

**NURTURING EMPATHY IN JAPANESE HOME
ECONOMICS EDUCATION
BY INSTRUCTING DIVERSITY
IN EVERYDAY LIFE CULTURE**

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At Danish School of Education, Aarhus University on August 24, 2023**

INTRODUCTION OF MYSELF

● About me:

- Used to be a high school home economics teacher.
- Ph.D. in secondary school education from the university of Alberta, Canada.
- Worked for Ministry of Education to write the current course of study (Nation curriculum) in 2018-2019
- Currently teaching teacher training courses at Kinjo Gakuin University, Nagoya, Japan
- Comparative research between Japan and Canada in the home economics education field. Especial interest in family studies, expanding to consumer education.

● **How I met Professor Karen Wistoft: Through Professor Jette Benn whom I met at the post-congress after the IFHE congress Kyoto, Japan, in 2004.**



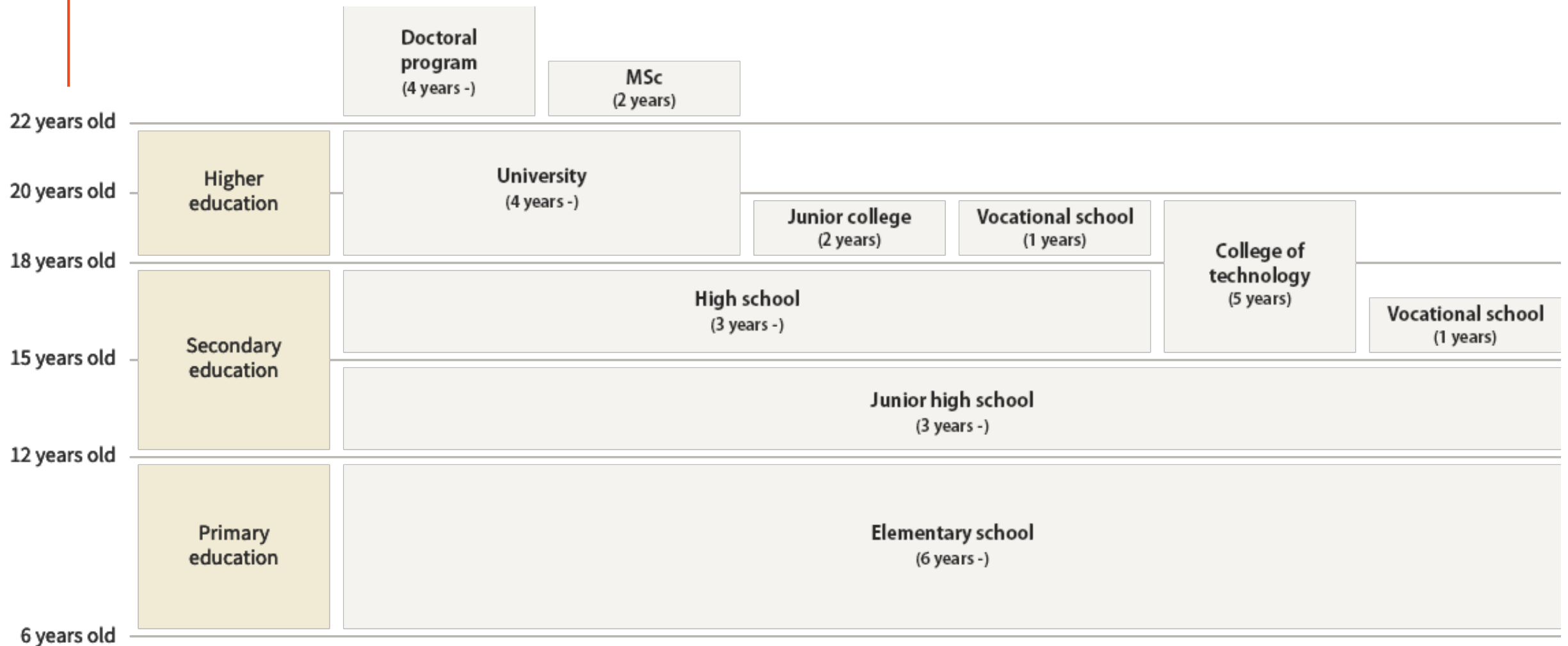
OUTLINE OF THIS PRESENTATION

1. Japanese education system and home economics education
2. Drastic population decrease of Japan
3. Children with foreign connections
4. Home economics education in multicultural societies: Learning from Canadian examples
5. Necessity of nurturing empathy to become global citizens in multicultural societies



PART 1
JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



Source: Japan National Tourism Organization,
<https://education.jnto.go.jp/en/school-in-japan/japanese-education-system/>

JAPANESE HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Compulsory education: Elementary school and junior high school education, grade 1 to grade 9.

Elective education: Senior high school education, grade 10 to 12. But, 99% of junior high school graduates going on to senior high school.

