Uta Meier-Gräwe · Miyoko Motozawa
Annette Schad-Seifert *Editors*

RESEARCH

Family Life in Japan and Germany

Challenges for a Gender-Sensitive Family Policy

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ISBN 978-3-658-26637-0 ISBN 978-3-658-26638-7 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7

Springer VS

This Springer VS imprint is published by the registered company Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH part of Springer Nature
The registered company address is: Abraham-Lincoln-Str. 46, 65189 Wiesbaden, Germany

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a series of conferences on general family policy in Japan and Germany, which have taken place at several institutions in Japan and Germany over more than a decade. The editors are grateful to the universities they are or have been affiliated with, as they have either supported or hosted the conferences and projects related to the subject of this book. These are the Justus Liebig University Gießen, the University of Tsukuba, and the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. The editors would also like to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for its generous financial support; the production of this book was funded by the DFG's Eugen and Ilse Siebold Award in recognition of Professor Miyoko Motozawa's outstanding contributions to the scientific exchange between Japan and Germany. Many other research institutions have supported the project in terms of financial funding or academic guidance. The editors are particularly grateful to the Japan Foundation, the Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy in Munich, the German-Japanese Centre Berlin, and the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo. The editors would like to thank all the authors of this book for participating in this project and contributing their research results to this edition.

Finally, many thanks are also due to the student research assistant team at the Japanese Studies Department of Heinrich Heine University, especially Ezgi Bilke, Julia Heinrich, and Andrej Preradovic, for their efficiency as well as their excellent copyediting and translations.

The editors, November 2018.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Uta Meier-Gräwe, Miyoko Motozawa, Annette Schad-Seifert

Since the early 1990s, the governments of both Germany and Japan have been paying more attention to the phenomenon of low fertility as well as the social and economic factors that result from it. Clearly, fundamental changes in the family as a social institution brought about this shift, and the Japanese and German governments had to respond to the growing diversity of family life as well as the problems that families with children came to face at the beginning of the 21st century. It has become apparent that the normative ideal of the post-war middle-class family, which sociologists like Talcott Parsons or René König once propagated, is no longer applicable to the realities of today's families (König 1974a and 1974b; Parsons 1965). Both scholars anticipated the ideal of an isolated nuclear family consisting of a man and a woman living with their biological children in a permanent, sexually exclusive first marriage. In this model, the marriage founded on love achieves its culmination through parenthood. König spoke of marriage as an "incomplete family" to emphasize that "family" is on one's mind when marrying. In 1989, German family sociologist Rosemarie Nave-Herz further pointed out that family is accordingly created or expanded via marriage (Nave-Herz 1989: 3).

Given the falling fertility rates and increase in childlessness in Germany and Japan, this terminology is no longer valid. Already at the beginning of the 1990s, the feminist Japanese sociologist Chizuko Ueno took up the issue of family transformation and unconventional family models (Ueno 1994, 2009). Meanwhile, it would take German family research until the end of the 1990s to reach the conclusion that the connection between marriage and family has "no place" in a contemporary definition of family (Lenz 2003: 487).

The modern family was characterized by the male breadwinner model, which implies that the husband works full-time all day long, while the wife stays at home to take care of the household and their children. In pre-modern society, parenting was in no way the mother's exclusive domain, but rather a secondary by-product of growing up in a domestic household and work community consisting of family members as well as people with no blood kinship. With the transition to an industrial society however, the socialization function regarding one's offspring became the ideal type and "actual" function of a family. Within the discourse of family research, this form of raising children has not simply been regarded as one among many options; instead, it was used to define what a "proper" family should be.

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_1

The conceptually narrow view on the ideal of the middle-class family has other aspects that show that the multiplicity of family life and development can hardly be decoded using the instruments provided by mainstream research from the latter half of the 20th century. As Lenz emphasizes, the premise that a family consists of at least three people contains certain biologist presumptions, as these people are usually assumed to be the biological father and mother along with their own child (or children) (Lenz 2003: 489). But in 2014 in Germany, there were already 41,000 same-sex couples living in a registered civil partnership, with an estimated 16,000 children. This number is expected to increase in the next few years. A resolution by the German Bundestag from June 30th, 2017 paved the way for a new law that will allow same-sex couples to marry and adopt children. Although same-sex marriage is not recognized in Japan, LGBT families with children exist in Japan as well. As of 2018, nine cities and city wards have legalized same-sex partnerships (*pātonāshippu sensei seido*) (*Japan Times* 04/07/2018).

Even though the definitions of "incomplete family = single parents with child(ren)" and "complete family = parental couple with child(ren)" is no longer appropriate in political discourse, the implied minimal size of a family (namely a father, mother, and child) systematically stigmatizes the family form of single parents with child(ren). Essentially, they are not considered to be a family by definition. This view ignores alternative family models along with the specific problems that single parents face. Thus, this terminology is an ill-suited means for advancing meaningful understandings. Instead, defining a family as a group consisting of two adults and at least one child casts a negative light on a form of life that needs urgent support in both Germany and Japan. Around 1.6 million single parents are living with their minor children in Germany today. While the proportion of families with children in Germany has been going down for years, the number of single parents has kept increasing, and single parents now constitute about a fifth of all families with minor children. Nine out of ten of these single parents are women. While the at-risk-of-poverty rate of couples with two children in Germany is only at 10.1 percent, that rate is more than three times higher for single parents and their children (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016). In Japan, the national average of single parent households (female-headed and male-headed) is 6.67 percent, with the highest rates in the prefectures of Kochi, Hokkaido, and Miyazaki (more than 10 percent) (Statistics Japan 2018). According to Japan's Health Ministry statistics, child poverty among single-parent families has reached 55 percent (*Washington Post* 28/05/2017). Taking all households into account, 16 percent of Japanese children live below the poverty line.

Equating family with household does not help to understand what family is about. For a long time, family research has assumed that family members live together in one household and keep house together. While this assumption is true for the most part, it ignores the fact that familial solidarity is not tied to living in one household together. Various intergenerational support services are still offered by family members, even when the children have left their parents' home. It has been empirically documented that “family life” currently exceeds the boundaries of a nuclear family household and that relationships between the generations remain close.

A look at German official statistics also shows that household statistics fail to give an adequate impression of family constellations (cf. Bien and Marbach 1991: 4). Children that live on college campuses but visit their parents twice a week are not considered as household members. Neither are grandparents that live in the same house but keep their own household while supporting the young family in a variety of ways. Empirically valid status analyses regarding network relations between family members across generations make clear that they are, generally speaking, part of a tight web of family and kinship relations. Bertram coined the term “multi-local multigenerational family” to describe this correlation, thereby contradicting the long-established concept of the “isolated urban nuclear family” in family sociology (Bertram 2000).

A typical feature of the modern family is a clear border between inside and outside, private and public, family and work. Family became the embodiment of intimacy, a harmonious counterpoint to the cold and impersonal outside world closed off from the circumstances and issues inherent to family life. It is almost impossible to maintain this definition given the progress of digitalization in Germany and Japan as well as the potential opportunities of the labor market, which offer more flexible working conditions that may improve compatibility between family and work. The borders between work and private life are eroding. Therefore, the German expert commission on the Second Gender Equality Report demands substantial political regulations such as the introduction of a law that would give employees the right to adjust working hours according to their individual needs (Expert Commission on the Second Gender Equality Report 2017).

In striving to positively acknowledge and analyze the social services that families deliver, mainstream family research in both countries has overlooked the “dark sides” of family for decades (Goodman 2012; Lenz 2003: 487). Domestic violence against women and children, as well as the proper empirical and scientific conceptualization of these issues, have been almost entirely absent in German and Japanese family research. Lenz points out that such topics remained ignored even after the first shelters for battered women and children were established in Germany in the middle of the 1970s (ibid.). The topic of growing poverty among parents and children has also been neglected until now due to the focus on the established middle-class family (Matsumoto 2010).

“Labor of love”: The Systematic Trivialization of Female Care Work and its Consequences

Within the middle-class family concept, the principle of the Fordist division of labor and specialization characteristic of industrial society was transferred to the family. Gender segregation became legitimized in ideology through gender role attributions that were supposed to be based on natural law. The man became defined as *homo oeconomicus*, the woman as *domina privata*. Both acted in separate social spheres; men were supposed to find meaning in their work, women in family. This process led to gender segregated spheres of everyday private life and lifetime: "The family of the husband is not the family of the wife." (Metz-Göckel and Nyssen 1990: 179)

The structural dichotomy between work and private life was accompanied by a significant appreciation of gainful employment ascribed to the father on the one hand, and a societal trivialization and privatization of household and family work ascribed to the mother on the other hand. König postulated, along with Parsons, that the process of the alleged "removal of the family from contexts of society as a whole" correlated with an intensification of life inwards: "The disintegration of the modern family does not only lead to the narrowing of family to the spouse-children group, but also to what we want to call the 'functional reduction to purely familial services'" (König 1974b: 69).

This reductive concept contributes to the long-established idea that family is important in transmitting "qualifications" to the next generation of children, while basically being a unit that more or less only consumes economic values. At the beginning of industrial society, the precursors of political economy, such as Adam Smith and his followers, were unwilling to acknowledge any social activities that were not organized according to the market principle as work. This especially excluded those forms of work that were socially ascribed to women from economic concepts and calculation models of social value-added processes.

Historically, this view of economy only began to catch on in the middle of the 18th century. In contrast, preindustrial societies were characterized by a more holistic view of economy. In the rural subsistence society of the 18th century, male and female farmers worked together to manage the "entire house"—the *oikos*—and to ensure the livelihood of the entire group. This was also true for family trade businesses. Gainful work and housework formed a spatial and economic unit. Women, men, the elderly, and children contributed together. While women did have specific areas of responsibility like storing, processing, and stockpiling food, these activities were not valued less than the trade and craft of men. Both helped secure a livelihood, so the areas of responsibility were considered to be equal and complementary.

Only by defining work as market-based gainful employment in industrial society did the formerly valued household-related work of women degenerate into a "labor of love" (Bock and Duden 1977). Female work underwent a hitherto unknown and completely undeserved trivialization and began to be ignored as a topic of social and economic interest. As all kinds of household activities became attributed to the female half of society, such denials of female work were even extended into the area of gainful employment. Today, female jobs are dead-end jobs: poorly paid, non-qualified, repetitive, and often structured as helper professions without any significant opportunities for career development.

One example of this comes from the history of vocational training. At the beginning of the 20th century, the chambers of commerce objected to the integration of female small trade, arguing that dressmaking and sewing were not to be considered a proper business—that is, a "job for life"—but rather a pre-marital occupation for private use within the household (cf. Krüger 1991: 156f). As a result, female trades did not stand under strict legal protection (ibid.). The ideological core of this marginalization was formulated by a traditionally oriented economist as follows: "The reason lies in the particular characteristic of all these domestic services performed for free within a family: While they do have an economic aspect to them... they are usually perceived less as economic actions and more as acts of living and caring out of love. It is against common sense to apply the gauge of economic evaluation here" (Jostock 1941: 135; translation by editors).

This view manifests clearly in a concept of labor that was reduced to a market-mediated satisfaction of needs. Therefore, household and family work performed by the female "invisible hand" was not regarded as necessary for the survival of companies and society as a whole. Female contributions to human resources and production were simply marginalized as the "labor of love," which led to many disadvantages for the female half of society (Meier-Gräwe 2008). As a result, all expenditures required for the upbringing of the next generation, the reproduction of the current generation, and the care of the sick and elderly lost the distinction of being considered work. The American economist Galbraith critically analyzed this gender dualism at the beginning of the 1970s by sarcastically defining the transformation of women into a hidden servant caste in the duty of men during industrialization and urbanization as a first-class economic achievement. He remarked quite aptly that housewives would constitute the biggest part of the labor force by far if they received a proper salary (Galbraith 1973, 1974). In this light, it has to be considered a success that at the end of the 1980s a concept to record the gross value added through household production was developed and empirically founded through two national time budget surveys. A comparison between 1992 and 2001—even with a modest evaluation of the total volume of unpaid work in private households at the net hourly wage of a housekeeper without compensation for lost hours (lower limit) of 7.10€—showed an added value through household production of 43 percent, that is almost 40 percent of the GDP (Schäfer 2004: 267 f.). The calculations based on the current time use study of the German Statistics Bureau (2012/13) have come to a similar conclusion (Schwarz 2017).

Presented as a gender-specific analysis of the traditional GDP and household production in Germany (extended Gender GDP) (Schaffer and Stahmer 2006), the measurement aims to show the extent to which informal work by both men and women contributes to the GDP. Another important area of interest in this context is the research into the chances and barriers of professionalization processes of personalized household-related services (Krüger 2000; Meier-Gräwe 2015; Thiessen 2004).

An overly rigid and one-dimensional concept of family is therefore inadequate to consider alternative and plural forms of family or recognize and explain behavioral changes in the lives of women, men, and children. Until recently, mainstream German family research failed to notice that the ideal-typical female three-phase-family-model (employment until the birth of the first child, the family phase, re-entering the labor market after the children have moved out) in no way reflected the actual lives of many women, even in the so-called “golden age of the family” in post-war West Germany. A study by Born *et al*. shows that in the generation of women born around 1930 there were between three and twelve career breaks and almost the same number of attempts at requalification for the purpose of re-entering into a career, which were accompanied by severe normative and temporal restrictions due to structural and family-ideological standards (Born *et al*. 1996).

A New Concept of Family as an Approach to Changed Realities and Gender Roles

The theoretical interpretations of German and Japanese family research remained inadequate to represent the various changes in family relations, especially in the 1990s when the phenomenon of the silent but influential “baby strike” became obvious, and the falling birth-rate particularly among young educated women could no longer be ignored. This demographic change is the effect of changes in the life courses and circumstances of women, which have not been sufficiently considered as having an impact on reproductive behavior in industrialized countries. Institutions and politics relevant to the life course have reacted too late or too indirectly. Obviously, a structural conservatism was effective behind family research which insisted on the “fact” that, despite divergent results in international studies, it was best if the mother takes full care of the child during the first 10 years, only complemented by kindergarten or school. This maternal myth has increasingly clashed with the justified ambitions of the highly educated female age cohort who expect to use their academic and professional qualifications for gainful employment. Consequently, more and more women either decided to forego having children or gave up their employment after giving birth, forfeiting their professional potential.

Following the seventh German federal government family report (BMFSFJ 2006), we propose to conceive of family as a special type of social network whose constitutive characteristics are gender and generation. Family is a place where generations take responsibility for one another, indicating that it is a social community consisting of at least one adult (regardless of gender) and at least two generations. This micro theoretical perspective matches the variability and dynamics of familial life forms and distances itself from the idea that family is simply a group in which a married couple lives with their direct offspring. Furthermore, this view recognizes families as important investors and performers in communal networks that significantly contribute to the creation of local economic, cultural, and social capital. In this extended microsociological view, the family report defines family as a daily production effort that is formed through cooperation and coordination, and through negotiating with and trusting family members. In order to cope with daily life, familial forms of life are dependent on money and time as resources, but also on family support services. These services have to identify the ever-changing needs of parents and their children living in different forms of family. They also have to create viable and appropriate conditions for successful parenthood in co-operation with local actors and institutions. These need to take the specific living conditions of mothers and fathers into account and overcome field-limited thinking between different professions in the familial context.

But family is not just a daily production endeavor dependent on money, infrastructure, and time as well as a competent handling thereof to satisfy the needs of each family member. Family is also always a lifelong project that undergoes negotiations spanning gender and generations. It has to manage dynamic transitions and adapt to the changing needs of children, mothers, fathers, and grandparents in partially new family constellations. In this sense, family turns out to be an open system that has to be constantly rearranged and recreated, from the perspective of daily life and the life course. But family also always requires a macro theoretical consideration: from this perspective, family is a social institution, that is a socially accepted body, that creates many socially beneficial services in generative, welfare-related, and educational aspects.

From a macro theoretical perspective, families should not primarily be seen as responsible for giving birth to a sufficient number of children for the purpose of reproducing the national population. Rather, family generates the human resources for society, such as everyday life skills, language use, or the ability to engage in emotional bonding and conflict management. In family life, competences such as inquisitiveness, frustration tolerance, and self-regulatory skills are acquired; these have to be regarded as vital requirements for the acquisition of professional expertise in the later life of the young generation. These are common social goods that are usually produced by families, provided that the younger generation is ready to have children and invest affection and time in their development. The satisfaction of emotional needs, such as intimacy, love, and personal happiness, are deeply private aspects of familial life, but they “also represent a necessary precondition for the creation of those common goods that are viewed as a quasi-natural and inexhaustible resource of the development of the wealth of society” (BMFSFJ 2006: 10). In other words: these common goods are produced in a private context, but in the end, they benefit all members of society. In fact, these services only materialize when individuals build networks on a private level whose relationship patterns are characterized by gender, generation, and life course. This understanding of family conceptually distances itself from the idea that familial forms of life are private "harmonic counter worlds" that stand in opposition to the worlds of rational work and public life. It is indispensable that governments as well as business organizations provide a variety of options for a better work-life balance for both sexes. Everyone should be able to take care of children and persons in need of care under the changing conditions of labor markets and educational training.

To this end, the resources of money, infrastructure, and time have to be considered in terms of how they apply to the specific familial needs along the life courses of its members. Only improving the reorganization of temporal structures between the spheres of family and work is not sufficient. Instead, a new concept of society is necessary to conceive of families, communities, workplaces, and neighborhoods as integrated with each other. By addressing and therefore normatively "universalizing" gainful and generative care work for both genders, we make the creation of a family-friendly society, including a gender-friendly remodeling of all institutions relevant to the life course, part of the agenda. It is obvious that these new developments have to be systematically recorded and processed in the theoretical-conceptual approaches of family related research.

After a long period of deregulating labor markets in both Germany and Japan, recent calls for new regulations become ever louder. Precarious employment such as short-term project work, internship contracts, and the overall expansion of the irregular low-wage sector serve as "efficient contraceptives" among the young generation in both countries. The lack of a sustainable material foundation upon which to start a family makes young people postpone or even give up on having children.

Parents in both countries often feel pressured, and daily life with children has become quite diverse in the early 21st century: Some become parents with the aim of sharing work equally, tend towards the "professionalization" of parenthood and strive for an arrangement between family and gainful employment for both partners. Others, however, "slide" into traditional gender roles or conform to them by consent. In educationally deprived strata, parenthood often means living in multidimensional poverty situations, which evidently complicates the process of raising of children, especially for single mothers after a separation or divorce. However, the need for support in these status transitions exists throughout all education groups and forms of life. Family-supporting services have to identify the various needs of parents and their children within a society increasingly ill-suited to raising children and create viable and proper conditions for a successful parenthood in co-operation with local actors and institutions. These conditions need to take the resources of mothers and fathers into account, promote stable employment for mothers and support a fair division of labor between the parents.

Considering the demographic change, the lack of professionals, and the low birth-rates in Germany and Japan, the awareness that both societies have to take better care of their limited human resources is growing in the fields of economy, science, and politics as well as among the general public. But mental barriers and traditional gender-role stereotypes still exist in both countries, as well as general structural frameworks and institutional disincentives that make equal participation in care responsibilities difficult or even impossible. Family research has to rise to the challenge of adequate scientific analysis and explanatory conceptual instruments, which have to be sharpened in a gender-sensitive way in order to distance the field from traditional values and the ideal image of the middle-class family.

Structure of the Volume

The structure of the book is organized according to contributions that address the issue of family policies in Germany and Japan. The first section deals with the historical context of family life and historical changes that have affected family laws, economic foundations such as the labor market, and the different ways governments have tried to respond to these changes by implementing family policies. The second section analyzes the German case and focusses on recent policies towards families in precarious living conditions. Families living beyond the standard middle-class norm, like many single parents, currently face huge social disadvantages, and the contributions in this section discuss the social effects of poverty and examine the policies that try to alleviate the burden of today's families. The third section covers research on government measures and family policies in Japan. To this day, Japan has no discrete ministry in charge of family affairs. But in the face of a serious demographic crisis and falling fertility rates, the state has been implementing welfare and gender policies for more than three decades in order to tackle the various structural problems that have been identified as factors in childlessness and changes in the reproductive behavior of families. This section illuminates the status of contemporary family life and identifies the specific requirements for institutional adjustment in Japan. The fourth and final section presents research contributions that apply a comparative perspective. As the goal of the book is actually to relate Germany and Japan in a manner that makes the differences and similarities visible and knowable, this section is particularly thought-provoking and informative for current debates. The two contributions in this section have managed to cover the topics in a clearly international manner, both in terms of authorship as well as theoretical and empirical approach.

This volume is but a small step toward our goal of providing a forum for studying family policy that draws on research in various societies, such as in Japan and Germany, but further research in this field is still necessary.

Historical Context and Current Situation of Family Life and Institutional Changes

Miyoko Motozawa's chapter argues that the traditional Japanese family system called *ie*, which has its origins in the 19th century Meiji era, still has an impact on not only the modern notion of family, but also on recent concepts of social security and family support measures. By critically reviewing the content of family-related welfare legislatures and family policies as measures against the falling birth rate, she demonstrates the need to overcome the traditional concept of family. Recent policy making has indicated some acknowledgement of the growing diversity of living conditions and ways of living in Japanese society; however, the current family-related legal institutions still inhibit the realization of family forms that do not conform to the standard married couple with children, such as single parents or couples living together in non-married cohabitation. In Motozawa's view, Japanese society should endorse more diversity in family support measures and regard family not as an isolated social unit, but as related to society, business organizations, and communities.

Hans Bertram takes up a generational perspective by comparing the "skeptical generation" born during the war and forming families in the post-war period with the "overburdened generations" of today's grownup adults. Bertram provides a detailed historical account of these two generations with regard to their life courses, family forms, and marriage behavior in order to show the ways in which today's young adults are being confronted with the welfare expectations of their parents and grandparents' generations as well as the consequences this has for the younger generation. As the older generation seeks to ensure their high and secure standard of living, there is a political priority to guarantee the economic and social quality of life for elderly people. Bertram points out how the post-war welfare system has come to produce detrimental effects for the younger generation's capacity to form families and have children, and that family policy should consider effective measures to alleviate the "overburdened generation."

Family Policy in Germany: Impact on Social Conditions of Precarity and Risks

For many years, Eva-Maria Hohnerlein has conducted research on the status of single parents in the legal social order. Based on the fundamental changes in the family and labor market following German reunification in 1990, her chapter analyses the living conditions of single-parent families, whose proportion is steadily increasing in German society. These families are social groups that are disproportionately affected by relative income poverty, a risk that is particularly high for single mothers. Hohnerlein describes how material shortages generate negative effects on the well-being as well as the educational and life prospects of children. She criticizes that in comparison to the relatively generous support provided for standard married couples and two-parent families in the Federal Republic of Germany, social legislation has ignored the specific needs of single mothers for many decades. Hohnerlein considers the family policy measures relevant to the specific life situations of single-parent families and concludes that, to date, neither the existing welfare state benefits for single parents nor the various labor market instruments aimed at this target group have been able to reduce the poverty risk of single mothers—on the contrary, the rates have been rising for years.

The research presented in Uta Meier-Gräwe's chapter COLLABORATION OF LOCAL PARTNERS: NETWORKING AND COMMUNITY ORIENTATION developed out of her studies on the increasing segregation of social spaces in German cities, which has led to an increase in residential areas with disproportionately high numbers of families in multidimensional poverty situations. In some East German cities, the dynamics of this increase can now be described as "historically unprecedented." The author points out how such socio-spatial settings generate specific detrimental effects on the socialization of children and adolescents as well as their educational and life opportunities. The lack of stimulating environments in poor parent families dismantles all kinds of compensatory and protective family functions. This is compounded by the way in which segregated social spaces often generate various forms of social exclusion, ranging from symbolic exclusion, for example when the residential address of a school child indicates that they live in a socially troubled area, or when middle class residents leave socially troubled neighborhoods, thereby depriving these areas of social and economic resources. The chapter critically points out the necessity of analyzing the poverty of children and families in a multi-dimensional way, especially by considering the negative effects financial poverty, poor living conditions, health impairments, and a lack of participation in social life can have during the first months of a child's life.

In her chapter DAY-TO-DAY WORK - WHY WE NEED TO REORGANIZE IT WITHIN SOCIETY AND DISTRIBUTE IT FAIRLY BY GENDER, Uta Meier-Gräwe draws on her experiences as the founder of the competence center for the professionalization and quality control of private household related services at the University of Gießen. The center aims at establishing market-based service providers for the household under federal and local support structures. The institution's overall objective is improving the local economy in this field and counteracting illicit employment practices. The chapter traces the competence center's past initiatives in cooperation with different agents from the fields of science, politics, and practice. Meier-Gräwe's focus is on how the transition from the Fordist industrial society to the 21st century's knowledge- and service-based society has evolved. She points out that the supply of high-quality, company-related services are prioritized in any economic assessment. However, individual and household-related services also generate an economic value since they provide the social, cultural, and educational framework for material production. Her chapter shows how social value creation is generated via occupationally organized services that support households and families. These services help to ensure the wellbeing of families as key performers of society, and they also contribute to the creation of a successful work-life balance along the life course.

Family Policy in Japan: Structural Reforms and their Effectiveness

Barbara Holthus' chapter offers empirical evidence on how core elements of family policy institutions such as childcare facilities have an impact on parental well-being in Japan. Improving the supply of childcare facilities for the age group 0 to 6 years (but especially for those younger than 3 years) has become a major goal for the governments of Japan and Germany. Accordingly, surveys that investigate the quality and quantity of childcare institutions and their usage have become an important policy issue. Holthus' research starts from the fact that parents' levels of satisfaction with family policy services has hardly become an object of scrutiny in Japan so far. Her evaluation provides an important suggestion for how effective family policies can alleviate constraints on the work-life balances of families in different status groups.

Annette Schad-Seifert's chapter focuses on family policy and Japan's labor market. In recent years, various Japanese governments have legally reinforced gender equality and initiated campaigns to help women balance work and family. Nonetheless, the labor force participation rate among Japanese women is still low compared to other OECD nations. Mothers in particular face specific difficulties when trying to make their work life compatible with child rearing. As a result, the LDP government is now aiming to thoroughly improve Japan's diversity and gender equality scores on the executive level. The rationale behind this package called Womenomics is to implement policies for supporting women's continuous careers. The chapter explores the questions of whether Womenomics can function as a new model for family policy in Japan and whether its structural reforms provide effective solutions for the various problems that hinder the improvement of female employment in Japan.

Masako Ishii-Kuntz' chapter focuses on another solution to increase women's labor force participation. In recent years, the Japanese government has propagated the ideal of younger Japanese fathers who participate in childcare. These younger fathers have been called *ikumen* (child caring men), a concept that seems to embrace a more positive image of fatherhood. The word *ikumen* was also used by the government-sponsored project launched in 2010 to encourage men to actively take care of their children and to create a society where men can enjoy active child rearing and take child care leave from work more easily. Ishii-Kuntz details how the project works on changing traditional gender attitudes and suggests that the persistence of organizational work culture is impeding the state-sponsored campaigns towards realizing a more family-friendly society.

Chie Maekoya's chapter gives an account of an issue that went largely unrecognized by Japanese society and remained unaddressed by the Japanese until the early 1990s. Domestic violence in terms of spousal violence is now being regarded as a serious problem in Japan, and the state has become willing to fund services for women, shelter organizations, and counseling support centers. The chapter critically reviews the laws, policies, and legal activities that address DV. It shows that understanding the character of DV and its impacts on victims needs to be facilitated among the public and among institutions dealing with DV since social support plays an important role in the victims' physical and psychological recovery.

Germany and Japan in Comparison: Similarities and Differences of Welfare Institutions

Yoko Tanaka's chapter provides a comparative perspective on German and Japanese family lives. It gives a detailed analysis of how the male breadwinner/female housewife family model became the dominant family paradigm in Germany and Japan as well as in many other industrialized countries during the postwar period. A wealth of literature has analyzed this model as being characterized by a male head of household in a nuclear family who receives sufficient income to support a wife and children, while the wife engages in domestic and care work without pay. Much of the scholarship on this family model has focused on its decline and the transition to alternative family models, particularly since the 1990s. According to this scholarship, the housewife model is evolving into variations of the "work/family-life balance model." Tanaka points out that the discussion of alternative family models so far has not sufficiently considered the significant international differences and complexities in the formation and evolution of the housewife model, which require more detailed examination from an international perspective.

In his chapter, Steffen Heinrich analyzes the legislative approaches the German and Japanese governments have adopted in recent years to promote the equal treatment of workers of different statuses, especially for women in non-standard jobs. The comparison shows that equal treatment legislation in Germany and Japan entails a political trade-off between labor market flexibility through differentiated treatment and equality through obliging employers to treat workers equally. Heinrich argues that the shape of this flexibility-equality conflict is comparable since both economies employ similar modes of labor market flexibility. Due to the gradual demise of institutions based on male breadwinner models as well as changing attitudes towards gender roles, policymakers in Germany and Japan support equal treatment through regulatory interventions. At the same time, they are also under pressure from employers who resist attempts at limiting the flexibility afforded by the differentiated treatment of workers they have gained in recent years. The discussion follows different interpretations of how regulatory change is being targeted and asks what amount of political pressure would be required to further dismantle the politics of balancing.

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Historical Context and Current Situation of Family Life and Institutional Changes

Family Policy in Japan: General Policies for the Family in an Aging Society with a Declining Birth Rate

Miyoko Motozawa

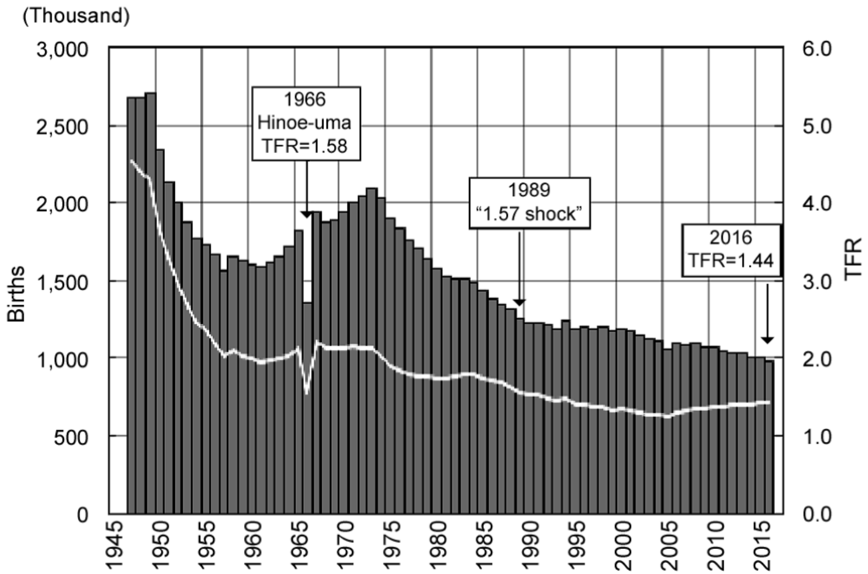
1 Introduction

In March 2006, a Japanese-German international symposium on "General Policies on Aging Society and Family" was organized at the University of Tsukuba as part of an event commemorating the "Germany Year in Japan." I have been the principal organizer of this event and international experts on sociology, political science, legal studies and economics exchanged their views at the University of Tsukuba and at a symposium open to the general public at Yomiuri Hall in Tokyo. At the public event in Yomiuri Hall, Dr. Kuniko Inoguchi, the then Minister of State for issues of the falling birthrate and gender equality, delivered the opening address. She mentioned that Japan's total fertility rate had dropped to a record low of 1.26 in 2005, so the conference was taking up the issue of Japan's falling birthrate just in time (see Figure 1). The 2006 symposium was the start of a series of conferences and the second Japanese-German international symposium was held at the University of Tsukuba (Tsukuba campus and Tokyo campus) in November 2008, followed by the third and fourth conferences that were organized by the Japanese-German Center Berlin in September 2010 and September 2012, respectively. Japan's total fertility rate improved to 1.41 in 2012. Although this increase has not been the direct result of the fourth Japanese-German international symposium, the author believes that the conference had its merits. The results of the first, second and fourth conferences have been published in Japanese in a three-volume book titled *Kazoku no tame no sōgō seisaku* (General Policies for the Family) (Motozawa and von Maydell 2007, 2009; Motozawa and Meier-Gräwe 2013).

Why did we choose the title "general policies for the family" instead of "family policy"? In Germany and other Western countries, family policy usually refers to a system of comprehensive state policies supporting child-rearing and family related nursing care. In Japan, very differently, "family policy" has a meaning that, for historical reasons, is associated with the traditional Japanese family system called "ie system (*ie seido*)." Therefore, I would suggest using the concept of "family policy" in the meaning of "general policies for the family" to indicate the importance of family policy for the Japanese society.

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_2

Figure 1: Annual Number of Births and Total Fertility Rates in Japan: 1947–2016



2 The Japanese Civil Code (*Minpō*) and the Family

2.1 The Japanese Family System of Ie as Defined by the Meiji Civil Code

Although I am sometimes being identified as a sociologist because of my research methods and interests, I am originally a legal scholar specializing in family and social security laws. Therefore, from the perspective of family law, I would first like to explain how the Japanese family system of *ie*, which derived from the Meiji Civil Code (*Meiji Minpō)*, is being perpetuated even in today's society, despite major reforms of Japan's family law that have taken place after the Second World War. Knowledge about the institution of the *ie* system is essential for understanding the traditional paternalistic structure of Japanese society. It has been argued that the "*ie* family regime" is the most rigid type of stem family (cf. Kato 2013), and that the vertical structures of the *ie* are still alive in the human relations of Japanese business corporations, as a collective virtue which requires sacrificing one's entire private life, or that the still lower social status of women in Japanese society is the result of this family formation.

The *ie* system has been the basic component of the Meiji Civil Code's family law. Under this system, the head of each *ie* family was granted considerable rights to govern the *ie*. The system not only regulated the family life of the common citizens. Each *ie* was considered a basic unit supporting imperial Japan, with the Emperor at its head. In other words, imperial Japan itself was considered an *ie*, which was headed by the Emperor, and in which the Japanese populace was thought of as the children of the Emperor and the Empress. Rules regarding the common citizens' *ie* as being the basic unit of imperial Japan were deeply incorporated by means of school education and local community life, as an underpinning support of the larger *ie* of imperial Japan. And it was the family register system (*koseki seido*) that firmly established the *ie* system and made the system visible and discernible to the people. To assemble the family register, those citizens previously without a surname were compelled to adopt one so that their *ie* would bear a family name. The family register system was also used to identify the legitimacy of the Japanese lineage of its people, requiring them to record the addresses of their *ie* as domiciles in the family register from which it was possible to trace a person's line of descent.

Under the *ie* system the status of the household head and patrimony were inherited in principle by the eldest son[1]. Marital relations were considered subordinate to parent-child relations, and consent from the parents or household head was required for marriage. Marriage meant that a woman would move out of her parents' *ie* and enter into her husband's *ie*. Therefore, her surname would change into that of her husband's by marriage, and she would be registered as a wife in her husband's family register. This rule was clearly stated both in the Meiji Civil Code and in the former Family Register Act (*Kyū Koseki Hō*). As the continuity of the *ie* was considered to have absolute priority, it was the wife's obligation to bear a child who would inherit the *ie*. Women incapable of bearing a child were refused entry into their prospective husband's family register, or, as a common Japanese saying frames it: "a wife who fails to produce a child after three years should leave." Childless wives were pressured to return to their parents' homes or have a divorce. Any child given birth to by a woman belonged to her husband's *ie*. The father had sole parental rights over the child. The mother had an obligation to raise the child under the supervision of her husband and parents-in-law and in accordance with the custom of her husband's *ie* and enjoyed no rights whatsoever over the child. In case of divorce, the mother had to leave her child, as the child belonged to her husband's *ie*, and return to her parents' home. Furthermore, as the wife belonged to her husband's *ie*, she had to serve her parents-in-law and was forbidden to support or provide care for her own parents. As she now belonged to a different *ie* from that of her parents under the law, this principle was regarded as a natural consequence. Moreover, the General Provisions of the Meiji Civil Code clearly stated that wives were legally incompetent. Consequently, wives were barred from

1 Exceptionally one daughter or her husband as son in law could inherit the status of the household (cf. Sen 2017).

transacting or managing property without the permission of their husbands. Under the law, wives could not become economically independent, and had to be subjugated to their husbands and their husbands' *ie*.

2.2 The Family of the Current Civil Code

After the Second World War, the U.S. occupying forces abolished the *ie* system, and the Constitution of Japan (*Nihonkoku Kenpō*), which proclaimed "individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes," was enacted in 1946 and came into force in 1947. The term "family" is used in Article 24, Paragraph 2, of the Constitution, but it stops short of defining what "family" actually is.[2] This is because the legislative intent of Article 24 of the Constitution was to establish individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes as codes of conduct in family life, rather than to deal with the concept of family. The Civil Code of Japan (*Minpō*) was also revised according to Article 24 of the Constitution, the revised Civil Code and the revised Family Register Act (*Koseki Hō*) came into force in 1947. In the revision, the provision of legal incompetence of women was deleted from the General Provisions of the Civil Code. Book IV of the Civil Code and the Family Register Act, which deals with matters related to marital and parent-child relations, were also extensively revised.[3]

In specific terms, a marriage is established when both parties have the intention to marry and the marriage is officially registered (Civil Code, Articles 739 and 742), the husband and wife are equal in marital relations (ibid., Article 752), any child born to a married couple belongs to both the father and the mother, and parental authority over the child is exercised jointly by the parents (ibid., Article 818). A divorce, in principle, must be filed with agreement between the husband and wife (ibid., Article 763), and in case of a divorce, either one of the parents will have sole parental authority over any child who is still a minor (ibid., Article 819, Paragraph 1). A husband and wife, on the other hand, must adopt either one of their surnames, whichever they decide at the time of marriage (ibid., Article 750). As the registration of marriage is a condition for establishing a marriage, a couple can only marry if they choose either one of their surnames (Family Register Act, Article 74). This has resulted in the adoption of the husband's surname in about 96 percent of all marriages in Japan. This, coupled with the current family registration system in which the original holder of the adopted surname is listed ahead of other family members (ibid. Article 14, Paragraph 1), is one of the causes perpetuating the concept of marriage of the Meiji period and the custom of the *ie* even until today. It is necessary to first understand that such historical and social circumstances are

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2 See Appendix (A) The Constitution of Japan.

3 See Appendix (B) The Civil Code of Japan and Appendix (C) The Family Register Act.

providing the context in which marriage, child-rearing, and caring for parents are being discussed in today's Japan. These underlying factors have a far-reaching effect that cannot be explained simply by inequality of the sexes or traditional gender roles.

3 Historical Development of Social Security Laws: Family and Household

As mentioned above, the head of a household had the authority to decide on matters of the *ie* and to execute exclusive rights over its assets. In return, the head of a household had the obligation to guarantee the livelihood of the family members. As a result, there is a deeply rooted view in Japan, even today, that if someone becomes impoverished, the family of that individual should have the first responsibility to lift that person out of impoverishment. In this section, we will look at how Japan's social security system developed in a society that still carries the remnants of the *ie* system, and how the family was defined in social security laws and related policies.

In the Relief Regulations of 1874 (*Jukkyū Kisoku*), which was Japan's first public assistance system for the poor, the assistance was limited to small alms given by the emperor and the government to those poor who had no *ie* to belong to. The Poor Relief and Protection Law of 1929 (*Kyūgo Hō*) substantially expanded eligibility for assistance in comparison with the Relief Regulations, but the rights of the poor to receive protection were still not recognized. Those requiring assistance could only receive relief derived from the government's obligation to protect the poor and not as their rights to be protected.

To meet the exigencies of alleviating impoverishment after the Second World War, the Public Assistance Act of 1946 (*Kyū Seikatsu Hogo Hō*) was enacted based on three principles of public assistance established by the U.S. occupation forces. The Child Welfare Act of 1947 (*Jidō Fukushi Hō*) and the Act on the Welfare of Persons with Physical Disabilities of 1949 (*Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi Hō*) were further enacted to assist war orphans and war-disabled persons. After the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living had been incorporated into Article 25 of the Constitution of Japan, which was enacted under the supervision of the U.S. occupation forces, the Public Assistance Act of 1950 (*Seikatsu Hogo Hō*) was enacted, providing for the right of those requiring assistance to claim protection. To achieve universal health insurance and pension coverage, the National Health Insurance Act (*Kokumin Kenkō Hoken Hō*) was substantially revised in 1958, and the National Pension Act (*Kokumin Nenkin Hō*) was enacted in 1959. With the help of increasing tax revenue from rapid economic development in the 1960s, the Act on Social Welfare for the Elderly of 1963 (*Rōjin Fukushi Hō*), the Act on

Welfare of Mothers with Dependents of 1964 (*Boshi Fukushi Hō*), and the Maternal and Child Health Act of 1965 (*Boshi Hoken Hō*) were enacted.

