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Separate Spheres or Increasing Equality? Changing Gender Beliefs in Postwar Japan

This research investigates change in gender beliefs in Japan during a period of economic hard times in the late 1990s. Using data from the International Social Survey Programme on the Japanese population from 1994 (n = 1,054) and 2002 (n = 872), we examined how cohort replacement and intracohort change contributed to changes in gender beliefs. We found important differences from the patterns of change reported for many Western countries, namely, a decoupling between societal trends in the female labor force participation rate and beliefs about gender. Such differences may be attributable to factors such as the high societal valuation of the housewife role compared to that in other postindustrial countries and sanctions against full-time employment for women in Japan.

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Japan has undergone dramatic social, political, and economic changes since the early 20th century (see, e.g., Gordon, 2003). Prior to World War II, the *Ie* family system organized daily life. Characterized by Confucian filial obligation, an inheritance system loosely based on primogeniture and the exit of adult daughters from the family of origin upon marriage, this patriarchal system allowed women to have some power within their households, but they had no property rights and were officially subservient to their husbands (Ochiai, 1997). Following WWII, Japan was occupied until 1952, during which time a new Constitution was implemented by the U.S. Occupation authorities. Japan's constitution officially established equal rights for women, including the right to vote. After this and until the 1970s, Japan experienced record economic growth, averaging 10% a year. These dramatic changes in the political, economic, and social systems of Japan resulted in strikingly different contexts for socialization in the development of beliefs about gender across cohorts. Japanese born in the postwar period experienced a social context that was significantly different than that of the earlier period.

In this paper, we examine how these different contexts for socialization shaped the gender beliefs held by individuals in different historical periods and how these historical residues in gender beliefs have changed Japan in the postwar period. Specifically, we analyze beliefs about

gender in different segments of the population defined by birth cohort, gender, and (among women) employment history. We examine for different segments of the population how much of the total change in gender beliefs occurring in Japan in the 1990s and early 21st century is attributable to cohort replacement and how much is attributable to intracohort change (e.g., period effects) during this time.

Gender Beliefs and Gender Equality

Gender beliefs are important because they are one piece of the narrative of increasing gender equality in a society (the progress toward the equality of opportunities and status for men and women). Blau, Brinton, and Grusky (2006) identified four overlapping narratives for social change in gender equality: economic, organizational, political, and cultural. Although each of these narratives plays a key role in a society's trajectory toward gender equality, our focus here is on the cultural narrative, that is, what people believe.

There are two reigning theoretical perspectives concerning historical changes in cultural beliefs about gender. Inglehart and Norris (in political science) and Lesthaeghe (in demography) have investigated different, yet interrelated, social phenomena—progress toward gender equality in the case of Inglehart and Norris and changes in family formation, fertility, and family dissolution in the case of Lesthaeghe. Both theoretical perspectives set out to explain processes of social change, but they differ in the key forces they identify as responsible for producing change. Inglehart and colleagues' work (see, e.g., Inglehart, Norris, & Welzel, 2002; Inglehart & Baker, 2000) predicted that as the economic development that accompanies modernization progresses and a stable democracy is established, beliefs about gender will become more egalitarian. For example, Inglehart et al. reported that in nearly every stable democracy, the majority of the public rejects the belief that men make better political leaders than do women. The key exogenous factor motivating social change in their model is economic development.

In the second predominant theoretical perspective addressing changes in beliefs about gender, Lesthaeghe and colleagues (see, e.g., Lesthaeghe, 1983) argued that cultural changes that are rooted in the Protestant reformation,

increasing individualism, materialism, and secularism have motivated changes in both the family and in beliefs about gender. The second demographic transition refers to the changes in patterns of fertility, marriage, and divorce that have altered the course of women's lives and that have been associated with increasing acceptance of nonfamilial roles for women (e.g., Lesthaeghe, 1983). In Western Europe and North America, there has been a steadily increasing trend toward paid employment by married women, especially among those with young children. Similar to Inglehart and colleagues' work, Lesthaeghe and colleagues theorize social change as the interplay of both cultural and economic forces, but with an emphasis on the role played by cultural transformation.

These theoretical perspectives from political science and demography describe interdependent changes in the economy and in values that have motivated changes in the family and in beliefs about the appropriate roles for men and women. These are closely connected theories with differences only in their emphases on economic and cultural change, respectively. On the individual level, the mechanisms connecting societal changes in the family and in the economy with changes in beliefs about gender are the individual changes in social-structural position resulting from economic development and the second demographic transition. Individuals' location in social organizations and the larger social structure define their interests and shape their beliefs and attitudes (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004). Inglehart and Baker (2000) argued that with economic development comes a shift toward values and beliefs that are more tolerant. Therefore, vis-à-vis developing countries, people in industrial and postindustrial societies exhibit, overall, greater acceptance of the full participation of different socioeconomic groups in society. As for changing family roles, predictions in the literature have focused on women's increased employment outside the home and the associated changes in gender beliefs. According to interest-based theories of attitude change, individuals adopt new attitudes when it is in their individual interest to do so, in particular in order to reduce cognitive dissonance between their beliefs and behaviors (e.g., Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983). As women enter the labor force, their new positions in the workplace bring an increased demand for gender equality. Research in Australia, the Netherlands,

Germany, Great Britain and the United States has shown that, in part as a consequence of changes in women's employment, attitudes and beliefs have become steadfastly more supportive of women's dual family and work roles (e.g., Alwin & Scott, 1996; Brewster & Padavic, 2000). These changes have occurred for both women and men, although changes for women occurred at a faster pace (e.g., Mason & Lu, 1988; Brewster & Padavic).

Theoretical Approach

Much of the prior theorizing on cultural change in a society (including beliefs about gender) has focused on such cultural change as an individual-level phenomenon (e.g., interest-based and exposure-based models of change) or as a general, cross-national phenomenon (e.g., Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Lesthaeghe, 1983). Our focus is on predicting the direction and nature of social change in gender beliefs in Japan. Inglehart and Norris argued that "the broad direction of value change is predictable, although the pace is conditioned by the cultural legacy and institutional structure of any given society" (p. 10). Similar to their argument, we also assert that the direction and pace of ideational change will vary on the basis of societal characteristics and institutional constraints. We are interested, however, in investigating the direction and nature of change in a single cultural context, within a particular set of social and institutional constraints. We assert that the direction of the change may not always be toward more egalitarian beliefs. The liberalization of gender beliefs will occur only insofar as the necessary social-institutional supports for the integration of women into the workforce are available and there is a demand on the part of women for a revolution in gender roles.

