

# American and Japanese University Students' Views of Having Children

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# Outline

- Significance of Study
- Research Question
- Research Background
  - Japanese birthrate versus American birthrate
  - Potential Influencing Factors on Childbirth
  - Government's influence on family starting decisions
- Research Method
- Research Findings
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Acknowledgements

# Significance of Study

- While I lived in Japan I was able to work and interact with many families where I was able to see what relationships they had.
- Was very surprised when I entered college after coming home and found the birth rates in Japan and America are dropping
- Ultimately want to know why drop exists by researching modern views of having children among students.

# Research Questions

1. What are views on having children among university students?
2. What outside influences affect opinions of children having among Japanese and American university students?

# Background Research

- a) Japanese Vs. American Birth Rates
- b) Potential Influencing Factors on Childbirth
- c) Government's Influence on Family Starting Decisions

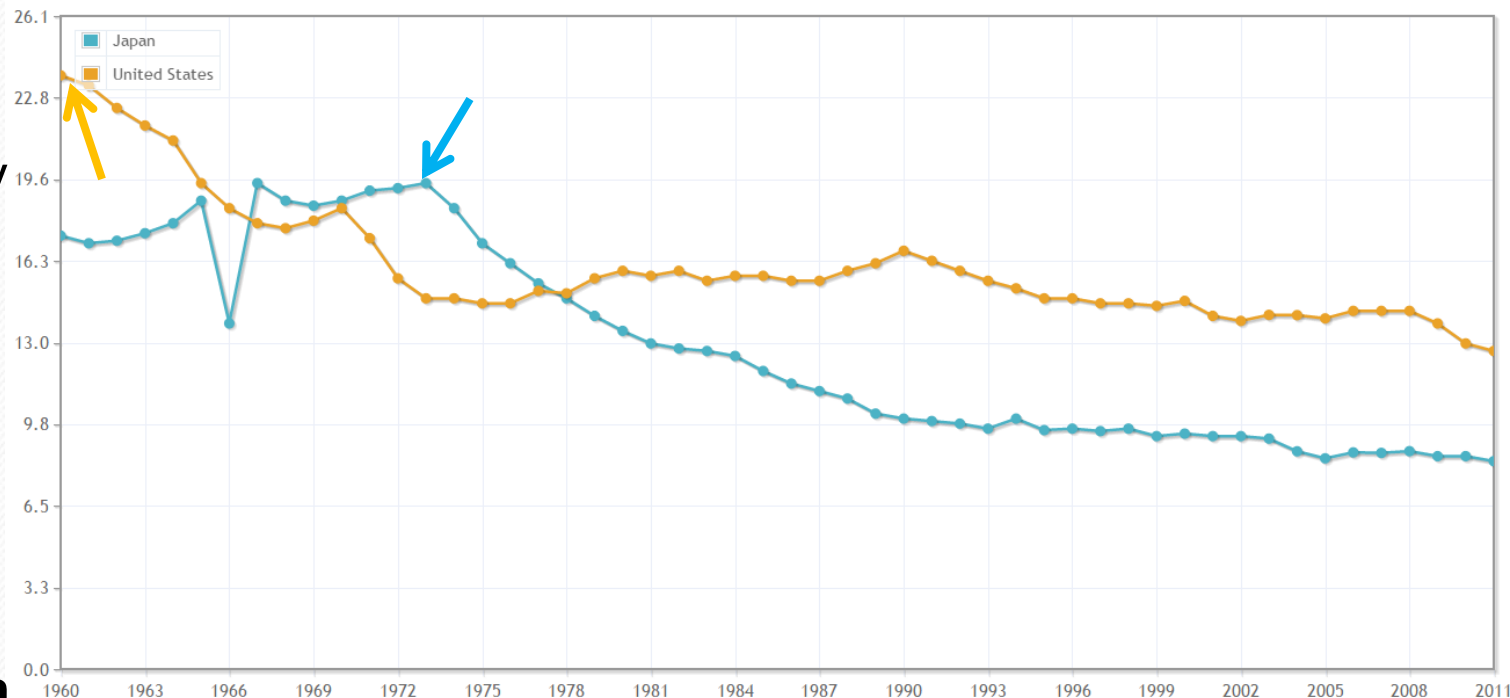
# Japanese versus American Birthrate

## Crude Birth rate for Japan and America

Crude birth rate indicates the number of live births occurring during the year, per 1,000 population estimated at midyear.

Japanese crude birth rate is declining steadily from 1973s 19.6 thousand America is also declining back from the 60s

- Japan
- America



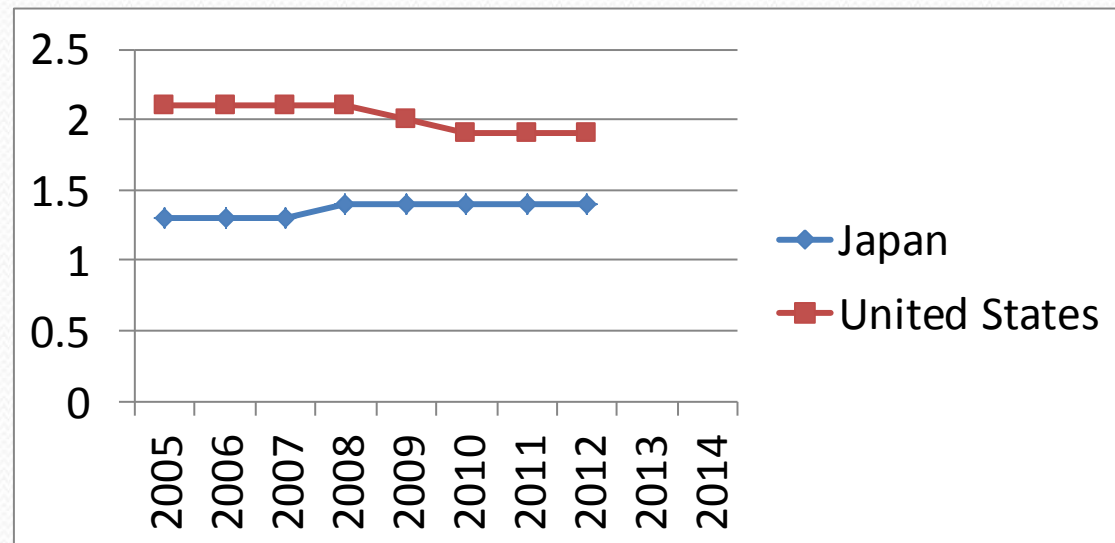
# Japanese versus American Birthrate

## Fertility Rate, Total (Births per Woman)

Countries generally need a birth rate of 2.1 children per women to maintain a stable population (Hales, 2014)

### Recent Fertility Rate

- U.S. falling under 2.1 in 2008
- Japan's long time being under 2.1 for the over the past ten years



# Potential Influencing Factors on Childbirth: Employment

- The M shaped trajectory:
  - Japanese women show high rates of employment prior to child rearing, deep dip during childrearing years, and a rise when the children enter school (mostly lower wage and part time)

**Employed Mothers:** (percentages date to 2007)

Japan	United States
22% employed w/ preschool age children	60% employed w/ preschool age children
52% employed w/ adolescents	59% employed w/ adolescents

Second “hump” is “not only lower, but also qualitatively inferior to the first.”

