

# **40 Years of Gender Equality and Economic Policy in Japan**

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RIETI Policy Symposium

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\*The views expressed in this presentation are my own and  
do not necessarily reflect the views of my organization.

# 1985: A Pivotal Year for Japan

**Plaza Accord**: Yen appreciation

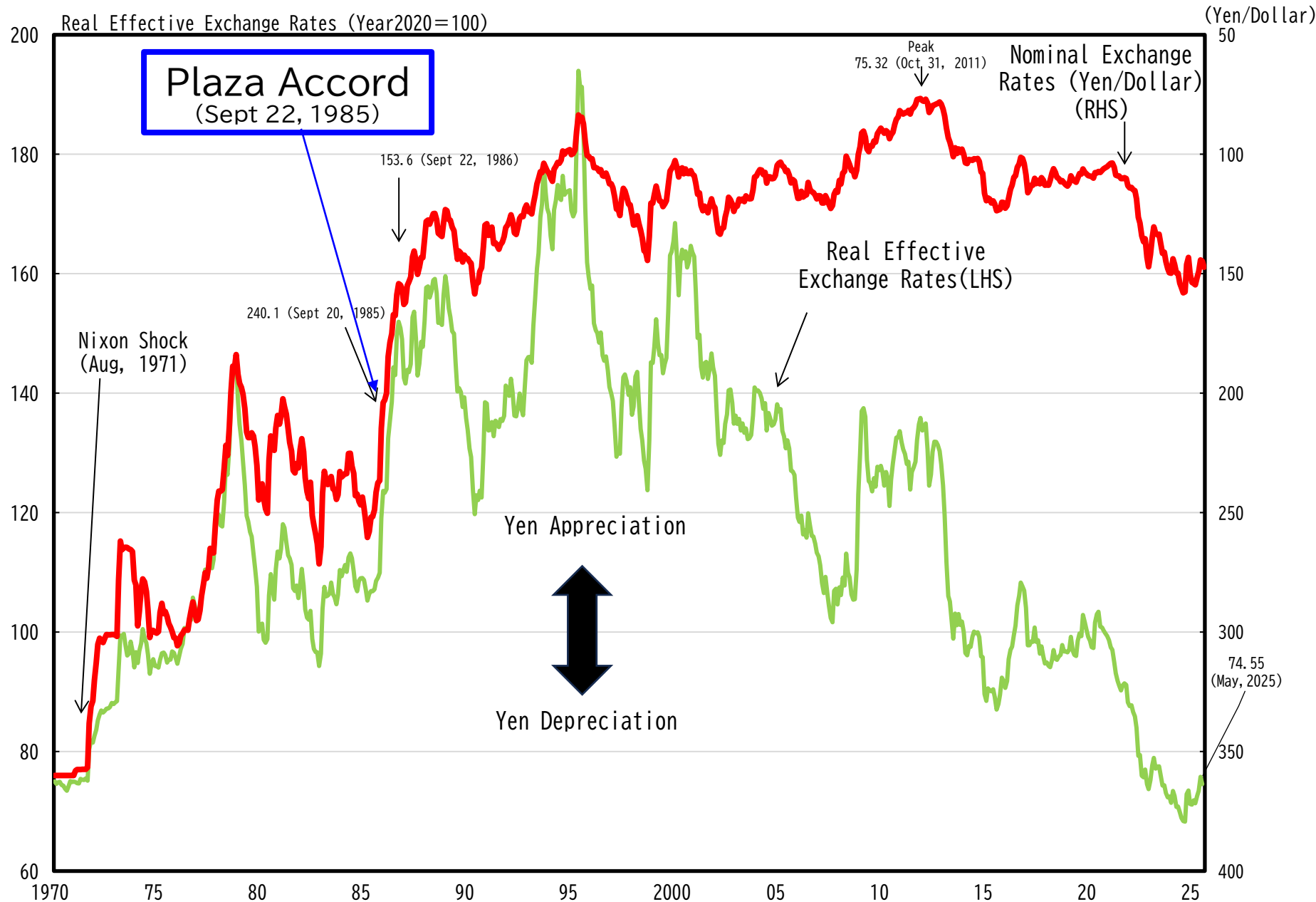
## **Equal Employment Opportunity Act**

Discrimination based on sex is prohibited in all aspects of work management, including recruitment, employment, promotion, and mandatory retirement age.

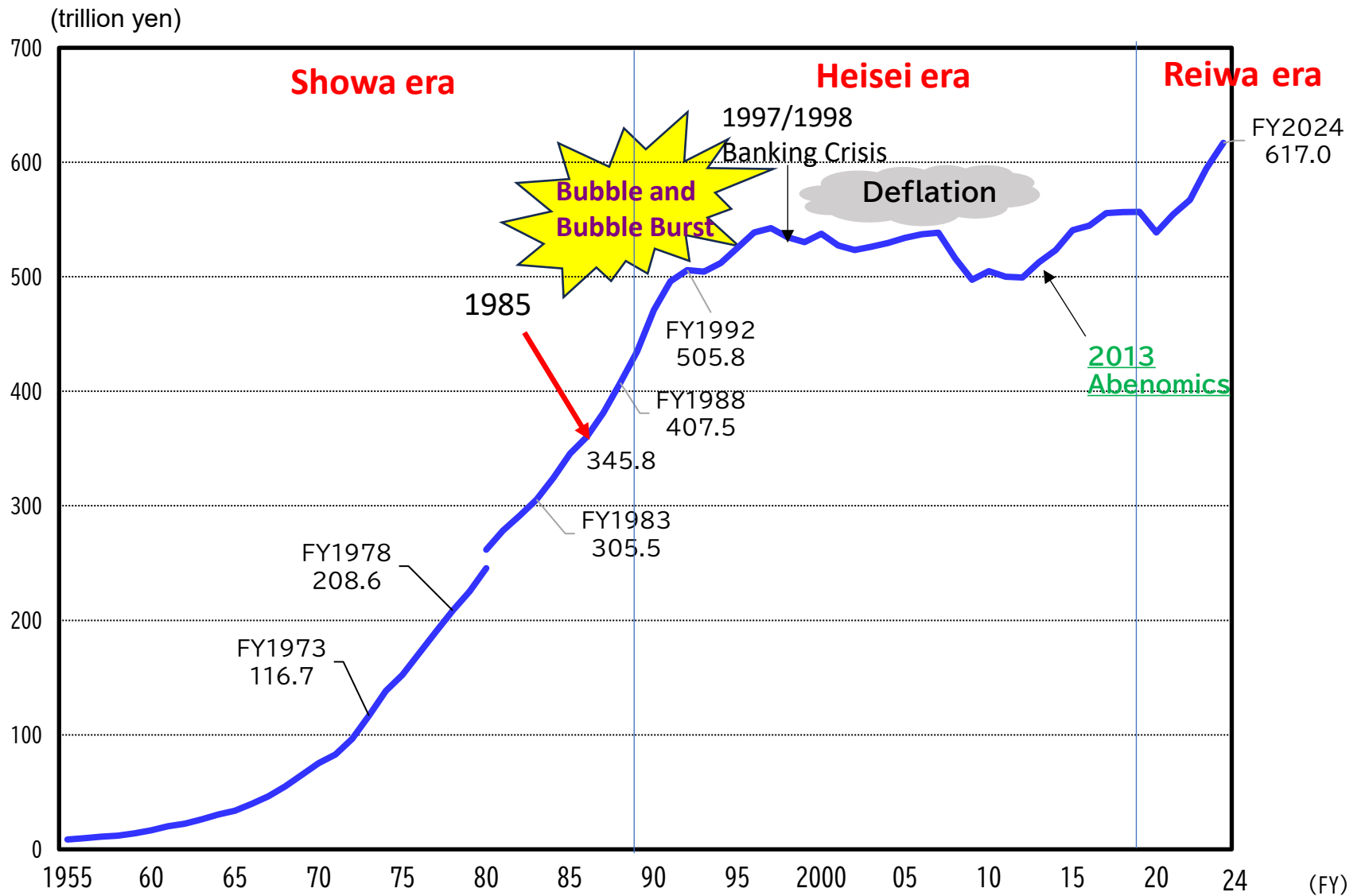
## **Revised Pension Act**

Introduction of a “Mandatory Basic Pension for Employees’ Spouses” (No contributions required, but benefits provided)