We also empirically investigate the pace of change through a decomposition analysis. Modern theories of social change rest on the idea that culture, social norms, and social behavior change through two main mechanisms: (1) through changes undergone by individuals (because of aging or period effects) and (2) through the succession of cohorts or generations (Firebaugh, 1989). Underlying the cohort succession mechanism of social change is the assumption that beliefs are formed in youth and remain relatively stable thereafter

(Mannheim, 1952; Ryder, 1965). Intracohort change, on the other hand, is often in response to economic or social events. Intracohort change captures individuals' attempts to adapt their beliefs in response to their changing sociohistorical context. The decomposition of social change into that motivated by intracohort change and that motivated by cohort replacement is significant because the mechanisms of change provide insight into the pace of social change. Change motivated primarily by the slow social metabolism of cohort replacement will occur gradually. We expect that much of the cultural change theorized by Lesthaeghe (1998) occurs through the slow process of cohort replacement. Change motivated by aging or period effects, on the other hand, is faster, with the potential to revolutionize beliefs about gender in a population over a relatively short period of time. We expect that the change in beliefs motivated by economic changes, as discussed by Inglehart and Norris (2003), will largely occur within cohorts.

Our approach to studying change in beliefs about gender emphasizes the intersection of history and biography. In addition to identifying the societal factors responsible for the direction and pace of change in Japan, we also identify the individual factors that predict the pace of change in different subgroups of the population. Gender is central to our analysis of gender belief change. We argue that the predictors of gender beliefs and the mechanisms of change in gender beliefs will vary by gender and by social-institutional context. We predict that women have an interest in egalitarian gender ideology and therefore change in beliefs will occur through both the slow process of cohort replacement and through intracohort change (as a response to key period effects). Change for men, however, is likely to be more uneven and in response to key period effects like downturns in the economy or the emergence of a significant gap in the beliefs of men and women. We also expect that the relationship between employment status and gender beliefs for women that has been found in previous research is not constant but also varies according to social-institutional context.

As gender scholars have pointed out, the achievement of complete gender equality in the case of the United States is not necessarily a certainty (England, 2006; Ridgeway, 2006). The same can be said for Japan, where the gendered division of labor is more intractable and

essentialist views on gender more widespread (Levey & Silver, 2006). Japan, for example, is the sole exception to several of Inglehart and colleagues' findings. Japan is the only postindustrial country that did not display high levels of gender equality in Inglehart and Norris' (2003) analysis, and Japan is the only exception to Inglehart et al.'s (2002) finding that in stable democracies, the majority of the public rejects the belief that men make better political leaders. For this reason, an in-depth analysis of the nature of social change in a single case is an important complement to the broader, cross-cultural work done by Inglehart and colleagues. Such an analysis will allow for the narrative of change in a specific cultural context to be revealed, highlighting the significance of the cultural narrative in a society's trajectory of change with respect to gender equality.

Japan as a Case: Background and Justification

We turn now to a discussion of Japan as a case and the specific social-institutional constraints on social change in beliefs about gender. As we discuss in greater detail, we argue that the mechanisms of cohort replacement and intracohort change are likely to contribute differently to social change in gender beliefs in Japan than what has been found in Western countries in the 20th century.

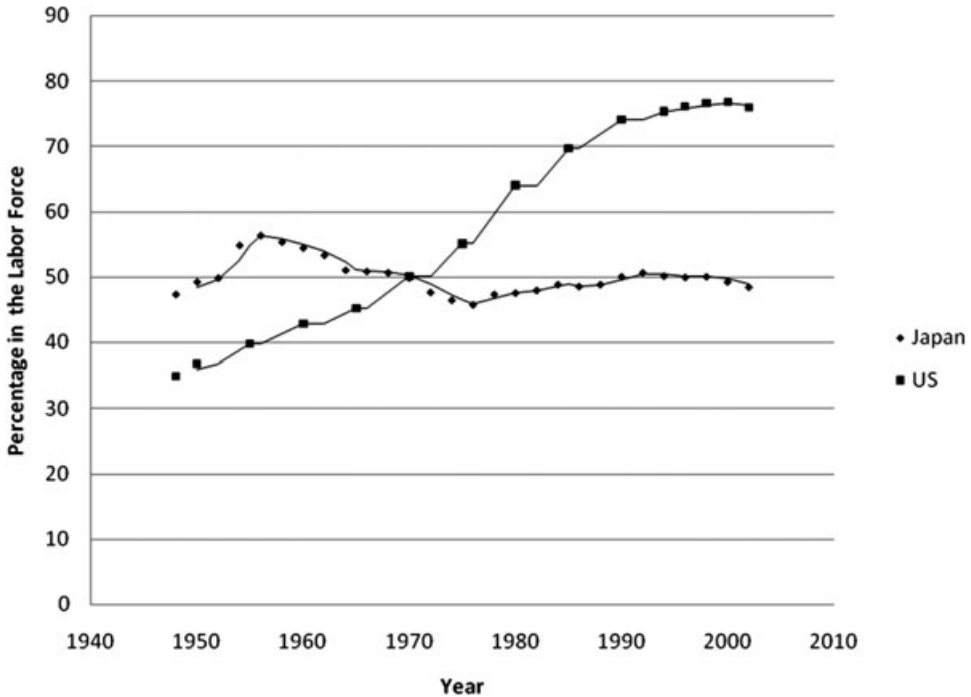
Cohort replacement. The roles occupied by men and women in Japanese society underwent dramatic changes in the 20th century, creating a unique opportunity to compare the beliefs of individuals raised in historically distinct gender contexts. We expect some differences from the West with respect to the contribution of cohort replacement to social change. Overall, successive birth cohorts in the United States and Great Britain, for example, have reported increasingly egalitarian gender beliefs (Alwin & Scott, 1996; Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Mason & Lu, 1988). On the basis of economic, social, and institutional differences between Japan and Western countries, we expect that this may not necessarily be the case in Japan.