Home Economics is a mandatory subject for each grade from grade 5 to 10 or 11.

Home economics contents include food, clothing, housing, family relations, child rearing, consumer & finance education, and social welfare.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS

Category A: Family and Home

- (1) Personal Growth and Family Life
- (2) Family life and work
- (3) Relations with family and community members
- (4) Practice of problem solving regarding family life

Category B: Food, Clothing & Housing

- (1) Functions of meals
- (2) Basics of cooking
- (3) Nutritious meals

- (4) Dressing and care of clothes
- (5) Production using cloth to enrich life
- (6) Comfortable ways of living

Category C: Consumption & Environment

- (1) How to use goods and money, and shopping
- (2) Environmentally friendly life

COURSE OF STUDY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS

Category A: Family and Home

- (1) Personal Growth and Family Life
- (2) Childhood life and family
- (3) Relations with families and communities
- (4) Practice of problem solving regarding family life

Category B: Food, Clothing & Housing

- (1) Functions of meals and nutritional needs of junior high school students
- (2) Meals that meet the nutritional needs of junior high school students
- (3) Daily food preparation and local food culture

- (4) Clothing selection and care
- (5) Production using cloth to enrich life
- (6) Housing functions and safe ways of living
- (7) Practice of problem solving regarding clothing, food and housing

Category C: Consumption & Environment

- (1) Financial management and purchase
- (2) Consumer rights and responsibilities
- (3) Practice of problem solving regarding consumption and environment

COURSE OF STUDY FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS: HOME ECONOMICS BASICS (2 CREDIT COURSE)

Category A: Human Life, Family and Welfare

- (1) Lifelong life planning
- (2) Adolescent Independence and Family
- (3) Child life and child care
- (4) Life and well-being in advanced age
- (5) Inclusive society and welfare

Category B: Independence and Life Planning in Clothing, Food and Housing

- (1) Diet and health
- (2) Clothing and health
- (3) Housing and health

Category C: Sustainable Consumption and Environment

- (1) Financial planning in life
- (2) Consumer behavior and decision making
- (3) Sustainable lifestyle and environment

COURSE OF STUDY FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS: HOME ECONOMICS GENERAL(4 CREDIT COURSE)

Category A: Human Life, Family and Welfare

- (1) Lifelong life planning
- (2) Adolescent Independence, family and society
- (3) Relations with children, childcare, welfare
- (4) Relations with the elderly and welfare
- (5) Inclusive society and welfare

Category B: Science and Culture of Clothing, Food and Housing

- (1) Science and culture of food
- (2) Science and culture of clothing
- (3) Science and culture of housing

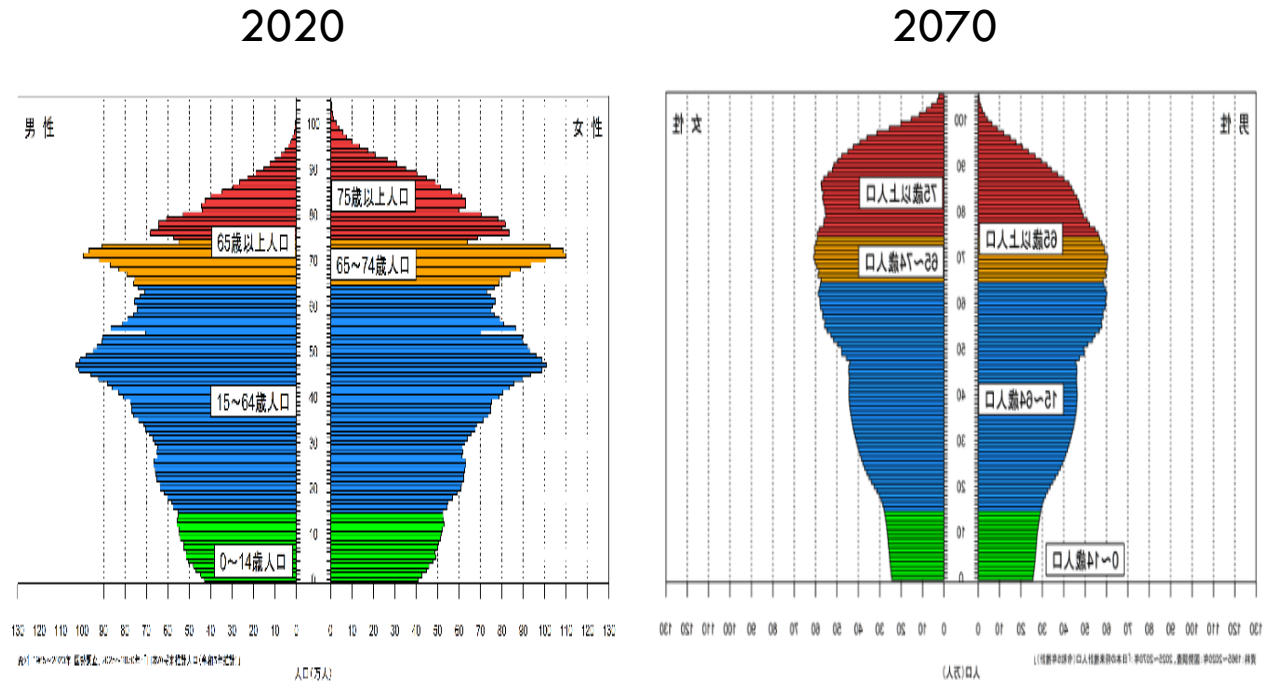
Category C: Sustainable Consumption and Environment