The slowdown of Japan's economic growth following the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, however, changed the trajectory of the development of Japan's social security system. On the one hand, to alleviate the government's social security cost, self-responsibility and self-help efforts of individuals and families were emphasized, and the "Japanese-style welfare state" was propagated as being based on the three-generation family, a family system that was already beginning to break up at that time. On the other hand, to respond to the rapid aging of society, the National Pension Act was substantially revised in 1985 to introduce the basic pension system, and eight laws related to social welfare were revised in 1990, accordingly, and in 1995 the Basic Act on Measures for the Aging Society (*Kōrei Shakai Taisaku Kihon-Hō*) was enacted. While abolishing the elderly healthcare system that was becoming overburdened from the hospitalization of elderly persons requiring nursing care rather than medical care, the Long-Term Care Insurance Act of 1997 (*Kaigo Hoken Hō*) was enacted and put into force in April 2000. The primary objective was to quickly expand the volume of nursing-care services. At the end of 2012, the Act on Promotion of Reform to Establish a Sustainable Social Security System (*Shakai Hoshō Seido Kaikaku Suishin Hō*) was enacted to expand pension payments, healthcare, nursing care, and support for child-rearing.

As the overview of the development of social security laws given above indicates, Japan's social security laws and policies have put a focus on specific groups, such as children, sick and injured persons, disabled persons, single-mother families, and elderly persons. As a result, the "family (*kazoku*)" has never been a focus in social security laws and policies in Japan (Masuda 2007: 258–263). On the other hand, the concept of the "household (*setai*)," which implies a family relation based on the gender division of labor in family life, is being used as a basic unit to collect medical and pension insurance premiums and benefit payments. In the field of social welfare and social assistance policies, terms such as "single-mother households (*boshi setai*)," "single-father households (*fushi setai*)," "single elderly households (*kōrei tanshin setai*)," and "elderly married-couple households (*kōrei fūfu setai*)" are used to refer to recipients of benefits. Household income, in this regard, is the basis for determining requirement for protection under the Public Assistance Act (*Seikatsu Hogo Hō*). This concept of "household" however, is based not on relations between relatives as defined in the Civil Code (*Minpō*), such as husband and wife and parents and children, but on any relations among individuals who live in the same household and are supporting each other. Therefore, it is essentially different from the "family" used in family policies in Western countries. My line of argument is that there is nothing in Japan that corresponds to family policies in Western countries.

4 Family Policy as a Measure Against the Declining Birthrate

4.1 Causes of the Falling Birthrate and Measures for Improvement

It has been pointed out that the conservative aspects of family life and the slowness by which changes in family life are brought about are some of the causes of low fertility in Japan. Specifically, it has been claimed that (1) lack of women's initiative in matters of birth control (a substantial lag in the use of contraceptive pills compared to other countries) and (2) the deeply rooted notions about the *ie* system, such as that the role of the eldest son is to inherit, are serving as impediments that hinder young people to freely choose their spouses and to attain independence, factors which, as a consequence, are promoting further decline of the marriage rate. Moreover, (3) the deeply ingrained traditional gender division of labor, which is closely associated with the *ie* system, is delaying the implementation of working arrangements that enable women to continue their employment after giving birth and is obstructing gender equality at home. Further, (4) this division based on gender, which is deeply rooted in the traditional view of family, has been undermining the value of women's employment and independence. It is also contributing to the decline in the marriage rate (Atoh 2007: 81–85).

It has been noted that for Japan to transit from lowest-low fertility to moderately low fertility, it needs to promote gender-equal partnership formation between men and women to the level found in countries with moderately low fertility. This would require (1) giving women the initiative in birth control, (2) facilitating economic independence of the youth, (3) supporting young people in gaining psychological independence, and (4) promoting gender equality. In the transition of people's perceptions towards a greater acceptance of gender equality, support should be given to make it easier for men and women to balance their occupational and family roles. In this regard, it has been observed that family policies which focus on the improvement of the childcare leave system and nursery services are playing a significant role (Atoh 2007: 85–86).

4.2 Measures Against Low Fertility and Support for Families

When Japan's total fertility rate decreased to 1.57 in 1989, the need to implement measures against low fertility became striking, and the government started introducing such measures in the 1990s. With the coordinated help of related government ministries and agencies, the government adopted the "Angel

Plan"[4] (FY 1995 to 1999) and a "New Angel Plan"[5] (FY 2000 to FY 2004), respectively (CAO 2016: 25). One of the main objectives was the extension of childcare facilities such as nurseries, but although new day care centers were built, the two Angel Plans failed to put a stop to the rapid fall of the birthrate (Jozuka 2009: 95).

A major turning point in policy measures came about with the enactment of the "Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising the Next-Generation Children" (since July 2003) and the "Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate" (September 2003), and in December 2004 with the adoption of the government's "Basic Policy Guidelines on Declining Birthrate" and the "Child-Rearing Support Plan" (FY 2005 to FY 2009) (CAO 2016: 25). Specifically, the "Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising the Next-Generation Children" obligated local governments to draw up five-year regional action plans. The compilation of such regional action plans formed the basis for the national "Child-Rearing Support Plan" (Jozuka 2009: 95–96).

The introduction of a clear legal framework for local governments to set up regional action plans and for the central government to support their implementation had a significant impact. What was still lacking, however, were concrete measures for a re-evaluation of people's working styles. Therefore, in December 2007, the government announced the Key Strategies: "Japan that Supports Children and Families," (CAO 2016: 26) aiming to change the existing status quo in which female employees had to either choose between staying in employment, on the one hand, or getting married and having children, on the other hand, and to realize the labor market participation of all persons willing to work. The goals of the strategy were to support people to fulfill both their desire to marry and to have and raise children. To attain these goals, the government planned to carry out a two-tiered approach by reforming people's working styles for achieving a better work-life balance and by building up an infrastructure such as nursery services to comprehensively support child-rearing. On the same day of the announcement of the above strategy, the government also made public the "Charter for Work-Life Balance" and the "Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance". The Charter's stated goals are to create a society in which people (1) can attain economic independence through work, (2) can have time to lead healthy, fulfilling lives, and (3) can choose from a variety of working and life

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4 The four Ministers of Education, Health and Welfare, Labour and Construction formulated the first Angel Plan in December 1994 according to an agreement. This plan aimed to allow the society as a whole to endeavor child rearing in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

5 In consultation with other ministries and agencies concerned, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare worked out a concrete plan to implement a priority measure for the declining birth rate.

styles. Numerical targets were also introduced for these goals (Jozuka 2009: 98–100).

4.3 Birth of the DPJ Regime and Support for Child-Rearing

In 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power and amended the Employment Insurance Act to strengthen the social safety net for non-regular, contingent workers. The DPJ also amended the Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members, with the aim to exempt certain employees with children from overtime work and to obligate the business sector to introduce a system of shorter working hours. At the end of January 2010, the Cabinet adopted a program called “the Vision for Children and Childrearing,” which included twelve major policies in the areas of (1) supporting the development and growth of children and youth, (2) helping people fulfill their wish to have and raise children, (3) supporting child-rearing through various community networks, and (4) bringing about change to realize work-life balance. As a policy measure for (1) above, a child allowance system (*kodomo teate seido*) was established, and the system of child support allowance for single parents was expanded to cover single-father families through legislative amendment in 2010. After an issue was raised on non-availability of pension benefits for surviving single-father families in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the National Pension Act was amended in 2012 to enable payment of pension benefits to single-father families (CAO 2016: 26–27).

In 2012 three laws related to children and child-rearing were enacted based on the agreement of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), *Kōmeitō*, and DPJ, to comprehensively promote school education and nursery services for children and to support regional efforts in child-rearing. The three laws, which came into force in April 2015, aim to (1) create benefits across the board for parents using facility-based services, such as accredited children’s centers for early childhood education and care (*nintei kodomoen*), kindergartens, and nurseries, and regionally based small-scale nursery services; (2) improve the system of accredited children’s centers for early childhood education and care; and (3) enhance support for children and child-rearing in accordance with regional needs (Hashizume 2013: 96–108).

5 Family Policy as a Measure to Support the Development of the Next Generation of Children

5.1 LDP Regime and Measures for Supporting Child-Rearing

When the LDP regained power and formed a coalition government at the end of 2012, it immediately abolished the child allowance system that had been implemented by the DPJ and revived and further expanded its own child allowance system (*jidō teate seido*). In March 2013, the Cabinet Office published the results of a survey on the progress made in "the Vision for Children and Childrearing" program in a report titled "Survey for the Inspection and Assessment of the Indicators of the Vision for Children and Childrearing." In the report, more than 50 percent of the survey respondents said that the government's efforts were insufficient in each of the following areas: supporting young people to gain independence and employment; encouraging men to be more involved in child-rearing; preparing an environment conducive to changing people's working styles, including curbing long working hours and promoting telecommuting; eliminating the shortage of nurseries and improving the quality of pre-school education and nursing services; and preventing child abuse and enhancing programs for nurturing orphans and children from poor families (CAO 2016: 27–28).

Despite these results, the government's "Declining Birth Rate Crisis Relief Taskforce" issued the "Urgent Countermeasures to Break through the Fertility Crisis" in June 2013 (CAO 2016: 27), which proposed to further strengthen efforts to (1) support child-rearing and (2) reform people's working style as well as to (3) implement measures to provide support for marriage, pregnancy, and birth, as "three arrows" of policy measures. "Marriage"[6] was included for the first time in the third arrow of "providing support for marriage, pregnancy, and birth," since there is an ongoing trend towards less marriage in Japan[7].

5.2 Perception Survey for Review of the Basic Policy Guidelines on Declining Birthrate and Formulation of New Guideline

In March 2015, the Cabinet Office published a report on the results of the "review meeting on the priority issues of supports for marriage and childrearing toward realization of the New Outline of Measures for Society with Declining Birthrate," which included questions on marriage, pregnancy, and birth. Specifically, respondents from ages between 20 and 59 were asked what measures were essential to support single people to get married, and a high percentage of them gave the following responses: raise wages to stabilize

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6 There was a major understanding observed at the time, that women must give priority to first getting married, and then giving birth. A female member of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly was confronted with sexist remarks made by male politicians during a session in June 2014, in which she was ridiculed for being unmarried and lacking children. Detailed media coverage on this issue by *BBC News* (23/06/2014) and *Japan Times* (19/06/2018).

7 There is a dramatic increase in the percentage of unmarried men and women in their 50s from 1,7% and 3.3% in 1970 to 23.4% and 14.1% in 2015. The unmarried rate at age 50 is called a lifetime non-marriage rate. Because there are few births outside marriage in Japan, the cause of the declining birthrate is attributed almost exclusively to marriage behavior (CAO 2017: 7).

household finances; create a workplace environment where both husband and wife can remain in employment; and provide stable employment opportunities through employment measures. Among respondents who were single and under forty, more women than men chose the response "create a workplace environment where both husband and wife can remain in employment." Among female students, as many as over 60 percent chose this response (CAO 2016: 28).

These results show that policy support in the personal domain of "marriage, pregnancy, and birth" boils down to policy measures for work-life balance, and particularly, the reform of people's working styles that was included in the "Urgent Countermeasures to Break through the Fertility Crisis" has yielded only little results. This also means that a family policy is needed in Japan. The "New Outline of Measures for Society with Declining Birthrate" provides five priority plans, in addition to a new support for marriage and childbirth at a young age (CAO 2016: 28).

5.3 Amendment of the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children and Future Challenges

In April 2014, a law was established to amend related laws to promote and further strengthen measures to support the development of the next generation of children and enhance measures to support single-parent families. The amendment was based on the understanding of the need to prepare a better environment in the workplace and regional communities to promote sound development of children who will forge the future society as the next generation. The amendment included (1) a 10-year extension of the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, effective from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2025, and (2) the establishment of a new special certification system for business operators who are exemplary in their implementation of workplace measures for assisting the development of the next generation of children. Such business operators are chosen among those who have received the "*Kurumin* Mark[8]" certification for drawing up and implementing an action plan to create a better workplace environment for child-rearing (see Figure 2). Business operators certified under the new system will be required to make public the status of implementation of their measures according to an action plan that is drawn up based on government guidelines (CAO 2016: 28–30).

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[8] In case that certain assets contributing to next generation development support regulated by MHLW Notification is described in an action plan, introduced during an action plan period and authorized, additional depreciation deduction of 18 percent to 32 percent per year of such given assets during the business year including the date of authorization under *Kurumin* Mark will be approved. *Okurumi* means baby wrapping (MHLW 2017).

Figure 2: *Kurumin* Mark

Note: Companies that implement certain standards supporting the rearing of children receive this mark as a recognition for their efforts.
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

With regard to the guidelines, the Equal Employment Subcommittee, established under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Labour Policy Council, recommended that the guidelines clearly indicate (a) inclusion of non-regular, contingent workers in the action plans to ensure that business operators are fully aware that such non-regular, contingent workers should be included and (b) the importance of reviewing people's working styles through measures to encourage male employees to take childcare leave, reduce overtime, encourage employees to take paid annual leave, and to adopt schemes to enable a variety of working styles (such as a system of shorter working hours for regular employees, working from home, and telecommuting). Measures to encourage male employees to take childcare leave included allowing male employees to take a leave of about five days in length, establishing companies' distinct childcare leave systems, permitting male employees to take paid annual leave in the unit of hours, encouraging male employees to take leave within eight weeks of their spouse giving birth, and setting up a system where male employees will be able to take leave to attend to children older than primary-school age or grandchildren. The review of people's working styles, however, is a matter that should be considered within the framework of regulations on working hours and holidays and that should, in the future, include in its scope measures to support workers balance work and nursing care of family members (CAO 2016: 30–32).

Based on three laws related to children and child-rearing enacted in 2012, the support system for children and child-rearing has been enforced on April 1, 2015. To improve the support system for children and childrearing, the Children and Childrearing Support Act was amended and enforced in April 2016.

6 Conclusion

The family is usually regarded as the natural germ-cell of any society. But especially in Japan the family has had an extraordinary role within the *ie* system. In the *ie* system the woman was legally incompetent and completely subjugated to the husband. In order to save her livelihood conditions she had to have children with her husband. In the post-war period after 1945 the *ie* system came to be abolished as it was seen as the political and social basis of the traditional emperor system and as working against the modern notion of individual dignity and the equality of men and women.

But as a matter of fact, the idea of the *ie* system is still having an impact on social relations within Japanese society until today. For instance in the case that marriage still means that the surname of the woman has to be changed to that of her husband's and that the female spouse will be registered as a wife in the family register of her husband. Therefore, the idea of predominance of men over women still remains in families and many women become victims of domestic violence or other forms of maltreatment by their husbands because of their financial and mental dependence.

With regard to growing diversity in family life course, family policy should not force people to live a stereotypical lifestyle. The above-mentioned family support measures that Japanese governments have implemented so far, are first of all measures against the declining birth rate, as well as measures to support child rearing. However, the policies may have the effect of fiercely pushing women to get married in the first place and then have children within the marriage. This means that in Japan it is extremely difficult for a woman to give birth outside of legal marriage and to raise the child as a single mother. Unmarried couples raising a child, so-called patchwork families, or any other kind of non-stereotypical families are still stigmatized in Japanese society. This tendency is actually indicated by the high rate of abortions and the extremely low birth rate of children born out of wedlock (up to 2% in 2016).

Diverse lifestyles must be respected. A society in which people can choose among various ways of living should be the political goal. A stop of the falling birthrate or even increasing the number of childbirths can only be realized if a society provides the means to raise a child while working with or without marriage, and if not only the family members, but business organizations and every member in the local communities are being involved in child rearing. Japanese society should also endorse more diversity in family support measures, which eventually will turn out to be more effective to the improvement of the birthrate than setting it as a national purpose to increase the number of children.

Appendix

(A) The Constitution of Japan

Article 24: Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.
(2) With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes.

Article 25: All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living.
(2) In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavors for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.

(B) Book IV of the Civil Code

Article 739: Marriage shall take effect upon notification pursuant to the Family Registration Act (Act No. 224 of 1947).
(2) The notification in the preceding paragraph shall be given by document with the signatures of both parties and not less than two adult witnesses, or given orally by these persons.

Article 742: Marriage shall be void only in the following cases:
(i) if one of the parties has no intention to marry due to mistaken identity or other cause, or
(ii) if the parties do not lodge notification of marriage; provided however, that the effect of marriage shall not be prevented merely because notification was not given in the form prescribed in paragraph (2) of Article 739.

Article 750: A husband and wife shall adopt the surname of the husband or wife in accordance with that which is decided at the time of marriage.

Article 752: A husband and wife shall live together and provide mutual cooperation and assistance.

Article 763: A husband and wife may divorce by agreement.

Article 818: A child who has not attained the age of majority shall be subject to the parental authority of his/her parents.

(2)—omission—
(3) Parental authority shall be exercised jointly by married parents; provided that if either parent is incapable of exercising parental authority, the other parent shall do so.

Article 819: If parents divorce by agreement, they may agree upon which parent shall have parental authority in relation to a child.
(2) In the case of judicial divorce, the court shall determine which parent shall have parental authority.
(3)–(6)—omission—

C)The Family Register Act

Article 14: Names shall be entered in the Following order:
First: the name of the husband when the husband and wife take the husband's surname, or the name of the wife when they take the wife's surname;
Second: the name of the spouse;
Third: the name(s) of any child(ren).
(2)–(3)—omission—

Article 74: Persons who to marry shall submit a notification to that effect, entering the following matters in the written notification:
(i) the surname that the husband and wife will take; and
(ii) other matters specified by Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice.

Appendix II

Overview of Japanese Social Security and Family Laws

Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members: *Ikuji Kyūgyo, Kaigo Kyūgyo tō Ikuji matawa Kazoku Kaigo wo okonau Rōdōsha no Fukushi ni kansuru Hōritsu,* Act No. 76 of 1991 http://www.japan eselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail_download/?ff=09&id=2438 (accessed 14/08/2018).

Act on Promotion of Reform to Establish Sustainable Social Security System: *Shakai Hoshō Seido Kaikaku Suishin Hō*, Act No. 64 of 2012. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws-search/1sg0500/detail?lawId=424AC1000000064&openerCode=1 (accessed 07/09/2018).

Act on Social Welfare for Elderly: *Rōjin Fukushi Hō*, Act No. 133 of 1963. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?re=02&dn=1&x=0&y=0&co=1&ia=03&yo=&gn=&sy=&ht=&no=&bu=&ta=&ky=social+welfare+for+elderly&page=41 (accessed 15/05/2017).

Act on Welfare of Mothers with Dependents: *Boshi Fukushi Hō*, Act No. 129 of 1964. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId=339AC0000000129&openerCode=1(only Japanese) (accessed 17/09/2018).

Act on Welfare of Persons with Physical Disabilities: *Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi Hō*, Act No. 283 of 1949. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws-search/1sg0500/detail?lawId =324AC1000000283 (accessed 17/09/2018).

Basic Act on Measures for the Aging Society: *Kōrei Shakai Taisaku Kihon Hō*, Act No. 129 of 1995. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId =407AC1000000129&openerCode=1 (accessed 07/09/2018).

Book IV of the Meiji Civil Code: *Minpō Dai 4 Hen,* Act No. 9 of 1898. http://www.cas.go.jp/seisaku/hourei/date/cc4=2pdf (only Japanese) (accessed 17/09/2018).

Book IV of the Civil Code: *Minpō Dai 4 Hen,* Act No. 222 of 1947. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=2057&vm=&re=02&new=1 (accessed 15/05/2017).

Child Welfare Act: *Jidō Fukushi Hō*, Act No. 164 of 1942. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?re=02&dn=1&x=0&y=0&co=1&ia=03&yo=&gn=&sy=&ht=&no=&bu=&ta=&ky=child+welfare+act&page=37 (accessed 15/05/2017).

Children and Childrearing Support Act: *Kodomo Kosodate Shien Hō*, Act No. 65 of 2012. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId=424AC0000000065=20180401=430AC0000000012&openerCode=1(only Japanese) (accessed 17/09/2018).

Constitution of Japan: *Nihonkoku Kenpō*, November 3, 1946. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?dn=4&x=0&y=0&re=02&co=1&ia=03&yo=&gn=&sy=&ht=&no=&bu=&ta=&ky=constitution+of+japan&page=41 (accessed 15/05/2017).

Employment Insurance Act: *Koyō Hoken Hō,* Act No. 116 of 1974. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=1910&vm=04&re=02 (accessed 14/08/2018).

Family Register Act: *Kyū Koseki Hō*. (The first Family Register Act was 1898 enacted. This Act was 1913 all reformed.) http://www.geocities.jp/nakanolib/hou/ht03-26.htm (accessed 27/09/2018).

Family Register Act: *Koseki Hō,* Act No. 224 of 1947. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail_download/?ff=09&id=2161 (accessed 14/08/2018).

Long-Term Care Insurance Act: *Kaigo Hoken Hō*, Act No. 123 of 1997. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?vm=04&re=01&id=94 (accessed 17/09/2018).

Maternal and Child Health Act: *Boshi Hoken Hō*, Act No. 141 of 1965. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId=340AC0000000141&openerCode=1 (accessed 07/09/2018).

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National Pension Act: *Kokumin Nenkin Hō*, Act No. 141 of 1959. http://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/search/elawsSearch/elaws_search/lsg0500/detail?lawId=334AC0000000141 (accessed 07/09/2018).

Poor Relief and Protection Law: *Kyugo Hō* of 1929. http://www.geocities.jp/nakanolib/hou/hs04-39.htm (accessed 24/09/2018).

Public Assistance Act: *Kyū Seikatsu Hogo Hō*. The former Public Assistance Act of 1946. http://www1.mint.or.jp/~kaoru-h/02siryokan/kouteki/020200/020200.htm (accessed 24/09/2018).
Public Assistance Act: *Seikatsu Hogo Hō*, Act No. 144 of 1950. http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?dn=4&x=0&y=0&re=02&co=1&ia=03&yo=&gn=&sy=&ht=&no=&bu=&ta=&ky=public+assistance+act&page=102 (accessed 15/05/2017).
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From the Skeptical to the Overburdened Generation

Hans Bertram

1 Introduction

In 1957, the German sociologist Helmut Schelsky characterized the juveniles and young adults born in Germany between 1930 and 1943 as the "skeptical generation." With this concept Schelsky was referring to those young people born and raised between the Great Depression, the Third Reich, and the Second World War, indicating that this generation was primarily skeptical towards all kinds of political pathos and slogans, focusing instead on their private and professional lives, and valuing their newly gained security and modest prosperity more than anything else in life. The skeptical attitude has to be understood as a result of this generation's specific life experiences, as they suffered great hardships during their childhood and adolescent years, losing possessions and even their homelands during wartime, and after the war often had to cope with the loss of their fathers or other relatives.

The American sociologist and psychologist Glen Elder has in a similar vein described attitudes of young Americans who were born during the Great Depression and grew up in the years of the long-lasting economic recession (1974). Obviously, experiences of loss and the daily struggle to ensure private economic subsistence and to find a place in society almost naturally resulted in a skepticism towards pathos and ideological slogans. This seems to be an apt description for a common generational feeling.

Comparing the experiences that the skeptical generation gained during their childhood and adolescent years with those of today's youth and young adults, it can be maintained that today's levels of economic security and prosperity, as well as levels of educational and professional training, are higher than ever before in history. In contrast to the skeptical generation, today's youth and young adults are growing up in relatively small families with only one or two siblings, while being provided with economic security by their parents.

In this chapter, I am going to compare these two generations with regard to their life courses in order to show the ways in which today's young adults are being confronted with the incredibly high expectations of their parents' and grandparents' generation towards them, and the consequences this has for the younger generation. As the older generation seeks to ensure their high and secure standard of living, there is the need to guarantee the economic and social quality of life for elderly people over their entire lifetime and to provide the appropriate support for those in need of care.

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_3

This situation is without historical precedent; the younger generation is facing a high degree of uncertainty about their future, as they are not only responsible for managing their own lives, but are also in charge of their elderly parents' and grandparents' well-being. The dramatic nature of these changes is reflected in the changing population pyramid in developed countries: fewer young adults have to support a growing number of elderly people, and this demographic constellation is not only the case in Germany with its low fertility rates, but also in countries with higher birthrates, such as in the U.S. and in France.

In addition, there have been major changes in economic development. In his social analysis, Schelsky mostly dealt with industrial employees and workers, who in the 1950s were the largest and most influential social group of young adults, compared with only about eight percent of academic graduates. The significant increase in industrial employment reached its peak in the early 1970s, with about 50 percent of employees in this sector. The industrial society with its secure jobs offered this generation a high amount of security and provided a clear perspective for the future. The postmodern society that has been evolving since the 1970s has stopped providing such security for many young adults, especially when they are starting an academic career.

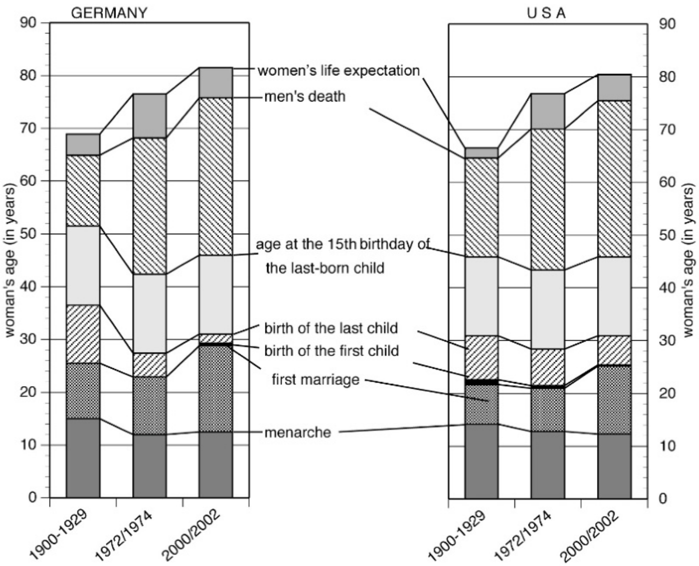
I would like to propose as a hypothesis for consideration that the skeptical generation, both in the developing societies of Western Germany and the GDR, was offered high degrees of private, occupational, economic, and political security after living through extremely uncertain childhood and adolescent years. Today's young adults have grown up in a safe environment and enjoy high degrees of personal skill development. However, the amount of economic security that was provided by postwar industrial society and embedded in the political context of a bipolar world order is no longer available to the young generation.

It remains unclear how the economic structure of the knowledge society is evolving, and the paths of integration into new forms of employment are yet to be developed. An individual's decisions about educational training, their career, and their family are not only personal choices, but are valued as a social activity in the public, familial, and professional context. Private life, which in the 1950s and 1960s was indeed considered as private, is now going to be evaluated with regard to its social usefulness; an argument I am going to return to later in this chapter.

2 The Years Gained

In 1979, the Italian demographer Livi-Bacci showed for the first time how fundamentally women's lives have changed during the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society (Livi-Bacci 1979). This is an issue that the German historian and demographer Arthur Imhof has addressed in his study "The extra years" (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Changes in the Life Cycles of Married Women from the Beginning of the 20th Century until Today, in Germany and the United States



Source: Imhof 1981: Die gewonnenen Jahre: p.164 ff. Years 2000/2002 own calculations data from Statistischen Bundesamtes. USA: U.S. Census Bureau; Human Fertility Database MPI Rostock; Age at birth at the first and last child: Suchindran/Koo 1992: Age at Last Birth and Its Components, Demography 28(2): p. 236. Live Expectancy: National Vital Statistics Report 2011 Nr. 59(9): p. 48; Menarche: Steingraber 2007: The Falling Age of Puberty in US Girls. Announcement: Life expectancy = Lifespan of women and men, who reach at least 25 year of age.

The skeptical generation was in their mid-life in the 1970s, when those born during the Great Depression turned 40, and those born at the end of the war turned 30. In terms of family planning and starting a career, the skeptical generation was atypical in comparison to all older generations before them in history. They married and had children at an early age; giving birth to the final number of children by the age of 30 on average, implying that mothers were only 43 years old when their youngest child turned 15. Due to an increased life expectancy, these women could enjoy an extra 35 “gained years” in their lives.

There were similar trends in the U.S. but they were not as pronounced as in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, where the average age at the first marriage was under 25 years old. It is important to note that the reduction of the reproduction rate from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1960s was not the result of lower fertility rates, but due to improvements in maternity care and significantly low infant mortality rates. Comparatively, with an average of 2.3 children born per woman, the skeptical generation had many children. What remained relatively unchanged was the 10-year period between puberty and the birth of the first child.

In comparison, in 2000 the life course of women had radically changed. The period between puberty and birth of the first child had changed to almost 20 years at the beginning of the millennium, with similar though not as dramatic trends for the United States.

In a report on the older generation (Kocka, Kohli and Streek 2009), both Imhof and the German National Academy of Sciences regarded these extra years much more as years for the elderly. As current changes in the life course show, however, these years can also be obtained at the stage of young adulthood, which is not affected by marriage, parenthood, career, or even by other elements, at a time when the future outlook of the life course is still unknown. The reproductive cycle, which today usually begins at the age of 30, and is very short due to low fertility rates, allows for more time before starting a family and provides opportunities for living different ways of life.

The American social psychologist Jeffrey Arnett has coined the term “emerging adulthood” for this phase of life, indicating that the early transition from adolescence to adulthood that was typical for the skeptical generation is now becoming postponed (Arnett 2010). The skeptical generation that mostly consisted of skilled workers became economically independent, got married, and had children early in life. The transition from adolescence to adulthood corresponds to Talcott Parsons’ theories about the industrial family, which he developed at the same time that Schelsky presented his theory on the “skeptical generation.” Today, there is no longer such a smooth transition, but rather a variety of different paths, and young adults have to cope more individually and independently when leading their lives. If the hypothesis is applied that the phase of young adulthood can no longer be clearly demarcated from adulthood, then the defining criteria for adulthood, such as economic independence, or having a household with family and children, are no longer valid in analyzing these changes.

Among the many criteria for describing the separation of adulthood from adolescence, I find Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen’s concept of active participation in societal development the most appropriate. Sen assumes that all individuals have the right to cope with their own lives while being materially independent in a social context. This so-called right to material participation is closely linked to the individuals’ right to develop the skills according to their abilities for material participation. Substantive participation and the capability to take part in the qualification process of a society only becomes possible if the individuals are able to subjectively interpret their personal situation, their life, and social relations as satisfactory, and do not feel excluded from their relations to others.

Sen’s concept is a very accurate description of the self-perception of adolescents and young adults. As Arnett’s surveys revealed (Arnett 2010: 210), teenagers and young adults name three key criteria that must be met when considering being an adult: responsibility for oneself, or the ability to take responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions; the opportunity to make one’s own decisions without depending on others, e.g. for housing, education, and career choices, as well as for religious, ethical and political beliefs; and economic independence.

3 The Gained Years and the Rush Hour of Life

The scientific debate in Germany about youth as a separate phase in life (Böhnisch 2009) still regards the firm attachment to the labor market and leaving behind precarious jobs as central elements of being able to participate in society as an adult. Both German and international research (Furstenberg 2010) has described this transformation as being characterized by diversity and a low level of structure, but most scholars fail to identify a link between youth and adulthood that can be described as an independent phase of life. The standard life course of the skeptical generation had a transition to adulthood that was clearly defined, and the transition process was clearly recognizable for everyone. The current scholarly debates as well as the young adults themselves seem to admit that there is now a unique phase of life emerging between youth and adulthood. However, what is still lacking is the description of how the process of transition into adulthood is actually taking place.

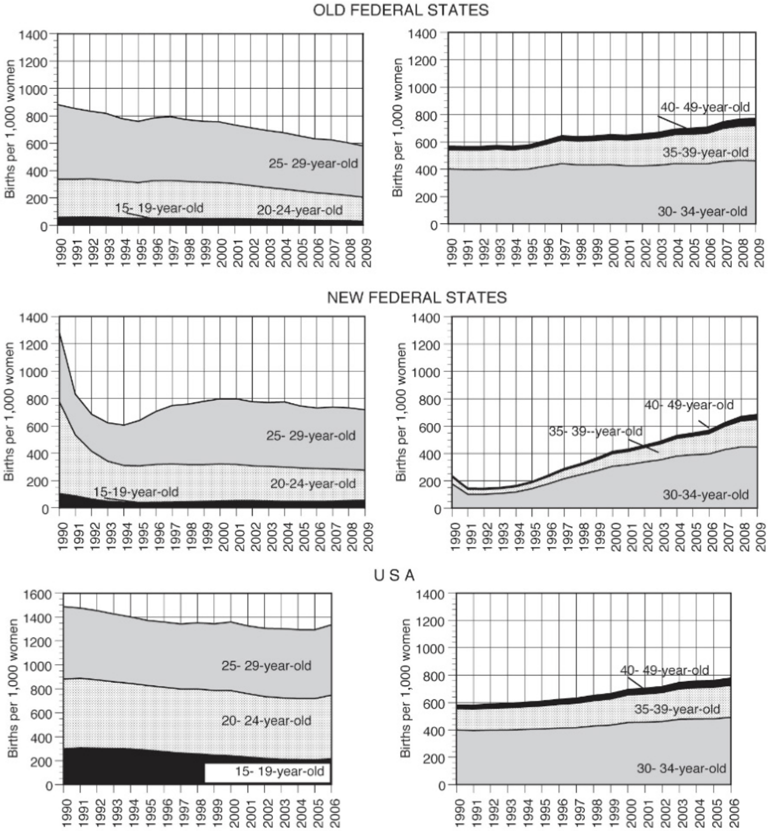
3.1 The Compression of the Narrow Time Window over the Age of 30

Taking a look at some demographic indicators of young adulthood, it can be suggested that the amount of time that is gained under the age of 30 does not equal a prolongation of the life over the age of 30. On the contrary, postponed events such as marriage, having children, and starting a career have to be tackled all at once and in a very short period of time.

With regards to the age-specific fertility rates in Germany (ASFR), birthrates among women under the age of 30 are declining significantly: In 1990, the ratio was 900 children per 1000 women of this age, whereas in 2009 it was only 600 children. In contrast, the number of children born by women over the age of 30 has increased from about 600 to about 800, with particularly high birthrates among the 35–39 age group (see Figure 2).

A similar tendency can be observed in the U.S., where the birthrate is decreasing among women under the age of 30, from 1500 to 1000 children per 1000 women, and a similar increase of the birthrate in women over the age of 30 is also taking place; from 600 in 1990 to 800 in 2009. Postponing family formation until a later age is more pronounced in Germany than in the U.S., and even more than in other European countries, such as Sweden and France. Due to biological reasons, family formation over the age of 30 has to occur very quickly, because the chances of becoming pregnant and having children decline progressively with age.

Figure 2: Cumulative Age-Specific Fertility Rates (ASFR) from 1990 to 2009, Germany and USA



Note: Since the year 2001 old federal states without West-Berlin and new federal states without East-Berlin.
Source: ASFR Germany: Statistisches Bundesamt Wiesbaden 2010, ASFR USA: MPI Rostock, The Human Fertility Database, own calculations and illustration.

If family formation is being postponed until later age levels, the life choices that have to be tackled at the same time, such as starting a career and professional development, are becoming very compressed into a narrow time frame. In the past, starting a family during one's mid-20s did not necessarily affect later career options at the age of 35, and it was possible to link the different life events one after another in the chronological order of a life course, whereas the current trend of simultaneously starting both a family and a professional career is causing a greater conflict potential between the different spheres of life. Political support measures, such as income-related family allowances for the economic livelihood during the first year of the child's life and the provision of early childcare services, can only alleviate this potential conflict to a limited extent. This is because advancement to positions of responsibility normally takes place in the fourth life decade, and very young children have different demands regarding care and attention compared to children of 8 to 10 years of age.

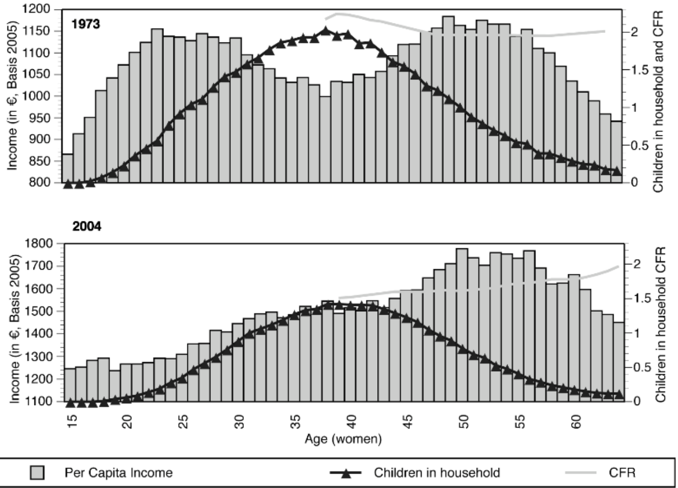
3.2 The Material Participation

One reason for the late decision to have children in today's Germany can be identified by the fact that the material participation of young adults is far worse than it had been in Schelsky's generation. The calculation of the per capita income of women for the years 1973 and 2008 for specific age cohorts clearly indicates that in 1973, due to early marriage and an early career start during their twenties, the per capita income per family was about the same as in old age over 50. In contrast, the per capita income today is continuously increasing, reaching the highest levels between 50 and 60 years. At the age of starting a family, the per capita income level is about the same as that of a pensioner's household at the age of 65—even when considering that today's income levels are higher than in the 1970s, and that in this decade the per capita income was lowest for the 35–45 age group due to the fact that this cohort was usually living in a family household with many children. In contrast to the 1970s, a young couple today is economically unable to build up resources to start a family because they are confronted with precarious economic conditions. It seems odd that the highest disposable per capita incomes are found in older age groups, who no longer have to care for family and children. A society has to face the question whether it is a sustainable future concept that a pensioner's household is financially more well off than a young family's household (see Figure 3).

The American sociologist Reynolds Farley has shown that a worker in the U.S. in 1985 already had less disposable income (inflation-corrected) than his grandfather, who was able to receive a relatively good and secure pension (Farley 1996). Without entering into a discussion about the political implications, it has to be stated that starting a family is occurring in a life phase when it is necessary to not only secure one's own professional position, but also to increase the income of the family.

There is a simple answer to the question as to why the income development between different age groups has changed so much. The income of a skilled worker depended on his training, which usually finished in his twenties. The German sociologists Heinrich Popitz and Hans-Paul Bahrdt described this relationship of professional experience and physical performance clearly and in detail in their study on the social image of the industrial worker: strength, skills and professional experience paved the way for performing the toughest and most skilled jobs, which in return generated the highest incomes.

Figure 3: Income Development of Women over the Life Course, 1973 and 2004



Note: The per capita income is the net equivalent income, weighted by the new OECD-scala.
CFR = Cohort Fertility Rate.
Source: Scientific Use Files of the German Microcensus 1973, 2004, own calculations and illustration.

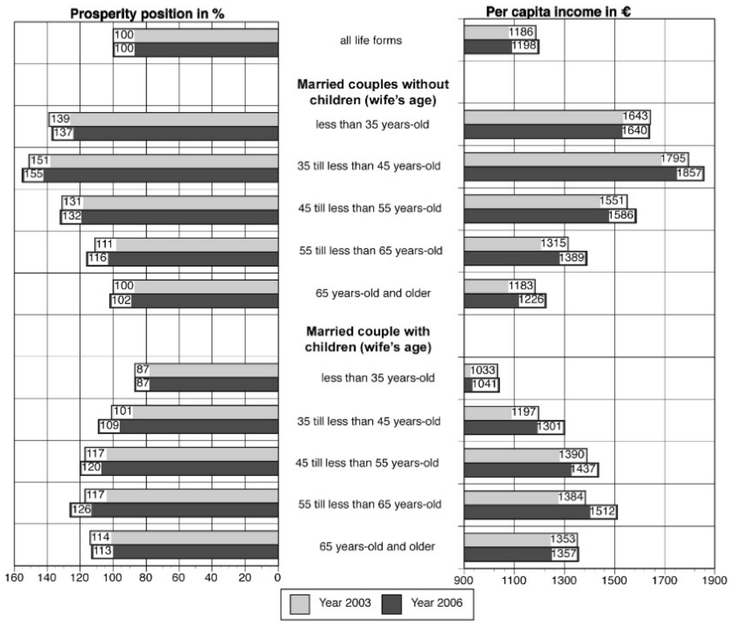
In today's society, where almost half of school graduates receive a high school or even academic degree, there are much fewer opportunities to earn a sufficient amount of money with your work; academic professions in particular are designed as career positions, only allowing one to receive a high income later in life after achieving a higher career level.

The decision to have children in this situation is creating an economic constraint, not only in comparison to the parents' generation, but also in comparison to peers who opt for partnership without children. According to calculations by the Family Research Center of the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Statistical Office (Bertram and Kohl 2010), in 2006, a 35-year-old married couple without children had on average almost 40 percent more per capita income at their disposal than the average population, whereas young families had about 13 percent less available than the average. Single mothers are far less well off, with per capita incomes of about 64 percent below the average, which is not even half of the income childless couples have.