(Holloway, 2010, p. 171)



# Potential Influencing Factors on Childbirth: Employment

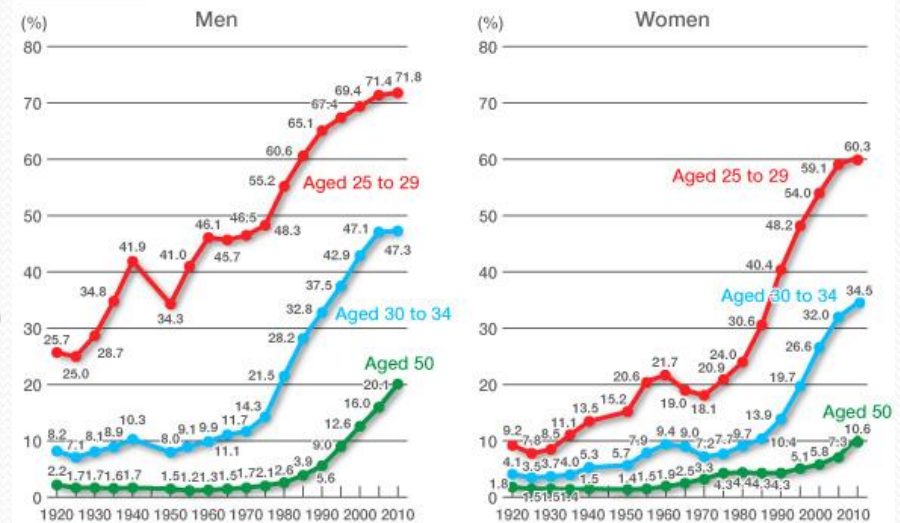
- Still Strong view of men being the “breadwinners” and women being the “homemakers” (Holloway, 2010)
  - This delays marriage into mid to late 30s (Rosenberger, 2013)
- Married women being told that they aren’t supposed to get pregnant for a certain amount of time
  - Pregnancy leads to quitting because of discomfort in the workplace (Holloway, 2010)

# Potential Influencing Factors on Childbirth: Decrease In Coupling

- In addition to Married couples having fewer children there is also a rise of Japanese who never get married or get married late.
- Also decrease in formation of steady boyfriend or girlfriend
  - The percentage of those with a lover has been under 40% since 1990, and it dropped to 25% among males and 35% among females in 2010
- Many young Japanese still firmly endorse the opinion that love should lead to marriage and then to a family.

(Yamada, 2012)

Figure 1 Unmarried Rates by Age



Source: Population statistics of Japan 2011, the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

# Government Influence On Family Starting Decisions

## Japan

- 2009 proposition to offer about \$3,300 a year to new parents until child is 15
  - Other initiatives include more state-supported day care, tuition waivers and other efforts designed to make parenthood more appealing.
  - Money goes only so far (Wakabayashi, 2009)

## America

- “The government cannot persuade Americans to have children they do *not* want, but it can help them to have the children they *do* want,”  
(Hales, 2014)
  - Larger tax breaks per child and exempting parents from paying into Social Security while they have children under 18.

# Research Method

- Total of 47 university students
  - 24 Japanese University Students
    - 15 females, 9 males
    - Studying at various Japanese universities
  - 23 American University Students
    - 9 females, 14 males
- Online Survey (Google Forms)
  - [Japanese Survey](#)
  - [English Survey](#)

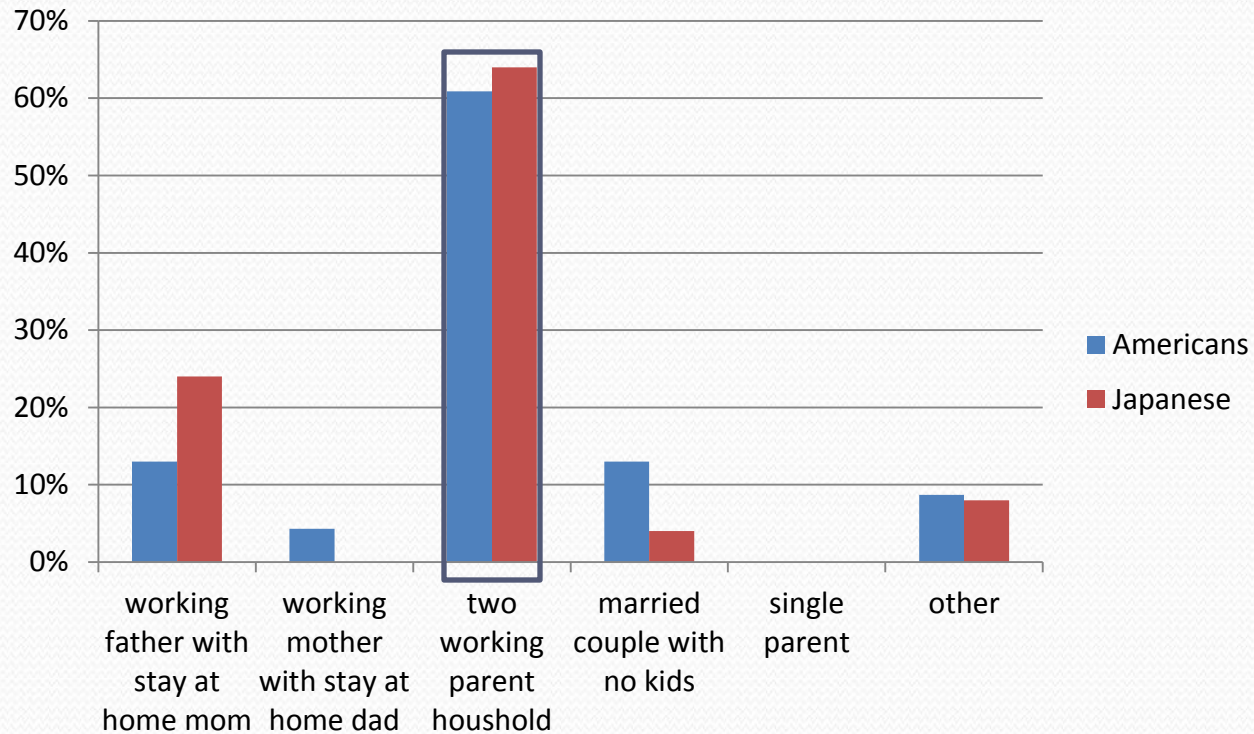
# Survey Results

Research Question 1:

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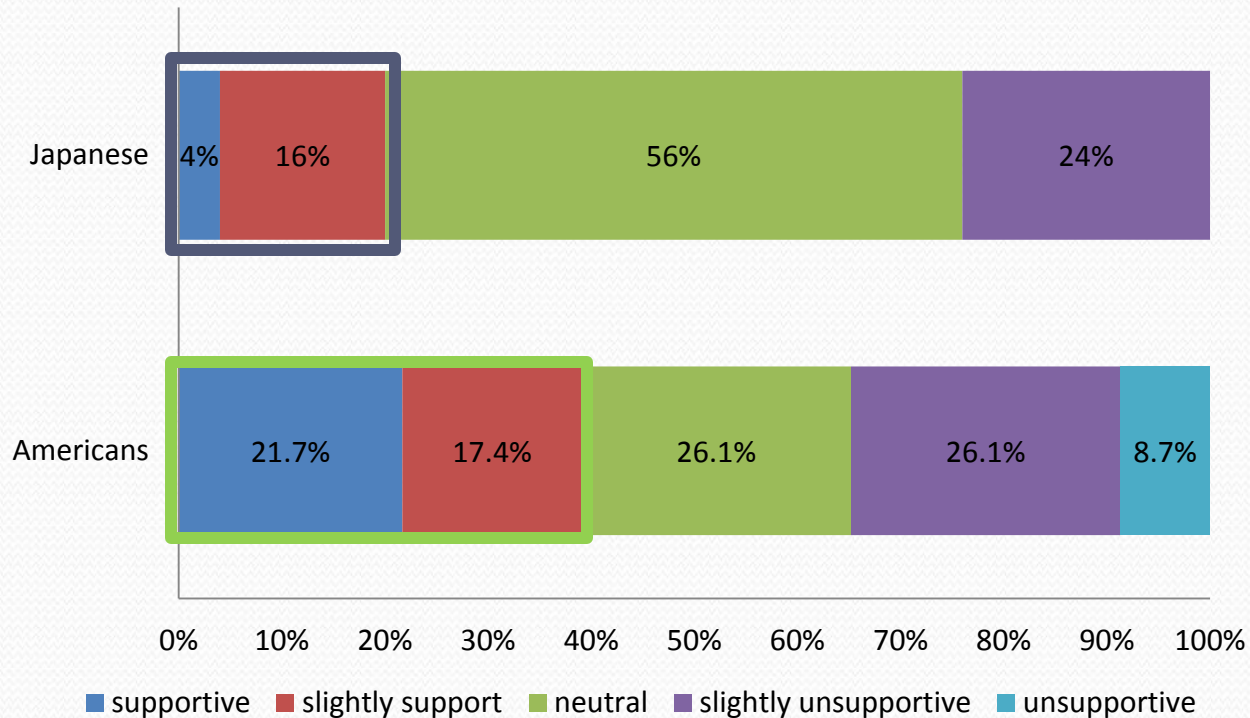
What are views on having children  
among university students?

# Ideal Family



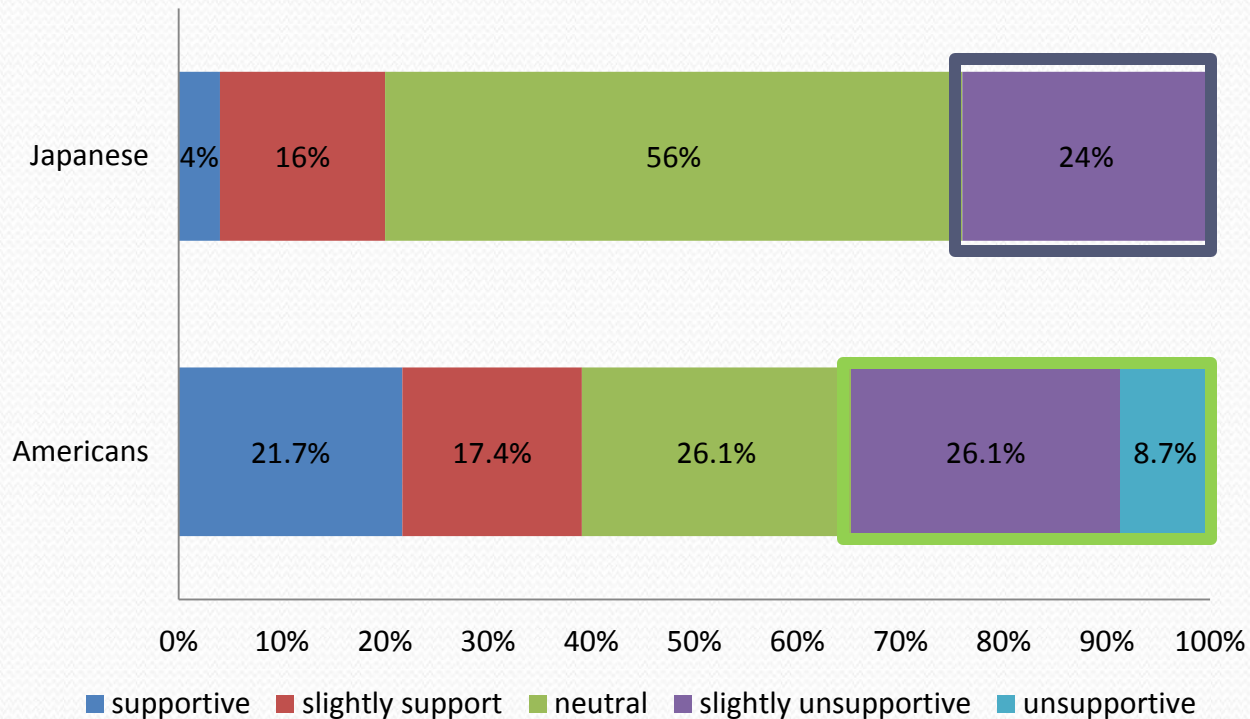
Both Americans and Japanese students view the ideal family as having both parents working

# Views on young parents



A rather low percentage of respondents thought well of young parents, with 20% Japanese and about 40% Americans