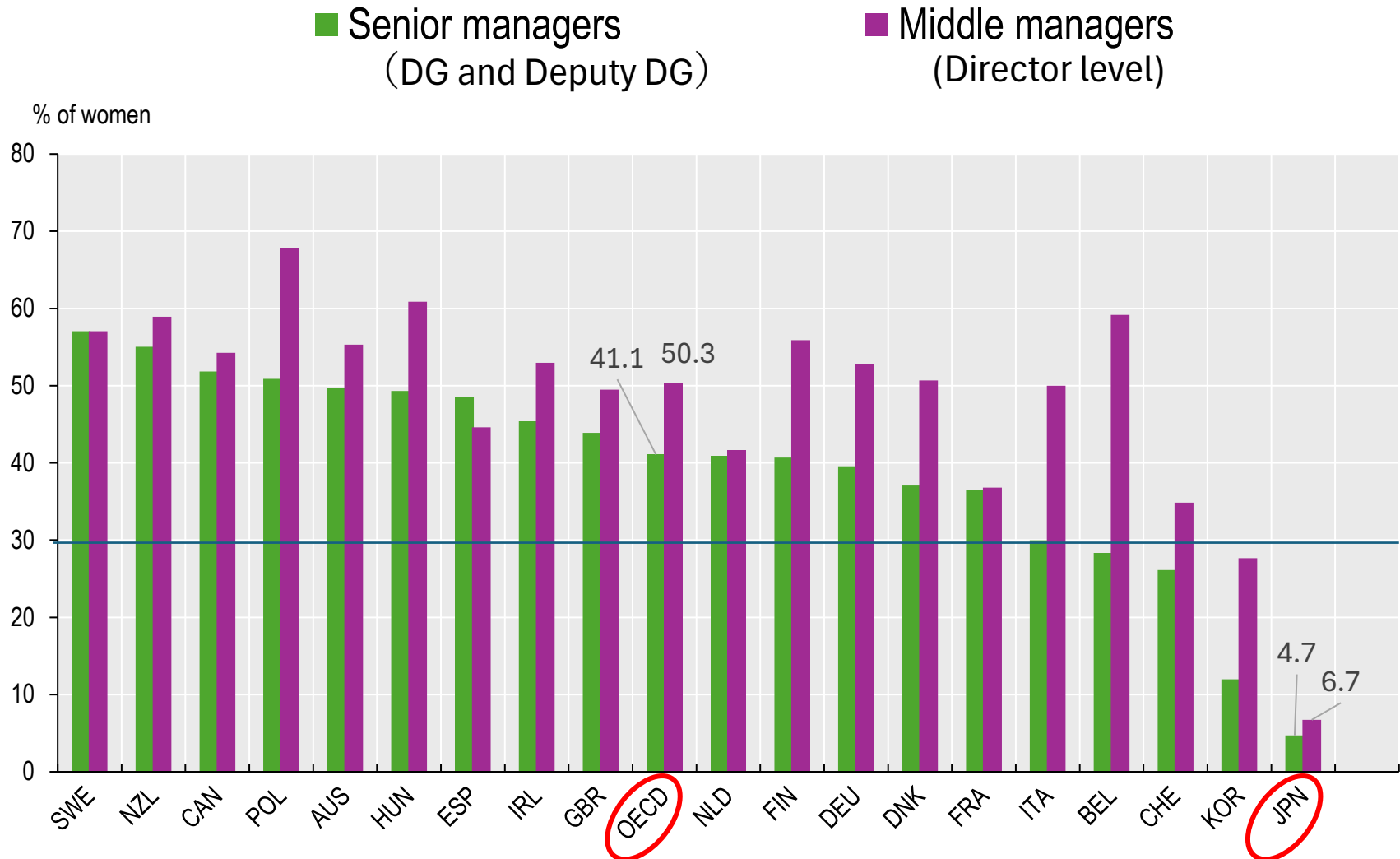
# Exchange Rates



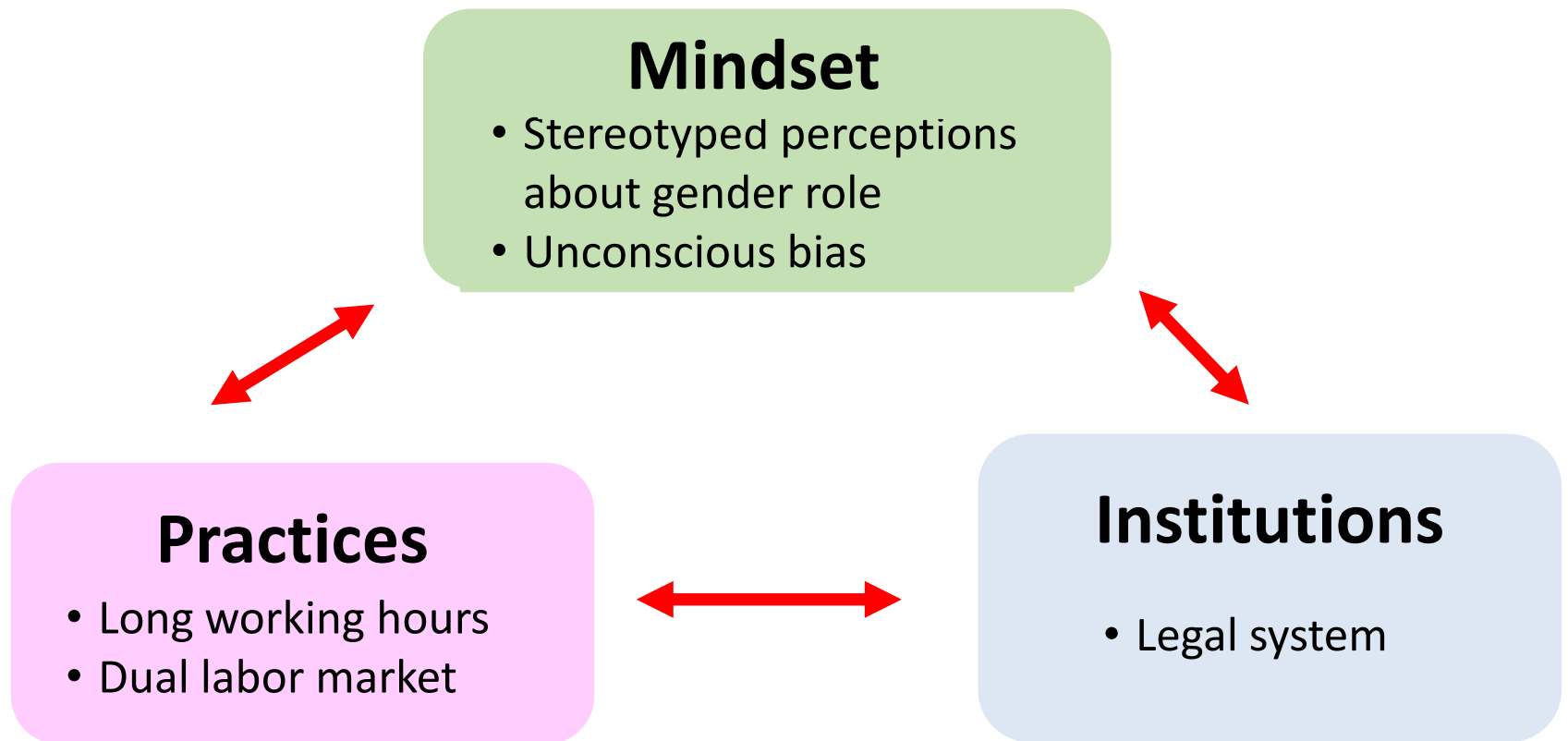
# Nominal GDP



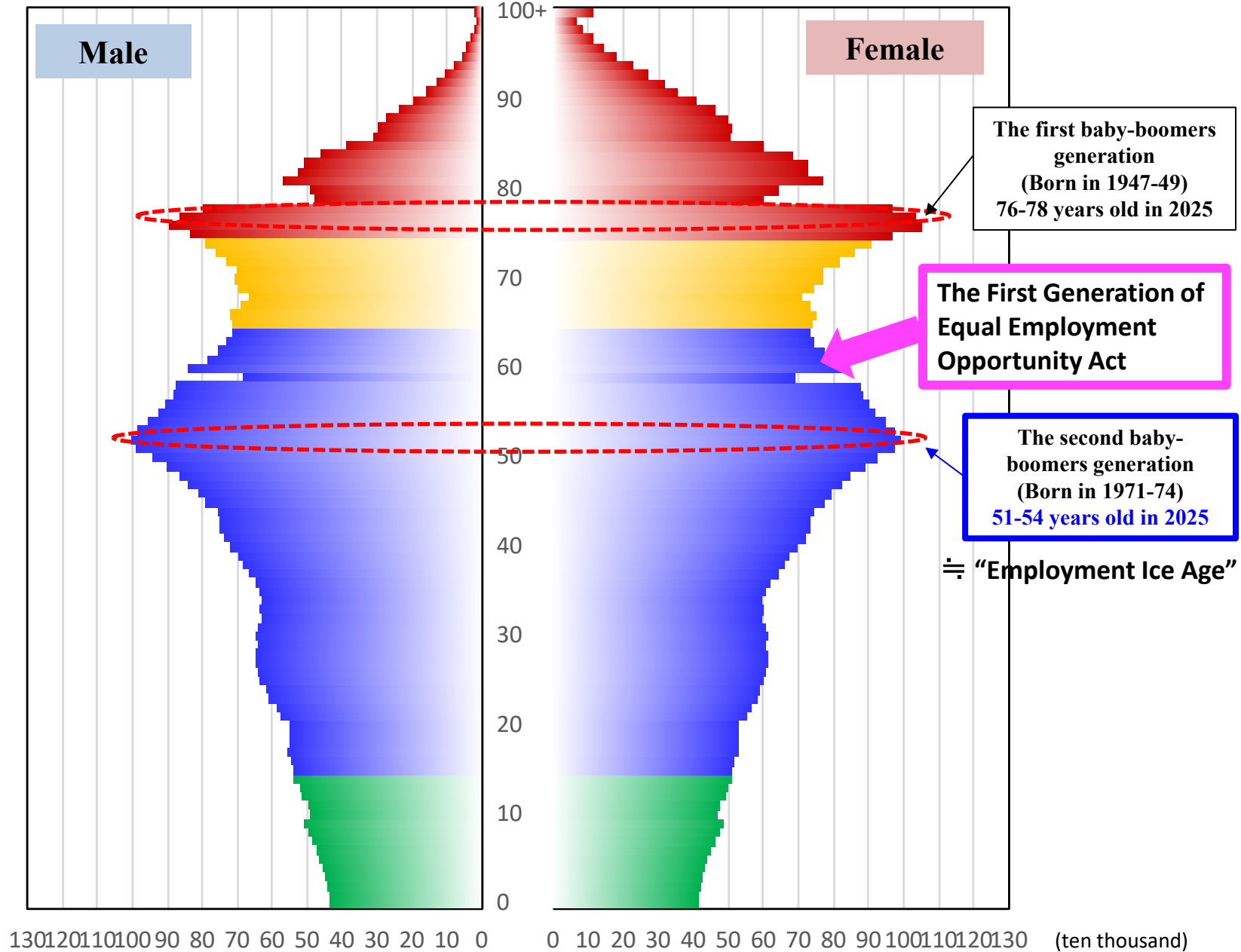
# Women in Central Government, 2023



Source: *Government at a Glance 2023*, OECD

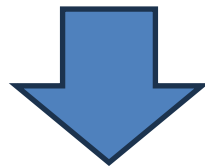


# Japan's Population Pyramid in 2025



# Implication of gender issues

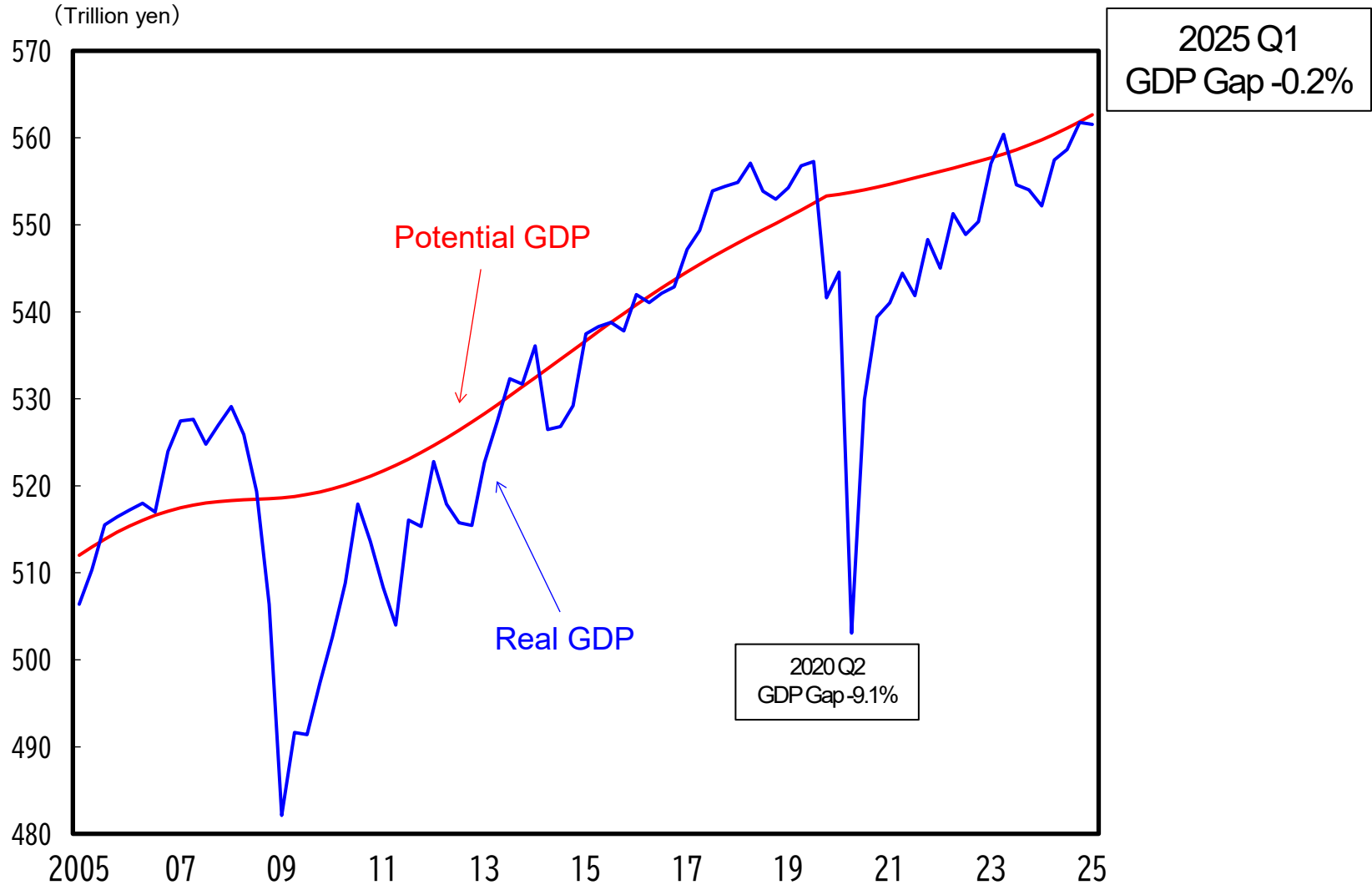
- For Economic Growth
- For Public Finance