The situation of families with children is problematic not only in comparison to those of the older skeptical generation, but also in relation to the growing number of singles and couples without children, for with regards to consumer standards, we usually compare ourselves with peers. If living without children is becoming the norm, living with children is increasingly perceived as limiting one's own life, despite the allocation of family benefits. Single mothers and fathers living with children especially are even running the risk of falling into poverty, and family policy is not very effective in preventing relative poverty for this group (see Figure 4).

It is usually argued that the economic deprivation of families is the result of the young mothers' low labor market participation in Germany, and that if enough childcare support services for young children were provided, the economic difficulties experienced by young families could be solved due to higher rates of working mothers. Although the expansion of the childcare and all-day school infrastructure is certainly a successful instrument to improve the reconciliation of work and family life, it is nevertheless an illusion to believe that economic disadvantages could simply be overcome by improving infrastructure alone. International comparison has shown that even in countries with an excellent preschool and all-day school infrastructure, the economic disadvantage of single parents can only become offset by providing substantial government transfer payments (see Figure 5).

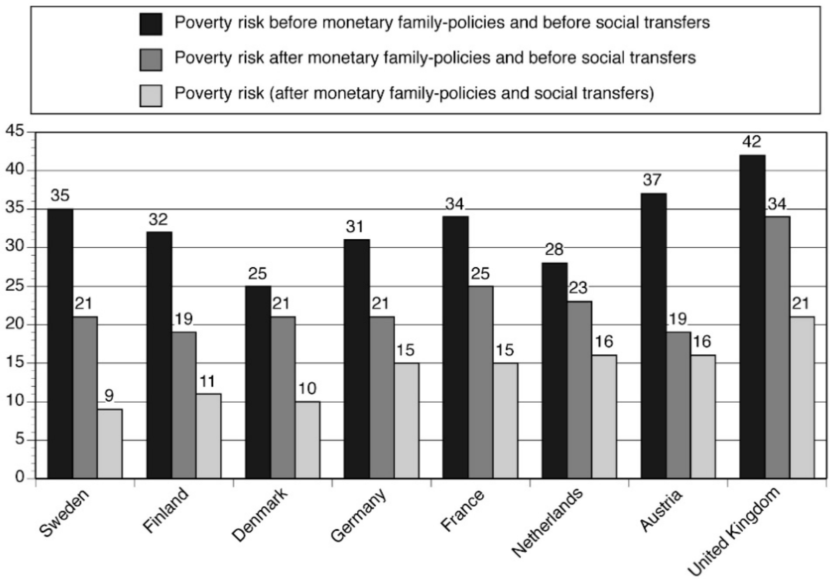
Figure 4: Prosperity Status and per Capita Income for Couples with Children and without Children



Note: The per capita income is the net equivalent income, weighted by the new OECD-scala. The category "all life forms" indicates the average per capita income. It includes all marital statuses in Germany. It serves as the reference category.
Source: German Microcensus 2003 and 2006, Calculation by "Familienwissenschaftliche Forschungsstelle im Statistischen Landesamt Baden-Württemberg"; own illustration.

Even in Sweden, a country with high female labor participation rates due to all-day schools and a well-developed childcare infrastructure for children under 6 years old, the risk of poverty is highest among single mothers (35 percent), while Finland's rates (32 percent) are similar to Germany's (31 percent). But unlike Germany, the Nordic countries have a stronger commitment to combat the poverty of single mothers effectively by allocating transfer payments from the state to them. In Sweden, this is achieved through covering the full social security contributions for part-time working mothers; as a result, these mothers' disposable net income is significantly higher than those of part-time workers without social contributions in Germany. In Germany, women are instead awarded pension entitlements for childrearing periods, which become effective only at old age, but not at the time when mothers are bringing up children. Another positive result of these transfer

Figure 5: Percentage of Children at Risk of Poverty Before and After Monetary Family Benefits and Social Transfers in Selected European Countries: 2004



Note: Pensions are not included in social transfers; At risk of poverty are children in households having less than 60 percent of the national median equivalent income available. Weighted by the new OECD scala. Weight 1=first person in the household; weight 0,5=each further person aged 14 or older, weight 0,3=each further person aged 14 or younger. Since 2004 there has been a differentiation of the income definition due to a diversification of the income and poverty calculation. Official EU-SILC, Microcensus and OECD data consequently slightly differ after 2004.
That is why the reference year illustrated is 2004.
Source: EU-SILC 2005 (reference income from 2004); UK EU-SILC 2006; published in: ISR Task Force (2008): Child poverty and child well-being in the EU, Part I: Evaluative review of child poverty and social exclusion in the EU, Brussels, p. 31, own illustration.

payments is that it is attractive for the young mothers to be working in terms of social security, which is only achieved by being attached to the labor market. In doing so, Swedish mothers develop a continuous occupational biography like male peers, with almost the same amount of social security entitlements. As the Swedish example shows, the economic disadvantage of families in Germany is created by the fact that the state and the society do not appropriately respond to the changes of family formation and future working life prospects of young mothers and fathers (see Figure 5).

Viewed economically, it is obvious that young people aged 29–35 who choose to start a family today are also consciously accepting to face negative economic consequences from this decision, compared to the increasingly larger peer group living without a family who are earning much higher per capita incomes—single parents are even facing a significant risk of poverty. In this regard a difference exists between these young adults and the skeptical generation. In Germany, the inadequate redistribution and partial overburden is only partially the result of the economic transformation of modern society, but much more due to the fact that despite considerable financial expenditures, the state has thus far failed to guarantee an economic balance between generations, and is not preventing the decision to have children from becoming associated with significant economic constraints.

3.3 Female Labor Force Participation

Economic disadvantages are not the result of low female labor force participation rates, as is revealed by the comparison of working mothers in Germany and European countries. The employment behavior of mothers with small children in Germany is not much different from that of France or other European countries (see Figure 6). Comparing France and Germany, it must be noted that differences are small between mothers with one child regardless of age. In France, 74 percent of mothers with a child under 3 years old are in employment; in Germany 73 percent. No differences exist between Germany and France concerning mothers with several children. The labor force participation in both countries is much higher than in Finland, where only 55 percent of mothers with a child under 3 years old are working. There are differences for children aged 3–5 years and aged 5–14 years, and particularly with regard to large families, both France and Finland vary greatly. These international comparisons do not provide explanations about the reasons behind these differences, such as cultural background, different interpretations of the mother's role, lack of all-day schools or childcare limited to the morning only. However, the international differences are not so profound as to suggest that women in Germany are refraining from work due to the cultural background. Instead the lack of infrastructure has to be considered as having an impact.

The labor force participation of mothers in a generational comparison shows that for mothers with small children, the "housewife and mother" model has become uncommon today, due to the fact that the vast majority of young mothers are

Figure 6: Employment Rate of Women Aged 25 to 49 in EU Countries According to the Number and Age of Children

Country	Germany		France		Italy		Netherlands		Finland		Great Britain	
Year	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003
Childless Women	84	74	80	78	67	59	87	82	84	81	84	84
Employment rate of women with children aged 0-14												
1 child	76	76	78	75	61	54	81	73	72	74	73	72
2 children	71	64	77	67	52	47	81	69	82	71	72	68
3 children	59	46	63	41	41	34	75	59	67	60	54	48
Employment rate of women with children aged 0-14, youngest child under the age of 3												
1 child	73	68	74	73	61	58	87	79	55	56	73	69
2 children	64	54	63	52	53	47	81	68	58	39	63	59
3 children	44	38	44	29	38	34	68	49	45	49	43	36
Employment rate of women with children aged 0-14, youngest child between 3 and 5 years old												
1 child	74	73	79	75	62	55	79	70	83	84	71	69
2 children	67	63	78	71	52	46	81	67	86	81	64	66
3 children	54	43	68	46	38	31	75	56	80	63	49	46
Employment rate of women with children aged 0-14, all children older than 5 years												
1 child	79	79	81	75	61	52	76	71	86	80	74	74
2 children	76	71	85	75	54	48	81	71	93	86	78	75
3 children	72	63	72	54	44	38	78	72	79	79	67	62

Source 2009: Eurostat, European Labor Force Study, own calculations and illustration.
Source 2003: taken from: R. Renz and B. Eggen, Frauen in Europa: Job? Kinder? Oder Beides? in: Statistisches Monatsheft Baden-Württemberg 4/2004, pp. 11ff

working. Thus, in comparison with the skeptical generation, the challenges for this generation have increased significantly. In the past, a gender division of labor and social roles clearly existed, and housewives and mothers had more free time at their disposal and more time to take care of their children and the household according to their own wishes. In contrast, today's working young mothers have to align their time schedule and working hours essentially according to the opening hours of the child care institutions, which often leads to serious conflicts over the planned way of caring for their children, and their own ideas about family life. Afternoon or evening jobs at department stores or night shifts as a nurse are incompatible with having family dinner and with putting the children to bed relaxed, which from both the mothers' and the children's point of view are key elements of childcare and commitment to the family.

The problem of fitting into the temporal structure of a workplace and living in family relationships with children and a partner in ways that are satisfactory for all cannot be solved by an egalitarian sharing of housework and paid work among the partners alone. This is because these models usually turn out to be organized in ways that one partner meets the time demands of the job in full, while the other partner has to shoulder the family responsibilities. This will necessarily also lead to abandoning tasks and activities that are subjectively experienced as being satisfactory. Moreover, this means that developing a relationship with a partner and having shared family time becomes very difficult.

Well-known phrases from studies are often quoted, saying that it does not depend on the quantity of time you are spending with your partner and children, but on the quality. These phrases simply ignore the fact that the problem of time restriction is not yet solved, and this is valid for almost all European countries. The paradigm of a primacy of the economy is matter of fact for all of these countries, which leads to taking economic growth and interest rates as sole indicators of measuring social development and individual action, subordinating social relationships and the care for others to this paradigm. In this regard, the American sociologist Arlie Hochschild is referring to many conditions of compatibility as being "cold-modern" (Hochschild 1998), indicating that the central issue is not dealing with the question of how care and personal relationships can be developed for the sake of society, but how to "outsource" the needs for care according to the primacy of the economy in advanced industrial societies (Hochschild 2012).

This primacy was already recognizable for the skeptical generation. The family structure of this generation can be seen as an attempt to secure care and human relationships by applying a gender-specific division of labor. Today, we know that this division of labor has created a structural inequality between men and women in all democratic societies: the primacy of the economy was only fulfilled by the man; whereas in theory, the woman was supposed to perform equivalent amounts of household work, but in practice, the whole family was economically dependent on the breadwinning father.

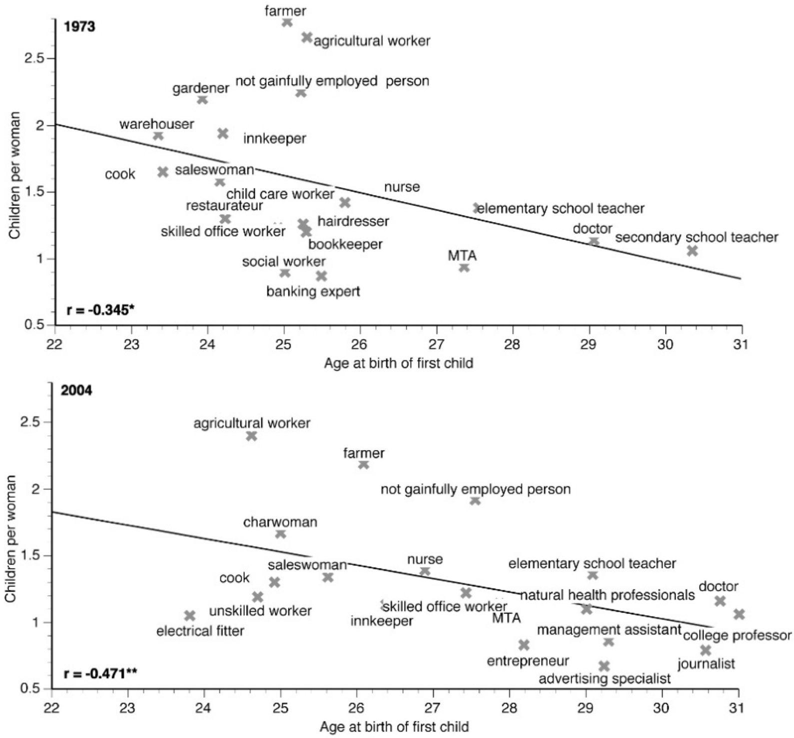
However, the elimination of such structural inequalities does not mean that men and women are now participating equally in society both in terms of economic and material development. Rather, the present conditions are such that those who value both caring and human relationships as an aspect of their lives have to pay a price in all areas of life and are constantly suffering from feelings of being insufficient. Entering the labor market later in life, combined with late parenthood, provokes tough conflicts between different areas of life, so that it is right to term this situation a "rush hour" of life. Today's young generation faces economic hardships and shrinking incomes along with tensions that occur during family formation and raising children at a level of complexity that the skeptical generation did not have to bear.

3.4 Having No Time for Children

The rush hour of life poses the fundamental political question of how the different needs of the family, the children, and the labor market can be appropriately reconciled. There is no simple answer to this question, but some factors can probably be identified in order to develop a solution. By taking a look at statistical information and official data about those aged between 30 and 40 years old, it can be observed that both highly qualified professionals and people employed in the service sector are most represented among those who are especially reluctant to form a family (see Figure 7).

Women employed in agriculture have the highest number of children (2.6 in 1973, 2.2 in 2004), which is more than non-working housewives have; they give birth to about two children, and the average age at the birth of the first child in this group is under 26 years old. Young women in other professions, such as shop assistants or nurses, have relatively few children (1.4) both in 1973 and in 2004, giving birth for the first time at 26 to 27 years old. Skilled professionals, such as elementary school teachers, medical doctors, or even medical technical assistants have their first child at over 28 years old, and with rates of 1.4, the number of children is low both in 1973 and in 2004.

Figure 7: Age of Women and Number of Children Born 1973 and 2004 in Different Professional Groups

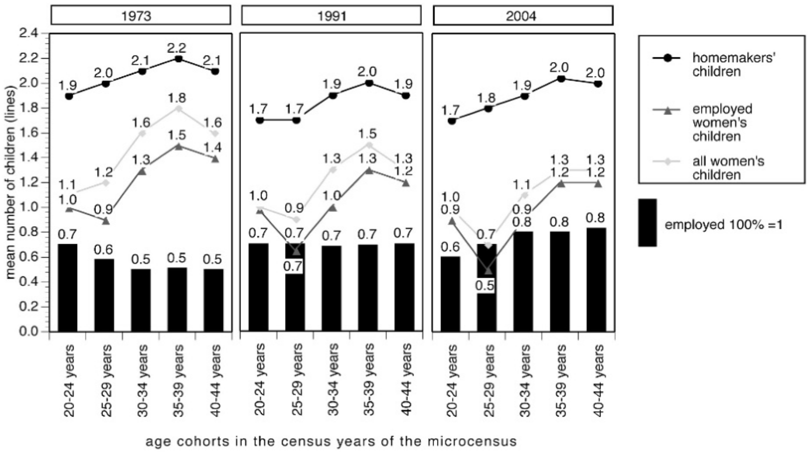


Note: Considered are women in the age of 33–43 (1973) and 36–46 (2004).
Source: Scientific Use Files German Microzensen 1973 and 2004, own calculation and illustration.

It is surprising how constant fertility rates are over time for certain occupational groups. The small number of children not only depends on the age of the mother at the time of the birth of the first child, but also on the mother's type of job, as can be concluded by comparing housewives and less skilled occupations, as well as comparing high- and low-skilled jobs. In 2004, the structure of highly skilled professions has become clearly differentiated: journalists, university lecturers, or advertising executives are having their few children rather late. The average number of children per woman is 0.8 among journalists and 1.0 among high school teachers.

The declining birthrate in Germany is mainly related to the fact that the occupational structure is increasingly developing towards high-qualified jobs, but low-skilled occupations were also already showing a small number of children in 1973 due to structural reasons. It is not a change of values, but rather a structural change that has contributed to the apparent decline in the number of children, as the following chart shows (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Housewives and Working Women by Age of Children from 1973 to 2004

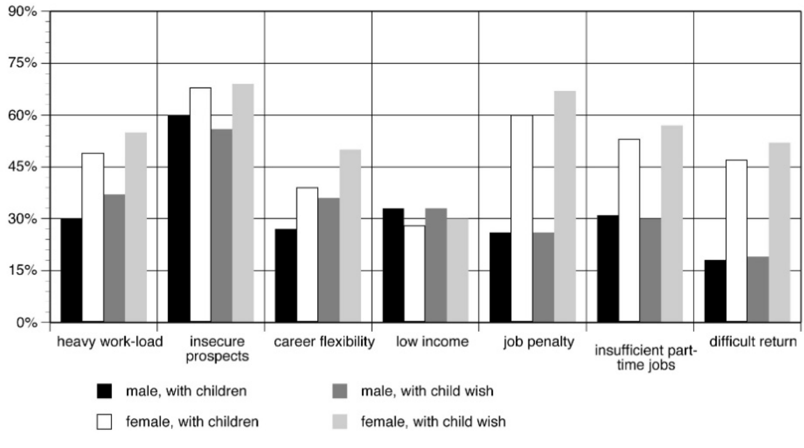


Note: the number of children refers to the number of children living in the woman's household.
Source: Scientific Use Files of the German microcensus 1973, 1991, 2004; own calculations and illustration.

Families with a traditional role division (breadwinner/housewife) had an average of 2.1 children in 1973 and 2.0 children in 2004. In families with working mothers, the average number of children was about 1.8 in 1973, and 1.3 in 2004. At the same time, the proportion of working mothers increased from about 50 to 80 percent. The continuously shrinking group of housewives cannot compensate for the lower fertility rates of working mothers. In addition, there are now more professional groups who have a relatively small number of children for reasons that have hardly been studied so far.

These figures, evident in many publications by statistical offices in various countries, are neither new, nor do they represent solely a German trend, as is documented in the mid-1990s report by the American Bureau of Census (Bachu 1997). On the basis of the U.S. census, highly skilled positions in management and high-income groups are usually associated with a small number of children. These correlations are already well known, but factors still remain to be analyzed about how and under what kind of conditions the individuals' participation in the professional life and family living environment is taking place. The solution to increase fertility rates is not just a better balance between family and working life, but a new organization and a new design of the life course by accepting on the one hand that highly skilled positions require longer training periods and also a higher degree of independence and professional flexibility, and on the other hand that the opportunity to participate in various areas of life and to actually realize them should be provided. Taking scientific professions as an example, several factors can be identified for the low number of children in this group. I am also confident that there are realistic policy options for making it more attractive to have children. That requires, however, the political decision to provide a framework that allows even highly qualified young adults in very specialized professions to realize a life plan, in which taking care of children or others can be easily integrated.

Figure 9: Impediments for Scientists to the Desire for Children



Source: HIS Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH, WiNbus-Studie 2010, Hannover.

With regard to the reasons that scientists give when being asked for why they did not opt for children, rather than professional flexibility or high levels of stress, it is the uncertain prospects of the profession that are being identified as key factors by both the male and the female scientists (see Figure 9), followed by the fear of being left behind professionally; a reason that is given mainly by childless scientists, but not by those who already have children. The discrepancy between having children and not having children is also reflected in other reasons, such as the difficulty to return to one's job or the opinion that there are too few part-time jobs. The level of income plays a minor role, although it has been shown above that the young scientists do not earn a lot of money. Scientists with and without children emphasize professional uncertainty in particular. Both university administrations and the legislature could have an influence on these conditions with effective political decision-making.

International comparisons show that many proposals have been presented to improve the conditions of scientists at universities and research institutions by developing career positions that require flexibility and mobility, but still offer the opportunity to stay at the university or within the academic system. In the German university system, you need to become a tenured professor or otherwise you will have to quit your academic career. As tenured positions are barely available in the university system, many young scientists do not have a realistic option to build a career. The German system does not provide career development and professional positions in research and university teaching, which are not designated as tenured professorship. The academic hierarchy is organized in a way that virtually all the resources are allocated to the professors, while the others have to retire from the system sooner or later, and the same is true for academic institutions such as the Max Planck Society, the Leibniz Society, and other research facilities.

Figure 10: Academics and Children and Desire for Children

	Universities				**Research Facilities**			
	Child		**Child wish***		**Child**		**Child wish***	
child	**yes**	**no**	**yes**	**no**	**yes**	**no**	**yes**	**no**
male	22%	78%	76%	13%	21%	79%	78%	9%
female	15%	85%	72%	14%	15%	85%	79%	7%
total	**19%**	**81%**	**74%**	**13%**	**19%**	**81%**	**78%**	**9%**
	100%		**87%**		**100%**		**87%**	
younger than 30 years	10%	90%	85%	7%	8%	92%	85%	4%
older than 30 years	27%	73%	64%	18%	36%	64%	68%	15%
total	**19%**	**81%**	**74%**	**13%**	**19%**	**81%**	**78%**	**9%**
	100%		**87%**		**100%**		**87%**	

* the category "don't know" is not considered. It contains 13% both at universities and at research facilites.

Source: HIS, WINbus-Studie 2010.

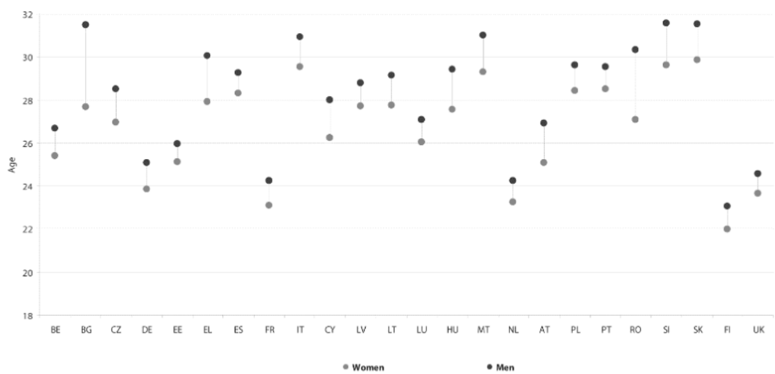
The negative effects of the academic career system have already been well documented by several studies, but the legislature at the federal or state level in Germany is not making any effort to change the system, although they fund such studies. About 64 percent of all university scientists over the age of 30 indicate that they want children, whereas only 27 percent have done so. Of scientists at the research institutes, 68 percent want to have children, but only 36 percent have children. This data shows that it is not a change in values or other general factors that lead to such low numbers of children in specific professions. Instead, the academic career conditions clearly make it difficult for young adults to participate both in career development and in having a family with children.

The concentration of decisions to be made for partnership and children and the integration into the world of employment in a relatively short period of life means that this generation of young adults has to make very fundamental decisions under time constraints, a situation that is likely to be experienced as being confronted with incompatible options. As a matter of fact, these options could turn into real alternatives if the life course could be organized in a way that these life choices are no longer “either/or” decisions. So, I would suggest the term “overburdened generation” to be applied to the young generation, which—unlike the skeptical generation—is forced to make such fundamental decisions under time constraints. Due to this rush hour, the life choices, which in the past have been made successively, are now being squeezed into a very narrow time frame, compounded by insufficient economic resources. In comparison to the older generation and to their childless peer cohorts, the economic resources of this group are very scarce, especially if they are single parents. But this scarcity is not the result of low welfare spending on families with children, but the result of a family policy that does not acknowledge the existence of new life designs, but instead holds to ways of life that were appropriate for the skeptical generation 50 years ago.

4 Personal Relationships: Outsourcing and Arbitrariness

Young adults are indeed gaining life time at the age between 20 and 30 years old, but cannot use this time—except for their improved education—in order to fulfill the tasks that society expects from them, namely to become economically independent, to run one’s own budget and decide for oneself, possibly to start a family and launch a career. Owing to the uncertain prospects of the labor market, high-skilled young adults are earning relatively low incomes and are entering professional positions with a clear career prospect rather late. As a result, the transition

Figure 11: Moving-Out Age of Young Adult Men and Women from the Parental Home

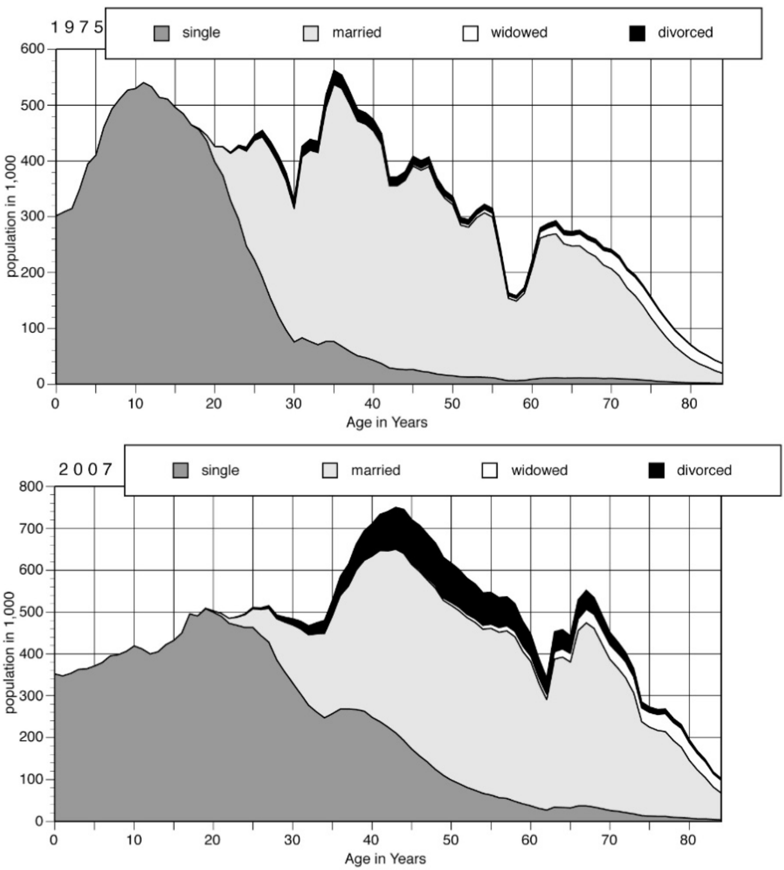


Note: DK, IE, SE: data not available.
Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS

of getting the foot on the career ladder is overlapping with the transition into starting a family. This concentration of life events places an overburden on these young adults, because the family policy is dealing neither with questions of professional development nor with questions of income distribution between generations.

Comparing the moving-out behavior of German young adults with other European countries, it can be observed that the young men and women are moving out of the parental home relatively early. Young Germans, similar to the French, Dutch, Finnish, and English young people, leave the parental home at the age of 25 for men, and at the age of 24 for women, while young adults in Italy, Spain, and Hungary leave the parental home rather late.

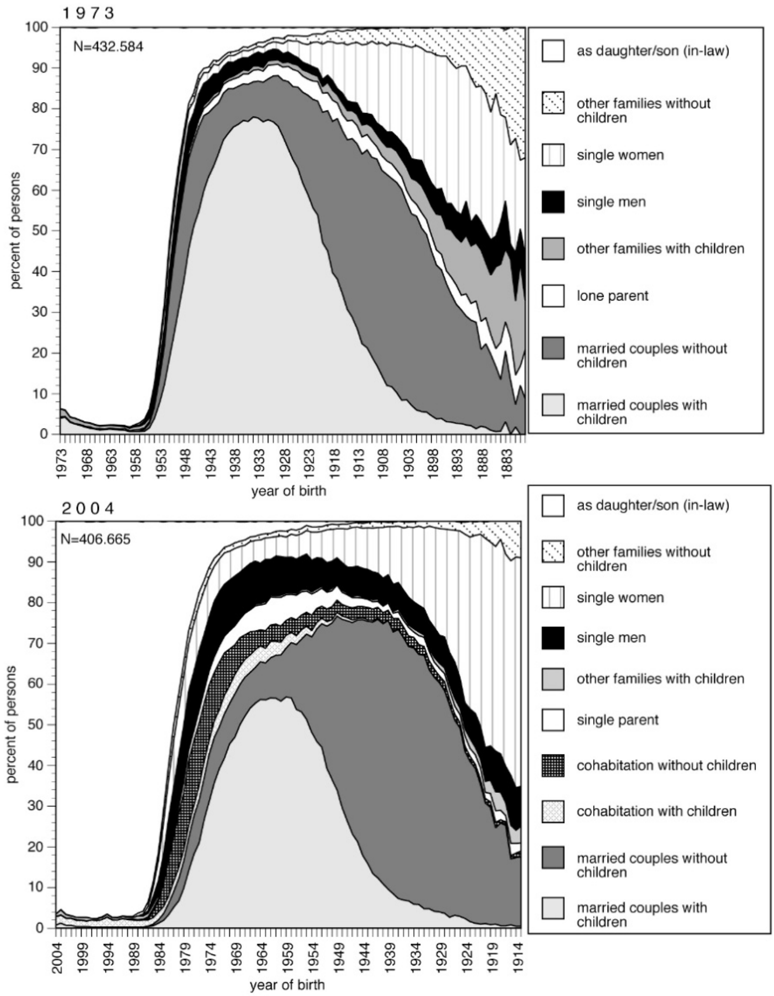
Figure 12: Marital Status, Male Population 1975 and 2007



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt Wiesbaden, own illustrations.

Although young Germans leave their parents' home early in comparison to other European countries, they do not start families, as is the case for young adults in other countries, but are increasingly living as singles, and a growing proportion is permanently remaining single. While married women have an average of 1.7 children compared to only 0.8 children that unmarried and divorced women have, choosing a particular marital status is ultimately a decision about having children: the higher the proportion of single people in the population, the fewer the number

Figure 13: Life Forms: Cross-Section of the Population, 1973 and 2004



Source: Microcensus Scientific Use Files 1973 and 2004; own calculation and illustration.

of children. In 1975, almost the entire male population was married at the age of 30, while today almost half of the male population at the age of 40 is unmarried. These days, the family status of a person does not explain whether or not a person is in a relationship or in cohabitation. However, comparative studies of lifestyle changes show that parallel to changes in family status, changes in lifestyles are taking place (see Figure 12).

In 1973, young people born between 1933 and 1948 lived almost exclusively as married couples with children, which is characteristic for the skeptical generation, who at that time had reached the average age of first marriage. In contrast, other groups, such as married couples without children, single parents, single men and women living alone, amount to only about 20 percent total in this age group. However, even in later life these other living options have not played a major role, with the exception of men and women living alone (see Figure 13).

In contrast, the picture has completely changed in 2004. The married couple with children still plays a significant role for the people born between 1949 and 1969, as about 55 percent of this group have chosen this way of life, while the rest of the population has opted for other lifestyles. But in 2004, the predominant form of life is being single. In this group, even those living with children amount to only a small proportion of about 2 to 3 percent. In Germany at least, living alone as a single person is increasingly appearing to be an alternative instead of living as a married couple with children, while the decision to live without children, whether due to personal decisions or to external circumstances, is not affected. The aforementioned example of the scientists could show at least that the decision to live without children may not be a self-made choice, but rather the result of a work-life situation that makes it extremely difficult to realize the desire for children.

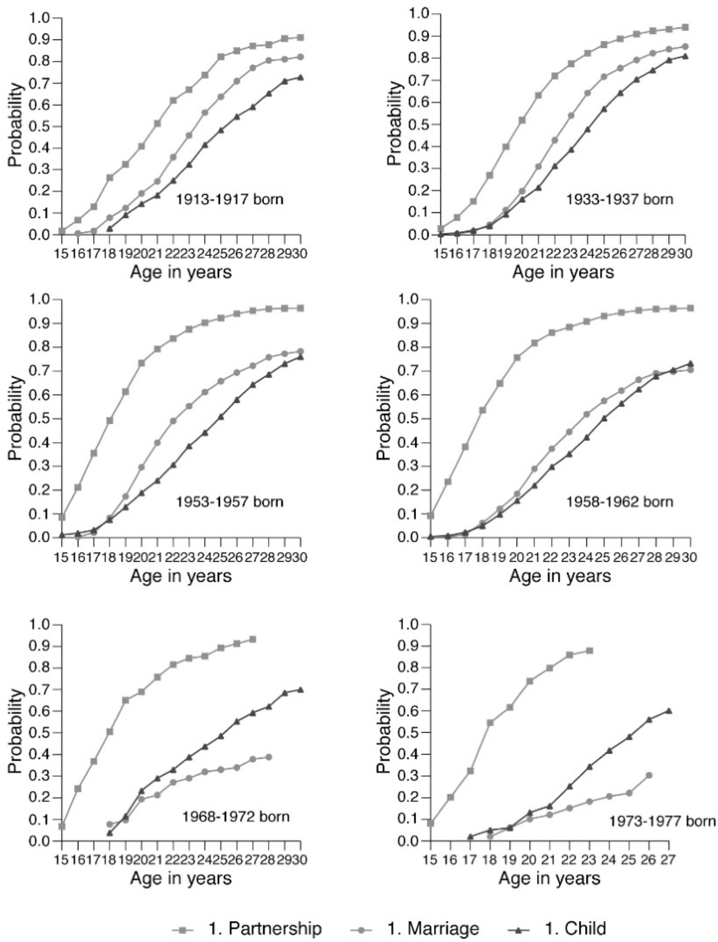
This result is not specific to Germany alone. Even in the U.S., childlessness has become a typical pattern, particularly in career positions. Half of the women with an income of more than $100,000 are childless. According to interviews, the majority of these women did not deliberately decide to be in this situation, but accepted it as a result of a way of life in which private concerns were ultimately subordinated to, or even sacrificed for, their professional careers. From an economic perspective, these developments are not even to be criticized, because in doing so these women can become optimally utilized as human resources according to the needs of the labor market. In the case of Germany today, the same trend can also be observed for men, as the percentage of men living alone is significantly higher than the proportion of women living alone.

These changes in lifestyle and family status at the macro level correspond surprisingly to the individual level when opting for partnership, marriage, and children. Referring to the data of several family surveys (Bertram 1991, 1995; Bien and Marbach 2003; BMFSFJ 2006), changes in perspectives toward union formation, marriage, and the birth of the first child clearly show that the traditional life cycle of growing up according to the old European marriage pattern has dissolved. Thus, the skeptical generation was the last generation of people born in the

20th century who were still living the traditional lifestyle with partnership, marriage, and children (see Figure 14).

In the youngest generation, the traditional association between partnership, marriage, and the decision to have children has largely dissolved. At the age of 20 to 21, about 80 to 90 percent of all young women have had sexual experiences with a partner. In this age group, less than 20 percent of young women have children, and at the age of 27, about 50 percent of young women have children with only about 30 percent being married at that time. Among men, these ratios are

Figure 14: Age at First Partnership, Age at First Marriage and Age at Birth of First Child



Source: DJI Familiensurvey BRD 1988, DDR 1990, Singularisierung 1993, Survey 2000.

even more pronounced (Hennig 2005). The standard pattern of family formation that has been valid in Europe for ages (Mitterauer 1991) has vanished in the last 30 years.

Thus, sexual partnership, marriage, and having children are no longer interrelated, as was the case among the older generations in general, and for the skeptical generation in particular. Up until the decision to have a child is made, a young woman today has met an average of four partners with whom she does not stay in a permanent relationship.

This is not implying that sexual fidelity no longer plays a major role unless one has opted for a child. Even in this life phase, with more open relations than those lived by the older generations, young adults are living in serial monogamy—but pledging loyalty to the current partner does not necessarily mean staying together in the long term.

According to studies in sexual science (Schmidt and Starke 1993), even the ways of dealing with each of the partners have changed significantly. A negotiated sexuality has replaced the traditional model of women being conquered by men. The question remains about how significant such changes of intimacy are for one's own life plan and for the development of partnership relations in the life course. Further studies about the consequences that the dissolution of the traditional marriage pattern will have for the organization of the life course are still lacking.

In her study of private life, Hochschild (2012) argued that the dissolution of definite rules for building socially structured private relationships in the life course has not increased the amount of individually built personal relationships, but has instead led to the phenomenon that private lives are becoming "outsourced." Partnerships and relationships are no longer necessarily developed in a familiar neighborhood, friendship, or family context. Rather, the Internet or commercial agencies are being used to support the individual in the market to form relationships and to build partnerships. It has to be accepted that the market plays a role in these relationships, and that thereby relationships are turning into a commodity, for example by making our ideal picture of a partner public on virtual and market-like platforms, and by being ready to pay an appropriate fee if a good match is provided.

Certainly, Hochschild is describing a process that does not only affect our intimate relationships, but also many other areas of private life. When, for example, a Filipino nanny is taking care of our children for an exchange of money, this is as much a process of outsourcing private family lives to the market as hiring a consultant to increase performance, getting your personal plans from vacation to marriage arranged, or delegating the care of your parents to a paid service. These market-like processes can be understood as an expression of individualism, allowing more freedom and more options for the individuals to design their own lives. But nevertheless, this can also be viewed as problematic, as Hochschild suggests, because the market is also limiting our abilities by forcing us to subject ourselves to certain market rules.

The American sociologist Edward O. Laumann in his study (2010) described how the major institutions have lost their impact on the organization of personal, private, and intimate relationships, but that nevertheless the individual has not become free to design their private relationships according to their own wishes, as is suggested by the individualization thesis. Rather, the role of the large institutions, such as churches and the traditional cultural institutions of society, has been taken over by social networks and groups that control the individuals' intimate and private behavior. The individual options and possibilities have multiplied, but that does not mean that we can break free from the societal values and norms of the respective group to which we belong. There is a greater variety, but whether this actually leads to greater diversity and more individual options, or just to a very subtle control within smaller groups, is still open for discussion. In their analyses, Hochschild and Laumann have suggested remaining skeptical, taking a stance similar to Polanyi's theses about major transformation (Polanyi and Jelinek 1973), indicating that the increasing penetration of market rules into our private lives may cause the erosion of social bonding and relationships.

Taking these considerations into account for estimating the current situation of the 25–40 age group, it has to be stated that in contrast to the skeptical generation they grew up in a very safe living environment, usually in a family context consisting of stable relationships between parents, grandparents, and other relatives. They have been able to realize a multitude of educational options, more than any generation before them, and they have grown up in a society with a high degree of social and economic security. In that regard, their generational experience is completely different from that of the skeptical generation, who experienced not only relative poverty in their childhood and early youth, but in fact absolute poverty, had to cope with the loss of parents, and grew up in an environment that was largely destroyed by the effects of war. In Schelsky's opinion, they regarded security as a very important and valuable asset, which appears absolutely plausible, considering their experiences with misery in childhood and youth.

The social, political, and economic development of the fifties gave them the opportunity to gain security, as well as experiencing as a young adult how an early career entry with modest economic security enabled them to start families and to rely on their family relations, while the welfare state helped significantly in alleviating the life and health risks that their own parents were exposed to. Furthermore, they could observe from their own parents that life expectancy had significantly increased, that the future perspective on life extended into old age, and that they remained healthier in old age than previous generations. This whole generation was thus able to develop a strong sense of meaningful life and positive attitudes based on relatively stable structures.

In contrast, the current generation of 20–40-year-olds grew up in unrivalled security and enjoyed a lot of educational opportunities, but today they find themselves in a situation of suffering under a high degree of structural uncertainty in their lives, even at high quality levels. Compared to previous generations, this generation is economically in a worse position, so that material participation in society is becoming severely restricted, particularly once they decide to have children. Above all, they experience difficulties with establishing sustainable and secure personal relationships in their private lives. Ultimately, the individual's educational and occupational expectations, as well as participation opportunities are limiting the amount of time they have to build stable private relationships.

Additionally, the lack of a clearly structured perspective creates difficulties in choosing one's paths of life, undermining the belief that one's own expectations can be realized. This generation may be characterized as being overburdened because they are faced with the fact that their parents and grandparents are not only claiming an incredibly high degree of social and economic security, but they are living it for themselves. The young adults are held responsible to ensure this security for the parents and grandparents, but when it comes to their own future they cannot hope for someone to take care of them with the same benefits when they are older. They themselves are not responsible for this situation, and they cannot even change it, because they are so few, and because they are busy finding a place for themselves in the insecure working and living world.

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Family Policy in Germany: Impact on Social Conditions of Precarity and Risks

Addressing Poverty Risks of Lone Mothers in Germany: Social Law Framework and Labour Market Integration

Eva Maria Hohnerlein

1 Introduction

As in other European countries, family relationships, patterns and arrangements in Germany have undergone fundamental changes in the past decades, in particular since the mid-90s, following the unification of the Federal Republic and the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) of East Germany in 1989. Among families with children under age, the married couple with one or two children is still the most common family constellation, although other family forms are gaining ground. In particular, the share of lone parent families has increased consistently over time. According to the Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018a), in 2017, 19 percent (1.5 million) of the overall 8.2 million families living with at least one child under age was registered as a lone parent family (up from 14 percent in 1997). Considerable regional differences between the two parts of Germany have persisted: The share of lone parent families amounted to 24.9 percent in the Eastern part (ex-GDR), and to 18.2 percent in the Western part (former FRG) of Germany in 2017. About 2.4 million children below the age of 18 were living in a lone parent setting, more often in urban centers than in rural communities (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018: 11).

