; 71 percent). From then until the 1993 survey, the latter group increased steadily. With the 1998 survey, however, the number of respondents with the most critical view of the political efficacy of public opinion—those who felt it was not reflected in politics at all—rose sharply. Although this share shrank somewhat in the 2003 survey, it did not return to the level of a decade earlier.

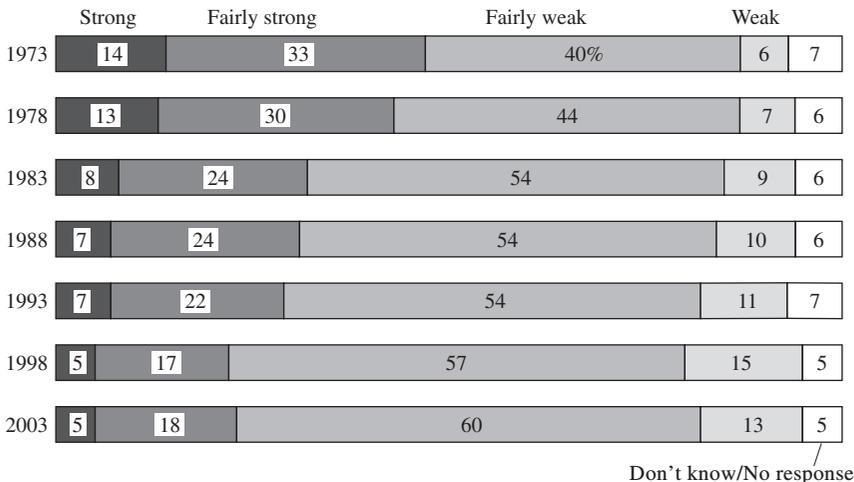
The breakdown of these responses by occupation is also characterized by a significant increase in the choice of “weak” even by conservative occupational groups—“agriculture, forestry and fisheries” and “managerial”—who in the past tended not to choose that option. Furthermore, the fact that the “sales and service” group accounts for the largest share of respondents who chose “weak” is presumably because those are occupations in which sales performance is directly affected by the recession.

Direct action

In terms of its influence on politics, public opinion operates at a broad, general level. At a more concrete level is the case of direct action—demonstrations, petitions, and other kinds of specific, self-motivated activities aimed at getting one’s opinion heard in the political arena. Respondents were given the following four choices to indicate how far they thought politics was affected by direct action:

1. Has very great political efficacy (Strong)
2. Has significant political efficacy (Fairly strong)

Figure 9. Sense of Political Efficacy: Direct Action (Overall sample)



3. Has some efficacy (Fairly weak)
4. Has no efficacy (Weak)

The results for this question are shown in Figure 9. Thirty years ago, the shares of respondents who felt direct action had political efficacy (the “strong” plus “fairly strong” group) and those who felt it did not (the “weak” plus “fairly weak” group) were more or less equal, at 47 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

In the 1970s, protest demonstrations and other direct action figured in a number of major developments, including the defeat of labor in a series of strikes for the right to strike (1975) and the end of the Vietnam War (1975). From the mid-1970s on, however, protest movements fiercely critical of the Japanese political establishment began to gradually fade away, and the downturn in the economy has altered the nature of labor activism as well.

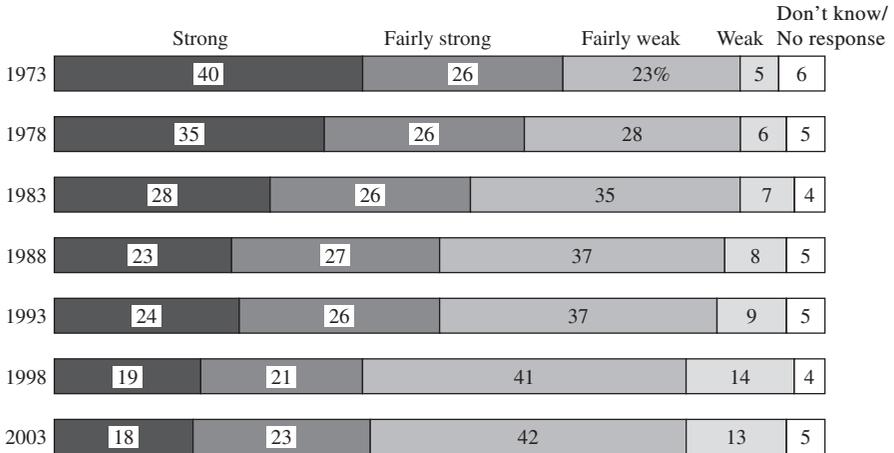
This shift in the mood of the times is evident in the 1983 survey, in which the sense of the political efficacy of direct action began to wane considerably as the “fairly weak” view expanded to more than half the respondents. Analysis of the “strong” plus “fairly strong” share by occupation shows that, in 1973, that share was highest in the “managerial” category, followed by the “self-employed” and “agriculture, forestry, and fisheries” categories, accounting for more than half of the respondents in all three cases. This indicates that many people in occupations with established political pressure groups felt at that time that direct political action was effective. In 1978, however, the “strong” plus “fairly strong” share shrinks markedly among both management-type (“managerial”) and labor-type (“clerical and technical”) groups.

Voting in elections

Elections allow everyone with the right to vote—in Japan this means every Japanese citizen 20 years of age or older—to express his or her political opinions by way of the ballot. This is the final area in regard to which the survey seeks to gauge people’s sense of political efficacy. Respondents were asked, “To what degree do you think the general public’s voting in National Diet elections influences political affairs?” and were given the same response options as in the question on direct action.

Looking at the trend of the overall sample (Figure 10), we see that in 1973 respondents who felt elections had political efficacy (the “strong” plus “fairly strong” group) far outweighed those who did not (the “weak” plus “fairly weak” group), by 66 percent to 28 percent. This indicates that in 1973 many people felt that voting made a difference. Thereafter, however, the share of respondents who felt this way steadily decreased, the gap between them and

Figure 10. Sense of Political Efficacy: Elections (Overall sample)

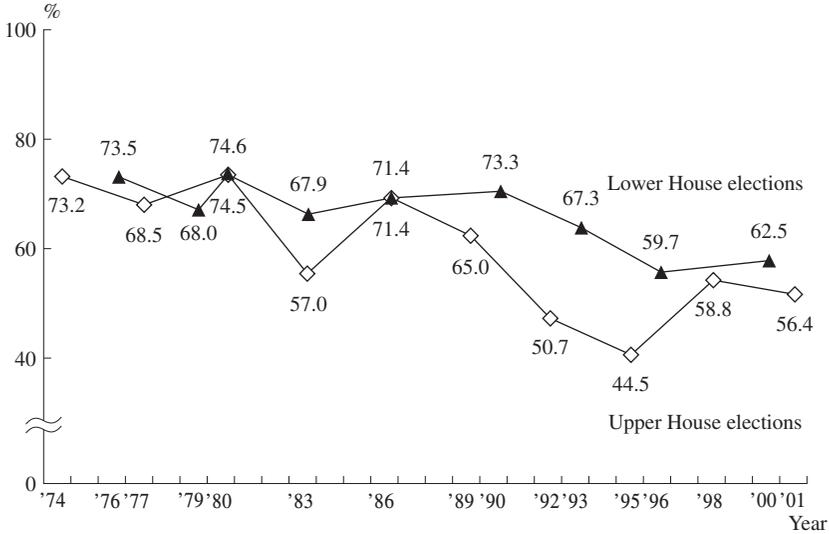


those who disagreed narrowing to just 50 percent and 45 percent, respectively, in the 1988 survey.

The figures for the 1993 survey showed almost no change from those of 1988. This reflects the fact that the 1993 survey was conducted in October that year, after the LDP lost its Lower House majority in the July election and ceded power in August to a non-LDP coalition government led by Hosokawa Morihiro. An NHK survey conducted one month after the launch of the Hosokawa government showed that it enjoyed a formidable 70 percent support rating.

But just when it seemed that the ousting of the LDP for the first time since its inception in 1955 had checked the decline in people’s sense of the efficacy of elections, the downward trend returned in the 1998 survey. For the first time since the survey series began, the balance of negative (“fairly weak” plus “weak”) to positive (“strong” plus “fairly strong”) responses tipped in favor of the former, at 55 percent to 40 percent, respectively. In 2003, the figures for this question were almost identical to those of 1998, indicating another pause in the decline in confidence in election efficacy, presumably due to renewed hopes for a political shakeup under the Koizumi Jun’ichiro government and its program of structural reform.

Figure 11 shows the trend of actual voter turnout for national elections during the period of the survey series. With the exceptions of 1980 and 1986, when simultaneous Upper and Lower House elections were held, and after 1998, when regulations governing absentee voting were relaxed, actual voter turnout shows an overall downward trend that matches the decline in people’s confidence in the efficacy of elections.

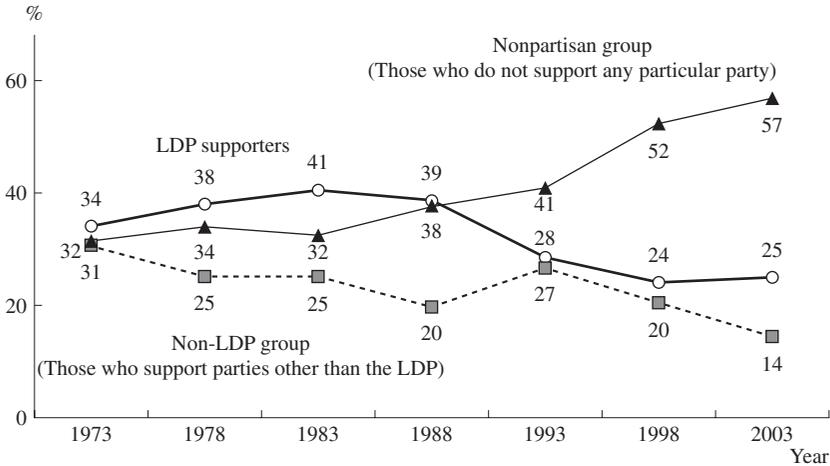
Figure 11. Voter Turnout for National Elections

In terms of perceived efficacy (the combined “strong” plus “fairly strong” ratios), the three forms of political action addressed in the survey currently rank in the following order: elections (41 percent), direct action (23 percent), and public opinion (10 percent). In other words, more than half the people feel that even elections have little effect, an even larger majority of them regard direct action as having little effect, and an overwhelming 90 percent of the population feels that public opinion is not adequately reflected in political affairs.

Continuing Trend of Nonpartisanship

For the question “What political party do you usually support?” respondents were asked to write the name of their preferred party (one only) rather than choose from a list of options. The results are represented in Figure 12 as three groups: LDP supporters, the non-LDP group (who support other parties), and the nonpartisan group (who do not support any particular party). The nonpartisan group became the largest with the 1993 survey and has continued to increase its share from that point on.

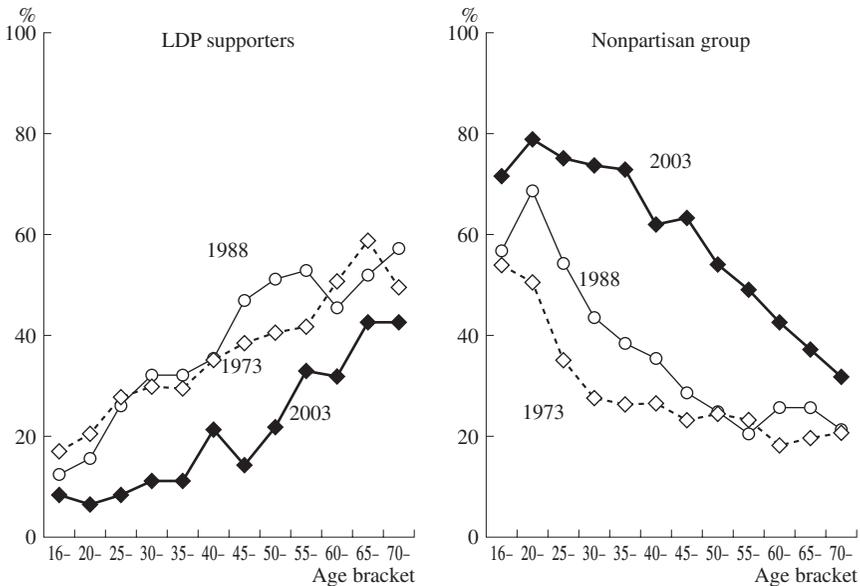
In August 1993, the first non-LDP government in 38 years was born when Japan New Party leader Hosokawa Morihiro was designated prime minister by both houses of the Diet. Over the next five years up to the 1998 survey, Japan’s political parties underwent a series of realignments, and governing power passed from another non-LDP coalition to an LDP-led coalition. The

Figure 12. Political Party Support Rates

breakdown of 1993 survey results for non-LDP supporters by individual party shows that, with the exception of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which had 8 percent, each of the other opposition parties scored support rates of less than 5 percent. Meanwhile, the nonpartisan group's share climbed to 52 percent, more than doubling the 24 percent accounted for by LDP supporters. In April 2001, Koizumi Jun'ichiro swept the LDP presidential primaries on a platform of structural reform, and on the tailwind of his popularity the LDP emerged from the Upper House election in July that year not only victorious but gaining seats in that chamber the first time in several years. The 2003 survey also shows a slight increase in LDP support over the 1998 figure, from 24 to 25 percent. Meanwhile, the ratio of support for the DPJ, which at that point had yet to absorb the Liberal Party, was just 5 percent, while that for each of the other opposition parties was even lower. On the other side of the balance, the drift toward nonpartisanship had reached serious proportions, with 57 percent of respondents indicating they did not have any particular party preference. The sharp rise in the nonpartisan group over the ten years to 2003 has resulted less from losses in the LDP group than from those in the non-LDP group, support for which has been in steady decline since the brief upturn in 1993.