Women's social and family roles followed a somewhat different trajectory of change in the 20th century in Japan compared to the United States, for example. We acknowledge the limitations of comparing employment rates of women across nations and argue that social

and institutional arrangements are important; we nonetheless find it valuable to display the differences in order to demonstrate that the Japanese experience in the 20th century is quite different from that experienced in the West, especially the United States, despite the fact that both are postindustrial countries by the beginning of the 21st century. The female labor force participation rate and women's contribution to the household economy fluctuated across the 20th century in Japan. Figure 1 depicts high levels of female labor force participation in the immediate postwar period, which declined during Japan's economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Much of this trend was driven by women moving out of agricultural work faster than they moved into service sector jobs and by the economic need for both spouses to work in the first half of the 20th century. As we would expect on the basis of differences in stage of economic development, this is different from the patterns of female labor force participation in the United States (also in Figure 1). Women in the United States had comparatively low levels of employment in the immediate postwar period, but their labor force participation rate steadily increased across the second half of the 20th century. On the basis of these differences in female labor force participation rates (attributable to both differences in stage of economic development and also societal valuation of the housewife role), we expect to see differences in the patterns of change in beliefs about gender in the 20th century in Japan compared to many Western countries.

Following World War II, major economic and social changes occurred in Japan. In the 2 years following the war, Japan was in such a state of economic upheaval that there was a dramatic increase in the number of women working outside the home in order to help meet their family's economic needs (Koyama, 1961). The *Ie* family system was also officially abolished under the postwar constitution. As Japan recovered economically and moved into a period of rapid economic growth, women left the labor force to raise their children and care for their families. According to Ochiai (1997, p. 35), "in the postwar period, the state of being a housewife became so strongly normative that it was practically synonymous with womanhood." The housewife role in Japan took on a different meaning than in many Western countries. This

FIGURE 1. FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE IN JAPAN (AGE 15+) AND THE UNITED STATES (AGES 25–54), 1948–2002.



Note. Two-period moving average.

Sources: Japanese data: Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2006). U.S. data: Current Population Survey as reported in Mosisa and Hipple (2006).

is partially attributable to the “New Life” Movement’s efforts in the postwar period to professionalize the role of housewife (Gordon, 1997). This may help to explain why, even in recent history, Japanese women have not viewed the housewife role as an oppressive one but rather as an autonomous role in which they can hone skills essential to the functioning of their family and society (e.g., Bumiller, 1995). According to Vogel (1978), women and men’s roles in Japan can be described as “separate but equal.” Writing in the 1970s, she explained that the housewife’s “role is different from a man’s, but she holds the power within her sphere” (Vogel, p. 42). Fifteen years later, Iwao (1993) further concluded that men had virtually disappeared from Japanese family life because of their extensive work obligations and that women had ascended to positions of economic power in the family because of their control of the family budget.

In addition to the great “symbolic value” (Panayotova & Brayfield, 1997) of the housewife role in modern Japan, social and economic sanctions against full-time employment for women also limit women’s full participation in the Japanese labor market. Spouses benefit from tax deductions as long as their annual income is less than 1.35 million yen (Akabayashi, 2006), discouraging the full-time employment of women. Japanese women face considerable difficulties if they choose to pursue both a career with promotion opportunities and a family. Extraordinarily long commutes, the lack of affordable child care for children under age 3, expectations of frequent overtime, and job transfers are some of the obstacles faced by working women (Yu, 2001). Working women are also still expected, in many cases, to leave their jobs upon the birth of their first child. These social and institutional constraints on women’s employment influence the meaning of full-time

employment for women—making it less of a form of liberation and more of a burden. The symbolic value of the housewife role and the costs of employment for mothers in particular shaped this dual consciousness of Japanese women—at once embracing the egalitarianism associated with modernization but also rejecting the costs of full-time employment.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, in Japan, as in many Western countries, women reaching adulthood at the turn of the 21st century faced more than four times the risk of divorce than those women reaching adulthood in the immediate postwar period (the oldest respondents in our sample). The increased risk of divorce later in the century may be associated with greater support for egalitarian gender beliefs among later-born cohorts of women in particular (because women are the most likely to be economically dependent in a marriage and therefore likely to suffer more severe consequences of divorce). At the same time, on the basis of the social-institutional constraints on mothers' employment and the symbolic value of the housewife and mother role among more recent cohorts, we might expect Japanese women who came of age during WWII and the immediate postwar period to have somewhat more egalitarian beliefs (specifically with respect to women and work) than women reaching adulthood during the economic miracle in which the housewife role was normative and greatly respected.

Intracohort change. In addition to the cohort-based mechanisms of change in the population, intracohort change is expected to produce some of the change in beliefs that occurred during the period of observation. An analysis of intracohort change in beliefs necessitates an attention to the relevant period effects driving change within cohorts. We are particularly interested in how Japanese men and women have changed their beliefs in response to the recent economic hard times in Japan, starting when the bubble burst in the early 1990s. We see this economic recession as one of the key period effects motivating intracohort change during the period of analysis. Our data come from two critical points in recent Japanese history—1994 and 2002. Between the waves of survey data collected, Asia underwent an economic crisis. Starting in 1997 in Southeast Asia, Asian currencies plummeted, sending shock waves through the economies of Asia and

unsettling financial markets around the world. Although the Japanese economy was not hit as hard as the economies of many Southeast Asian countries, the late 1990s and early 21st century were a period of economic hard times in Japan (extending the financial downturn that started in the early 1990s). Major Japanese banks folded, the yen tumbled, and unemployment reached record levels. At the same time, public scandals in the 1990s surrounding the government's handling of the Kobe earthquake and sarin gas attack shook public confidence in the government (Gordon, 2003).

METHOD

We analyzed data from the Japanese component of the International Social Survey Program's (ISSP) "Family and Changing Gender Roles" module, which included measures of gender beliefs in surveys administered in 1994 and 2002 (International Social Survey Program, 1997, 2004). The Japanese samples are two-stage stratified random samples representative of the Japanese population age 16 or older. From these original samples we selected respondents between the ages of 20 and 67. These subsamples of respondents were used for all descriptive statistics and all statistical analyses presented here. Gender beliefs are conceptualized as "cognitive representations of 'what is'" the appropriate gendered division of labor in the family (Alwin, 2005). Gender beliefs provide guidelines for "doing gender" as based on status inequalities and inherent differences between the genders or on the equality of the genders (Ridgeway, 2006; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In all of our analyses, we scaled responses to questions about gender beliefs so that a high score reflects an egalitarian gender belief. Agreement with the belief that there are benefits derived from women's employment outside the home and that women should engage in market activities indicates egalitarian gender beliefs. We categorized seven measures according to three dimensions of gender belief content, as follows: (1) gender ideology, (2) beliefs having to do with the consequences to the family of women working, and (3) beliefs about the importance of women's employment outside the home. We use the term *gender ideology* to refer to fundamental beliefs about the gender division of labor. The individual measures of gender beliefs and the associated variable mnemonics

