Revised March 11, 2008

EXPLAINING TRENDS IN CORESIDENCE

OF NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES WITH PARENTS IN JAPAN

Rikiya Matsukura
Nihon University Population Research Instistute
Tokyo, Japan

Naohiro Ogawa
Nihon University Population Research Institute
Tokyo, Japan

Robert D. Retherford
East-West Center
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Coresidence of adult children with parents in Japan is of interest not only because of its importance in understanding the structure, functions, and welfare of the Japanese family, but also because of its relevance to government policies relating to population aging and below-replacement fertility. The Japanese government views coresidence of middle-aged children with elderly parents as a "latent asset" for caring for the elderly in the context of rapid population aging and escalating costs of the social security system, which in Japan includes universal health coverage as well as pension coverage (Ogawa and Retherford 1997). The government has so far paid little attention, however, to coresidence earlier in the family life cycle, when many newly married Japanese couples move in with parents, often temporarily. This second type of coresidence can be viewed as a latent asset for the government in its efforts to raise Japan's very low fertility.

Whether these two types of coresidence really are latent assets depends on whether one frames the question in terms of coresidence at a particular time or in terms of the trend in coresidence. If one considers coresidence at a particular time, then coresidence is clearly a latent asset, because without it, the government would have to shoulder even more of the burden of caring for the elderly; marriages would be even less affordable and would therefore occur even later; and fertility within marriage would be even lower, because grandparents would not be easily available to help with childcare, which is especially important if the young wife works. By contrast, if one considers the trend in coresidence, the direction of the trend makes a difference. If the trend in coresidence is upward, then the trend in coresidence is a latent asset. But if it is downward, it is a latent liability, because it will work against the government's efforts to shift some of the costs of elderly care back to families and to raise marriage and fertility rates.

Among advanced industrial countries, Japan has an unusually high level of coresidence, reflecting the persistence of a traditional pattern of coresidence, whereby the eldest son and his immediate family live with the eldest son's parents. Historically, this pattern arose when Japan was a peasant-agrarian society in which production was family-based and unspecialized, and father and son typically shared the same occupation, usually farming. Parental authority over children was legitimized and reinforced not only by the legal system but also by the parents' longer experience and greater expertise in their shared work. Under these circumstances, coresidence of adult children with parents made both economic and social sense (Ogawa and Retherford 1997).

But Japan's present circumstances are vastly different. Values and norms tend to be rooted in the underlying conditions of everyday life, but in contemporary Japan, the historical conditions of everyday life in which values and norms of coresidence were originally rooted have mostly disappeared. As a result, values and norms of coresidence are in the process of adjusting to modern conditions. They have not caught up with modern conditions, however, partly because these conditions continue to change, and partly because, to some extent, values and norms have a life of their own, so that adjustment occurs only after a time lag. The faster the change in the underlying conditions of everyday life, the greater the adjustment lag and the greater the discordance between values and norms of coresidence and underlying conditions at any given time. In Japan during the last century and especially since World War 2, the pace of socioeconomic change has been very rapid, leading to an unusually large time lag and an unusually large discordance. This lag and discordance are a manifestation of the more general phenomenon of cultural lag, and they portend further declines in coresidence.

An analysis of trends in coresidence must also consider that the causes of coresidence vary over the family life cycle. For example, in many cases a newly married couple coresides temporarily with parents simply because the young couple cannot yet afford to live independently at a standard of living that they find acceptable. By contrast, later on, when the parents are elderly and their children middle-aged, an adult child and his or her immediate family may coreside with parents in order to help and care for the parents. Sorting out the causes of coresidence clearly requires separate consideration of coresidence at time of marriage and coresidence later in the life cycle. This paper focuses on explaining the trend in coresidence at time of marriage.

In most industrial countries, the proportion of newly married couples who coreside with parents is very low, typically only 2 or 3 percent (? - need to cite comparative data from other countries). In Japan, however, this proportion, though falling, is still relatively high, for reasons already discussed. It fell from 67 percent of marriages in 1955 to 23 percent of marriages in 1997, then reversed direction and rose to 29 percent of marriages in 2002, the latest year for which we have reliable information. The reversal after 1998 is somewhat puzzling and seems to support the hypothesis that the trend in coresidence of newly married couples with parents is a latent asset that could contribute to earlier marriage and higher fertility. But the simple theory outlined above suggests that the reversal of the trend in coresidence after 1998 will ultimately prove to be a temporary upward blip in an otherwise long-term downward trend. The empirical analysis in the present paper attempts to shed light on this question by identifying the causes of not only the long-term downward trend of coresidence prior to 1998 but also the reversal of the trend after 1998. If it can be shown that the causes of the reversal are of a temporary nature, one can reasonably infer that the reversal itself is of a temporary nature.

DATA

Data for this analysis come primarily from various rounds of the National Survey on Family Planning (NSFP) and the 2004 National Survey on Population, Families and Generations (NSPFG), conducted by the Mainichi Newspapers of Japan. In all of these surveys, the primary respondents are women, who were asked about coresidence both at the time they married and at the time of survey. Women who were currently married at the time of survey were asked additional questions about their husbands. The present analysis is restricted to women who were currently married at the time of survey, in order to allow inclusion of husband's characteristics and well as wife's characteristics in the set of predictor variables in the multivariate analysis.

Trends in coresidence are measured as the proportion of newly married couples who coreside with parents, tabulated or graphed by calendar year of marriage. Prior to the 1992 survey, the NSFP did not distinguish between first marriages and remarriages. We therefore treat marriages recorded in the pre-1992 surveys as if they were first marriages, except for women with children born before the woman's reported age at marriage. These women are assumed to be in a second or subsequent marriage and are excluded from the analysis.

RESULTS

Principal results from the multivariate analysis are graphed in Figures A and B, based on pooled data from various rounds of the NSFP and the 2004 NSPFG. Both figures show

unadjusted and adjusted trends in coresidence, where "unadjusted" means without controls, and "adjusted" means with controls. Both figures are based on pooled data from the 1986, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1998 NSFP surveys and the 2004 NSPFG survey. Omitted surveys lack information on one or more predictor variables in the logistic regressions.

In Figure A, the coresidence values in the unadjusted trend are 3-year moving averages of observed values for single calendar years of marriage. The coresidence values in the adjusted trend approximate 3-year moving averages and are calculated by logistic regression. In the logistic regression analysis, the pooled data set is initially partitioned into subsets, one for each calendar year of marriage. For example, the subset for 1959 includes only those women who were married in 1959. The single-year subsets of women are pooled into larger overlapping 3-year subsets of women marrying in 1959-61, 1960-62, ..., 2001-2003. A separate logistic regression of coresidence (in the input data, $P = 1$ if coresiding at time of marriage, 0 otherwise) on the predictor variables is then calculated for each of the overlapping 3-year subsets, based on women in that subset. Using a common set of mean values of the predictor variables calculated from the entire pooled data set, a predicted value of P (the probability of coresidence at time of marriage) is calculated from each of the logistic regressions. In this way the predictor variables are controlled (i.e., held constant) from one overlapping 3-year time period to the next. The predicted values of P are then plotted at the mid-points of the overlapping 3-year time periods, yielding the adjusted curve in Figure 1.

Predictor variables in the logistic regressions pertaining to the adjusted trend in Figure A include arranged marriage (yes, no); wife's age at marriage (15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30+); husband's age at marriage (15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30+); wife pregnant at time of marriage (yes, no); couple type (eldest son and eldest daughter, eldest son and younger daughter, younger son and eldest daughter, younger son and younger daughter); wife's childhood residence (urban, rural); wife's education (jr. high school, sr. high school, jr. coll. or higher); husband's education (jr. high school, sr. high school, jr. college, university); and wife worked before marriage (worked for pay full-time before marriage, worked for pay part-time before marriage, worked not for pay before marriage, did not work before marriage). (Note: This needs to be checked; variables included in the logistic regressions may not correspond exactly to what is written in this paragraph.)

Figure B is calculated in a rather similar fashion, the difference being that separate logistic regressions are calculated for 5-year year-of-marriage groups instead of overlapping 3-year year-of-marriage groups.

Figures A and B show that the predictor variables do explain some over the overall downward trend in coresidence. But they do not explain the upward trend in coresidence after 1998. Indeed, in Figure A, the upward trend in coresidence is more extreme for the adjusted trend than for the observed trend.

Figures 1-28 provide additional information on trends in the distributions of women on each of the predictor variables and trends in percent coresiding for each category of each predictor variable considered separately. These figures have yet to be analyzed.

Figures
(for contract report)

March 11, 2008

Figure A: Percent coresiding (3-year moving averages)

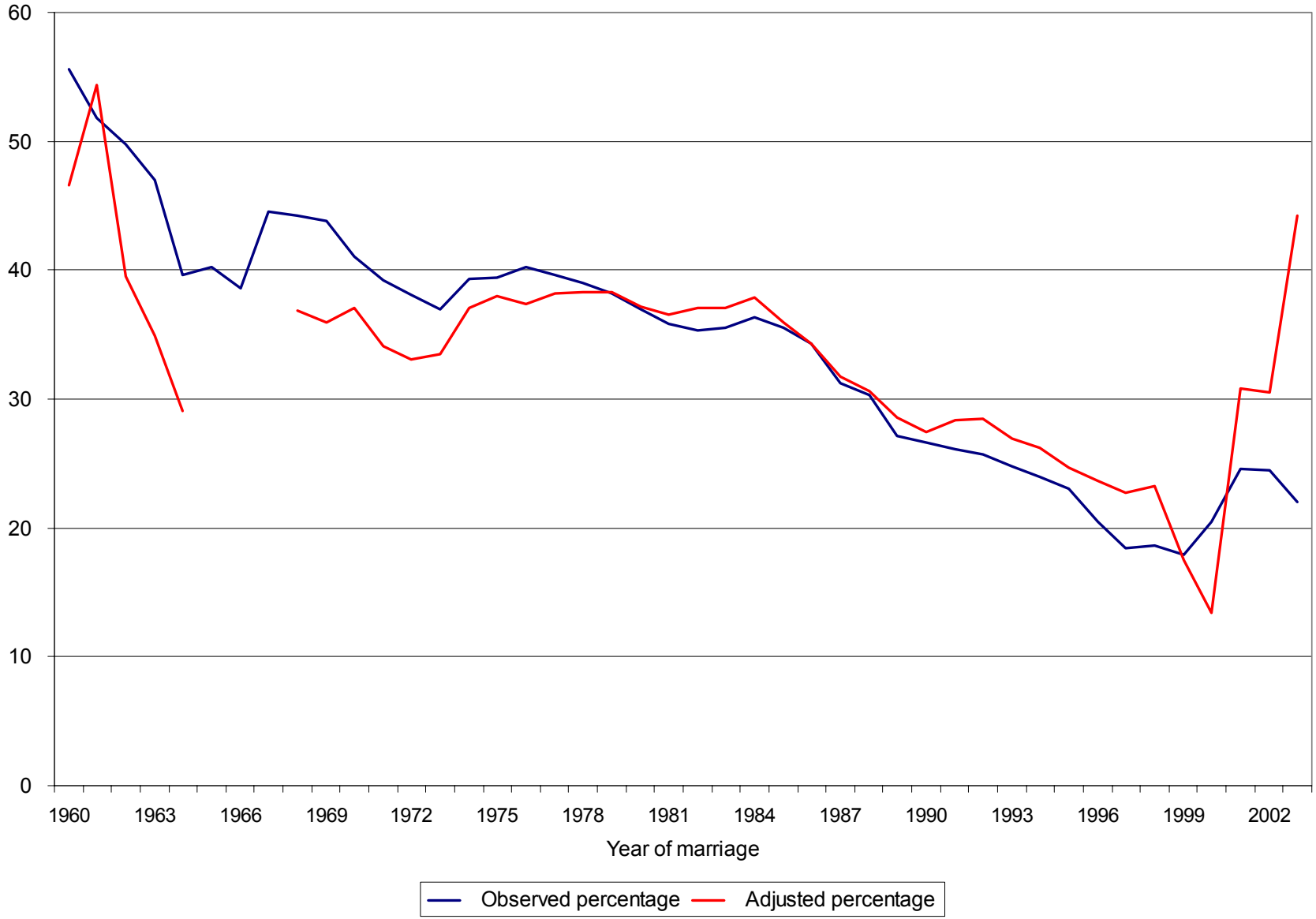
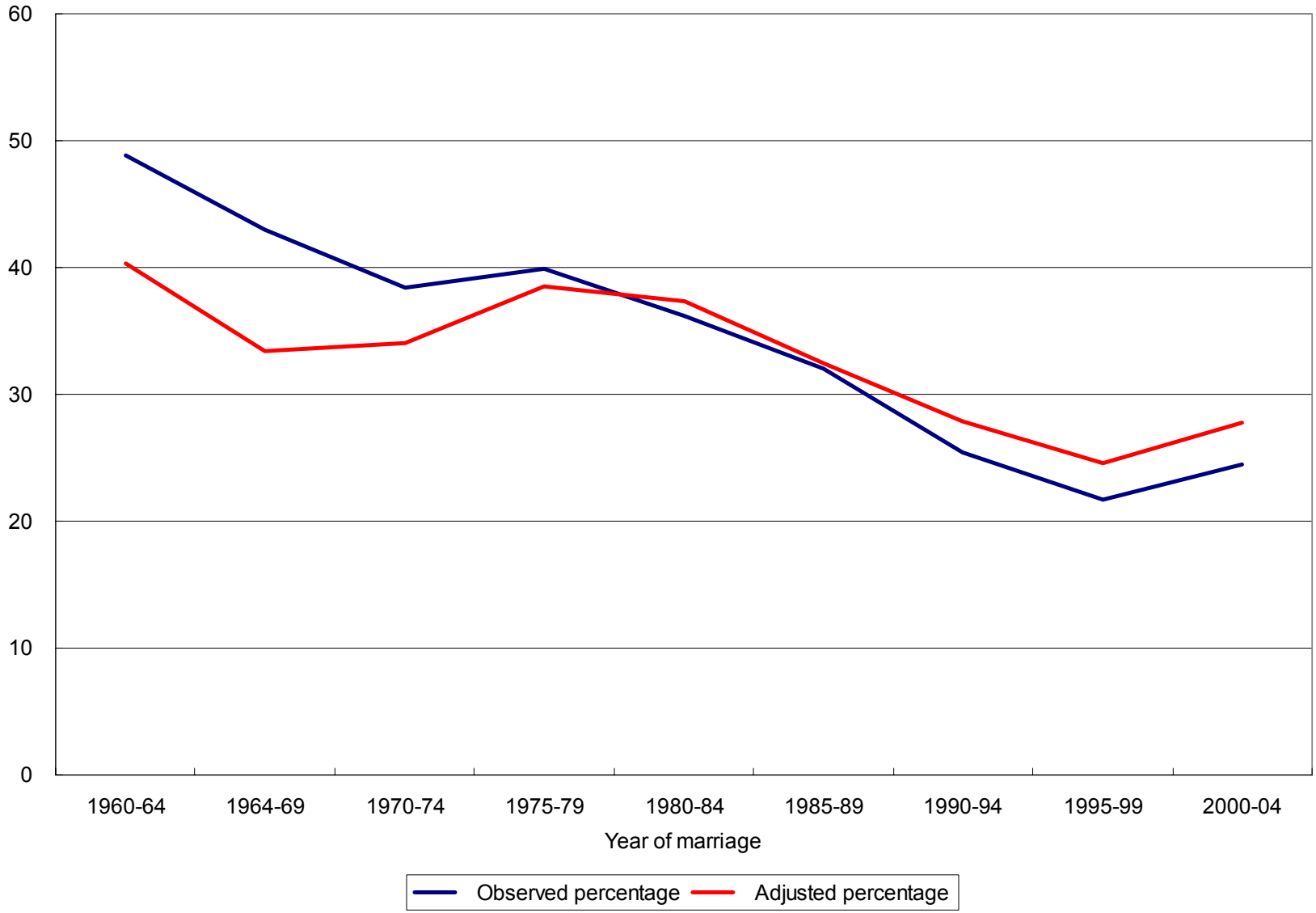
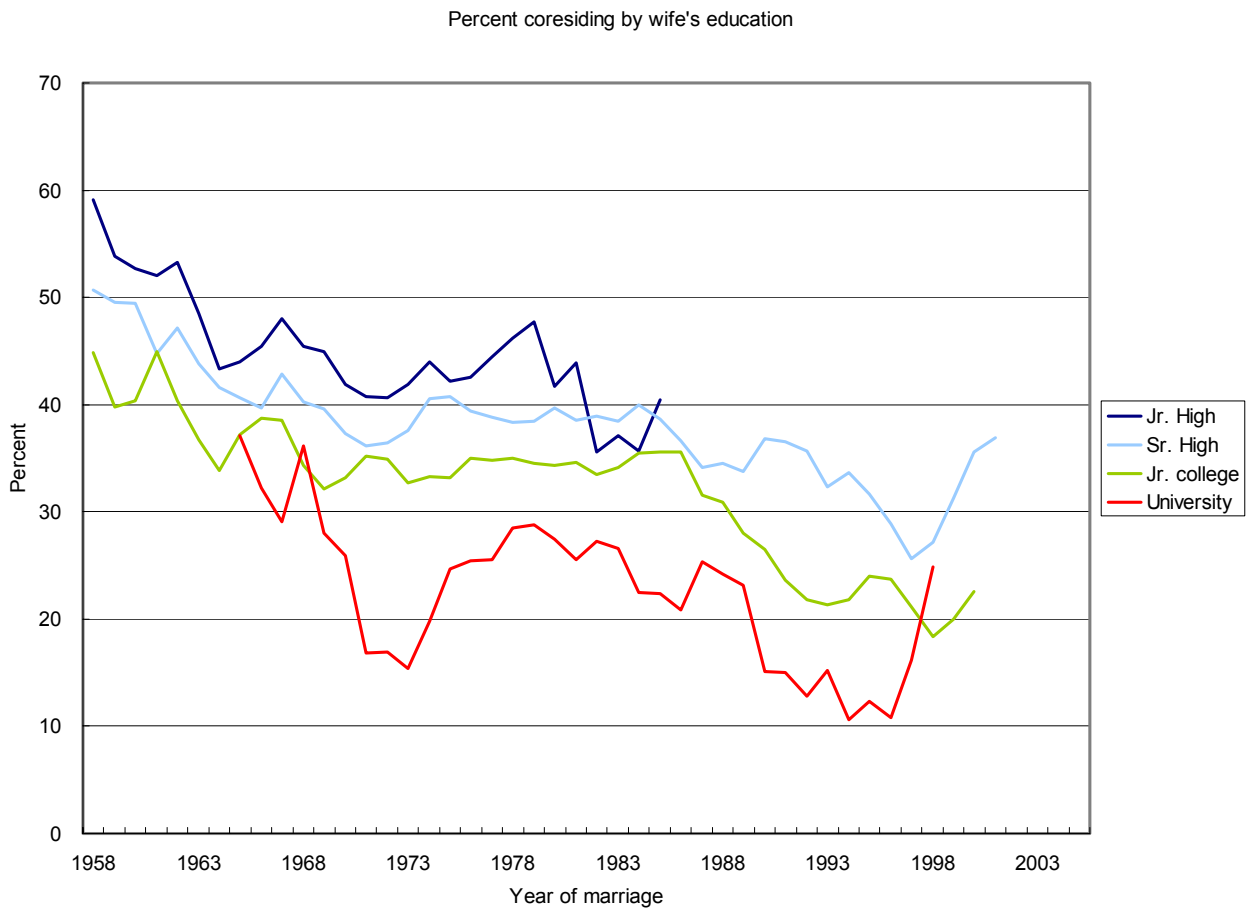