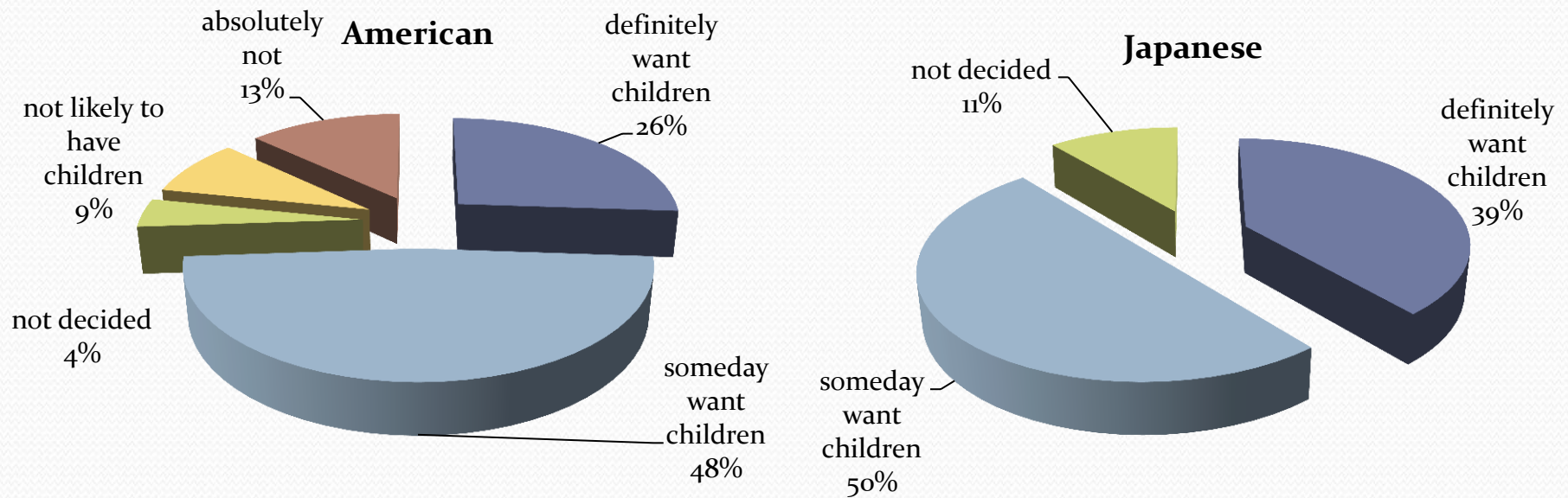
# Views on young parents



Both sides still had about 25% rate of unsupportiveness, with some Americans actually being completely unsupportive



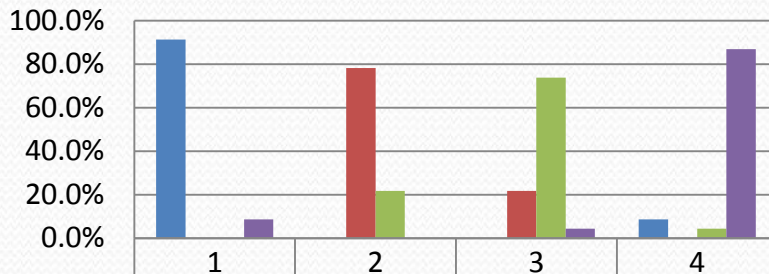
# Do university students want to have children?



89% of Japanese and 70% of American participants said they want children, but 22% of Americans said they won't have kids

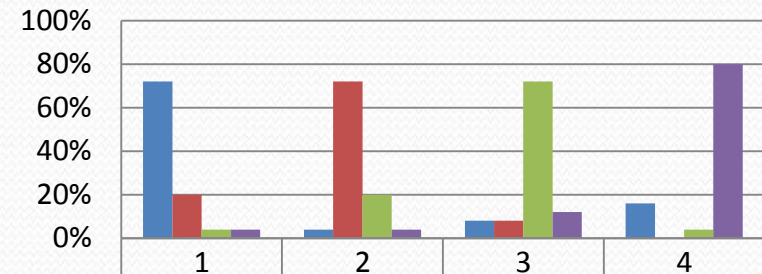
# Current Priorities

**Americans**



	1	2	3	4
school	91.3%			9%
work		78.3%	21.7%	
marriage		21.7%	73.9%	4%
having children	8.7%		4.3%	87%

**Japanese**

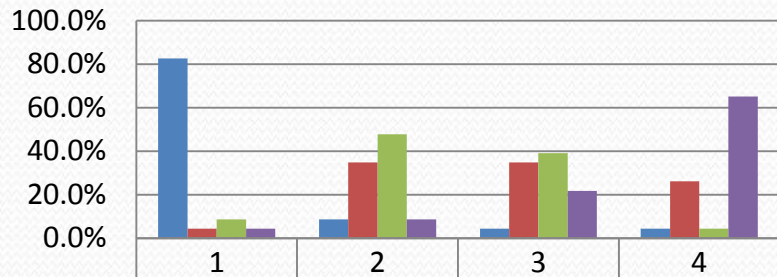


	1	2	3	4
school	72%	4%	8%	16%
work	20%	72%	8%	
marriage	4%	20%	72%	4%
having children	4%	4%	12%	80%

A vast majority of both American and Japanese students prioritized school, work, marriage, and having children in that order

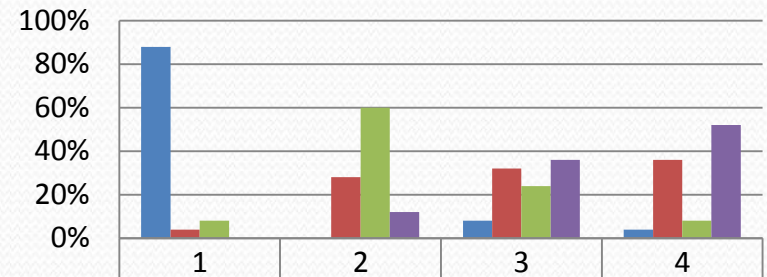
# Priorities For After Graduation

**Americans**



work	82.6%	8.7%	4.3%	4.3%
promotion	4.3%	34.8%	34.8%	26.1%
marriage	8.7%	47.8%	39.1%	4.3%
having children	4.3%	8.7%	21.7%	65.2%

**Japanese**



work	88%		8%	4%
promotion	4%	28%	32%	36%
marriage	8%	60%	24%	8%
having children		12%	36%	52%

A vast majority of respondents answered work as first priority and having children as fourth.