Table 1. *Empirical Predictions*

Empirical Predictions	Women	Men
General predictions	Change will likely occur both through CR and IC	Change is likely to be more uneven and largely through IC, though direction of IC is unclear
Predictions by dimensions		
Gender ideology	Positive CR, positive IC, lower levels of IC than in the other 2 dimensions	Positive CR, unclear whether IC will be positive or negative, lower levels of IC than in the other 2 dimensions
Consequences of women working	Unclear whether CR will be positive or negative, positive IC	Positive CR, unclear whether IC will be positive or negative
Importance of work	Unclear whether CR will be positive or negative, positive IC	Positive CR, unclear whether IC will be positive or negative

Note. The measures of gender beliefs are grouped into three dimensions: gender ideology, consequences of women working, and importance of work dimensions. In the gender ideology dimension are two measures: WANTHOME = "A job is all right, but what most women really want is home and kids" and FEFAM = "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." In the consequences of women working dimension are three measures: FAMSUF = "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job," FEPRESCH = "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works," and FECHLD = "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." In the importance of work dimension are two measures: BOTHEARN = "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income" and FEMJOB = "Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person." CR = cohort replacement, IC = intracohort change.

are listed in Table 1. We employ variable name mnemonics to simplify our discussion. These three dimensions were formulated by the ISSP investigators and were validated by an exploratory factor analysis of the ISSP data. The results of the factor analysis may be obtained from the authors upon request.

We decomposed the change in measures of gender beliefs observed in Japan between these two points in time ("SC" or social change) into that part resulting from changing beliefs within cohorts ("IC" for intracohort change) and that because of cohort differences reflected in the succession of cohorts ("CR" for cohort replacement) using a linear decomposition method (Firebaugh 1989). The linear decomposition technique uses the specification of a linear regression model for the variable of interest as follows:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + e,$$

where y is an outcome of interest, in this case a given measure of gender beliefs, and the predictors x_1 and x_2 are year of survey and birth year, respectively. This equation can also contain other predictor variables; in our case, we use level of schooling and employment status as

control variables in this equation, but it is often useful to estimate this equation first without any control variables and then compare with the results including statistical controls. The slopes from this equation, β_1 and β_2 , are then used to compute the cohort replacement and intracohort change components of secular change, defined as follows:

$$\text{Intracohort change (IC)} = \beta_1(t_T - t_1),$$

and

$$\text{Cohort replacement (CR)} = \beta_2(C_T - C_1),$$

where $t_T - t_1$ represents the amount of historical time elapsed between Time 1 and Time T, C_T is the mean birth year at time T, and C_1 is the mean birth year at Time 1 (see Alwin & Scott, 1996, for a discussion of these techniques). After comparing this method with other techniques that decompose differences of means across time, Firebaugh concluded that the linear decomposition method expressed above provides reasonably good estimates of cohort turnover and intracohort influences on means. In these decompositions, schooling is measured as years of schooling completed and employment

status for women is measured by two dummy variables: the respondent is employed full-time or less than full-time compared to the reference category of not being in the labor force or being unemployed. Incomplete data in these analyses was handled using the Full Information Maximum Likelihood procedure (Allison, 2001).

Empirical Predictions

We outline separate predictions for cohort replacement and intracohort change by gender and dimension of gender beliefs. An overview of these predictions is in Table 1. Overall, for women, cohort replacement was expected to result in higher levels of agreement with beliefs about egalitarian gender *ideology* because these are the broadest measures of beliefs about the appropriate roles for men and women. It was unclear, however, how cohort replacement would contribute to changes in beliefs about the consequences of women working or about the importance of women working outside the home. This uncertainty is based on the social-institutional constraints on women's employment discussed earlier (e.g., social pressure for women to invest in their children [rather than career pursuits], tax disincentives, lack of affordable child care). Although women have an "interest" in gender equality, there are constraints on their employment outside the home that may have made work outside the home relatively more "costly" for women, across cohorts. For men, although research on Western countries has suggested that men's beliefs are more resistant to change than women's because of men's lower "interest" in the adoption of egalitarian gender beliefs (e.g., Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Mason & Lu, 1988), changes in marriage rates may have spurred men's adoption of egalitarian gender beliefs in more recent cohorts. Recent cohorts of young men face bleak marriage prospects because of, according to some social critics, the gap in gender beliefs between men and women (Sugihara & Katsurada, 2002; Westley, 1998). Women have chosen to postpone marriage and family life rather than marry a man with beliefs about gender considerably more conservative than their own. For this reason, recent cohorts of men in Japan may have a particular interest in adopting egalitarian beliefs, and we therefore expected to see significant

cohort replacement for men in the direction of increasingly egalitarian beliefs.

As for the effect of economic period effects, we expected to see more change in the measures of gender beliefs indicating the economic necessity of women's labor and the consequences of women working than in the measures indicating gender ideology, following the findings of Braun, Scott, and Alwin (1994). Braun et al. found that gender ideology in the former West and East Germany was more resistant to change than were beliefs about the consequences of women working. Gender ideology is thought to reflect more deep-seated beliefs about gender. As for gender differences, we expected men and women to respond differently to the economic recession of the 1990s. We expected that intracohort change would be in the direction of increasingly egalitarian gender beliefs for women. Although the direction of cohort replacement for women is uncertain because of the changing relative "cost" of employment for women across cohorts, we expected that intracohort change (largely in response to changing economic conditions) would be positive because women benefit from increased economic opportunities regardless of gender during tough economic times. For men, we envisioned two possible responses to these economic hard times and changing marriage and fertility patterns. Men may have embraced gender beliefs on the basis of a separate spheres gender ideology, protecting scarce jobs from competition from women and harkening back to more prosperous economic times in Japanese postwar history. From this perspective, in times of economic strain, men may reject egalitarian beliefs and seek refuge in the traditional family structure (see, e.g., Braun et al.). Alternatively, men may have embraced egalitarian gender beliefs, welcoming support from women in providing for the family and ushering in a new conception of marriage in which men and women are more equal partners.