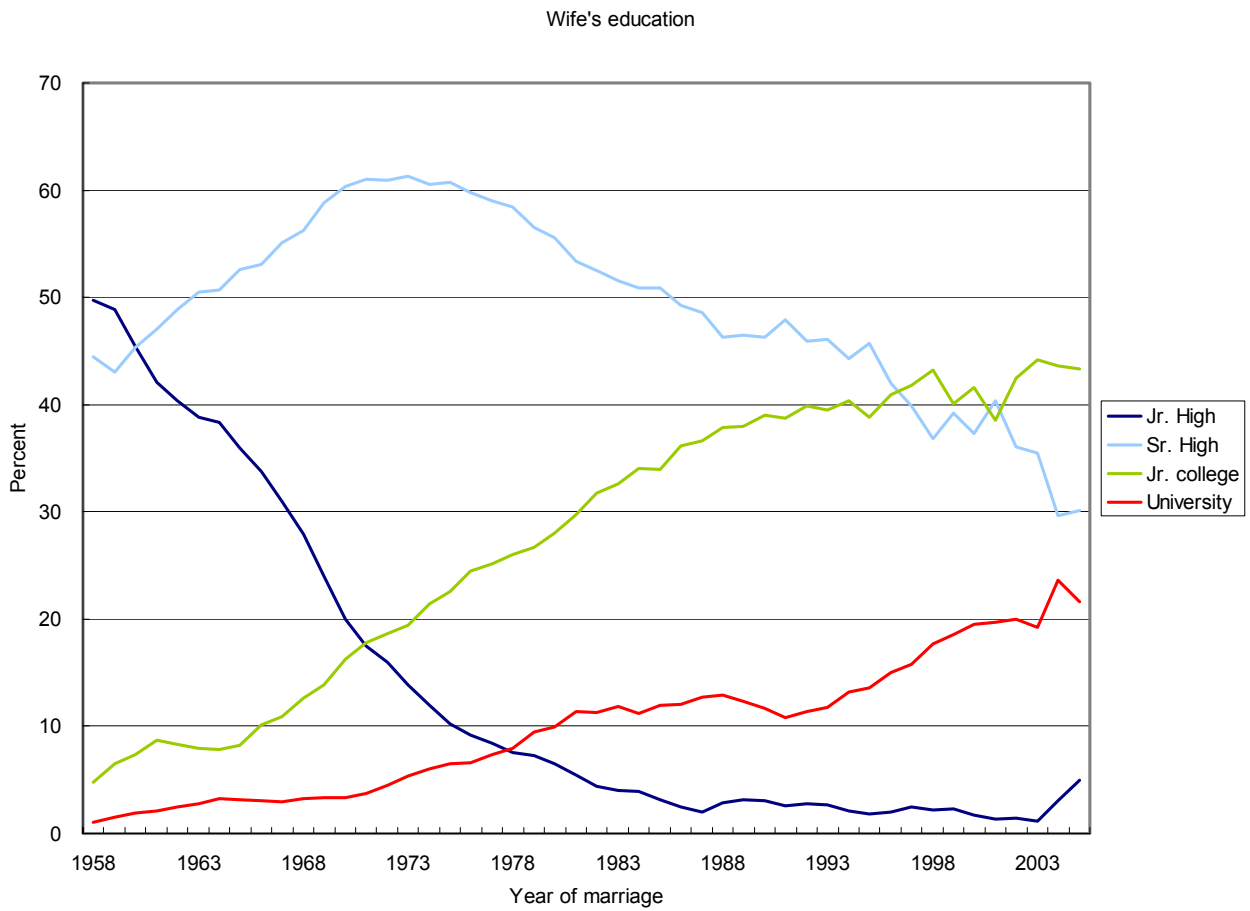
Figure B: Percent coresiding (5-year year-of-marriage groups)



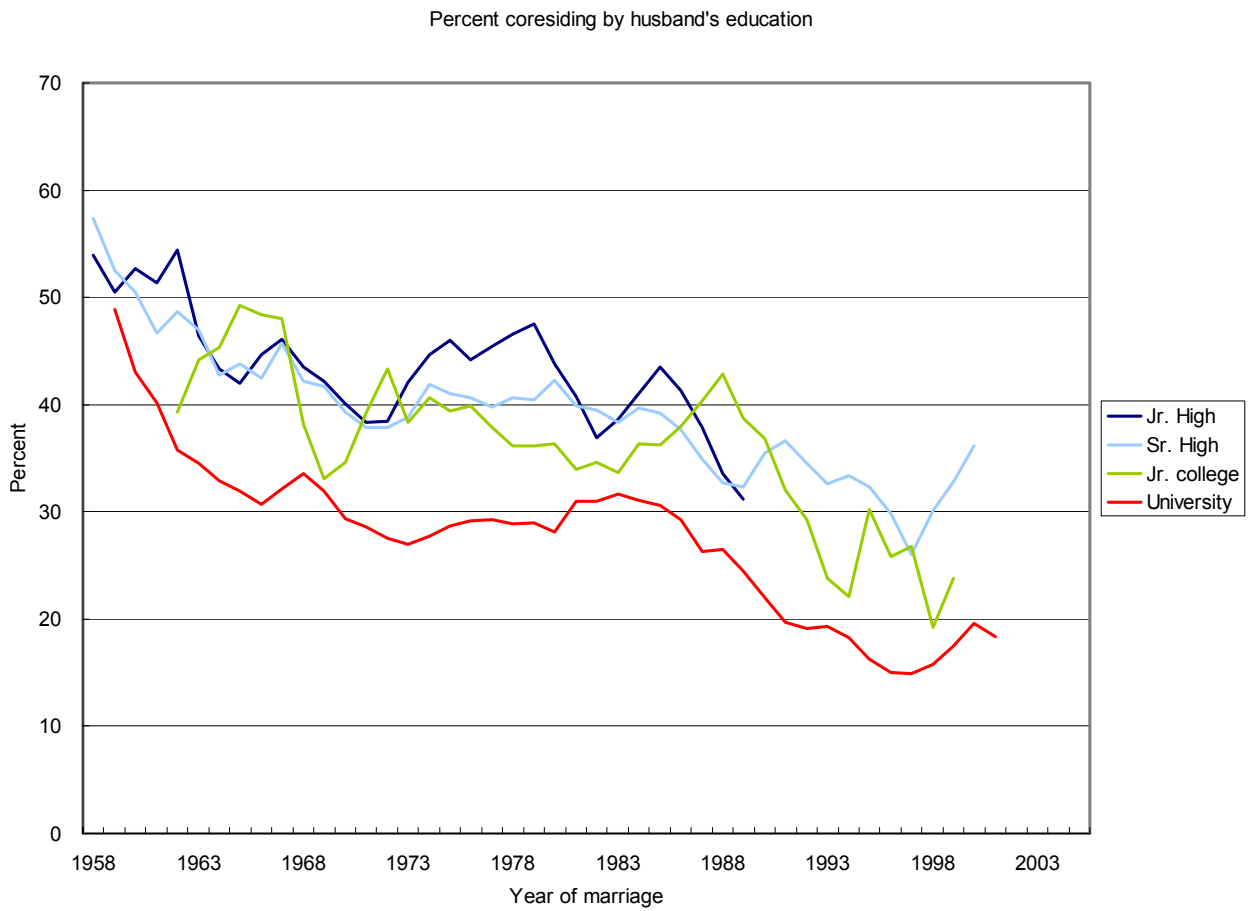
1-Percent coresiding by wife's education (three or four categories)



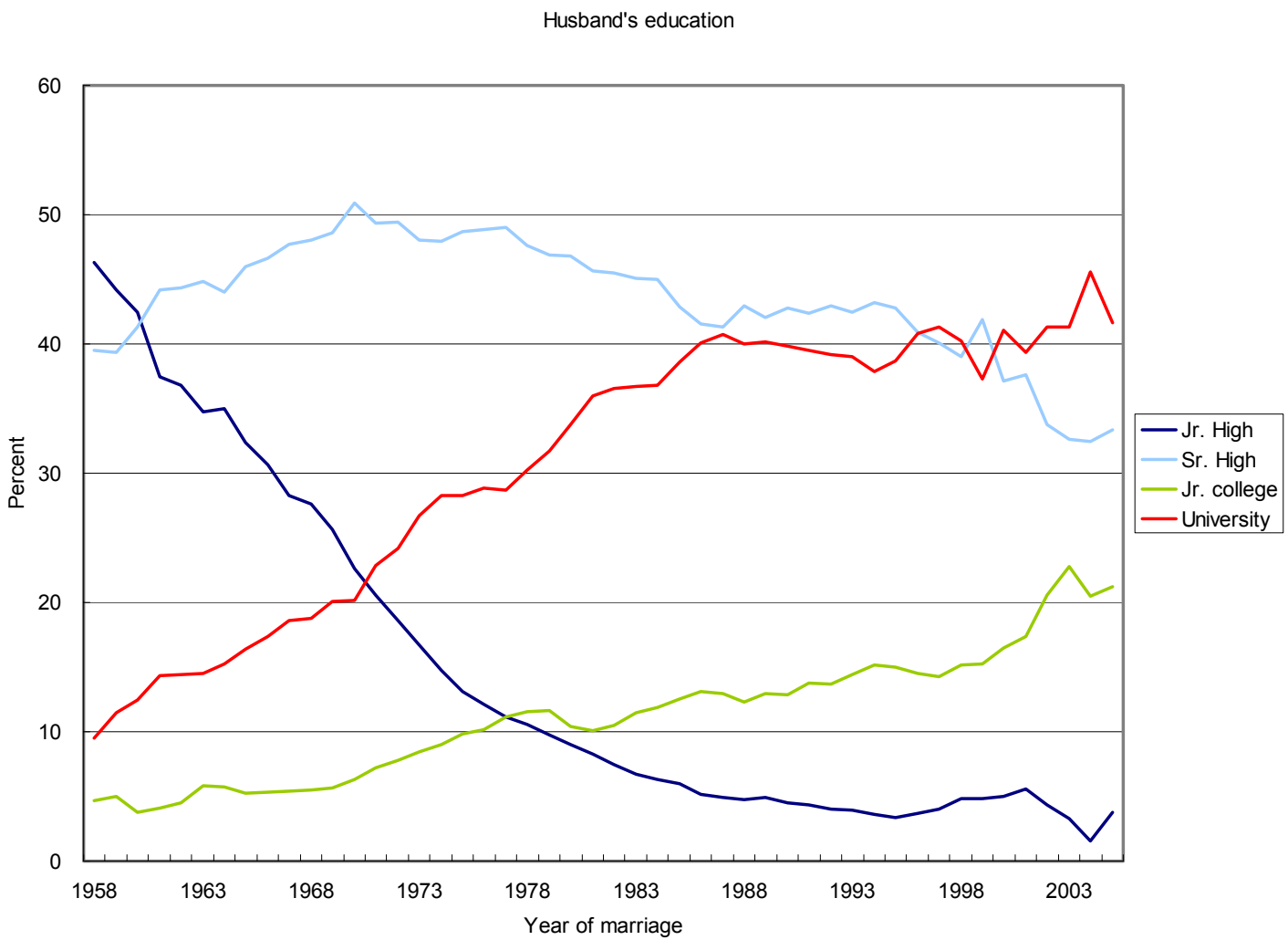
2-Percent in each wife's education category (area graph like Fig 18 Singapore workshop paper)