- (1) Financial planning in life
- (2) Consumer behavior and decision making
- (3) Sustainable lifestyle and environment

PART 2
DRASTIC POPULATION DECREASE IN JAPAN

(1) JAPANESE POPULATION TRANSITION

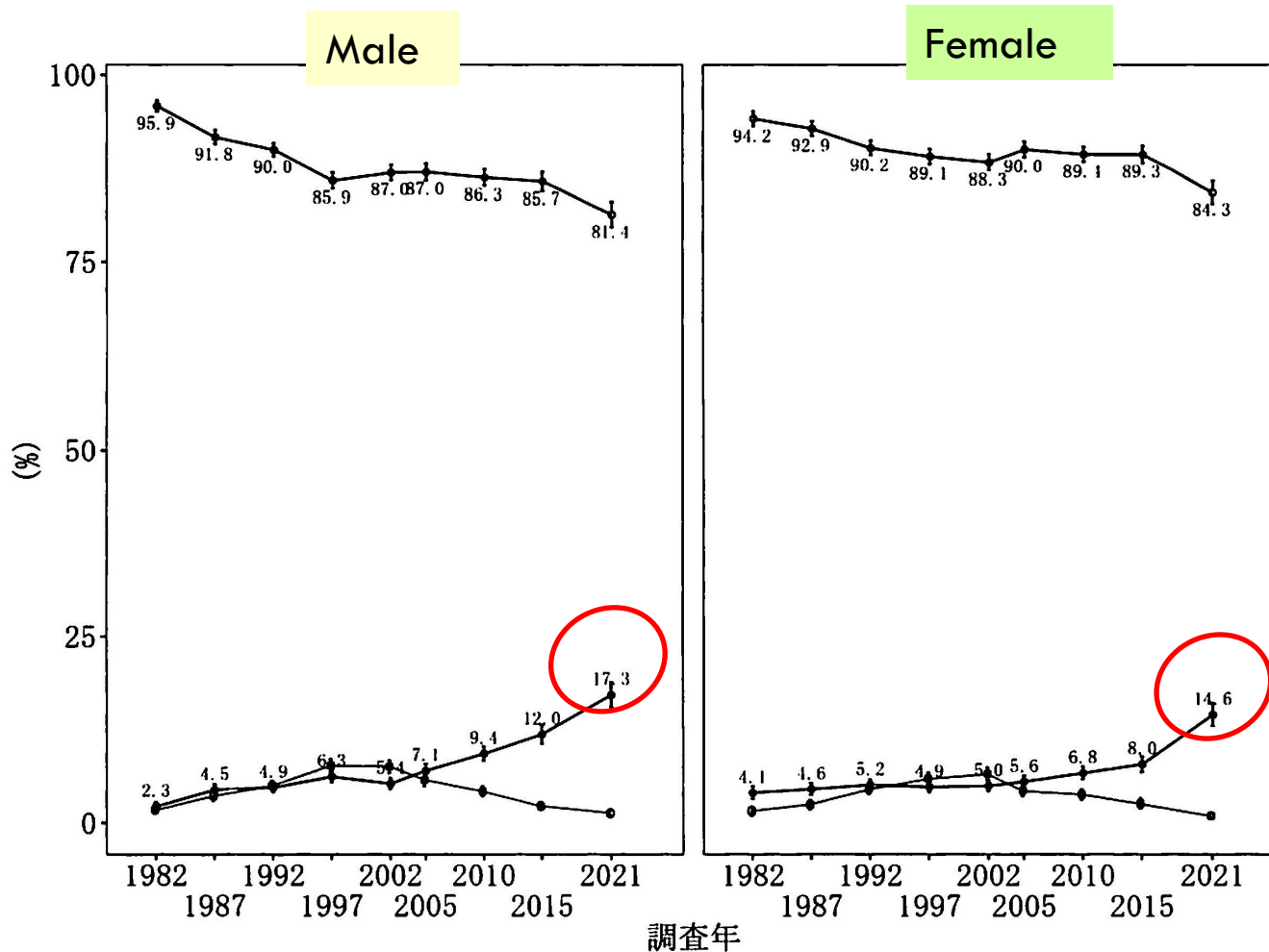
- 2020 graph shows two baby booming clusters, people born right after WW2 and their children. The 2020 population was **125 million** (6 million in Denmark).
- For 2070, the population is predicted to drastically decline. The estimated population pyramid looks like a vase. The total population will be **87 million** in 2070, and **50 million** in 2120.
- Due to the decreasing number of births as well as deaths, **the young population (under 15) will be 10%, working age population will be 50%, and elderly population(over 64) will be 40% in 2070.**



