

## CHAPTER III: MARITAL STATUS

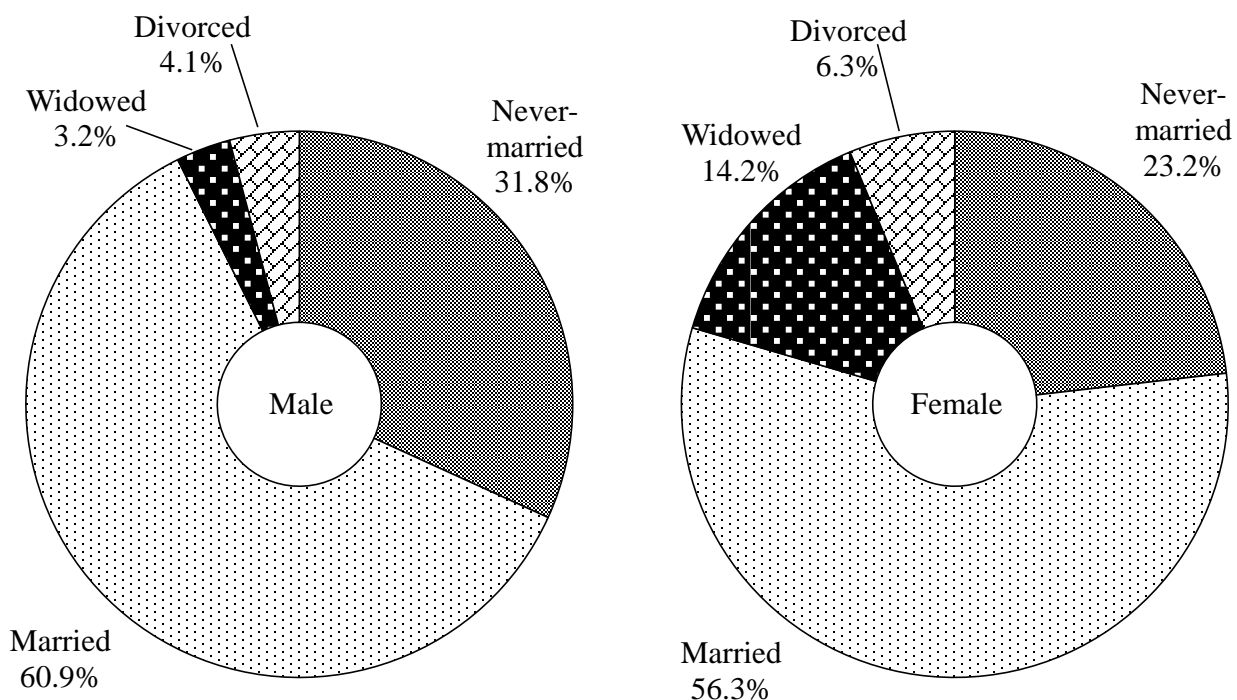
### 1. Proportion by Marital Status

#### **Proportions of never-married men and that of widowed women are high.**

According to the population aged 15 and over (52.9 million men and 56.9 million women) by marital status as reported in the 2015 Population Census, the number of never-married men is 16.3 million and that of never-married women is 12.9 million. The proportion of never-married men to the population of men aged 15 and over (31.8%) is higher than that of never-married women to the population of women aged 15 and over (23.2%). This is mainly because the age at which men get married for the first time is generally higher than that of women, leading to a large proportion of never-married younger men.

Meanwhile, the number of widowed men is 1.7 million and that of widowed women is 7.9 million. The proportion of widowed men to the population of men aged 15 and over (3.2%) is lower than that of widowed women to the population of women aged 15 and over (14.2%). This is mainly because the age of the wife is generally lower than the age of the husband and the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men. (Figure 3.1, Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