RESULTS

Trends in Gender Beliefs

The overall trends in measures of gender beliefs across the two survey years (see Table 2) indicate, for most measures, the Japanese population became significantly more egalitarian between 1994 and 2002, using conventional

Table 2. Mean Gender Beliefs by Gender and Survey Year: 1994 and 2002 ISSP Japan

	Women									
	ISSP 1994 (n = 576)				ISSP 2002 (n = 466)				F Ratio ^e	p
	M ^a	% Egalitarian ^b	% Ambivalent ^c	% Egalitarian ^d	M	% Egalitarian	% Ambivalent	% Egalitarian		
Gender ideology										
WANTHOME	2.77	46.86	20.47	32.68	2.85	43.72	23.54	32.74	0.692	.406
FEFAM	3.36	30.49	21.78	47.74	3.69	22.56	19.96	57.48	13.575	.000
Consequences										
FAMSUF	3.23	34.93	24.11	40.96	3.39	30.55	24.18	45.27	3.179	.075
FEPRESCH	3.16	38.28	22.00	39.71	3.42	28.41	25.99	45.59	8.859	.003
FECHLD	4.06	14.29	13.93	71.78	4.26	9.83	10.48	79.69	6.595	.010
Importance of work										
BOTHEARN	3.48	25.48	20.07	54.45	3.33	24.35	28.48	47.17	2.588	.108
FEMJOB	3.47	25.44	19.26	55.30	3.40	25.11	25.33	49.56	0.541	.462
	Men									
	ISSP 1994 (n = 478)				ISSP 2002 (n = 406)				F Ratio	p
	M	% Egalitarian	% Ambivalent	% Egalitarian	M	% Egalitarian	% Ambivalent	% Egalitarian		
Gender ideology										
WANTHOME	2.50	51.61	23.50	24.88	2.99	37.50	26.63	35.87	22.313	.000
FEFAM	2.97	44.14	19.40	36.46	3.46	29.28	21.84	48.88	24.718	.000
Consequences										
FAMSUF	3.13	37.69	22.91	39.40	3.33	32.41	22.28	45.32	4.032	.045
FEPRESCH	3.16	38.10	20.56	41.34	3.38	29.43	23.70	46.88	4.705	.030
FECHLD	3.87	18.57	16.20	65.23	4.05	13.81	13.30	72.89	4.042	.045
Importance of work										
BOTHEARN	3.40	27.58	20.84	51.58	3.14	30.13	28.35	41.52	6.707	.010
FEMJOB	3.36	28.04	23.62	48.34	3.31	25.07	28.46	46.48	0.254	.614

Note. WANTHOME = "A job is all right, but what most women really want is home and kids." FEFAM = "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." FAMSUF = "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job." FEPRESCH = "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works." FECHLD = "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." BOTHEARN = "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income." FEMJOB = "Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person."

^aMeans are presented for the gender belief items measured on scales ranging from 1 to 5 (high scores reflect egalitarian gender beliefs).

^bPercentage of those who disagree or somewhat disagree with the egalitarian gender belief.

^cPercentage of those who neither agree nor disagree.

^dPercentage of those who agree or somewhat agree with the equalitarian gender belief.

^eF ratios test the hypothesis of equality of means for each gender belief item across survey years.

standards for evaluating statistical significance. The greatest increase in egalitarian beliefs between survey years is in the dimension of what we have called gender ideology. There is also a substantial reduction in the concern that working women will have negative

consequences for children and the family—see the changes for the variables measuring the beliefs that when a woman has a full-time job, her family (FAMSUF), her preschool children (FEPRESCH), or her relationship with her children (FECHLD) suffers. The exceptions

to the overall pattern are the beliefs about the importance of women working, specifically that both husband and wife should contribute to the family income (BOTHEARN) and that employment is the best way for women to gain independence (FEMJOB). For these measures, it is not that the proportion of respondents indicating nonegalitarian beliefs substantially increased, but rather that the proportion of respondents indicating egalitarian gender beliefs declined and the proportion of respondents indicating that they are ambivalent increased between survey years. Overall, the trends reported in Table 2 are remarkably similar for men and women. Some notable differences exist, however, regarding gender ideology. During this period of observation, the proportion of men reporting nonegalitarian gender ideology decreased more sharply than among women, and the proportion reporting egalitarian beliefs increased more dramatically, narrowing the gender gap in gender ideology during this time period. For example, although statistically significant differences by gender were found with respect to the belief that what women really want is a home and kids in 1994, by 2002, the gender differences in this indicator of gender ideology were not statistically significant.

Cohort Differences in Gender Beliefs

Our theoretical model assumes there are two mechanisms accounting for the trends in gender beliefs shown in Table 2, one involving cohort differences and one because of change within cohorts. To gain some insight into the nature of cohort differences in gender beliefs, we first pooled the 1994 and 2002 data and investigated patterns across cohorts for seven arbitrarily defined groups. Cohort differences in gender beliefs for women and for men are presented in Table 3; cohort differences in beliefs for women by employment history are available from the authors upon request.

We predicted that, in a departure from the findings for Western countries (e.g., Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Mason & Lu, 1988), we would not necessarily find increasing acceptance of egalitarian beliefs about gender across successive birth cohorts in Japan. This prediction was partly based on differences in women's employment trends in the United States and Japan. We looked at Japanese women's labor force participation when their youngest child was preschool

age, across groups defined by year of birth in the pooled 1994 and 2002 ISSP data. Female respondents born from 1927 to 1934 had higher full-time labor force participation rates when their children were under school age than women born later in the century. Although approximately 35% of women born between 1927 and 1934 worked full-time outside the home when their children were small, only about 20% of women born between 1967 and 1974 did. This is in contrast to the United States, for example, where only 5.6% of women born between 1926 and 1935 worked full-time outside the home when they had small children compared to 38.1% of women born between 1966 and 1975 with small children (Percheski, 2008). Owing to the nature of these patterns, we may not be able to attribute changes in gender beliefs in Japan to the increasing labor force participation of later-born cohorts of women, although we investigate this in subsequent analyses.

Among men and women, for both measures of beliefs involving gender ideology (WANTHOME and FEFAM), there are statistically significant systematic differences in the direction of increasingly egalitarian beliefs, trends in line with previous research in Japan (Yamaguchi, 2000). Consistent with our prediction that successive birth cohorts would not necessarily report increasingly egalitarian beliefs, however, we found that the indicators of beliefs about the consequences for families (FAMSUF) and for children (FECHLD) of women working fluctuated among different birth cohorts. Earlier-born cohorts, both women and men, also report stronger beliefs that women should contribute financially to the household (BOTHEARN) and that employment is the best way for women to gain independence (FEMJOB). Later-born cohorts show less endorsement of these beliefs. As we hypothesized, the relationship between employment and gender beliefs for women is also different than what would be expected from research on the West (analysis results are available from the authors). Among women in the earliest cohort group (born between 1927 and 1934), women who worked outside the home when their children were in preschool reported *less* egalitarian beliefs than women who did not work with respect to measures of gender ideology (i.e., WANTHOME), the consequences of women working (i.e., FAMSUF and FEPRESCH), and the importance of work for women (i.e., FEMJOB).