In the contest for public support, the LDP has thus been dramatically toppled from the top spot by the growing trend of not supporting any specific parties. Further analysis of the results for LDP support and nonpartisanship reveals what changes in which strata of the population are behind this trend.

Analysis in terms of rural-urban disparity shows that this disparity is nar-

Figure 13. Political Party Support Rates by Age

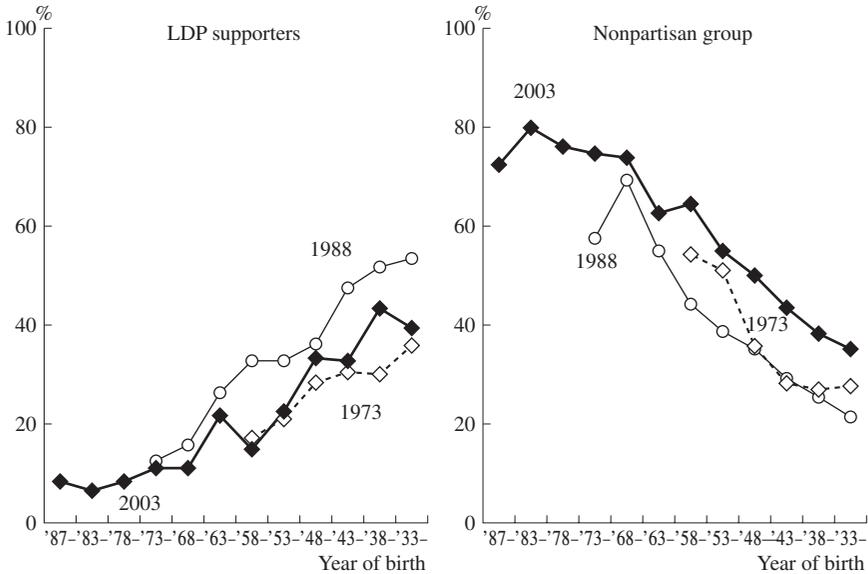
rowing in both groups. Looking at the case of LDP support, we see that the gap between rural and urban support for the LDP is closing as LDP support continues to decline in rural areas from its 1983 peak. Thus, even in the traditional heartland of LDP support, the LDP is losing favor.

In the breakdown by age (Figure 13), all surveys show the trends of greater LDP support the higher the age bracket and greater nonpartisanship the lower the age bracket. Overall, however, there is considerable variation of the age-breakdown results depending on the survey year.

The breakdown by year of birth (Figure 14) shows less variation among the different survey years than was evident in the breakdown by age. This indicates that, to some extent, people's tendencies in supporting political parties (or choosing nonpartisanship) remain constant within each generation. The results show that generation is a major factor affecting the size of each of these two groups (LDP supporters and nonpartisans). Figure 14 suggests that a given individual is highly unlikely to change from nonpartisan to LDP supporter as he or she gets older. The differences among the different survey years can be attributed to the fact that, under the affects of changing political conditions, conversion to nonpartisanship is increasing across the generations.

In summary, these analyses by various attributes show that, with the rural sector being no longer the LDP vote mine it once was, and with the flow of

Figure 14. Political Party Support Rates by Year of Birth



generational change, conditions get worse for the LDP and the trend of non-partisanship gains momentum.

Association and Activism

Social and political association and activism are modern forms of behavior for protecting the rights of the individual. The styles of social and political behavior typical in Japan were once widely known to be, unlike those of the middle class in Britain or the United States, conspicuously lacking in proactive modes of association and activism. After World War II, with freedom of association guaranteed by the new postwar Constitution, citizens’ movements and labor union activities to protect the rights of the individual became more common. We have already seen that people’s sense of the efficacy of political activity is waning. In the same connection, the survey asks respondents what kind of approach ordinary citizens should take in regard to political and other kinds of activities in society. The purpose of these questions is to enable us to infer from the responses the nature and degree of people’s willingness to participate in the broader political process. In respect to three contexts—politics, the workplace, and the community—respondents are asked to choose from three behavior patterns the one that best describes what they would do in each situation. The three behavior patterns in each case indicate, respectively, a non-

associative attitude (remaining passive), a strong associative attitude (taking action), or a middle-ground attitude (asking someone else to act).

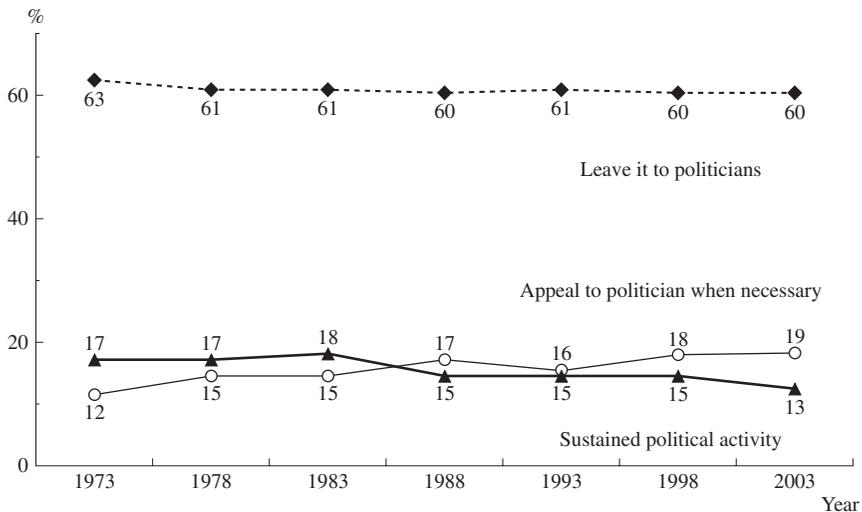
More people under 40 willing to approach politicians

Regarding politics, respondents are asked which of the following represents the most appropriate form of political participation by ordinary citizens:

1. Elect competent politicians and leave them to act on our behalf as our representatives (Passive: leave it to politicians);
2. When a specific issue arises, ask the politicians we support to reflect our views on the matter in the political arena (Appeal to politicians when necessary);
3. Try to achieve our goals through sustained activities that boost our preferred party or group (Active: sustained political activity).

Looking at the 30-year trend for the overall sample (Figure 15), we see that the overwhelming majority of respondents take a passive, “leave it to politicians” attitude on this question. With the slight decline over the years in the active attitude (“sustained political activity”), its position relative to the “appeal to politicians when necessary” response has reversed and is currently lower than at any previous time since the survey series began. Meanwhile, the breakdown by age shows that, whereas in the 1973 survey age was seen to make little difference to these three attitudes to political behavior, since then there has been a marked change in attitudes among people under 40.

Figure 15. Political Association and Activism (Overall sample)



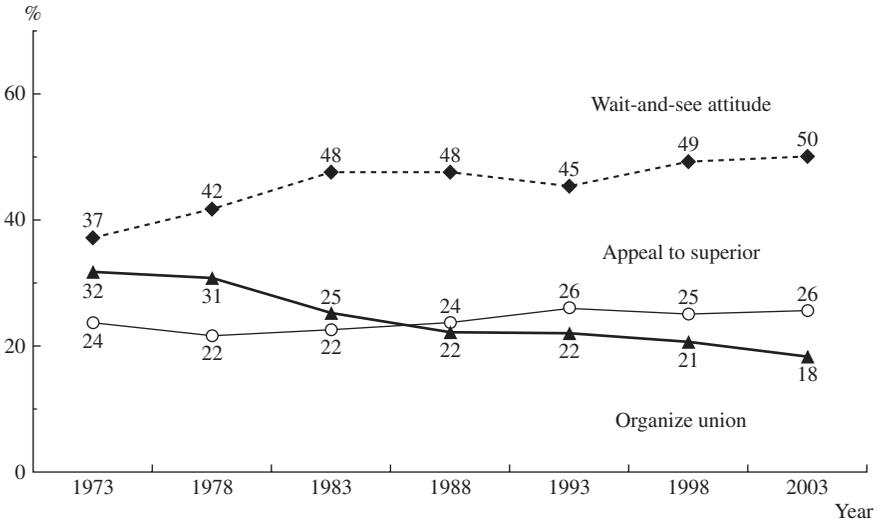
In the under-40 age group, the “leave it to politicians” attitude has declined while the “appeal to politicians when necessary” attitude has increased, narrowing the gap between the two. The number of under-forties advocating “sustained political activity” has also decreased significantly. As the statistics on voter turnout in elections also show, the trend toward political apathy among the younger generation of Japanese has been continuing for many years. On the other hand, an overall comparison reveals that it is not only young people who have little taste for proactive political participation. In fact, with their lower level of “leave it to politicians” passivity, people in the younger age group show greater willingness for the two more active options—“sustained political activity” and “appealing to politicians when necessary”—than is evident in the overall sample. In particular, the option of “appealing to politicians when necessary” is seen to be higher the lower the age bracket.

Post-1980s decline in labor union spirit

The number of respondents aware that the right to organize labor unions is guaranteed to the people by the Constitution was seen to decrease considerably in 1983. What, then, of people’s willingness to exercise that right of association? The survey poses the following question: “Suppose you are employed by a newly established company and that after a while you and many of your co-workers begin to feel very dissatisfied with the pay, working hours, and other working conditions. What would you do?” The response options were as follows:

1. Because it is a new company, the working conditions will probably improve gradually, so I would wait and see how the situation develops (Passive: wait-and-see attitude);
2. I would ask a superior in the company to act on our behalf to improve our working conditions (Appeal to superior);
3. I would join others in organizing a labor union and acting through it to improve our working conditions (Active: organize union).

The results, summarized in Figure 16, show that in 1973 the shares for the passive “wait-and-see attitude” and the active “organize union” attitude were roughly the same. By the 1980s, however, the results for these two attitudes had begun to diverge, with an increase in the “wait-and-see attitude” and a decline in the “organize union” approach. This drop in willingness to organize and take part in union activities in the workplace is linked to the decline in knowledge of the constitutional rights of association and the decline in the sense of the political efficacy of direct action. In the breakdown by occupation we find that the “organize union” response began to decrease in 1983 among

Figure 16. Association and Activism in the Workplace (Overall sample)

people employed in the “skilled,” “general unskilled,” and “clerical and technical” fields.

Lower level of “wait-and-see” attitude in community affairs

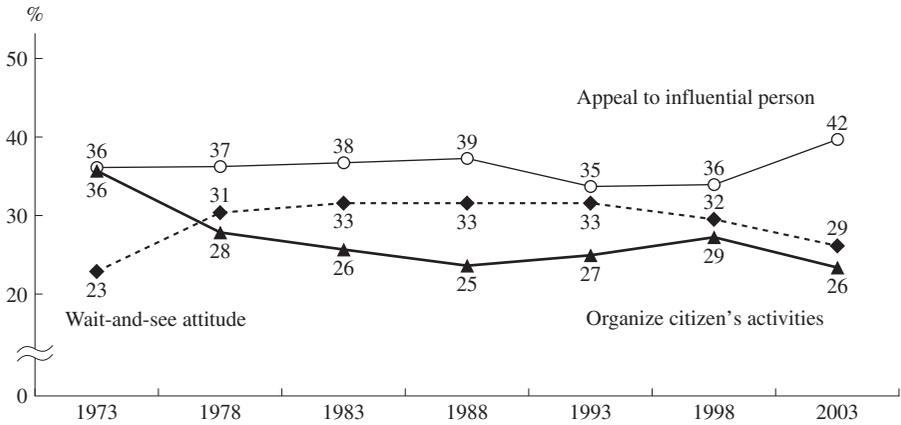
The question gauging associative inclinations in the community context was: “Suppose there arose a pollution problem in your community that posed a significant threat to the living environment. What would you do?” The response options were:

1. It’s best that such problems be resolved without unnecessary fuss, so for the time being I would wait and see how the situation develops (Passive: wait-and-see attitude);
2. I would ask an elected representative, public official, or other influential person to resolve the problem (Appeal to influential person);
3. I would join others in organizing and conducting citizens’ activities to resolve the problem (Active: organize citizens’ activities).

The year of the first survey in the series, 1973, was one of numerous pollution-related incidents and developments in Japan. The results for this question (Figure 17) show that in that year there was a high level of willingness to “organize citizens’ activities,” the share for that response equaling “appeal to influential person” even in the overall sample (both at 36 percent) and soaring to 50 percent in the under-30 age group.