About nine out of ten lone parents are lone mothers, and as in other European countries, lone mothers are overrepresented among poor people (Bahle, Göbel and Hubl 2013; Jaehrling 2014; Künkler 2017), with detrimental consequences also for their children. Poverty incidence among lone mother families is far above the poverty risks of the population as a whole, irrespective of whether poverty is determined on the basis of income poverty thresholds (less than 60% of the median net income) or according to the share in recipients of basic income support under Social Code (SGB) book II (Hauser 2015). Financial pressure and poverty risks among lone mothers in general does not mean extreme, life-threatening deprivation, but relates to relative income poverty and income inequalities that may hamper social inclusion and full participation in society. Some of these inequalities result from an unfair share of burdens following separation or divorce.

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_4

Lone mothers have to shoulder a number of tasks and roles at the same time: They are not only required to provide for the living expenses of their family, under discriminatory and unfavourable labour market conditions, but they are also responsible for parental care and education of their children, as well as for organizing the household with its daily routines. Because of lower wages in segregated labour markets and a rather high gender wage gap of about 22 percent, lone mothers in general face much more difficulties than lone fathers to achieve financial self-sufficiency even when working fulltime.

In view of the specific burdens and the high poverty risks of lone mothers and their children, this family constellation is considered as one of the most vulnerable parts of society. But while general family benefits and relief systems for "traditional" marriage-based families are relatively generous in Germany, in particular child benefit, parental allowance or tax relief (Hohnerlein 2014), the special needs of lone parent families have been a neglected issue for a long time.

In many cases, financial hardship is the effect of separation or divorce. About half of the children living in a lone parent family do not receive any maintenance by the absent parent, and another 25 percent get less maintenance than they are entitled to. Lack of child maintenance payments is thus a major reason for financial pressure in lone mother families. Besides, the financial pressure can be attributed to a combination of structural negligence of the socio-legal framework, and general structural disadvantages, including availability of childcare, but also prejudices and discriminations that hamper labour market participation of lone mothers. Although a majority of lone mothers is gainfully employed, their earned income is often not enough to bring the family above the poverty threshold. Almost half of the lone parent families have no savings or other financial assets to bridge income shortages (Kraus 2014). As a consequence, they have to rely more than any other family type on means-tested benefits, in particular on the basic income support system for job-seekers under SGB II—the last safety net for individuals that are fit for work (Achatz, Hirseland, Lietzmann and Zabel 2013; Lenze and Funcke 2016; Lietzmann 2014; Statistisches Bundesamt 2018a). The introduction of this scheme in 2005, inspired by welfare to work concepts and activation policies, can easily turn into a nightmare for lone mothers, due to complicated application procedures, intransparent interaction with other welfare benefits, inconsistent rules of off-set between different claims, the imposition of rigid conditions and duties in the context of activation policies, and sometimes discretionary actions imposed by the staff involved.

The aim of this chapter is firstly, to present an overview of trends and characteristics of lone parent families in general (2), including particular features of vulnerability and poverty risks. The main part (3 and 4) will focus on public support systems, labour market policies and childcare provision, and discuss to what extent the legal framework is aimed at alleviating poverty risks of lone mother families in Germany, and at promoting access to quality jobs for them. Special attention is paid to recent reforms targeted on lone parents/mothers, in particular the extension of the benefit scheme for the advance of child maintenance. Finally, some conclusions and further reform prospects will be presented (5) in a perspective to enhance economic self-sufficiency of lone mothers without neglecting caring needs of their children.

2 Definitions, Trends and Characteristics of Lone Parent Families

2.1 Definitions

There is no uniform definition of the status of lone parenthood in statistical data nor in legal provisions. According to the German Microcensus, the family status is considered as "lone" parent family, when one parent is living with his or her unmarried child/children in a common household, without a spouse or partner. Under this definition which includes unmarried adult children, there were 2.74 million lone parents (2.331 million lone mothers, 409,000 lone fathers) in 2015 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016). The narrower definition used by the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) is restricted to lone parent households with minor children only: There were 1.644 million lone parents with minor children (comprising 1.461 million lone mothers) and another 1.096 million lone parents with adult (unmarried) children. The definition does not consider arrangements for legal custody or parental authority following divorce. In recent times, new family constellations have emerged among separated parents who share their parental care responsibilities (distinct from legal concepts of joint custody) more equally, often in a double residence model with a fifty-fifty share, so that the parents do no longer match the traditional definition criteria of lone parents. Furthermore, it has to be emphasized that social benefit schemes may provide their own definition of lone parent within their scope of application.

2.2 Socio-Demographic Trends and Characteristics of Lone Parents

Lone mothers are not a homogeneous group within families but show a great variety of individual characteristics as to age, educational background, previous employment biographies and labour market attachment. The poverty risks generally associated with lone motherhood are therefore not the same for all lone mothers. Social policy research has identified a number of indicators linked to conditions of precariousness among lone mother families: They include the high incidence of employment in low wage sectors, indebtedness as well as low savings rates, but also the distribution of tasks in a partnership preceding divorce and separation. Very important in this context is the degree of economic self-sufficiency or dependency resulting from previous relationship patterns. A highly risky model for divorced lone mothers insofar is the male bread-winner family model with traditional gender-specific distribution of tasks.

Despite the general rise in lone parent families, spells of lone parenthood are rarely an option elected deliberately but rather a temporary phase in the life-course (BMAS 2013). In part they are the consequence of freely decided separation from a partner who does not want to form a family, often following an unintended pregnancy. Further reasons are separations due to severe problems in the relationship or unilateral separations decided by the partner. Divorce and separation account on average for about 53 percent of lone parents in 2015 (56.6% in the Western part of Germany, 40.2% in the East, BA 2016). A more recent trend is the rising share of single, never-married lone parents to 41 percent in 2017, in particular in the Eastern part of Germany: single parents accounted for 57 percent of lone parents in the ex-GDR and for 34.9 percent in the Western part of the FRG (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018a). Only 4.9 percent of lone parents are widows or widowers (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018a: 21).

The numbers of lone parent families do not reveal the highly dynamic evolution of this family form: A spell of living as a lone parent is an increasingly common experience for many people, and lone parenthood often is terminated by taking up a new partnership, but also when a child leaves the common household. An analysis of panel data on the course of partnership relations of lone mothers revealed that 50 percent of them succeeded in re-partnering again within a period of five years after lone parenthood had started (Achatz 2016)[1]. But the data also indicate that a consistent number of lone mothers have to cope with the challenges of lone parenthood for a long period of time: 40 percent of the mothers remained more than eight years, and 25 percent more than 13 years as the sole responsible parent for their children (Bastin 2016). Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that mothers that had been married or had been living in a marriage-like partnership remained in the status of lone parent family for a longer period of time than single mothers (Peuckert 2012).

Lone families represent a highly gender-specific family constellation, given that only one out of ten is a lone father family. There are also considerable differences between lone father and lone mother families with respect to the number of children and their age: On average, lone mothers live with more children, and more often with younger children than lone fathers do. A vast majority (about 68%) of lone parents lives with one child only, while 32 percent (522,000) live with two or more children (data for 2015, BA 2016).

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1 An earlier analysis of survey data from the socio-economic panel (SOEP) for the period 1994–2009 found that about half of the periods spent in lone parenthood lasted for more than seven years, about one third lasted for more than ten years (Ott, Hancioglu and Hartmann 2011: 50).

About one out of three lone mothers (against one out of 10 lone fathers) is responsible for a child in pre-school age (BMFSJ 2012). 49 percent of all lone parent families live with a child aged between 6 and under 15, while 21 percent live with a child aged 15–18 (BA 2016). Mothers thus have to cope with more extensive care needs of younger children, and as a consequence will face more problems in labour market participation and in gaining financial self-sufficiency. It is therefore not surprising that lone fathers are more likely to be in (full-time) employment, and also in a better situation in terms of financial security. Furthermore, lone fathers tend to be more successful in exiting the lone parent status by entering a new partnership than lone mothers do (Achatz 2016).

2.3 Socio-Economic Trends and Characteristics of Lone Mother Families

Living in a lone mother household is associated with an above average risk of financial pressure and socially adverse conditions due to income shortage. This is manifested in particular in the risk to have a disposable income below the poverty line. [2] The risk of income poverty among lone parent families is significantly higher than in any other family type. This finding remains the same irrespective of the criteria used to assess poverty. While the income poverty risk of the population as a whole increased from 14.7 percent to 15.5 percent between 2005 and 2013 (Hauser 2015), the income poverty risk of all lone parent families (with minor and adult children) increased from 39.3 percent to 43.0 percent, three times higher than for the overall population. In 2016, the risk of poverty rate, based on the federal median income, reached 43.6%, with peaks of about 60% in Saxony-Anhalt and in Bremen (Deutscher Bundestag 2018: 15). Over time, lone parent families have always had the highest rate in needing basic income benefits under the SGB II scheme (and previously under the social assistance scheme for the needy) compared to all other household types, even though their share has slightly decreased in the past decade, from about 40.8 percent in 2006 to 38.1 percent in 2015 (BA 2016; Hauser 2015). About 625,000 lone parent families with 1.515 million members relied on such benefits that year. The rate is still about four times higher than for other households on income support. Although not all lone parents depend on this basic support scheme, the dependency rate increases with the number of dependent children in

2 In the EU, the poverty threshold is usually determined as 60 percent of the median average net income of households of the whole population. For the increase in poverty risks among lone parent families based on various survey data (the only exception being EU-SILC data for 2008–2014) see BMAS 2017: 549 ff.

the household (Hauser 2015).[3] This suggests that lone parents, and in particular lone mothers, continue to experience special problems in finding a job that allows them to exit the income support scheme in a sustainable way. [4]

Poverty rates of lone parent families are even more salient if there is a child aged below 15 years (Hauser 2015). All in all, 50 percent of child poverty risks are directly linked to lone-parent situations, despite the high attachment to the labour market, and the high rate of full-time employment among lone parents. Full-time employment among lone mothers is very common and higher than in other family constellations. Moreover, the volume of part-time work is very close to full-time work: More than 40 percent of lone mothers work at least 35 hours per week. The general problem (which is aggravated in case of part-time work) is a lack of decent work conditions in vast sectors of female employment. As a consequence, a consistent proportion of lone mothers need to top up insufficient income from employment by payments under the basic income support scheme of SGB II.

About one out of 12 people registered as unemployed in 2017 was a lone parent. The number of unemployed lone mothers is about ten times as high as the number of unemployed lone fathers (BA 2018:18). In terms of unemployment protection, it is important to note that only a small part of unemployed lone parents (9% in 2015) is covered by the—more generous—unemployment insurance benefit scheme (Social Code Book III). The vast majority (91%) has access only to benefits under the means-tested basic income support scheme for jobseekers (Social Code Book II) (BA 2016: 50).

Dependency on basic income support among lone parent families is in the majority of cases not the consequence of unemployment. Still, the unemployment rate among lone parents was 9.5 percent in 2015 (7.7% in Western Germany, 14.8% in Eastern Germany) which is twice as high as for the population in general (4.6%). Furthermore, long-term unemployment of at least 12 months or longer is widespread among lone parents, involving almost half of the unemployed lone parents (46% in 2015), and more than a quarter of them (26.6%) remains unemployed for more than two years (BA 2016: 20).

One of the factors explaining this situation may be that among lone parents on income support, 47 percent of the young mothers and 31 percent of the fathers aged 16–24 have not completed any professional education, nor are they attending school or participating in vocational training under the dual pathway

[3] 34.8 percent among lone families with one child, against 47.5 percent in case of two or more children.

[4] On the evolution of the average rates of dependency on social income support of different types of family households, see Statistics of the Federal Agency for Employment, 2007–2013, May 2014.

(BMBF 2015: 55; Martin 2016). In 2017, 67,000 lone fathers (16.1%) and 595,000 lone mothers (27%) had not completed any professional education (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018b: 95, 97). Apart from personal obstacles resulting from gaps in professional education and professional experience, poverty risks of lone mothers in particular can also be driven by other personal factors such as lack of savings or indebtedness or previous partnership relations. Yet the most important risk factors are various structural factors. They include unmet needs in childcare provision, but also factors linked to overall labour market and employment conditions for mothers, such as low wages in segregated female labour markets, lack of flexible part-time arrangements, increasing employment intensity and demands for mobility and flexibility in the labour market that are difficult to reconcile with family responsibilities.

These risk factors are aggravated if the financial co-responsibility of the non-resident parent (father) is missing—an experience shared by about half of all lone mother families. Structural barriers can also be aggravated if the social law framework is privileging two parent or marriage-based families without taking account of the special conditions and needs of lone parent families. By contrast, overall poverty risks and income inadequacy are in general much lower or last for a shorter period when lone mothers had already achieved financial self-sufficiency before they enter lone parenting (Hübgen 2016). Among the most vulnerable lone mothers are therefore very young (unmarried) mothers without or with low professional qualification, including mothers lacking professional experience on the one hand, and divorced lone mothers that had not been part of the labour market for extended periods or only to a marginal extent. Under such circumstances a return into paid labour can prove to be difficult even for highly qualified women (Achatz 2016). The question therefore is to what extent the legal framework responds not only to the changes in family status, but also to the specific needs of lone mother families in terms of financial security, decent work and good living conditions, and whether a more gender-sensitive approach can help to reduce poverty risks among lone mother families.

3 Financial Pressure Due to the Legal Framework of Public Support Schemes

3.1 General Legal Framework

In legal doctrine, the view is gaining ground that financial pressure for lone mother families has increased in the past decade due to the combined effects of various reforms which were aimed at enhancing the paradigm of self-responsibility, in particular the maintenance law reform of 2008, welfare benefit reforms and the introduction of activation policies in the first decade of this century (Lenze 2014; Lenze and Funcke 2016). Maintenance law reforms have shifted the financial burden and financial risks on to lone mothers and their children, while social welfare law has provided little support to compensate this shift, so that lone mother families tend to be left very quickly to the last safety net of basic income support, in particular because access to general and specific child-related support schemes (the system of the advance of child maintenance) has resulted as rather restrictive. A special difficulty follows from the overall complexity of the German welfare system and the need to apply for a variety of benefits with uncertain interaction between those different benefits, or the necessity to fill in complicated forms difficult to understand, even for German nationals, but all the more for foreign nationals. Additional problems have emerged with the transformation of the labour market and the expansion of low-income sectors and precarious work conditions witnessed since the early years of the current millennium. Lone mothers are negatively impacted not only by their own reduced earning capacities, but also by insufficient child support from the non-resident parent.

3.2 Maintenance Law

A major problem in this context are maintenance claims of divorced mothers against the former husband/partner in terms of maintenance to care for a child. One of the major objectives of the 2008 Maintenance Law Reform[5] was in fact to enhance financial self-reliability of divorced spouses by reducing the maintenance obligations of the ex-spouse to support the divorced partner. The reform was also intended to align post-divorce entitlement of the caring parent to the entitlement of never married parents. Such an entitlement had been introduced for single mothers for a period of three years after child-birth, and later extended to lone fathers. Divorced (as well as single) mothers with children older than 3 years are therefore obliged to engage in full-time employment, if appropriate child care services are available (Lenze 2014). Only in exceptional cases when continuing personal care is necessary for child-related reasons, can maintenance to care be granted beyond the age of three. In practice, the courts have adopted a very strict interpretation of the age-related limitation to the advantage of divorced fathers. Exceptions will be accepted only in cases of manifested pathological conditions of the child or if a divorced mother takes care of at least 3 children—a very rare constellation.

This limitation has significantly worsened the position of divorced mothers and of their children older than three, as mothers are now required to engage in full-time employment, irrespective of the previous care arrangements, irrespective of the quality of available childcare, and also irrespective of the child's needs to adjust to the new family constellation. The diffusion of

[5] Maintenance Law Reform, Act of 21/12/2007, in force since January 2008.

unemployment or marginal employment among lone mothers suggests that labour market conditions and the situation of full-time childcare places are not offering sufficient guarantees for these families.

In principle, the non-resident parent is liable to pay child maintenance for a minor child living with the mother up to the age of majority. After majority, both parents are responsible for child maintenance until completion of professional education. According to family law experts, child maintenance amounts are systematically set too low, as they cover only the child's material subsistence, but not the increasing expenses that children require for leisure activities, cultural and social activities etc. In practice, maintenance for children is determined by the courts using a system of tables, and the amounts vary according to the child's age and the net income of the parent liable to pay maintenance. Compliance with this obligation is often limited: Only about half of the children receive the maintenance they are entitled to. According to Hartmann (2014), three out of four children growing up in a lone parent family are either not receiving maintenance from the absent parent at all or not at the level they are entitled to. So, in a vast number of cases lone parents caring for one or more children do not receive the maintenance necessary to provide for the minimum needs of a child. Under these conditions, maintenance—either as maintenance to take care of the child or as child maintenance—is not a reliable source of income for lone parent families. However, if paid regularly, child maintenance could contribute to the family income just to the extent necessary to exit income support. Little is known about the reasons for the low compliance among non-resident fathers (Lenze and Funcke 2016). However, entitlement to child maintenance can be undermined by recent developments when both parents agree to share their care obligations, as such arrangements contradict the conceptual division between the parent who cares (and therefore is exempt of child maintenance payment) and the parent who provides maintenance under German family law. This raises the question about the role of social support systems and benefits when family support is lacking or not sufficient.

3.3 Specific Public Schemes Addressing Income Security in Lone Parent Families

Of course, lone parent families are eligible in principle for all kinds of general family benefits that are not dependent on marriage as a civil status, and in case of insufficient resources they can be eligible for specific benefits for low income families (housing benefit, child benefit supplement etc.). Of special interest are some specific benefits and support schemes targeted at lone parent families. In practice, shortcomings in the benefit design and in the interaction of various benefits, in particular rules of off-setting, can limit benefit entitlements, to the disadvantage of the most vulnerable families. As a consequence, many lone mother families face difficulties to exit the basic income support system which is characterized by extremely rigid rules.

There are three different public schemes targeted at lone parent families, yet their role in limiting or alleviating poverty risks can vary greatly depending on individual circumstances. Some schemes are available only to specific groups within lone parent families, in particular the benefits based on concepts of the male-breadwinner model (pensions in case of the death of the bread-winner) that usually have a limited scope of application.

Pensions for Lone Parents Under the Statutory Pension Scheme

Lone mothers that qualify as surviving widows (and widowers) can be entitled to a widow's pension under the statutory pension scheme (SGB VI). Whether such a pension is accessible and at what level depends on the insurance record of the deceased spouse and on the number of children under age raised by the surviving spouse. In addition, some additional income for this type of lone parent family may stem from orphans' pensions. But if the death of the family breadwinner occurred at a younger age the accrued pension insurance periods will not provide for a decent pension due to the absence of a minimum pension guarantee in the statutory pension scheme. A better protection level is available for survivors' pensions under the social insurance for industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

In 1977, the public pension insurance introduced a peculiar type of pension for divorced widows and widowers who raise a child (child-raising pension for divorced parents, § 47 SGB VI). This pension has been paid to roughly 9,800 beneficiaries in 2016 (Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund 2017) and thus has a very narrow personal scope of application as compared to the overall numbers of lone parents. The benefit is intended to substitute the maintenance that the deceased ex-spouse had to pay, and it replaced the widows' pensions formerly available under pension law. Apart from the death of the former spouse, eligibility criteria require that the surviving ex-spouse raises a child under the age of 18 and has not remarried; the surviving spouse has to fulfill the minimum contribution period of 5 years under the statutory pension scheme. Unlike survivors' pensions, the child-raising pension is not derived from the contribution periods accumulated by the deceased ex-spouse, but is based on the insurance periods of the surviving parent. The pension amount[6] is on average above the level of either widows' pensions and of other family welfare benefits, and it is paid until the youngest child turns 18.

[6] The average amount per month in 2016 was 750 € for new pensions (against an average amount of 618 € for widows' pensions), and 814 € per month for existing pension entitlements in 2015, see Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund 2017: 129, 207).

Tax Relief under Income Tax Law

Tax relief is granted as a special tax exemption for lone parents who live with at least one child (for whom the parent is entitled to child benefit). This relief [7] (Entlastungsbetrag) had been reduced in 2004 to about half the amount of a previously existing relief for lone parents. It is intended to compensate for extra living expenses in lone parent households. After more than a decade without adjustment, the tax relief was finally increased to 1,908 € as of 2015, and an extra relief of 240 € for each additional child was added. But due to the tax tariff structure, the relief increases with higher incomes, and is less effective for lower incomes. Although the measure is applicable to about 1.1 million lone parents (about 40% of the about 2.7 million lone parents living with an unmarried minor or adult child) it can be assumed that lone fathers are benefitting to a greater extent from this scheme than lone mothers. This could have been avoided if the tax relief was designed as a tax credit or a negative tax.

Advance of Child Maintenance

The most universal public scheme for lone parents is the public advance of child maintenance scheme, introduced in 1980[8]. This scheme seeks to guarantee a minimum financial support for a child living in a lone-parent family, if the non-resident parent liable to pay child maintenance in cash does not—or not fully or not regularly—comply with his or her child maintenance obligations. The entitlement of this family benefit which is not means-tested lies with the child. However, the original purpose of the benefit was to bridge a short-term transitional period without maintenance, which led to the adoption of to two major restrictions concerning the child's age and the duration of the benefit: The age limit (originally set at 6 years) excluding all children older than 11 years of age, and the maximum duration of 72 months (6 years).

Family and social policy experts had pointed again and again to the inequalities that the combined effects of both restrictions would produce on lone parent families, depending on the time in life when lone parenthood started. Furthermore, they emphasized the negative impact of the application of subsidiarity rules and rules of off-set between the advance of the maintenance scheme and the basic income support scheme of SGB II (Hohnerlein 2016; Lenze 2014). As a consequence, lone parent families receiving basic income to cover all living expenses were constrained to use the advance of maintenance scheme without the possibility to increase the family budget because the child maintenance benefit would be off-set against the income support benefits.

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7 § 24b Income Tax Law (Einkommensteuergesetz).

8 Unterhaltsvorschussgesetz. In 2014, about 455,000 children were entitled to this benefit (Deutscher Bundestag (2016), Bundestags-Drucksache 18/7700:2).

Finally, as of July 2017, the age limits and the time limits of the maintenance scheme have been abolished, so that the benefits are now available up to the age of 18. However, special restrictions apply for children aged 12 years or older that live in a family relying on basic income support under SGB II. In such circumstances the benefits will be granted only if either the gross income by gainful employment attains a certain level (at least 600 € per month) or if the child aged 12–18 years does not need benefits under SGB II. Despite these improvements, several shortcomings of the benefit scheme remain that reduce the chances to provide sufficient income security to lone parent families (Ahner 2017). The benefit amounts are still at a minimum level, and several inconsistencies with maintenance law further restrict the potential of the scheme to secure the child's livelihood. The inconsistencies relate to the loss of the benefit in case of remarriage of the lone parent, and to the restriction by which the entire amount of the general child benefit is to be deducted.[9] A critical issue are the links between the advance of maintenance scheme and the basic income support scheme under SGB II (Hohnerlein 2016) as well as the inconsistent interplay of various set-off rules in different benefit schemes, affecting in particular lone parent families (Hauser 2015: 199). The overall financial situation of lone parent families may even worsen under the advance of maintenance scheme (Stöwhase 2018).

It has been estimated that the advance of maintenance scheme was able to reduce income poverty in lone parent families by six percentage points (Prognos AG 2015). After the extension of the benefit in 2017, further positive effects on reducing poverty risks can be expected.

3.4 Benefits for Low-Income Families

If the specific support schemes for lone parent families are not able to meet the financial needs of the family, social welfare law provides for several means-tested schemes that help in particular lone parent families with low earnings to avoid the necessity to draw on the basic income support scheme for the minimum subsistence needs of their children. These alternative options comprise traditional schemes like housing subsidies[10], further education allowances for

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9 According to the Maintenance Law, only half of the child benefit is deducted from the benefit amounts. The deduction of the entire amount according to the advance of maintenance benefit scheme has been introduced in 2008 as a savings measure. As of January 2018, the monthly benefits after the deduction amounts 154 € for children under 6; 205 € for children aged 6 and under 12; and to 273 € for children aged 12 to 17.

10 Housing benefits under the Wohngeldgesetz are only for households that do not depend on a basic income scheme.

college and university students, and a package of special means-tested child benefits for educational and social participation purposes under the German Child Benefit Law (Bundeskindergeldgesetz). In particular, the two means-tested child benefit schemes present a number of limitations that contradict their function to alleviate poverty risks in relation to lone parent families.

The new supplementary child benefit (Kinderzuschlag)[11] for working parents with low earnings has been introduced to accompany the labour market reform (named Hartz-IV Reform) of 2005. The benefit should help parents in gainful employment who are able to sustain themselves but do not earn enough to sustain their children. The benefit thus should prevent parents with low earnings to claim basic income support just because of unmet existence needs of their children. Its maximum amount (originally set at 140 € per child/ per month) has been raised to 160 € in July 2016, and to 170 € per month as of January 2017. The benefit is eligible for children that entitle to the general child benefit, provided the parental gross income reaches a certain minimum level, and the parental net income does not exceed a maximum income level. Earned income exceeding this level is set-off against the benefit at 50 percent, while all other types of income of the parent and of the child are fully set-off. In practice, lone mothers very often do not qualify for this benefit because of the very special income thresholds and off-set rules. Only 14 percent of all households receiving this supplement are lone-parent families (Lenze 2014). Since 2011, the number of lone parent families benefitting from this scheme has dropped consistently from 84,300 (2011) to 66,800 (2014) and so has the number of children (Hauser 2015: 198). According to Hauser (2015) about 10 percent of lone parent families were able to benefit from this option in order to exit the basic income scheme.

The second means-tested child benefit scheme is aimed at providing a specific social and cultural minimum for educational needs and participation, in terms of material needed for school activities, leisure activities like sport or music, or private tutoring (§ 28 SGB II; § 34 SGB XII; § 6b Bundeskindergeldgesetz). Introduced initially for children in families depending on basic income support, it became available later on for low income families entitled to other means-tested benefits, such as the additional child benefit, the housing benefit or basic income benefits under the scheme for asylum seekers. The scheme comprises flat rate amounts (100 € per year for school entry material; 10 € per month for leisure activities) as well as full or partial coverage of recognized needs related to education (e.g. school meals; transport to school; tutoring costs; costs for school excursions). Unlike the general child benefit, the flat rate amounts of this scheme are not subject to any adjustment. Critical issues of this child benefit scheme comprise various restrictions in access conditions, in particular the highly

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11 § 6a Bundeskindergeldgesetz [Federal Child Benefit Law].

complicated application procedures, and restrictions that apply in case of private tutoring. As a consequence of the huge bureaucratic barriers, lone mothers often are not claiming the benefit despite eligibility.

3.5 Basic Income Support Scheme

As recipients of means-tested social support benefits, lone mothers were particularly affected by employment and social welfare reforms introduced in the early years of the new millennium, which were aimed at increasing labour market participation of groups with significant employment barriers. The major piece of a series of four reform projects was a 2005 reform (the so-called Hartz IV Reform) which combined the former unemployment assistance (supporting long-term unemployed persons whose entitlement to unemployment insurance benefits was exhausted) and the former general social assistance benefit to form the new means-tested unemployment benefit, the basic income support scheme for job seekers under SGB II. Needy persons that are incapacitated for work or have reached retirement age are covered by the reformed social assistance scheme, now SGB XII. The 2005 reform had a major impact on the condition of lone parents, as more emphasis was put on so-called activation policies which should bring unemployed benefit recipients into work, including parents with family responsibilities. Parents are now expected to be available for work as soon as their youngest child turns three, provided that adequate childcare is available.

As indicated above, not all lone parents have to rely on basic income support under SGB II, yet the recipient rate is at about 38 percent, and 94 percent of lone parents receiving income support are lone mothers. In 2015, there were 625,000 lone parent families depending on income support. However, only 235,000 of these lone parents were unemployed. The rest were either in employment, but with insufficient income from work, participated in so-called “active labour market policy measures,” or they were in education (school, university or professional education) or temporarily not available for work, due to incapacity for work or due to caring obligations.

The new basic income support scheme for jobseekers applies when an entitlement to the regular unemployment benefit under the unemployment insurance scheme is exhausted or is not applicable. It covers persons without any previous link to the labour market, but also persons in employment and persons receiving unemployment insurance benefits (SGB III), if earnings or insurance benefits are below the subsistence level. 20 percent of lone parents are part of the working poor, and have to top up their earned income by income support for jobseekers.

Income support benefits under the Social Code Book II consist of means-tested benefits for each member of the lone parent family at a rather low subsistence level. [12] Children are entitled to a certain portion of the standard benefit according to different age groups. [13] In addition, lone-parent households are entitled to a special supplement the amount of which depends on the age and number of children living in the household. The cost for appropriate housing, for heating and electricity are also covered. But in a large number of cases, lone-parent families who need income support benefits still face financial hardship due to specific restrictions (for details see Hohnerlein 2016).

A major limitation stems from the rather rigid means-testing rules and the interaction with other benefits or family income: Because of severe benefit offset rules in the context of basic income support many lone-parent families cannot improve their living standard by claiming non-means tested family benefits. The same limitation arises in the context of private maintenance payments and the advance maintenance scheme.

4 Labour Market Integration Policies for Lone Mothers

A key issue in combatting poverty risks of lone mothers is the promotion of their employment. About half of the lone mothers are the main bread-winners of their family: Earned income is the main source of income for 1.03 million (60.3%) lone mothers in West Germany and for 295,000 (59.8%) in East Germany, about 8 percentage points less than for fathers (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018b, 94; 96). On the other hand, lone mothers are overrepresented among the unemployed, with a higher risk of long-term unemployment than other parents, in particular in the Eastern part of Germany. The main strategy chosen by policy makers and employment offices to improve lone parents' economic situation has been to encourage participation in active labour market programmes, in particular workfare, training programmes and vocational education programmes. In practice, most of the programmes offered to lone mothers are not able to guarantee economic self-sufficiency by subsequent entries into standard employment in the first labour market, but rather serve to get lone mothers temporarily out of the unemployment statistics.

As for unemployment benefits, employment promotion rules, benefits and competences are linked to two different unemployment schemes providing for two different legal frameworks with different rationales: The unemployment

12 The standard minimum subsistence rate for the head of the household is set at 416 € (as of 2018).

13 Monthly benefits for children aged 0–5= 240 €, 6–14 = 296 €, 15–17 = 316 €, 18–24 = 332 € (as of 2018).

insurance scheme (SGB III) and the means-tested basic income support scheme for job-seekers (SGB II).

4.1 Family and Gender Policies in Employment Promotion Policies and Programmes

The Federal Employment Agency is aware of the special labour market problems of lone mothers. Special programmes have been established to bring this target group into work, such as the programmes "decent work for lone parents" and "networks of effective support". Moreover, lone parents have been recognized as a special target group for employment promotion policies. This is reflected by the objective to increase the integration rate of lone parents contained in the annual target agreements between the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Agency for Labour since 2011 (BMAS 2013). However, the results are not very promising. Among all those lone parents that exit unemployment only very few are able to enter the first labour market.

Employment promotion benefits and services for lone mothers are more likely to fall under SGB II rules. This scheme does not explicitly contemplate gender equality and reconciliation of family and work, but these objectives have been integrated into the annual target agreements between the Federal Ministry of Labour and the Federal Employment Agency. Besides, gender equality matters are entrusted to officers for equal opportunities that should support and provide counselling to the job centers on equality issues, promotion of women and reconciliation issues (see § 18e SGB II).

By contrast, issues of reconciling family responsibilities and work have a long-standing tradition in the social insurance scheme of SGB III: Benefits aimed at employment promotion of parents with caring responsibilities or parents who wish to return to the labour market after such periods as family carers must consider their particular situation.

4.2 Employment Promotion Policies for Lone Mothers Receiving Income Support

In order to enhance the perspective of economic independence, the framework for professional orientation and qualification is of paramount importance. Access to income support under SGB II is combined with labour market integration and work opportunity programmes. Lone parents can refrain from participating in such programmes only if they have to care for a child under the age of three.

There is a great variety of measures and services to assist labour market integration: Placement guidance and assistance; support in taking up further education and training, including repeating the lower secondary school leaving certificate; assistance for employers, community integration support (such as childcare services and debt advisory services), assistance in taking up self-employment, training opportunities etc. However, access to these services is not backed by an individual legal entitlement but is left to the discretion of the employment offices and job centers, or simply depends on availability of funds.

Although lone mothers show high participation rates in employment promotion programmes, not all programmes they are assigned to are effective in view of entering sustainable, regular and contributory employment. As lone mothers are overrepresented in the SGB II scheme, they participate more frequently in programmes specifically addressing recipients of minimum income support. These programmes are aimed at the long-term unemployed with particular obstacles towards labour market integration, comprising lack of motivation. The obstacles faced by lone mothers are rarely due to a lack of motivation but due to their childcare responsibilities and to comprehensive needs for re-orientation in a difficult phase of transition (Achatz, Hirseland, Lietzmann and Zabel 2013). In practice, mainly short-term employment promotion programmes are proposed to lone mothers who receive income support under SGB II, comprising workfare programmes—known as "one-euro jobs"—situated in the public or non-profit sector and usually run for 6 months, short classroom training programmes that run for a duration of a few days up to 12 weeks, "further vocational training programmes" which usually run for about 3 months and are organized via a voucher system that benefit recipients can use to join a course offered by a certified provider (Zabel 2013a: 8; 2013b: 10–11). These programmes differ in the extent to which they can contribute to improving benefit recipients' skills, and in the extent to which they are used to exert pressure on them to increase job search efforts (Zabel 2013a).[14] Among these programmes only further vocational training programmes were found to improve the chances to find regular contributory employment and to enable lone mothers to exit the income support scheme, but due to the small scale of this programme only few lone mothers can benefit from it (Zabel 2013b). On the other hand, lone mothers are rarely assigned to in-firm training programmes at company level that prove to be by far the most successful programme in terms of job integration (Achatz *et al.* 2012; Zabel 2013b: 7). Another measure with good perspectives of increasing participants' chances of subsequent unsubsidized employment consists of job subsidies. They can either be granted as employer subsidies (*Eingliederungszuschuss*), or as income supplements paid directly to basic income benefit recipients when they take up low-wage jobs (*Einstiegsgeld für abhängig Beschäftigte*). But lone mothers of young children are not very likely to participate in this type of programme (Zabel 2013a: 7), whereas lone mothers with older children in Western Germany have high entry rates into job subsidies.

[14] Benefit recipients can be sanctioned by benefit cuts if they do not attend the programmes to which they are assigned.

The reason for the low participation rate of lone mothers with younger children in in-firm training programmes and job subsidies is not clear. As working hours are determined by the employers, there might be incompatibilities with childcare provision, but the low participation rate can also stem from discriminatory treatment of lone mothers by excluding them from such promising programmes just on the ground of their family status.

A further problem hampering sustainable labour market integration is related to the practice of job centres to propose qualification measures in specific female employment sectors (for instance as a sales person, hairdresser, childcare worker or elderly care worker) which is a serious barrier towards achieving economic independence, aggravated in case of part-time work. Moreover, employment in these sectors often involves long and atypical business hours which are hardly compatible with official opening hours of childcare facilities. Nevertheless, job centres often send women into qualification programmes of these branches. This can entail serious risks for the well-being of children as they may be left alone at home for long hours.

Recent reforms[15] attempt to improve access to further education at all stages of the professional career, comprising further education in case of long-term unemployment, vocational skill-ups for employed persons, and programmes to improve basic competences throughout the life course (Steinmeyer 2017; Winkler 2017). Lone mothers may be able to benefit from the new provisions that allow for greater flexibility in employment promotion and improve income security in various constellations of further vocational education.

4.3 Reconciliation and Childcare Issues as Part of Labour Market Integration Programmes

A major condition for accessing employment promotion programmes, especially those of longer duration and involving longer working hours, is integrated childcare provision. As a consequence, family-work balance problems have turned increasingly into an issue also in the area of employment promotion programmes. Several provisions address this issue:

Local authorities can provide for additional benefits to support employment integration measures benefitting lone mothers, in particular in the Western part of Germany (Burkert, Kosubek and Schaade 2014). Such benefits pursue a holistic support for employment integration of vulnerable groups, comprising in

[15] Cf. Gesetz zur Stärkung der beruflichen Weiterbildung und des Versicherungsschutzes in der Arbeitslosenversicherung (*Law to Strengthen Further Vocational Education and to Improve Social Insurance Coverage Under the Unemployment Insurance*) of 18 July 2016, in force since August 2016.

the first place child care provision for minor or for disabled children and care at home for other family members; but also counselling for debtors.

A special problem can be the lack of professional education and qualification among lone mothers, some of whom may have not even accomplished lower secondary school. Lone mothers in this condition need to acquire solid professional qualification in order to have a realistic chance to achieve economic independence in the future. As many of the concerned lone mothers have very young children they would need part-time programmes for vocational training which are still difficult to find. Part-time vocational education in companies has been provided by law as of 2005 but has not been extended to professional schools. According to an agreement between employers and the federal states[16] part-time education and training should be made possible both in the company and in school in the future, but so far there is no legal entitlement to part-time qualification programmes, and in practice they are not readily available. In 2016, only 0.4 percent (2,085) of all new contracts on vocational education concerned part-time arrangements (BMBF 2017). A further obstacle to engage in vocational education has been gaps in income security for the lone family throughout the period of such programmes. Combined with the lack of childcare provision this constituted a serious restriction for lone mothers. The dilemma for lone mothers is that they may get a childcare place when they are employed or in education, and on the other hand they have a chance of getting a contract for vocational education if the childcare issue is resolved. The same applies to lone mothers who—after having spent long periods as family carers—try to get re-qualification in order to return to the labour market.

In view of the growing awareness of the need to life-long learning, part-time professional qualification programmes at all grades and levels should be made available for lone mothers and fathers, supported by a legal entitlement. This dilemma can be addressed if job centres provide for childcare places themselves, with special back-up services (Martin 2016).

Finally, to support labour market integration of lone mothers the job centres are allowed to assume costs for childcare provision up to the age of 13 as ancillary benefits. Such ancillary benefits are seen as indirect measures to promote employment participation. In some programmes, a monthly amount of 130 € per child for child-care can be granted; in case of municipal integration benefits necessary childcare costs may be assumed under various circumstances, but again only based on the discretion of the officer and not as a legal entitlement (§ 16a SGB II).

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[16] The federal states have the legislative power in matters of school education.

4.4 Provision of Childcare Services

As indicated above, appropriate childcare provision continues to be a major challenge for lone mothers' possibilities to improve their economic self-sufficiency via employment and vocational up-skilling. Institutional childcare services (including childminding services) are part of Youth Welfare Law under Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII), yet access conditions (including the weekly care volume, parental cost participation) can vary greatly. Although major improvements in terms of quantitative expansion of childcare services took place throughout the past two decades, there are still persisting gaps in available, affordable and appropriate childcare places, both under quantitative and qualitative aspects, especially for school-age children. In general, childcare provision rates, all-day schedules and parental demands for childcare provision are still much higher in the Eastern part of Germany as a legacy from the past. So far, no uniform quality standards have been adopted, and a comprehensive definition of quality criteria is still missing, for instance in terms of age-specific staff-child ratios, staff qualifications or time for management tasks.

The legal framework has reacted to the growing demand stemming from adult worker families by introducing specific entitlements to early childhood education: In 1996, the legal entitlement for a place in child-care for the pre-school children aged 3–6 was finally implemented in all federal states of Germany, followed by a similar entitlement for the age group 13–36 months as of August 2013. However, the entitlement does not specify the number of weekly hours to be guaranteed. Thanks to extensive investment programmes the enrolment rates for both age groups have grown consistently, albeit with important regional and local variations, in particular as to the availability of full-time schedules. Lone parents thus have to compete with adult worker couples and will be granted precedence only if the child is placed through an order of the youth welfare office for specific child-related reasons.

For the first age-group (under three), the available places have increased from 285,000 in 2006 to 762,400 in 2017, slightly above the political target of 750,000 places set in 2007, while enrolment rates went up from 14 percent on average in 2006 to about 33.1 percent in 2017. A minor part of these places (15.4%) are offered by certified private child-minders (in-home child-care) (Statistische Ämter 2018: 8). The demand of child-care provision is increasing year by year, reaching about 46 percent in 2016, but in urban areas the demand is already close to 60 percent (for one-year-olds, the demand is 59.7%, for two-year-olds 77.1 %) (BMFSFJ 2017: 5). Regional differences persist with regard to enrolment rates as well as to demand. Full-time day care of more than 35 hours per week (more than 7 hours per day) is available for about 18.5 percent of the children under three (Statistische Ämter 2018), half-day care (up to 25 hours per week) for 17.5 percent, and extended half-day care services (25–35 hours per week) are provided for 28.4 percent of children under three. It has been estimated that in

2017 almost 300,000 places are missing (262,000 in the Western part, 31,000 in the Eastern part of Germany), but the demand—in particular for all-day care—is increasing significantly (BMFSFJ 2017: 10f). In April 2017, Parliament has announced a new investment programme for 100,000 places.