Table 3. Mean Gender Beliefs by Gender and Birth Year: 1994 and 2002 ISSP Japan

	Women							F Ratio ^a	p
	1927–1934	1935–1942	1943–1950	1951–1958	1959–1966	1967–1974	1975–1982		
Gender ideology									
WANTHOME	2.21 (72)	2.37 (172)	2.79 (218)	3.01 (169)	2.99 (183)	3.06 (146)	3.28 (43)	6.804	.000
FEFAM	2.33 (79)	3.20 (179)	3.57 (221)	3.74 (172)	3.64 (188)	3.76 (151)	4.09 (45)	14.455	.000
Consequences									
FAMSUF	2.77 (77)	3.35 (172)	3.37 (219)	3.27 (171)	3.41 (187)	3.30 (148)	3.38 (45)	2.198	.041
FEPRESCH	2.72 (76)	3.06 (173)	3.39 (219)	3.26 (168)	3.37 (186)	3.59 (146)	3.13 (45)	4.265	.000
FECHLD	4.05 (76)	4.03 (172)	4.38 (221)	3.99 (170)	4.15 (190)	4.18 (150)	4.13 (46)	2.096	.051
Importance of work									
BOTHEARN	4.15 (79)	3.73 (177)	3.28 (221)	3.30 (172)	3.09 (189)	3.34 (150)	3.58 (45)	7.538	.000
FEMJOB	3.99 (78)	3.71 (175)	3.29 (219)	3.35 (168)	3.30 (183)	3.27 (149)	3.57 (44)	4.034	.001
Men									
	1927–1934	1935–1942	1943–1950	1951–1958	1959–1966	1967–1974	1975–1982	F Ratio	p
Gender ideology									
WANTHOME	2.11 (71)	2.23 (150)	2.73 (156)	2.79 (136)	2.96 (142)	3.20 (111)	3.25 (36)	8.556	.000
FEFAM	2.52 (77)	2.94 (155)	3.07 (166)	3.34 (149)	3.36 (153)	3.43 (126)	3.96 (46)	7.052	.000
Consequences									
FAMSUF	3.08 (77)	3.21 (153)	3.33 (163)	3.19 (149)	3.09 (151)	3.34 (124)	3.33 (45)	0.708	.643
FEPRESCH	3.16 (74)	3.21 (149)	3.28 (160)	3.26 (144)	3.19 (151)	3.33 (123)	3.44 (45)	0.313	.930
FECHLD	3.57 (74)	3.99 (150)	4.10 (163)	3.92 (145)	3.96 (152)	3.92 (125)	4.09 (45)	1.456	.190
Importance of work									
BOTHEARN	3.68 (76)	3.39 (152)	3.20 (169)	3.15 (146)	3.26 (155)	3.24 (127)	3.11 (45)	1.539	.162
FEMJOB	4.08 (74)	3.76 (151)	3.31 (159)	3.12 (145)	3.18 (149)	2.93 (116)	3.05 (42)	8.259	.000

Note. Valid *N*s in parentheses. WANTHOME = "A job is all right, but what most women really want is home and kids." FEFAM = "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." FAMSUF = "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job." FEPRESCH = "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works." FECHLD = "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." BOTHEARN = "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income." FEMJOB = "Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person."

^aFor each of the gender belief items, *F* ratios test the hypothesis that means are equal across all cohorts.

Decomposition of Secular Change

To understand the mechanisms underlying the secular changes documented here, we used the methods described earlier for decomposing social change (SC in Table 4), that is, the differences in levels of egalitarian beliefs at the beginning (1994) and end (2002) of the period studied, into two components: (1) cohort replacement (CR in Table 4), and (2) intracohort change (IC in Table 4). As first documented in Table 2, these results again demonstrate that

gender beliefs became more egalitarian in the population with the exception of the beliefs about the importance of women working. To the extent they changed at all, beliefs about the importance of women working became less egalitarian during this time period. This is consistent with our expectation that not all dimensions of gender beliefs would become increasingly egalitarian, given the social-institutional constraints on women's employment in Japan compared to in other countries. In particular, tax

Table 4. *Decomposition of Secular Change (1994–2002) in Gender Belief Items Without and With Controls for Schooling and Employment Status*

	Women (n = 1,042)								
	No Controls			Schooling Controls			Schooling and Employment Controls		
	SC	IC	CR	SC	IC	CR	SC	IC	CR
Gender ideology									
WANTHOME	0.080	-0.046	0.135***	0.080	-0.125	0.093***	0.080	-0.128	0.092***
FEFAM	0.328***	0.186*	0.145***	0.328***	0.126	0.113***	0.328***	0.138	0.105***
Consequences									
FAMSUF	0.159†	0.128	0.031	0.159†	0.125	0.031	0.159†	0.178†	0.015
FEPRESCH	0.267**	0.208*	0.061**	0.267**	0.199*	0.061**	0.267**	0.250**	0.047*
FECHLD	0.196*	0.200*	-0.004	0.196*	0.186*	-0.005	0.196*	0.227**	-0.019
Importance of work									
BOTHEARN	-0.144	-0.063	-0.081***	-0.144	-0.037	-0.045*	-0.144	0.024	-0.063**
FEMJOB	-0.069	0.001	-0.069**	-0.069	0.038	-0.030	-0.069	0.098	-0.045†
Men (n = 884)									
	No Controls			Schooling Controls					
	SC	IC	CR	SC	IC	CR			
Gender ideology									
WANTHOME	0.491***	0.323**	0.165***	0.491***	0.220*	0.132***			
FEFAM	0.493***	0.359***	0.134***	0.493***	0.274**	0.113***			
Consequences									
FAMSUF	0.194*	0.191†	0.002	0.194*	0.162	-0.011			
FEPRESCH	0.219*	0.202†	0.016	0.219*	0.197†	0.013			
FECHLD	0.185*	0.177†	0.009	0.185*	0.155	0.005			
Importance of work									
BOTHEARN	-0.257**	-0.211*	-0.045†	-0.257**	-0.162	-0.012			
FEMJOB	-0.051	0.126	-0.168***	-0.051	0.132	-0.158***			

Note. SC = social change. IC = intracohort change. CR = cohort replacement. WANTHOME = "A job is all right, but what most women really want is home and kids." FEFAM = "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." FAMSUF = "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job." FEPRESCH = "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works." FECHLD = "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." BOTHEARN = "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income." FEMJOB = "Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person."