**Figure 3.1 Proportion of Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Marital Status: 2015**



**Table 3.1 Population by Sex and Marital Status: 2010 to 2015**

Sex and marital status	Population (thousands)		Proportion (%)	
	2015	2010	2015	2010
Both sexes	109,754	110,277	100.0	100.0
Never-married	29,242	29,730	27.3	27.5
Married	62,625	63,786	58.5	58.9
Widowed	9,579	9,409	8.9	8.7
Divorced	5,596	5,283	5.2	4.9
Not reported	2,713	2,071	-	-
Male	52,880	53,155	100.0	100.0
Never-married	16,324	16,639	31.8	31.9
Married	31,236	31,859	60.9	61.1
Widowed	1,656	1,608	3.2	3.1
Divorced	2,109	1,999	4.1	3.8
Not reported	1,555	1,049	-	-
Female	56,874	57,123	100.0	100.0
Never-married	12,918	13,090	23.2	23.3
Married	31,389	31,927	56.3	56.9
Widowed	7,923	7,801	14.2	13.9
Divorced	3,487	3,283	6.3	5.9
Not reported	1,158	1,022	-	-

**Table 3.2 Trends in Mean Age at Marriages and in Age Differences between Husbands and Wives: 1975 to 2015**

Year	(Age)					
	All marriages		First marriages		Age difference	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	All marriages	First marriages
1975	27.8	25.2	27.0	24.7	2.6	2.3
1980	28.7	25.9	27.8	25.2	2.8	2.6
1985	29.3	26.4	28.2	25.5	2.9	2.7
1990	29.7	26.9	28.4	25.9	2.8	2.5
1995	29.8	27.3	28.5	26.3	2.5	2.2
2000	30.4	28.2	28.8	27.0	2.2	1.8
2005	31.7	29.4	29.8	28.0	2.3	1.8
2010	32.5	30.3	30.5	28.8	2.2	1.7
2011	32.7	30.5	30.7	29.0	2.2	1.7
2012	32.9	30.7	30.8	29.2	2.2	1.7
2013	33.0	30.8	30.9	29.3	2.2	1.7
2014	33.2	30.9	31.1	29.4	2.2	1.7
2015	33.3	31.1	31.1	29.4	2.2	1.7

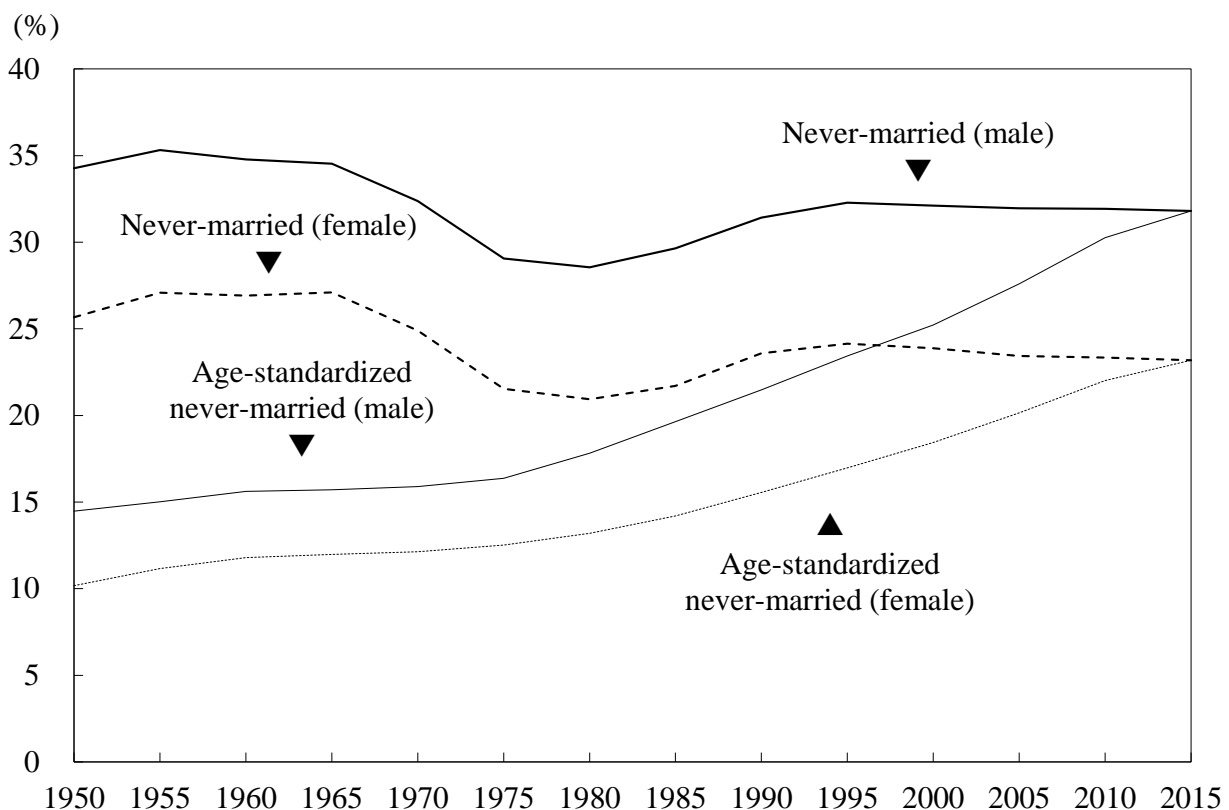
Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