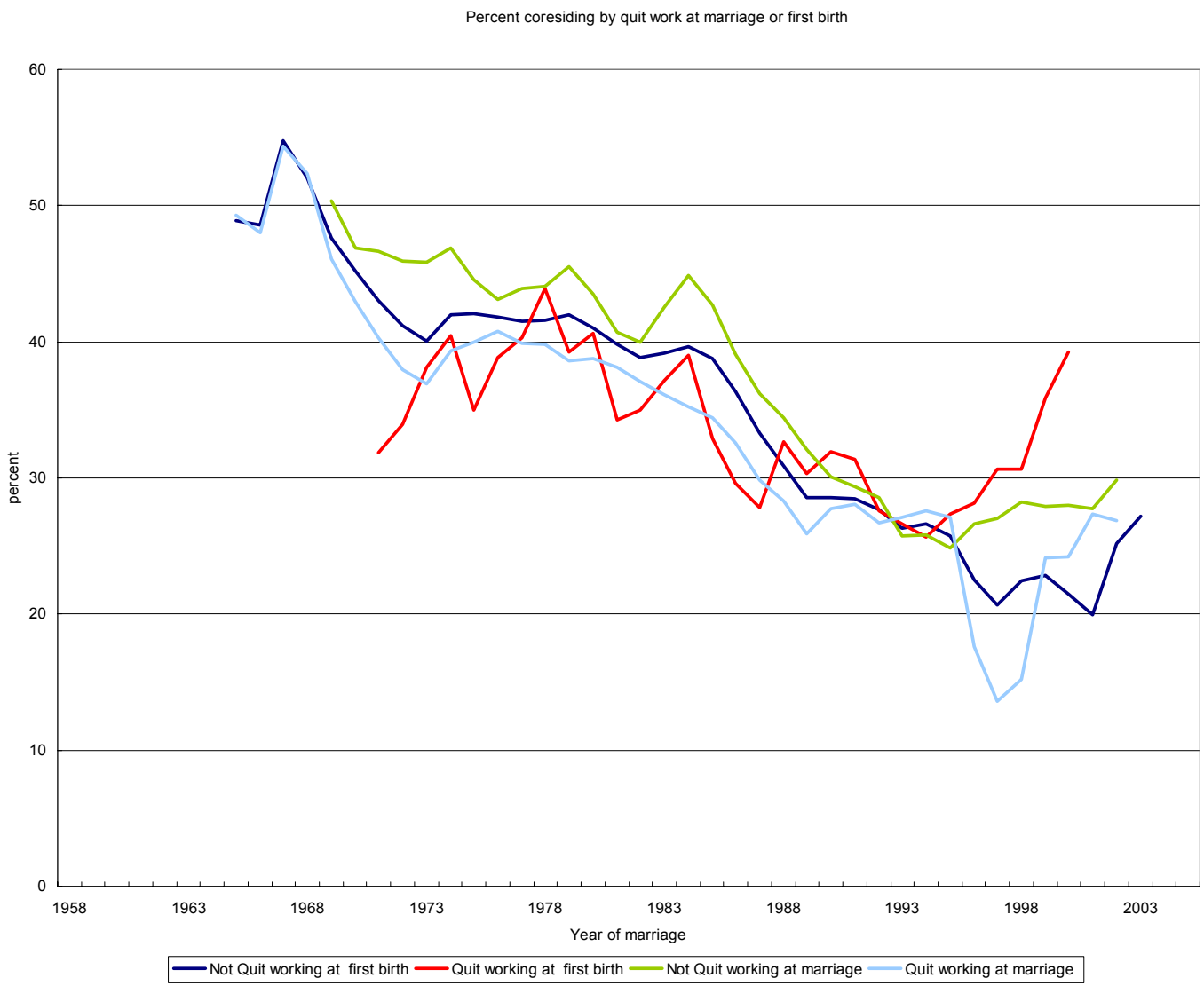
3-Percent coresiding by husband's education (three or four categories)



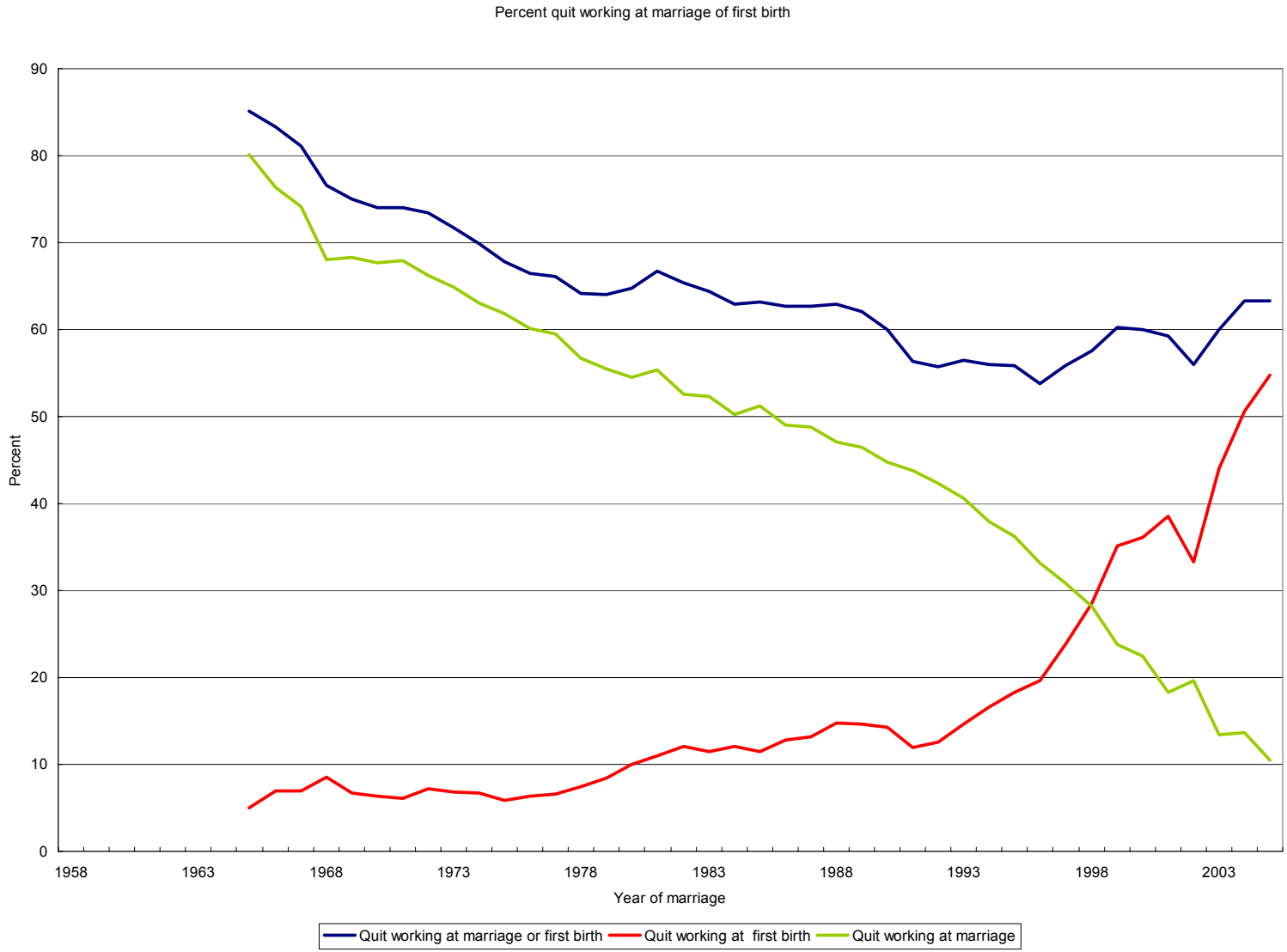
4-Percent in each husband's education category



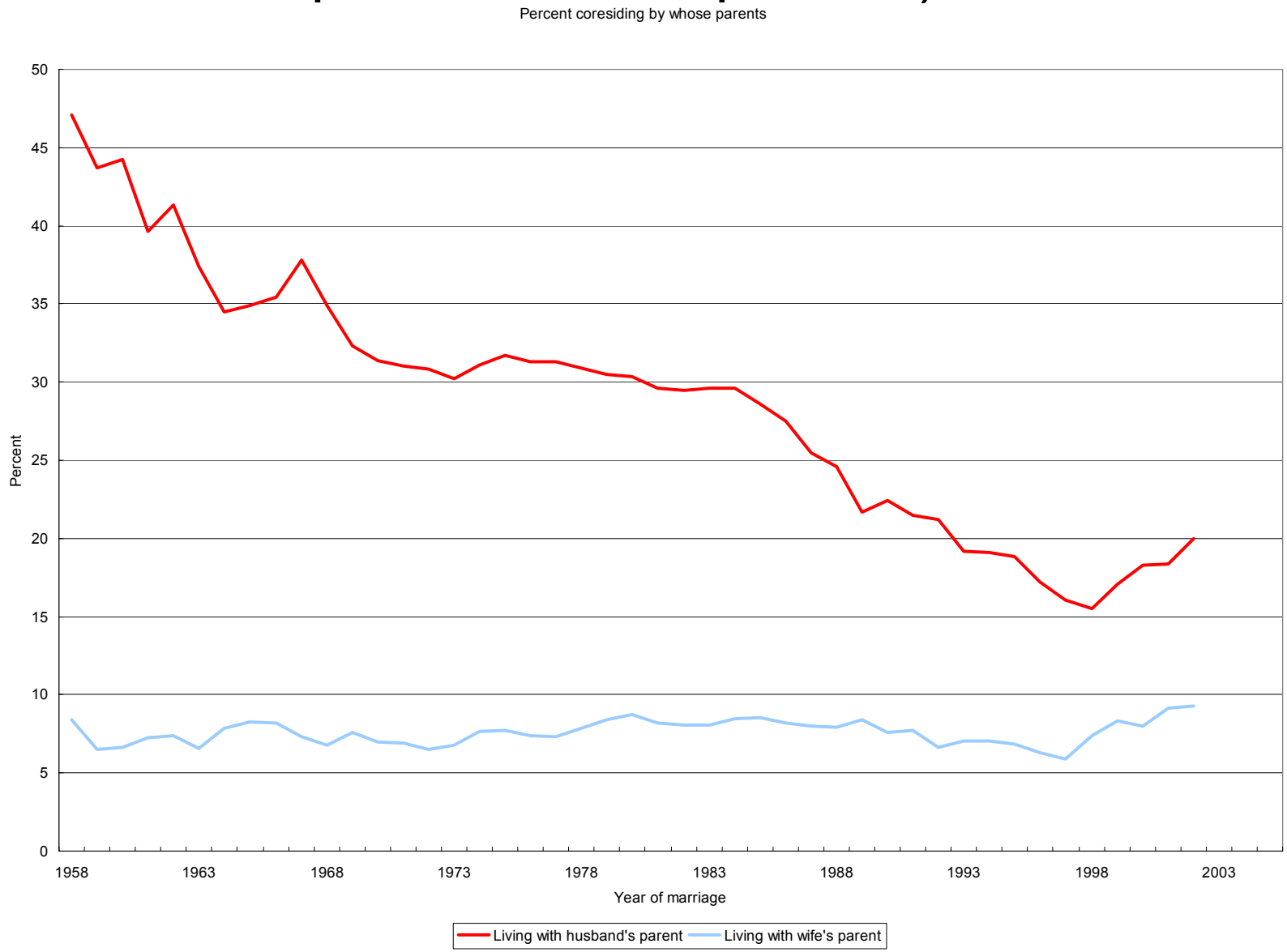
7-Percent coresiding by "quit working at marriage" (yes, no, other) among those who worked before marriage (note: two-way causation)



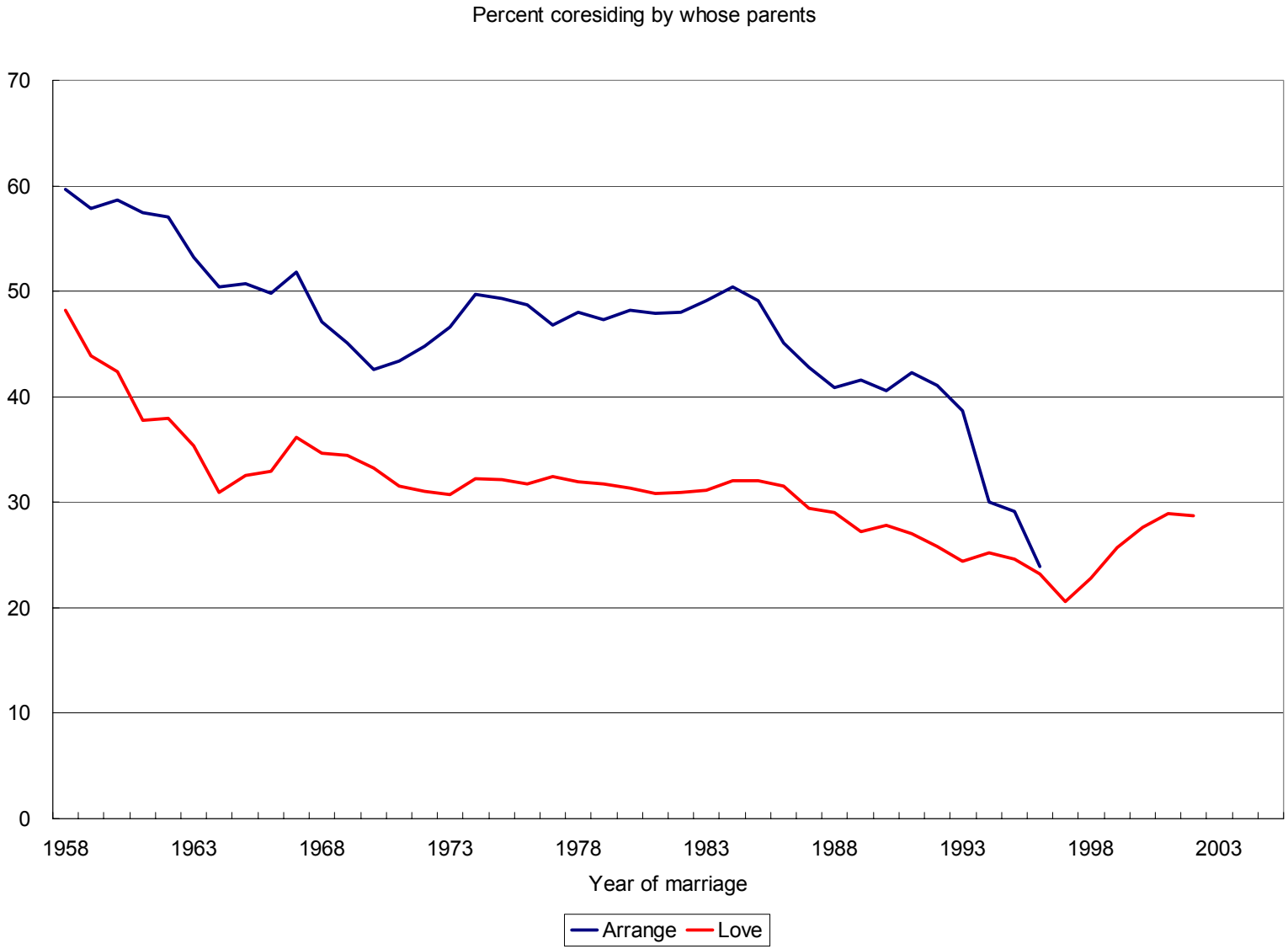
8-Percent quit working at marriage or first birth among those who worked before marriage (big rise in quit at first birth after 1993). Also do separately for quit at marriage and quit at first birth