Another feature that distinguishes the community-related results from those

Figure 17. Association and Activism in the Community (Overall sample)



on politics and the workplace is the comparatively low level of the “wait-and-see” attitude. This trend indicates that people are generally more likely to sense immediacy and urgency in regard to problems that threaten their living environment than in regard to other issues.

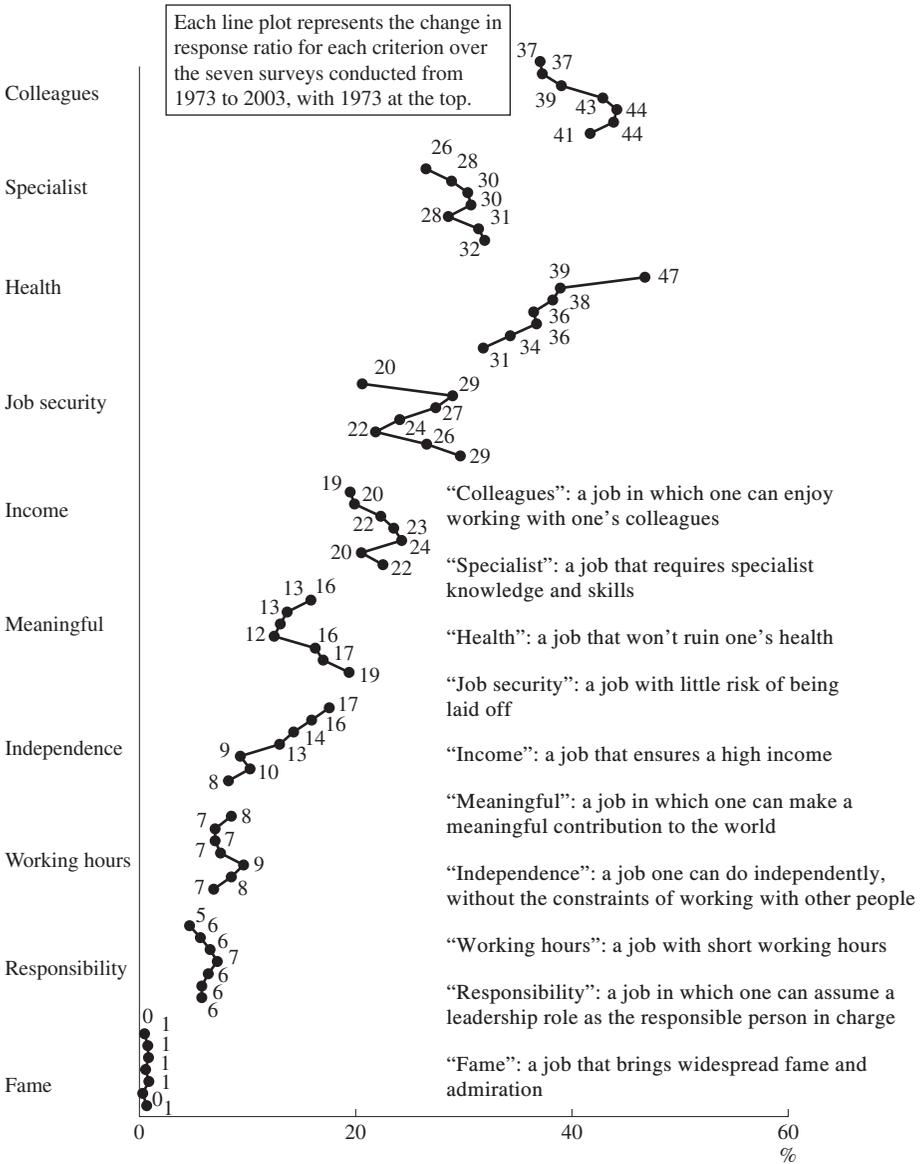
Changing Attitudes to Work

The prolonged economic slump is also affecting people’s attitudes to work. The survey lists ten job conditions and asks respondents to choose from the list their first and second preferences as the criteria of an ideal job. The trend of results for first and second choices combined (Figure 18) shows that Japanese attitudes to work have changed markedly over the past thirty years.

The ratio for “job security” turned upward in 1998 and in 2003 rose further to a series high of 29 percent. While it is only natural that jobs in the real world are affected by the prevailing economic climate, these results suggest that that influence is felt strongly even in people’s images of the ideal job. The share of respondents choosing “job security” increased sharply 25 years earlier as well, under the recession conditions that followed the 1973 oil shock. The subsequent trend for this choice also corresponds closely to the changing fortunes of the Japanese economy. Increasingly stringent economic conditions are prompting an increasingly high percentage of the population to regard employment security as an essential condition of the ideal job. In the breakdown of results for “job security” by age, a comparison of the 1993 and 2003 results shows a marked rise in this criterion among young people, narrowing the disparity between the lower and higher age brackets.

The criterion of “colleagues” (“a job in which one can enjoy working with one’s colleagues”) has remained a top-ranking choice throughout the survey

Figure 18. Criteria of Ideal Job (First and Second Choices)



series. In the 2003 survey, its share outstrips all others and is the only one above 40 percent.

The share for the “specialist” criterion (“a job that requires specialist knowledge and skills”) has increased gradually. This can be taken to indicate a growing desire to derive not only income but also self-fulfillment from one’s job.

The “health” criterion (“a job that won’t ruin one’s health”) was the top choice by far in the first, 1973 survey, but its share has continued to drop with almost every survey since. This indicates a shift in people’s perceptions of the relationship between work and health that can be attributed to, among other factors, the gradual disappearance of especially health-threatening jobs from the Japanese workplace.

The choice of “meaningful” (“a job in which one can make a meaningful contribution to the world”) has been on the increase since the 1993 survey, reaching a series high of 19 percent in the 2003 survey. This, too, indicates people’s increasing desire to derive spiritual, moral, and intellectual fulfillment from their work.

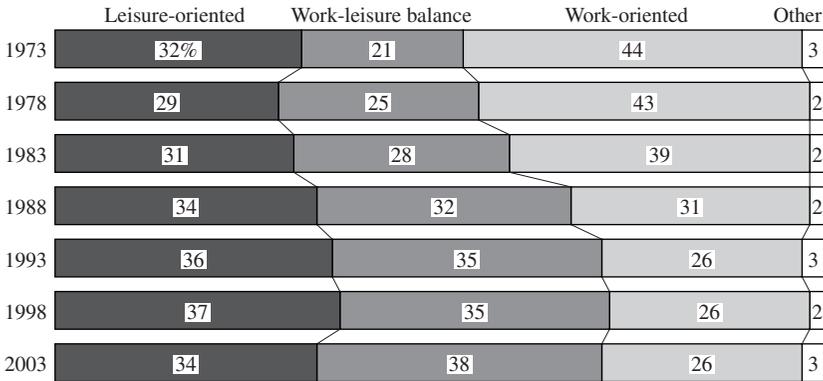
“Leisure-oriented” Ratio in Decline

A key element in the survey’s monitoring of long-range trends in life values is the question on the balance between work and leisure. In a society that experienced both the workaholism of Japan’s rapid economic growth period and the leisure boom of the “bubble economy” period, do people today place more emphasis on work or on leisure? Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following responses best describes their ideal of the work-leisure equation:

1. I seek fulfillment in my leisure pastimes rather than my work.
2. I try to get my work finished quickly so as to enjoy as much leisure time as possible.
3. I give equal priority to my work and my leisure pursuits.
4. I enjoy my leisure time but I give more energy to my work.
5. I seek fulfillment in and devote all my energy to my work.

Figure 19 shows the results, with response options 1 and 2 combined as “leisure-oriented,” options 4 and 5 combined as “work-oriented,” and option 3 represented as “work-leisure balance.”

The results indicate a shift toward emphasis on private life, with a steady decline in the orientation toward work (options 4 and 5) and increases in both the “leisure-oriented” (options 1 and 2) and “leisure-work balance” attitudes. The final five-year period, however, shows a drop in the “leisure-oriented”

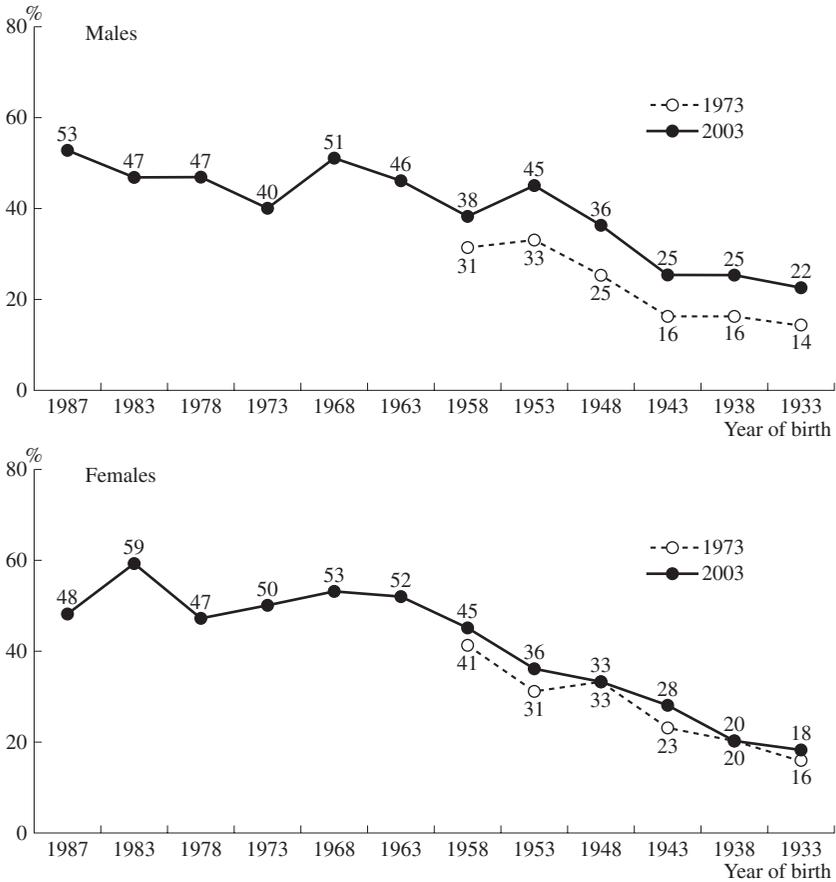
Figure 19. Emphasis on Work or Leisure

ratio for the first time in twenty-five years. A similar decline in this response was seen in the 1978 survey just after the oil crises earlier in the 1970s. This suggests that people's aspirations for greater leisure are restrained during times of economic hardship. Figure 20 shows the breakdown by year of birth of male and female respondents who chose "work-leisure balance" in the 1973 and 2003 surveys. In 2003, the prevalence of this attitude was higher the younger the generation and lower the older the generation for both men and women. Comparing this distribution with that of the 1973 survey, we find that, whereas the two lines more or less overlap on the women's graph, on the men's they show a similar incline but with a constant range of increase between the 1973 and 2003 results. These results suggest that the overall rise in the "work-leisure balance" response is due to a combination of generational shift and changing attitudes among men.

Patriotic Sentiment Stable, National Confidence in Decline

The functions and forms of nationalism are complex and diverse. This survey focuses on two aspects of nationalism: patriotic sentiment toward the nation and confidence in Japan vis-à-vis other countries. The questions concerning the former aspect are designed to gauge the degree of emotional identification (solidarity) with the Japanese nation. The questions concerning the latter aspect are designed to gauge the degree of nationalistic sentiment rooted in such identification that can lead under certain circumstances to chauvinism. The latter group of questions is also designed to elucidate, against the background of Japan's economic development, whether those sentiments are getting stronger or weaker with the spread of international communication and the postwar Constitution's principles of peace and international cooperation.

Figure 20. “Work-Leisure Balance” Ratios, by Gender and Year of Birth



For the three questions gauging patriotism, respondents were asked to indicate whether they did or did not feel:

1. proud to be born Japanese;
2. a strong affinity for Japanese traditions (e.g., at the sight of old temples or houses); and
3. a desire to serve Japan’s national interests in some way.

The results for these three questions (Figure 21) show that patriotism in the form of emotional identification with Japan has remained consistently high.

The three questions aimed at measuring confidence in Japan vis-à-vis other countries asked respondents to say whether they did or did not feel that:

1. The essential character of the Japanese is superior to that of people of other countries;
2. Japan has much to learn from other countries; and
3. Japan is a leading nation in the world.