**Proportion of divorced population and that of never-married population are increasing which are standardized for age composition of 2015.**

The trends in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over by marital status show that in both men and women, the proportion of never-married population started declining in 2000 and from 1985 onward as did that of married population. On the other hand, the proportion of widowed population had leveled off or slightly declined before 1990, but started rising in 1995. The proportion of divorced population showed little fluctuation until 1975, but started rising in 1980 in both men and women as a result of an increase in divorce cases in recent years.

The trends are influenced by changes in age composition in each year. To exclude these influences, the data for marital status is standardized for the age composition of 2015. This standardization is based on the assumption that the age composition of the population of Japan for each year is the same as that of 2015. According to the standardized data for marital status, both men and women, the proportion of the never-married population and that of the divorced population show an upward trend, while that of the widowed population shows a downward trend. (Figure 3.2, Tables 3.3 and 3.4)

**Figure 3.2 Trends in the Proportion of Never-Married Population by Sex: 1950 to 2015**



**Table 3.3 Trends in the Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Marital Status: 1950 to 2015**

(%)

Sex and year	Proportion by marital status				Proportion by marital status after age-standardization			
	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
<b>Male</b>								
1950	34.3	60.3	4.6	0.9	14.5	70.8	13.7	1.0
1955	35.3	59.7	4.1	0.9	15.0	70.9	12.9	1.1
1960	34.8	60.8	3.5	0.9	15.6	71.7	11.5	1.2
1965	34.5	61.7	3.0	0.8	15.7	73.2	10.1	1.0
1970	32.4	64.1	2.7	0.8	15.9	74.3	8.7	1.1
1975	29.1	67.4	2.6	0.9	16.4	74.8	7.7	1.1
1980	28.6	67.8	2.4	1.2	17.8	74.2	6.7	1.3
1985	29.6	66.3	2.4	1.6	19.6	72.8	5.9	1.7
1990	31.4	64.3	2.4	1.9	21.5	71.5	5.1	1.9
1995	32.3	63.0	2.5	2.2	23.4	69.6	4.7	2.3
2000	32.1	62.5	2.7	2.7	25.2	67.7	4.3	2.8
2005	32.0	61.8	2.9	3.3	27.6	65.1	3.9	3.4
2010	31.9	61.1	3.1	3.8	30.3	62.3	3.6	3.9
2015	31.8	60.9	3.2	4.1	31.8	60.9	3.2	4.1
<b>Female</b>								
1950	25.7	56.2	16.1	1.9	10.2	50.1	37.9	1.8
1955	27.1	55.7	15.2	2.0	11.2	50.1	36.9	1.9
1960	26.9	56.8	14.2	2.1	11.8	51.0	34.9	2.3
1965	27.1	57.9	13.1	1.9	12.0	52.8	33.2	2.1
1970	24.9	60.2	12.8	2.1	12.1	54.1	31.5	2.3
1975	21.5	63.7	12.7	2.1	12.5	55.8	29.5	2.2
1980	20.9	64.2	12.4	2.5	13.2	57.0	27.3	2.6
1985	21.7	62.6	12.7	3.0	14.2	57.3	25.5	3.0
1990	23.6	60.7	12.4	3.3	15.5	58.1	23.0	3.3
1995	24.1	59.4	12.8	3.7	17.0	58.1	21.2	3.7
2000	23.9	58.7	13.1	4.4	18.4	57.9	19.3	4.4
2005	23.4	57.6	13.7	5.3	20.2	57.1	17.4	5.3
2010	23.3	56.9	13.9	5.9	22.0	56.4	15.7	5.8
2015	23.2	56.3	14.2	6.3	23.2	56.3	14.2	6.3