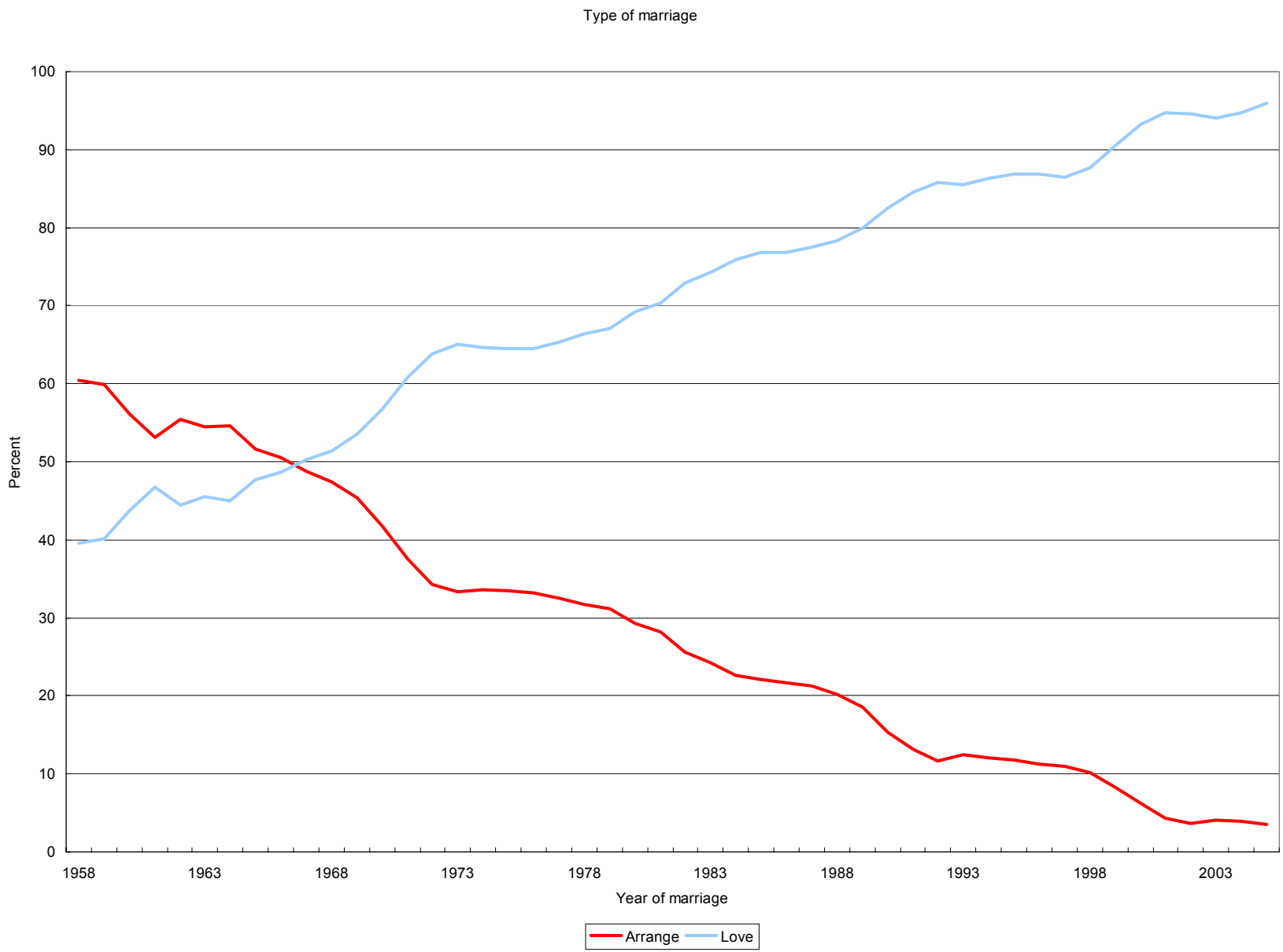
9-Percent coresiding by whose parents (husband's parents, wife's parents)



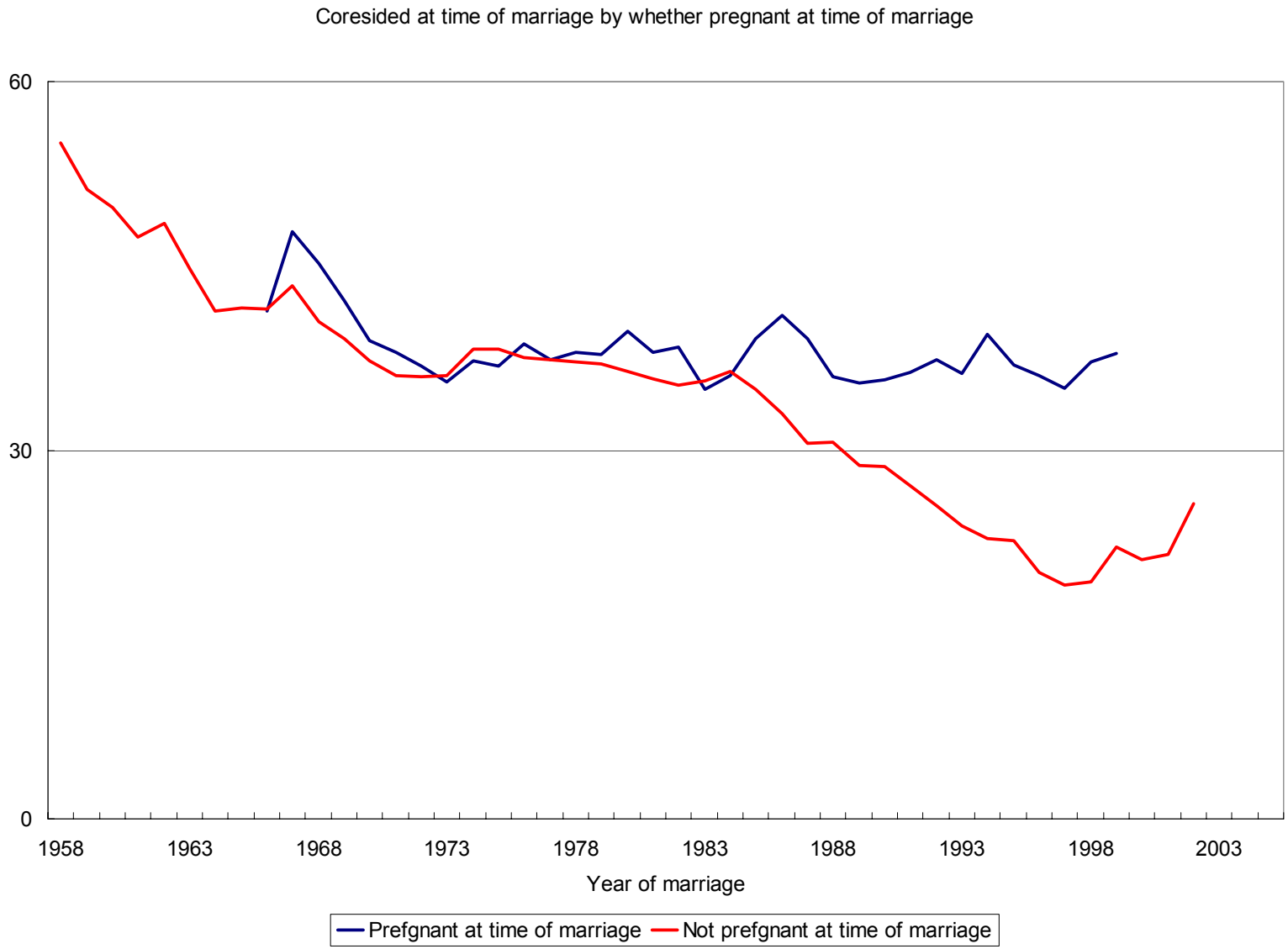
10-Percent coresiding by type of marriage (arranged, love)



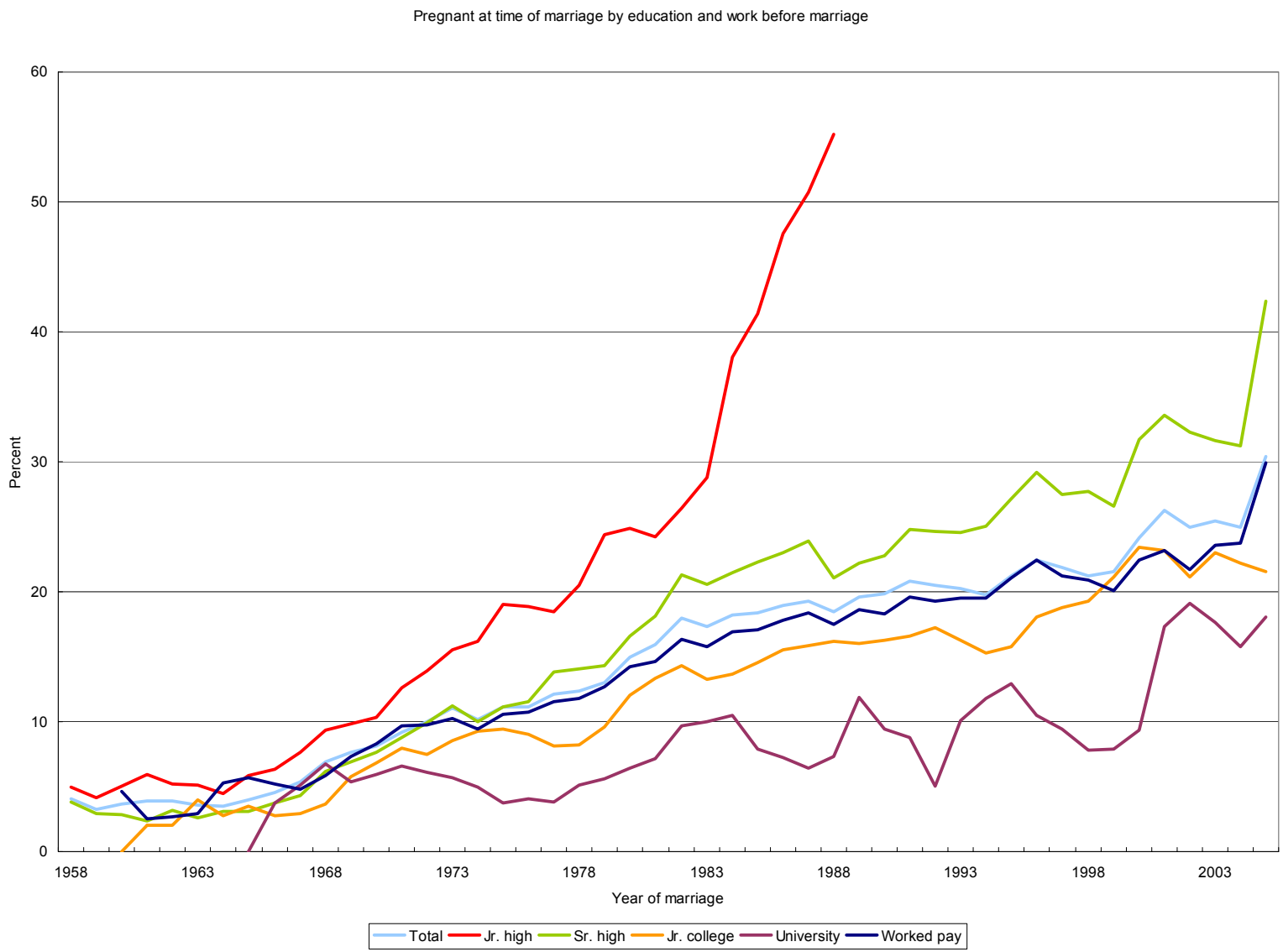
11-Percent of marriages that are arranged



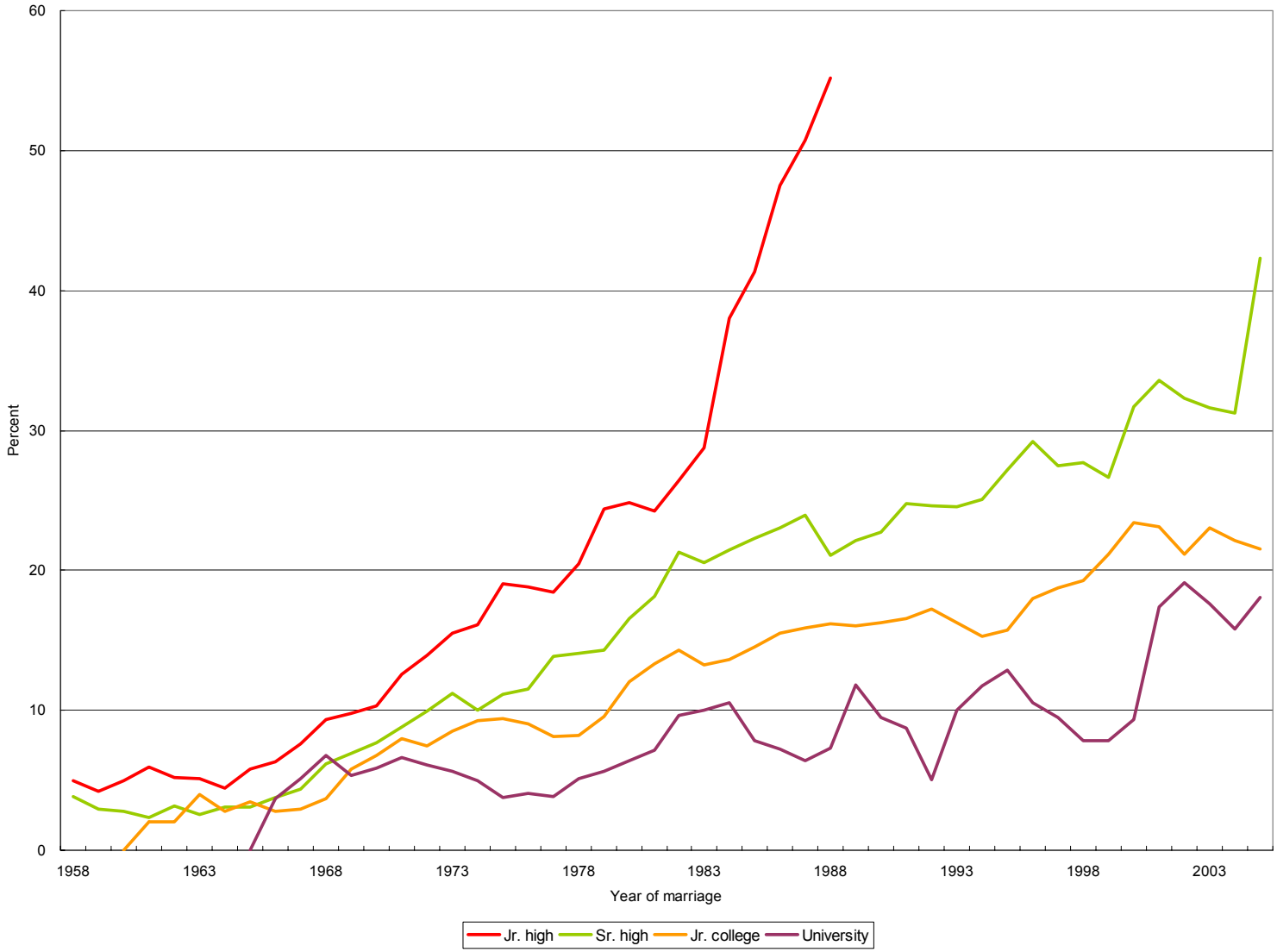
12-Coresided at time of marriage by whether pregnant at time of marriage