# Research Question 1

## Findings Summary

- Despite the old idea in Japan that men work while women are to focus on child-rearing still being present, *both* countries chose “two working parent household” as their ideal family type
- Japanese aren't all that supportive of parents in their teens to mid-twenties, but Americans were the opposite
- Despite the declining birth rate no Japanese answered with not wanting children
- Both countries view that for having a family jobs are necessary, so school or work is priority while having kids is last

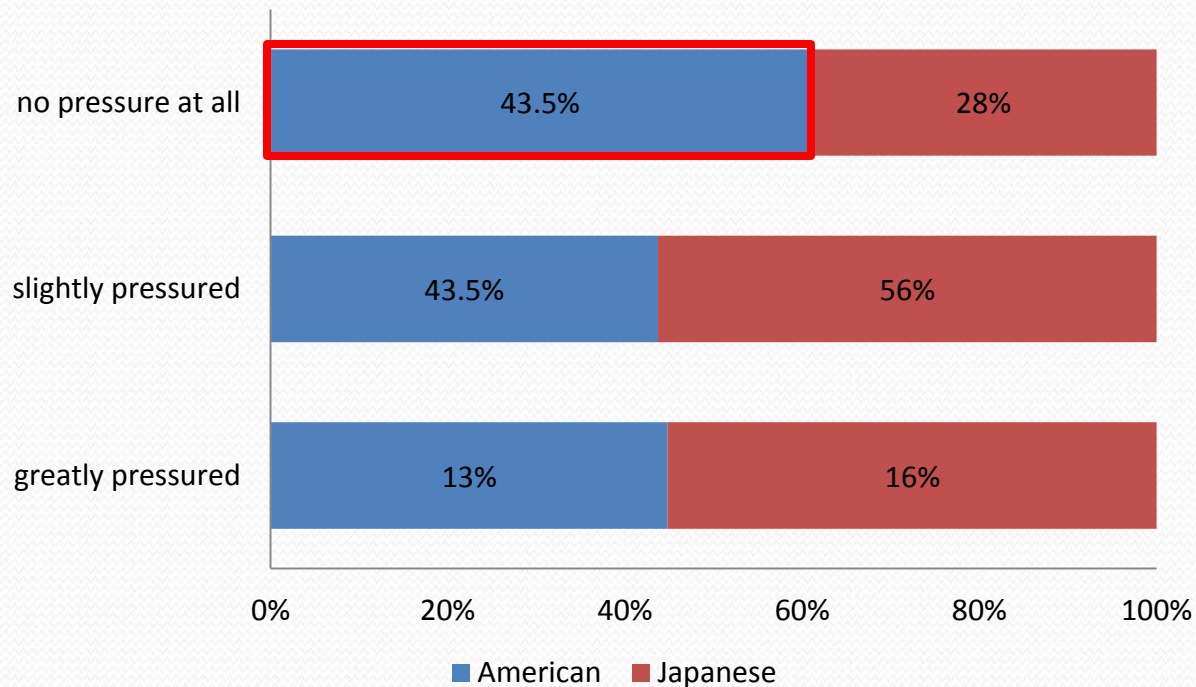
# Survey Results

## Research Question 2:

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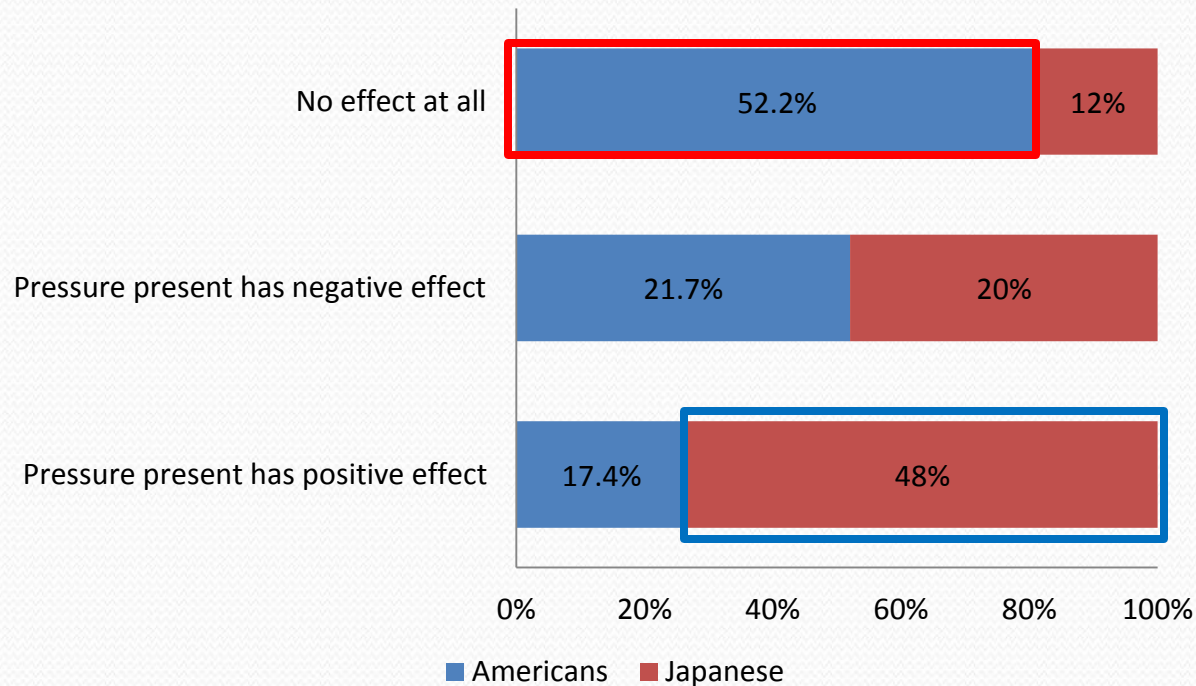
What outside influences affect opinions of children having among Japanese and American university students?