After a peak in 1983, confidence in Japan vis-à-vis other countries has continued to decline, reaching its lowest ebb in the survey's history in 1998 and remaining there in 2003 (Figure 22). The fluctuation in national confidence

Figure 21. Patriotic Feelings about Japan (Overall sample)

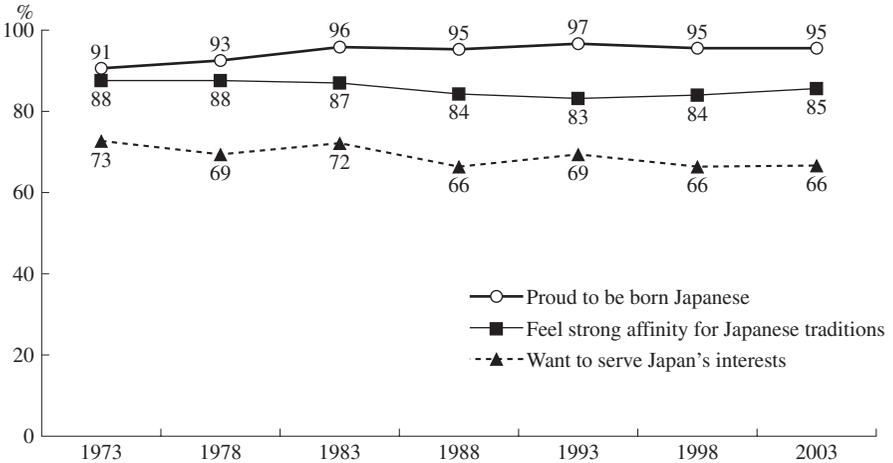
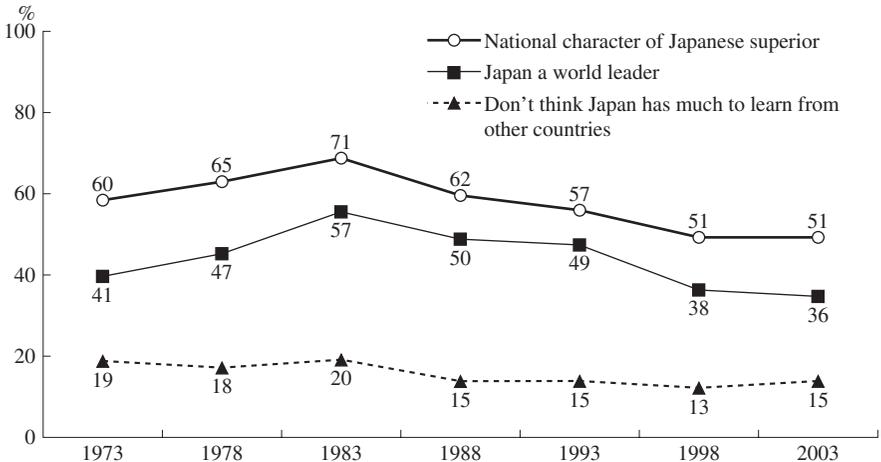


Figure 22. Confidence in Japan (Overall sample)



more or less mirrors Japan’s changing social conditions—as reflected in its fluctuating economic fortunes—over the same 30-year period.

Attitudes toward the Emperor

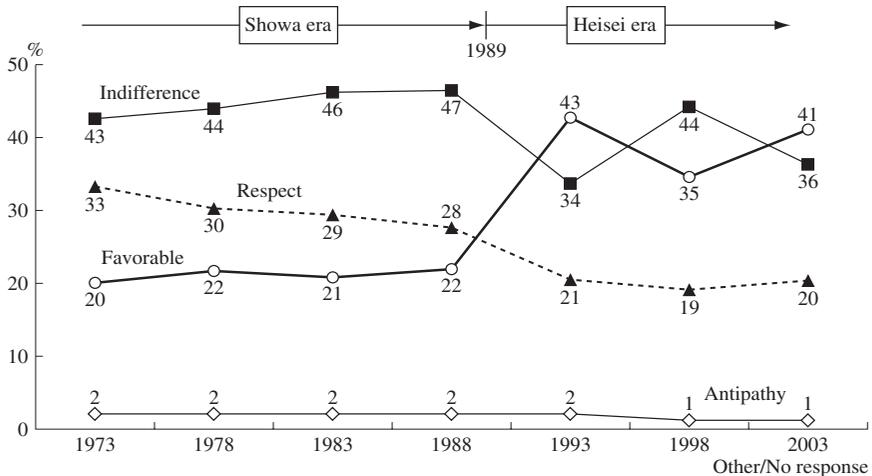
Up to and during World War II, Japan’s imperial institution had a considerable effect on the thinking and beliefs of Japanese. Under the current Constitution of Japan, the emperor’s status was officially changed to that of “symbol of the State and of the unity of the people.” The inclusion in this survey of a question on attitudes toward the emperor is based on the hypothesis that people’s feelings and views about the emperor are interconnected with their attitudes on politics, way of life, and other topics. It should be noted here that, with the death of Emperor Showa (Hirohito) in 1989, the surveys from 1993 on were conducted after the accession to the throne of his son, Emperor Akihito.

Respondents were asked to choose from the following four response options to the question “What kind of feelings do you currently have toward the emperor?”

1. Deep respect (Respect)
2. Favorable feelings (Favorable)
3. No particular feelings either way (Indifference)
4. Feelings of antipathy (Antipathy)

Figure 23 shows the trend for all respondents over the thirty years of the survey series. The results show a basic shift from “indifference” to “favorable feelings” toward the emperor. In the 1998 survey, “indifference” overtook “favorable feelings,” but in the 2003 survey those responses switched places

Figure 23. Attitudes toward the Emperor



in the ranking again. This can be attributed in part to the birth of Princess Aiko to Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako in December 2001, with scenes of the Crown Prince and Princess as parents subsequently receiving extensive media coverage and being well received by the Japanese public.

The results for this question differ markedly with the change of eras in 1989 from Showa to Heisei. Leaving aside the “indifferent” group, we see that feelings of “respect” toward the emperor prevailed in the Showa era, but “favorable feelings” toward the emperor are more prevalent in the Heisei era.

Feelings toward the emperor are seen to vary markedly from generation to generation (Figure 24). Whereas the ratio of respondents who feel “respect” for the emperor is high among people of the prewar/wartime generation, it is considerably lower among those of both later generations. Even after the accession to the throne of the new emperor, there remains a wide gap in thinking between the generation of Japanese brought up to think of the emperor as a “living god” and the subsequent generations who regard him as a “symbol” of the nation.

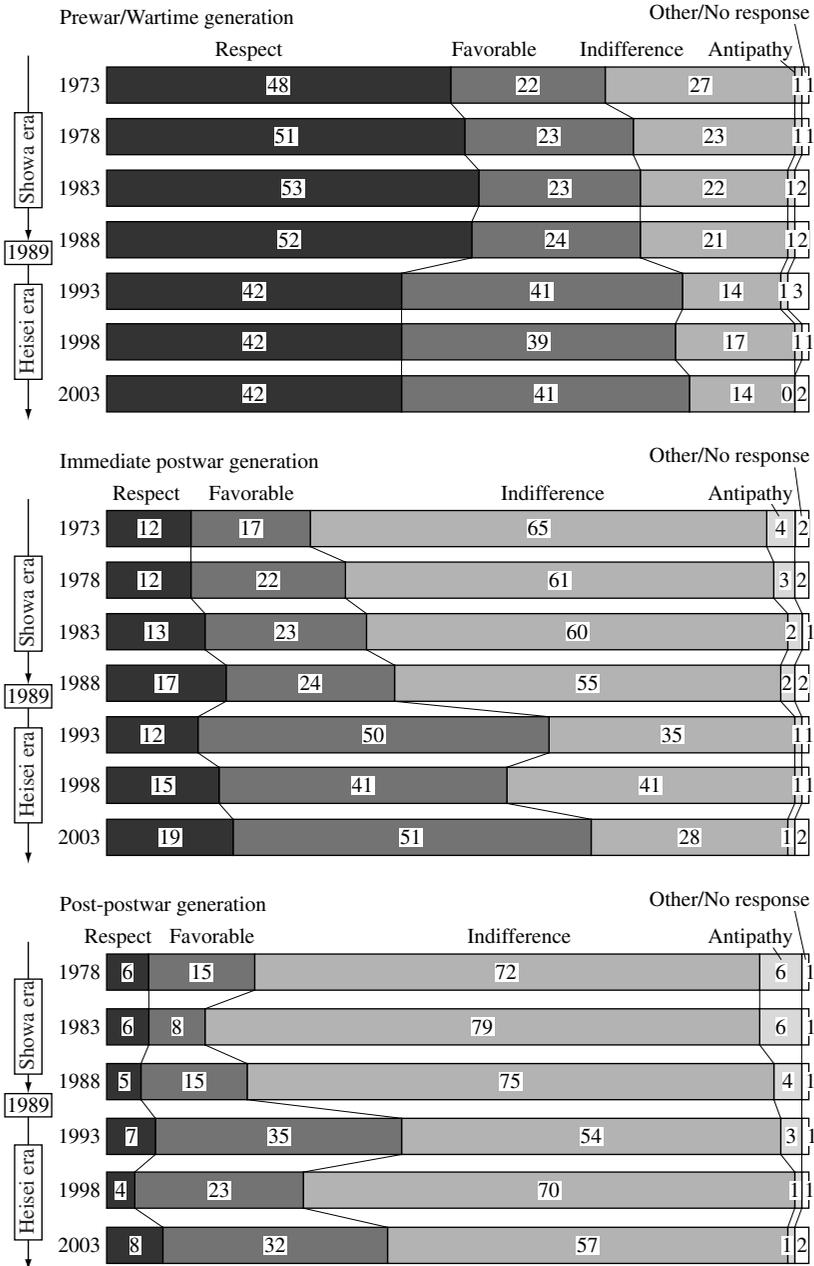
Family and Gender Relations

With the nation’s defeat in World War II and the extensive reforms carried out over the subsequent period under Allied Occupation, Japanese society underwent dramatic changes. Reforms were instituted in its political and educational systems, and the civil code was extensively revised in line with the spirit of Article 24 of the new (postwar) Constitution, which upholds the principles of “individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes” in family and gender relations.

In former times, when the family home was also a key site of production in Japanese society, it was common for both parents to work. However, with the industrialization that followed the Meiji Restoration (1868), the resulting separation of production from domestic life gave rise to the “modern family” based on the division of gender roles, with men going out to work and women staying home to keep house and care for children. This model, which first took root among the urban middle class during the Taisho era (1912–26), spread rapidly throughout the general population during the post-World War II period of rapid economic growth. The postwar economic boom also created employment in urban areas, and the resulting influx of young people into the cities undermined the strength of the traditional rural extended family and the urban nuclear family became the more common norm.

The survey poses questions in a number of contexts to monitor whether or not and in what ways attitudes concerning gender roles, family, marriage, and other social institutions are changing.

Figure 24. Attitudes toward the Emperor by Generation



Desirable home life: Shift from “division of roles” to “cooperation at home”

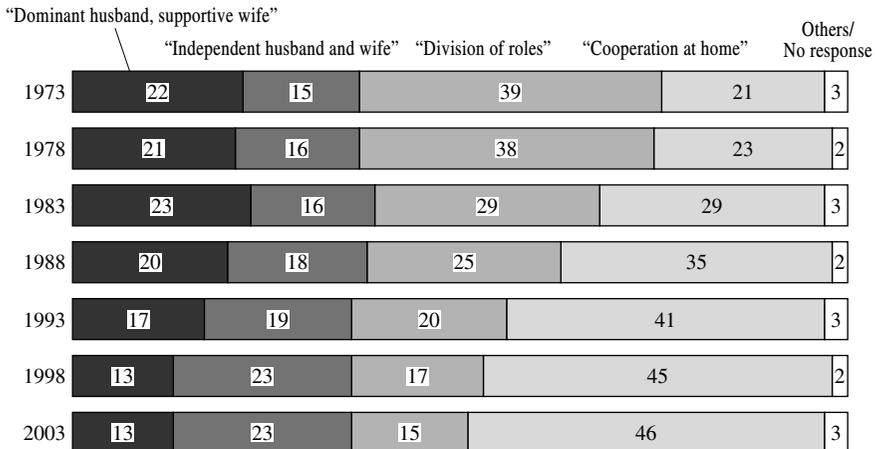
One question asks respondents to choose from the following options the one that best fits their image of an ideal arrangement for home life:

1. The father has full authority as head of the household, while the mother supports him with total devotion (“Dominant husband, supportive wife”)
2. Both father and mother devote themselves to their own jobs and interests (“Independent husband and wife”)
3. The father devotes himself to his work, while the mother devotes herself to household duties (“Division of roles”)
4. The father pays some attention to home life as well as work, while the mother concentrates on creating and maintaining a comfortable home environment (“Cooperation at home”)

Figure 25 shows the results of this question for the overall sample. Over the period of the survey so far, the ratio of respondents who prefer a “division of roles” has decreased with every survey, shrinking from 39 percent, the largest

Figure 25. Image of Ideal Home

- “Dominant husband, supportive wife”: The father has full authority as head of the household, while the mother supports him with total devotion.
- “Independent husband and wife”: Both father and mother devote themselves to their own jobs and interests.
- “Division of roles”: The father devotes himself to his work, while the mother devotes herself to her household duties.
- “Cooperation at home”: The father pays some attention to home life as well as work, while the mother concentrates on creating and maintaining a comfortable home environment.



share 30 years ago, to just 15 percent in 2003. Meanwhile, the ratio of those advocating “cooperation at home” has grown from 21 percent to a top-ranking 46 percent.

Home life and employment for women: Percentage advocating “balance” grows to half

A key factor in women’s independence is whether or not they remain in the workforce, and the nature of home and family life is greatly affected by whether or not the wife continues to work.