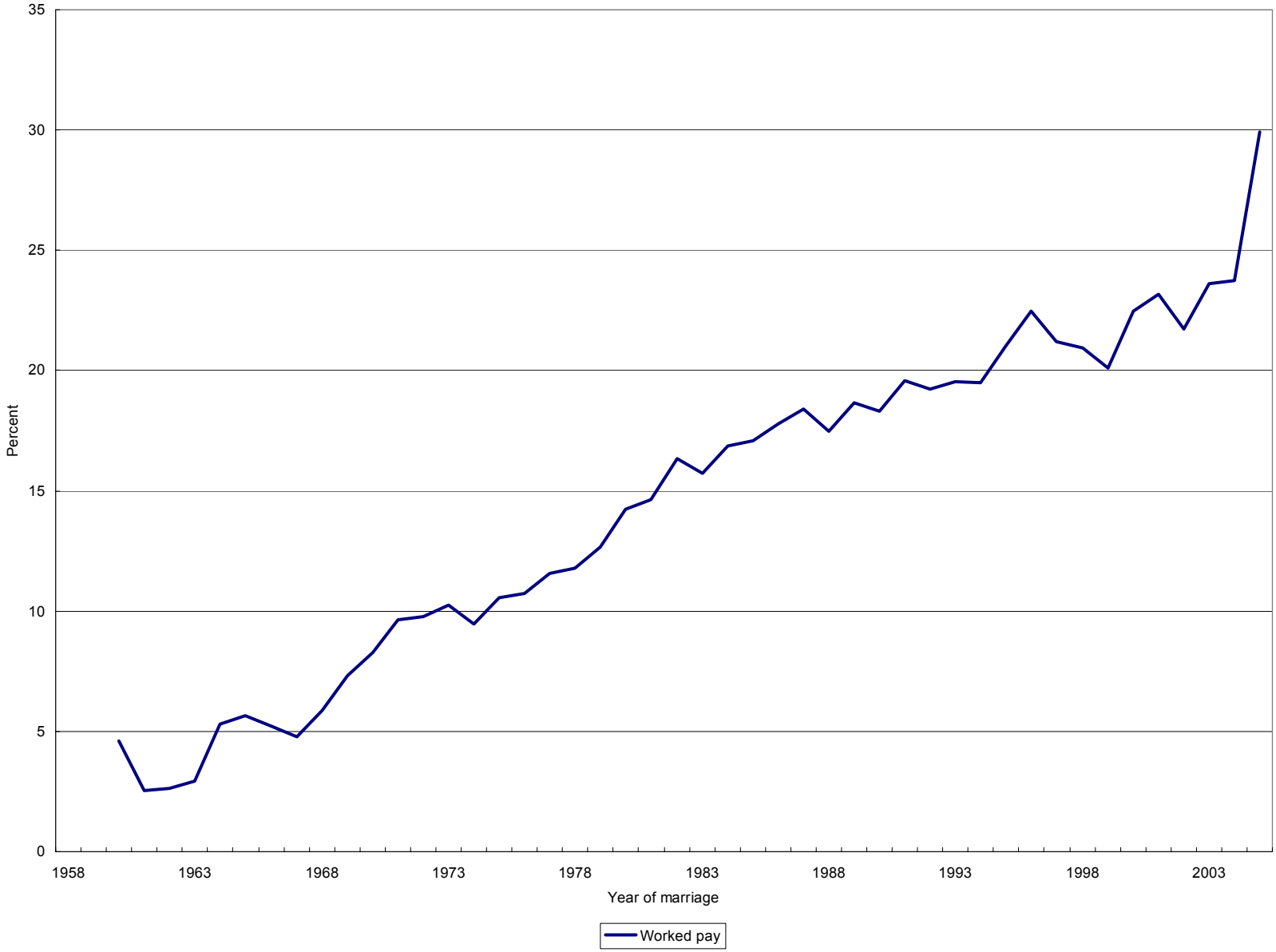
13-Pregnant at time of marriage



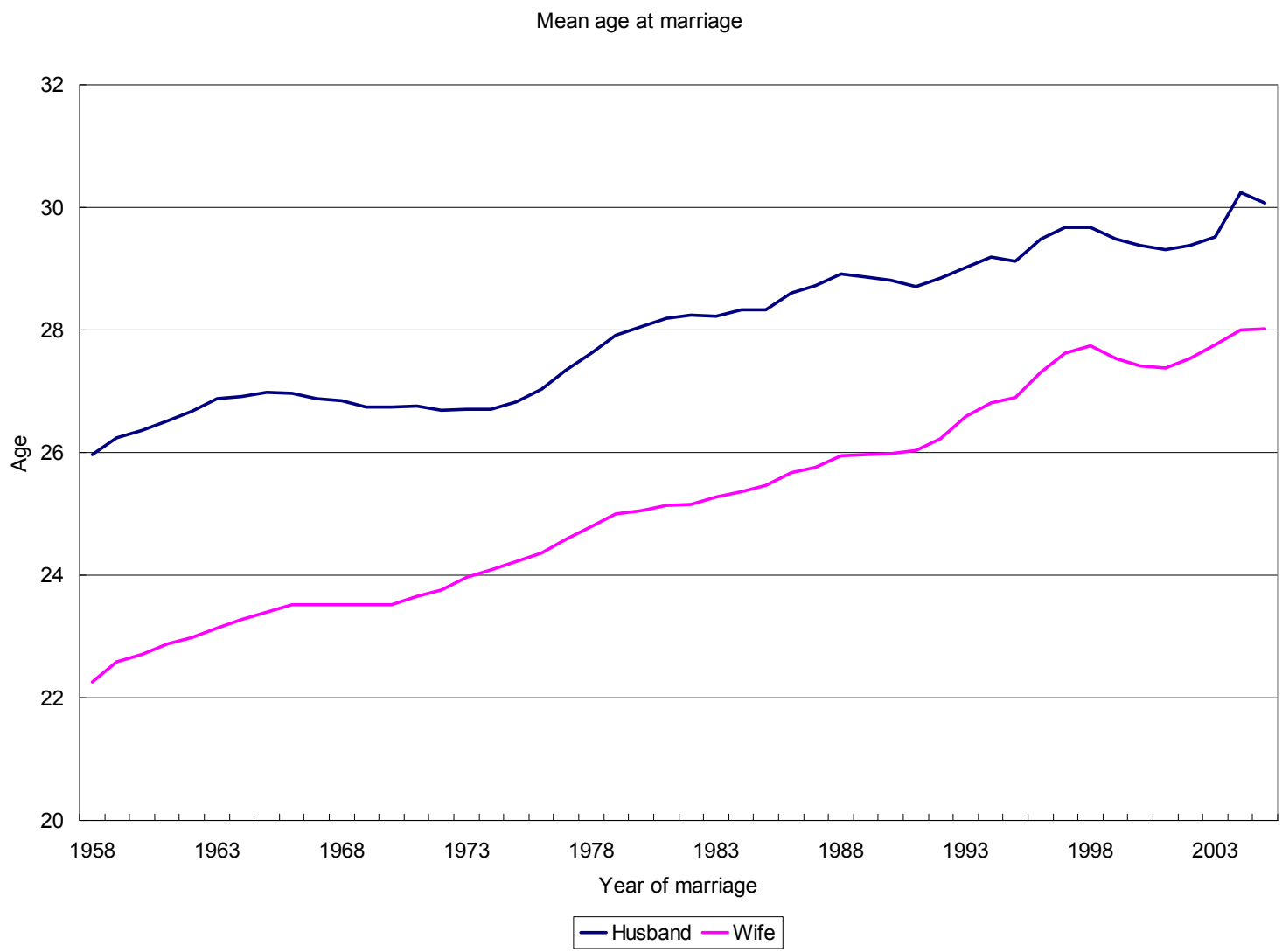
14-Pregnant at time of marriage (percent that shotgun marriages are of total marriages) by education



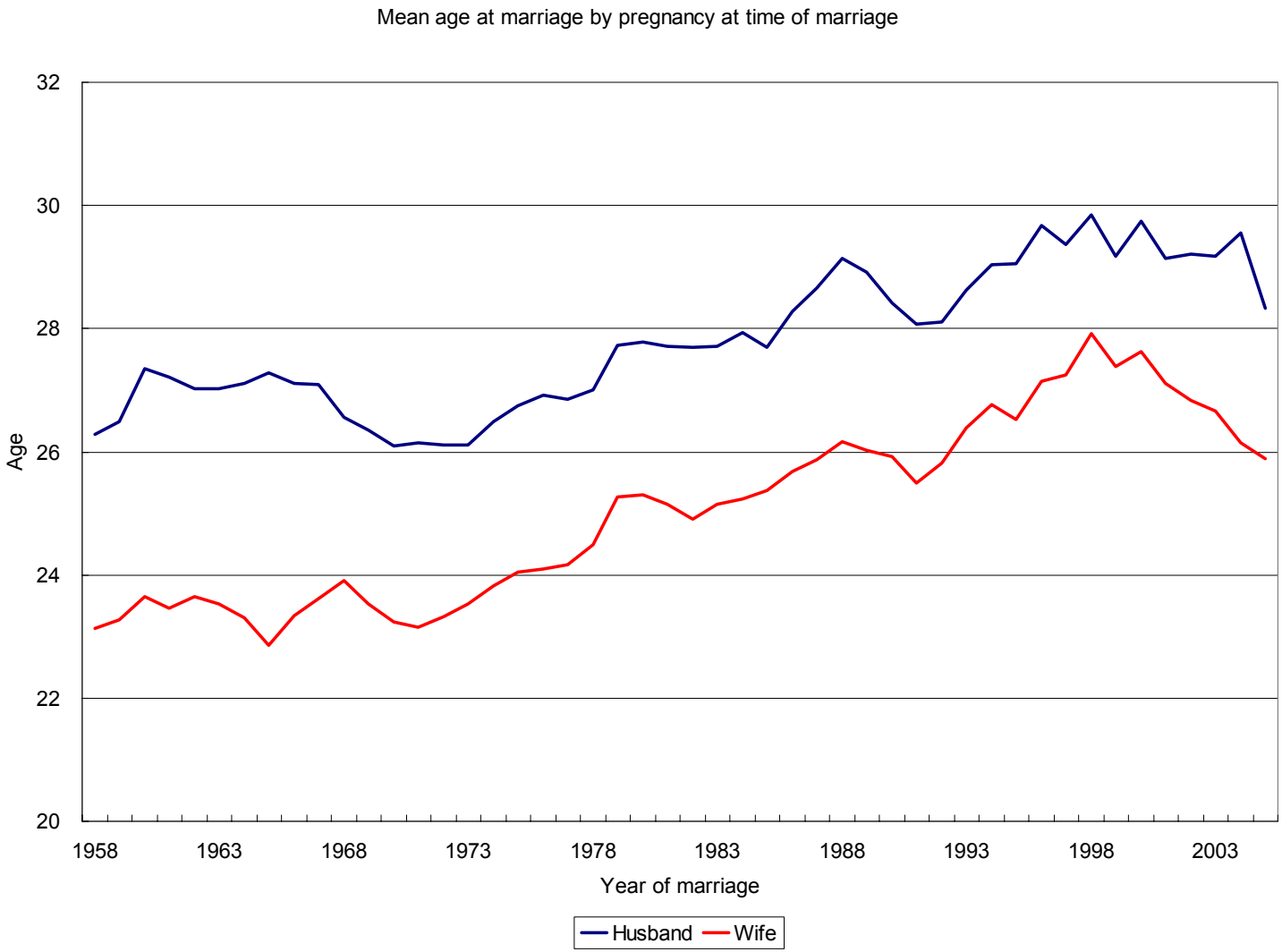
15-Pregnant at time of marriage by whether worked for pay before marriage



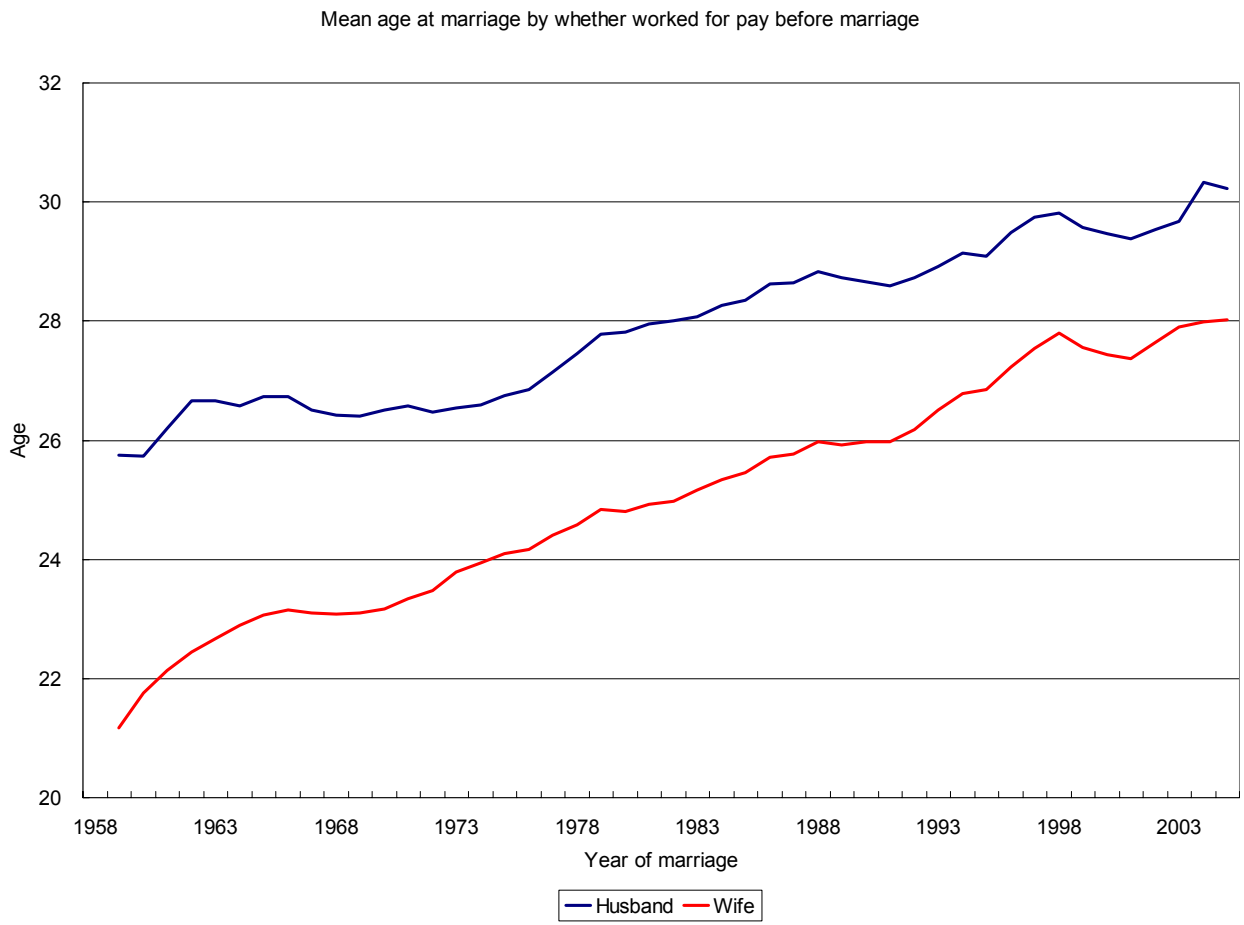
16-Trend in mean age at marriage of husbands and wives



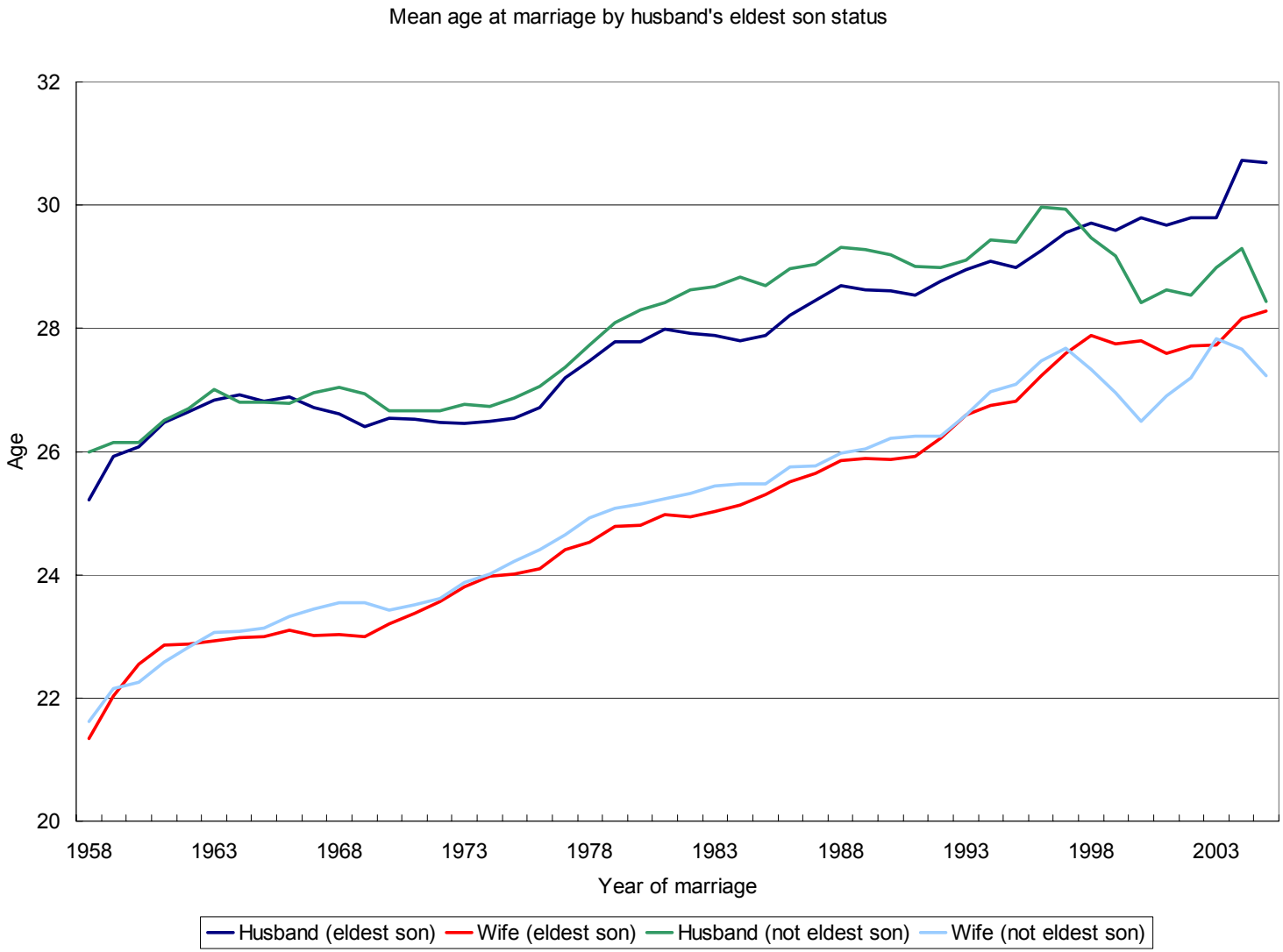
17-Trend in mean age at marriage for wives by pregnancy status at time of marriage