**Women's economic empowerment matters.**



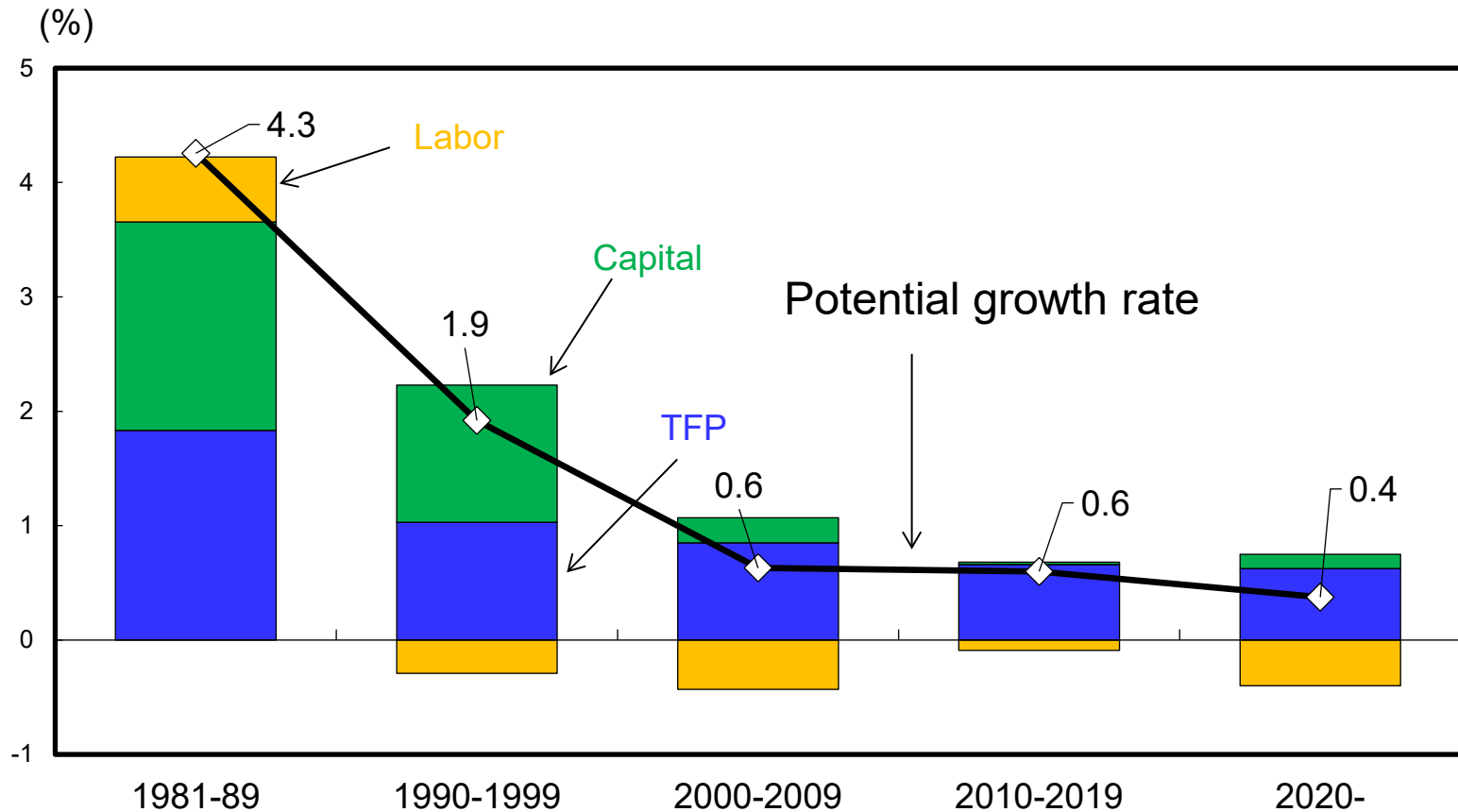
## Potential GDP and Real GDP in Japan



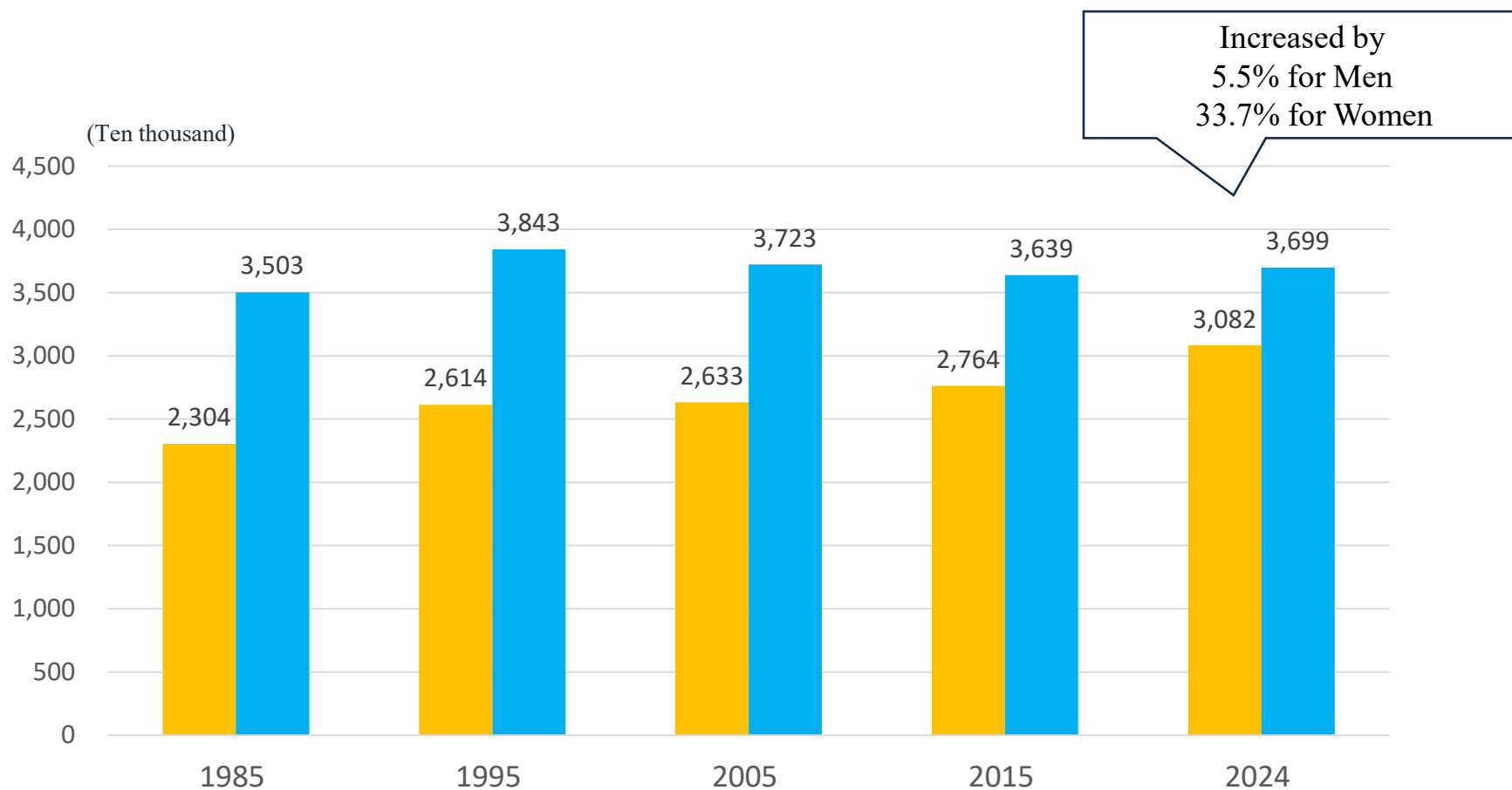
# Potential Growth Rate in Japan

Potential Economic Growth ← Labor, Capital, Total Factor Productivity

Women Labor Force

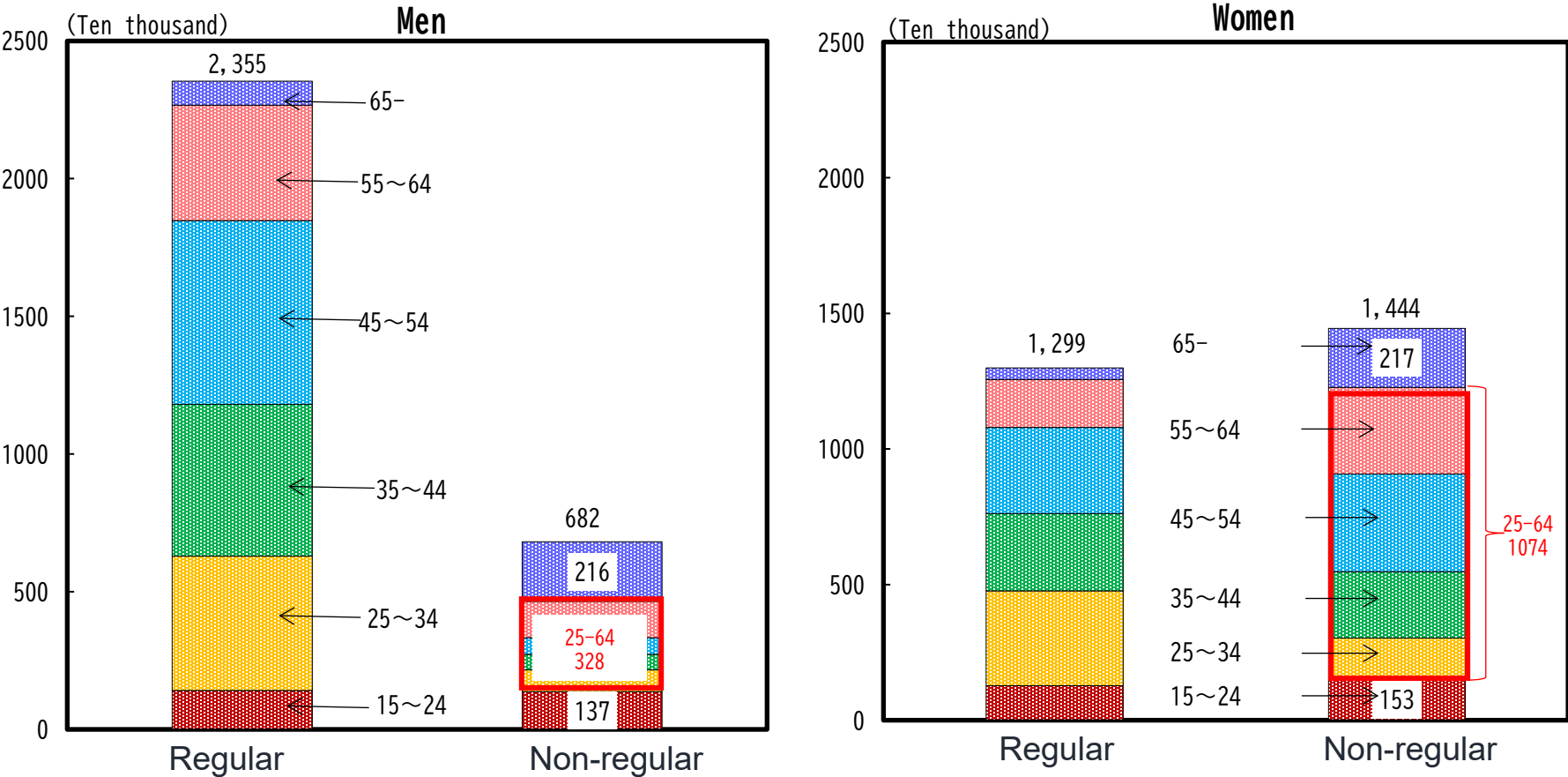