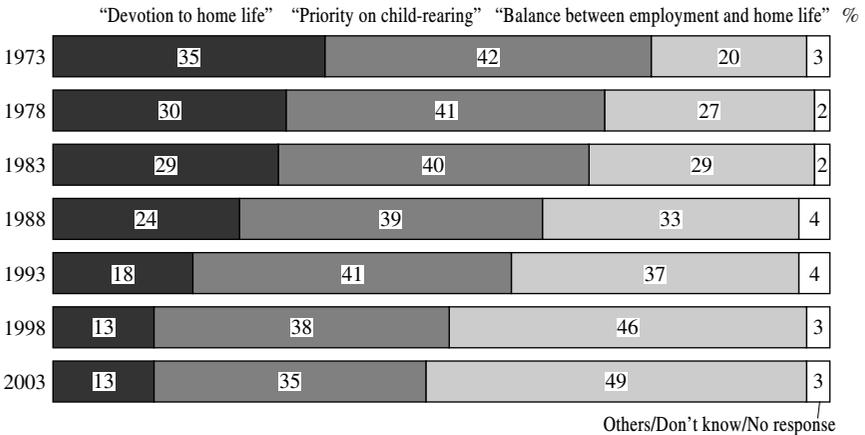
The survey asks respondents which of the following best describes their view on women working after marriage.

1. When a woman marries, she should concentrate on taking care of the home (“Devotion to home life”)
2. Even after a woman has married, she should continue working until she has children (“Priority on child-rearing”)
3. Even after a woman has married and had children, she should, as far as possible, continue working (“Balance between employment and home life”)

Looking first at the results for the overall sample (Figure 26), we see that the

Figure 26. Home Life and Employment for Women

- “Devotion to home life”: When a woman marries, she should concentrate on taking care of the home.
- “Priority on child-rearing”: Even after a woman has married, she should continue working until she has children.
- “Balance between employment and home life”: Even after a woman has married and had children, she should, as far as possible, continue working.



share accounted for by people advocating a “balance between employment and home life” was the smallest in the first survey 30 years ago but has increased with every survey since, becoming the largest of the three in 1998 and growing further over the next five years to 49 percent in 2003. The breakdown of that 2003 percentage by gender reveals that more women (52 percent) than men (45 percent) advocate a balance of work and home life for women.

Looking at the 30-year trend by gender (Figure 27), we see that, among women, “balance” surpassed “devotion to home life” in 1978, and replaced “priority on child-rearing” at the top spot in 1993. Among men, by contrast, “balance” did not surpass “devotion to home life” until 1993, and rose to the top position above “priority on child-rearing” only in 2003. This shows that attitudinal change on this issue is significantly slower among men than among women.

Figure 28 shows the breakdown by age of men and women who chose the “balance” response in the 1973 and 2003 surveys. It shows a significant increase in this view among all age brackets for both men and women. These graphs can also be used to track the degree of attitude change over the 30-year period within a given age group. For example, the ratio of respondents who chose “balance” was 22 percent among women in their early twenties in 1973, but by 2003 it had risen to 52 percent among the same sector of the female population, who were then in their early fifties. Similarly, the ratio of early-thirties men who chose “balance” in 1973 was 17 percent, but in 2003, when that same population of men were in their early sixties, 45 percent of them chose that response. In other words, the view that women should maintain a balance between employment and home life has increased not only among

Figure 27. Home Life and Employment for Women, by Gender

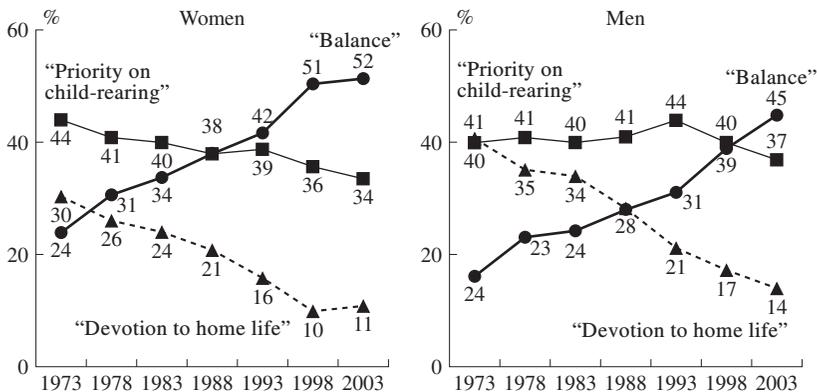
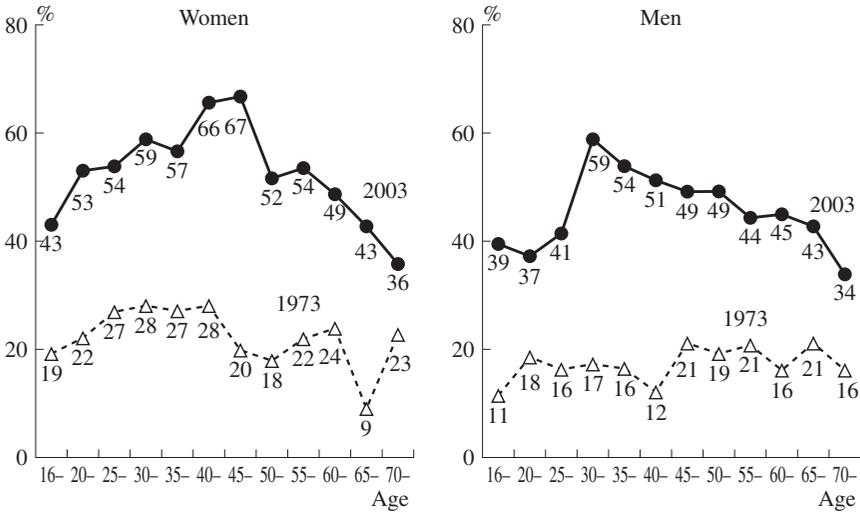


Figure 28. Ratio Advocating Balance between Home Life and Employment for Women, by Gender and Age



each age group at the time of each survey but also within the same generations as they get older.

These results indicate that the change in attitudes on this topic has occurred not only because of the emergence of new generations with different ways of thinking (generational effect), but also because the same individuals are changing their way of thinking over time due to social trends and phenomena that affect the population at large (“changing times” effect).

Decline in giving precedence to husband’s surname

Japanese law currently requires spouses to have the same surname. There is a movement to revise the law so as to allow spouses to have different surnames, and several bills to that effect have been submitted to the Diet. With considerable division over the issue, however, none of the bills has been passed into law. So has there been any change in thinking among the general public about the issue of names after marriage?

The survey asks the respondent to indicate which of the following best represents his or her view on this issue.

1. The wife should adopt her husband’s name as a matter of course (“Husband’s name as matter of course”)
2. Given current circumstances, it’s better for the wife to adopt her hus-

- band’s surname (“Husband’s name given current circumstances”)
- 3. The couple should use the same surname, but it can be either the husband’s or the wife’s (“Same surname, either husband’s or wife’s”)
- 4. There’s no need for the couple to use the same surname; they can each retain their own (“Separate surnames”)

The results for the overall sample (Figure 29) show a decline in the proportion of people who think a wife should adopt her husband’s name as a matter of course. Comparing the “husband’s name” group (“husband’s name as matter of course” plus “husband’s name given current circumstances”) with the “non-husband’s name” group (“same surname, either husband’s or wife’s” plus “separate surnames”), we find that the latter group has been steadily increasing.

Figure 30 shows the breakdown of the 1973 and 2003 responses to this question by year of birth for men and women. Looking at the breakdown among women (left graph), we find that each thin line (1973 results) diverges

Figure 29. Views on Married Name

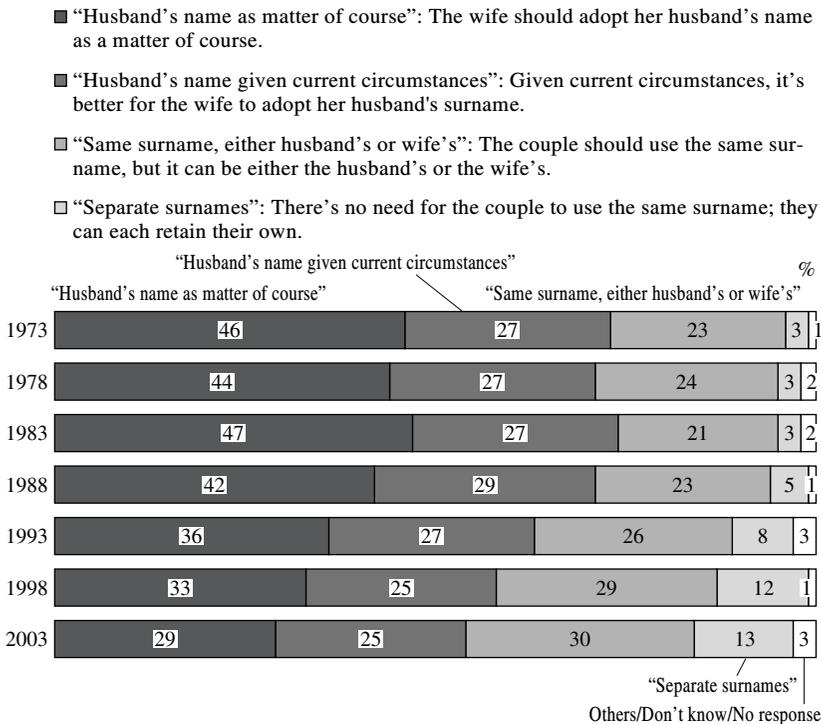
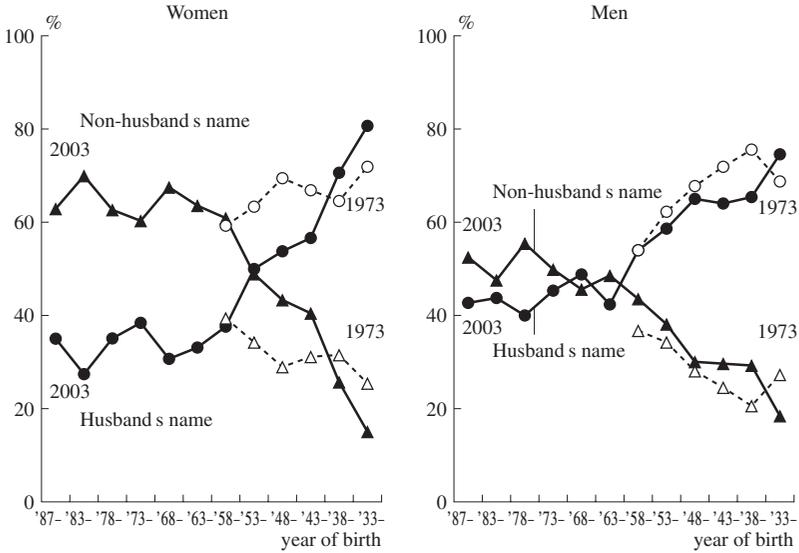


Figure 30. Views on Married Name, by Gender and Year of Birth



Husband's name = Husband's name as matter of course + Husband's name given current circumstances
 Non-husband's name = Same surname, either husband's or wife's + Separate surnames

from the corresponding bold line (2003 results). Among women born between 1944 and 1948—and therefore in their late fifties in 2003—the “husband’s name” proportion has decreased markedly, while the “non-husband’s name” proportion has greatly increased. These results indicate that, among women, the overall change in attitude on this issue is due to both the emergence of new generations with new ways of thinking and changes in individuals’ views in line with the changing trends of the times.

In the year-of-birth breakdown for men (right graph of Figure 30), each thin line (1973) is almost overlapping the corresponding bold line (2003). Thus, the “husband’s name” and “non-husband’s name” ratios vary according to generation, and for some birth-year groups, such as those in the baby-boomer generation, those ratios show almost no change over the 30-year period. This indicates that the change in attitude seen among men as a whole has resulted from the emergence of new generations with different ways of thinking, not because particular individuals are changing their previous views as they get older.

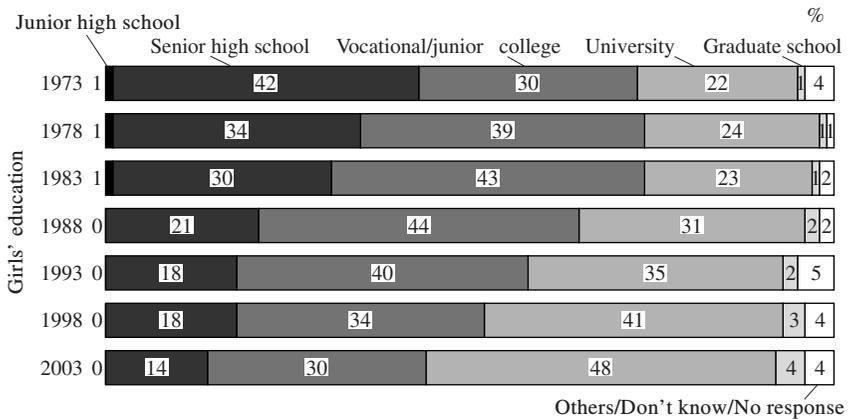
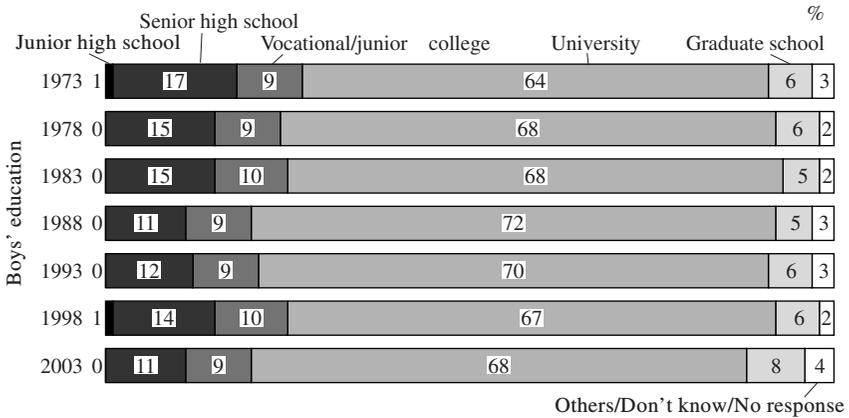
Growing desire to provide girls with university education

Respondents are asked to what level of formal education they would like to educate their children if they had children currently of junior high school age. The question was asked separately regarding male children and female children, with the following response options in each case.