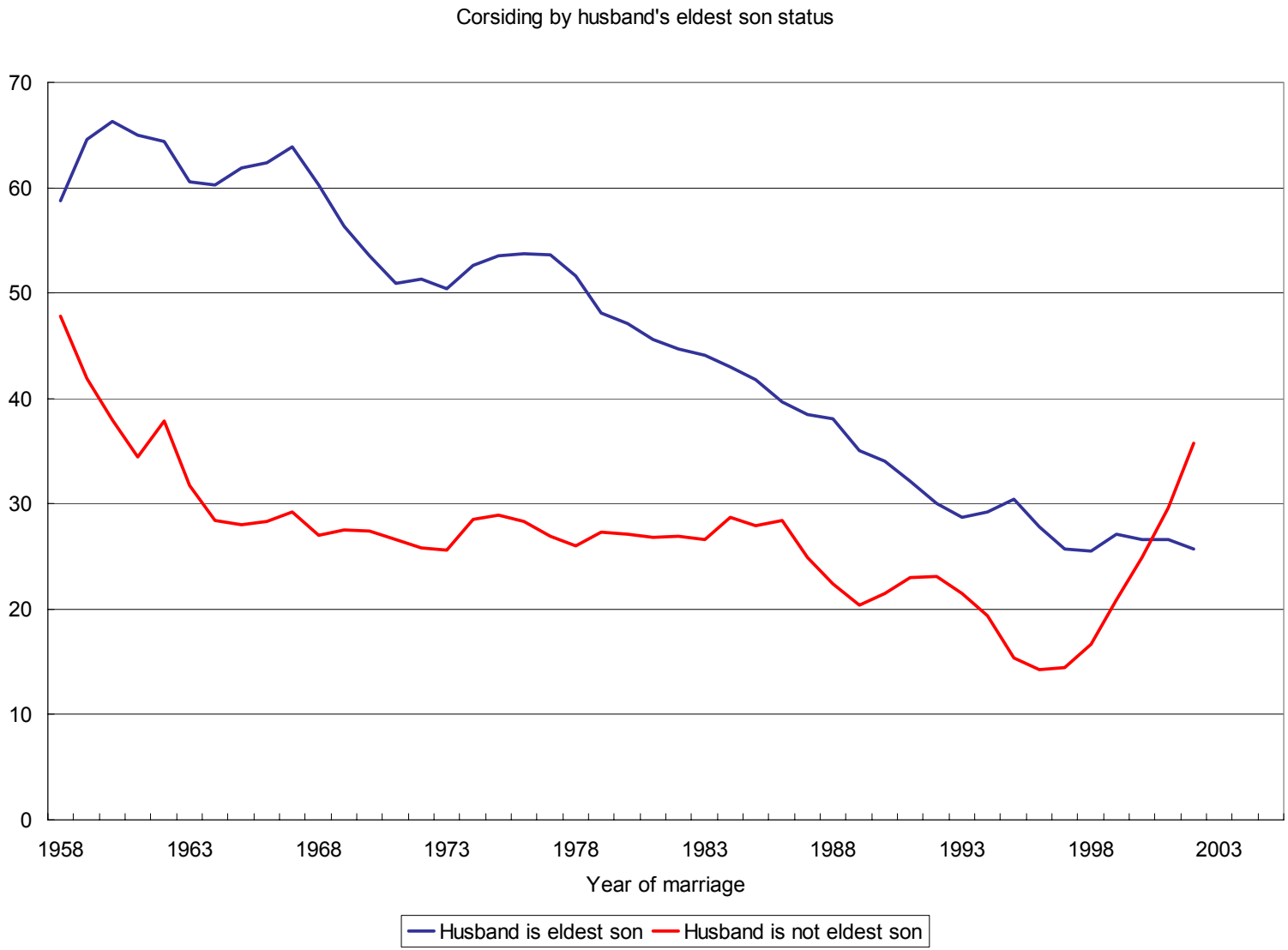
18-Trend in mean age at marriage of wives by whether worked for pay before marriage



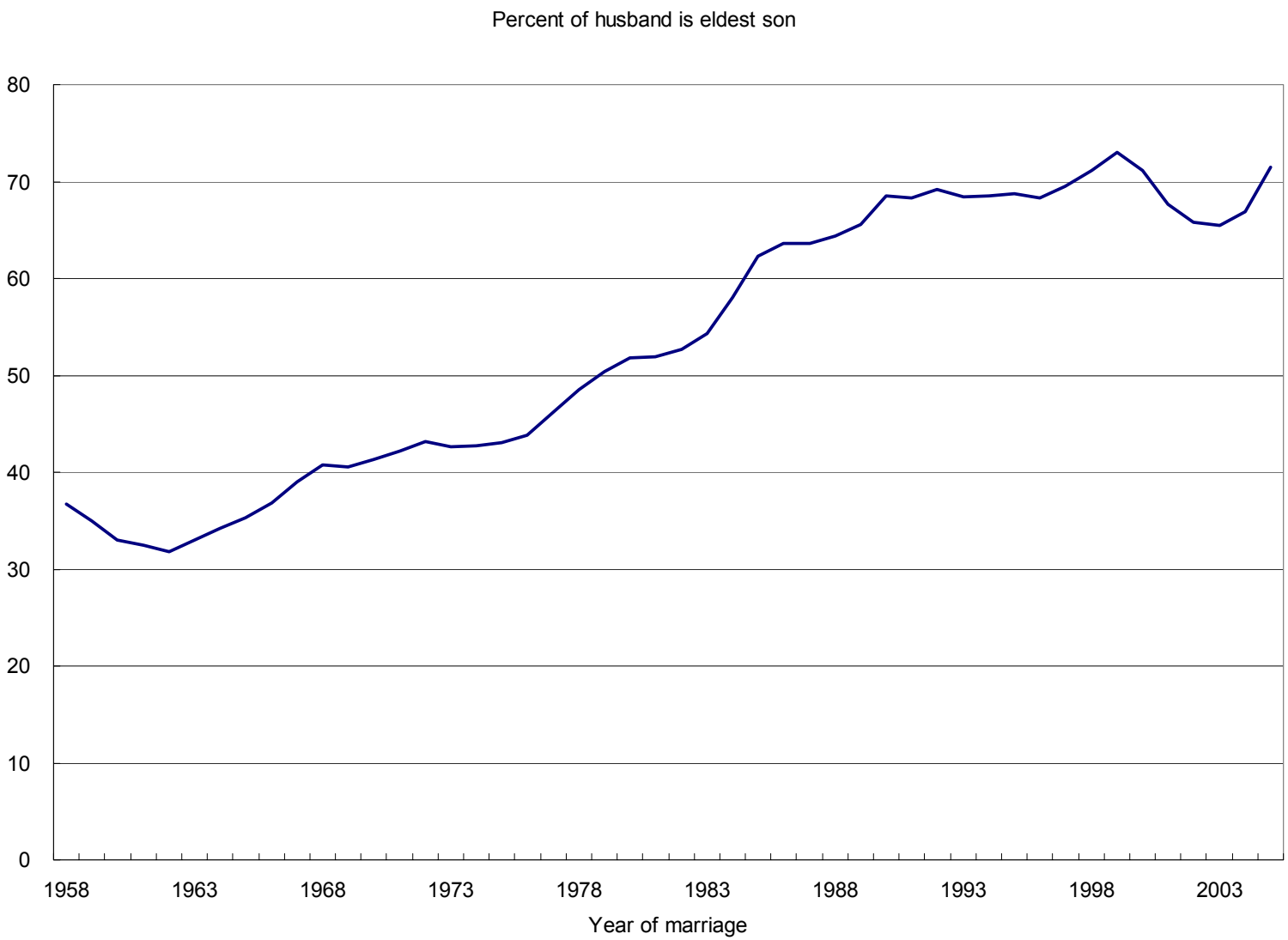
19-Trend in mean age at marriage of wives by whether husband is eldest son (eldest sons may marry later because many women do not want to marry an eldest son)



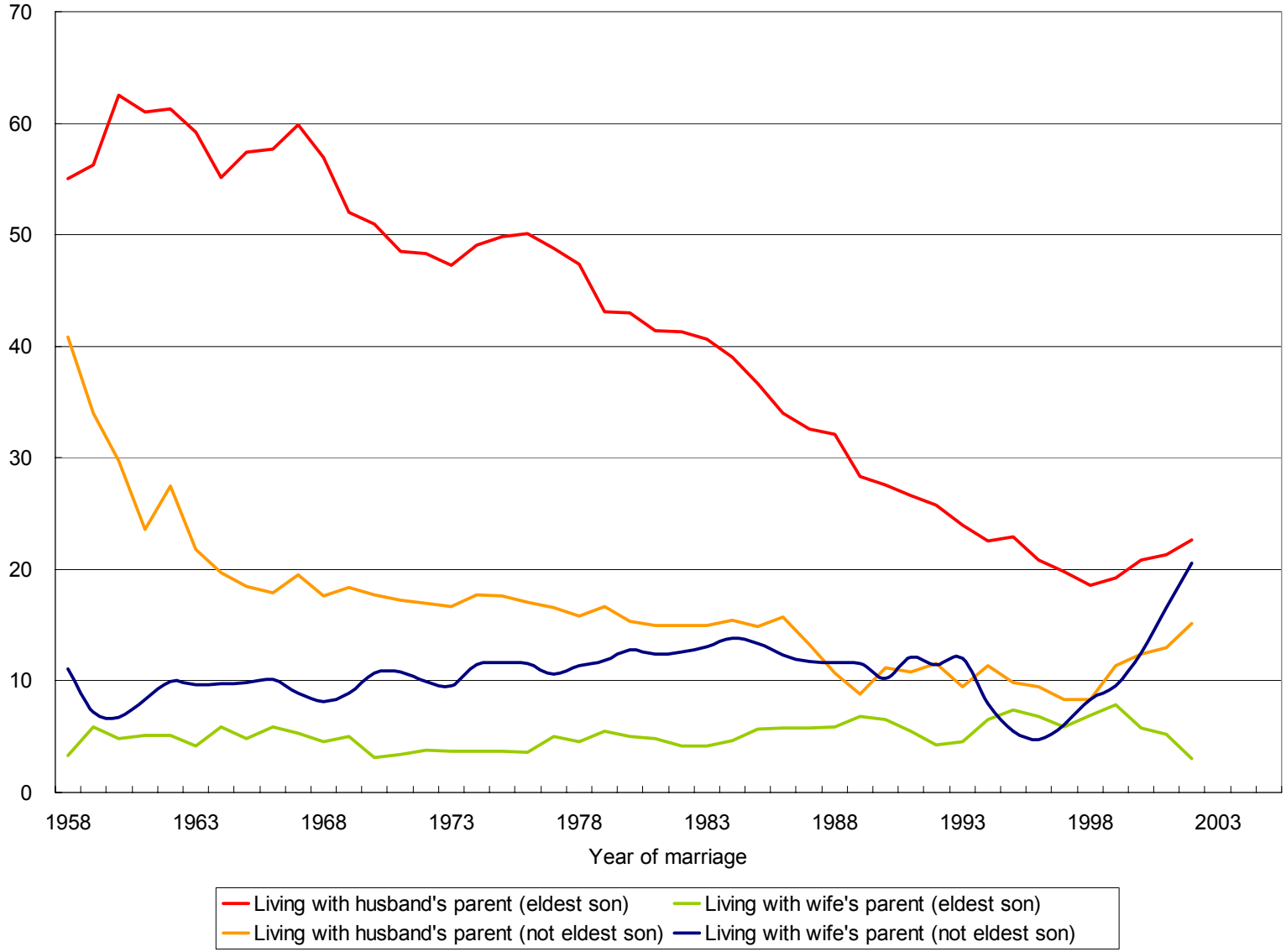
20-Percent coresiding by husband's "eldest son" status (eldest son, younger son)



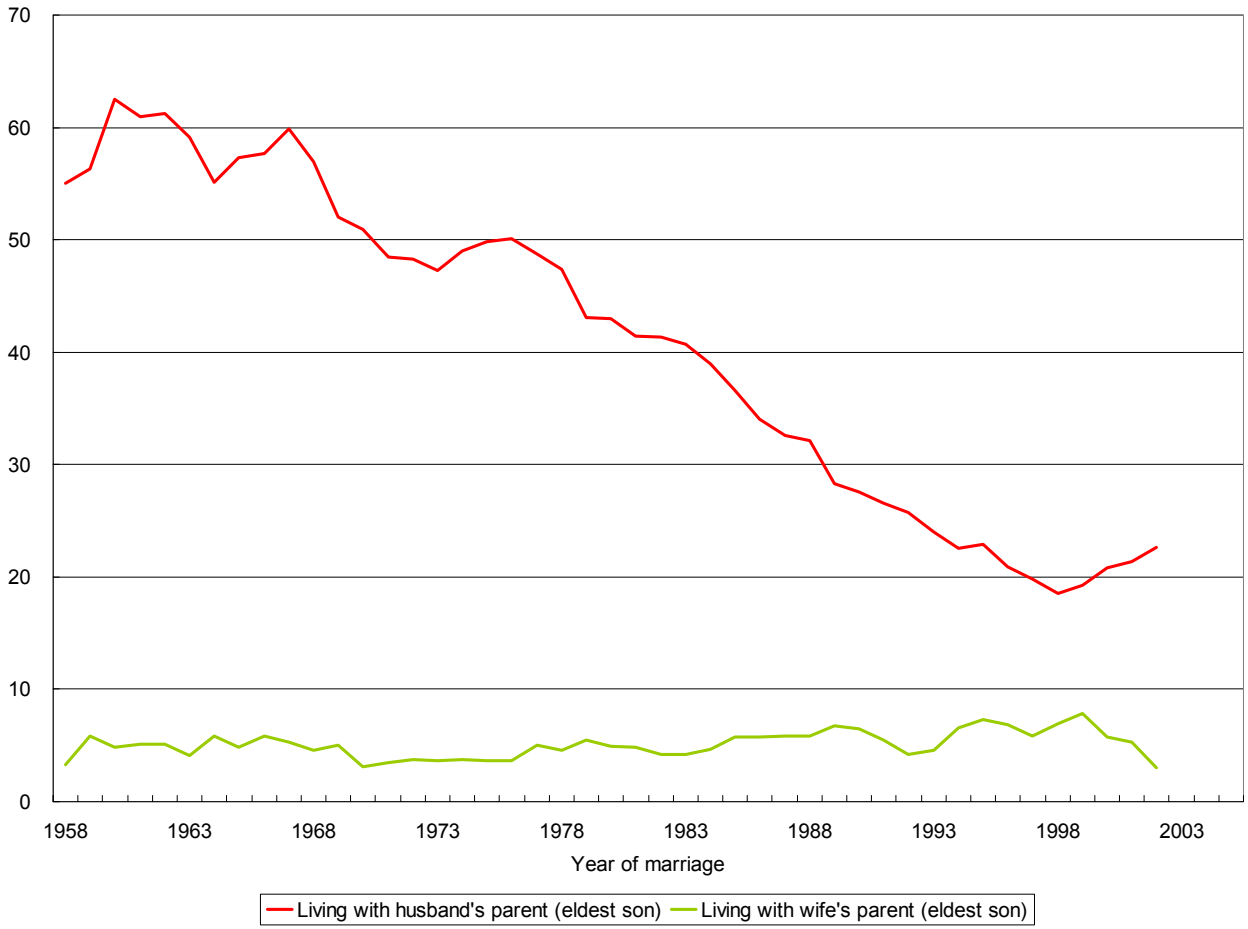
21-Percent of husbands who are eldest sons