## Employed People in Japan: 1985-2024



Note: Employed People = Self-employed + Family workers + Employees

Employees by Age (2024)



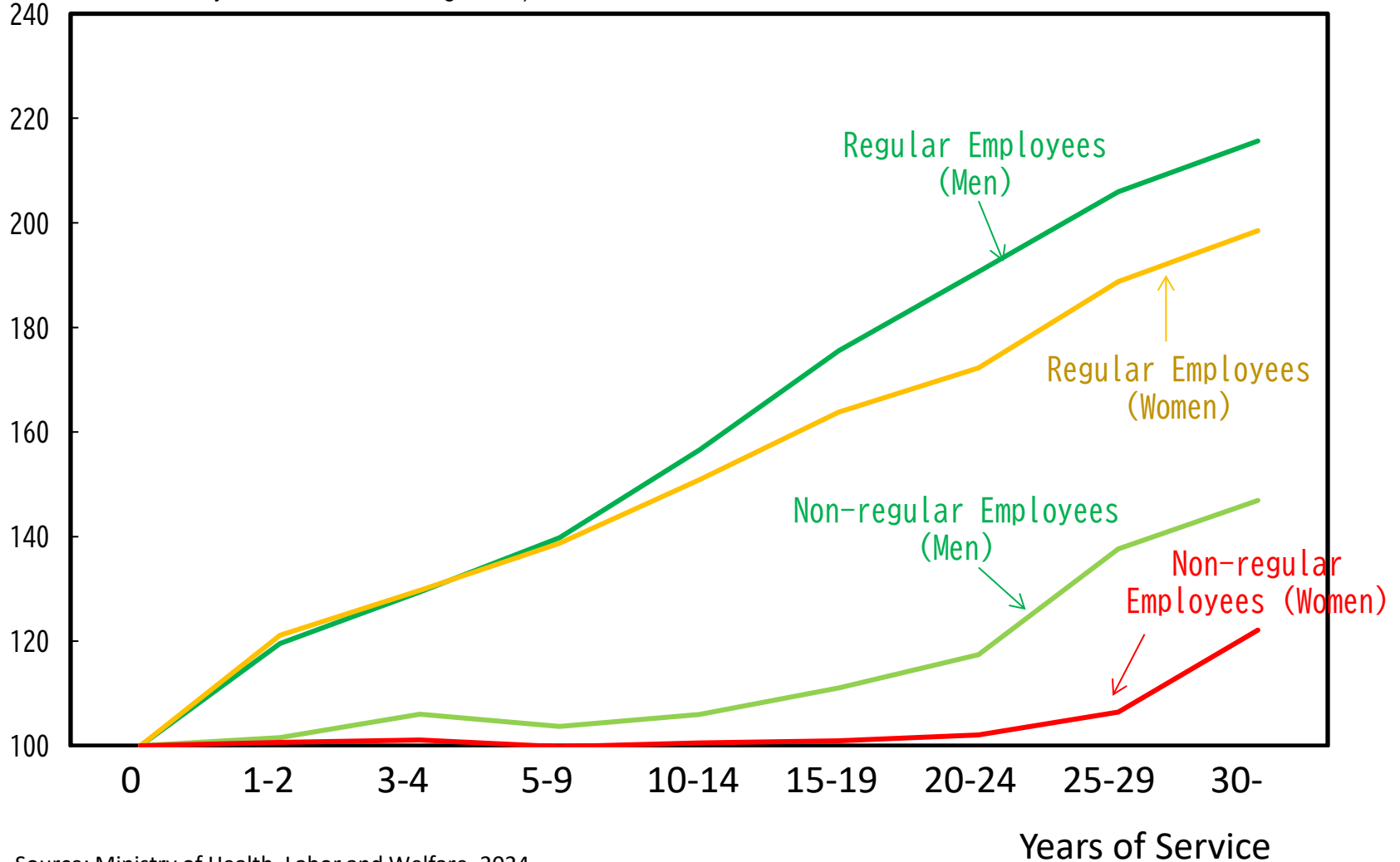
Source: Statistics Bureau, Labor Force Survey

## Further Challenges: Dual Labor Market

### Wages by Years of Service (full-time employees)

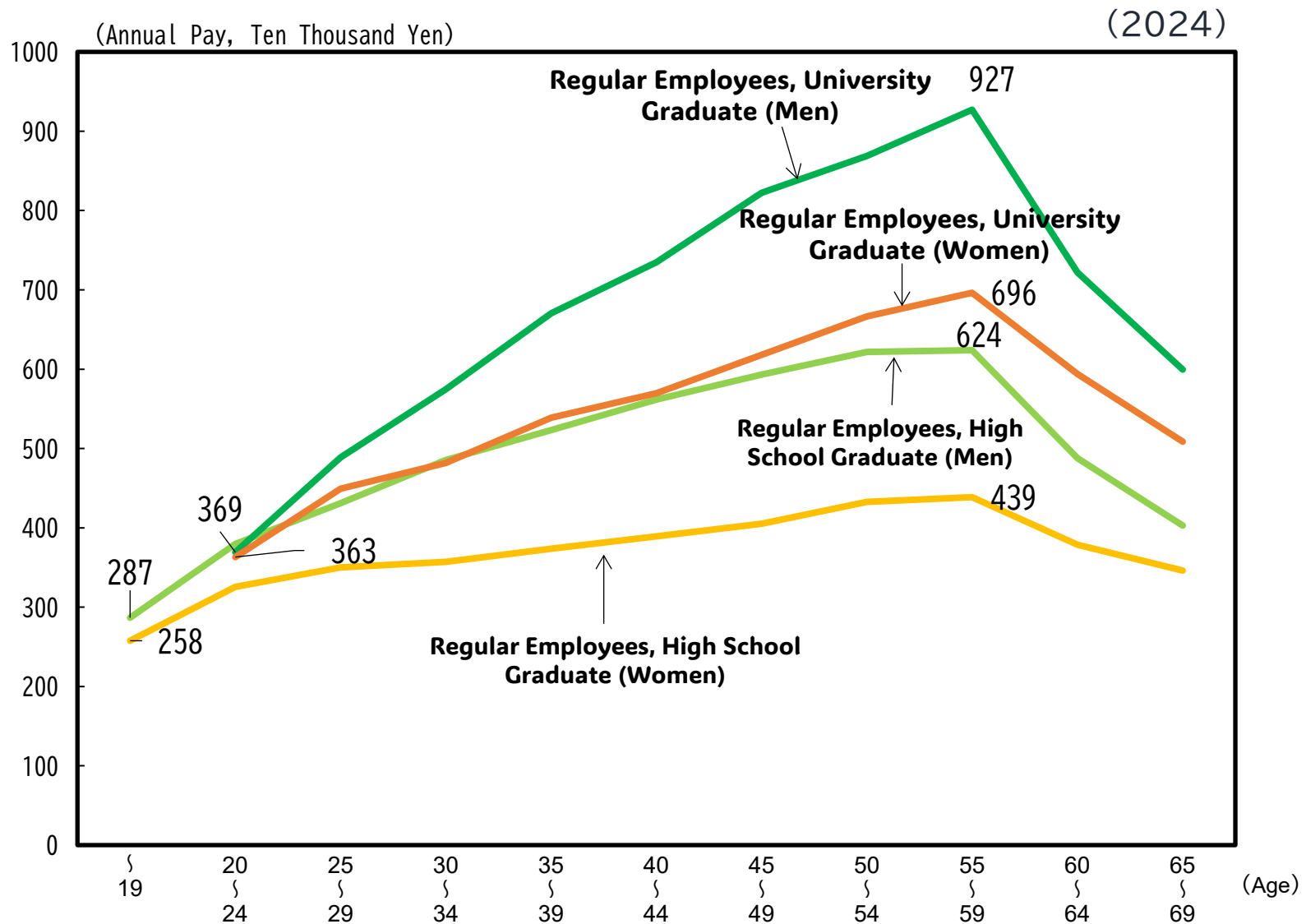
Wages

(indexed to 100 at zero year of service, including bonus)



Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2024

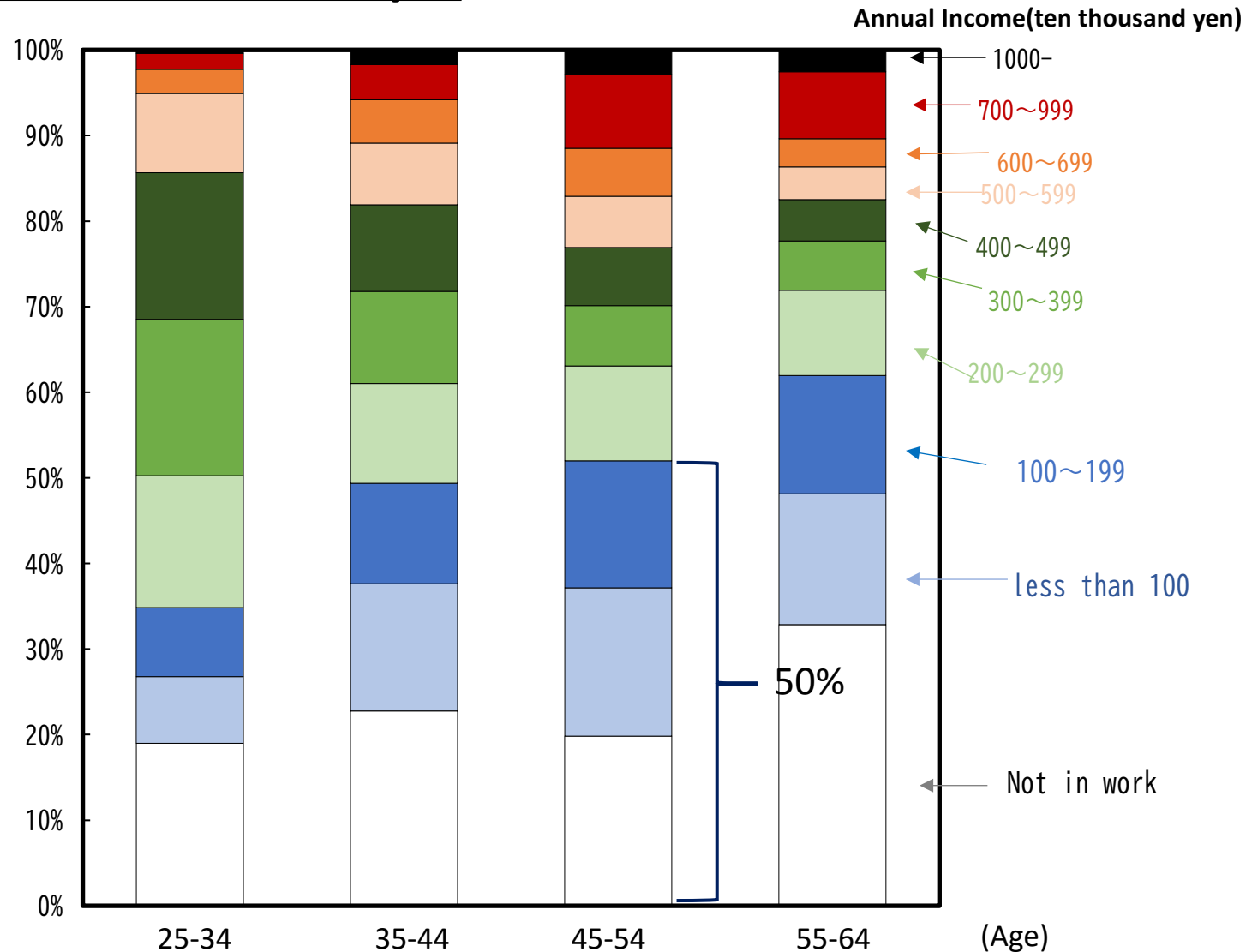
# Gender Pay Gaps among Regular Employees in Japan



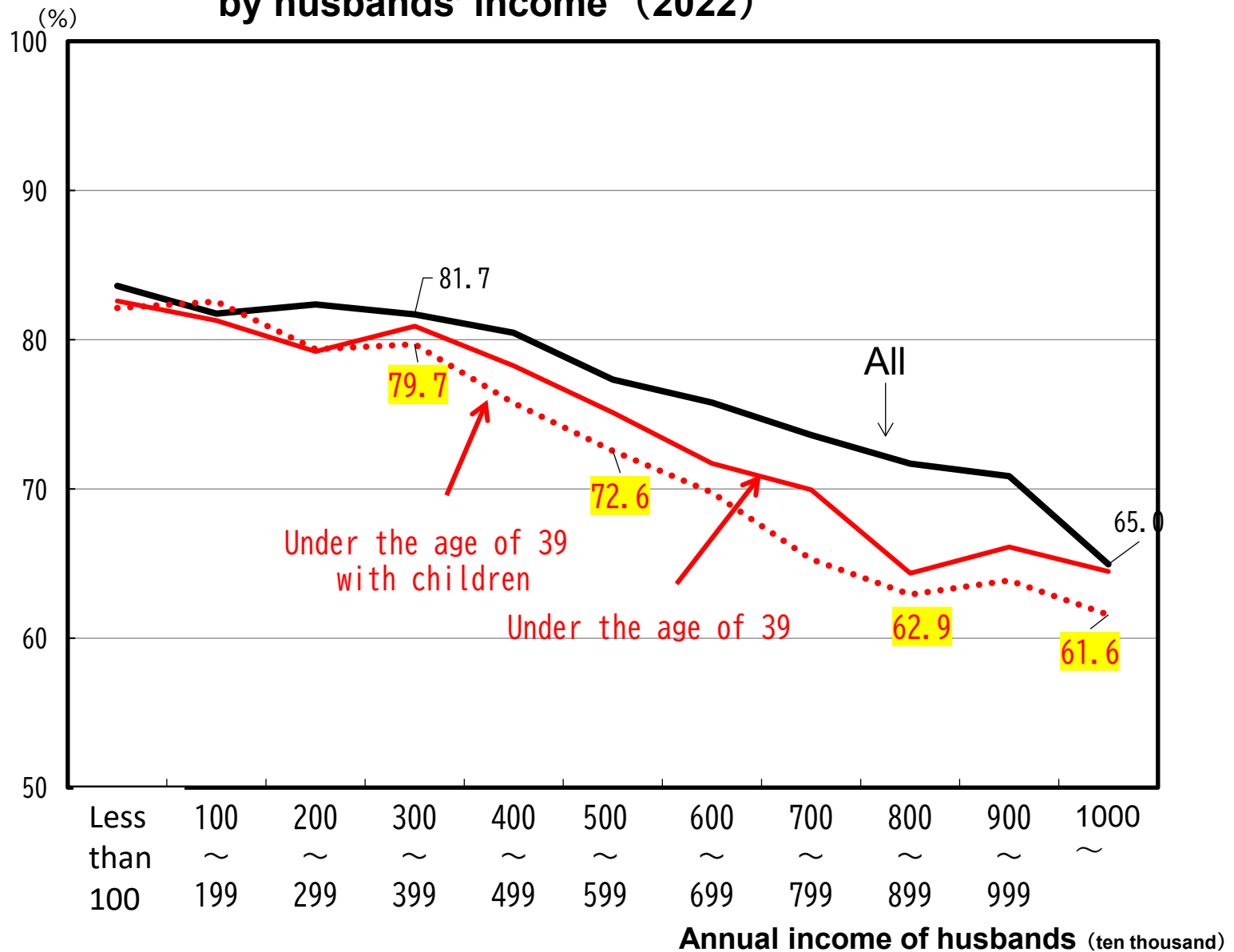
Source: MHLW, 2024

2022- Mandatory corporate disclosure of the gender pay gap

## 50% of married women aged over 35 with a university degree earn less than 2 million yen



## Labor participation rates of married women by husbands' income (2022)



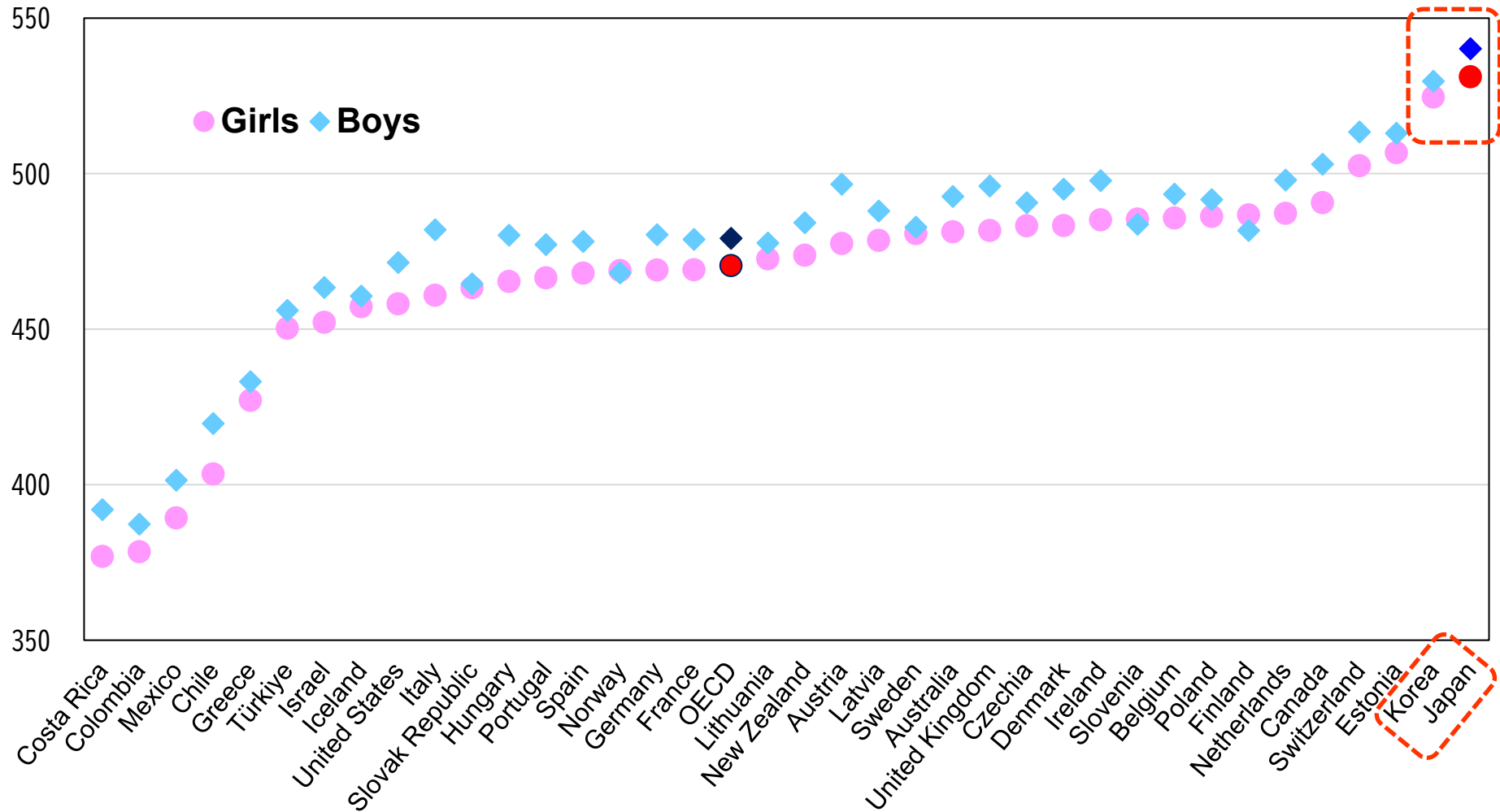
Source: Statistics Bureau, Employment Status Survey 2022

Note: Households with a husband aged 59 or younger.