Source: National Institute of Social Security and Population Studies, https://www.ipss.go.jp/site-ad/TopPageData/PopPyramid2023_J.html

(2) CHANGES IN JAPANESE FAMILIES

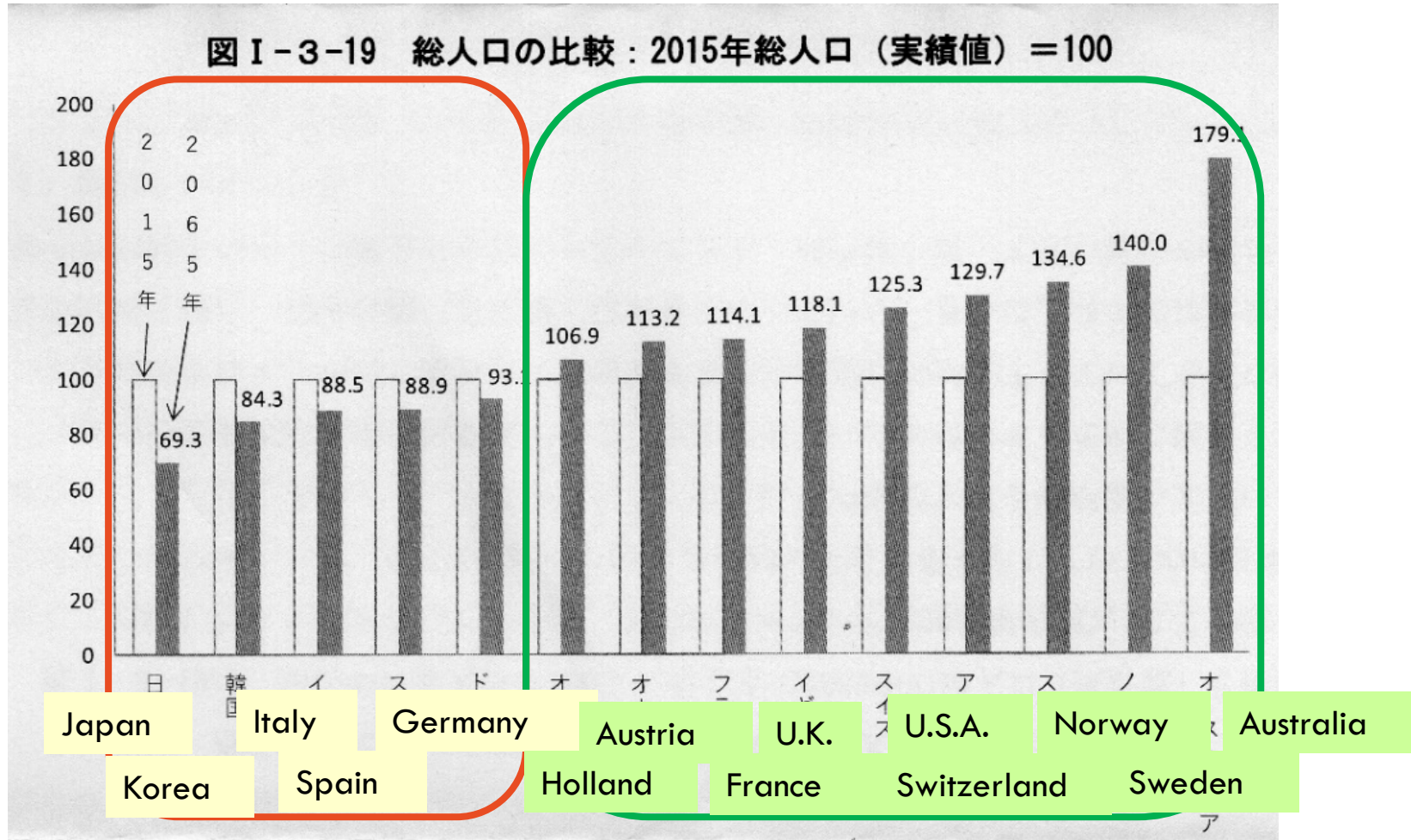
- **Single households** increased. They are **35%** of the total households in Japan. A half of them are elderly people.
- The right charts show the increase of **unmarried people aged between 18 and 34, claiming no intention to marry.**
- Unmarried people at the age of 50 are also on the rise (28.25% for male, 7.81% for female in 2020).
- Japanese TFR was 1.34 in 2020.
- It can be said that **population decline is inevitable in Japanese society**, where childbirth and marriage are not separated: people don't think about having children until they get legally married.