For pre-school children aged 3–6, enrolment rates increased from 87 percent in 2006 to 94 percent in 2016, with little variation between the Western part (93.7%) and the Eastern part (95.3%). All-day care was available for 49 percent of the children aged 3–5, extended half-day care for almost 38 percent (BMFSFJ 2017: 20).

So far, no legal entitlement to early childhood education has been adopted for the children of the youngest age-group (below 12 months). The overall family policy in that case is aimed at supporting parental child-care via parental allowances. Enrolment rates for this age group is thus very low (2.5% on average).

School entry at the age of six is a major challenge for all parents but impacting lone mothers in particular: While pre-school children very often have been enrolled in all-day care, there is an important gap in childcare provision concerning after school care, wrap-around care and care during holidays for school-age children. This age group still lacks any entitlement under federal legislation, so that employment options of lone mothers with school-age children can be seriously jeopardized, especially in the absence of comprehensive all-day school programmes. After-school care options for children under 11 under the auspices of the youth welfare code (SGB VIII) are available for only 16.2 percent of children, albeit with extensive regional differences (BMFSFJ 2017: 26). The gap in childcare provision can be mitigated to some extent by comprehensive all-day school schedules under the auspices of the school administration. Yet about 44 percent of children aged 6–10 are not covered by any type of care provision, including all-day school programmes (BMFSFJ 2017: 29). Even with all-day school programmes, additional wrap-around care or care options during school holidays may be needed by lone mothers.

A general problem in further increasing the number of childcare places is the lack of qualified staff. Public institutions have to compete with private ones that offer better working conditions. Shortage of qualified staff impacts the quality of childcare, such as the child-staff ratio, the size of the groups, or the time assigned for management tasks. Staff shortage also entails a shortening of opening hours entailing additional pressure on lone parents.

In January 2016, a new federal programme to enhance extended opening hours in day care facilities and after school care has been adopted. It consists in subsidies for childcare facilities that provide childcare at non-standard working hours (night shifts, early morning shifts, or during weekends), thus improving employment opportunities of lone mothers who often work in sectors requesting non-standard working hours. As a new small-scale programme, it is available only for few children as yet.

5 Conclusions and Future Prospects

The situation of lone mothers and their children continues to require urgent attention. The socio-economic framework which determines the living conditions of lone mother families has undergone important transformations since the early years of the new millennium (2005–2016). Despite attempts to improve labour market integration of lone mothers, significant efforts to increase childcare provision, and some recent improvements in specific benefits for lone parent families, overall difficulties and poverty risks of lone mothers and their children have not been addressed in a consistent way, and the regulatory framework often does not consider the complexities of lone parenthood.

In particular, the problematic effects of transformations in maintenance law since 2008 and in labour market and welfare policies since 2005 remain unchanged. The combined effects of both reform developments and their interaction with other welfare benefits tend to increase economic pressure on lone-parent families. Moreover, employment-related poverty risks are likely to increase with the expansion of low wage sectors, insecure fix-term working contracts or rising work intensity, based on concepts of the adult worker as a "zero-drag employee" (Hochschild 1997) without any family responsibilities. Job centres tend to push lone mothers rather into short-term (but less effective) training programmes, and into workfare programmes such as one-euro jobs (community work) or jobs in marginal part-time employment. It is very difficult to transform this type of employment into regular standard employment. Lone mothers should instead rather be encouraged to participate in those employment promotion programmes that substantially increase the chances to enter into regular unsubsidized employment. These programmes should be made available and promoted on a part-time basis for persons with childcare responsibilities.

Moreover, the social benefit law framework presents a number of shortfalls. Lone-parent families are often left behind when family benefits are expanded or new benefits are created. In many cases, an inconsistent interplay and intransparent rules, in particular in terms of set-off provisions, tend to negatively affect lone parents. The need to apply for different small-scale benefits with different authorities can create additional access barriers for lone mothers, by adding time pressure to financial pressure. The sudden descent into the poverty regime of basic income support is probably not the best solution for lone mothers, especially after troublesome divorce and separation experiences. For a certain period of re-orientation and re-training, lone mothers in need of public support should be eligible for a somewhat more comprehensive and more gender-sensitive family support scheme with less strict conditionalities than the last safety net.

Finally, the most promising option for lone mothers to exit poverty risks has always been and still is integration into decent employment. To this end, the elimination of employment barriers related to childcare issues is of utmost importance. This implies extending childcare provision to school children, and to invest more in affordable quality childcare. On the other hand, more gender-sensitive employment promotion programmes for lone mothers should be directed towards qualified employment and qualified further education under conditions that consider care obligations. The rigid adherence to the conditions of the basic income support scheme (SGB II) inhibits, rather than enables lone mothers to find better paid employment and to achieve financial independence. Therefore, more personalized employment support programmes with a holistic approach are needed, accompanied by a more family-friendly work environment.

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Collaboration of Local Partners: Networking and Community Orientation

Uta Meier-Gräwe

1 Foreword

In 2011, nearly 1.5 million young people between the ages of 20 and 29 did not have any professional training, nor were they participants in any measures to improve their qualifications (Allmendinger, Giesecke and Oberschachtsieck 2011). In a knowledge-based service economy, their chances of finding work are extremely low. Strikingly, the social background and occupational status of parents also play a role in determining whether professional training is a success or a failure. 60 percent of unskilled young women and men had at least one parent who had not graduated from school or did not have any professional qualification. Although an above-average number of young people whose parents have little qualification are taking advantage of supporting measures to make the leap from school to professional training, the success of these measures is rather modest, as shown by the referenced data. It is obvious that these training initiatives are started far too late, as they have not proven sufficient in preventing the intergenerational inheritance of educational deprivation. Although many training organisations desperately tried recruiting trainees last year, the number of training contracts in 2010 fell by 9.7 percent in the new federal states as well as in Berlin. Even the West saw a 2.3 percent decline in the number of trainees (ibid.). This development marks a turning point which cannot be overcome structurally or qualitatively by using such spectacular proposals as those long discussed by the Erfurt Chamber of Industry and Commerce on how to deal with the scarcity of trainees: In addition to receiving an iPhone, a starting bonus of €500 and the payment of travel expenses between the place of residence and training location, youths who sign a trainee contract are also offered tutoring in German, mathematics or professional conduct regardless of whether they are successful in school. Although this well-intended proposal definitely entails 'balancing out educational inequality' in the future, it can be expected that many of these young people will not be able to handle the requirements of a professional training and are likely to drop out, considering the fact that up until now their personal life history and education have been dominated by frustration in school as well as failure. Many of them were not equipped with the basic skills to do this through secure emotional bonds in the first years of their lives. The first years of life, however, are when inquisitive behaviour and intrinsic motivation are stimulated, linguistic and musical skills as well as

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_5

motor skills are practiced, or conversely when these abilities are kept from developing due to the lack of stimulation (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006). If a home environment does not provide enough or any opportunities for the right encouragement, greater public responsibility in the upbringing of children is required, without underestimating the role of parental duties and their involvement (Spitzer 2006). Unexpected support has been provided in educating parents and family in recent years: Education economists and researchers of life course theory have (re)discovered the educational relevance of the family and now unanimously appeal for good social services in family environments as well as for the equal involvement of parents and family in work. In order for a child to develop socially and mentally well, it is essential that his/her parents and other immediate caregivers are supported as early as possible during their new life situation and throughout all educational groups. It is also important for them to be involved and their parenting skills and interpersonal skills should be strengthened so that they avoid being overwhelmed by their new situation in life; a child's development is undeniably tied to all of this. In this respect, it is first important to establish strong emotional bonds as well as for the child to procure non-cognitive skills. Children who have another 'competent person' (Holodynski 2006) in their life at exactly the right time are equipped, from a very young age, with various strategies to independently take advantage of training programmes as well as processes that promote human resources later on in their life. In addition to cognitive skills, many studies suggest that non-cognitive skills—such as the ability to form bonds and the capacity to handle conflict, everyday life skills and frustration tolerance, but also a child's physical and mental health—are just as important for developing a child's personality, including the formation of human capital. For the all-round development of children's personalities, awareness is growing that it is very important in the first years of life to use specific 'time frames' to develop motor, linguistic or cognitive skills and to professionally guide these developmental processes of children as well as to also provide different support in terms of a complementary programme of family offers. Parents still remain the primary caregivers in connection to one's background, meaning that parental work and family education, and thus also the educational guidance of mothers and fathers, are extremely important.

The issue here, however, is also to recognise that society can avoid considerable subsequent costs by investing in early intervention initiatives, early learning initiatives and early childhood education (Meier-Gräwe and Wagenknecht 2011).

2 The Spread of Urban Poverty and its Consequences

The social segregation of urban districts has been taking place in Germany at a community level for years, proof of which is reflected in the increase of residential areas with a disproportionately high number of families experiencing multiple problems. Such socio-spatial settings are synonymous with apparent contextual spaces for socialisation, which themselves have structural effects on society (Häussermann 2010: 25). They generate 'specific contextual effects' which lead to less educational opportunities and chances in life for children living in these areas. Less stimulating communities with a concentrated number of residents living in poverty and precarious conditions can lead to a situation where they socially alienate themselves, when they do not fit into urban functional relationships or are no longer capable of being integrated, or the rest of urban society sees them as being this way. As a result, class-related deprivation is enhanced by the fact that these social environments (as settings for socialisation) do not provide any benefits or protection, but instead produce additional forms of social exclusion for poor children and their parents. This exclusion may occur symbolically through stigmatisation—for example, if a residential neighbourhood is communicated and perceived as a 'hotbed for social problems'. A current analysis of the school data and population figures of primary schools located in Germany, carried out on behalf of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration, shows that from the 30 primary schools examined in Berlin-Neukölln, there is considerable segregation in the 'high-risk schools,' where the share of foreign children and children with migrational background is two to three times as high as in the surrounding residential community: Parents concerned with education avoid schools with a high percentage of foreigners because they associate these schools with a lack of learning opportunities as well as with an environment plagued with problems. They go to considerable lengths and accept paying more to ensure their children have better educational opportunities at other schools. Disadvantaged children, such as Roma or migrant children, who are not admitted to other schools, are left behind (*Tagesspiegel* 29/11/2012: 9). Furthermore, the socio-spatial concentration of deprived segments of the population in an urban district leads to no facilitators of relevant information and social networks living in the neighbourhood, thereby cutting off or severely restricting the access of the disadvantaged residents living in these areas from central fields of activity such as training programmes and the labour market. Finally, the intensified withdrawal of an integrated middle class means that the resources for political organisation and representation have also been removed, which in turn increases the marginalisation of poorer sections of the population (Häussermann 2010: 26).

The fact is that the social environments in these neglected and impoverished problem neighbourhoods nevertheless still provide contextual space for disadvantaged children and youth to socialise and have experiences. Cultural techniques on how to survive are definitely still developed in such communities and residential neighbourhoods, thus leading to the acquisition of class-specific skills on how to deal with day-to-day life under difficult conditions ('culture of poverty'). Such spaces for socialisation and gathering experiences, however, offer little opportunity for the right skills and know-how to be acquired in order to lead a 'normal life' among urban society if these spaces are not raised to a higher standard. In view of these developments, the decision to continue the Federal and Länder programme 'Social City' (which has existed since 1999) only in terms of 'construction investment measures' is a serious mistake. This decision contradicts the clearly established and well-founded results of the evaluation by renowned experts from urban sociology and poverty studies. It has been argued for many years that participatory approaches with residents (families, migrants, young people, etc.) should be increased within the programme areas as part of integrated urban development. Even if the budget for such project proposals was comparatively modest in the past, the funds for this have now been completely exhausted. It makes little sense, however, to invest solely in redeveloping/renovating buildings ('hardware') in these problematic urban areas. At the same time, a reassessment of the programme areas must also occur by initiating communication and through the local residents, who must cope with the stresses of day-to-day life under difficult conditions, taking self-initiative (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2004).

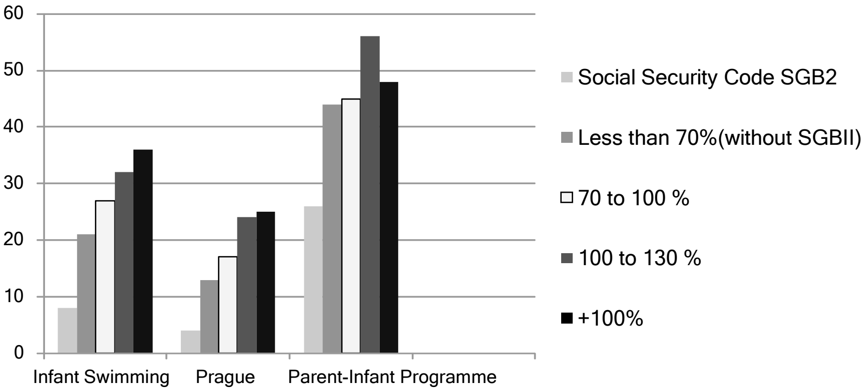
Above all, it is becoming increasingly important for the public to assume greater responsibility in the upbringing of children, which also includes the educational guidance of families by training parents and families within the scope of the federal programme 'Elternchance ist Kinderchance' (Parents' opportunities are their children's opportunities).

3 Family Poverty Also Means Child Poverty

There is a good reason why the phenomenon of the multidimensionality of poverty in the context of the family of origin is repeatedly brought up in public discussions about child poverty (Holz and Stallmann 2010). Poverty does not simply mean financial poverty, but is often also associated with living in confined quarters, parents with a lower level of education, health impairments and a lack of participation in society. A small financial budget significantly restricts the opportunities for parents to undertake action in the first place, not to mention the increased risk of remaining in a state of poverty and/or danger of slipping into poverty from a precarious financial position (Groh-Samberg 2010). This fact is relatively rarely taken into consideration in Germany; instead, media reports predominantly focus on spectacular examples where the parents demonstrably fail to base their actions on the needs of their children. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that 'abuse and neglect most commonly arise due to a fatal development taking place for which the parents, who are placed under excessive demands from the very beginning, did not originally intend' (Kindler and Sann 2007).

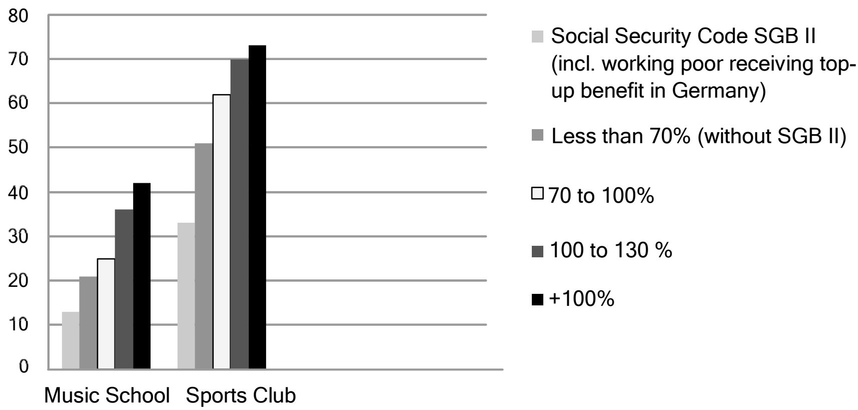
A recent study on the living situation of families in the region of Braunschweig reconfirms that exceedingly few parents cut costs when it comes to their children's needs (Diakonisches Werk Braunschweig 2011). Nevertheless, a large proportion of these parents are nowhere close to being able to provide middle-class standards to their children (for example, in the case of educational resources). The study 'Eltern wollen Chancen für ihre Kinder' (Parents want opportunities for their children) (BMFSFJ 2010) now representatively demonstrates for Germany that there is a 'social scale' for access to recreational activities from the moment children are born (see Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Percentage of Children Under the Age of 24 Months Who Participate in Organised Recreational Activities, Based on Family Income (in percent)



Note: Percentage of family income weighted in equivalence to the median income
Source: AID special analysis: ADJI Survey 2009.

Figure 2: Percentage of Children Under the Age of 24 Months Who Participate in Organised Recreational Activities, Based on Family Income (in Percent)



Source: AID special analysis: ADJI Survey 2009.

4 What Contribution Can Networking and Community Orientation Make to the Education of Impoverished Parents and Children? Ten Recommendations for Action

Many cities and communities are now trying to counteract the development of poverty through stronger orientation towards community and stronger networking of local services and actors whilst also including the potential of volunteerism. Demographic change works as a driving force in a variety of ways. Findings from resilience research are also increasingly finding acceptance at the community level, which means identifying and implementing individual and structural protection factors to ensure the prosperous upbringing of children despite adverse circumstances (Lanfranchi 2006).

4.1 Early Intervention

Cities across Germany, such as Ludwigshafen in the Rhineland-Palatinate or Dormagen in North-Rhine Westphalia, are developing new concepts for early intervention initiatives, which connect existing professional medical and youth service resources at the time of birth in order to quickly and effectively support families at risk in particular. Health services are working on improving screening procedures that will allow for diagnoses and the specific support needs of the mother and child in the transition to parenthood to be identified in a much more differentiated way than has ever been possible up until now. They are also working on introducing necessary measures that shall continuously and reliably be carried out after discharge from a maternity clinic. In any case, it is important—as based on the respective community needs—to provide appropriate staffing and financing for outreach assistance in the form of family midwives after mothers are discharged from the maternity clinic. It is also necessary to connect this health service with offers from general social services and youth welfare in home environments. According to experts acting between the areas of health care services, general social services and youth offices, in many places the existing need for subsequent help and interdisciplinary cooperation provided on a timely basis far exceeds the supply available in underprivileged communities. However, as cost-benefit analyses of early intervention initiatives have shown, investments in such cooperative structures ‘around birth’ are better than any subsequent measure taken at effectively preventing young parents living in disadvantaged conditions from experiencing situations they cannot cope with and at addressing various forms of endangerment to a child's welfare as well as psychological complications (Meier-Gräwe and Wagenknecht 2011). Furthermore, a wide range of support needs for parents and children are not only emerging for families at risk (i.e. ‘red’ cases)[1] but also for families that have been classified as ‘red-yellow’ and ‘yellow’ in terms of their needs. In the interest of good development of, and educational opportunities for, their children and the stabilisation of day-to-day domestic life, these families often living in precarious situations also require tailored information and easily accessible services in their residential environment after the mother and child return from the maternity clinic. In this case, different district-based and target-group based outreach services—including both semi-professionals and laypeople—are also offered. As experience shows nationwide, parents are much more likely to be convinced of using such offers when approached in person by physicians, childcare workers in day care and family centres, or by neighbours and persons from their own cultural sphere who they trust than they are by flyers or the press (Sann and Thrum 2004). The accessibility of offers also plays a particularly important role in whether services are used: If necessary, a portion of ‘by appointment’ (stationary) services must be changed to ‘mobile services’, for example, by regularly providing the office hours of early learning centres at day care centres or family centres so that families in need actually take note of them.

4.2 Mandatory Cooperation Between Day Care Centres and Child Guidance Centres

Meaningful support for disadvantaged parents and their children can also be achieved by ensuring a regular offer of local educational counselling for parents at all day care centres with an above-average percentage of poor children through mandatory service-level agreements. Currently, such collaborative structures regularly in place at day care centres are generally denominationally sponsored. For years, scientific studies have stressed the need to readjust cooperation between child guidance centres and day care centres in this sense:

> (...) teachers/childcare workers try to tackle problematic children themselves and provide advice to parents with problems (...) (and) feel extremely overwhelmed and devastated by the astounding number of problematic children (...). Psychosocial service staff wait for clients in their consultation rooms and are usually confronted with ‘serious’ cases. Two ‘systems which are strongly separated from each other’ thus work in

[1] The traffic light image is based on case assessments from the peripartum questionnaire called the ‘Ludwigshafener peripartalen Erhebungsbogens’ (LupE). Shortly before or after birth, a mother’s need for support is assessed using the traffic light colours ‘green’ (no increased need for support), ‘yellow’ (increased level of support required) and ‘red’ (high to very high level of support required). If there is a high or very high level of support required, an in-depth discussion is held with a family midwife from the hospital. A specially trained midwife, who can provide up to six months of follow-up outreach care, is assigned to the mother. If the parents do not accept the support, a second in-depth discussion is held with a trained medical specialist. The Youth Office is then notified if they continue to refuse necessary support.

> juxtaposition to each other and find it difficult to fulfil their mission of effectively reacting to the disabilities, delayed development and behavioural issues of children in due time (Pellander 2003: 37).

Various family education offers thus fall exclusively under the auspices of family-support services. Here, impoverished families benefit from offers provided at family centres existing throughout Germany. In a Frankfurt children's centre and family centre, for example, dual leadership provided by a social education worker and a family educator has proven to be particularly helpful in developing integrated offers and providing them in the institution in a target group-oriented manner.

4.3 Work of Integration Facilitators and Community Mothers

Integration facilitators and community mothers with or without migrant backgrounds are deployed across Germany in underprivileged districts and residential neighbourhoods. They provide information on services available at day care and family centres, are often able to connect to 'hard-to-reach' parents and build relationships of trust with them, and also encourage parents whose children do not yet attend day care to take advantage of free offers in children's and family centres. Their other areas of responsibility also include providing support with daily living and language support, promoting children's success in school, providing support for education pathways, looking for jobs and promoting healthy lifestyles, as well as providing regular services. Communication, cooperation and networking are key specialised features in this process. As facilitators, they act as intermediaries and multipliers for ensuring successful educational partnerships between the parental home and public day care centres or family centres. They themselves also benefit from being educated and trained to become community mothers or integration facilitators by being able to share their valuable experiences of integration and boost their self-esteem (Gögercin 2008). Voluntary commitment, however, requires being structurally connected to professional structures. Therefore, on the side of skilled staff, a certain amount of time and personnel is required from the overhead in order to involve volunteers, to provide them with feedback, to take over tasks of their supervision, etc.

4.4 Rapid Expansion of Childcare Provision

Although nurseries and day care centres have been considerably expanded in western Germany in recent years, demands still have not been completely met, especially for children placed at a disadvantage because of their background. It is necessary to establish timely, reliable life support structures so that these children receive good supplementary family support from the beginning, including committed parent involvement with contact persons who stay as constant as possible. Many children's centres and family centres have been able to connect with parents with young children in the meantime, for example, by offering postnatal exercise classes. However, these contacts and established relationships of trust cannot be maintained permanently due to the limited number of nursery care spots which are usually always fully occupied (waiting lists): parents and children are therefore 'once again lost.' There is a lack of continuity, and in the existing day care facilities, there are also not enough all-day provisions and after-school support, which are urgently needed for parents working in the service sector. In this case, a detailed needs analysis in all disadvantaged districts and residential neighbourhoods is recommended in order to determine the number of spaces required locally. In any case, it is important that cities and communities ensure that a quick and uncomplicated allocation of spots takes priority to ensure continuity of care on site (for children at risk at a minimum), but also for children who, in a screening procedure, have been designated as 'red-yellow' or 'yellow' in terms of their need for support. The allocation guidelines currently in force should be reviewed according to this perspective and, if necessary, a quota system (assignment of spots) for extreme cases should be established. In view of the increased professional qualifications required for dealing with children and parents coming from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there is additional need to further educate teachers/childcare workers in regards to current neuroscientific findings, intercultural competence building, knowledge about the consequences of poverty, methods of approaching different types of poverty, etc. Cities and communities must also, however, respond to the increasing demand for staff in family-related service occupations in the coming years and seek solutions.

4.5 Expansion of Mobile Services

Many cities and communities nationwide are currently focusing on developing a concept for including disabled children and children who are at risk of becoming disabled. For example, the state capital of Wiesbaden introduced a mobile service to provide integration support in day care centres and hired the qualified integration staff to do this. They also financially accounted for the systematic cooperation of the mobile service's work with teachers/childcare workers from the respective day care centre that the child attends. This is an intelligent, flexible and cost-effective tool which, in comparison to conventional structures, can respond more distinctively and precisely to the individual needs of children and their parents: the usual practice of early learning and early counselling as a 'by appointment' (stationary) service must be avoided, as this can lead to a child/family being 'disenrolled' in cases where parents miss appointments twice. This raises the question about the situation of these children's perspectives with regard to their health and educational paths in life—and in the case where early learning initiatives are not introduced, when and how high the subsequent costs, which accumulate in the further course of life, shall be for communities as well as for the state.

4.6 Develop Day Care Facilities, Schools and Communities to Promote Health

School entrance examinations repeatedly show that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are in a comparatively poor state of health and development. Such results raise the question as to how the state of health of these children can already be influenced over the long run, starting at the age when they enter nursery school or preschool. Based on the Dormagen model, it is recommended that in disadvantaged neighbourhoods day care centres and family centres be used to administer medical check-ups to children at the end of their fourth year of life. Individual and tailored support frameworks should be developed from the results in consultation with teachers/childcare workers to, on the one hand, be integrated into day-to-day activities at day care, and on the other, to be implemented in collaboration with the parents. Reserving preventive health care measures for younger children directly in the day care centres and family centres would be helpful, however, in order to relieve and support teachers/childcare workers by providing them with contacts and access to health care services. One example would be to mitigate the chronic health impairments of children, which are identified at the day care centre, in cooperation with medical specialists. Cities and communities could develop a 'healthy day care' concept analogous to the 'healthy school' concept and introduce a certification process aimed at getting as many day care centres as possible to voluntarily commit. This would embed the issue of health as an internal sign of quality in day care centres and family centres. It would also provide children and their parents with easy and timely access to socio-paediatric and other therapeutic offers that promote early learning and health, the use of which then must be monitored and evaluated in terms of their effectiveness on a case-by-case basis. Cities and communities should, however, also increasingly use the results of school entrance examinations in order to rank health and education risks in all of a community districts' primary schools, as well as to use this ranking to prioritise the allocation of local resources.

4.7 Expansion of Primary School Care and Holiday Care

For the most part, the care of children in primary school is still inadequate in many cities and communities. This area still largely lacks a concept that precisely identifies concrete development goals and that, above all, also systematically incorporates the offers of the caregiving primary school or district schools in the expansion. A resolute change of course is urgently required here in the interest of reducing the class-related educational disadvantages of children. Severe deficits also exist for older socially disadvantaged children and youth in terms of homework assistance and tutoring. For this reason, the expansion of all-day schools using local resources must be encouraged, especially in communities where there is an above-average number of children and youth with clear health impairments and weak educational performance. Needs-oriented concepts for after-school homework assistance and afternoon child care must be developed in cooperation with teaching staff.

It is also advisable that every primary school child whose parents are covered by SGB II (second Social Security Act) is given the opportunity to participate in a free four-week local holiday care programme during the winter and summer holidays. Research from the United States shows that during the holiday period, socially disadvantaged children from impoverished family backgrounds fall behind by two to three months in their language proficiency and reading skills as compared to middle-class children. So far, this effect has been proven for students in Germany in the subject of mathematics (Coelen and Siewert 2008). In light of the above, holiday programmes should be designed as a mix of recreational activities, adventures, exercise and healthy nutrition, but should also provide specific offers to strengthen cognitive skills. However, a supportive holiday programme embedded in the neighbourhood requires vigorous and creative cooperation between day care centres, schools, after-school care, congregations and public youth work representatives. The school can offer holiday support for up to a specific number in cooperation with external partners, such as public children's establishments and youth facilities.

At the same time, it is also just as urgent to achieve a significant reduction in the proportion of poor children not attending secondary school, although they are capable of doing so based on their academic performance. Concerted action is necessary in order to provide volunteer mentors ('personal scout') to these children in the primary schools, to conduct parent-teacher discussions to encourage parents to let their children attend secondary school and to provide accurate support measures (free bus tickets and school meals, free supply of educational aids, expansion of funding offers, etc.).

4.8 Distribute Educational Materials

The diversity of the challenges confronting the best possible support for disadvantaged children and youth from impoverished families in communities with a particular need for development means that it is necessary not only to professionalise existing community supply structures and services but also to better network them. First, it is important to guarantee these communities adequate basic equipment/facilities (education, health, funding). This results in a wide range of requirements for social, health and education planning in order to determine and justify the basic equipment/facilities a district requires in relation to the problems that exist there. Due to the fact, however, that the need for action in urban districts requiring particular development is so complex (i.e. cost- and labour-intensive), contributions made by civil society, such as volunteering and endowments, must be effectively incorporated as ‘bridge-building resources’ in communities where there is a disproportionate number of disadvantaged children, youth and families. In this context, it is also necessary to develop intelligent concepts for the fairer distribution of resources to local foundations.

4.9 Places For Disadvantaged Children and Their Parents as ‘Structural Second Homes’

Cities and communities would be well advised to set up urban meeting places in neighbourhoods requiring particular development as a public place for children, youth and families, but also for other age groups. These should serve as places of refuge for families which, in addition to offering leisure activities, education and counselling, also enable neighbourly contact between community members of different classes. The facility (or perhaps a multigenerational house or a house of the family) should be centrally located in the urban district and offer enough space. Different courses could be offered here, for example, in the subjects of music, exercise, nutrition, child upbringing and education, with an intensification of these courses during the holiday season. There should be enough room provided for children of different ages. In addition, local child minders and their children could use the premises to escape the frequently cramped conditions of their own homes and go to a family-friendly place. Furthermore, various group offers for parents and their children (e.g. PEKiP groups), family-oriented sports groups (e.g. father-child gymnastics, fitness with childcare supervision), intercultural offers (e.g. German integration course with childcare supervision) and selected educational offers (e.g. parenting courses) could take place there (Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus 2010). A community coordination centre should be implemented in such urban meeting places in order to ensure the systematisation of easily accessible outreach family-support services. It is extremely important to coordinate offers in line with a district’s requirements, to avoid competition and to cooperate closely with all educational institutions and facilitators in order to successfully integrate such offers into disadvantaged districts.

4.10 Development and Use of District Monitoring

Lastly, standardised evaluation procedures are required in order to examine the effects of the implemented measures and the interdisciplinary cooperation structures in districts and residential neighbourhoods requiring particular development and, if necessary, to correct them within the context of an error-friendly culture of learning. A process of communication based on appropriate key figures should be provided and the binding target agreements between the stakeholders involved in the respective community networks should be elaborated in order to improve support offers for socially disadvantaged children and parents.

Community stakeholders can refer to benchmarks, guidelines and strategic approaches to combat child poverty and their consequences in nationwide social, health and education reporting. For example, a community could aim to reduce the proportion of children who experience delayed development upon entering school in districts requiring particular development by 25 percent within a specific time frame, by implementing earlier day care enrolment, targeted preschool training and funding programmes, common qualification of childcare workers and teaching staff on the subject of 'transition management' at the primary school level, as well as by introducing procedural standards for cooperation between primary schools and neighbouring day cares, complemented by the involvement of industry and civil society.

5 Outlook

The aforementioned recommendations for action should be understood as part of a nationwide master plan, which must be urgently tackled for the equal opportunity and educational justice of socially disadvantaged children, but also in terms of securing Germany's competitiveness (Wehrmann 2008): Between 2006 and 2025, the number of 19 to 24 year olds is projected to drop by 14 percent in Hamburg, Bavaria and Hesse, by 27 percent in Berlin and by 48 percent in Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2010). It is in Germany's ultimate interest as a business location to also utilise export profits for strategies and measures to reduce the precarious financial positions and poverty situations of children and impoverished families. For a country lacking in natural resources such as Germany, making investments to greatly stimulate the social conditions of children should be a matter of course, both in terms of equal opportunities and economic logic. The common argument currently existing that public budgets must 'unconditionally' adopt strict austerity measures in 'the interest of our children and children's children' is a fatal strategy as based on present scientific findings.

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Day-To-Day Work. Why we Need to Reorganise it Within Society and Distribute it Fairly by Gender

Uta Meier-Gräwe

1 Foreword

Since the introduction of income-dependent parental allowances in Germany on 1 January 2007, many expectations have been placed on the young generation of fathers to act as beacons of hope and trendsetters in matters dealing with the division of work between partners. As a recent study by the Berlin Social Science Center (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin) shows, an increasing number of men are taking advantage of this opportunity after the birth of their child (Bünning 2014). Thus, as a sign of fatherhood involvement, it is essential to acknowledge that in 2012, 29.3 percent of men took parental leave after the birth of their child (Bünning 2014). The positive effects that are generated for shared caregiving arrangements in families (even after parental leave has ended) when fathers assume care responsibilities for at least two months are also worth highlighting: fathers who took parental leave reduce the time they work after returning to their job by an average of 4.5 hours per week and are altogether more involved in caring for children as compared to fathers who did not take advantage of this benefit. The fathers, however, do not seek to be more involved in housework, nor do they increase the amount of time spent working in this area after parental leave is over. Only the fathers who were on parental leave while their partner went to work also did a little more housework later (ibid.).

The question as to who really assumes responsibility for time-consuming day-to-day work, even in partnerships with children in which both partners try to be or are actually equally employed and for fathers who see themselves as more highly involved in the care of their children than as others, remains relevant (BMFSFJ 2003). The same applies to single-parent mothers and fathers who are gainfully employed and must cope with their day-to-day life with children. Even in other phases of life, the problem still arises as to who can actually reliably carry out housework and caregiving work on a dedicated basis, in situations where physical and mental strength deteriorate and their adult children live elsewhere and have their own obligations. In this context, it is worth noting that the public has increasingly become aware of the importance of domestic care services in recent times, particularly as a result of a rise in dementia-related illnesses. Concepts for reform and strategies for the professionalization of outpatient and inpatient caregiving environments, therefore, can no longer avoid integrating household services in equal

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_6

measure and recognising that these are not just merely ‘women’s issues’. On the one hand, this entails taking charge of care services for people in need of help; on the other hand, it involves interacting with individuals in a delicate manner that respects their still-present abilities and which is aimed at strengthening the resources they (still) have left.

In two respects, the historical development until now of day-to-day work in private households cannot be interpreted as a success story (Scheiwe and Krawietz 2014). A partnership-based division of labour in carrying out unpaid housework and caregiving work in the private space is not a widespread social reality; likewise, the delegation of this day-to-day work to third parties (more specifically to women with other social positions or ethnic backgrounds) has not resulted in good and fair arrangements. This theory is reinforced not only by the consistency of inequalities and disadvantages existing in these fields of activities and occupations, but also by the new inequalities and hierarchies created, especially in the course of globalisation and migratory movements. The transformation of activities involving childrearing, caregiving and household work obviously does not simply follow the path of linear ‘modernisation’ according to which unpaid work carried out within the family up until now is increasingly being diverted to professionals, who in return receive adequate symbolic and, above all, financial remuneration. New tendencies towards the precarisation of day-to-day work are currently emerging, and are being perpetuated and not resolved by apparently innovative business models such as ‘Helpling’, which the cleaning industry has just discovered as a billion-dollar business (Scherkamp 2014).

2 A Retrospective Look: Male-Connoted Market and the ‘Family-isation’ of the Female Half of Society

In the rural subsistence economy up until the eighteenth century, a complementary division of labour between men and women was typical in the management of the ‘entire household’—the *oikos*—in order to secure the livelihood of the entire rural class. There was no separation between the productive and reproductive spheres in farming (or even trades-based) family organisations:

The work of all members of these economic associations and symbiotic communities, which included the work of non-family members (slaves, servants, etc.) in addition to that of family members and relatives, was embedded in a reciprocal interplay of different forms of work and activities of indispensable importance to survival, and was acknowledged by the male head of the household (*paterfamilias)* despite the existence of hierarchical and gender-related structures of superiority and subordination. In other words, household work as well as generative caregiving was definitely appreciated by society and was widespread in everyday life. The core objective here was to care for each other across generations using resources which were often scarce and frequently put at risk. In household economics and teachings passed down from antiquity until the eighteenth century, the focus was not placed on the generation of profit. These written documents passed on through the ages contain very different explanations and valuable information on what was called the ‘art of proper housekeeping’: the well-thought-out arrangement of home and farmstead, the procurement and storage of food, the preservation of health and the defined rules of living together with the aim of ensuring life and providing basic needs over the long run in these economic and symbiotic communities (Richarz 1991).

A fundamental change in the structure of society and the economy took place during the transition to industrial society, leading to a departure from the economic understanding which had been used to provide direction over many centuries since the time of Aristotle’s *oikonomia*. In a momentous move, during the transition (begun in the late 18th century) from an agrarian system to a capitalist industrial society, the male architects of the national economy summarily dispelled the notion that all domestic activities (*cooking, cleaning, caring*) were productive work. Moreover, as they devised the scientific system, object- and person-related care work—which, even up until the present day, accounts for a significantly greater number of hours worked than the total volume of labour paid, both in Germany as well as abroad—was henceforth no longer structurally factored into economic models for ascertaining social welfare production. As a result, important dimensions of the care- and needs-based *oikonomia* were abandoned in that they were no longer considered by definition to be a subject of the economy. At the same time, natural law provided justification for women to oversee the various day-to-day tasks: Since this point in time, any duties related to the household and caregiving have been intrinsically attributed to women and declared ‘non-work’. Their relevance to the system and value-adding significance for the economy and society has also been systematically ignored.

A national economist with a classical perspective blatantly framed the ideological basis for excluding female care work from adding value to society thus:

> The justification for this lies in the special character of all these domestic services provided free of charge at the hands of the family: they may also all have an economic aspect […], but they are, in general, considered as far less economic, as they are seen as a certain way of living, lifestyle or act of caregiving practiced out of love. It serves in opposition to the healthy feeling of setting the benchmark for economic evaluation (Jostock 1941: 135).

One of the few economists who recognised the absurdity of this patriarchal theoretical construction was the economist Friedrich List: “He who breeds pigs is a productive man, whereas he who educates people, an unproductive member of this society.” (List 1959: 151) One reason for the narrow-mindedness of conventional economic theories is that they have been heavily shaped by the (male) fascination for the technical upheavals of the industrial revolutions since the mid-nineteenth century, the fixation on profit rationality and an incomparable increase in productivity arising therefrom. Considered the architect of the national economy, Adam Smith defines this objective as follows: ‘Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production’ (Smith 1950, quoted by Funder 2011: 146). Another reason is the fact that economics is based on the perspective of companies and capital. This androcentric perspective only views households as consumers and not as productive units. These economic theoretical models also see private households as ‘destroyers of value’, since goods purchased at market are ‘consumed’ in these living environments.

The structural principle of a hierarchical division of labour between the sexes was simultaneously introduced and institutionalised with the emergence of a capitalist industrial society and national economy. This is also referred to as the Fordist ‘reproduction pact’: the institutionalised and politically legitimate social organisation of production processes and reproductive processes (Jurczyk 2010). The woman became the *domina privata*, who should concern herself with caring for her husband and children and be content to do so. Her standard of living was structurally supported through matrimonial, tax and labour market policies as well as financially sponsored through the manoeuvres of the male head of the household, who as the *homo oeconomicus* ‘sells’ his labour in an occupationally organised process of production. This gender-specific division of labour became part of the advancing social division of labour of the emerging capitalist society, which was enormously productive, but which systematically concealed the large part women played in this social progress.

The historically new understanding of private households as consumer units also brought the work carried out above all by women further out of the sight of society, especially with consumer goods such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners and ready-made products that supposedly took the place of household work. Focus was increasingly carried away from the fact that the wide range of routine care-related activities carried out for others do not only provide the social foundation for societal production, but that raising children, carrying out care-related activities to maintain the health and activities of adults as is done in their daily lives, and—last but not least—providing care to the sick and elderly in need of assistance are in themselves productive acts, without which capitalist societies would not be able to survive. Any monetary economy would ultimately collapse if these activities were not carried out (Schmuckli 1994).

The allocation of household and caregiving work to women thus proved to be a well-calculated step by the architects of the newly emerging industrial society in order to ensure social stability in an increasingly individualised society. On the one hand, this construction of gender roles was supported by the codification of gender-specific patterns of assignment; on the other, by the fact that they were represented as being ‘natural’ and were thus naturalised.

Representatives—in particular medical practitioners, legal practitioners, economists and sociologists—of the scientific system which rapidly diverged in the nineteenth century played a considerable part in the spread of this gender-stereotypical ideology, which compared 'masculine' and 'feminine' principles as being incompatible and irreconcilable. This ideology was associated with a historically new construction of femininity, which reduced the role of women to that of wife and mother and resulted in a standardised course of life for females. This is referred to as the 'family-isation' of the woman as based on natural law. She became the 'angel of the household', an innocent, desexualised dependant willing to sacrifice herself for others. "The modern legal state's necessity for equality incorporated a countermovement which entrusted the female sex with the historical mission to act as the socially stabilising liaison between individuals and society" (Stauder 1999).

3 Androcentric Economic Model

What basic assumptions characterise the popular theories of macroeconomics that have served as a guide since the transition to industrial society? It is assumed that all market participants are based on a 'level playing field' in order to maximise profits and/or gains and are equipped with certain preferences, product information and money as a means of exchange. In other words, they are equal yet autonomous individuals. They merely compete and interact with each other as *homines oeconomici*, as owners of goods in supposedly symmetric relationships, which are embedded in neither social nor ecological lives. Focused on satisfying one's own unlimited needs or attaining the greatest possible gain, they represent the fictional character of a ruthless individual exclusively concerned with following his own short-term interests and demonstrating no concern for others. The fact is that, throughout the life of *homo oeconomicus*

> with changing participants, the mother, spouse(s) and homemaker(s), secretaries, cleaning ladies, courtesans, nurses, and clerks discreetly and anonymously stand by the side of *homo oeconomicus* to mitigate all that which could degrade *homo oeconomicus,* challenge his freedom from social relations as well as his market achievements (Madörin 1995: 20).