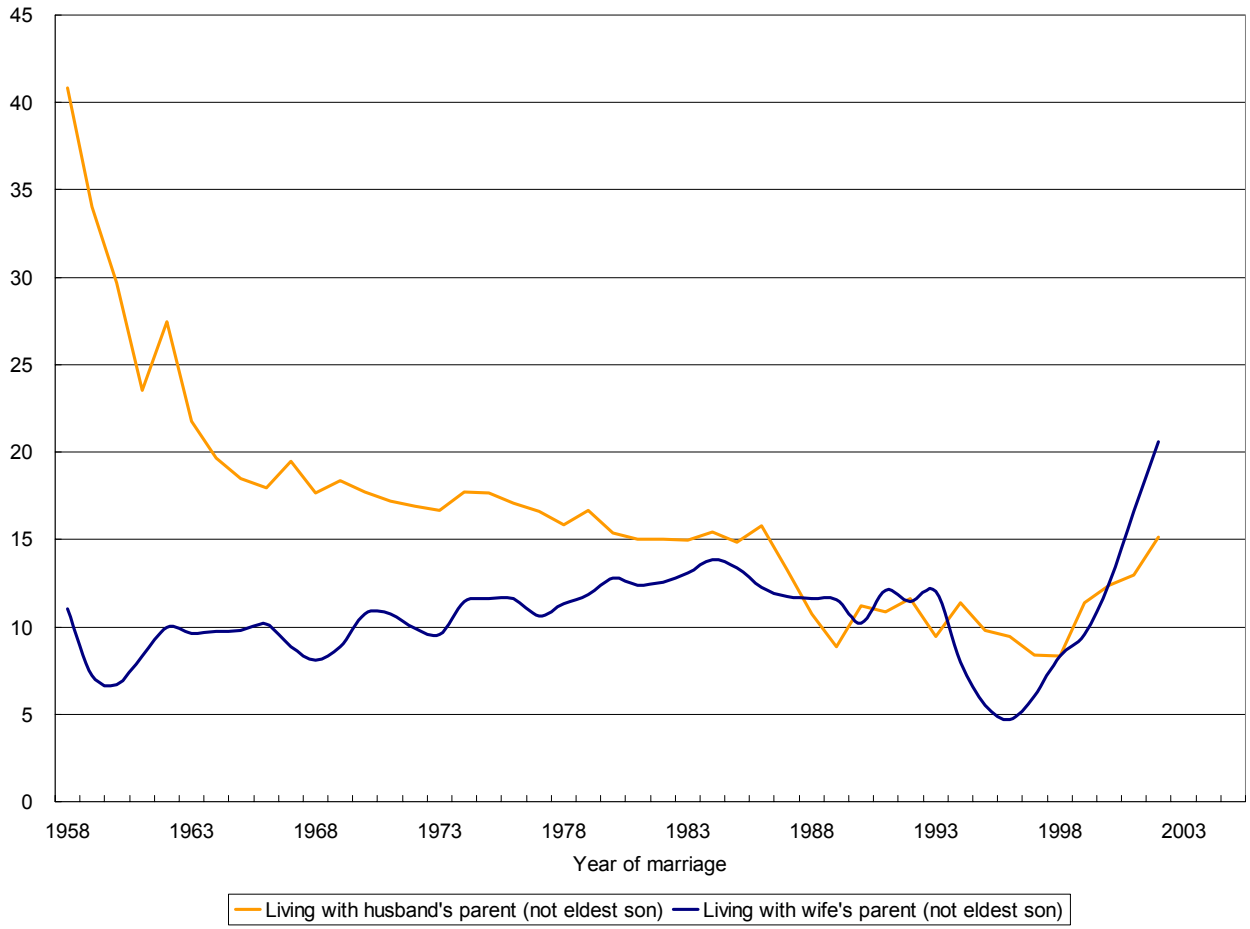
22-Among couples in which husband's eldest son, percent coresiding with husband's parents and percent coresiding with wife's parents (include a total curve, too)



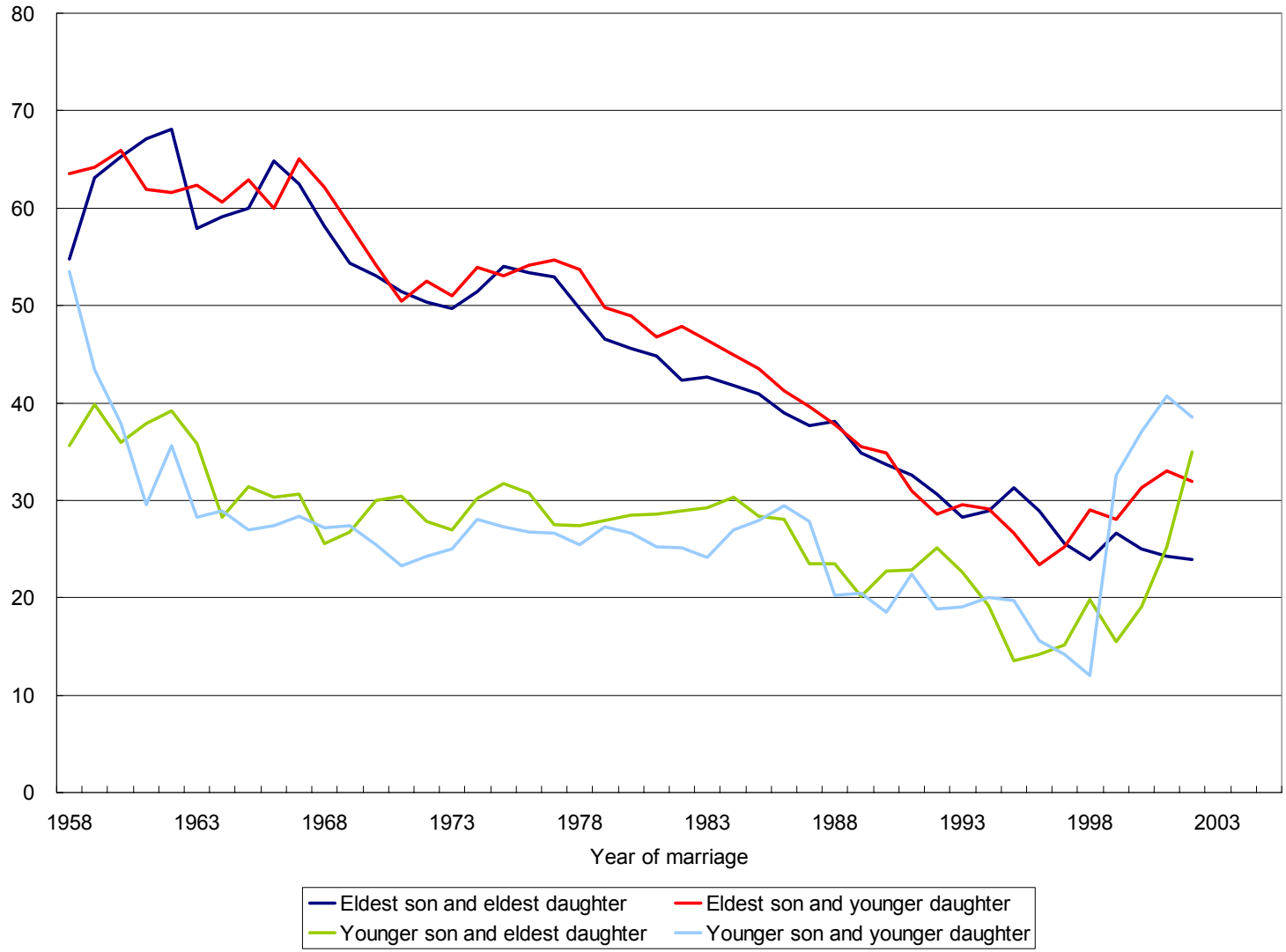
22-Among couples in which husband is eldest son, percent coresiding with husband's parents and percent coresiding with wife's parents (include a total curve, too)



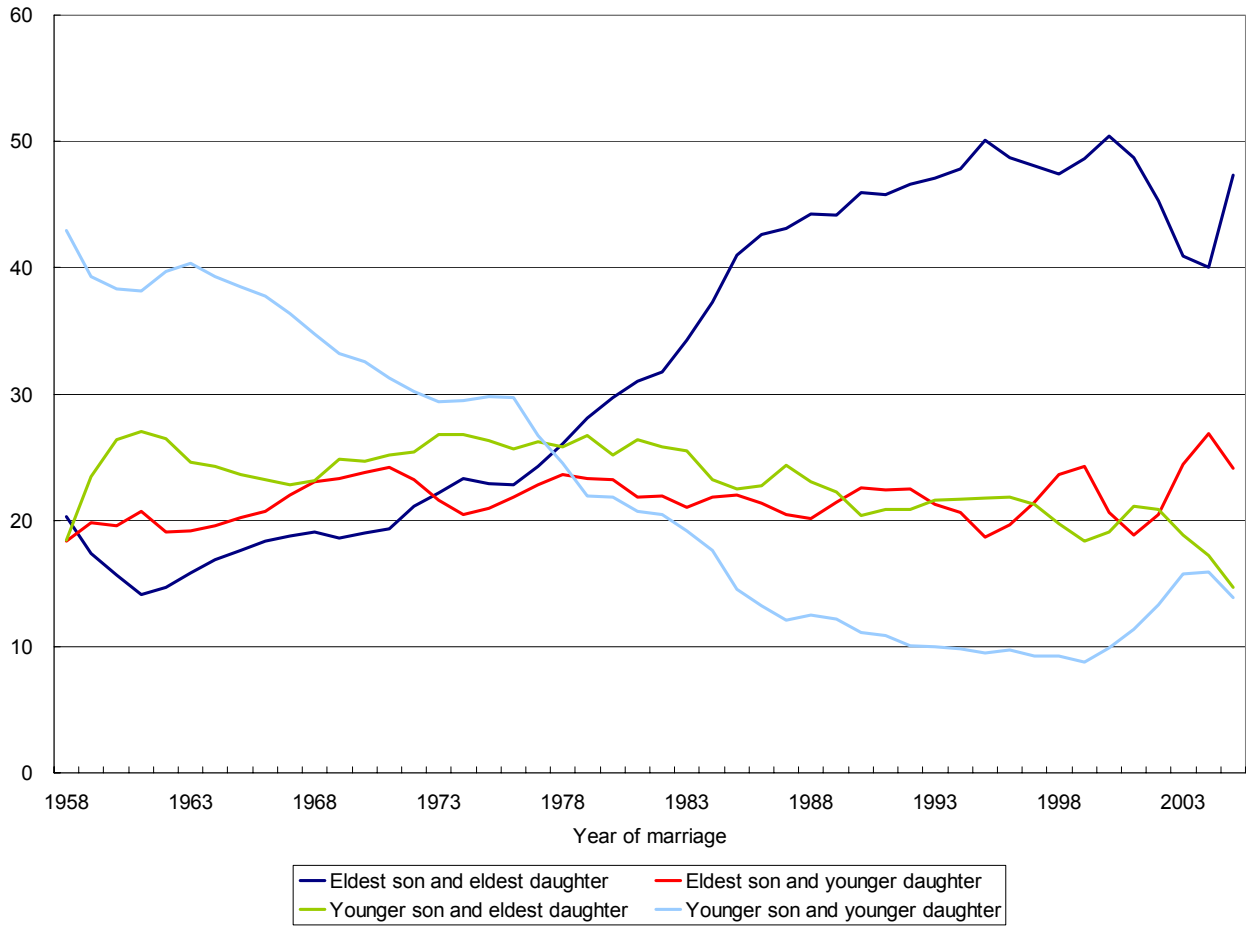
23-Among couples in which husband is a younger son, percent coresiding with husband's parents and percent coresiding with wife's parents (include a total curve, too)



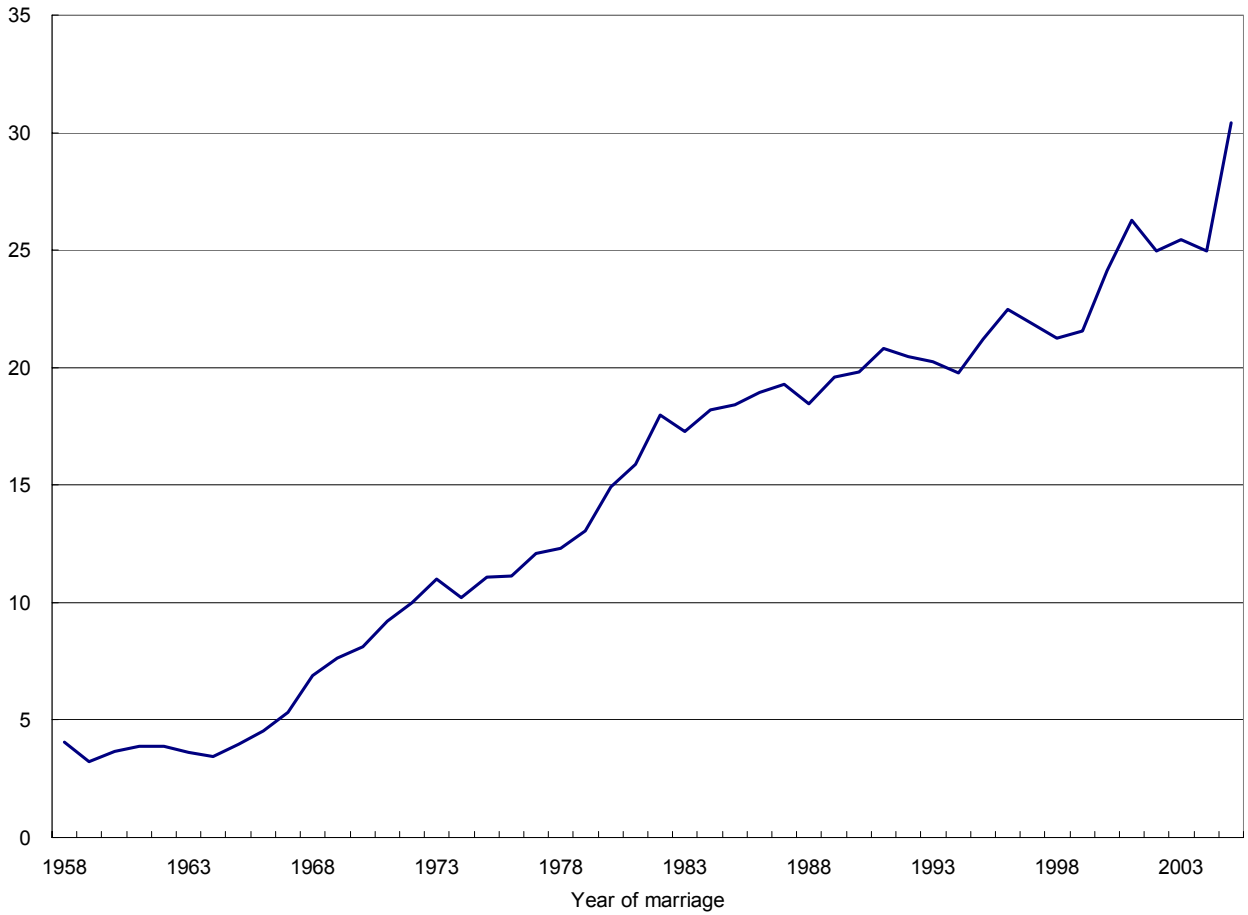
24-Percent coresiding by couple type: Eldest son and eldest daughter, Eldest son and younger daughter, Younger son and eldest daughter, Younger son and younger daughter