# Pressured to Have a Family?



Both sides seemed to have slight pressure, but about half of the Americans felt they had **no pressure**

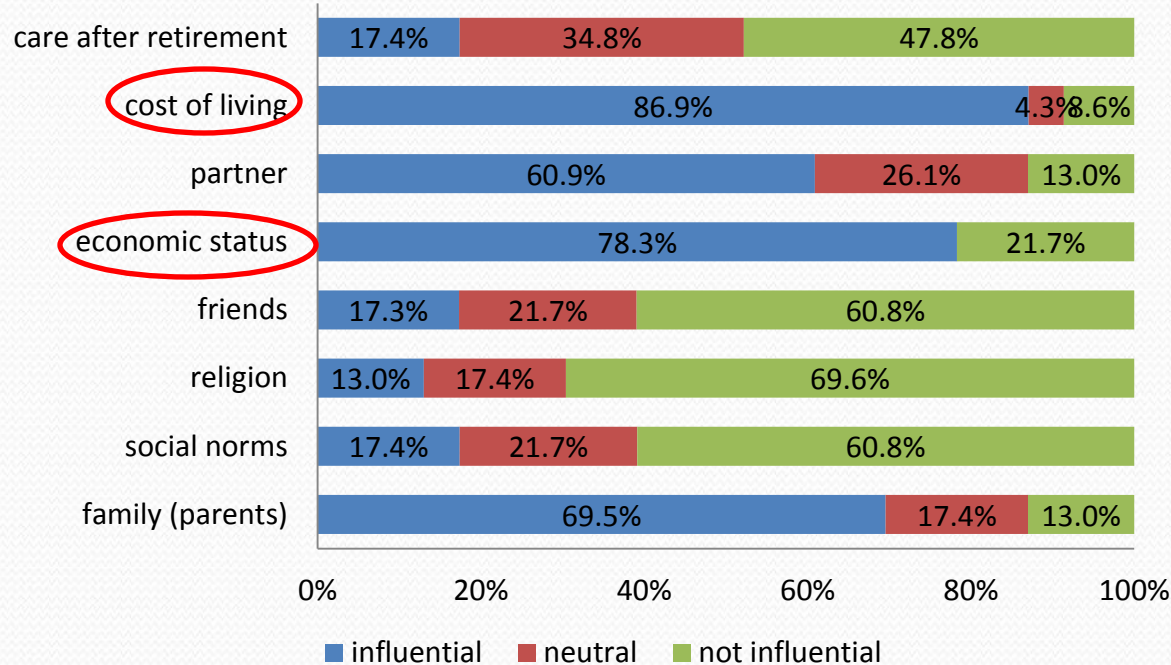
# Pressure's Influence



Over 50% of pressure the Americans felt had **no effect** on them, while a majority of what pressure the Japanese felt had a **positive effect** on their views of having children

# Outside Factors Affecting Opinion

## Americans

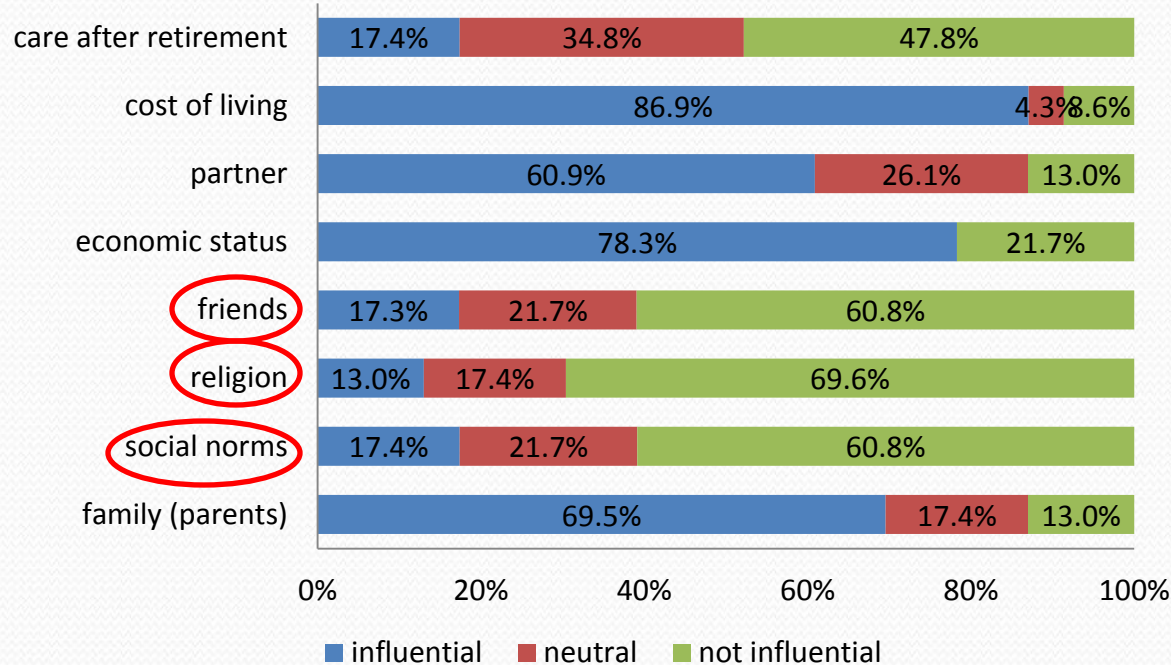


Highest influencing factors deal with monetary issues, while the least influencing factors were society, religion and friends



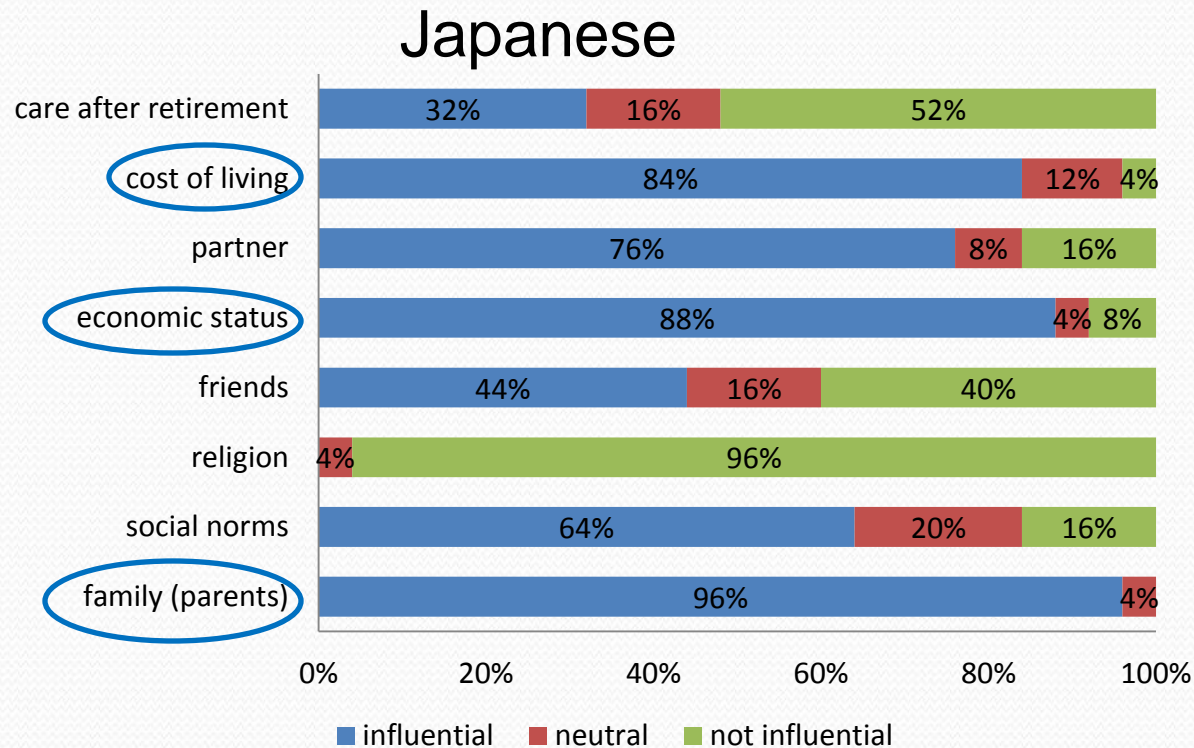
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## Americans