1. Junior high school
2. Senior high school
3. Vocational/junior college
4. University
5. Graduate school

In the results for male children (Figure 31, top), the share for “university”

Figure 31. Preferred Level of Children’s Education



shows little change since 1973, hovering around the 70 percent mark. Between 1998 and 2003, the share for “graduate school” has risen from 6 percent to 8 percent, suggesting a desire for even higher qualifications as university-level education becomes more common.

Looking at the results for female children (Figure 31, bottom), we see that in 1973 the share for “university” was only about one third that for male children. Since then, the “university” response for female children has increased steadily, reaching 48 percent, or roughly one in every two girls, in 2003. This still represents a marked disparity with the “university” share for male children in the same year, the balance being accounted for by the higher “vocational/junior college” share for female children. The “graduate school” share for females is also considerably lower than for males.

On the question of having children after marriage, whereas “have children as a matter of course” was the majority response 10 years ago, since then the share for “may not have children” has overtaken it, indicating a shift in values toward lifestyles more centered on the individual.

In the preceding sections we have examined from various angles the changes in values and views on gender relations and home and family life. A major current common to these attitudinal changes is the desire to live, not within traditional social frameworks, such as the prewar *ie* (extended family household) system, but rather in accordance with one’s own feelings and aspirations. It is fair to say that Japanese value orientations are changing in a direction corresponding to the principles, set down in the Constitution, of respect for the individual, equality under law, individual dignity, and the essential equality of the sexes in domestic life.

Decline in Desire for Close Relationships

It is widely noted that, whereas human relationships in Japan are traditionally characterized by close-knit, all-inclusive ties with emphasis on identification and assimilation with the group, modernization has brought a shift toward relationships of a more limited, exclusive kind. The survey asks respondents whether they prefer close, open relationships or clearly defined, limited relationships with their relatives, at their place of work, and with neighbors—three contexts in which relationships are, while not as intimate as among immediate family, nonetheless sustained over time. The response options were as follows.

Relatives

1. Relationships confined to observing the formalities of family custom (Formal)

2. Relationships in which relatives visit each other casually (Limited)
3. Relationships in which relatives consult and help each other regarding a wide range of matters, including personal affairs (Open)

Neighbors

1. Relationships confined to formal greetings when encountering one another (Formal)
2. Relationships in which neighbors chat easily without formalities (Limited)
3. Relationships in which neighbors consult and help each other regarding a wide range of matters, including personal affairs (Open)

Workplace

1. Relationships confined to matters directly related to work (Formal)
2. Relationships that include social contact beyond working hours (Limited)
3. Relationships in which co-workers consult and help each other regarding a wide range of matters, including personal affairs (Open)

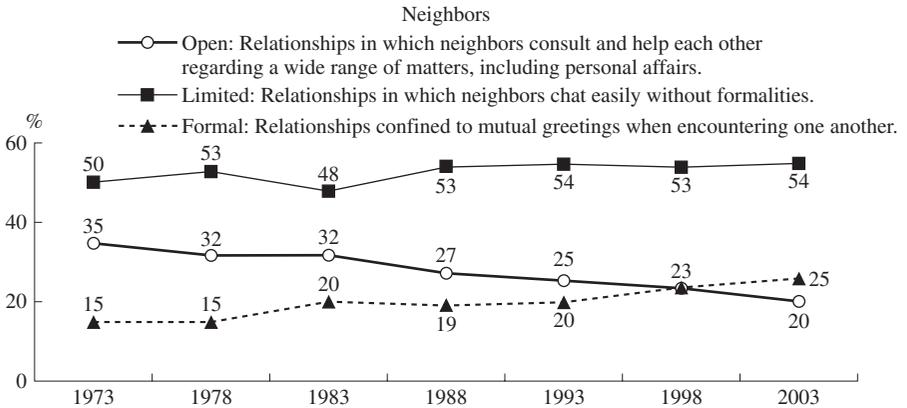
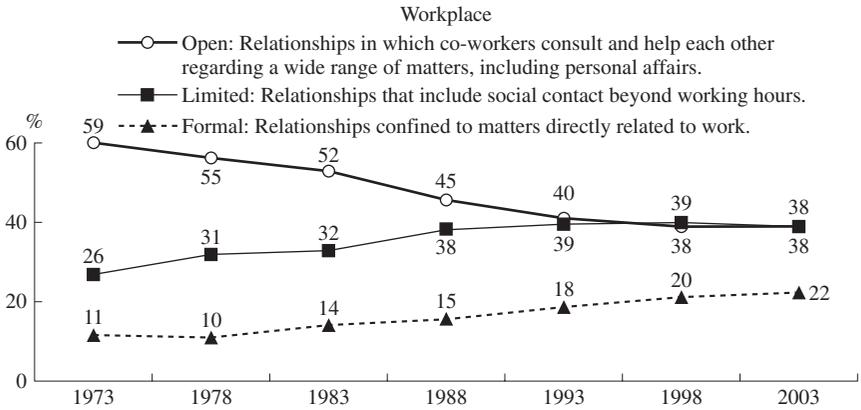
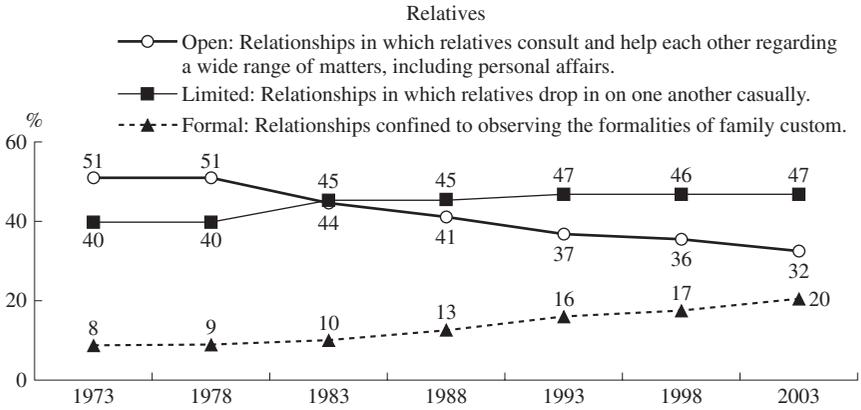
As Figure 32 shows, in the context of family relations, the preference for “limited” relationships has been higher than that for “open” relationships since 1988, and the proportion of the “formal” preference has also steadily increased.

In the workplace context, the ratios for “open” and “limited” relationships have converged, and are currently holding at about the same level. In this context, too, the “formal” preference is rising steadily.

In regard to neighbors, the preference for “limited” relationships has held steady throughout at around 50 percent, and the ratio for “formal” relationships surpassed that for “open” relationships for the first time in the 2003 survey.

The overall trend is that of a decline in the preference for “open” relationships and a rise in the preferences for “limited” and “formal” relationships, and this trend has continued over the last five years. As a result, the preference for “limited” relationships is currently in the top or equal-top position in all three contexts. Furthermore, the “open” relationship preference records its highest ratio in the “workplace” context, followed by the “relatives” and “neighbors” contexts, in that order. This ranking of the three contexts in the results for the “open” preference has remained unchanged since the first survey in 1973. This shows that the preference for “open” relationships is declining not just in a specific type of relationship but similarly in all three types.

Figure 32. Preferences regarding Human Relationships



Deep-rooted Preference for Empathy over Efficiency

It is often said that one of the core values of modernization is rationalism, in which efficiency and performance take precedence above all else. To gauge the extent to which today's Japanese embrace such rationalism, the survey asks respondents whether they would give precedence to rationality and achievement (the "efficiency" preference) or to personality and mood (the "empathy" preference) in three hypothetical situations: (a) in choosing a co-worker, (b) in taking a trip, and (c) in conducting a local community meeting. Respondents were given two response options to choose from in each case, as follows.

Preference in a co-worker (presumably in a context demanding emphasis on efficiency):

1. Someone highly capable as far as work is concerned although perhaps unsociable or difficult to get along with (Efficiency)
2. Someone with an amiable personality although not particularly good at their job (Empathy)

Preference in taking a trip (presumably in a context of enjoyment rather than efficiency):

1. Work out a clear-cut itinerary in advance so as to be able to get the most out of the trip (Efficiency)
2. Let the trip unfold naturally according to our moods and whatever happens along the way (Empathy)

In conducting a local community meeting (presumably a context that does not demand quite as much efficiency as the workplace):

1. Let the discussion unfold in a relaxed, friendly manner, including casual conversation, even if it takes a little longer (Empathy)
2. Exchange and summarize views in a brisk, businesslike fashion with no extraneous talk (Efficiency)

The results, shown in Figure 33, indicate some intriguing trends. Whereas efficiency is generally thought of as taking priority in the workplace, in fact most people prefer the "empathy" type of co-worker; and conversely, whereas vacation travel would seem to be a context for "empathy" rather than "efficiency," most people choose the "efficiency" approach when traveling.

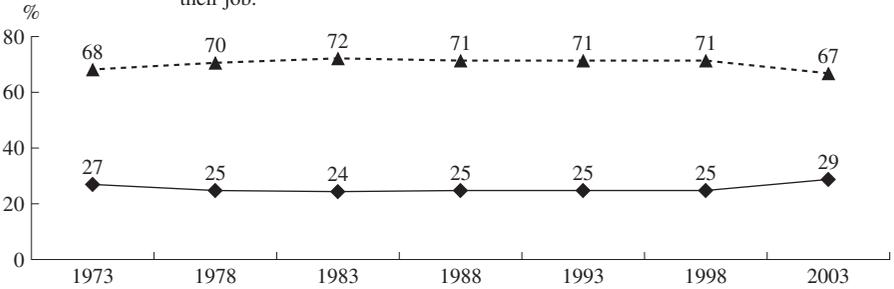
In the results for the co-worker question, the ratio for "empathy" has remained virtually static around the 70 percent mark since 1978, although in the most recent survey it dropped somewhat as the "efficiency" preference gained ground.

In the approach to styles of travel, the preponderance is still with "efficiency," but the "empathy" preference is on the increase.

Figure 33. Preference for Efficiency or Empathy

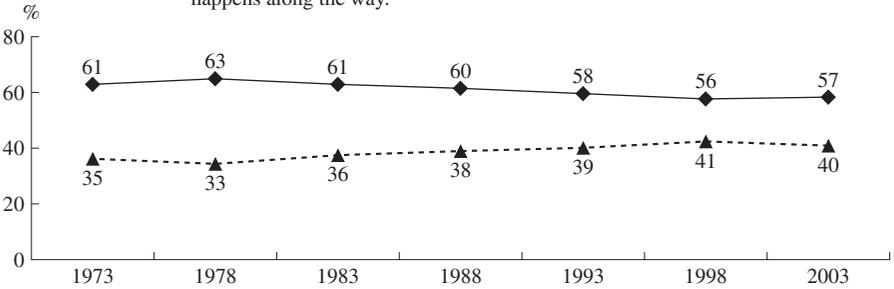
In a co-worker

- ◆ Efficiency: Someone highly capable as far as work is concerned although perhaps unsociable or difficult to get along with.
- ▲ Empathy: Someone with an amiable personality although not particularly good at their job.



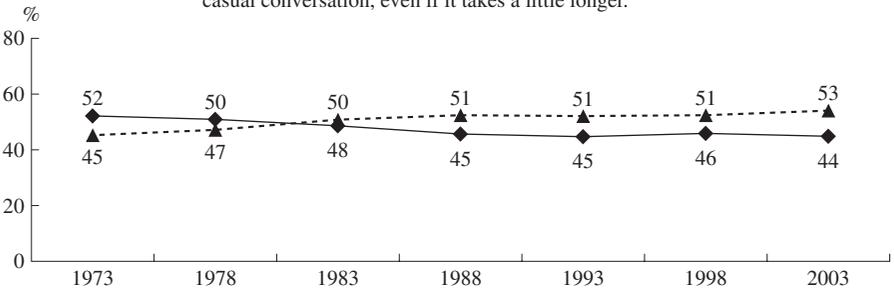
In taking a trip

- ◆ Efficiency: Work out a clear-cut itinerary in advance so as to be able to get the most out of the trip.
- ▲ Empathy: Let the trip unfold naturally according to our moods and whatever happens along the way.