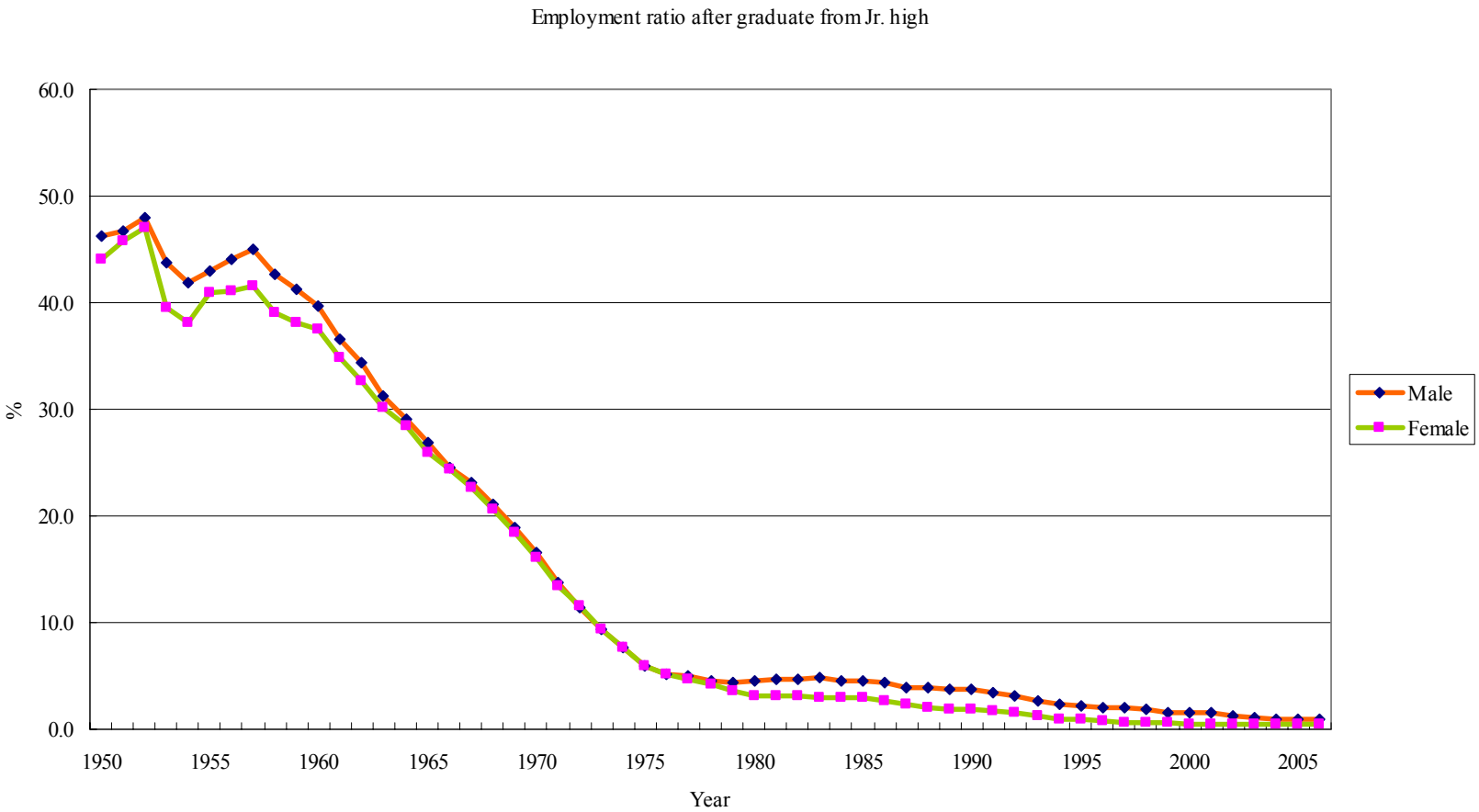
25-Percent of couples in each of the above four categories (area graph – already done – categories that increase after 1998 are: Younger son and eldest daughter, Younger son and younger daughter.



26-Percent that shotgun marriages

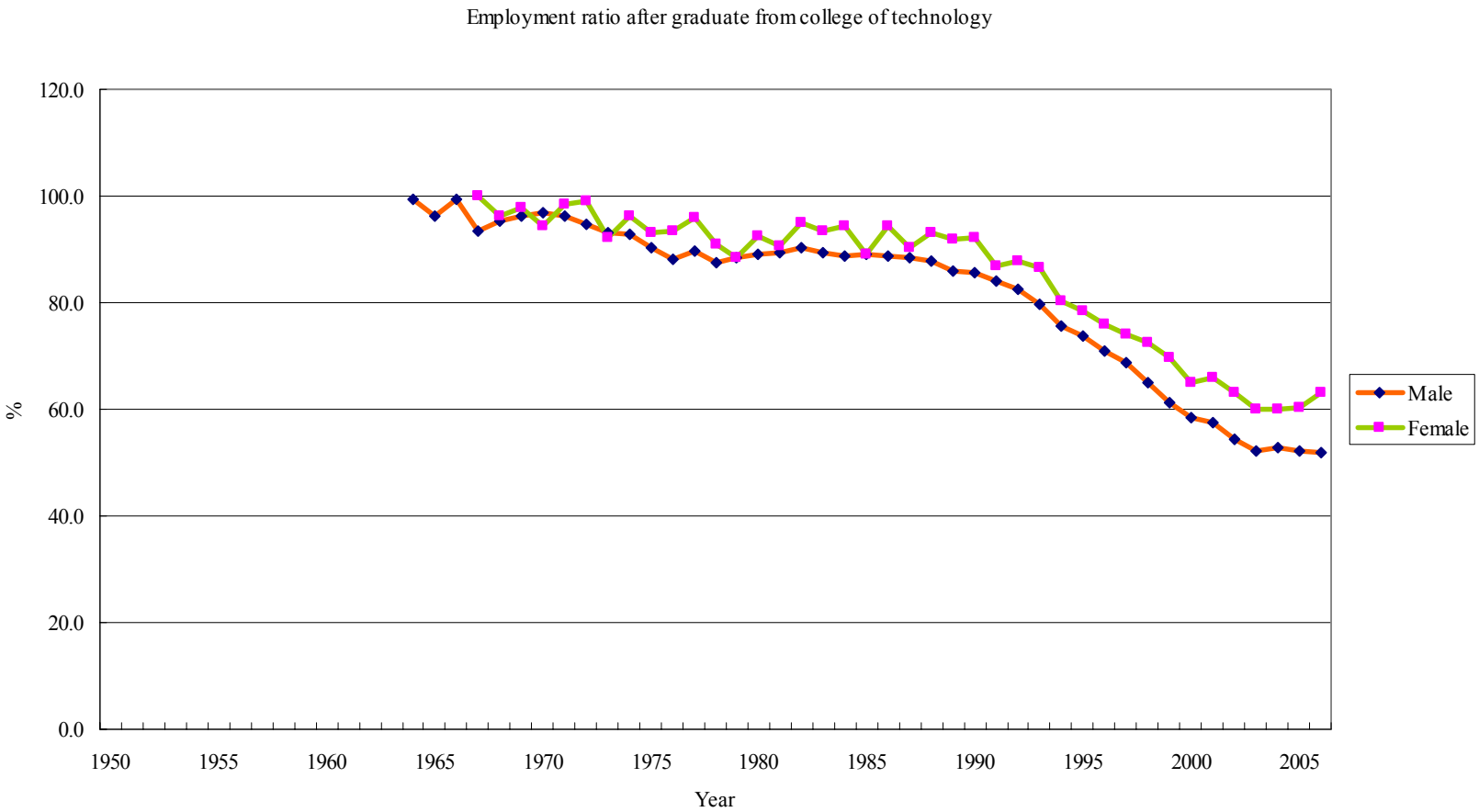


-27-1 Employment ratio after graduate from Jr. high

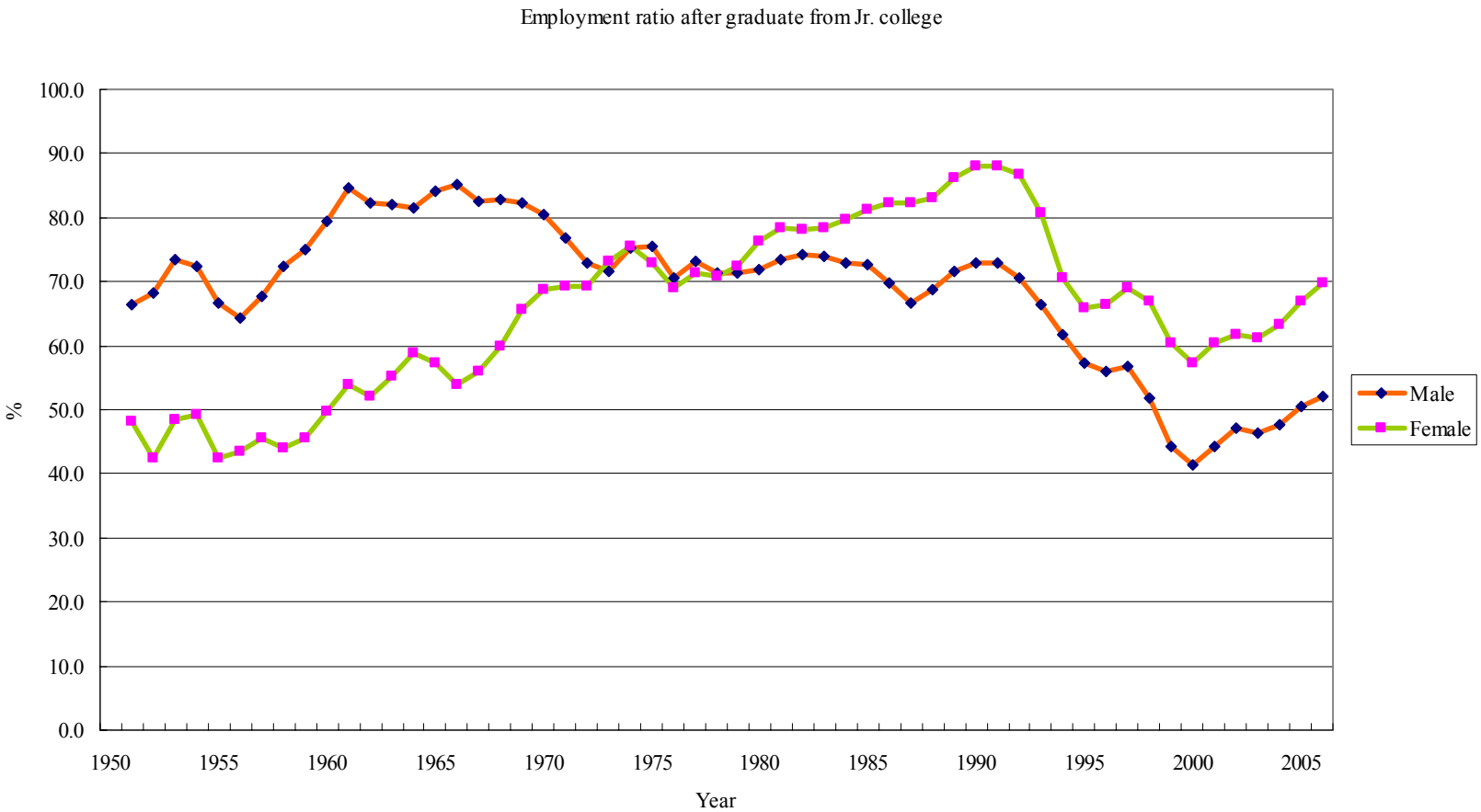


-27-2 Employment ratio after graduate from Sr. high

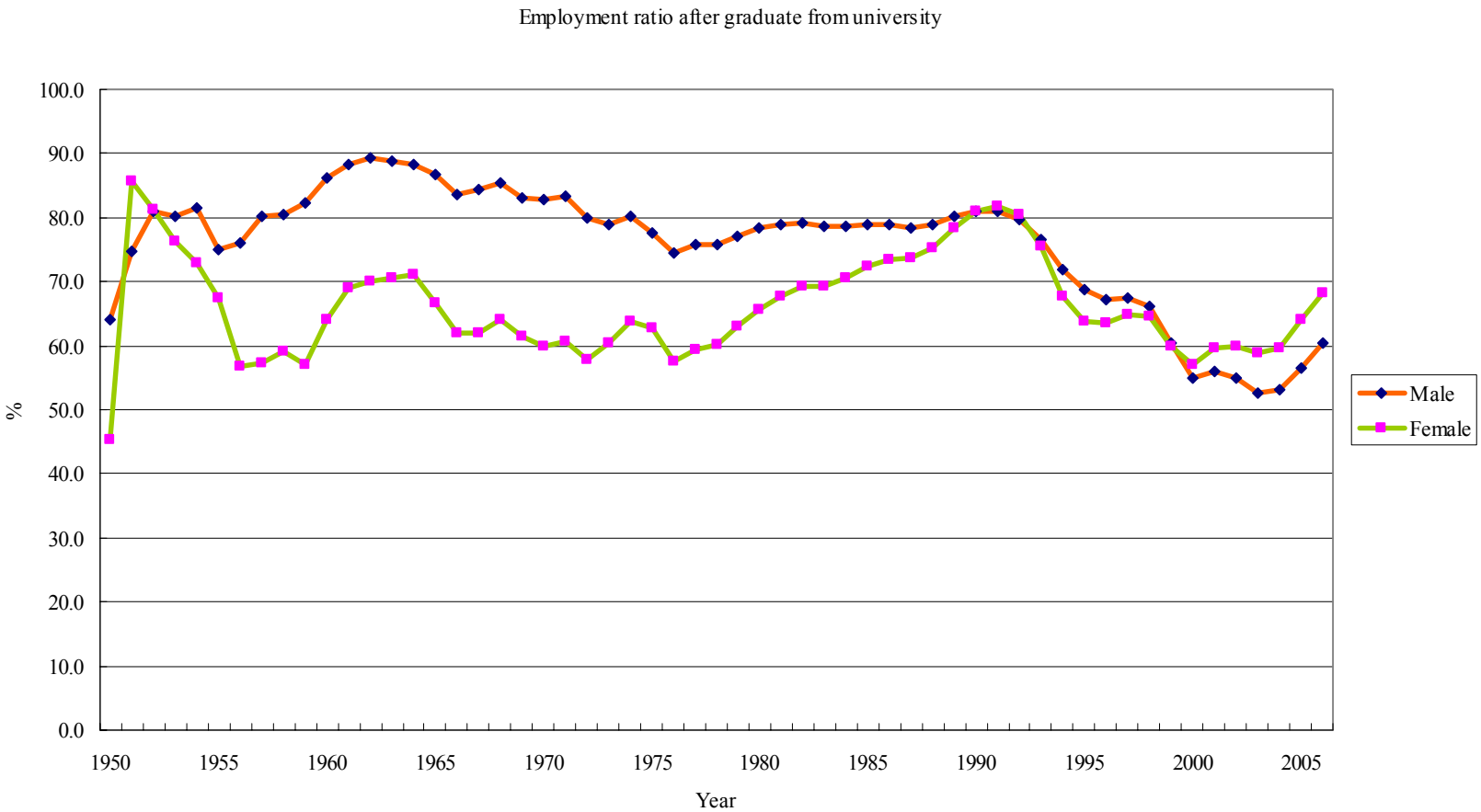
-27-3 Employment ratio after graduate from college of technology



-27-4 Employment ratio after graduate from Jr. college



-27-5 Employment ratio after graduate from University



-29 Age-specific proportions currently married (at time of survey) for full-time, part-time, and not working

28-Recent trend among young people – increasingly more favorable to coresidence with parents.