† $p \leq .1$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

disincentives, lack of affordable child care, and the great symbolic value attached to the role of housewife in recent cohorts were expected to restrain progress toward gender egalitarianism in recent birth cohorts. This follows previous research suggesting that normative and institutional differences among countries account for differences in beliefs about gender cross-nationally (Alwin, Braun, & Scott, 1992).

Beliefs reflecting gender ideology. With respect to the measures of gender ideology, we note, first, that although both men and women changed on these measures, the belief that what women really want is a home and children (WANTHOME) registers very little change among women. By contrast, among men there is a significant amount of change in both measures across the period studied, the majority of which reflects intracohort change. There is substantial cohort replacement on both measures of gender ideology for men, but the level of intracohort change is about twice the magnitude of that attributable to cohort replacement. The difference in the level of intracohort change experienced by men and women with respect to the belief that what women really want is a home and kids (WANTHOME) is statistically significant at conventional levels. Where there is change in the gender ideology measures among women (i.e., in the FEFAM measure), cohort replacement and intracohort change contribute nearly equally to the social change. There is a remarkable degree of uniformity between men and women in the level of change attributed to cohort replacement in these measures. The larger role played by intracohort change in motivating social change in gender ideology for men than for women is consistent with our expectation that social change for men is more uneven and responsive to period effects. Controlling for individual differences in schooling within and between cohorts marginally reduces, but does not fully account for, the impact of intracohort change and cohort replacement effects. Controlling additionally for employment levels for women does not alter the results either. Surprisingly, for men, more social change was observed in gender ideology than in the other dimensions of gender beliefs. This is a divergence from the patterns of change in other countries (e.g., Braun et al., 1994).

Beliefs about the consequences of women's employment. In contrast to the measures of gender ideology, the measures of beliefs about the consequences of women working reveal no cohort replacement effects, except for a small role in the belief that preschool children suffer when a woman works (FEPRESCH) among women. Even among women, however, the level of intracohort change is about three times the magnitude of that attributed to cohort replacement. Hence, virtually all of the observed changes between 1994 and 2002 are attributable to intracohort change for both men and women. This finding is a divergence from patterns of change in Western countries (e.g., Alwin & Scott, 1996; Mason & Lu, 1988) and follows our finding from Table 2 that there is not a trend of increasing acceptance of egalitarian beliefs across successive cohort groups.

Removing the part of these effects that is attributable to schooling differences among persons within and between cohorts does not alter the nature of these decompositions, but interestingly, controlling for differences in employment status substantially accentuates the intracohort components among women. This results from the fact that full-time employment is positively related to this dimension of gender beliefs, and there is a negative trend in full-time employment levels over the period studied, resulting in a stronger positive slope for "year of survey" in the regressions that include employment status for women.

Beliefs about the importance of women's employment. As noted, there is little change in the measures of beliefs about the importance of women working, and where there is change observed it is in a nonegalitarian direction. Agreement with the ideas that "both the man and woman should contribute to the household income" (BOTHEARN) and that "having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person" (FEMJOB) declined among both men and women. Among women the changes seem to be primarily attributable to cohort replacement, although controlling for schooling does reduce the impact of cohort replacement effects. The picture is mixed among men—the changes in the belief that both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income (BOTHEARN) are attributable mainly to intracohort change, and, with respect to the belief that having a job is the best way for

a woman to be independent (FEMJOB), there are contrasting effects of intracohort change (positive) and cohort replacement (negative) that are essentially cancelling out one another. The contribution of cohort replacement to social change in beliefs about a job being the best way for a woman to be independent was statistically significantly greater for men than for women. This is contrary to our prediction that men's beliefs would change primarily through intracohort change and not cohort replacement. Among men, controlling for schooling does not substantially alter these conclusions. These findings support our hypothesis that the postwar social-institutional context in Japan fosters skepticism surrounding the importance of work for women in recent birth cohorts compared to earlier cohorts of men and women. More specifically, we think that the high symbolic value of the housewife role among more recent cohorts as well as the social and institutional constraints on married women's employment (e.g., social pressure for women to invest in their children [rather than career pursuits], tax disincentives, lack of affordable child care) have contributed to this trend toward nonegalitarian beliefs about the importance of women's work.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, we examined the mechanisms of change in beliefs about gender in Japan from 1994 to 2002, identifying the relative contributions of cohort replacement and intracohort change. With respect to cohort replacement, we were interested to see if cohorts of men and women in Japan followed a pattern similar to cohorts in Western countries of increasing acceptance of egalitarian beliefs about gender. As for intracohort change, we set out to examine the economic period effects on within-cohort change in gender beliefs, hypothesizing that men's beliefs would be more closely tied to changing economic conditions, with their role as breadwinner either heightening their interest in their wife's employment or, alternatively, making them increasingly resistant to competing with women for scarce jobs during tough economic times. (Women, on the other hand, were expected to experience positive intracohort change, adopting increasingly egalitarian beliefs over the time period.) We wanted to see if, consistent with the previous literature (e.g., Braun et al., 1994), measures of gender

ideology were more resistant to change than other dimensions of gender beliefs. More generally, we were interested in looking at how social-institutional context matters in shaping the relationship between gender and gender beliefs and also between employment status and gender beliefs for women. Overall, we found differences in the mechanisms of change for men and women and important differences from the West in both patterns of change and in the relationships among gender, employment status, and beliefs about gender.

Although there was some variation by indicator in the mechanisms of change, the overall story that emerged from these analyses is that changes in beliefs about the consequences of women working occurred through intracohort change whereas social change in beliefs about the importance of women's work is attributable to the slower process of cohort replacement for both women and men. Changes in gender ideology occurred through intracohort change for men and through the slower mechanism of cohort replacement for women. Although gender ideology and beliefs about the consequences of women working became more egalitarian, beliefs about the importance of work for women became less egalitarian.