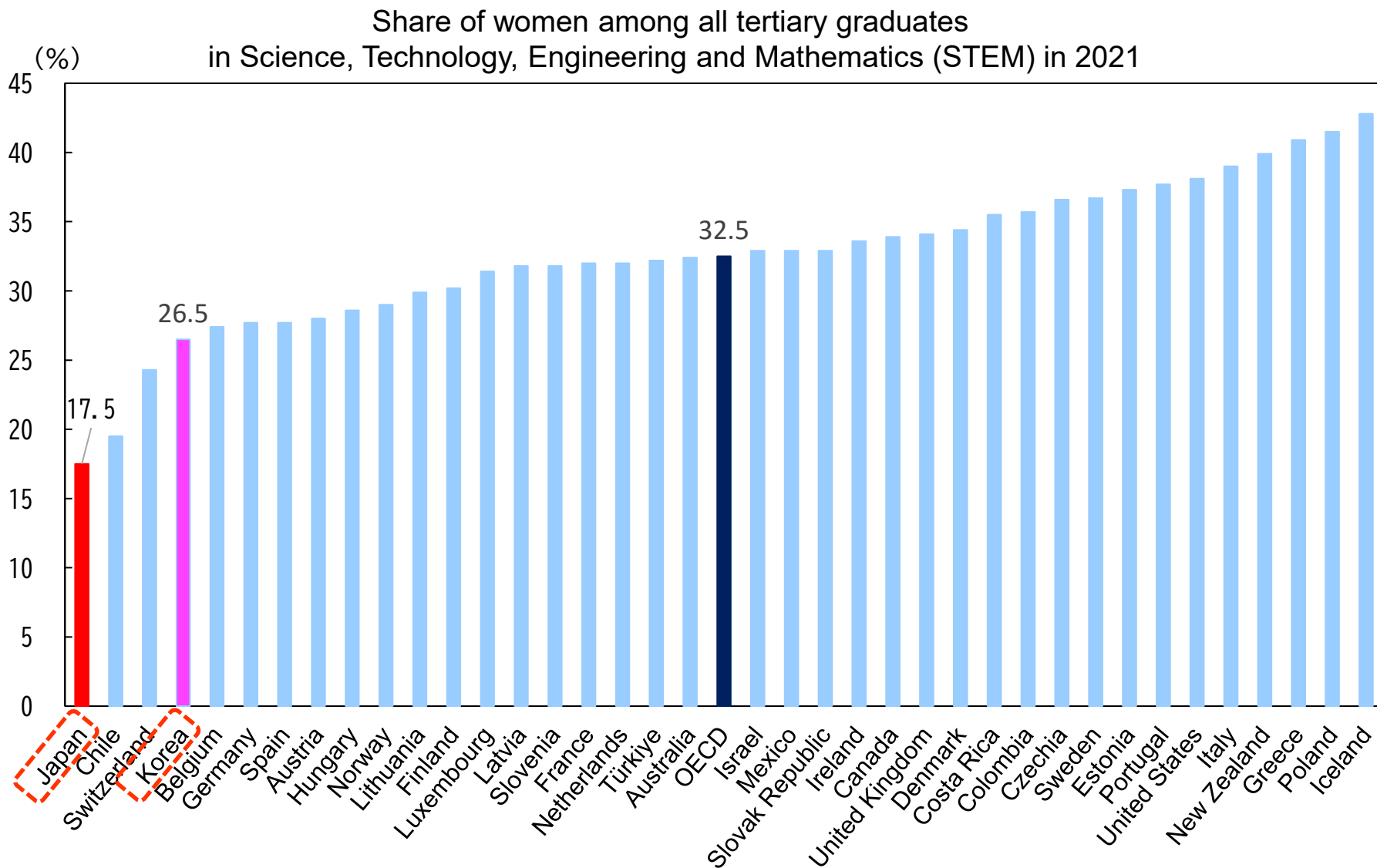


# Japanese and Korean girls achieve the highest PISA score in mathematics among OECD countries

Mean PISA score in mathematics by gender (PISA, 2022)