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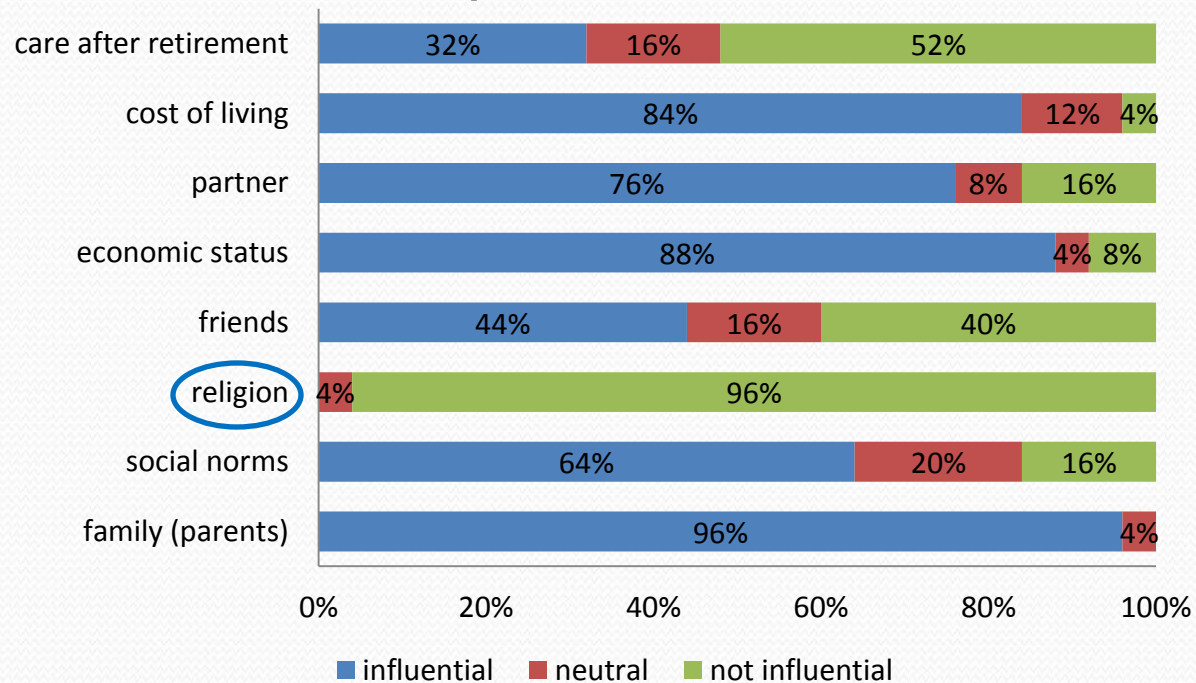
# Outside Factors Affecting Opinion



Family (parents) have the most influence on Japanese opinions, with economic factors being next in importance. Then the least influencing factor was religion.

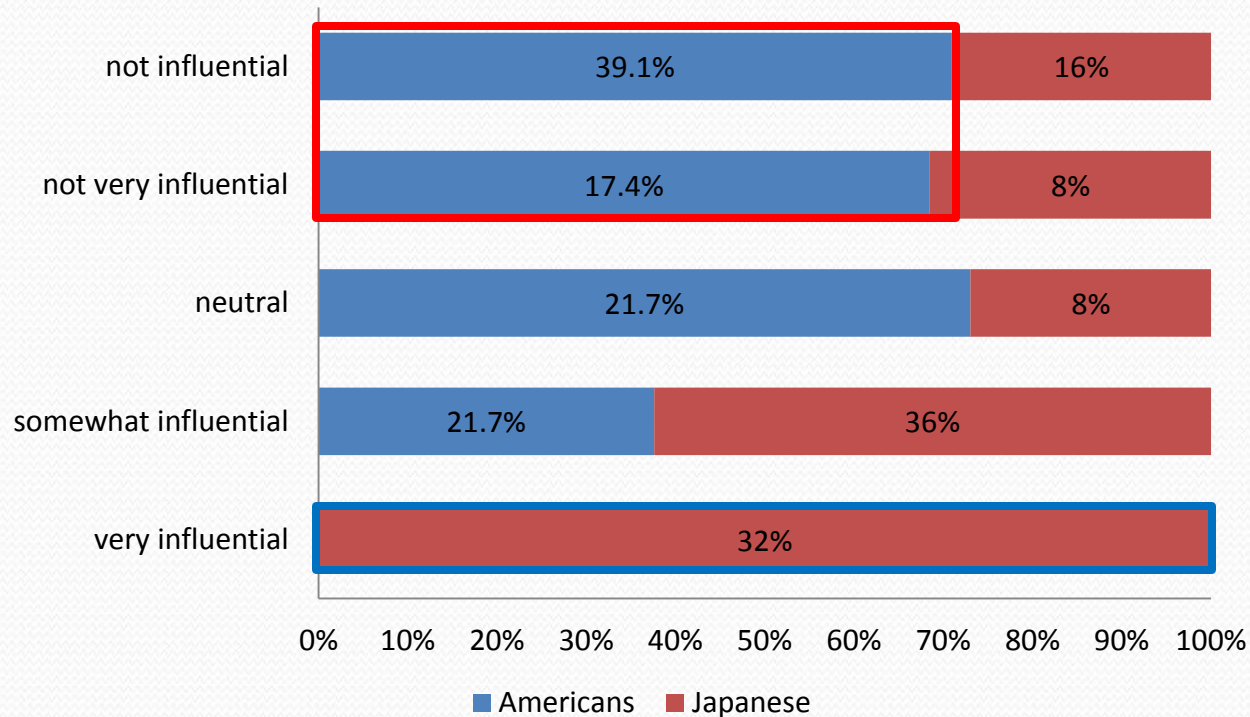
# Outside Factors Affecting Opinion (contd.)