In conducting a local community meeting

- ◆ Efficiency: Exchange and summarize views in a brisk, businesslike fashion with no extraneous talk.
- ▲ Empathy: Let the discussion unfold in a relaxed, friendly manner, including casual conversation, even if it takes a little longer.



The “empathy” preference has also risen steadily on the question of conducting community meetings, outweighing the “efficiency” preference since 1988. In the breakdown by occupation of respondents who chose “efficiency” in a co-worker, we find that this choice has increased particularly among students and clerical and technical workers. This can be interpreted as a reflection in those occupation groups of a broader trend toward meritocracy such as is evident in merit-based salary systems.

Another interesting feature appears when the responses on preferred type of co-worker are cross-referenced with those on preferred type of relationship in the workplace. Respondents choosing the “empathy” response in regard to co-workers account for the largest ratio of those who prefer “open” relationships in the workplace. More tellingly, they also account for 70 percent of those who prefer “limited” relationships in the workplace, and a majority even of those who say they prefer “formal” relationships in the workplace. Despite the increasing preference for “limited” and “formal” ties that we saw in the questions on human relationships, an emphasis on empathy and human feeling is still firmly rooted in the Japanese popular mind.

Life Credos Increasingly Oriented toward the Present

People’s choice of life credos greatly affects their various other values and attitudes. Conversely, their various other attitudes are key factors determining their choice of credos and principles. In formulating categories of basic life credos to be used in this survey, Mita Sosuke, one of the original architects of the survey, devised the following theoretical schema. At the core of people’s life credos are two axes of value choice. One is the axis of temporal outlook, whereby people choose between either “going with the flow” of their immediate feelings or suppressing immediate wants in consideration of future results. The other is the axis of social outlook, whereby one chooses either to satisfy one’s own immediate interests or to suppress that urge in consideration of how one’s actions affect others. The schema of life credos posited in this survey was arrived at by combining these two axes to produce four value types or patterns. In the actual questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following four credos most closely describes their ideal approach to life.

1. Enjoying life freely one day at a time (Enjoyment)
2. Gradually building an abundant life in accordance with a clear-cut plan (Advantage)
3. Spending each day in a happy atmosphere with the people closest to me (Affection)
4. Cooperating with others to make the world a better place (Justice)

Figure 34. Life Credos

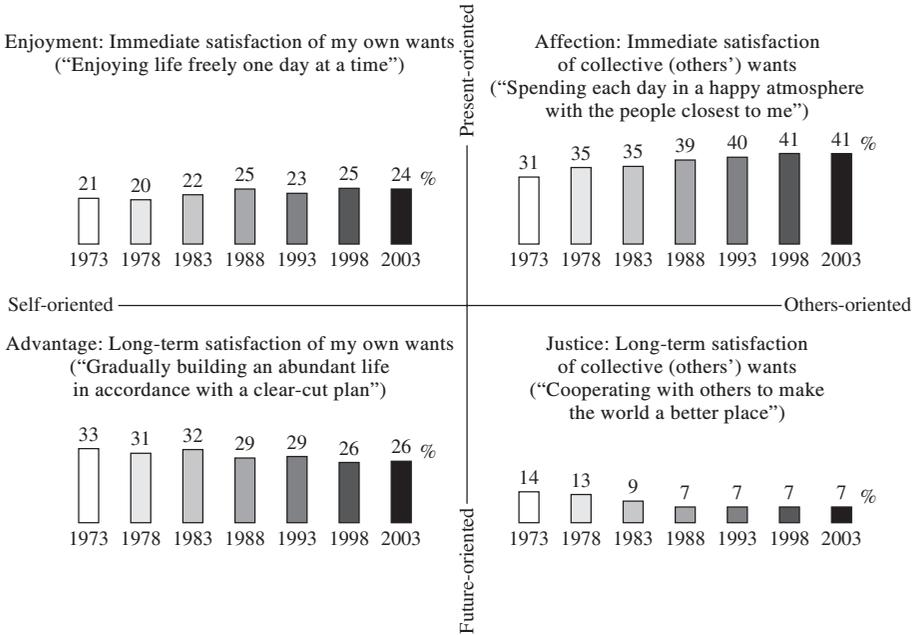
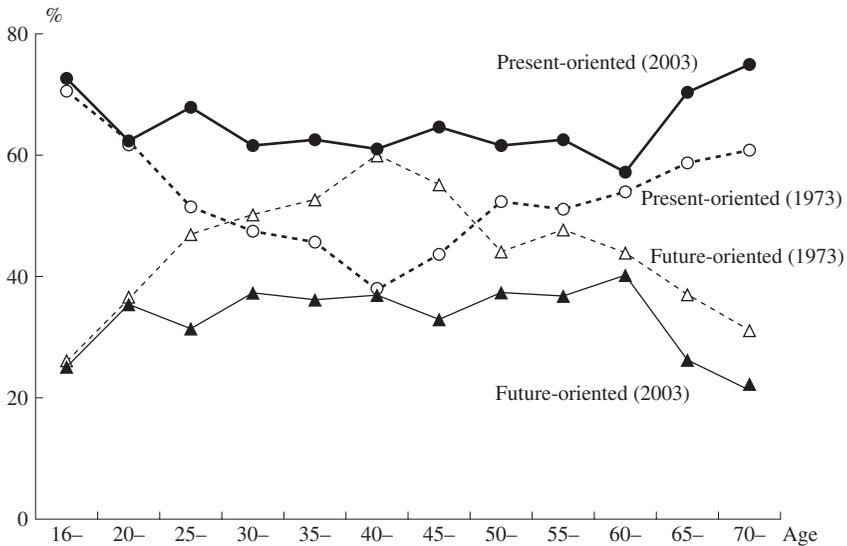


Figure 34 summarizes the change in basic life credos over the 30 years of the survey series. Whereas the “advantage” approach (“gradually building an abundant life in accordance with a clear-cut plan”) was the top choice 30 years ago, both it and the “justice” credo (“cooperating with others to make the world a better place”) have been in steady decline ever since. Meanwhile, the choice of “affection” (“spending each day in a happy atmosphere with the people closest to me”) has steadily increased, and is currently the most popular. These results indicate that Japanese people are gradually reorienting their basic values and goals of everyday life away from the formulation of plans for future prosperity and toward the immediate enjoyment of an emotionally rewarding, happy life with family and friends.

These results can also be divided into the “present-oriented” group—“affection” plus “enjoyment” (“enjoying life freely one day at a time”)—and the “future-oriented” group (“advantage” plus “justice”). Viewed in this light, the results show a broad shift from a “future-oriented” to a “present-oriented” outlook. Figure 35 compares the 1973 and 2003 breakdowns of the “present-oriented” and “future-oriented” outlooks by age. In 1973, the “future-oriented” ratio was highest in the age brackets in which people typically start

Figure 35. Tendency to Be Present-oriented or Future-oriented, by Age

careers, get married, and have children, remaining above the “present-oriented” ratio among people in their thirties and forties. The 1973 results also show a resurgence of the “present-oriented” outlook among people of retirement and post-retirement age. This means that, in the past, people’s credos generally varied according to their age. Over the next 30 years, however, there has been a major shift toward the “present-oriented” outlook among middle-aged people, with the result that that outlook is now preponderant in all age brackets. Furthermore, within the “present-oriented” group, the distribution of the “enjoyment” credo by age bracket shows almost no change between 1973 and 2003. This means that the overall rise in the “present-oriented” outlook is almost entirely the result of an increase in the “affection” type of life credo.

Over the 30 years of the survey series, even Japanese in their thirties and forties have come to enjoy more economic leeway and leisure time, and this has fostered a trend toward seeking greater spiritual and emotional fulfillment. We can surmise that this trend underlies the decline in the “advantage”-type credo, which includes economic values, and the ascendancy of the “affection”-type credo, aimed at “spending each day in a happy atmosphere with the people closest to me.”

OVERALL FEATURES

So far we have looked at the changes in value orientations over the past 30 years by topic area. Let us now summarize the overall features and consider them in two respects: (a) in terms of which orientations have changed markedly and which have barely changed at all; and (b) in terms of whether the overall variation represents a trend of greater uniformity or greater diversity of value orientations and the features of that direction of change.

Degree of Variation in Value Orientations

A total of 54 questions are common to all seven rounds of the Survey of Japanese Value Orientations conducted so far. These questions are organized by content into four topic areas: basic values; economy, society, and culture; family and gender relations; and politics. Excluding responses such as “other,” “don’t know/no response,” “not applicable,” and so on, these questions are accompanied by a total of 212 response items (multiple choice options).

To determine the degree of variation of value orientations, we determined the difference in absolute figures for each response item between one survey and the next and between the first (1973) and last (2003) surveys, then averaged those differences for each topic area and for the survey overall. Shown in Figure 36, these averages represent the degree of variation of value orientations over the course of the survey series so far.

The variations seen over each five-year period between surveys can be summarized as follows.

The figures for overall degree of variation for each five-year period show that the greatest change occurred in the 1973–1978 and 1993–1998 periods, at 2.3 percent in either case. Both of these periods correspond to periods of economic downturn in Japan, which suggests that prevailing economic conditions influence attitudinal change in some way.

Figure 36. Average Variation by Topic (Overall sample)

	No. of items	1973–78	1978–83	1983–88	1988–93	1993–98	1998–2003	1973–2003
Overall	212	2.3%	1.9	2.2	2.0	2.3	1.5	7.2
Basic values	53	2.2	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.0	1.1	4.4
Economy, society, culture	55	2.2	1.6	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.3	5.8
Family/gender relations	39	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.5	2.7	1.5	11.1
Politics	65	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.8	3.8	1.9	8.4

In the 1973–78 period, while the degree of variation was fairly even over all topic areas, it was notably higher than in the other five-year periods in the areas “basic values” and “economy, society, and culture.” Looking at items in the “basic values” area that showed marked change in the 1973–78 period, we find an increase in the “satisfied” response to the questions regarding overall satisfaction with life and satisfaction with specific aspects of life. Also under the “basic values” heading, the top choice of life credo changed from “gradually building an abundant life in accordance with a clear-cut plan” to “spending each day in a happy atmosphere with the people closest to me.” In the “economy, society, and culture” area, increases were seen in the choice of “a job with little risk of being laid off” as a criterion of the ideal job (first and second preferences); in the choice of “have visited a place of worship in the past year or two to pray for safety, prosperity, success in exams, etc.” in the question on religious activity; and in the preference for “limited” relationships in the workplace.

In 1970, not long before the launch of this survey series in 1973, there was a Fuji Xerox commercial on Japanese television with the catchphrase *Moretsu kara byutifuru e* (“From fierce to beautiful”). This was a time when Japan was rocked by the serious pollution problems that festered in the shadows of its unprecedented economic prosperity. The Fuji Xerox commercial was one of the first instances of strategic advertising that foresaw and thus came to symbolize the shift that was about to occur in Japanese society away from the “fierce” effort typical of the years of rapid economic growth toward a more “beautiful,” that is, relaxed and leisurely lifestyle. When the 1973 oil crisis hit just as the Japanese economy was at its peak, economic conditions turned sharply downward, and this had a pronounced impact on people’s attitudes and values.

In contrast to the 1973–78 period, the greatest variation in the 1993–98 period was seen in the topic area of “politics,” where the average change of 3.8 percent stands out in comparison with all other five-year periods. As one would therefore expect, the individual response items showing marked change in this period are also concentrated under the “politics” heading. The most common choice for top political priority changed from “improve public welfare” to “develop the economy,” and a decline in the ratio of people who considered Japan a world leader symbolized the loss of confidence in the nation. There was also a significant increase in the view that national politics does not reflect the people’s views and aspirations “at all,” and—with more respondents saying they did not support any particular political party—a further shift in the direction of nonpartisanship.

The Hosokawa Cabinet emerged in 1993 from the collapse of the so-called

1955 Regime—the LDP vs. Japan Socialist Party bipolar system that had characterized Japanese politics since 1955—but it did not survive for very long. As economic conditions worsened, cabinets changed five times during the 1993–98 period, but none was able to formulate a persuasive, alternative platform of basic policies. The repeated realignments of political parties around the same time also had a great impact on popular political views and attitudes as a whole.

At 1.5 percent, the overall average variation for the 1998–2003 period represents the lowest overall change of all the five-year intervals in the seven surveys. Even in this case, the response items showing comparatively large variation were, as in 1993–98, in the topic area of “politics.” Significant change was also registered in the 1998–2003 period by the decline in “indifference” and the rise in “favorable feelings” toward the emperor, though in both cases this represented only a return to 1993 levels. While the ratio of respondents who did not support any particular political party also increased, this trend of nonpartisanship was driven mainly by a decline in support for non-LDP parties. Meanwhile, the choice of “maintain public safety, law and order” as the top priority of politics rose for the first time in 20 years, presumably in response to increasing incidents of domestic crime, the emergence of the issue of abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea, and the escalation of terrorism overseas.

