

### Who Are Korean Millennials?: The Retreat from Marriage *By Hyunjoon Park & Jaesung Choi*

Recent studies (e.g., Park, Lee, and Jo 2013; Park and Lee 2016) have documented the trends of delayed (and possibly forgone) marriage in South Korea. To further see the trend, particularly among Korean Millennials compared to older generations, we crunched the numbers from the tabulations of 2015, 2000, and 1985 Korean Census. We define those aged 20 to 34 in 2015 as Millennials, those aged 20 to 34 in 2000 as Generation X, and the same age group in 1985 as Baby Boomers. The titles of three generations are meant only for convenience. The title for each generation may pertain to a subgroup rather than a whole group of 15-year intervals. For instance, Baby Boomers in Korea typically refer to those born in 1955 to 1963 (i.e., approximately aged 22 to 30 in 1985).

**Figure 1. % of Never-Married 20-to-34-Year-Olds in Each Census Year**

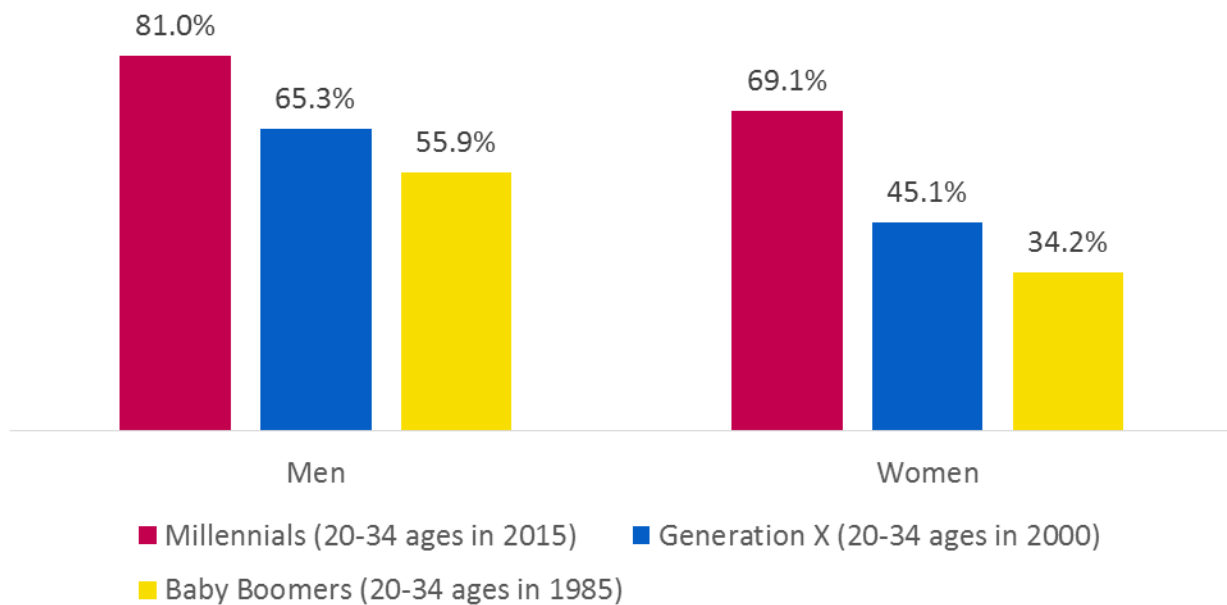


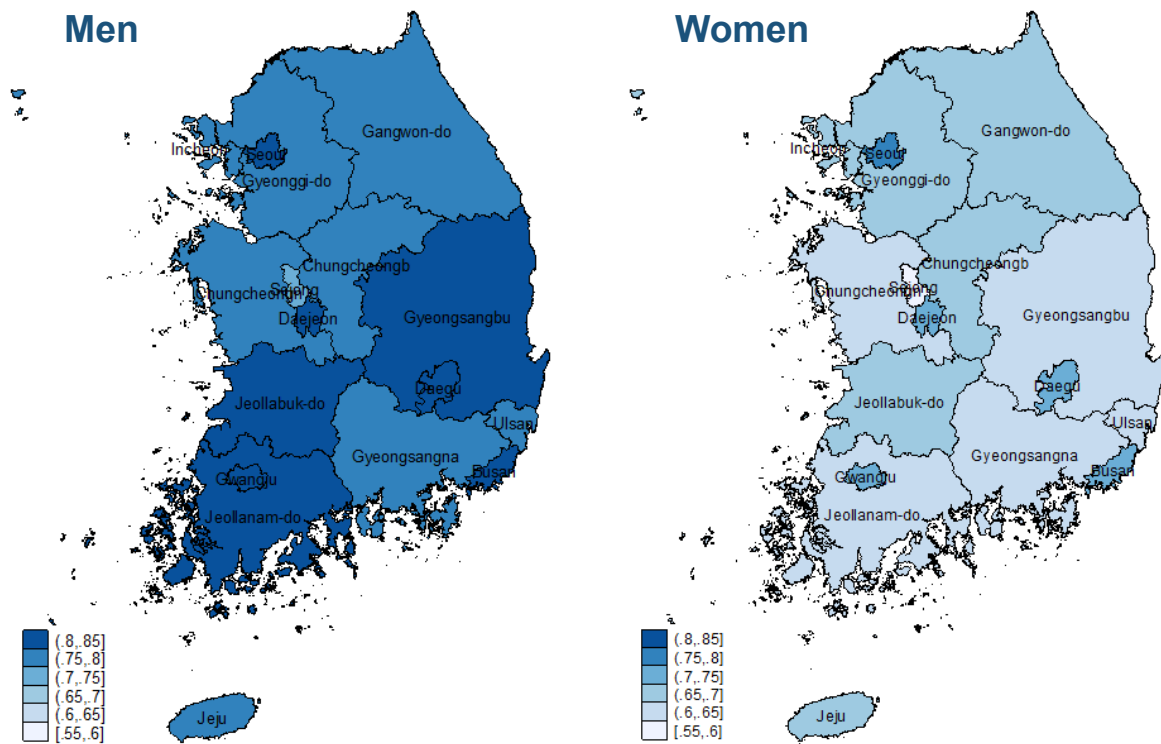
Figure 1 presents the share of never-married 20-to-34-year-olds in each generation. In 1985, 56 percent of men and 34 of women among those aged 20 to 34 had never been married (Baby Boomers). The share increased to 65 percent and 45 percent among Generation X who were aged 20 to 34 in 2000. The trend of delayed marriage has become more evident. Among Korean Millennials, 81 percent men and 69 percent of women at ages 20-34, respectively, have never been married. The increase of delayed marriage is particularly larger for women, narrowing the gender gap from 22 percentage points among Baby Boomers to 12 percentage points among Korean Millennials.

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Figure 2. % of Never-Married 20-to-34-Year-Olds across 17 Cities and Provinces (2015 Census)



Among men, the share of never-married 20-to-34-year-olds varies from 71.8 percent in Sejong special self-government city to 84.8 percent in Busan metropolitan city. Chungcheongnam-do shows the second lowest share, 77.7 percent. Among women, Sejong shows the lowest share, 55.7, while Seoul has the highest, 76.1 percent. With 62.1 percent Chungcheongnam-do shows the second lowest share among women as well as men (Ulsan also shows 62.1 percent).

#### References:

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