Cohort Effects

Our findings regarding cohort differences revealed some surprising differences from patterns found in previous research on the West. On the basis of data from other countries that have undergone the changes in fertility, marriage, and divorce associated with the second demographic transition (e.g., Lesthaeghe, 1983), increases in the acceptance of egalitarian gender beliefs might also be expected in Japan. As discussed earlier, Japan was also undergoing similar transformations in age at marriage, rates of nonmarriage, and fertility during this period (Raymo & Iwasawa, 2005; Retherford, Ogawa, & Matsukura, 2001). Research on Western countries has shown that labor force participation is a strong reinforcement for egalitarian beliefs (e.g., Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004) and that successive birth cohorts report increasingly egalitarian gender beliefs (e.g., Alwin & Scott, 1996; Mason & Lu, 1988). In Japan, trends in beliefs about the importance of women working and in the relationship between women's

employment status and gender beliefs represent a divergence from trends in many parts of the West (e.g., Alwin & Scott; Brewster & Padavic; Neve, 1995; Lee, Alwin & Tufis, 2007).

Specifically, we found that birth cohorts of women born in the early 20th century report the highest levels of full-time employment outside the home (when their children were preschool age) and the strongest agreement that women should contribute financially to their families (BOTHEARN). These women believe that employment is the best way for women to gain independence (FEMJOB), *but* they also express the strongest agreement with a gendered division of labor (FEFAM), the belief that women want a home and family (WANTHOME), and that a woman's preschool child (FEPRESCH) or family in general (FAMSUF) suffer when she works. As we hypothesized, gender ideology changed differently than beliefs about the importance of work for women. Decreasingly egalitarian beliefs about the importance of work for women coupled with increasingly egalitarian beliefs about the other two dimensions of gender beliefs across successive birth cohorts reflect, for older cohorts of women, both their rearing under the patriarchal *Ie* family system and the economic reality of the historical context of their youth in which many of them had to work to help support the family. For younger cohorts of women, the cost of full-time employment for wives in Japan (e.g., tax laws, social sanctions, limited opportunities for advancement), coupled with the professionalization of the housewife role, may also contribute to the trend of decreasing egalitarian beliefs about the importance of work for women across birth cohorts. As hypothesized, these findings highlight the competing factors that shaped social change in Japanese women's beliefs about gender and follow Lee's (2006) finding of a lack of an expected connection between gender ideology and personal work experience among Japanese women widowed in WWII. The findings revealed a "dual consciousness" on the part of some segments of the Japanese population—a juxtaposition of beliefs about "separate spheres" and "increasing equality."

The decreasing proportion of the population indicating agreement with the belief that both spouses *should* contribute to the household budget and that work is the *best* way for women to be independent and the increasing proportion

of respondents indicating their ambivalence regarding these measures may also be indicative of the destandardization of the life course in Japan and of the increasing acceptance of multiple roles for women. Particularly in light of criticisms in the 1990s of the masculine model of work and Japanese women's embrace of a separate, full life from that of their husbands (White, 1992), such changes may reflect a rejection of beliefs that women should aspire to men's work roles and an increasing acceptance of Japanese women as free to design their own balance between work and family (Iwao, 1993). Perhaps Japanese respondents' beliefs about gender egalitarianism and about individualism, for example, are in conflict, resulting in increasing reports of ambivalence regarding specific indicators of gender beliefs and conflicting gender ideology and beliefs about the the importance of women working.

Period Effects

Period effects, namely, the poor economic conditions with record levels of unemployment experienced during the period of observation, appear to have influenced men and women's beliefs differently. Consistent with our hypothesis, men's gender ideology appeared to be more closely tied to the changing economic conditions than were women's. Men actually changed their gender ideology, adopting considerably more egalitarian beliefs, whereas women's gender ideology changed mainly through processes of cohort replacement. It seems that Japanese men may be welcoming help from their wives in supporting the family. Surprisingly, men experienced more intracohort change with respect to gender ideology than for the other two dimensions of gender beliefs. Findings from other countries suggest that beliefs about the consequences and importance of women working are quicker to change than is gender ideology in economic hard times (Braun et al., 1994). For this reason, we expected gender ideology to be more resistant to change, changing primarily through the slower process of cohort replacement. This pattern of change for men is different from what has been found in other countries where the gender ideology dimension is the slowest dimension of gender beliefs to change (Braun et al.).

Considerable attention has been paid to the changing Japanese woman in light of rising ages at marriage, rates of nonmarriage, and

declining fertility (Raymo and Iwasawa, 2005; Retherford et al., 2001). Our findings, however, suggest that men actually changed their beliefs more than women did during this period. We think there are several social-institutional factors that are responsible for these changes among men. First, we suspect that the poor economy has pushed men to consider the benefit of another earner in the household. In Japan, men in managerial or promotion-track positions in large Japanese firms may not see women as competition for scarce jobs because of the vertical gender segregation within this occupational group, and, instead, the prospect of more women working outside the home may be seen as lessening the burden placed on the husband of providing for the family. This is consistent with what others have found regarding the increasing need for two incomes during the economic hard times in Japan (Allen, 2003). Alternatively, it is possible that men are simply catching up to women, closing the gap in gender beliefs between men and women. This disparity in men and women's beliefs has been pointed to as causing women to postpone marriage and family life (Sugihara & Katsurada, 2002; Westley, 1998). In changing their beliefs between survey waves, men have begun to close the gap between men and women, possibly in response to women's hesitation to marry men with less egalitarian beliefs about gender.

This study contributes to our understanding of patterns of change in beliefs about gender in Japan vis-à-vis other postindustrial countries. The social-institutional factors described (e.g., the "symbolic value" of the housewife role, social and institutional constraints on married women's employment) may help to explain why Japan has emerged as an anomaly in previous cross-national studies of economic development and value change (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Inglehart et al., 2002). These are speculations, however, and future research is needed to empirically examine the link between the proposed social-institutional factors and patterns of change in beliefs about gender. Future research is also needed with additional measures of gender beliefs. Quantitative measures of gender beliefs provide the opportunity to measure change over time in a population using standardized measures of beliefs, but the trade-off is that the respondent's interpretation of the indicators, the meaning ascribed to the indicators, is lacking. A desirable complement

to this research would be an in-depth qualitative investigation of the meaning of gender beliefs for respondents and the narratives of their personal choices in balancing work and family.

Our analyses indicate that a rejection of the gendered division of labor is not necessarily an outcome of industrial development. Among cohorts reared in Japan's postindustrial economy, there is some evidence that the belief in "separate but equal" roles for men and women is stronger than among those cohorts who reached adulthood in prewar Japan. At the same time, gender ideology and beliefs about the consequences of women working did become more egalitarian over the period of observation. Continued social change in beliefs about the appropriate roles for men and women is a necessary ingredient in achieving gender equality in other dimensions (education, the workplace, the government) in Japan.

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