Features of Change and Constancy

The greatest variation over the entire 30-year span of the survey series has occurred in the topic area “family and gender relations,” at 11.1 percent. Within each five-year interval as well, this area shows either the highest or second-highest degree of variation of all topic areas, indicating that views in this area have been changing constantly throughout the three decades. Variation within this topic was particularly high in the 1983–88 period, at 2.9 percent. This was the period in which, through many years of steady effort, feminism and other social movements for gender equality, women’s liberation, and the improvement of women’s status were nurtured in Japan. In the wake of various activities conducted during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–85), Japan’s Law on Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women went into effect in 1986.

For each of the 212 response items, we ascertained the difference in absolute terms between its highest and lowest figures through all seven surveys, then ranked all the items that showed marked variation (either increasing or decreasing) over the 30-year period. For every item except those on “feelings toward the emperor” and “Japan as a world leader,” the years of the

highest and lowest figures were either 1973 or 2003. In other words, in the items showing a large degree of variation, the overall variation occurred in only one direction, either increasing or decreasing continually over the survey period.

Referring to the items showing marked variation as well as those showing little variation, we can ascertain the overall features of both the change and constancy of attitudes among Japanese (see Figure 37).

One of the questions that the survey was designed to address when it was first formulated was that of how far modern values have permeated Japanese society. Among the values considered "modern" 30 years ago were, in the political and social sphere, willingness to participate in the political process; orientations away from Japan's prewar models of family (*ie*), marriage, and other social institutions; equality of the sexes; and other key values of democratization. Such values are addressed in the survey's questions on political

Figure 37. Change and Constancy of Value Orientations

Orientations showing marked change

Increased	Highest	Lowest	Variation
Political priority: Develop Japan's economy	2003 48%	1973 11	+37
Husband should help with housework	2003 86	1973 53	+33
Women should work even after having children	2003 49	1973 20	+29
Level of education for girls: university	2003 48	1973 22	+26
No preferred political party	2003 57	1973 32	+25
Premarital sex: okay if the couple love each other	2003 44	1973 19	+25
Ideal home: Cooperation in home life	2003 46	1973 21	+25
Favorable feelings toward emperor	1993 43	1973 20	+22
Don't consider Japan a world-leading nation	2003 56	1983 36	+20
Decreased	Highest	Lowest	Variation
Political priority: Improve welfare	1973 49%	2003 14	-35
Premarital sex: not okay	1973 58	2003 24	-34
Men should not help with housework	1973 38	2003 10	-28
Level of education for girls: senior high school	1973 42	2003 14	-28
Ideal home: Division of roles	1973 39	2003 15	-24
Women should concentrate on homemaking after marriage	1973 35	2003 13	-23
Elections have great efficacy on national politics	1973 40	2003 18	-22
Preferred type of relationships at workplace: Open	1973 59	2003 38	-22
Consider Japan a world-leading nation	1983 57	2003 36	-21

(continued on p. 50)

Orientatons showing little change

	Highest		Lowest	
Proud to be born Japanese	1993	97%	1973	91
Should use respectful language with elders	1983	89	1973	84
Feel affinity with traditional buildings/culture	1978	88	1993	83
Marriage go-between should know couple well	2003	87	1988	82
Most essential to a fulfilling life: Health	1973	78	2003	73
People's rights: Decent standard of living	1983	77	1973,1978	70
Enjoy good relationships with many people	1993	72	1973	66
Want to contribute to improving the nation	1973	73	1988	66
Level of education for boys: University	1988	72	1973	64
Preference in co-workers: Personality over ability	1983	72	2003	67
Pay respects to family graves once or twice a year	1993	70	1973	62
Use of leisure time (actual): Doing things I like	1998	63	1998	60
Political activity: Sufficient to elect representatives	1973	67	1998	60
Satisfied with life overall	1988,1993	61	1983	60
Plan trips carefully for maximum enjoyment	1978	63	1998	56
Politics somewhat reflective of public opinion	1988	60	1973	52
Essential forms of communication*				
Television	1998	86	1988	83
Newspapers	1983	81	2003	73
Talking with family	1998	80	2003	79
Talking with friends	1993	69	1983	66

* Included in the survey since 1983

efficacy, tendencies relating to sociopolitical association and activism, and preferences in family and gender relations. In the sphere of life in general, “modern” values include the preference for efficiency as a key value of the industrial age.

From the list of items showing marked change, we see advances in modern attitudes in the form of the popularization of higher education for women, the trend away from clear separation of gender-specific family roles, the liberalization of sexual mores (evident in the greater acceptance of premarital sex “if the couple love each other”), liberation from the constraints of the traditional *ie*-style household, and the shift toward gender equality. On the other hand, the increasing prevalence of nonpartisanship and decline in sense of the efficacy of elections indicate that modern values in the political context are regressing without ever having reached maturity. Although not indicated in Figure 37, there has also been a change in life credos, toward a focus on the

present rather than the future and toward emphasis on private, daily life rather than society at large. Over all of this the current economic recession has cast a pall that is arousing uncertainty about the future and contributing to the erosion of confidence in politics.

Next, let us look at the items that show little change and furthermore were chosen by the majority of the respondents—in other words, the attitudes and values that Japanese people have generally continued to hold. In the sphere of life in general, their attitudes toward efficiency, presumed to be a modern value, were somewhat unexpected: in the workplace, a context that demands efficiency, most Japanese seek emotional, empathetic relationships; conversely, when traveling, a context in which one would expect people to seek satisfaction of emotional and empathetic needs, they are oriented toward efficiency. In the case of travel, people want to have a clear-cut plan so as to derive as much enjoyment as possible from a trip given the limited time and money at their disposal. This can therefore be regarded as a case of applying efficiency for the purpose of maximizing empathy. In his bestselling book *The Lonely Crowd* (Yale University Press, 1961), American sociologist David Riesman identified a two-pronged strategy operating in one direction toward work and in the other toward leisure, noting that the effort to regain a sense of humanity in the workplace must proceed from the premise of a clear separation of work and leisure. While Riesman was writing about modern Americans, Japanese have always placed high value on empathy and interpersonal ties in the workplace and continue to do so today.

Other value orientations that have remained unchanged among Japanese include a strong sense of affinity with Japan and Japanese traditions; respect for one's elders; performing at least some acts of respect toward one's ancestors (such as visiting the family grave); devotion to education; regarding health as a top priority; and valuing the right to a decent standard of living.

People who do not support any particular political party have become the majority, and those who embrace the "justice"-type credo ("cooperating with others to make the world a better place") are in a minority. However, this does not mean that the Japanese have grown reluctant to become involved in society. The desire to contribute to the welfare of the nation in some small way has continued to be expressed by a majority of respondents. Japanese thus seek to address social issues within the scope of their own personal lives. The urge to contribute to society persists, although with the loss of faith in politics and political parties, the expression of this commitment has shifted toward political and social engagement at the individual level.

Despite marked changes in other values and attitudes over the past 30 years, a large majority of Japanese continue to identify television, newspapers, talk-

ing with family, and talking with friends as essential forms of communication. With a response rate of almost 90 percent on that question, television presumably plays a particularly large role in attitudinal change.

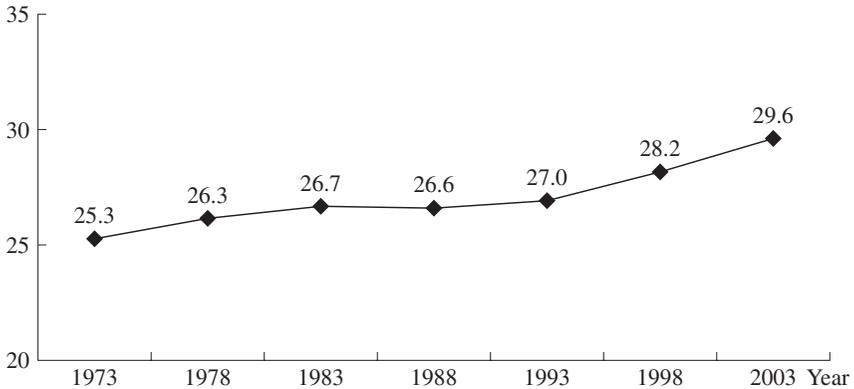
Uniformity of Values

Japanese today live amid incomparably greater abundance as far as information and goods are concerned than they did 30 years ago. But while media and goods are diversifying, are Japanese value orientations becoming more diverse as well? In the 1970s, advances in computer technology triggered a surge toward increasingly sophisticated information functions. This in turn has led to greater functional specialization, miniaturization, and personalization of information tools, as well as greater compartmentalization, refinement, and specialization of information content. While conventional media forms have remained firmly in place, a new arena of personal media (mobile telephones, electronic mail, etc.) has emerged, leading to a flurry of communication in multiple forms somewhere in between mass communication and personal communication.

In this context of increasing information accessibility and facility, are Japanese value orientations becoming more diverse or more uniform? To measure this, we employed a calculation originally applied by Makita Testuo in his report on the 1998 survey.⁴ First, we isolated the 54 questions common to all seven of the surveys conducted between 1973 and 2003. Beginning with the 1973 survey, for each of those 54 questions we took the figure for the most common response and subtracted from it the figure for the second-most common response. Having done this for all 54 questions, we totaled the resulting figures, then divided that total by 54. The resulting average represents the “uniformity index” for the 1973 survey. The lower this figure, the higher the degree of diversity in people’s attitudes; conversely, the higher the figure, the higher the degree of uniformity in their attitudes. Diversity is represented by a roughly even distribution of different views and values on a given topic, while uniformity is higher the greater the preponderance of any single view or value on that topic. After repeating the calculation for all seven surveys, we plotted the results as the trend of the uniformity index from 1973 to 2003 (Figure 38).

As the graph shows, the average difference between the most and second-most common responses has increased over the past 30 years. Contrary to what we expected of Japan’s advanced information society, with its combination of conventional mass communication and a new dimension of personal

⁴ *Gendai Nihonjin no ishiki kozo* [The Structure of Attitudes of Contemporary Japanese], Nihon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai, 2000.

Figure 38. Uniformity Index

communication, it would appear that Japanese value orientations are in fact becoming more uniform. Thus, the hypothesis put forward by Makita on the basis of the 1998 survey results has been confirmed in the 2003 survey as well.

The rate of drift toward uniformity is indicated by the difference in uniformity index from survey to survey. The difference was 1.0 between 1973 and 1978, then there was very little year-on-year change up to 1993. Since then, however, the drift toward uniformity has sped up, the difference in the index jumping to 1.2 in the 1993–98 interval and 1.4 in the 1998–2003 interval. In the breakdown of uniformity index variation by topic area (Figure 39), we see that the index rises markedly in the areas “family and gender relations” and “politics” in both the 1993–98 and 1998–2003 periods. The rate of increase is particularly high in the “family and gender relations” area over that 10-year period.

On which specific issues are Japanese value orientations becoming more uniform? The individual response items that show significant drift toward uniformity are: the sense of satisfaction with life on the material level; the “affec-

Figure 39. Uniformity Index by Topic Area (Overall sample)

	1973	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003
Basic values	7.8	31.0	30.3	31.0	31.2	31.2	31.1
Economy, society, culture	14.6	13.8	10.8	12.1	13.5	14.3	15.0
Family/gender relations	25.4	25.7	26.5	25.9	25.0	28.0	31.2
Politics	29.1	29.2	32.5	31.3	31.8	33.5	35.4

tion"-type life credo ("spending each day in a happy atmosphere with the people closest to me"); the preference for limited relationships with neighbors; the view that a husband should help with the housework as a matter of course; the sense of the political efficacy of direct action is fairly weak; the shift in political party preference from the LDP to nonpartisanship; the adoption of a wait-and-see attitude on activism in the workplace; the focus on the "right to a decent standard of living" in people's knowledge of the Constitution; the view that Japan has much to learn from other countries; and the view that Japan is not a world-leading nation. As typified by the views on life credo, husbands' helping with housework, and learning from other countries, this group indicates a general increase in attitudes of respect and consideration for others.

The results that reflected decreasing uniformity are: the decline in the preference for open relationships in the workplace; the decline in the view that a wife should as a matter of course take her husband's surname; the decline in disapproval of premarital sex; the decline in the desire to serve Japan's interests; and the decline in the sense of Japan's superiority compared with other countries. As typified by the results concerning married name, premarital sex, and national superiority, this group indicates a decline in exclusive, unilateral views that do not recognize the needs or rights of others. The most recent three surveys show an overall increase in attitudes that respect individual choice, such as in matters of marriage and whether or not to have children. Thus, there is a general increase in attitudes recognizing the needs and rights of others, and this is what is driving the shift toward uniformity.

Around the time that the 2003 survey was conducted, a pop song titled *Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana* [Each Flower a One and Only] by the group SMAP became a hit in Japan. The song's message is that each individual does not have to strive to be the "best" or "number one"; it is enough that each of us is unique in the world. In its rejection of standardized competition and its celebration of difference and individuality, the song expresses an attitude of considering and respecting others. In a society prone to uniformity and standardization, this popular expression of a more diversity-tolerant outlook appears to have struck a deep chord in a large proportion of the Japanese population. Its message fits neatly with the growing attitude of respect for others that we see in the survey results.

(Translated by Dean Robson)