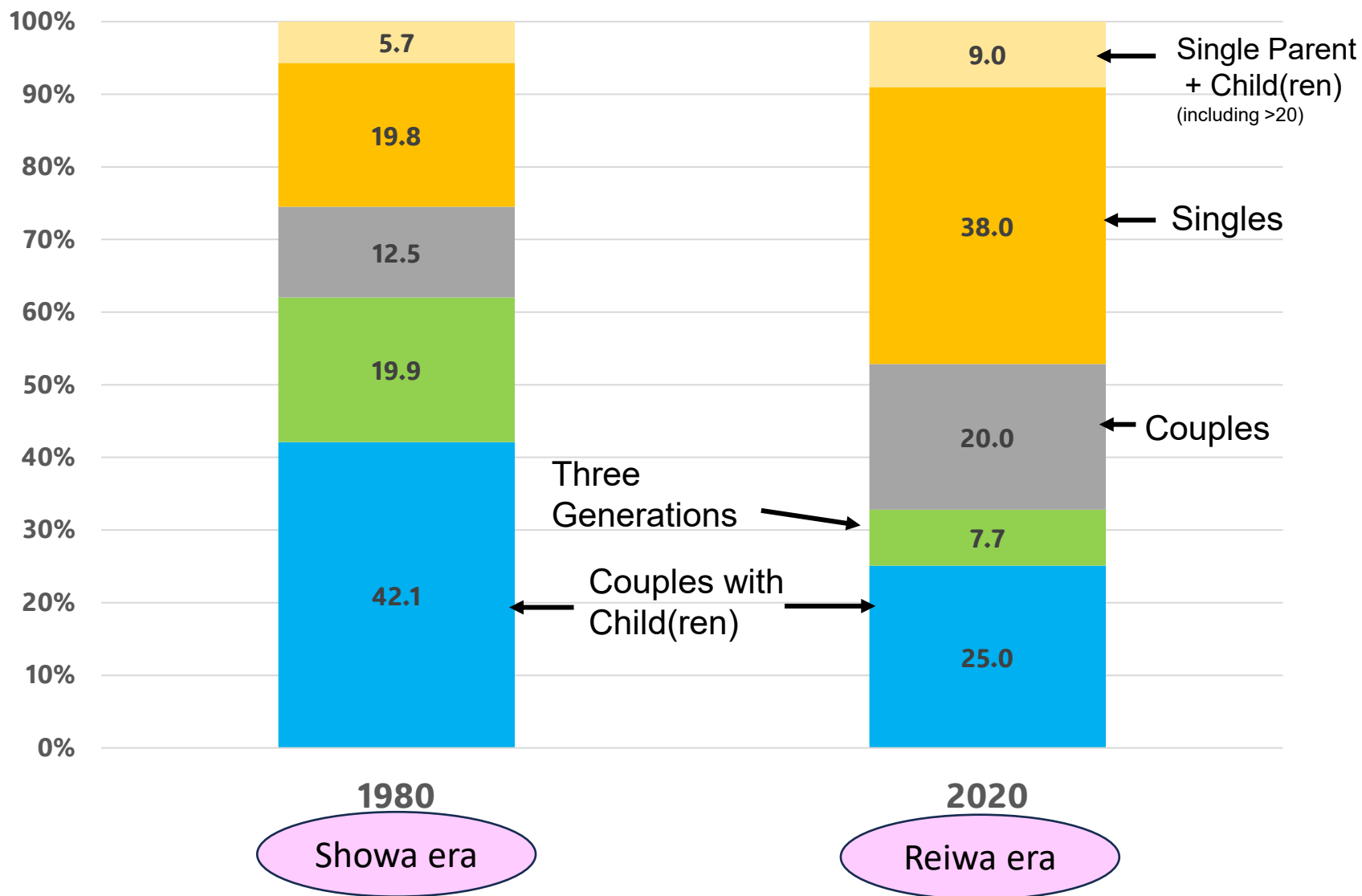


# The share of women in STEM fields remains the lowest in Japan

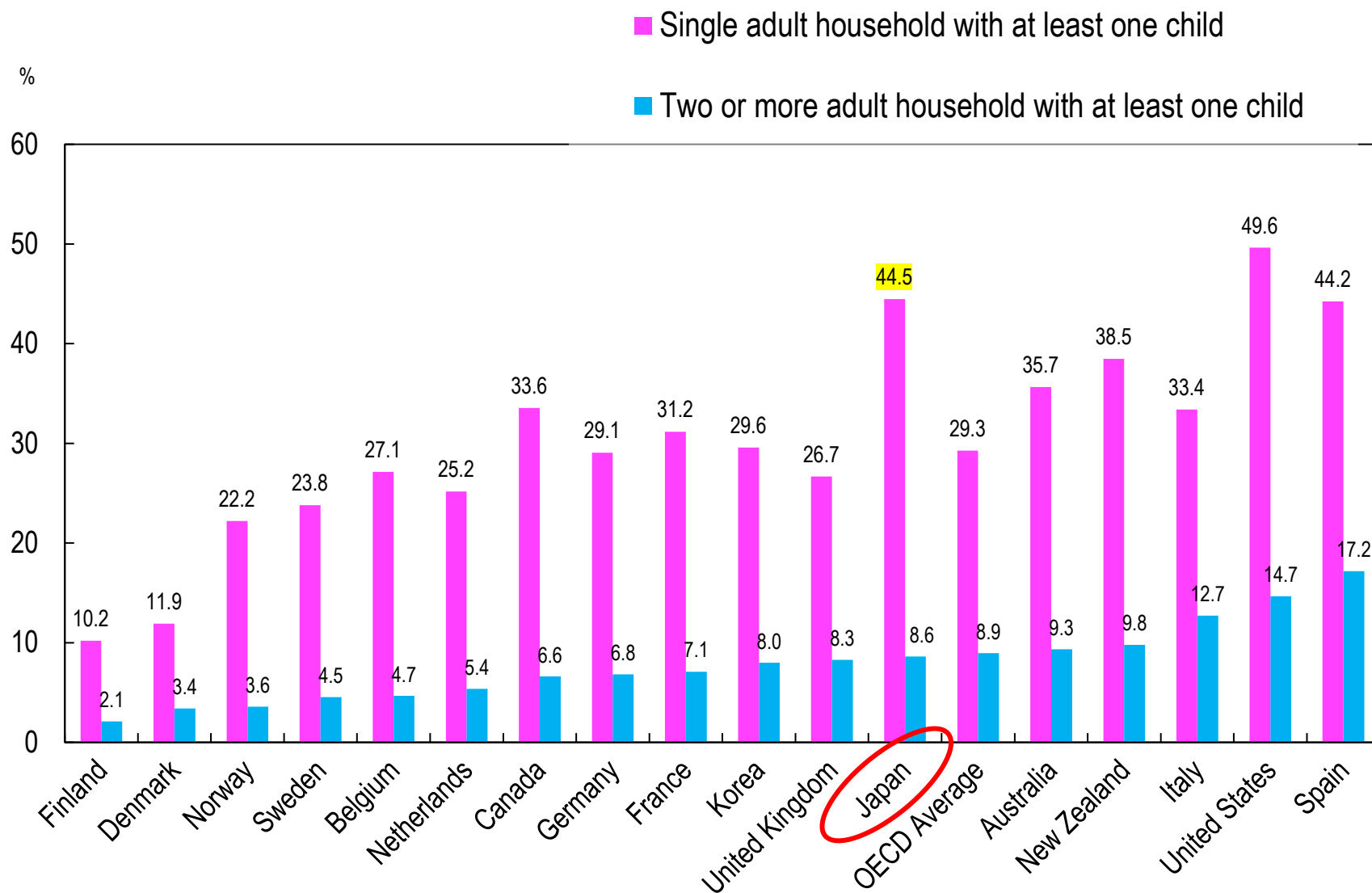


# Changes in Family Structure

## Households by family type



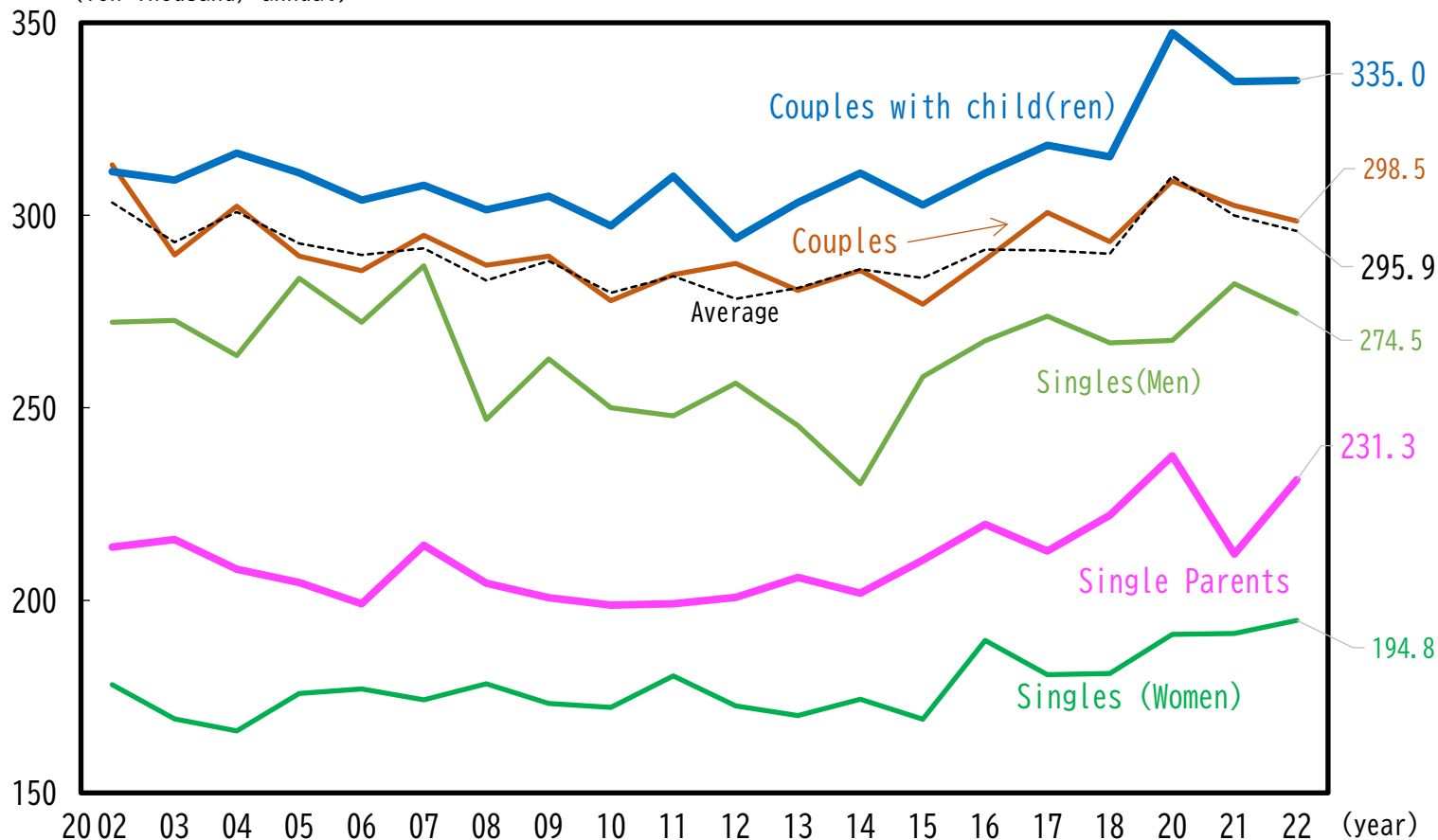
# Poverty rates in households with children by household type (2021 or latest available year)



Source: OECD

# Equivalent Disposable Income by Household Type in Japan (adjusted for family size)

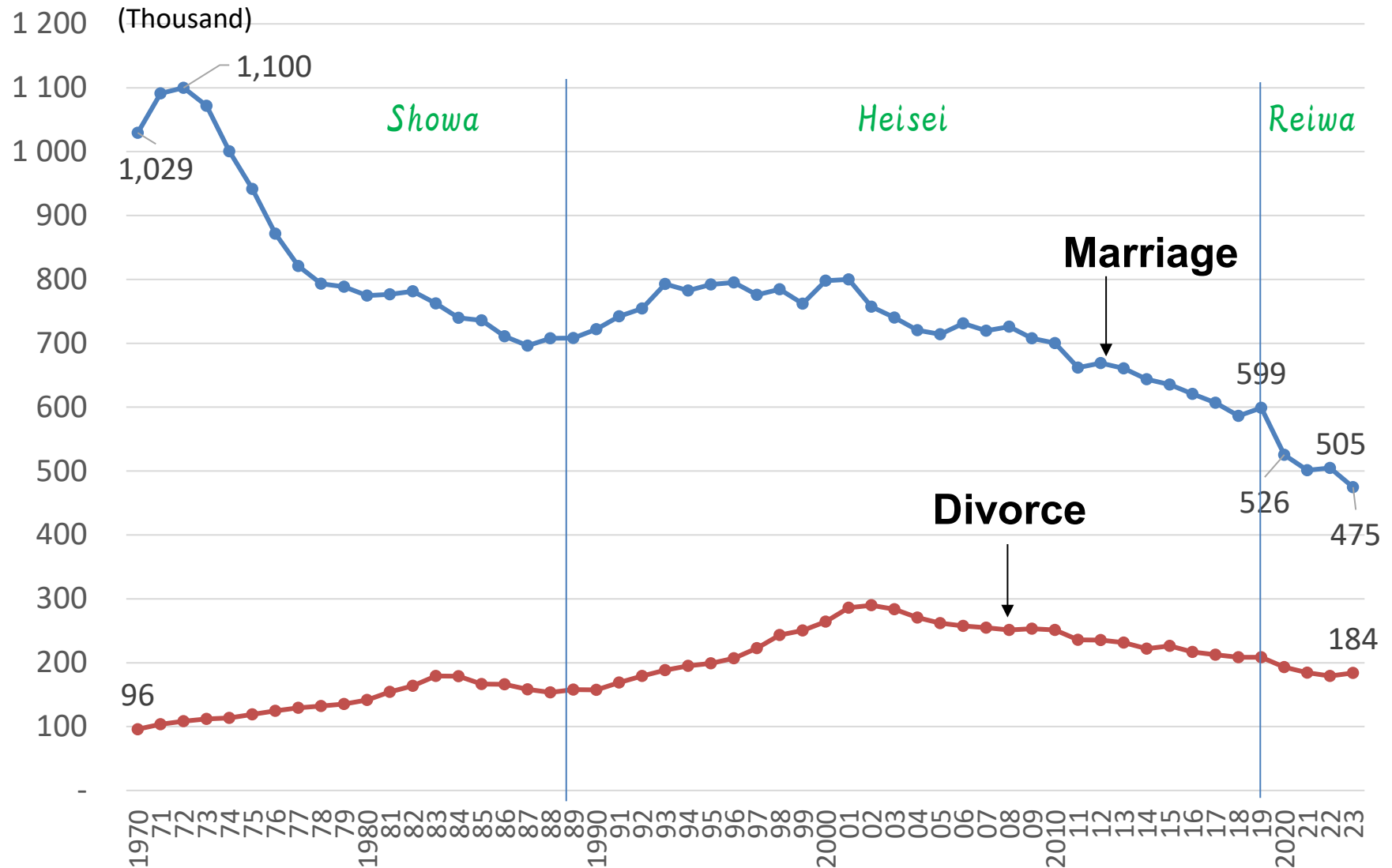
(Ten Thousand, annual)



Source: MHLW

# Marriage and Divorce

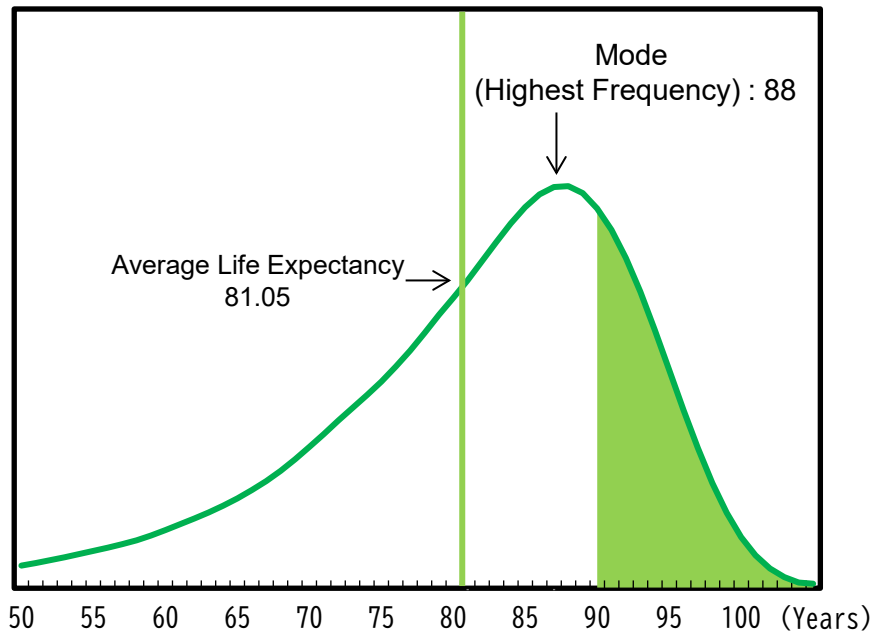
## Number of Marriages and Divorces



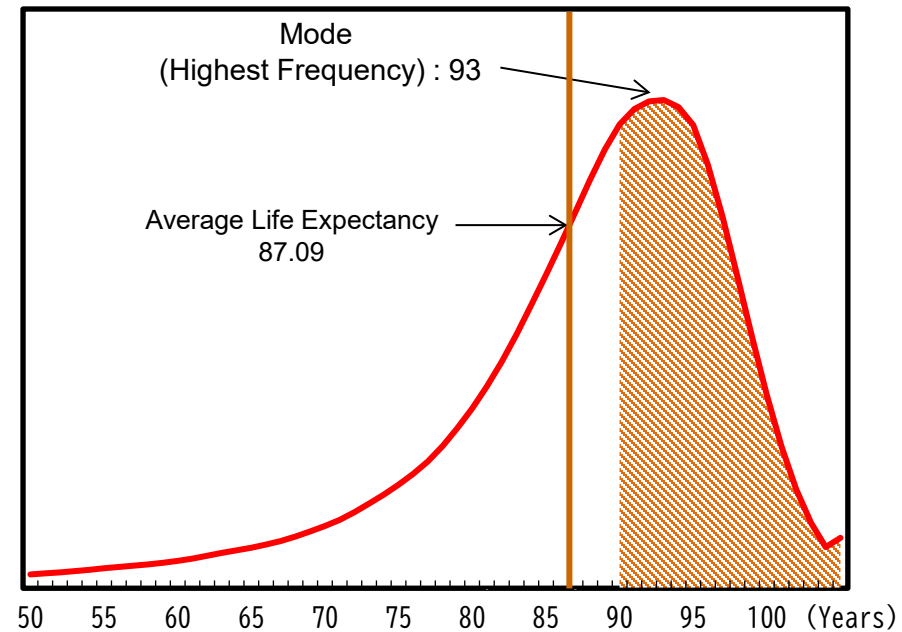
# Super-Longevity: 100-year Life in Japan