Note: The calculation for the standardization was conducted by considering the nationwide population aged 15 and over by sex and age (five-year groups) as of 2015 to be standard population. In short, the purpose of calculation is to observe how the proportions by marital status would change if the age composition of the population aged 15 and over is assumed to be identical to that of 2015.

**Table 3.4 Trends in the Number of Marriages and Divorces: 1950 to 2015**

(thousands)

Item	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Number of marriages	715	866	1,029	775	736	722	792	798	714	700	635
Number of divorces	84	69	96	142	167	158	199	264	262	251	226

Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

## 2. Proportion of Married Population by Age Group

**The highest proportions of married men and women are found in the 70 to 74 and 55 to 59 age groups, respectively.**

Observing the proportion of married population by age group, it shows that the highest proportion among men is 83.2% (aged 70 to 74), and the highest proportion among women is 77.3% (aged 55 to 59). This is because among the younger population, the proportion of unmarried people is large. On the other hand, the proportion of the widowed population grows quickly among the aged 70 and over. (Figure 3.3, Table 3.5)

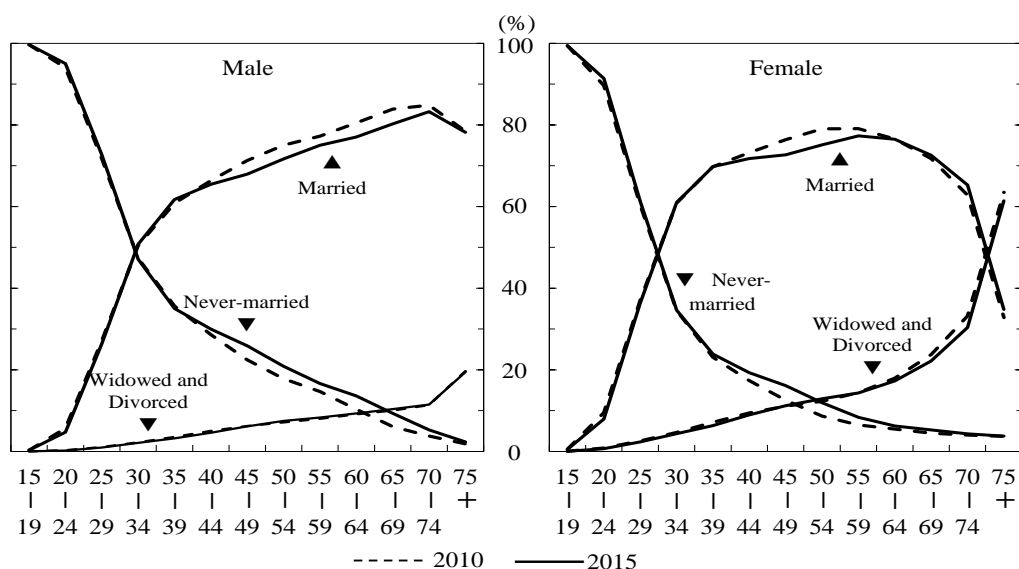
**Comparing the proportion between 2010 and 2015, the proportions of married men aged 45 and over are declining.**

When comparing the married population by age group in 2010 with 2015, two trends appear: the married population around the age group 40 to 44 is declining in both men and women while the never-married population is increasing.