This reductionist understanding of economics is marked by a certain degree of self-indulgence and lack of concern, and has currently resulted in a corrupted form of profit maximisation on international financial markets, where only a few market participants achieve unimaginable profits at the expense of the people around them and the social environment they live in (Kennedy 2011, Wehler 2013).

Macroeconomic theories do not take the environment and the social world into consideration; neither natural resources nor those connected to private life—above all any object- or person-related care activities carried out by women—have been adequately included in national accounts to date. Nevertheless, these are essential for maximising market profits and have always been utilised extensively. This applies to the full production range and the concern for preserving human resources: the birth and socialisation of children, the daily retrieval of workers for the labour market, the committed attention paid to family members affected by unemployment and, last but not least, care for those who are ill and in need of care. These care activities are (re)productive in nature, but are factored into economic evaluations just as little as natural resources are. Both of them, however, are utilised without remuneration and implicitly 'serve' market processes.

This separation and elimination of basic care activities of human economies as well as of natural resources, carried out according to the dominant male definition, has an equally destructive effect on both social and ecological aspects. Since, because they are not valued, neither of these are factored into economic accounts, these resources are used excessively and thoughtlessly exploited (Biesecker 2011:10). The common cause of today's social and ecological crisis phenomena lies precisely here. They are all expressions of the same crisis: the reproductive crisis (ibid.). Present-day wealth, economic growth and social welfare, as defined by the mainstream economy, are neither sustainable nor future-proof. This kind of patriarchal economy has a high price, which became increasingly evident for many people during the 2008 financial crisis. It is based on destroying fundamental resources, the productive dimensions of the care economy and the ecological nature (see Gottschlich *et al.* 2014).

In this context, the Expert Committee of the Seventh Family Report of the Federal Republic of Germany emphasised that human resources (i.e. all our actions and values, social coping skills and professional skills whose foundations are laid in the context of private life) which are vital for society can only develop and be maintained when young adults are ready to have children and also devote their time and affection to these children for the sake of their development, or maintain social relationships with parents who have grown old (BMFSFJ 2006). Thinking of these resources as infinite is equivalent to entirely misunderstanding the real development.

At this point, the question needs to be asked why economics and politics have rigorously overlooked such fundamental requirements for co-existence in a cohesive community. This development is very strongly tied to today's pervasive reductionist-androcentric understanding of the economy which still does not consider all activities carried out to satisfy needs and care of others in private life (outside of a paid relationship of exchange) as work and which subsequently does not recognise them as adding any value. From the point of view of life course theory, this concept of labour systematically discriminates against persons who undertake generative household and care work throughout their life, and thus deviate from the 'standard male model of employment' (Meier-Gräwe 2010).

Economic activity, however, is only partly handled through markets and money. "Economy begins with the production of people: by giving birth, nurturing and educating, so that the survival of every person born is assured." (Prätorius 1997: 254). The creation and maintenance of human resources, which the economy and society depend upon, is fundamentally based on a multitude of day-to-day care activities, which are essentially provided by women in the family in private households, but which are neither classified as a cultural achievement nor an economic activity. Care needs are nevertheless universal and require people to undertake care activities throughout the course of our lives:

> [...] human needfulness, vulnerability and the finite nature of life means that all people must be taken care of, starting at the beginning of their lives, for many at some point in the middle of their lives and for a great many at the end of their lives (Brückner 2010: 48).

4 What Must an Integrated Economic Theoretical Concept Look like so That It Is Geared Towards a Good Life for Everybody?

An increasing number of voices around the world are calling for economic and monetary reform. Regardless of the ambitious goals set at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, there has been no trend towards sustainable development in recent years. That is why in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference, high expectations were placed on the concept of the green economy, which seeks to transform the global economic system and achieve improved human welfare, increased social equality and reduced environmental risks (UNEP 2011).

Women have been audibly and clearly involved in discussions about viable methods for a new (global) economic concept and have contributed their own ideas. They criticise the fact that they are obliged to uphold 'repair operations' for environmental problems but have no influence whatsoever on production processes of goods and services directed at maximising profits. Ecologically sustainable budgeting results in more work for women and leads to an additional workload, meaning that this can be classified as a 'feminisation and privatisation of environmental responsibility' (Weller 2004, 2012). Caring for the environment therefore becomes an additional area of responsibility in care work, which is highly gendered (Gottschlich *et al.* 2014). At the same time, debates on the importance of sustainable consumption patterns fundamentally overrate the influential opportunities and the freedom of private consumers to act in industrial societies by not understanding the problem of sustainability as a 'systemic crisis.' The causes of today's crisis lie in the systematic exclusion of the two reproductive areas: unpaid work and the environment (Biesecker 2011: 10). Only when reproduction is visible and understood as productive can the green economy become a care economy, by predominantly focusing on the quality of life instead of the maximisation of profit (Mölders 2010). Concepts of a sustainable, comprehensive care economy always include concern for humans *and* nature and recognise their productive work as an integral part of a holistic economic concept. From a feminist perspective of home economics, in the aftermath of this analysis, it is essential to conceive the birth of a modern economy as a dizygotic, ambisexual twin birth: The male-dominated market economy *and* the female care economy cannot be separated from each other, although the denial of the female twin has dominated the mainstream models of economics up to the present day (Biesecker 2010). Only when 'all' of the economy is taken into consideration through a –twin– perspective can undesirable developments and crisis phenomena be identified for what they are: not individual cases of misconduct or tragic accidents, but systemic crises (ibid.). Ageing societies such as the Federal Republic of Germany are also confronted by this challenge, because the low appreciation of (paid and unpaid) care work has resulted in a deep structural care crisis.

What is the typical feature of classical care responsibilities? Ecological economist Maren Jochimsen believes it is the restricted ability or complete inability of the person who needs care to act. Small children cannot put diapers on themselves; a critically ill patient cannot wash himself/herself. Some people requiring care cannot even articulate their needs—coma patients, for example. Situations where care is provided are typically characterised by existential dependency, meaning that another person must make "the existential needs of the person requiring care the reference point of their own actions" (Jochimsen 2010). Moreover, a person who must be cared for in a real situation of care cannot provide any return service in the sense of any adequate service contribution. Asymmetry is therefore a typical characteristic of care relationships (ibid.). Typical care situations are thus characterised by asymmetry in two aspects: in terms of the ability of the caregiver and the person who needs care to act and in terms of the material resources which are required for carrying out care activities—for example, if an elderly person cannot afford care, but is dependent on the financial support of his/her family or the state. The dependent person's limited or missing ability to act usually means that they usually cannot leave a care environment for a certain length of time or period (children potentially until they reach the age of legal majority, sick persons until complete recovery, patients in need of care until death). The fact is that care activities of this quality cannot be covered using categories of exchange between autonomous individuals in classic macroeconomics. Other types of care situations resembling market-mediated transactions may be imaginable; however, these categories do not function in classic care situations. Based on these varying complications of care activities, Jochimsen demonstrates the boundaries of conventional economic approaches using the example of the home economic model of Gary S. Becker, Nobel Prize laureate in economics.

Although he did indeed attempt to integrate the productive side of the private household into his model by including care shared between spouses in the household as an altruistic behaviour with interdependent beneficial functions, which is compatible with classic economic considerations in that the (husband) man and (wife) woman have a similar capacity to act (he spends his time in gainful employment outside the home, while she cares for him and focuses on maximising shared benefits), in the beneficial logic of their parents, children nevertheless function as consumers or (production) goods due to their limited capacity to act (!). The example speaks for itself, in fact. It demonstrates the profound incapacity of the mainstream economy to deal conceptually with people with a limited ability to act—with their natality, their vulnerability and their needs for care. They are degraded to passive non-persons, to goods (ibid.).

As an alternative, the conceptualisation of a sustainable economic system would have to equally integrate different sectors of the overall economy (the for-profit sector, the household sector, the public sector, the third sector and the illegal sector of the economy) and then spell out their reciprocal relationships for society and gender equality in detail (Verein Joan Robinson *et al*. 2010: 35 ff.).

5 Long Overdue: The Termination of the Fordist Reproduction Pact

As illustrated, the originally appreciated generative care work of women was devalued to work done 'out of love' (Bock and Duden 1977) during the transition to an industrial society when economic activity was reduced to gainful employment organised on a market basis. Female work was trivialised and de-thematised in a completely unjustified and previously unknown manner. This connotation and connection with its distinct attribution to the female half of society led to the institutionalisation of 'a typical standard biography for females' that was meant to complement the 'standard male relationship' of the 'breadwinner'. The subsequent devaluation of female work in private life was also extended to the labour market. To this day, the professional service careers involving different forms of generative care work are dead-end professions—they are still poorly paid, monotonous, frequently structured as helping professions, without any significant career development opportunities (see for example: Kettschau 1991; Thiessen 2004).

A gender budgeting analysis of the economic stimulus packages I and II, which were put together in reaction to the crisis that began in 2007 in the financial and real estate sector in Germany, shows just how hegemonically devalued this vital and essential day-to-day work has been in the current economic and financial crisis up until now. In the results of her analysis, the author of economic policy attests to adhering to this structural conservatism in industrial societies (Kuhl 2010). Based once again on the socio-political construct of the male breadwinner and the financially dependent (at best supplementary) wife who carries out reproductive tasks at home, this financial incentive policy was unilaterally geared towards promoting classical, male-dominated industrial sectors which were in decline: The scrappage programme subsidised an industry in which more than 80 percent of men work. Short-time allowances measures also mainly benefitted men, with around 80 percent who were employed in regular full-time jobs in the manufacturing sector. On the other hand, this scheme did not apply to the atypical employment carried out by a large majority of women. The use of the term 'system relevance' in order to legitimise the large cash flows of the economic stimulus packages is quite revealing here. Although it is increasingly obvious that care services (the promotion of health, care, upbringing, education, etc.) are not only 'system-relevant' in the care economy, but are also a system requirement for a society to be vital and perform economically, these care services (including services paid for on the labour market as well as those provided free of charge in private life) are not defined as 'system-relevant' and are therefore not promoted (ibid.), or typically not subsidised.

It is still a widespread attitude today that investments in services which support individuals, households and families can only be afforded when the economy builds momentum, but never in crisis situations. Martin Baethge and Ingrid Wilkens (2010) have described this entrenched culture as 'industrialism,' an attitude that highlights the 'long goodbye' of the industrial society in Germany on the socio-cultural level. A topic which is hardly addressed at the moment is the fact that person-related service jobs have proven to be relatively immune to the crisis on a national level, even growing in the area where employment is subject to social security contributions and possibly gaining in importance in the years to come.

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, at the time a vocational education and training system was being developed, chambers of trade campaigned against the integration of female craftspersons, using the argument that dressmaking, undergarment sewing or hairdressing were not supposed as actually being trades in the typical sense (i.e. a 'career for life'), but at most an activity for women to undertake before marriage, or 'a very humble way of learning about household requirements' (Lischnewska 1979: 225 ff.). For this reason, female trades would not be suitable for strict regulatory regulation (ibid.). The uncontrolled growth and expansion of careers as helpers and assistants, such as 'dental assistant' or 'dietician', are indicators of the development of female-associated vocational training courses. Other professions that require training, however, such as nurses, teachers, speech therapists, etc., are professions with no significant opportunities for advancement and were historically only conceived of as 'premarital employment.' While trainees are paid in the dual education system and these training occupations are structurally linked to a system of employment and promotion, school fees often have to be paid for training in the female schooling system; more years of education must be completed than in the male dual education system, yet these occupations are associated with lower collective pay after entering the labour market. Furthermore, many of these primary skilled occupations for females are not suitable for subsequent training and career paths (Krüger 2000).

This is why it is urgent for such service professions—for which it can be assumed that there will be increased demand in the future—to be re-examined and provided with equal pay.[1] One of the striking, unique features of person-related and household-related services that fundamentally sets them apart from the manufacturing sector is the so-called *uno actu* (one act) principle: Service providers and service recipients must be located in the same place, in close physical and temporal proximity, in order to be able to carry out or receive care work. Manufacturing facilities and business-related services can be relocated abroad—a company strategy which is frequently pursued due to financial reasons. Nothing comparable to this exists for the care work of children, the ill or elderly[2]. However, the demand raised by the new women's movement for some time now, calling for the increased integration of well-educated women in the labour market alongside a fair division of labour in the household and family, with both men and fathers assuming their share of care work in the private sphere and ensuring that an appropriate labour market and social policy framework exists, has in no way been implemented as of the present day. Instead, the growing participation of qualified women in the labour market in prosperous North American and Western European countries is—to a certain extent—'bought' through care work often carried out illegally by 'new maids' from poor countries who are paid poorly and receive no or little social security (Lutz 2008, Rerrich 2006). An unprecedented transfer of care and knowledge is currently taking place worldwide. In this regard, the American sociologist Arlie Hochschild speaks of an 'emotional shift' in the context of cosmopolitan care, whose additional emotional value is consumed in the host societies (Hochschild 1997, 2002). In view of economic and political inequalities from North to South and from West to East, in addition to the worldwide hierarchical division of work according to gender, transnational chains of care services have emerged that present a highly unsatisfactory 'approach' to solving the care crisis in rich countries, but which also divert professional care skills and care resources away from the respective home countries of the migrants (Brückner 2010: 44 f.). Nonetheless, the new migration of females also offers women opportunities to escape the poverty of their home country and often domestic violence too.

Today, the *first* course of action is to significantly relieve women from unpaid housework and care work in their daily lives by shifting these services into monetarised economic sectors, in order to enable them to equally participate in gainful

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1 The first procedure for rating jobs in German-speaking countries, which current EU standards equally observe and which are now under discussion in Germany as well as used by some companies, was developed in Switzerland in 1996. The Analytical Evaluation of Work by Baitsch and Katz (ABAKABA) takes work demands and challenges into account as factors and is thus gender-neutral and non-discriminatory (Baitsch and Katz 1997). It looks past rating female skills as free and leads to a sufficient living wage, instead of structurally continuing to devalue female-associated work.

2 Inexpensive institutional care arrangements, such as those occasionally offered in Sri Lanka or Thailand for EU citizens in need of care, are likely to remain the exception in the future.

employment and to secure an independent livelihood without having to abstain from having children (Madörin 2010). Calculations for Germany show that approximately 461,000 mothers of schoolchildren could be gainfully employed again if a corresponding childcare infrastructure existed. As a result, tax surpluses of around 1.02 billion Euro, as well as an additional 2.65 billion Euro in approximate social security contributions, can be realised (BMFSFJ 2011a). *Secondly,* since there is an extremely large amount of unpaid labour, various measures for the labour market, taxes and family policy are also required which enable people in different stages of their lives who are obligated to look after children or family members in need of care to reduce the regular hours they work or also to put in more time (BMFSFJ 2011b). *Thirdly*, a concept for the consistent social reorganisation of generative care beyond the Fordist 'reproduction pact' must be supported by the traditional attribution of generative care to the female half of society using a set of measures aimed at ensuring a fair distribution of unpaid and paid labour between women and men throughout the course of their lives.

6 Professionally Organised Household-Related and Person-Related Services

At the end of the 1950s, during a time of unprecedented industrial economic upheaval in the Federal Republic of Germany, the French economist Jean Fourastié predicted an enormous expansion of the service sector for developed Western economies. According to his thesis, jobs created in the service sector in the future would compensate losses in the agricultural and industrial sector. At that time, politics and the public hardly took note of this prediction, since West Germany was on its way to becoming an 'economic miracle' in terms of industry and had also already planned on restructuring the Fordist reproduction regime: continuing the gender-specific division of labour in the form of a strong 'breadwinner model' with the husband who continually works and the wife/mother who does not work, but who has been made responsible for carrying out generative care work for free. An expansion of household-related and person-related infrastructures was therefore not contemplated and considered superfluous. Using the GDR as a reference, for example, it was also seen as being motivated by 'collectivist educational' ideology and therefore rejected. Nevertheless, the dream of achieving 'perpetual prosperity' by continually expanding key industrial sectors was over more quickly than expected, due to the 1973 oil crisis. Just as Fourastié had predicted, the elimination of industrial jobs was then justified (Fourastié 1954). Many new employment opportunities were created in the health, education, cultural and social sectors—a situation which, although barely thematised, was enormously important in reality. At the end of the 1960s, the economic theorist William Baumol had already identified a problem associated with shifting from industrial jobs to service jobs. Baumol described person-related service professions—in education and health care, but also in science and art—as being characterised by a 'cost disease', because they result in lower labour productivity per hour as compared to industry and the trade sector (Baumol 1985; Madörin 2010: 99). In an interview with the German Women's Council, Swiss economist Mascha Madörin hits the nail on the head: "Although we may be able to produce cars increasingly faster, we do not care for the elderly or raise children faster" (Madörin 2012: 11). Although it is doubtful, from a feminist perspective of home economics, that raising humans and ensuring the health of people results in less added value and quality of life than is created by producing cars and machines, Baumol's predictions have now come true in many developed countries:

- There has been a clear shift in employment away from the 'productive' industrial core sectors to personal care service sectors which are allegedly 'less productive.'
- The share of state social expenditures in the gross domestic product has steadily increased.
- The GDP growth rates in many Western countries have declined (at least within the logic and nomenclature of the mainstream economy).

A significant part of the massive job cuts in the commercial/technical industrial sectors were rarely highlighted as positive by politics and business, nor was the fact that only a significant part of these jobs could be compensated by new jobs in the health, education and social sectors. In the years to come, a higher demand for skilled workers in the health, social and care sector than in the IT sector is expected for ageing societies in Western Europe and North America (Baethge and Wilkens 2010: 25 f.; Enste, Hülskamp and Schäfer 2009). It is therefore no surprise that the private sector has now discovered these services as profitable, offering them on an increased basis, even when frequently not based on conditions of good work.

Robert B. Reich, who later became the United States Secretary of Labor under President Clinton, described a paradoxical situation as early as 1992: A single chain of private nursing homes, the Beverly Enterprises, may indeed have more employees than the car company Chrysler. Nevertheless, Americans are much better informed about the car company's financial difficulties than they are about the working conditions in nursing homes (Reich 1992: 176 ff.).

Parallel developments and observations are being drawn in Germany today. More than 730,000 people are now employed in child and youth welfare services. Around 750,000 people work in the automotive industry, which was by far the most important industrial sector in the Federal Republic of Germany for a long time, but which is now on a downward trend (Rauschenbach 2013: 6). The child and youth welfare service sector has thus become an important growth market—this trend, however, is not yet reflected in the perception of the public nor in corresponding wages and salaries. In 2010, the service sector, at 71.2 percent, already accounted for a large percentage of the gross value added. This share is by no means produced by business-related services alone. It cannot be ignored, however, that in the course of social and economic structural change within the service sector, new hierarchical relationships are already being constructed and defined socially. Industry-related services, which for the most part are carried out by male employees, are frequently considered productive, whereas person-related, female-connoted jobs are considered unproductive because they supposedly do not have any effects on growth. Thus, even when looking at the development within the service sector, the tendency to divide the labour market according to gender can once again be seen. While the expansion of the service sector is definitely now acknowledged as positive for the overall macrosocial development of the labour market, the real controversy still remains untold: The highest rates of growth within the service sector were not achieved by computer-related and/or business-related services, but instead in person-related services, social services and society-driven services. In the past twenty years alone, employment in the education, care and social professions has quintupled (Lehndorff 2002). This development is taking place throughout most of the European Union; the differences between countries, however, are significant. For example, around 30 percent less hours are worked in this service group per capita of the employed population in Germany than in Denmark and Sweden. What is more, in Germany, there is less need for so-called ‘simple’ services, but rather for ‘high-quality’ services such as childcare, education and geriatric care. As early as fifteen years ago, Helga Krüger, a researcher of female gender studies and (vocational) education based in Bremen, sarcastically described the characterisation of person-related services as being unproductive as an ‘economic blind flight’ (Krüger 2000). Decision-makers in business and politics largely ignore the fact that, in the global market, such services are increasingly becoming economically relevant and are required more than ever to provide and secure the social, political and cultural framework as well as qualifications for the production of materials (key word: global value added chains). Person-related services do not only affect material production, but also the generation of knowledge, the everyday economy, life courses or even the attractiveness of cities: Cities that manage to attract young people or recruit them from elsewhere through family-support infrastructures are the most successful communities in the world.

Gender-based research has long since thematised generative care work in private life not only in its political but also in its economic dimensions (Behning 1997). As a result, the concept of the human image of *homo oeconomicus* has been expanded to include the dimensions of his natality, vulnerability and mortality (Prätorius 2000). At the same time, it is currently necessary for relevant institutions having an effect on one’s life course to develop a social structure to enable the normalisation of male and female biographies to become an integral part for others in education, paid work and generative care work.

7 Implementation of the 'Professionalisation and Quality Assurance of Household-Related Services' Competence Centre (PQHD) at the University of Gießen

The implementation of the 'PQHD' Competence Centre represents federal politics' timely response to create the First Report on Equality in the Federal Republic of Germany as based on the expert committee's recommendation to take firm action: It suggested expanding household-related and family-support services to better reconcile work and family life, as well as promoting the attainment of more control over one's time and quality of life into advanced ages of life for people living in different conditions and pursuing different ways of life. In this regard, a study by the German Institute for Employment Research (IAB) concludes that nearly half of regular part-time female workers and two-thirds of women employed in 'mini-jobs' would like to increase the number of hours they work so that unused work opportunities could be tapped into (Klenner and Pfahl 2009). Thus, in this context, the 'Prospects for Re-entering the Workforce' campaign by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is an initiative based on an increased need for support in terms of time and infrastructure when returning to work after a longer family-based interruption of employment, which can be satisfied by a spouse/partner but also by providing household-related and person-related services (BMFSFJ 2013). This stops transitionary life phases from turning into conflict-ridden status passages which lead to interruptions, the abandonment of the desire to return to work and subsequent risks of poverty over the course of one's life. Instead, such services can free up time for women to make successful transitions and provide them with fair wage opportunities at junction points in their employment history. The expansion and availability of household-related and person-related services generate a 'double' dividend, since the national economy also benefits from the reallocation of female workers, who are urgently required because of the foreseeable shortage of skilled labour. A transformation of investments in the education of women can also occur, which in turn leads to adequate returns on education on the labour market. Higher incomes strengthen the purchasing power of women returning to work, whereas cities and communities benefit from additional revenue generated through the payment of employment tax and social security contributions. The crucial requirement here, however, is to use targeted initiatives and changing incentives to transform irregular (often illegal) private employment (which usually takes place on the 'grey and black' labour market) into regular employment opportunities and, for example, bring them together in service agencies.

The establishment of the PQHD Competence Centre is also associated with European developments and strategies. A growing demand for professional household and care work is predicted for many European societies. In addition to initiatives for expanding digital industries and creating 'green jobs' in low-emission, resource-efficient economic sectors, so-called 'white jobs' in the health and social sectors are gaining importance in all EU countries. There are also, however, time-consuming services in the private sector whose job-creation impact has only just been 'discovered' after being marginalised for a long time. They are now regarded as an indispensable part of the EU strategy 'A Job-rich Recovery' in times of fiscal consolidation (European Commission 2012). According to the European Commission, person-related and household-related services can contribute to an increase in the employment rate by better reconciling professional and private life, drive gains in productivity and direct undeclared work over to the official labour market. In Europe, these services are predominantly provided by low-skilled women with a migrant background in precarious part-time employment that does not provide a living wage. Without state support, formal employment in this area is relatively expensive for the majority of the population and the supply of such services is limited on the formal market. As a result, a considerable proportion of the household-related and person-related services in private households are informally provided by undeclared workers employed illegally (BMFSFJ 2011c: 8 ff.). In order to ensure the quality of these household-related services in the future, different concepts are being developed and implemented throughout Europe with the aim of adequately training the mostly female workers in the private sector, providing them with permanent employment with a minimum number of guaranteed working hours and strengthening their rights (European Commission 2012). Belgium and France were able to have a significant impact on employment within a brief period of time by initiating state-subsidised service cheques[3]: In Belgium, this number is estimated to have risen to around 100,000 employees active in household-related services between 2005 and 2008. Approximately 60 percent were employed in regular full-time jobs through this initiative, with more than 43 percent of these workers previously being unemployed. In France, the total number of persons employed legally in this sector was two million at the end of 2007 (BMFSFJ 2011c: 27).

In the 21st century, time-consuming household-related and person-related services offer a wide range of employment opportunities for different education and skill groups. They provide women and men with intermediate levels of education and relatively low-skilled workers with a variety of employment opportunities to cover the costs of living, when their service in private households occurs in a coordinated manner, and jobs subject to social security contributions (for example,

3 The service cheque system entered into force in Belgium on 1 April 2004. Since then, every individual living in Belgium can buy service cheques and use them for a variety of different household-related services. Services purchased using a cheque are provided by the workers employed in recognised service companies. A cheque can be bought for 7.50 Euro but has a total value of 20.80 Euro. The social security fund provides young mothers and females returning to work with 105 service cheques to facilitate their return to work (BMFSFJ 2011c: 51).

through concentrated and regular employment in a certified service company) are created. Such initiatives to exploit the employment potential of household-related and person-related services can only be successful if education and training in the professional domestic fields is simultaneously readjusted, which includes the revaluation of these professions and the creation of professional development perspectives. The portfolio of household-related and person-related services also includes demanding leadership, coordination and management roles for highly qualified employees.

Today, household and family support services generate a considerable share of the value added to society—a trend that is likely to intensify over the next few years. Different international experiences show where the opportunities and barriers exist in transferring undeclared work performed in and for the private sector to the official labour market using national and local market-integration aids. The Federal Republic of Germany also urgently needs to raise awareness for the opportunities that accompany the regional development of employment, which will help to relieve social and health care budgets and increase tax revenues and social security contributions.

The demand for person-related and household-related services is already currently high and shall continue to increase in the coming years due to the ageing of European societies (Enste, Hülskamp and Schäfer 2009). These services partially include simple jobs which are important for ensuring a successful work-life balance on a day-to-day basis as well as a high quality of life. Private households (as potential 'employers') also place high expectations on the quality of household-related services to be carried out: Providing non-family members access to one's household means providing them with insights into one's private life and intimate home environment as well as negotiating specific standards of cleanliness and quality expectations with external service providers. This is why trust, reliability and confidentiality are among the social skills employers require of the people they hire to work in the home environment and who are unfamiliar with the household. Various requirements are also placed on flexibility and professional household-related skills.

Providing relief to caregiving family members as well as creating suitable everyday arrangements that reconcile the balance between professional life and care work also open up employment opportunities to providers of household-related services. In this case, however, care work takes on a much broader definition than the simple definition of care. Contrary to public belief, jobs directly related to care are not as time-consuming as other domestic and care services which contribute considerably to ensuring a standard of living for elderly people requiring assistance. These findings should be taken into greater account in the future than has been previously done when developing tailored care environments suited to day-to-day life (Feulner 2014).

This underlines how long overdue a transformation of the image of person-related and household-related services is here in Germany, supported by a modern service concept—which, in addition to possessing the relevant knowledge, also requires a high level of social skills such as reliability, empathy and the ability to communicate.

In order to comply with the requirements for expanding person-related and household related services as set down in the First Report on Equality published by the Federal Republic of Germany, it is necessary, among other things, to invest *in training workers,* to provide *greater market transparency and information* as well as to use *local networks to ensure better communication in terms of promoting an image.*

These requirements comply with the strategic considerations within the European Union. According to the European Commission, person-related and household-related services provide an opportunity to increase the employment rate by better reconciling professional and private life, to drive gains in productivity and to direct undeclared work over to the official labour market. In Europe, these services are predominantly provided by low-skilled women with a migrant background in part-time employment. Without state support, formal employment in this area is relatively expensive for the majority of the population and the supply of such services is limited on the formal market. As a result, a considerable proportion of the household-related and person-related services in private households are informally provided by undeclared workers employed illegally. In order to ensure the quality of the services, workers should be provided with permanent employment with a minimum number of guaranteed working hours as well as proper training and good working conditions.

In the case of the Federal Republic of Germany, the OECD Economic Report determined:

> With an ageing population, the increase in the skill level of the younger cohorts, and the increase in the rate of women's employment, labour shortages shall occur in areas where there is a need for medium-level skills, for example, in the household services industry (OECD 2012: 69f.).

The use of household-related services could, above all, help provide relief to mothers and thus lead to a more gender-equitable division of labour within the family[4]. A flexible, transparent and affordable range of such services can provide useful support, especially when re-entering the work force, and can also provide better

4 Siemens, for example, calculates 14,000 vacant positions (currently: 3,000) by 2020, if potential specialists and managers with children or dependent family members are not provided with any noticeable and reliable relief for everyday work and care work in the private sphere. It will not simply suffice to invest in childcare. Household-related service providers could be used to deal with the wide range of activities revolving around the day-to-day organisation of work and family life. This would create a win-win situation for both parties.

chances for women already employed in a part-time position or mini-job to increase their working hours.

Since its establishment on 1 May 2013, the Competence Centre has dedicated itself to:

- Interdisciplinary scientific management, including the coordination and implementation of the tasks connected with the subject of 'Professionalisation and Quality Assurance of Household-Related Services';
- Commissioning expert reports on home economics, vocational education studies and labour funding policy;
- Reviewing training and further education measures offered in Germany in the field of household-related and person-related services and evaluating them;
- Reviewing models of modular vocational training in selected European countries and evaluating them;
- Initiating expert dialogue between 'the domestic economy and private households' the 'service and labour market';
- Organising, documenting, and announcing technical events;
- Realising regional multiplier seminars;
- Writing articles for scientific journals.

8 Outlook

Looking at the future of working society means, above all, analysing the transformation of value-added processes and their sources, whilst also recognising the new type of work in the service-based economy: interactive work (Baethge 2011). Unlike industrial society, which focused on the productive work of craftsmen and industry, the human resources of the knowledge society represent a combination of infrastructure, quality assurance and the achievement of education and health. From this point of view, it makes little sense to pit investments in future-oriented industries (e.g. alternative sources of energy) against investments in the field of household-related and person-related services aimed at educating and caring for human resources as an 'expense factor' deemed as unnecessary but which must inevitably be implemented. When creating a vital, high-quality infrastructure of social services for family services and childcare, as well as for geriatric care and private households, it is important to clearly identify where catching up is required and to satisfy this need on a good level in the future, by supporting it with a mixed infrastructure of national-local, private and non-profit providers and organisational structures. In this context, one of the most urgent organisational tasks for the state lies in establishing and defining appropriate quality standards (that are binding for all service providers) in the areas of primary care and support services, upbringing and education, but also nutrition, health and care. The fact that young start-up companies with flexible business models have only just discovered household-related services as a billion-dollar market, without even factoring in political regulations in terms of quality assurance and adherence to criteria of good work and fair wages, shows the necessity of this aforementioned task. Instead, a threat is posed through the increase of the precarious self-employment of local workers as well as migrant women (Scherkamp 2014).

In the interest of their future viability as well as in the interest of maintaining their economic stability and vitality, modern societies are under pressure to find historically new solutions adapted to changing social conditions in order to ensure social cohesion as well as potential for solidarity. Social policy that looks towards the future and is aimed at equality between the sexes must answer the important question of how the willingness to undertake generative care for others aimed at developing and maintaining human resources can be structurally ensured and organised in the future, with the goal of creating conditions for economically and socially cohesive communities. In terms of life course theory, the issue here is to dissolve traditionally gender-separated pathways of life and to realign all institutions that support a person throughout their life so that the connection between education, paid work and family (as the basic pattern of a person's course of life) does not depend on one's gender and can be experienced in different forms and with flexible transitions. Such a task would require a re-assessment of all forms of work which are vital for society and which are thus inextricably linked to fundamentally reshaping the existing gender norms of modern societies. This is bound to abandoning the current 'hegemonic concept of masculinity,' redefining the male role and engaging in reflective gender-based discourse. On the other hand, this means no longer structurally or normatively defining generative care work as 'feminine' and 'free.' Only once the equal ranking of male- and female-specific fields of activity and experiences replaces the current hierarchizing of male-associated life patterns, skills and experiences, which puts the 'typically female' ones at a disadvantage, shall advanced societies have an opportunity to endure as vital societies with sustainable economies (Meier-Gräwe 2007). The 'patchwork' courses of life, already experienced by a much greater number of women today, are to be regarded in this sense as future models of adult life with multiple responsibilities, which—if they are to become culturally commonplace—must be appropriately supported by educational policy, labour market policy, and social policy (BMFSFJ 2006). The model of a gainfully employed person who simultaneously oversees tasks related to caring for the family throughout the course of their life can only be achieved if continuity in the history of employment for both sexes is firstly aspired to and secondly interruptions throughout the history of one's employment are made reasonable; only then can the history of employment be adapted to requirements, for example, for (further) education or care obligations in terms of 'guaranteed options' (Klammer 2006). This includes greater support for making transitions from one life phase to the next, from working with the family and pursuing further education to finding gainful employment and vice versa. Support for re-entering the workforce after taking parental leave or taking a break to care for someone is also required, as well as the possibility to switch between full-time and part-time work. This is the only solution to gradually resolving the issue of the 'rush hour of life': a phase that sees many responsibilities intensify during middle age, with professional commitments, the formation of a family and caring for children and elderly family members all having to be dealt with at once. The arrangement and combination of different life paths of both genders between educational, occupational and family systems would also be supported by expanding a variety of tailored person-related and household-related services. In the next few years, many jobs will arise in these areas specifically, which could open up interesting employment perspectives for both sexes. A look at Sweden shows that the proportion of people employed in the public service is three times higher than in Germany and that wages and salaries in this sector are three times that of those in Germany. It is also possible to imagine that an extensive dynamic of supply and demand may arise by combining state, non-profit and private providers, if these providers cooperate with each other instead of mutually excluding each other. Both sexes would benefit equally from dually oriented courses of life: In this modern concept of society and the economy, care-related fields of experience also shape the life history of male children and adults, both normatively and factually, instead of further establishing the 'normal biography' from a one-sided male-centred perspective of employment as socially acceptable (Methfessel 1993, Schlegel-Matthies 1998). This would not only be beneficial for the relationship quality of individual partnerships, because it would thus prevent the excessive demand for 'super-mums' often complained about today—namely, woman assuming sole responsibility as a (married) woman, mother and working woman all at once and, in certain phases of life, taking on the role of the caring daughter who attends to her parents and parents-in-law. Overcoming traditional gender roles in the course of life, both structurally and normatively, also opens up historically new employment opportunities for men in the expanding service sectors of education, support and care sectors typically associated with women (BMFSFJ 2011b). The relevance of person-related and family-related services is closely linked to how high a country's female employment rate is. Neighbouring European countries, which have been developing the public sector in the areas of childcare, geriatric care and household-related services for many years now have lower unemployment rates, higher birth rates, less child poverty and higher female employment. In an EU-wide comparison, there is a significantly positive correlation between the employment rate of women (in full-time equivalents) and the volume of work in this service segment. More women in the labour market increases both the demand for these services and the supply of workers looking for employment in this field.

Lastly, the challenge still remains in recognising different forms of work, which are vital for society and which have long been overlooked, as equivalent as well as in distributing this work equally among genders within and outside the household and labour market. Good governance to ensure good service work, which in no way may be inferior to good old-fashioned skilled 'German' labour, thus requires a social framework and supervision of professional standards and quality standards of specialised person-related, household-related and family-related service work as well as their supervision within the everyday work life of the employee groups concerned. This involves putting overcoming gender-segregated service work on the political agenda and resolutely opposing illegal employment and precarious self-employment in order to gradually achieve equality in male- and female-associated jobs.

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Family Policy in Japan: Structural Reforms and Their Effectiveness

Infrastructural Family Policy in Japan: Parental Evaluation

Barbara Holthus

1 Introduction

Family policies are part and parcel of Japan's larger social- and welfare policies (Rockmann 2011). Many of the policy measures have been implemented to tackle Japan's demographic crisis. Some of these measures for raising the fertility rate have such illustrious names as Angel Plan and New Angel plan (see also Motozawa, this book). So far these attempts have not proven as 'successful' as hoped, since the ratio of children to Japan's overall population continues to decline (*Japan Times* 04/05/2017). The government lays out its efforts in its yearly *White book for the society with few children* (*Shōshika shakai taisaku hakusho*), and in its 2017 edition, measures addressed are manifold, with the numerous efforts about daycare institutions (*hoikujo*) at the forefront (CAO 2017).

Daycare centers are also an essential element of the current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's efforts under the umbrella term of "Womenomics," which are to bring larger numbers of Japanese women back to the labor market after having given birth (see also Schad-Seifert, this book). The motivation for increasing slots in daycare centers is thus purely economic, as they are instrumentalized to tackle the labor shortage at a time when the Japanese government continues to resist allowing foreign migrants to fill the void. As mothers remain the primary caregiver for their children, daycare centers are a necessary prerequisite for mothers in order to rejoin the job market.

Besides fighting the low fertility rate, the governmental goals for family policies also include raising the welfare of its citizens (particularly that of single parents, as 51 percent of single mothers live below the poverty line, despite the fact that 85 percent of them are working parents (Raymo 2017: 117), as well as fighting the country's labor shortage. This diversity in goals makes the evaluation of these policies challenging at best: Is it first and foremost to be an economic evaluation, or rather a study of a change in demographics and birth rate statistics (e.g. Ma 2009; Riphahn and Wiynck 2017)? Or should something else be the focus of the evaluation? In international scholarship on the evaluation of family policies, attempts have been manifold: Dehos and Paul (2017) for

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_7

example evaluate family policies for after-school programs by the rate of maternal employment.[1] They find that additional after-school places have neither an effect on working hours nor the probability of mothers returning to work. Yet interestingly enough, they point to the possibility of the use of family policies for increase in parental well-being, not just the well-being of the child (see Garfinkel and Waldfogel 2012). The Japanese government so far has not to a large extent evaluated their family policies by focusing on the well-being of parents, those who are at the core of these measures. This could potentially explain why the existing family policies have seen rather limited success in economic as well as in demographic terms until now.

Academic research combining family policy and parental well-being for the study of Japan is limited. One notable exception is Kawano (2013), who looks in her qualitative study at how so-called drop-in centers for young children and their parents relate to mothers' well-being. She finds that those institutions can counteract maternal social isolation in urban areas where the family might lack other types of active support. In a U.S.-based study, Payne, Cook and Diaz (2012) find that satisfaction with childcare institutions (daycare) has a positive relationship to life satisfaction, and for Canada, Brodeur and Connolly (2013) argue that it is particularly the existence of childcare subsidies, effecting childcare (daycare) costs, which positively influence parental well-being. Other authors use what can be called indirect measures of well-being for their evaluations. Huebener *et al.* (2016) for example take parental labor market participation, household share between partners, and fertility as measures for family well-being. Surveying parents specifically in regard to their well-being and their satisfaction with family policies is rarely done, and thus a shortcoming of the existing literature.

For the case of Germany, a few relevant studies exist: Schober and Schmitt (2013) as well as Stahl and Schober (2016) use SOEP (socioeconomic panel) data to analyze parental satisfaction with childcare facility expansion for children under the age of three. They find daycare expansion positively associated particularly with maternal subjective well-being, with some differences between parents in West and East Germany. Camehl *et al.* (2015) also focus on childcare institutions. They investigate parental satisfaction with the many facets of daycare centers, such as their costs, activities with the children, care personnel, etc. and specifically look for alterations in satisfaction among parents of different socio-economic backgrounds. They find parents generally quite satisfied with daycare center provisions, yet lowest satisfaction is reported regarding the possibilities for parental input into the institutions and the costs for daycare.

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1 Maternal employment patterns are also the measure for successful family policies in the studies by Fagnani (2012) and Yamaguchi (2017).

Parents' education, their income, as well as the age of the child all impact their levels of satisfaction.

For this chapter, I mirror the study by Camehl *et al.* (2015) about their evaluation of infrastructural family policies and the effect on parental well-being and apply this to the case of Japan. In particular, my research questions are:

- To what extend do parents use childcare institutions, how do they evaluate them, and what do they deem important?
- How satisfied are parents with the existing daycare center provisions? Do the satisfaction levels with family policies vary between different socio-economic groups, like in the case of Germany? Are parents with children above age 3 more satisfied or rather those parents with very small children up to age 3?
- How does the satisfaction of Japanese parents with policies for childcare infrastructure compare with that of German parents, based on the findings in the study by Camehl *et al.* (2015)?

This chapter begins with a brief explanation of the existing family policies and particularly the different forms of childcare that exist in Japan. This precedes the quantitative analysis of the JPWS (Japan Parental Well-Being Survey) data from the year 2012. Its descriptive analysis helps to understand the many facets of childcare facilities and parental opinions about them. Parents who have their children in childcare facilities have very educated opinions on the institutions.