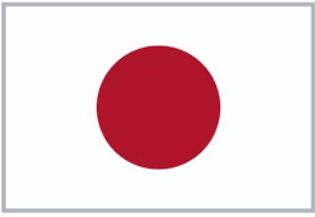
○ いずれ結婚するつもり ● 一生結婚するつもりはない □ 不詳

Source: National Institute of Social Security and Population Studies, 2022, 第16回出生動向基本調査（結婚と出産に関する全国調査）

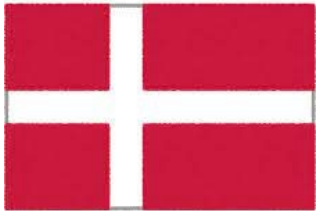
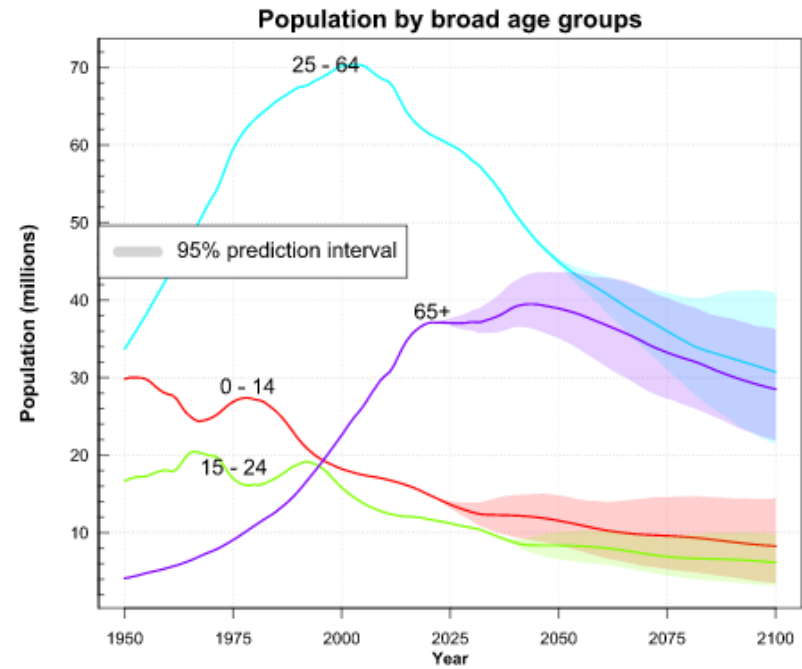
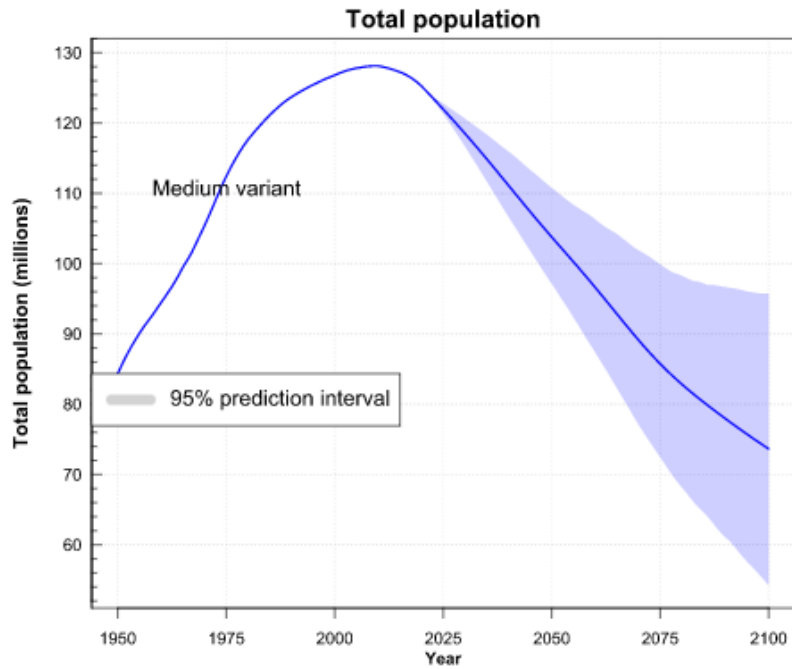
(3) POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON



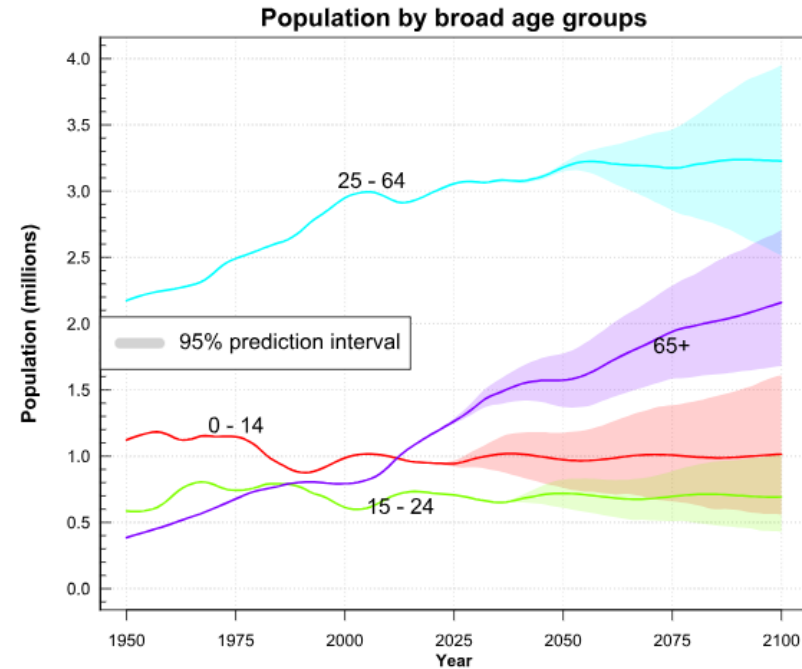
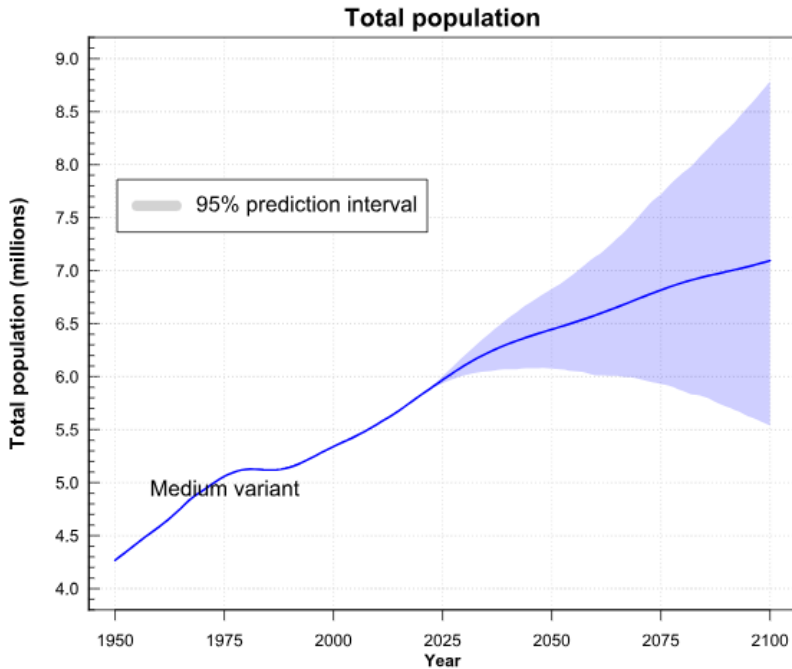
Source: National Institute of Social Security and Population Studies, 2018, 日本の将来推計人口—平成29年推計の解説及び条件付き推計, p.47



Japan :
Working age
population (25-64) is
shrinking



Denmark:
Working age
population will be
maintained at the
higher rate.

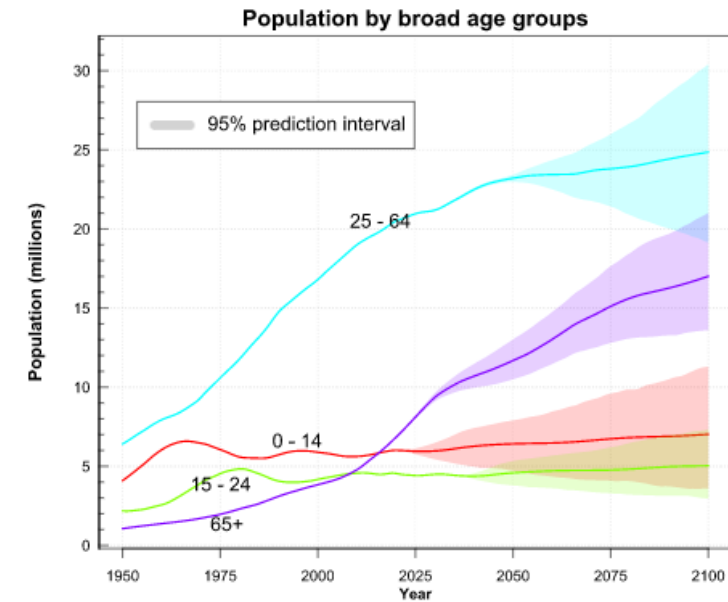
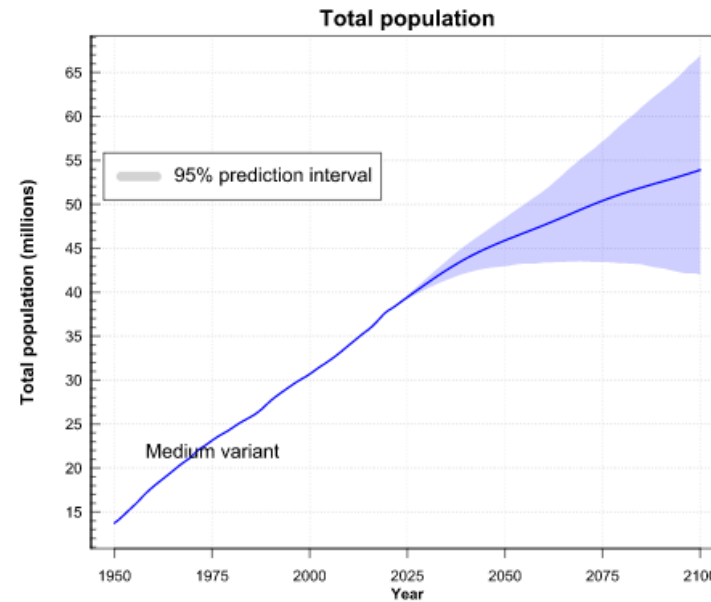