Among men, the proportion dropped 2 percentage points (pp) or more in each age group between 45 to 69. For example, the proportion of married men aged 50 to 54 decreased 3.4 percentage points from 75.1% in 2010 to 71.7% in 2015, also among men aged 45 to 49 the decrease was 3.3 pp from 71.3% in 2010 to 68.0% in 2015, and so on. Among women, the proportion dropped 3 pp or more in each age group between 45 to 54. For example, the proportion of married women aged 50 to 54 decreased 3.9 pp from 79.0% in 2010 to 75.1% in 2015, while among women aged 45 to 49, the decrease was 3.7 pp from 76.4% in 2010 to 72.7% in 2015.

(Figure 3.3, Table 3.5)

**Figure 3.3 Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Age (Five-Year Groups) and Marital Status: 2010 to 2015**



**Table 3.5 Trends in the Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Age (Five-Year Groups) and Marital Status: 2005 to 2015**

(%)

Sex and age	Never-married			Married			Widowed			Divorced		
	2005	2010	2015	2005	2010	2015	2005	2010	2015	2005	2010	2015
Male	32.0	31.9	31.8	61.8	61.1	60.9	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.8	4.1
15-19 years old	99.6	99.7	99.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	93.5	94.0	95.0	6.2	5.7	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.2
25-29	71.4	71.8	72.7	27.4	27.1	26.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.9
30-34	47.1	47.3	47.1	50.6	50.4	50.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.2	2.2	2.0
35-39	31.2	35.6	35.0	65.1	60.8	61.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	3.6	3.4	3.1
40-44	22.7	28.6	30.0	72.4	66.4	65.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	4.6	4.8	4.4
45-49	17.6	22.5	25.9	76.7	71.3	68.0	0.5	0.5	0.4	5.2	5.8	5.8
50-54	14.4	17.8	20.9	78.9	75.1	71.7	1.1	0.9	0.7	5.6	6.3	6.7
55-59	10.1	14.7	16.7	82.3	77.3	75.0	1.9	1.7	1.4	5.8	6.4	7.0
60-64	5.9	10.3	13.6	85.6	80.5	77.1	3.3	2.8	2.5	5.2	6.3	6.9
65-69	3.8	6.1	9.3	86.9	83.9	80.3	5.1	4.7	4.0	4.2	5.4	6.4
70-74	2.4	3.8	5.3	86.5	84.8	83.2	8.0	7.2	6.5	3.0	4.2	5.0
75 and over	1.3	1.9	2.4	78.4	78.5	78.2	18.6	17.6	16.8	1.6	2.1	2.7
Female	23.4	23.3	23.2	57.6	56.9	56.3	13.7	13.9	14.2	5.3	5.9	6.3
15-19 years old	99.2	99.4	99.4	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
20-24	88.7	89.6	91.4	10.4	9.5	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.8	0.6
25-29	59.1	60.3	61.3	38.2	37.1	36.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.6	2.5	2.3
30-34	32.0	34.5	34.6	62.8	60.8	61.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	5.0	4.5	4.2
35-39	18.7	23.1	23.9	73.8	69.8	69.8	0.5	0.4	0.3	7.0	6.8	6.1
40-44	12.2	17.4	19.3	78.7	73.2	71.8	1.0	0.8	0.6	8.1	8.6	8.3
45-49	8.3	12.6	16.1	81.5	76.4	72.7	2.0	1.6	1.3	8.2	9.5	9.9
50-54	6.2	8.7	12.0	81.8	79.0	75.1	3.7	3.1	2.5	8.2	9.2	10.4
55-59	5.3	6.5	8.3	80.1	79.1	77.3	6.5	5.6	4.7	8.1	8.8	9.7
60-64	4.3	5.5	6.2	77.0	76.6	76.5	12.0	9.6	8.3	6.8	8.4	9.0
65-69	3.8	4.5	5.3	70.5	71.8	72.6	20.3	17.0	13.8	5.3	6.8	8.3
70-74	3.9	4.0	4.3	60.1	62.8	65.3	31.8	27.9	23.9	4.2	5.2	6.5
75 and over	3.2	3.7	3.8	29.7	32.8	34.8	63.9	60.1	57.6	3.2	3.5	3.8