The following bivariate and multivariate analyses give insights into the use and parental evaluation of childcare facilities as well as explain the satisfaction of Japanese mothers and fathers with the existing family policy measures. Japanese parents show many similarities in their evaluations and degrees of satisfaction with the policy measures in comparison to the findings in the international literature—despite some smaller, but significant differences. These are discussed in a comparative perspective, concluding with policy recommendations.

2 Japan's Family Policy Triangle[2]

Family policies in Japan have seen many changes over time (see also Motozawa, Ishii-Kuntz, this book). Nonetheless, they can be categorized into three main types, the so-called pillars of the "family policy triangle": money, time, and infrastructure (Adema 2012; Bertram and Bujard 2012; Rille-Pfeiffer and Kapella 2017).

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2 See Holthus, Huber and Tanaka (2015: 57–73) for a more extensive discussion on the topic.

2.1 Money

Money policies have seen important and widely discussed changes over time in Japan. The child-rearing allowance system started already back in 1972, yet the monetary amounts and the limits of children's age and number of children benefitting from the system have been repeatedly revised. Paid childcare leave measures were implemented in 1995, with workers receiving 25 percent of their wages during leave. By 2010, this had increased to 50 percent. In Japan, a child's birth is not covered by health insurance, so the expenses for the doctor and hospital services are to be paid in full by the new parents. However, to counteract these high costs, since 1994, Japan has implemented a "new baby birth allowance." This lump-sum amount has risen from originally 300,000 Yen to 420,000 Yen by the year 2010.

2.2 Time

In regard to time policies, the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law (*Ikuji Kaigo Kyūgyōhō*) is of particular importance. First steps had already been taken in 1975 with the implementation of the *Ikuji Kyūgyōhō* (Child Care Leave Law), but at that time the policy only supported childcare leave of female teachers, doctors and nurses. Numerous revisions of the childcare leave law were then seen in 1995, 1999, 2010 and 2012. Work-life balance became a "hot" topic for the government in 2008 with the signing of the so-called "work life balance charter," however lacking "bite," as non-compliant companies are not forced to offer these policies, nor do they face any retribution. Thus, as summarized by Holthus (2008b: 1), those were "ambitious goals" coupled with "deficient implementation."

2.3 Infrastructure

One of the main differences when comparing Germany and Japan is the fact that Japan offers several forms of childcare infrastructure: daycare centers (*hoikuen*), offering care for children as young as the 57th day after birth, and kindergarten (*yōchien*), which offer care only for children from the age of 3 onwards, are the most prominent. *Hoikuen,* in existence since 1900, however, need to be distinguished further into public and private daycare centers. Furthermore, whereas all public daycare centers are licensed centers, there are licensed as well as unlicensed private daycare centers, a fact that weighs in on parents' considerations as to where they decide to enroll their children into. But also smaller, less frequented childcare institutions exist: baby hotels, daycare rooms (*hoikushitsu*), and the newest form, a merger between *hoikuen* and *yōchien*, called *kodomo-en*, offering educational, *yōchien*-type aspects, yet with extended care like *hoikuen*. They are often placed in former *yōchien*-buildings, as numbers of kindergartens are declining, while demand for daycare center slots is still on the rise.[3]

While daycare centers target working parents, with care being provided for full days, kindergartens have an educational aspect to them and usually only provide significantly shorter opening hours, not allowing for full-time employment of both parents.[4] As demand for places in *hoikuen* remains higher than the available slots, many thousand children are on waiting lists for public daycare centers, despite continued efforts by the government to expand daycare center care. With the Abe government pushing so hard for getting mothers back into the workforce with its "Womenomics" program, providing institutionalized childcare facilities is an absolute must and prerequisite and thus seems to be on the forefront of the public discourse on family policies in 2017.

Public discourse in Japan's mass media in the first months of 2017[5] focuses heavily on the continuing existence of parents on the waiting list for enrolling their child into daycare, but also other topics are discussed. Among them and related to the push for a further massive expansion of daycare center places, is the lack of daycare center staff (*hoikushi*) to provide care. This goes hand in hand with quality concerns due to the quick expansion of daycare places. Quality problems are also an issue in articles during that timeframe, such as the reporting of an increase in deaths in daycare centers. In addition, the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper reported on outbreaks of illnesses at daycare centers, like the neuro- or rota-virus, on accidents occurring on site, on food served at *hoikuen,* the opening of a 24-hour daycare center, as well as quality standard violations by private daycare centers. The way the reporting is done gives the impression that the public discourse leans towards portraying the negative sides of institutionalized childcare, focusing on the dangers lurking for the children outside the safety of the maternal care environment.

3 Method and Data

The analysis is based on data from the Japan Parental Well-Being Survey (JPWS), which I, as principal investigator, conducted in early 2012. JPWS is a nationwide, representative, postal survey of 1,031 fathers and 1,103 mothers from non-identical households throughout the country. Selection criterion was for participants to have at least one child below the age of entry into elementary

3 For more information on early childcare institutions in Japan, see Holthus (2011) and Zhou (2007). For other forms of childcare institutions, such as the recent addition of so-called *kodomo-en,* see Holthus (2008a).

4 For additional details see also Holthus (2011).

5 I conducted an analysis of *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper articles from January to May 2017.

school. The survey was conducted through quota sampling, based on gender (of the parent), residence, percentage of single parents (oversampling) and class (based on household income levels) (see Holthus, Huber and Tanaka 2015 for more details).

Of the 61 questions of the survey, nine specifically pertain to family policy matters, namely the actual use and availability of, knowledge about, as well as satisfaction with family policy measures. It is these questions that are part of the analysis here in this chapter. I conducted three analyses: (1) a descriptive analysis of the nature of parental use and opinions on childcare institutions, (2) cross-tabulations and ANOVA calculations to understand the differences in opinions on and satisfaction with childcare institutions by age of the children, as well as parents' socio-economic status, and (3) regression analyses for understanding which variables are related to parents' overall infrastructural family policy satisfaction.

3.1 Dependent Variable(s)

The main dependent variable is the overall satisfaction with infrastructural policies. The question presented to respondents was: "How satisfied are you presently with the following area of your life: The provision of institutional childcare support (e.g. daycare, kindergarten, etc.)?" The respondents answered on an 11-point standard life satisfaction scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being the least satisfied, 10 the most. Table 2 shows that the mean score lies at 4.86. This is significantly lower than the mean score for the parents' overall life satisfaction, which lies at 5.75 on the same 11-point scale. In addition, eleven questions pertain to the satisfaction with numerous elements of the childcare institution of the youngest child. These are listed in Table 2. Answers were on a 4-point scale from 1 to 4, from dissatisfied to satisfied. Mean satisfaction scores, discussed below in more detail, vary between 2.6 and 3.34.

3.2 Independent Variables

Independent socio-economic and demographic variables are gender, matters pertaining to social class (education, living situation, savings [as substitute for income], employment situation), as well as age of youngest child and number of children. Further variables included are the childcare situation of the parents, the monthly individual costs for childcare, the perceived difficulty for parents to enroll their youngest child into a childcare institution, as well as the parents' opinions on the importance of certain childcare support measures. Those seven questions, listed in Table 2, are under the heading of: "What do you think about the following childcare support measures?" Answers are on a scale from 1 to 5, from "not important" to "important."

4 Findings

4.1 Descriptives

The fathers and mothers exhibit significant differences in most of the demographic indicators, except marital status, educational levels, and number of children. Almost all men (99.5%) and women (96.4%) are married. Fathers are significantly older than mothers with a mean age of 37 as compared to mothers' mean age of 34.[6] The educational level of parents is high with 59.2 percent of parents being university educated. However, gender differences are significant here as well, as 68.4 percent of the fathers but only 50.4 percent of the mothers have a university education. In regard to financial means, I lean on Raymo's (2017) evaluation that the ability to save money is a better indicator for social class than the household income. Among the mothers and fathers of the JPWS, only 42.6 percent say that they can save money. Again, gender differences are telling, as many more fathers report to be able to save money (54.3%), whereas 68.3 percent of mothers say they cannot. The living situation, namely if one's place of living is rented or owned, is another indicator for social class. More people participating in the survey own their place as opposed to paying rent, and here again we find gender differences, with more fathers than mothers owning the place they live in (64.5% versus 53.6%). This socio-economic divide is perpetuated by the gendered employment patterns, with 98.1 percent of fathers being employed in some form or other, whereas only 34.4 percent of mothers are, with many more fathers also being regularly employed and working much longer hours as well.[7] In terms of regional variation, we have an almost equal distribution of parents living either in the two major metropolitan areas of Japan, the Kanto region (with Tokyo) plus the Kinki region (with Osaka and Kyoto) with 48.8 percent, versus all other regions, where 51.2 percent of all survey participants reside.

The majority (58.1%) of parents have two or more children. As the selection criterion for a parent to participate in the survey was to have at least one child between ages 0 and 6, it could very well mean that some of the respondents have not concluded their childbearing phase just yet. Thus no deduction about the sample populations' birthrate can be made at this point. At the time of the survey, the mean number of children of the respondents stood at 1.77.

6 This is in line with typical patterns: Japanese women's mean age at first births at 29.9, second births at 31.8, and at the time of the third child to have a mean age of 33.2 (CAO 2011: 29; data from 2010).

7 For more details, see Holthus, Huber and Tanaka (2015).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of demographic variables, by gender

Variable	Total	Male	Female	
Age	36.19 (SD 5.316)	37.71 (SD 5.105)	34.77 (SD 5.113)	***
Education				***
no univ. educ.	40.8% (886)	31.6% (325)	49.6% (541)	
university educ.	59.2% (1254)	68.4% (704)	50.4% (550)	
Living situation				***
renting	41.2% (876)	35.5% (365)	46.4% (511)	
owning	58.8% (1252)	64.5% (662)	53.6% (590)	
Savings				***
yes	42.6% (904)	54.3% (557)	31.7% (347)	
no	57.4% (1218)	45.7% (469)	68.3% (749)	
Employment				***
not employed	34.8% (738)	1.9% (20)	65.6% (718)	
employed (part/full/temp)	65.2% (1385)	98.1% (1008)	34.4% (377)	
Age of youngest child				***
birth up to age 2	43.2% (921)	46.9% (484)	39.7% (437)	
ages 3 to 6	56.8% (1211)	53.1% (547)	60.3% (664)	
Number of children				
1 child	41.9% (856)	41.4% (405)	42.4% (451)	
2 or more children	58.1% (1185)	58.6% (573)	57.6% (612)	
Regions				
Kanto and Kinki	48.8% (1041)	48.8% (503)	48.8% (538)	
all other regions	51.2% (1093)	51.2% (528)	51.2% (565)	

Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

In Japan overall, the birthrate stands at 1.39 (CAO 2011: 24, data from 2010), and among married couples, the birthrate was rather steady between 1972 and 2002, but declined to 2.05 by 2005 (Oshio 2008: 2–3). In the case of 56.8 percent of parents in the survey, the age of the youngest child is between the age of 3 and 6, whereas in only 43.2 percent, the youngest child is below age 3.

Parents Using Family Policies

Asked about the main caregivers for their youngest child, parents were presented a long list of options, from family members, friends, neighbors, to childcare institutions. Multiple answers were possible. It is often the case that for example grandparents either help on a regular basis, or on short notice jump in to help: for example when the parents have to work longer than usual or when the child is sick and thus has to be picked up from daycare and be brought home, even though on regular days, it might be one of the parents. Also, there are parents who have their child in a kindergarten until the early afternoon for educational purposes, but then, to cover the rest of the afternoon, have their child cared for in another childcare institution, such as for example by someone from the family support center. For those children who are enrolled in some form of childcare institution, the majority, namely 31.7 percent, are enrolled in kindergarten (*yōchien*), followed by 15.6 percent of parents who have their child in a public licensed daycare center and 9.4 percent in a private, yet licensed daycare center. All other forms of daycare centers, as well as options such as childminders (*hoiku mama*) or family support centers are only rarely used. Only four parents report having used a babysitter, showing the strong tendency for institutionalized care in Japan in comparison to more informal support measures.[8] See Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, continued

Variable	Total	SD	n
Satisfaction with infrastructural family policy (0=least satisfied, 10=most satisfied)	4.86	2.426	2130
Overall life satisfaction (0=least satisfied, 10=most satisfied)	5.75	2.273	2133
caregivers (other than family, friends, neighbors) (multiple answers possible)			1962
Kindergarten (*yōchien*)	31.7% (640)		
Daycare facilities			
public licensed daycare center	15.6% (311)		
private licensed daycare center	9.4% (186)		
non-licensed daycare center	1.8% (35)		
certified daycare center	1.4% (27)		
daycare centers in companies or hospitals	0.9% (18)		
kodomo-en	0.7% (14)		
daycare room *(hoikushitsu)*	0.6% (12)		
baby hotel	0.2% (4)		
childminder (*hoiku mama*)	0.8% (15)		
family support center	0.7% (13)		
babysitter	0.2% (4)		
monthly cost for institutionalized childcare (Yen)	25,892	14734.984	1176
degree of difficulty finding childcare institution for youngest child	2.35	1.124	1187
very easy	24.9% (295)		
easy	38.7% (459)		
neither nor	17.1% (203)		
difficult	15.6% (185)		
very difficult	3.8% (45)		
Opinions on childcare support measures 1=not important, 5=important			
increase the number of daycare institutions	4.11	.869	2124
increase the number of childminders	3.58	.864	2124
more flexible care hours	4.14	.837	2124
increase programs to improve quality	3.96	.804	2124
improve support for special needs children	3.03	.798	1186
improve support for parents with limited financial means	3.22	.730	1186
increase after school care	3.06	.732	1186

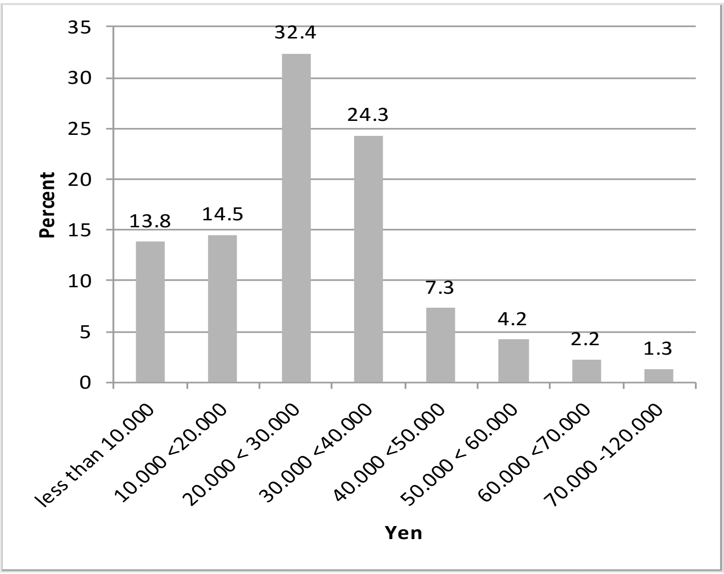
8 For more on parents' arguments for or against (employing) babysitters, see Holthus (2011).

Satisfaction with childcare institution of youngest child			
1=dissatisfied, 4=satisfied			
hours of care	3.2	.881	1186
the institution's closed days	3.18	.816	1186
costs	2.6	.955	1183
number of daycare providers per child	3.15	.786	1186
handling of the unexpected, e.g. illnesses	3.03	.798	1186
play and learn program	3.22	.730	1186
dealing on an individual level with each child	3.06	.732	1186
educational principles and ways of thinking	3.21	.670	1186
opportunities for parents' input	3.09	.700	1186
contact/communication with other parents	3.00	.712	1186
altmosphere of the institution	3.34	.647	1186

Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

The average monthly costs for some form of childcare outside the family was about 26,000 Yen (approx. €220). Yet the variance is significant, as costs can range from less than 10,000 up to 120,000 Yen. Separating the costs between costs for kindergarten versus daycare center show that the extreme costs, either very low or very high, are mostly for those who have their child in a *hoikuen,* a

Figure 1: Monthly Costs for Institutionalized Childcare for all Children per Family



Note: The question was limited to parents who actually have a child in regular care.
Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

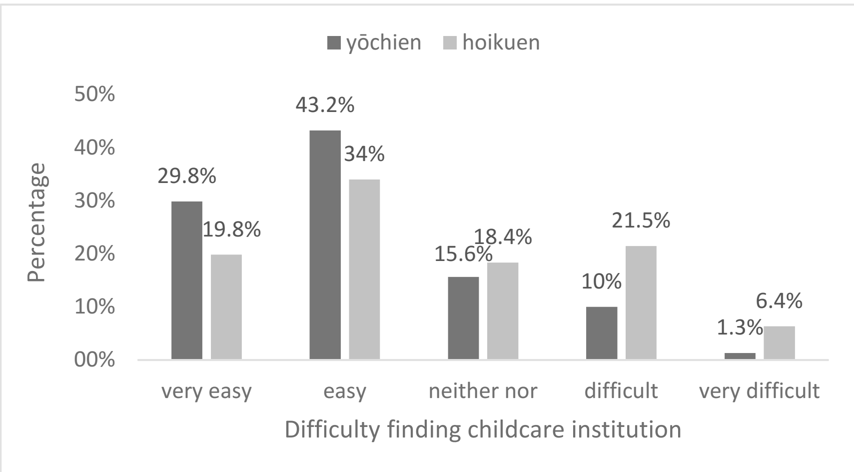
daycare center (see Holthus, Huber and Tanaka 2015: 62 for further details).

Regarding the youngest child's regular daycare schedule, of the 1,184 parents answering this question (55.5% of all parents), 86.2 percent stated that their child goes to daycare five days a week. An additional 8.1 percent (96) have their youngest child attend daycare six days a week.

Since the nationwide waiting list for children to get into daycare is an often-publicized issue, as described above, it is surprising to see that 63.6 percent of the parents in this survey thought it was easy or very easy to find a daycare place. 15.6 percent thought it difficult (185), and only 3.8 percent (45) found it very difficult (see Table 2). This warrants a more detailed look.

Distinguishing the findings by the type of childcare institution that the parents are using for their youngest child sheds an even greater light on the severity of finding a daycare center slot in comparison to finding a place in a kindergarten. As can be seen in Figure 2 below, 27.9 percent of parents found it difficult or very difficult to secure a place for their child in daycare, yet it was only 11.3 percent of those parents with their child in kindergarten. Vice versa, 73 percent of parents with their child in kindergarten report finding a slot easily, whereas it is only 53.8 percent of parents with their child in a daycare center. Part of the reason why it is easier to secure a place in a kindergarten than a daycare center lies in the fact that the number of kindergarten children has been declining for a long time, whereas the number of children in daycare continues to

Figure 2: Difficulty Finding Childcare by Type of Institution



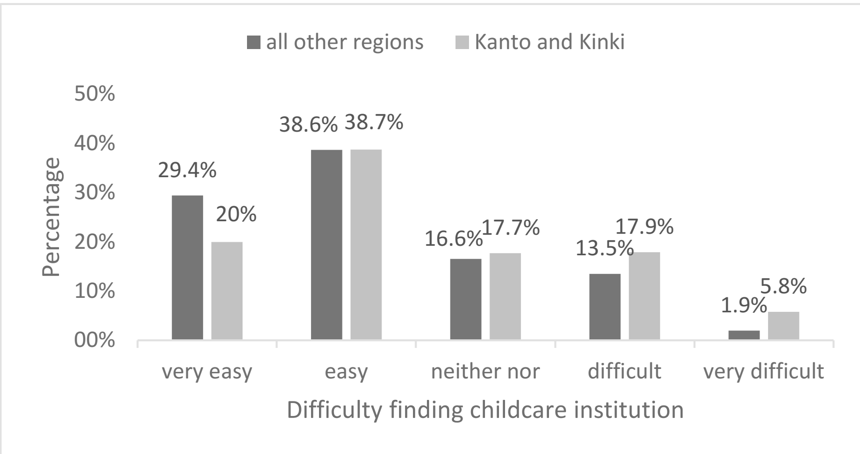
Note: A Chi-Square test of independence indicated a highly significant association between difficulty finding childcare institution and the type of childcare institution.
$\chi 2$ (4, n = 1187), p < .001.

Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

increase more quickly than new places are created. This resulted in the described mismatch of excessive kindergarten places and insufficient daycare places.

Kukimoto (2014) has pointed to the fact that the large increases in female employment since the mid-1970s have mostly occurred in urban areas. Thus the resulting greater demand for daycare places resulting in a drop in the use of kindergartens but on the other hand in a shortage of licensed daycare centers in the metropolitan areas, have created a situation Kukimoto has termed as "territorial injustice." And this is exactly what the experience of the parents in the survey here supports as well: Figure 3 below points to the regional differences in the distribution and demand of childcare places: Parents in the metropolitan areas (23.7%) report finding a childcare place to be much more difficult than in the other regions of Japan (15.4%).

Figure 3: Difficulty Finding Childcare by Region



Note: A Chi-Square test of independence indicated a highly significant association between difficulty finding childcare institution and the region in Japan. $\chi 2$ (4, n = 1187), p < .001.
Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

Parental Evaluation about the Importance of Infrastructural Family Policy Measures

As shown in Table 2 above, parents were asked to voice their opinions on several childcare measures. Answers range from "not important" (1) to "important" (4). Questions pertain to issues of 'quantity' on the one hand, such as the number of daycare institutions, after school programs, or childminders (*hoiku mama*), and the hours of care, as well as on the other hand to issues related to the quality of care. Furthermore, two questions ask about the quality of care and care options, namely for minority groups such as parents with limited financial means or with children with special needs (such as a disability). Parents consider the greater flexibility of care hours (mean 4.14) as the most important childcare support measure, followed by the increase in the number of daycare institutions (mean 4.11). Thus, concerns for quantity are more important to parents than quality aspects. Least important in their view is the improvement of support for children with special needs. This points to a possible ignorance on the side of the parents in regard to the difficulties for parents of children with some form of disability and the proven elevated stress-level experienced particularly by mothers of children with disability, as compared to children without disabilities (Yamaoka *et al.* 2016). Indeed, as Kayama has noted, "[t]he idea of disability rights, such as equal opportunity and full participation […], is not yet common in Japan" (2010: 122).

4.2 Parental Satisfaction with Infrastructural Family Policies

Distinguishing Factors

Parental satisfaction with family policies regarding childcare infrastructure overall is significantly lower (mean 4.86, SD 2.4) than parents' overall life satisfaction on the same 11-point Likert scale from 0 to 10 (mean 5.75, SD 2.27). An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the satisfaction scores for mothers and fathers. Gender differences can be found, as mothers report lower scores than fathers both for their overall life satisfaction and the satisfaction with infrastructural childcare policies.[9]

In a second step, one-way between-groups analyses of variance, ANOVA, and *t*-tests were conducted to explore the impact of all independent variables on levels of satisfaction with infrastructural family policies. Statistically significant findings are the following:

- Those parents with lower education are more satisfied with family policies on childcare infrastructure than those with higher education. For Germany, findings are not as clear-cut and show only highly educated mothers to be more satisfied (Camehl *et al.* 2015: 1112).
- Those financially better off show higher satisfaction with family policies on childcare infrastructures: Those parents owning their dwellings are more satisfied than those that only rent their houses or apartments. And those parents who manage to save money from their incomes are more

[9] Overall life satisfaction: fathers: M=5.87, SD 2.18, mothers M=5.64, SD 2.35 t(2131)= 2.33, p=.02. Satisfaction with infrastructural family policies: fathers: M=4.95, SD 2.36, mothers M=4.78, SD 2.48 t(2128)=1.68, p=.09.

satisfied than those who cannot save anything. Internationally, the well-off equally show higher scores in satisfaction with family policies, as they naturally have to rely more heavily on institutions to assist with childcare, whereas people with more financial means have more options available to them on the market place, such as private, more costly daycare centers or nanny services.

- Those residing in the Kanto and Kinki regions, Japan's two largest urban conglomerates, are less satisfied with the infrastructural family policies. In Germany, Camehl *et al.* (2015: 1110) also identify living in larger urban areas to reduce parental satisfaction levels with family policies. So this urban-rural divide is not unique to Japan but is likely to be a pattern of industrialized countries with an accumulation of industry and wealth and employment opportunities in fast-growing urban hubs.
- Satisfaction with infrastructural family policies increases with the age of the child, meaning that the older the child, the higher the level of satisfaction with the policies. It is my assumption that an important reason is that once the child is three years of age or older, there is a wider range of childcare options available, most importantly the option of a kindergarten (*yōchien*), despite the fact that due to their limited hours they are not designed for full-time employment of both parents. Even though *hoikuen* are licensed to care for babies from their 57th day after birth, enrolling one's child into daycare before the age of one still is very difficult due to the few available places for this most care-intensive group of children, which requires a smaller child-caregiver ratio than is necessary for the older children in daycare.
- Those parents whose youngest child attends a *yōchien* are significantly more satisfied with infrastructure policies than those who have their youngest child in a *hoikuen.* This is closely related to the point above, as children in *yōchien* are at least age 3, while those in daycare can start care from two months after birth.
- Those parents with two or more children are more satisfied with the infrastructural family policies than those with only one child. The large hurdle for parents seems to be the ability to enroll their first child. Once the parents have one child in *hoikuen*, then enrolling its younger siblings is made significantly easier by the government.
- Those parents without employment are less satisfied with the infrastructural policies. In Japan, one has to be employed to be able to get a daycare center place for ones child. Those mothers actively job-hunting feel discriminated against, even though efforts have been made in recent years to make it easier for those mothers actively trying to rejoin the labor market to find a care place in a daycare center as well. Yet the point system, which ranks the importance of parents to get a daycare center

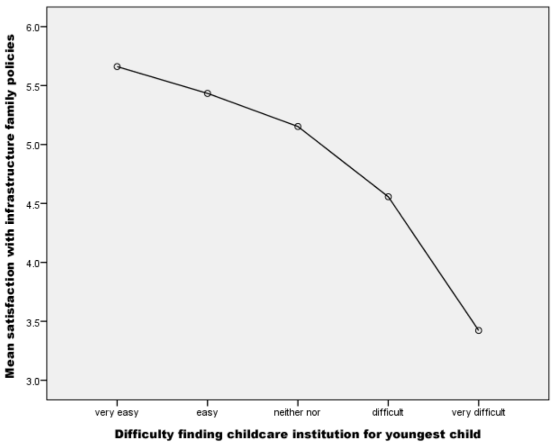
place, still awards more points for having full-time employment and thus makes it more likely for working parents to receive a daycare center place.

Above I discussed the importance of the parents' own experience with finding a childcare institution for their child(ren). This also has a significant impact on the overall parental satisfaction with infrastructural family policies. Data show a linear decrease in satisfaction, the more difficult it is to find a daycare place for one's child, as there is a statistically significant difference at the $p < .001$ level for the five levels of difficulty ((M=5.23, SD 2.33) $F(4,1182) = 14.711$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 4). Thus, parents' evaluation of family policies is strongly reflected upon through the prism of their own personal experiences.

Parental Satisfaction with Institutionalized Childcare Conditions and Provisions: The Relevance of Parental Financial Means, Education and Number of Children

In a battery of eleven questions, the survey asks in greater detail about the satisfaction with diverse elements of institutionalized childcare, all part and parcel of the overall evaluation of family policies for childcare infrastructure (see Table 2 above for more details). The questions pertain to the quantitative as well as qualitative elements of institutionalized childcare. Quantitative in this respect means the opening hours and days of daycare centers, as well as their costs. Regarding the quality of care, questions ask for the satisfaction with the number of daycare providers per child, the handling of unexpected events such as

Figure 4: The Impact of Parents' Own Experiences Finding Childcare on the Satisfaction with Family Policy



Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

illnesses, the communication with the parents and parents' input, the atmosphere of the institution, the play and learn program, the educational principles, and how well the institution deals with the children on an individual level.
These questions are measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 4. The analysis shows that the satisfaction with all but one element is rather high, ranging from mean scores of 3.00 to 3.34—a surprising finding considering the high level of media reporting on the quality deficiencies in *hoikuen*. The exception here is the satisfaction with the costs for the childcare institution, with a mean score of only 2.6. This corresponds with the findings by Camehl *et al.* (2015) for the case of Germany. The authors argue that the cost for daycare is the most influential factor in impeding the satisfaction with infrastructural family policies. Compared to Germany however, childcare costs are significantly higher in Japan in case parents have to use private daycare centers, often due to the unavailability of much more affordable places in public daycare centers. This two-tier childcare system with public, subsidized daycare on the one hand and a widely used market-based model of daycare on the other is still a significant difference between the two countries.

In particular, Camehl *et al.* (2015) identified parents' financial means and education as well as the age of the child as influencing factors for the satisfaction with institutionalized childcare provisions, as mentioned above also for the overall satisfaction with infrastructural family policy. For the case of Japanese parents here, *t*-tests were conducted; identifying that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the university educated versus the not-university educated parents. The analysis produces no evidence that the level of education affects the levels of satisfaction with particular elements of institutional childcare. For Germany, on the other hand, Camehl *et al.* (2015) identified in particular mothers with university degrees to be significantly more satisfied with the childcare costs than everyone else.

There was only one statistically significant difference in the mean scores for those with (M=3.17, SD .72) and without (M=3.26, SD .74) the ability to save money from their monthly income, namely for the evaluation of the play and learn programs ($t(1176)=2.06$, $p=.04$). Those with more limited financial means are more satisfied than those with greater financial means. Regarding the costs for daycare, parents with the ability to save some of their earnings are more satisfied, which supports the findings in Germany, yet the difference is not statistically significant in Japan.

In one aspect, however, the findings in Germany and Japan run opposite. For Germany, Camehl *et al.* (2015: 1112) find parents with children ages three and up to be less satisfied with the quality of childcare institutions than those with children below that age. The authors argue that the German government had in recent years focused on childcare for the young, below age three, with declining attention to the care of children above age three. In Japan, on the other hand, for eight of the eleven elements of institutionalized childcare parents with older preschool children were statistically significantly more satisfied than those parents with younger babies and toddlers up to age three. In 1996, Germany implemented a new law providing the legal entitlement for all children aged three and older to a kindergarten place. In 2013, the law expanded, as since then every child from the age of one has a guaranteed slot in a daycare center. These rather recent changes obviously also had an impact on parents and their views on institutionalized childcare. Japan does not have any comparable laws so far and with a reported 23,500 children officially on the waiting list for a public daycare space (*Japan Times* 09/02/2017), the situation is quite different in the two countries.

4.3 Regression Models to Explain Parental Satisfaction with Family Policies Concerning the Infrastructure of Institutional Childcare

Results for the five models for analysis of the overall levels of parents' satisfaction with family policies for childcare infrastructure are presented in Table 3 below. Each subsequent model adds further variables, thereby improving the explanatory value of the models. The first model shows that the age of the youngest child and the number of children are strongly related to family policy satisfaction of the parent. Gender contributes to it as well, as mothers show lower satisfaction scores, as already mentioned at the onset of this chapter. Yet this model only has an explanatory value of 2.6 percent (adjusted R^2). In model 2, the socio-economic background of the parents strengthens the explanatory model, with all three variables, employment, having savings, and education significantly contributing. We see that higher education diminishes the satisfaction with family policies. In the subsequent column for model 3, parents' own experiences with institutional childcare are added, showing that the monthly costs for institutionalized childcare, by themselves important, however do not make a significant contribution to the whole model. Nonetheless, it shows that positive experiences the parents had with finding a childcare place and also having a child attending public daycare both are associated with significantly higher levels of satisfaction with infrastructural family policies.

Model 4 adds the region the parents are living as contributing factor, showing that location has a highly significant negative influence on parental satisfaction with family policies, meaning that parents in the two urban, metropolitan areas are significantly less satisfied than those parents living anywhere else within Japan. In the final model 5, the inclusion of the parents' levels of satisfaction with the eleven different elements of institutionalized childcare for their own child contributes to the reduction in magnitude and statistical significance of the ability to save and the degree of difficulty finding a childcare space. This Model 5 shows significant contributions through six variables and explains 17.9 percent of the variance in satisfaction, which is high with such a large population. Thus, it provides a good explanation of the factors influencing parents' satisfaction with family policies on childcare infrastructure. The six variables of importance, as seen in Table 3, are: the satisfaction with the hours of care and the satisfaction with the costs for the child (but not the actual sum paid) as the two important quantitative elements of institutionalized childcare, and the number of teachers per child as signifier for the quality of care, together with the region of living. The ability to save money as well as having one's child in public daycare continue to make a significant contribution to the model.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Satisfaction with Infrastructural Family Policies

Regressions for satisfaction with infrastructural family policies
p<.05*, p<.01**, p<.001***

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender	-.046 *	.015	-.011	-.015	.009
Number of children	.066 **	.063 **	.043	.031	.045
Age of youngest child	.137 ***	.128 ***	.051	.056	.026
social stratification					
employed (vs. Not employed)		.079 **	.038	.031	.018
has savings (vs. No savings)		.084 ***	.077 *	.071 **	.065 *
university education (vs. No univ. edu)		-.065 **	-.058	-.049	-.051
own experiences with institutionalized childcare					
child in private daycare (hoikuen)			-.007	-.003	.014
child in public daycare (hoikuen)			.110 **	.104 **	.121 **
child in kindergarten (yochien)			-.031	-.022	.088
approx. Monthly cost for childcare			-.039	-.032	.029
degree of difficulty finding daycare (easy)			.157 ***	.147 ***	.067
Region (Kanto+Kinki) (vs. rest of Japan)				-.129 ***	-.116 ***
satisfactions with different elements of institutionalized childcare					
hours of care					.175 ***
the institution's closed days					.041
costs					.137 ***
Number of teachers per child					.075 *
Handling of the unexpected, e.g. illness					.059
The play and learn program					.049
Dealing with child on individual level					.007
Educational principles					-.040
Parental input opportunities					-.002
Communication with other parents					.034
Atmosphere at institution					.056
N	2039	2028	1120	1120	1120
Adjusted R2	.026	.039	.075	.081	.179

Source: JPWS 2012, author's own calculations.

5 Discussion

The continuing low fertility rate in Japan, coupled with high aging is a severe problem for Japan's social welfare system and its economy. Family policies have been largely implemented with the objective of trying to tackle the low fertility rate, as well as trying to improve the lives of families with children through numerous means. One important element of family policies is to provide affordable and good quality childcare institutions. Public discourse both focuses on the difficulties for parents to find a daycare center place and on the alleged quality decline of childcare places, as the government struggles to meet the continuously rising demand.

For governments, evaluating the users' level of satisfaction with their policies is a much needed, welcomed, but still new, trend. Even though the Japanese government, under the short-lived rule of the DPJ, had implemented a commission to research the well-being of its people—disassembled again shortly after the LDP took up power in 2012—I am not aware that the Japanese government has yet conducted a specific evaluation of parents' satisfaction with family policies. Therefore, this study fills a much-needed gap and identifies three main findings:

(1) Mothers' and fathers' own experiences are an important indicator for their satisfaction with family policies. If they managed to secure a childcare space for their child, in particular a place in a public daycare center, they are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with family policies. A place in a public daycare center in contrast to any other childcare institution contributes most significantly to the parents' satisfaction with family policies.

(2) The three pillars of family policies, time, money, and infrastructure, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, are overlapping in various ways. On the one hand, the costs for institutionalized childcare are of particular relevance, pointing to the financial restraints parents are under, something that is supposed to be covered through "money family policies." On the other hand, the opening hours of daycare centers impact parents', respectively in most cases the mothers' work-life balance. Both aspects are significantly influencing parental satisfaction with infrastructure-related family policies yet point to monetary and time-related needs of the parents as well. In future studies, a joint investigation of all three pillars of family policies and parental satisfaction with aspects belonging to these pillars should be in order.

(3) The region of living is a highly significant factor influencing the satisfaction with policies on childcare infrastructure. Parents in the urban metropolitan areas of Kanto and Kinki are significantly less satisfied—due in part to the fact that it is in these urban areas that daycare spaces are more difficult to get than in any of the other regions surveyed. As the regional divide between rural and urban areas is growing in Japan, due to continued rural to urban migration, and the resulting higher concentration of wealth, higher education and better and more employment opportunities in urban areas, will the regional divide in satisfaction with family policies also continue to grow? Future investigations should focus on a more detailed analysis of the regional differences of family policies and parental satisfaction with them, particularly since numerous such policies are implemented and done only on the local level and not on the national level. In addition, the current study distinguishes only between two regions. Yet this cannot let us fully understand what the differences

are to communities in smaller cities, suburban cities or rural areas, so a more fine-grained regional distinction would shed more light on the issue.

Even though this edited volume focuses on the challenges for the implementation of a gender sensitive family policy, the fair and balanced implementation of family policies throughout the different regions of Japan with their distinct challenges is also of importance. We know that well-being and the satisfaction with different areas of parents lives significantly differ between fathers and mothers, such as in regard to their partnership well-being or even the well-being with time-related family policies (Holthus, Huber and Tanaka 2015). Yet at least in regard to infrastructural family policy satisfaction, gender differences pale in comparison to regional differences. It is hoped that policy makers will acknowledge the importance of evaluating the "success" of family policies by the level of satisfaction of parents with family policies, and that the diverse conditions and needs of families in different regions be adequately addressed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my research assistants Peter Fankhauser and Stefan Hundsdorfer for their invaluable support for the entire project, Andreas Eder and Bente Tils in assisting with the literature review, and Maki Matsuda for her early assistance on researching about Japanese family policies. Furthermore I would like to thank the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo for survey funding, the German Research Foundation (DFG) for funding in the data analysis (grant HO 5249/2-1, 2014–2017), and last but not least, Ulrike Schaede (UC San Diego) and Patricia McLaughlan (University of Texas at Austin) for comments on a very early draft of the chapter, as well as Wolfram Manzenreiter for the many discussions about satisfaction and well-being in Japan.

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Womenomics: A Model for a New Family Policy in Japan?

Annette Schad-Seifert

1 Introduction

In 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe initiated a progressive plan to increase women's employment and empowerment. The policy bears the title "Womenomics" and is a pillar of Abe's economic growth strategy. Evidently, the recommendations of various international economic organizations have had a significant impact on shaping Abe's new gender policy. The World Economic Forum, the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the Goldman Sachs Investment Bank are all urging Japan's public and private business organizations to reform their corporate structures in order to adapt the economic sector to meet the requirements of an aging society. An important part of this policy is to increase the participation of women in the labor market as well as in political leadership.

Over the last few decades, Japan's government has implemented gender equality measures in the workplace under Japan's Basic Law for Gender Equality. Yet the labor force participation rate of Japanese women is still low in comparison with other OECD nations. Japanese mothers in particular have difficulties in balancing a professional career with childrearing. The LDP government is therefore working on a policy package, which aims to improve Japan's diversity and gender equality scores. The rationale behind this policy is to make available a highly-qualified female workforce. However, the question remains whether the business sector will provide an environment that is flexible and attractive enough for women to pursue their careers while having a family.

This chapter explores the question of whether Womenomics can function as a new model for family policy in Japan. The term "family policy" here refers to all kinds of supportive policies that enable women to combine parenting and employment, and that promote female employment. After providing an overview of the content of Womenomics, this article examines how the female workforce has been utilized under Japan's previous gender equality policies and how the changing conditions of Japan's labor market form the background to Abe's current politics. The chapter also reviews some of the papers that advised Japan's administration in the deployment of Womenomics. Goldman Sachs Japan (GSJ), as the main originator of the strategy, suggests further deregulation and privatization of social institutions as well as of the public sector, presenting this as a magical solution for the various structural problems that hinder the improvement

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_8

of female employment in Japan. The final part of this chapter illustrates how the Japanese government has implemented these market-oriented recommendations from GSJ. The conclusion will critically discuss the Japanese government's approach of having economic growth as a primary goal of promoting social development and improving female employment.

2 Womenomics as an Essential Part of the Growth Policy Abenomics

Although Japan achieved high economic growth rates during the post-war era, over the past 20 years it has been suffering from a financial crisis, recurring recessions and deflation. The National Debt amounts to 226 percent of the annual GDP, and the country is aging rapidly. Prime Minister Abe is trying to combat this trend with a massive and comprehensive growth policy. The keyword representing this political message is "Abenomics." Abe's growth policy consists of three essential strategies, also referred to as "arrows." The first arrow is a radical monetary policy, so-called quantitative easing, which aims to increase the supply of money by the Bank of Japan. The second arrow refers to a finance and infrastructure policy funded by public investment, while the third arrow is a long-term structural reform (CAO 2013). The aim is to stimulate the finance sector to promote investments and encourage private consumption. Moreover, the burden of rapid aging and the shrinking labor force is expected to be alleviated. Consequently, Abe aims to integrate women into the job market as the third "arrow" of his policymaking (CAO 2013: 18; Chanlett-Avery 2014: 1; Dalton 2017: 96; Rothacher 2014: 193–195; *FT* 19/04/2013; *JT* 15/06/2014).