Source:
United
Nations,
World
Population
Prospects
2022

WHY IS CANADIAN POPULATION GROWING?



- Working age population continues to grow.
- 2022 total population in Canada was 38 million.
- For example, the main government child-raising support systems in Ontario include free education from Kindergarten to Gr. 12, childcare leave for one and a half years, childcare leave benefit 55% of income, and at least \$334/month until the age of 17 for childcare subsidy (Government of Ontario).
- 2022 TFR is 1.47 in Canada. (Japan:1.26, Denmark: 1.72)



Source: United Nations, United Nations, World Population Prospects 2022

WHY IS THE CANADIAN POPULATION GROWING?

- According to UN, 2022 crude rates of net migration are 6 in Canada, 3 in Denmark and only 1 in Japan (per 1000 people).
- Immigration causes the Canadian population to grow.
- Looking at 2022 total net-migration, immigrants minus emigrants, approximately **249,000 in Canada, 20,000 in Denmark and 100,000 in Japan**. While the crude rate is low, the actual number of people migrating to Japan is significant. This number itself is too high to ignore (United Nations, 2022).



PART 3

CHILDREN WITH FOREIGN CONNECTIONS

INCREASE IN FOREIGNERS LIVING IN JAPAN AND JAPANESE LIVING ABROAD

- According to the Japanese Immigration Services Agency (2022), the number of **foreign residents has reached a record high of approximately 2.67 million.**
- The number of **Japanese people living abroad**, including permanent residents who have stayed overseas for three months or more and moved their base of life to another country, and long-term residents who temporarily live abroad, **is also increasing.** In 2021, the number will decrease slightly to about **1.34 million**, but in 2019, before the Covid-19 crisis, the number was **over 1.4 million**, a record high (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

CHILDREN WITH FOREIGN CONNECTIONS AT SCHOOL?

- The number of **foreign students enrolled in public schools is increasing**, reaching approximately **93,000** in 2019, which is also a record high (Ministry of education). Under these circumstances, it is becoming increasingly important to promote mutual understanding between students who have connections with foreign countries and those who have been brought up mainly in Japanese culture, and to foster an awareness of multiculturalism.
- Children with foreign connections at school include foreign nationality students, children with non-Japanese roots and Japanese nationality students who have lived outside Japan and whose parent(s) are non-Japanese.

WHY IS MULTICULTURALISM NECESSARY IN JAPANESE SCHOOLS?

- It is not only because the number of school children connected to foreign countries is increasing that multiculturalism is necessary. Regardless of nationality, **children living in this century will not be able to live without contact with other countries.**
- It is inevitable that children with connections to foreign countries should require proper language supported in order to acquire the language of the country they live in as they grow up, and **it is important to find ways to cope with problems arising from differences of everyday life culture in school and society** (Ueno et al., 2017).

PART 4
HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION
IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES:
LEARNING FROM CANADIAN EXAMPLES

CANADIAN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

- Then, how does Canadian home economics education facilitate those students in Canada, where many immigrant children are accepted into schools?
- Based on an analysis of Canadian home economics education curriculum and textbooks, the following are proposed as learning content to be handled in Japanese home economics education (Ueno, 2012) .
 - **Multiculturalism in families**
 - **Comparing customs and traditions of families in various cultures**
 - **Understanding cultural differences from a global perspective**
 - **Differences and similarities of families from various cultures**
 - **Empathy** toward cultures that are not ones own

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Four kinds of empathy (Brady, 2021)

- **Cognitive empathy:** the ability to imagine the thoughts and feelings of others, a kind of skill.
- **Emotional empathy:** this includes "feeling the same emotions as others," "anguish felt by individuals as a reaction to the plight of others," and "feelings of compassion toward others."
- **Somatic empathy:** It promotes "anguish that an individual feels as a reaction to the predicament of others", and by imagining the pain and suffering of others, one feels it physically.
- **Compassionate Empathy:** imagining and understanding what others are thinking and feeling others' emotions, does not end with empathy, but it provokes some kind of action (e.g., the act of helping others).