## Japanese



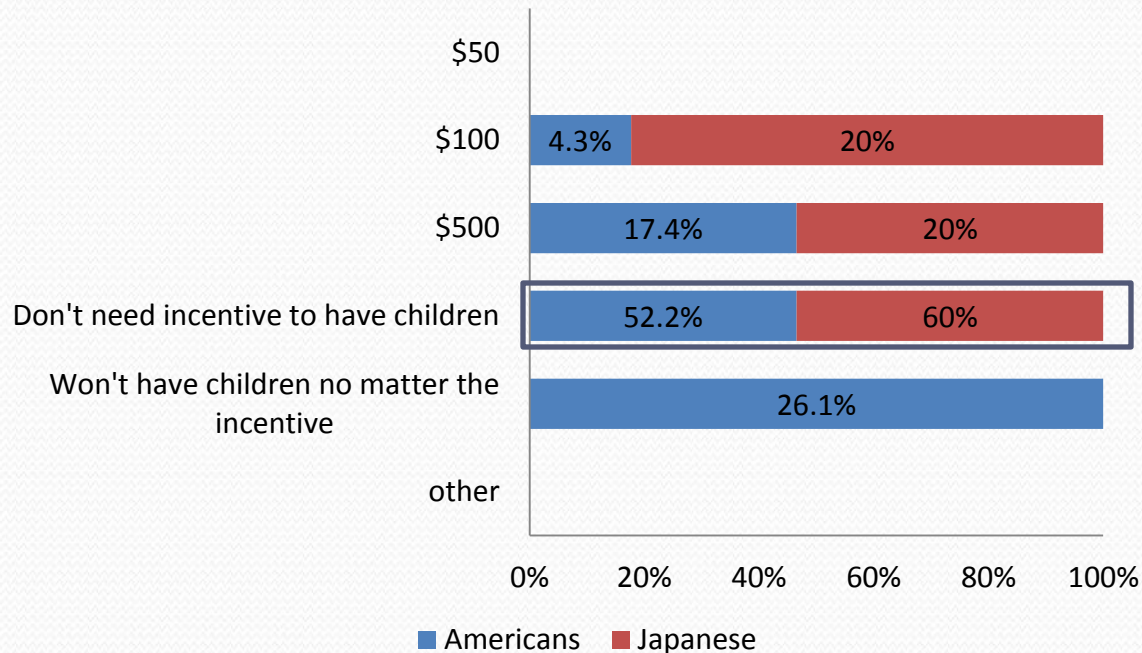
Family (parents) have the most influence on Japanese opinions, with economic factors being next in importance. Then the **least influencing factor was religion.**

# Government Incentives Affecting Desire To Have Children



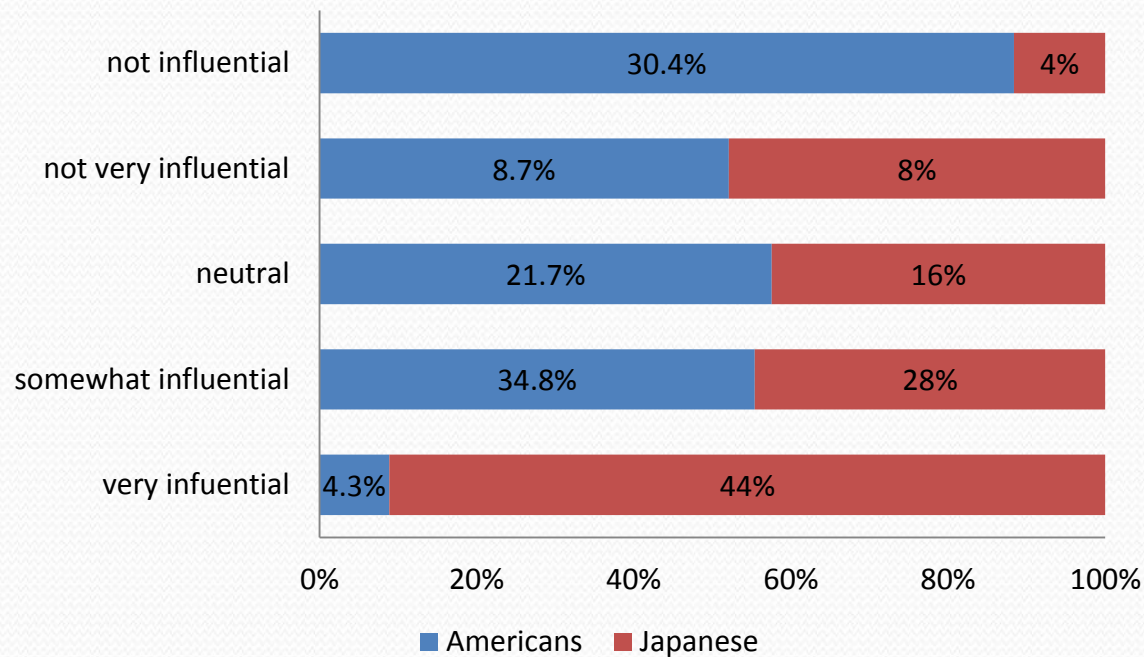
Japanese find government incentives influential in varying degrees, but most Americans do not find them very influential .

# Amount Received To Change Opinions On Having Children



About half of Americans and Japanese responded that they **don't need incentives to have children.**

# More Affordable State Run Daycare



A majority of Japanese surveyed said that more affordable state run daycare has an affect on their opinion, while most Americans don't feel any influence from it.

# Research Question 2

## Findings Summary

- Americans had the highest rate of not feeling pressured to have a family
- Majority of Americans are not affected by present pressure, while a majority of Japanese are positively affected
- Americans are most affected by economic factors, while Japanese find fulfilling their family's expectations to be most important
- Japanese find government incentives influential in varying degrees, but most Americans do not find them very influential.

# Conclusion

- Japanese are not against having children so long as they can be supported
- About 70% of Americans want children to varying degrees
- Americans were the only group to choose not wanting children
- Both sides prioritize having children last, for the most part
- Americans are more influenced by economic factors, while Japanese are most influenced by the desire to live up to family expectations



# Limitations of the Study

- Low number of survey respondents make it not possible to generalize the results

# Future Research

- Broaden the survey to cover working people as well
- I would like to see how people's life priorities change over time
- Separate male and female responses to compare differences in opinion

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# Media Resources

The World Bank:

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN/countries/JP?display=graph>

Index Mundi. Birth Rate:

<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SP.DYN.CBRT.IN/compare?country=jp#country=jp:us>

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