## Distribution of Deaths by Age

### Men



### Women



## **20 % of women in Japan are 75 years old and over.**

### **Population as of 1 November 2024**

(Thousand)

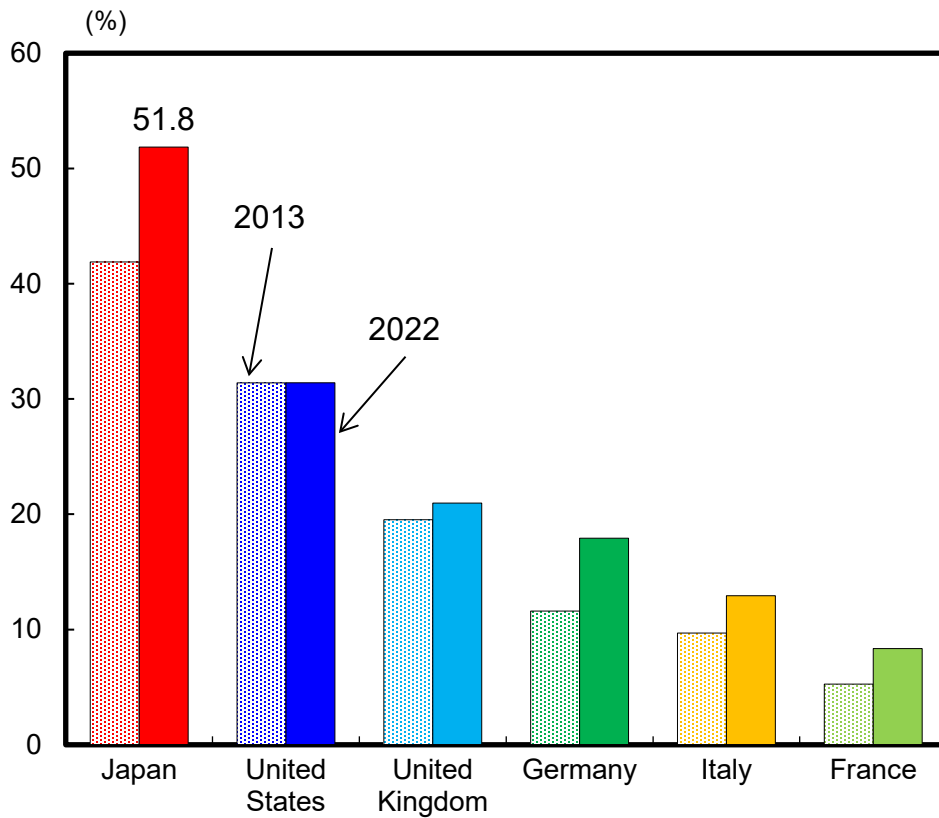
	All	(%)	Men	(%)	Women	(%)
Total	123,790		60,230		63,550	
65 and over	36,240	29.3	15,710	26.1	20,520	32.3
75 and over	20,840	16.8	8,330	13.8	12,510	19.7
85 and over	6,760	5.5	2,190	3.6	4,570	7.2
90 and over	2,820	2.3	740	1.2	2,080	3.3
100 and over	90	0.07	10	0.02	80	0.13



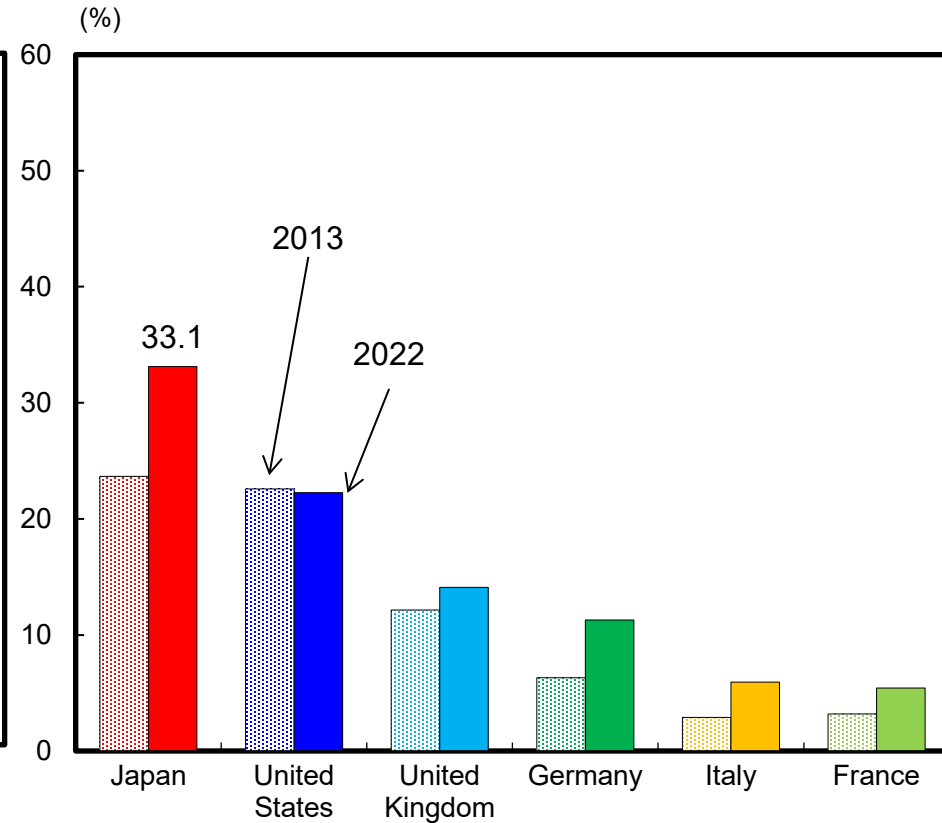
# High Labor Participation Rates of Older People

Labor Participation Rates  
(65-74 years old)

Men

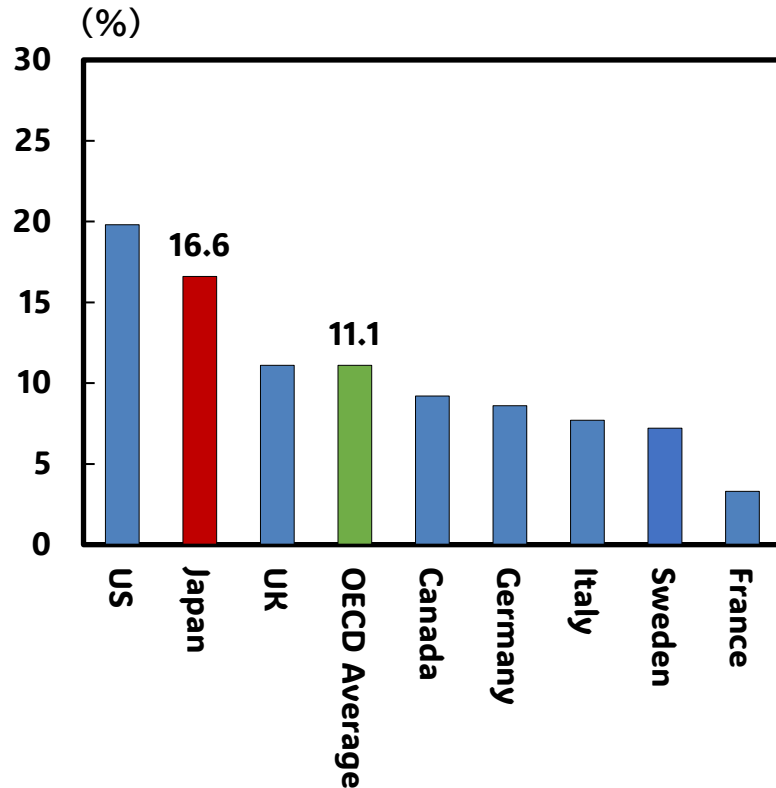


Women

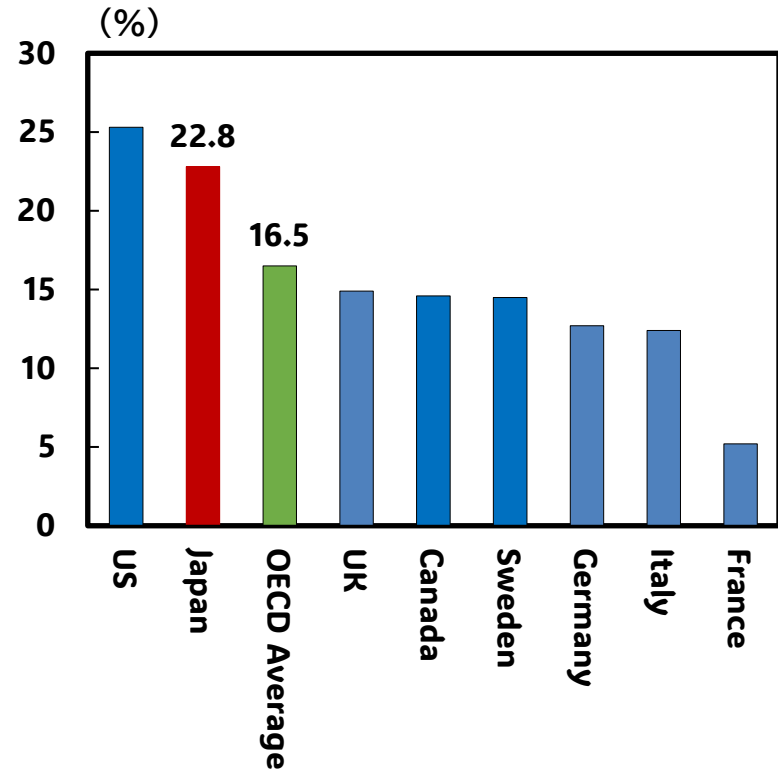


# Poverty Rates of People over 65

Men



Women



Source: OECD Pensions at a Glance, 2023

Note: Income poverty rates by age and gender, 2020 or latest available year

Percentage with income lower than 50% of median equivalised household disposable income

## Changes in Family Structure + Increasing Longevity

→ The **economic empowerment of women** plays a vital role in enhancing the **resilience and sustainability** of the economy and society.

Policy cohesion matters.  
Targeted policy matters.