CLASS OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW RESEARCH AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CANADA

- Interviewed home economics teachers at secondary schools in B.C., Canada, about home economics (Food studies) instructions related to multiculturalism (Ueno et al., 2018) .

Teacher C: “I ask students to make connections with the same or similar food items from a different culture. For example, flat breads – crepes, roti, tortillas etc. We do research, discussions, and draw upon connections.”

Teacher D: “I did ‘flavour profiles around the world.’ Our class discussed “how some regions of the world use the same ingredients or flavours often, and in a variety of ways.”

Teacher F: “We look at all aspects of tea – different ways it is consumed around the world, why it is consumed, what is the same, what is different.” Her intention was to “‘open students’ eyes to the vast differences but also strikingly similar ways people around the world interact with food and drink.”



POINTS TO CONSIDER IN TEACHING HOME ECONOMICS RELATED TO MULTICULTURALISM

- Based on the narratives of secondary school home economics teachers in Canada, the following five points came out as considerations in home economics in order to guide students to multiculturalism (Ueno et al., 2018) .
 - i. Focusing on locally grown foods or each student's family food as fundamental foods.
 - ii. Comparing commonly existing foods in the world and explore the similarities and differences, and discuss what make the differences.
 - iii. Inviting newcomer students to speak in class and share their knowledge and experience.
 - iv. Setting opportunities to share an appreciation of cultural diversity
 - v. Cultivating openmindedness toward diversity for the future.

PRACTICING MULTICULTURALISM IN JAPANESE CLASSES

- We, co-researchers and I, made multicultural education lesson materials and class plans, and put them into practice for the fields of technology and home economics at the junior high school level in Japan.
- We have developed the following three classes related to the lifestyle culture of clothing, food and housing (Ueno et al., 2019) .
 - Lesson A: Let's discuss clothing cultures by looking at the world's folk costumes !
 - Lesson B: Let's discuss food cultures by tasting different kinds of tea enjoyed in the world!
 - Lesson C: Let's discuss living environment and life culture by comparing traditional toilets used around the world !



LESSON B: LET'S DISCUSS FOOD CULTURES BY TASTING DIFFERENT KINDS OF TEA ENJOYED IN THE WORLD!

- Through hands-on activities that compare the colour, aroma, and taste of green tea and unknown tea, groups of students guess what kind of tea is the unknown tea.
- After the activity, students will learn about the place of origin, ingredients, characteristics, nutrition, and efficacy of each type of tea, and think about the differences and similarities, as well as the reasons that make the differences.

Students' worksheet:

世界のお茶から食文化を考えよう！

1. お茶を比べて、「○茶」は、何茶か考えてみよう。



	緑 茶	○ 茶
colour		
aroma		
taste		
Country where mainly drunk	日本	
what is the unknown tea		

PART 5
NECESSITY OF NURTURING EMPATHY
TO BECOME GLOBAL CITIZENS
IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

- It has been a long time since Canadian home economist and environmental activist, Vaines (1990) proposed the idea of **“world as home.”** This concept is indispensable in this global era. It is necessary to consider and act for a better life as **global citizens**, with the whole world as our place of life, in order to solve the various global life issues that are currently progressing.
- At that time, it will be difficult to secure even one's own livelihood unless we aim for coexistence in this multicultural world, instead of standing in the interests of only oneself and one's own country. It is necessary to cultivate **empathy** by intentionally finding commonalities in different cultures.
- Renwick (2022) notes that “coming to understand “what does it mean to live well?” leads us as professionals to think about whether or not we have done anything or enough to create **inclusive and decolonized spaces** where we practice”(p.19).
- This also applies to the practice of multiculturalism in home economics education. **Nurturing empathy by instructing diversity in everyday life culture**, home economics can become an inclusive and respectful field of expertise.
- We as educators are ought to facilitate students to develop the ability to make decisions for their better life in the future.

JETTE BENN LEFT A MESSAGE IN JAPAN SAYING,

“Home economics is necessary if you want to be able to make choices that are meaningful for the individual and the group, and perhaps also meaningful in terms of cultural heritage – not as a reminiscence but as a necessary tool for promoting action and development, and for understanding the coherence between nature and culture and between home and society.” (Jette Benn, 2004, p.69)

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