During a speech addressing the United Nations in September 2013, Prime Minister Abe introduced his growth program to the international audience for the first time, declaring: "What will serve as both a factor for and an outcome of growth will be the mobilization of the power of women." (PMOJ 2013) In order to achieve this "theory called 'Womenomics'," it would be essential to "create an environment in which women find it comfortable to work and enhance opportunities for women to work and to be active" (PMOJ 2013). Abe regarded the accomplishment of this task as "a matter of the greatest urgency" (PMOJ 2013). Abe's speech even deployed feministic rhetoric, when he declared his intention to create "a society in which women shine" (PMOJ 2013).[1]

[1] The Japanese wording to create a "society in which women shine" (*kagayaku josei no shakai*) (PMOJ 2014b) is probably linked to the first journal issue of Japan's early feminist women liberation movement, which opened with the words by Hiratsuka Raicho: "In the beginning, woman was the sun."

In the following year, 2014, when addressing the Word Economic Forum in Davos, Abe described the key performance indicators of his policy regarding the advancement of women: By the year of the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020, the proportion of women in executive positions should increase to 30 percent. The employment rate of women between the ages 25 and 44 should rise to 73 percent (current employment rate is at around 68%). If the same number of women and men entered the labor force, this would result in a significant increase of the GDP (PMOJ 2014a).

When IMF managing director Christine Lagarde gave a keynote speech at the World Conference of Women in Tokyo in 2014, she praised Abe's insight that Japan's low female labor force participation was an under-utilized potential and stated enthusiastically that women's empowerment could even "save Japan" (Lagarde 2014). She demanded that Japanese corporations should remove all impediments for promoting women to higher positions and thereby "become more welcoming of women" (Lagarde 2014).

Lagarde's speech stressed the importance of continued progress with regards to gender equality in Japan. The 2013 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum that she referred to ranked Japan at 105 in global comparison out of 136 nations measured (WEF 2013; *JT* 02/11/2013; *JT* 27/05/2014; Chanlett-Avery 2014). The three best scoring countries were Iceland, Finland and Norway. In the fields of political and labor market participation Japan is performing particularly poorly (*JT* 02/11/2013). Women make up only 1 percent of the corporate executive positions in Japan; they occupy more than 11 percent of leading managerial positions, including small and medium-sized enterprises. There is also a gender gap in salaries; regular female employees in Japan earn 26.6 percent less than their male colleagues. Although Japan's gender gap is ten percentage points lower than its Asian neighbor South Korea, both countries are nevertheless far behind the OECD average of 15 percent (*JT* 08/08/2013). Because a significant number of women are part-time workers or employed in low paid jobs, the income gap between the sexes is actually much higher (Dalton 2017: 99).

3 Utilization of the Female Workforce under the Japanese Gender Equality Policy

Japan's insight that a better utilization of the female workforce would be advantageous for the economy is nothing new. Previous studies have pointed out that Japan's corporate system disadvantages women who interrupt their professional careers to give birth and raise children, and in order to boost the falling birth rate of the country, a family policy improving work-life balance for well-educated women would be needed (Atoh 2008; Boling 2008; Estévez-Abe 2007; Osawa 2011). By the end of the 1990s, Japan had implemented some features typically found in the family policies of Scandinavian countries that are leading in global gender equality rankings (Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen 2011; Toivonen 2007). In Iceland, for example, having a family alongside a career is guaranteed by the state for both sexes. Consequently, women are more likely to return to their qualified jobs after giving birth (Bertelsmann Foundation 2009). This policy results in relatively higher birth rates, whereas in Japan and other countries, where working women are often forced into lower paid part-time jobs once they have dropped out and returned to the labor market, birth rates have declined dramatically (*BBC News* 22/03/2013; Dalton 2017: 97). In 1999, the ruling LDP established gender equality as an essential part of its political agenda for measures against the declining birth rate (Geraghty 2008; Lambert 2007; Osawa 2000; Ōsawa 2002; Rockmann 2011; Schad-Seifert 2006). In 2005, Kuniko Inoguchi, then female Minister for Gender Equality under the Koizumi administration, projected an ambitious 30 percent quota for women in management and leadership positions by the year 2020 (Gerathy 2008: 526–527; Johanson 2013: 32). After more than a decade, it is noticeable that there has been a limited increase, which also explains why Abe is yet to set a new agenda for family and gender equality policies to meet the targets. Japan is lagging behind with regards to work-family balance as well as the expansion of daycare facilities for young children in particular. In other words, the government's strategy in implementing efficient measures has been unsuccessful (Schoppa 2010; Takeishi 2007; Tanaka-Naji 2009; *TE* 29/05/2014).

The jurist Miller analyzed the historical development of the legal framework under which the demand for female labor has been institutionalized in Japan. Miller differentiated four periods: 1) Before the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL; jap. *Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō*) established in 1985; 2) During the bubble economy period in the 1980s; 3) During the recession period since the beginning of the 1990s, also referred to as the "employment ice age"; 4) Since the passing of the Basic Act for a Gender-Equal Society (*Danjo Kyōdō Sankaku Shakai Kihonhō*) in 1999.

Before the introduction of the EEOL bill, recruitment of young women in business organizations was limited to low-qualified clerical jobs, so-called "office ladies." Employers preferred female graduates from two-year colleges and high schools. The chances of being promoted to career positions were practically nil as female employees were expected to give up work after getting married or having a child (Miller 2003: 168).

At the beginning of the bubble economy, this recruitment practice needed to be reconsidered for the first time due to a labor shortage. The high-tech industry in particular started to hire female graduates from full university programs in significant numbers. This practice inevitably led to the enactment of the EEOL. Miller interprets this bill as an institutional framework to ease female access to the corporate career sector (*sōgo shoku*).

The opening of the labor market for high-skilled female labor promptly ended with the beginning of the recession in 1991, right after the burst of the bubble economy. The corporate restructuring process (reduction of regular employment positions) that followed is also referred to as a period of "employment ice age" (*hyōgaki*), indicating that vacancies for new graduates were heavily cut. However, this reduction of regular employees' positions (*seishain gentei*) in no way affected both sexes equally. During the recession, young women's chances to enter the labor market for regular employment were significantly lower than those of their male counterparts (Miller 2003: 169). On the other hand, an easily available sector for women was that of temporary employment. The Worker Dispatching Act (1985) led to heavy labor market deregulation. In 2001, the Japan Institute of Labor, now known as the JILPT, reported that firms were starting to replace general workers such as female office workers with dispatch workers (*haken shain*) (JILPT 2001: 4).

In the same period, companies were starting to become aware of the demographic crisis, and projected a critical shortage of skilled labor in the future (JILPT 2000: 23). The looming labor shortage led to the government's decision to ensure a better utilization of the female workforce. This political path was clearly reflected in the Basic Act for a Gender-Equal Society, which set an agenda for work-life balance and the reconsideration of institutions which hindered women from gaining access to the labor market, including the often-criticized tax benefits for families with male breadwinners (Nagase 2016; Osawa 2011).

Although Japan has been categorized as a conservative, male-breadwinner, welfare state (Miura 2012), the country chose to take a more neoliberal political path while coping with the economic crisis. Implementing regulatory reform was regarded as indispensable for recovering economic growth and employment. The reform policy also applied to the labor market, aiming for individuals' active participation, regardless of their age or gender, whose performance would be evaluated on the basis of the so-called merit-based system (*seika shugi*). Scholars have argued that in many ways, Japan's gender equality policies originated in regulatory reform of the labor market (Assmann 2014: 3; Ueno 2010: 27–30).

The sociologist Mari Osawa, who worked actively for many years in the Japanese government's Expert Commission for Gender Equality Policy, has criticized the reform agenda for not being implemented effectively, as Japan's social security system has remained stuck to the conservative male breadwinner model (Osawa 2011: 22). Furthermore, scholars have complained about the fact that the legal framework for gender equality was exclusively subject to the requirements of enterprises (Macnaughtan 2015a: 1; Miller 2003: 181; Ueno 2010: 30). In this regard, female labor has been functioning as a "buffer" or "emergency valve" of economic activity.

The question that is taken up in the following part of the chapter is whether Womenomics has suggested a different structural path for the utilization of the female labor force. Does Womenomics propose plans that would terminate the practice of utilizing women as an "emergency valve" of the economy? Are there indicators that would suggest a radical change of labor market policies, such as the intention to include working mothers as independent and self-reliant employees?

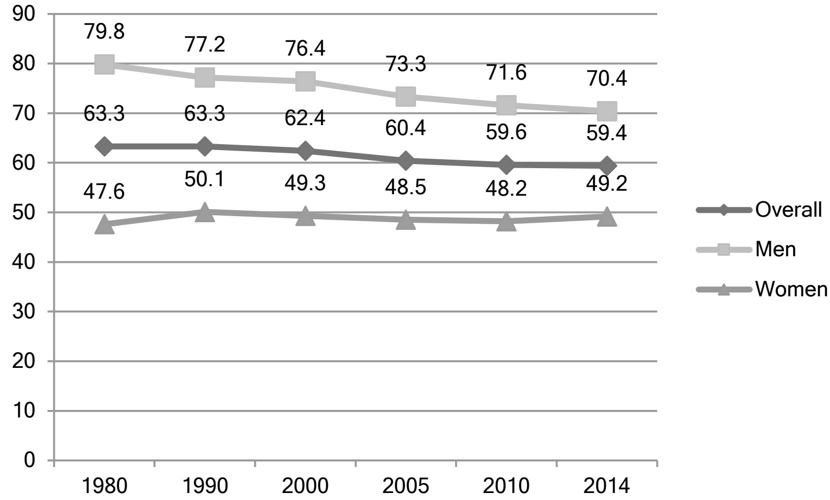
4 Changes in the Labor Market and the Increase in Female Employment

Taking a look at Japan's employment statistics, a slight increase in female employment in comparison with their male counterparts over the past few decades is evident. The overall labor force participation rate has decreased from 63.3 percent in 1980 to 60.4 percent in 2005 and down to 59.4 percent in the year 2014 (cf. JILPT 2014b, MIC 2015a). The percentage of women among the overall working population has remained about the same, slightly above 40 percent (JILPT 2014a: 58). While there has been a sharp decline in the male participation rate from 79.8 percent in 1980 to 70.4 percent in 2014, the female participation rate has stagnated below 50 percent (47.6% in 1980, 48.4% in 2005 and 49.2% in 2014, cf. JILPT 2014b, MIC 2015a).

The relative increase in female employment becomes more obvious with regards to the number of employees (*koyōsha*). During the period between 2000 and 2012, the number of male employees decreased by about 680,000; while the number of female workers increased by 2.3 million (JILPT 2014c). In 2014, the employment rate for men was 67.7 percent while the rate for women was 47.6 percent (MIC 2015a). These changes are due to labor market deregulation and the decline of the industrial sector. In general, the growth of the information and service sector is strongly related to the increase in female employment because these areas require more semi-skilled and unskilled work (Keizer 2009: 1529). Typically, male labor areas such as manufacturing and construction industries are decreasing, while areas that tend to employ women such as the health and medicine sectors have been expanding significantly (JILPT 2014a: 58–59). The following sectors employ women as more than 50 percent of their labor force: medical care and nursing (77.1%); the hotel and catering industry (63.0%); family support services and entertainment industry (58.2%); education and learning support (53.6%); and the finance and insurance sector (53.5%) (MHLW 2012: 11, all data is from 2012).

Studies have revealed that in the period between 1988 and 2009, more women entered regular employment than men in the age group of 15–34 (Blind and Lottanti von Mandach 2015: 76). Yet women earn less than their male counterparts within the same sectors. Furthermore, deindustrialization, the expansion of the service industry, and an aging society creating a demand for caregivers have all led to an increase in female regular employment (MHLW 2012: 11).

Table 1: Employment rate in Japan (All age groups in percentage)



Source: Data based on JILPT (2014c) and MIC (2015).

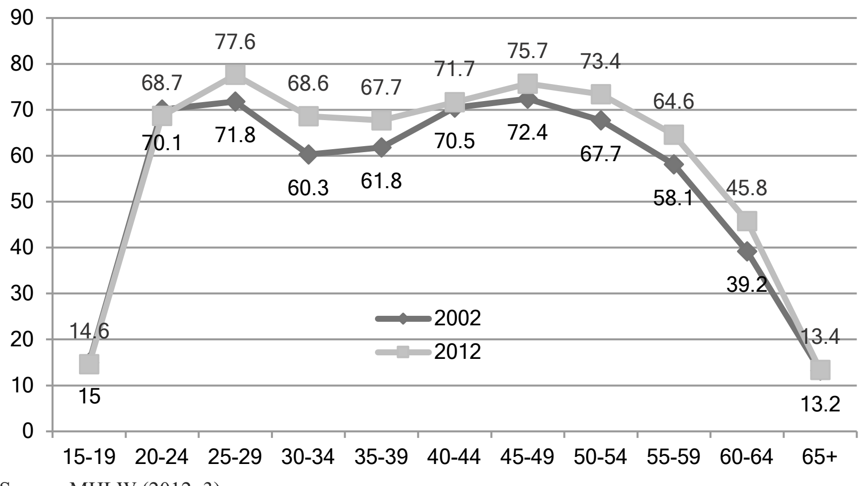
However, the most significant increase in female employment is taking place in the non-regular jobs sector. Between 2004 and 2012 the ratio of non-regular employees (*hiseiki shokuin, jūgyōin*) rose for both sexes from 31.4 percent to 35.2 percent (JILPT 2014a: 60). While male employees are less than 20 percent (19.7% in 2012), females make up over 50 percent (54.5% in 2012) (JILPT 2014a: 59). The gender ratio regarding employment status clearly indicates that firms still believe in traditional gender ideology, according to which women's earnings are regarded as supplementary income to the family budget (cf. Keizer 2008: 419; Macnaughtan 2015a; Tachibanaki 2010: 24).

The main component of female non-regular jobs is "part-time/assisting jobs" (*pāto, arubaito)* (42.4%), a field that is continuously expanding (up to 9.7 million, 1.6 percent more than the previous year) (MHLW 2012: 14, all data is from 2012). On the other hand, sectors with "temporary work" and "contract work" are shrinking slightly. In 2012, there were 550,000 "female workers in temporary employment" (2.4%) and 1.5 million "contracted female workers" (6.9%) (MHLW 2012: 14).

The distribution of non-regular employment by age group shows that Japanese firms contract employees above the age of 65 preferably as temporary workers (men 66.9%, women 71.4%). Young people, however, also have difficulties entering regular employment (non-regular workers within the age group 15–24: men 43.9 percent, women 50.6 percent, cf. JILPT 2014: 59). The gender gap among non-regular workers becomes significant in age groups who are likely to have families with children (25–34 years old: men 15.3%, women 40.9%; 35–44 years old: men 8.2%, women 53.8%, cf. JILPT 2014a: 59, all data is from 2012). Obviously, during their active years younger cohorts and middle-aged family women are overwhelmingly represented in temporary employment.

All figures presented show that Japan's labor market has benefitted from female non-regular labor for many decades now. However, creating a sustainable and family-friendly working environment for both sexes is still desired (Macnaughtan 2015a: 3–4). Japanese women have to choose between either having a family or a career with promotion opportunities (Haghirian 2013: 40). Due to an anti-family environment, female employees with children are confronted with many obstacles and have few incentives to become a regular employee, as surveys suggest. The most common reason stated by women for giving up their career after their first child are the long and inflexible working hours (65.4%), along with the lack of support for working mothers (49.5%) (MHLW 2015: 2; data is from 2008). According to a survey by the National Institute for Population and Social Security Studies, 70.7 percent of women were employed before their first child in the years between 2005 and 2009, however only 26.8 percent continued their career (after giving birth); the other 43.9 percent resigned from work for various reasons (MHLW 2015). Another study from 2008, conducted by the Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, surveyed women's reasons for leaving their jobs before or after their first childbirth. 35.1 percent of the respondents would have preferred to keep their job, yet they felt pressured to resign (9.0%), or they could not see any

Table 2: Female employment rate by age group in Japan (2002 and 2012)

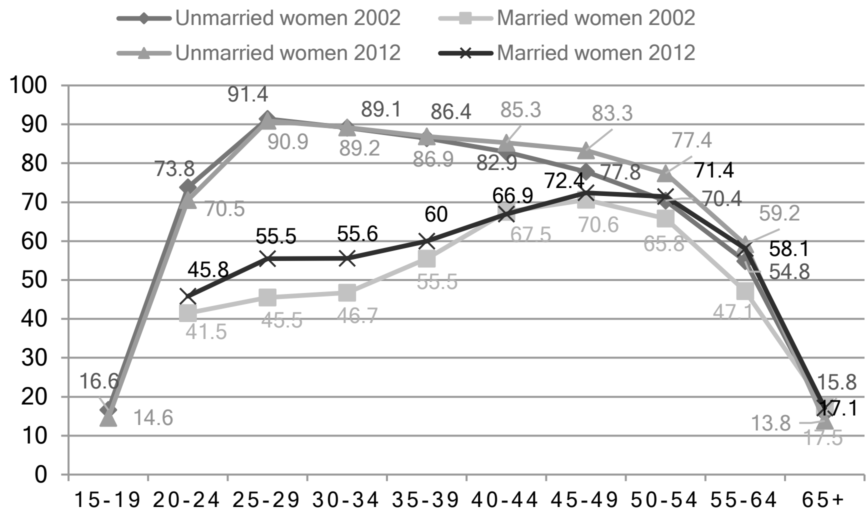


Source: MHLW (2012: 3).

possibility of combining their occupation with their family lives (26.1%) (Assmann 2014: 6; MHLW 2015; cf. Schultz Lee *et al.* 2010: 188).

As a result, the labor market shows a disparity among women who marry and quit their job at childbirth or who stay single, childless, and work without interruption. This trend is shown in the flattening of the “M”-shaped female labor participation rate. The highest employment rates are of those within the age groups 25–29 years old (77.6%) and 45–49 years old (75.7%) (MHLW 2012: 3, all data is from 2012). The two curves include women before and after giving birth and raising children, whereas the 30–34 years old age group (68.6%) and the 35–39 years old age group (67.7%) form the dip of the “M.” After one decade, the 2012 rates show a significant increase in female labor; especially the 30–34 years old age group which rose by 8.3 percent to 68.6 percent (from 60.3% in 2002).
Data regarding the marital status of employees shows a huge gap between never-married (*mikonsha*) (89.2%) and married women (*yūhaigū*) (55.6%). Employment ratios are high among the never-married 30–44 years old age groups (Table 3). Nevertheless, ratios of working married women have also increased, albeit to a lower extent. It has been hypothetically asked whether this shift in the married women cohort is to be regarded as an effect of successful family policies. For the time being, the Japanese government itself has doubts about the hypothesis and explains this trend as linked to economic recession and declining real wages leading to a rise in dual-earner families (MHLW 2012: 67).

Table 3: Employment rate by marital status and age in Japan (women in 2002 and 2012)



Source: MHLW (2012: 4).

Many studies try to explain the factors why career women in Japan have negative attitudes towards marriage and why even high-performing women in managerial positions are put under enormous pressure and feel discriminated against in a masculine work culture (Aronsson 2015; Assmann 2014; Benson *et al.* 2007; Haghirian 2009; Nemoto 2010; *TE* 29/05/2014).

The Japanese weekly journal *AERA* interviewed 100 female employees in private sector management positions (e.g. department head, corporate managers) and found that a female manager's wish for the reconciliation of work and childrearing is regarded as a "luxury." Regardless of the employee's expertise and accomplishments, after giving birth women were considered as a "substitute" (*AERA* 19/11/2012: 26). The survey revealed that private companies provide almost no support for career women with young children, as the following statement shows (*AERA* 19/11/2012: 27 [own translation]):

> In contemporary Japan, after giving birth a woman can only remain employed in the management team of the company if she either has parents who can actively support her with childcare, or she has a spouse who takes an active role in childrearing, or if she has the financial security to be able to afford private childcare until late in the evening.

In Japan's business sector, job interruption for childcare leave in most cases leads to career termination (*JT* 22/05/2013). The Japanese institution of in-house career recruitment and the lifetime employment system is built upon long-term and unilateral relationships, and leaves no room for the legal replacement system that is a core element in Western organizations when providing parental leave. Business studies have therefore pointed to the loss of skilled female labor as a waste of human capital on the part of companies (Haghirian 2013: 40; *TE* 29/05/2014).

The effects of labor market regulatory reforms are compounded by working environments that are hostile towards families. Downsizing of regular employment has resulted in long working hours and critical amounts of core employees working overtime (Dalton 2017: 101; JILPT 2014a: 104). Considering that Japanese men under these conditions have almost no chance to assist with family or care obligations, the reasons why women tend to withdraw from careers due to motherhood are evident (Fuwa 2014; Macnaughtan 2015b; *NYT* 02/01/2015).

5 The Goldman Sachs Corporation as the Main Propagator of Womenomics

The negative association between Japan's corporate culture and women's career empowerment has called for radical structural reform since as early as the 1990s. As mentioned above, the legal framework for the reform was already provided by the Japanese state with the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society in 1999, indicating the urgent need for family support measures in an era of new social risks. However, gender equality in political participation and in the private business sector still seems insufficient. As a response to Japan's poor performance in international gender equality rankings, large international economic organizations are getting involved into the debate. The International Monetary Fund is urging Japan's government and companies to thoroughly improve the domestic socio-economic infrastructure in order to recruit more women to the labor market and to support working mothers (Corbel 2014: 4; Nakane and Steinberg 2012: 6).

In this context, the Goldman Sachs Investment Bank coined the term "Womenomics" in an attempt to focus on the value of women in the workforce as an investment strategy. By stating "Don't underestimate the power of the purse," (Matsui 2005: 1) the GS Japan investment analyst, Kathy Matsui, estimated the potential of economic growth that could be generated by higher female labor market participation. In several research papers Matsui and her team demonstrated how the purchasing power of women could attract foreign investors, who would profit from higher consumption of food, cosmetics, and housing. She estimated a long-term GDP growth by about 13 percent (0.3 percent per annum) (Matsui *et al.* 2005: 1). In a second scenario, she sees the utilization of women in the country's labor market as the only possible solution to increase the workforce, considering Japan's current restrictive attitude towards immigration (Matsui *et al.* 2005: 2).

Since PM Abe has publicly committed himself to Womenomics, US citizen Matsui has been enjoying high popularity in Japan. In interviews and press briefings the married career woman and mother of two children has pointed out the obstacles that are prohibiting Japanese women from entering the labor force (Bloomberg Business Video 2013). In international comparison, participation rates within the age group of 30–44 years old are particularly low. As a numerical target, she suggests an increase in this particular age group from 68 percent (2013) to 73 percent by 2020. Moreover, Matsui points to a waste of economic resources, since the ratio of working women with a university degree in Japan is low in OECD comparison.

Matsui has identified four items in particular that are having a negative impact on female employment: insufficient childcare and nursing care support; tax obstacles; an inadequate focus on diversity in the private and public sectors; and rigid immigration laws (Matsui *et al.* 2005: 7). In her more recent papers "Womenomics 3.0: The Time is Now" (Matsui *et al.* 2010) and "Womenomics 4.0: Time to Walk the Talk" (Matsui *et al.* 2014), she targets all relevant issues of structural reform and defines specific key performance indicators for Japan's future development.

Without doubt, GS Japan is primarily interested in attracting private investors for the "portfolio strategy." This is reflected in the ways in which the deregulation and privatization of social welfare services are being suggested as an equity concept. The privatization of childcare facilities could help to ease the financial burden municipalities have to shoulder (Matsui 2005: 8). In particular, childcare institutions targeting children under the age of 3 are lacking in number, and enrolment rates are still very low by international comparison (Japan 28%, Denmark 63%, France 43% and USA 40%) (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 14). Despite a massive expansion of childcare facilities under the Koizumi administration (2005–2006), there is still a shortage due to a faster increase in female employment. Therefore, deregulation and privatization of the daycare sector are repeatedly being presented as a necessary strategy (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 15):

> One of the stumbling blocks continues to be excessive regulation of the daycare industry. Currently, a myriad of regulations—ranging from the floor space of the facility to the stringent licensing process—means that the supply of facilities remains limited relative to demand. Given the constraint of public finances, it is necessary to deregulate in order to encourage more private sector entrants into the sector.

Yet another factor that disincentivizes women to take up full-time employment is the Japanese taxable income deduction system that gives a tax benefit to married couples, if the annual income of the spouse—in most cases the wife—does not exceed 1.03 million yen (roughly 9,600 Euro). The system is under review and Abe has already asked the Tax Commission in 2014 to prepare for a reform bill. Matsui *et al.* strongly recommend the idea of dismantling the tax deduction system as a policy to encourage women to work (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 6).

The third item under scrutiny is the demand for creating diversity in the workplace. While in the U.S. there is an ongoing intensive debate on diversity management in order to accomplish higher productivity, and it is considered as a valuable resource of a company, in Japan this topic has only recently received attention in the public discourse. Matsui *et al.* consider the establishment of a Minister's Office for Gender Equality and the measures against the falling birth rate as important steps for social transformation, but they demand a more affirmative attitude towards "changing the diversity mindset" (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 17). To this end, Japanese organizations had to increase the proportion of women in executive positions and in political representation (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 17). The underrepresentation of women in leadership or supervisory positions is regarded as the most severe "push-factor," restraining women from pursuing their careers. By implementing more diversity, both the workplace gender gap and the gender pay gap would be significantly reduced (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 17).

The fourth item impeding female empowerment is seen in low immigration rates. Matsui *et al.* view the burdens of providing elderly care as "pull-factors," which are withdrawing women from the job market. Restrictive immigration laws should be eased, particularly in sectors as catering to services close to the private home, such as household help, nursing care, babysitting, and elderly care (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 22–23). A more deregulated labor market should accept foreign workers in the care sector (Matsui *et al.* 2010: 23):

> Unless Japan changes its overly stringent rules, the risk is that it will lose the global race for foreign nurse/caregiver talent—just at the time when it desperately needs such resources.

Eventually, Japan's workplaces have to create a more "flexible working environment" for working mothers, if they want to keep them as employees (Matsui *et al.* 2014: 22). This includes fair and objective evaluation, as well as payment and promotion systems that should be adopted to help to eliminate excessive long working hours in companies. The overall objective is to achieve more diversity and equality (Matsui *et al.* 2014: 23).

6 Abe's Womenomics and Family Policy Measures

While Abe is promoting female employment for Japan's economic growth, organizations that have until now not been in charge of social policy reform have become involved. The Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) and the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) have been developing new strategies in order to achieve Womenomics on a corporate level. The policy aims first to support work-life balance, second, to encourage positive actions for women's empowerment, and third, to encourage female entrepreneurship (Sakamoto 2015).

Since the fiscal year 2012, the "Nadeshiko Brand Initiative" has been conducted in order to select and publicize enterprises which show an outstanding performance in "promoting women's active participation (*josei katsuyaku suishin*)" (METI 2015b). The selection criteria for enterprises are: the increase of women in managerial positions; the support of women in their career development; and the provision for working mothers to better reconcile work and family (METI 2015a, METI 2015b; *JT* 30/07/2014a). The 100 best-performing enterprises have been nominated for the "METI Diversity Management Selection 100" (Sakamoto 2013).

In government papers METI promotes "diversity management" as a "business strategy" designed to identify the best ideas and most competent human resources regardless of "gender, age, nationality and disabilities" (METI 2015b). Diversity management is regarded as crucial for creating a society where "various human resources," such as women, the young, the elderly, and disabled people can participate in value creation (Sakamoto 2013). The traditional male management style, which tends to refrain from assigning demanding projects to female workers due to childcare leave or work-life conflict, is being viewed negatively. The METI's initiative therefore aims to eliminate employment barriers for women in order to realize the "'double-income-two-kids' lifestyle" (Sakamoto 2013).

It is obvious that effective improvements of the childcare system are essential for accomplishing any diversity scores. With regards to the provision of childcare services, the elimination of waiting lists for nursing care through the creation of 400,000 new vacancies has become a major issue (JapanGov 2015). To achieve this goal, the deregulation of care facilities is being implemented through leasing public property to private businesses, and by encouraging commercialized individual services such as babysitting, and non-governmental services such as company-run kindergartens (Sakamoto 2013).

Eliminating the "push factors" for leaving jobs is combined with measures to also reduce the "pull factors." The Japanese government plans to legalize the recruitment of foreign housekeepers into special economic zones (JapGov 2015; *NAR* 14/05/2017). Japanese double-earner households are now able to hire cleaners and nannies from Asian countries such as the Philippines, which was previously only permitted for foreign diplomats and expatriate families (*JT* 24/06/2014). Sociologist Emiko Ochiai has expressed doubts whether the domestic worker model will become an accepted system in Japan, while in other Asian societies foreign housekeepers are employed as a tool to alleviate the burden on families residing in urbanized areas (Ochiai 2011: 233; 2014: 223).

7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to clarify the ways in which Womenomics has triggered a debate about the necessity of implementing family policy in the business sector. In the past, the Japanese economy has developed a specific framework to utilize female labor; mostly relying on a two-track system that restricted the employment of women to the non-regular, non-core labor sector. Although Japan's equality laws have been providing the framework for non-discriminatory employment conditions, the actual integration of the female workforce is still lacking social sustainability and gender equality. In order to improve the situation, Womenomics demands thorough, ongoing structural reforms. The main objectives are deregulation and business diversification to engage the private sector in necessary family-oriented investments.

It is important to note in this context that a market competition for employing high-skilled women is emerging not only in Japan but also in other late industrialized countries. Global enterprises such as Facebook and Apple are even providing innovative reproductive technologies for their female staff members—also known as "social freezing"—in order to avoid problems arising from putting off childbirth while female career planning.

It can be suggested that Womenomics is a program with a similar agenda, such as utilizing the female workforce optimally in the interest of economic markets. It has been argued that due to Womenomics, the recruitment of female employees in regular and managerial positions is already improving (Macnaughtan 2015c). The question remains how successful the Abe administration is in undertaking the necessary structural reform. There is reason to doubt whether economic growth is an effective parameter for implementing sustainable family policy measures.

Still, its success depends on effective provisions for achieving work-life balance (*JT* 22/05/2013). Therefore, the privatization of welfare institutions such as nurseries and care services seems reasonable in times of budget constraints. Nevertheless, public-private equity funding does not necessarily guarantee long-term deficit reduction. Private investors will probably benefit more from this policymaking than parents who wish to use those services as potential clients. The proposal that Japan should mitigate its growing demand for care work with excessive foreign immigration seems ambitious, taking into account that the number of foreign workers has in fact decreased over the past few years, and that there has been little political decision-making to improve immigration flows.

In Japan's neighboring countries such as Thailand, Singapore or Taiwan, young women from the countryside are supposed to work for low fees in the households of middle-class families (Ochiai 2008, 2014). In fact, double-earner households in those countries rely on private services related to housework to cope with the early phase of child-raising. Nevertheless, it is necessary to keep in mind that even in those countries, nannies, maids or housekeepers certainly do not replace qualified nursing institutions such as kindergartens or day care centers (Ochiai 2008: 42).

It can be further argued that the government's logic to allow the inflow of foreign domestic workers with the purpose of installing household-related services is still largely inspired by the traditional housewife ideology and a familialistic welfare system. Buying domestic work with cheap migrant labor from Asia might sound like a feasible solution to Japan's aging society, but the non-regular utilization of foreign labor and transnational social dumping can hardly be considered a progressive structural reform.

It goes without saying that gender equality and work-life balance should be available for both sexes and should also include men (Macnaughtan 2015b). A general increase in double-earner families with kids affords an equal distribution of domestic work and care tasks on couples, family members and society. As long as Japan's current corporate culture is still reluctant to implement family-friendly working hours and childcare leave systems for their male workers, the professional empowerment of women will remain a difficult task to accomplish.

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Japanese Child Caring Men (*Ikumen*) and Achieving Work-Life Balance

Masako Ishii-Kuntz

1 Introduction

Seeing *sararīman* (salaried men) in business suits with their babies in the front sling, carrying a briefcase in one hand and a diaper bag in the other is no longer an uncommon morning scene in recent Japan. This is because younger Japanese fathers today are participating in child care much more frequently compared to their own fathers' generations. These younger fathers have been called *ikumen* (child caring men) in Japan since the mid-2000s (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). The word *ikumen* phonetically resembles another word, *ikemen*, which means "handsome men." Unlike fathers in the 1980s and 1990s who were involved in child care but often were embarrassed for their child caring role (Ishii-Kuntz 1994), *ikumen* today seem to embrace a more positive image of fatherhood in which child caring is considered a "good-looking" activity.

The word *ikumen* was also used by the government-sponsored project that was launched in 2010 for the purpose of encouraging men to actively take care of their children. The project also aims to create a society where men can enjoy active child rearing and take child care leave from work more easily (MHLW 2010). On the official website of the *Ikumen* Project, child caring men can declare themselves as actively-involved fathers. Other individuals such as wives, local residents, experts and celebrities, as well as organizations such as companies, labor unions, NPOs and local governments can also declare their support for *ikumen* in various ways.

In the same year, *ikumen* was nominated for the annual Buzz Word of the Year Contest. Additionally, numerous magazines and books about fathers' child care have been published and baby care goods made especially for fathers have been sold in many stores. Further, numerous *ikumen* online communities have been opened and several NPOs were inaugurated. Perhaps the most active such NPO is *Fathering Japan* that strives to change society by increasing the number of fathers who actively participate in child rearing. It offers various classes for fathers-to-be, fathers, grandfathers, and companies' bosses to promote both awareness of paternal involvement and actual fathers' participation in child care. "Thank You Papa" is one of their projects which aims to advance fathers' and companies' efforts toward men's work-life balance by encouraging fathers to take child care

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_9

leave, to build networks among fathers, and to launch educational campaigns for grandparents and companies.

What contributed to the rise of *ikumen*? What are the factors encouraging Japanese fathers' involvement in child rearing? How are Japanese laws and policies related to this *ikumen* phenomenon? More specifically, the main objectives of this chapter are threefold: First I will describe factors that increased the need for more active fathers' child care involvement in Japan. These factors include gender inequality, several demographic changes, and the government's work-life balance policies. Second, research findings on the factors affecting the levels of Japanese fathers' involvement in child care and the consequences of paternal involvement on children's development, wives' well-being, couples' communication and fathers themselves will be presented. Finally, based on the demographic changes and research findings, suggestions for both structural and attitudinal changes to achieve more gender-equal sharing of child care will be made in light of the recent governmental efforts to increase the taking of child care leave by men and women's labor force participation.

2 Gender Inequality, Demographic Changes and Work-Life Balance Policies

In this section I will describe how gender inequality, demographic changes and work-life balance policies have contributed to the rise of the *ikumen* phenomenon.

2.1 Gender Inequality

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 (WEF 2017), Japan was placed 114th among the 144 countries included in the survey, down from 111th in 2016, and the worst standing among the Group of Seven major economies. This clearly indicates that Japan is still far from achieving gender equality. Among the four dimensions included in the report, educational attainment, health and survival, political empowerment, and economic participation and opportunity, Japan ranks extremely low in terms of women's political participation. The drop of the ranking from 2016 to 2017 reflects the decline of the women's political empowerment category in which Japan fell from 103rd to 123rd due to low proportions of female lawmakers and Cabinet ministers.

Gender inequality in Japan is also evident in terms of women's labor force participation. Due to difficulties such as an insufficient number of child care centers and family-unfriendly workplaces, close to half (46.9%) of Japanese women leave employment after having the first baby (CAO 2016), then return to the workforce after they have finished raising their younger children. This employment pattern resembles the letter "M" with the bottom of the letter reflecting many women in their 30s or 40s who become full-time homemakers. Recently, the bottom of the M-shape has been rising, indicating a higher labor force participation rate among women of childbearing ages (25- to 29-year and 30- to 34-year age groups), but this increase reflects the recent tendency for Japanese women to marry and bear children later in life.

The gender gap is also seen in terms of the low number of women in managerial or executive positions. According to the Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training (JILPT 2007), the percentage of women in management positions in 2013 stood at around 11 percent, whereas the percentage in the U.S., U.K., France and Sweden was between 30 percent and 40 percent. This figure falls short of Prime Minister Abe's goal of 30 percent by 2020. More recent data by Teikoku Data Bank (2017) show that companies in which more than 30 percent of managers are women constitute only 6.4 percent of all companies in Japan.

Although Japanese women's high educational attainment was apparently shown in the Gender Gap Report 2017, a closer look at the education data reveals otherwise. For example, according to the Basic School Survey (CAO/GEB 2013), although a slightly higher proportion of girls (96.5%) than boys (96.1%) enter high school, the proportions of those entering four-year universities and graduate schools are lower for women (45.2% and 7.1%, respectively) than for men (56.4% and 17.4%, respectively). In addition, students indirectly learn about traditional gender roles by a so-called hidden curriculum which refers to the unofficial lessons, values and perspectives shown in schools. In case of Japan, students may learn about the importance of male leadership by seeing the underrepresentation of women in top administrative positions such as school principals, and by observing unwritten gendered rules in the teachers' room where female teachers may be more likely to perform domestic chores such as serving teas (Tada 2011).

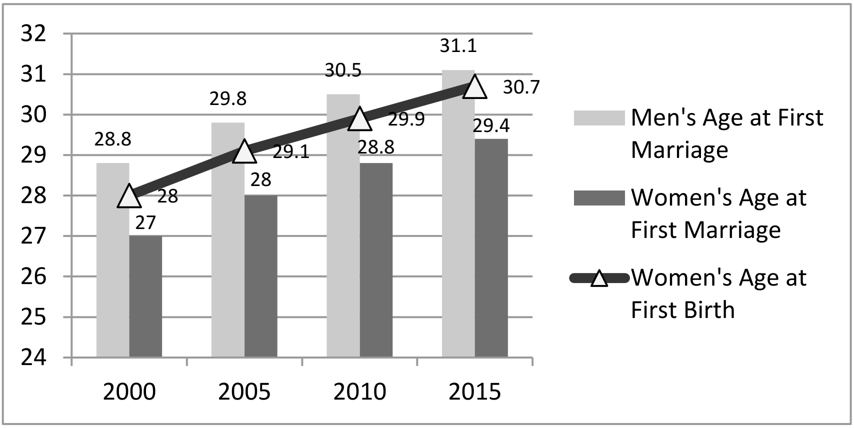
These gender disparities combined with demographic changes described below alerted the Japanese government to come up with campaigns and policies for encouraging women's labor force participation as well as men's involvement in child care.

2.2 Demographic Changes

As shown in Figure 1, Japanese men's and women's average ages at first marriage increased between 2000 and 2015 from 28.8 to 31.1 years for men and 27 to 29.4 years for women. Likewise, women's age at first birth went up from 28 in 2000 to 30.7 in 2015. These delays have caused a sharp decline in birth rates. In 1974, Japanese birth rates had dropped to 2.05 which was, for the first time, below the replacement fertility rate of 2.08. This declining trend continued until it hit the bottom in 2005 when Japan experienced the so-called "1.26 shock." This fertility rate was lower than that of the fire horse (*hinoeuma*) year of 1966 when many Japanese couples avoided having babies due to the traditional belief that girls born in that year would have bad personalities and end up to be very harmful to their husbands. Birth rates went up slightly after the mid-2000s, and in more recent years they remained between 1.41 (2012) to 1.44 (2017).

The decline in birth rates can be attributed to the delays in marriage and child birth as discussed above. At the same time however, a high cost of raising children, an increase in women's labor force participation, difficulty in balancing between work and family, and the shortage of day care centers are believed to have also caused this fertility decline (Ishii-Kuntz 2013).

Figure 1: Changes of Average Age at First Marriage and First Birth in Japan



Source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2017), figure compiled by the author.

2.3 Child Care Leave and Work-Life Balance Policies

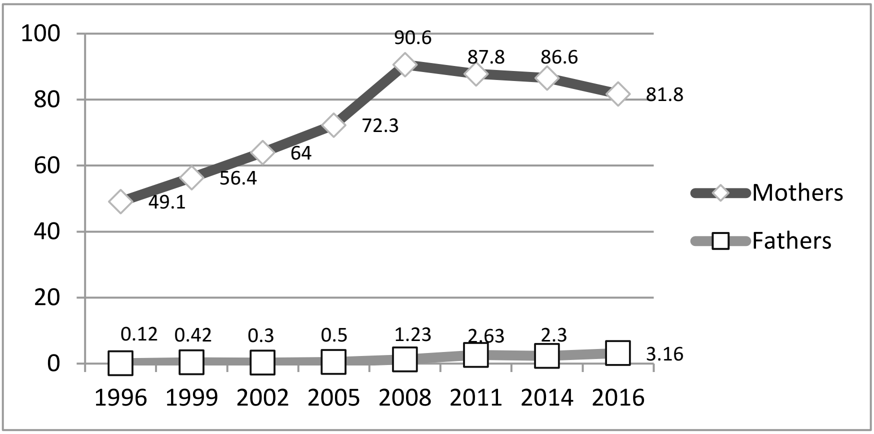
In response to the decline in birth rates and with a belief that husbands' participation in child care would encourage women to have more babies, the Japanese government began the first campaign to promote fathers' active involvement in child care in 1999. The caption on the campaign poster that featured the husband of a Japanese pop star holding their baby son read "A man who doesn't raise his children can't be called a father." The general public considered this campaign message quite sensational at the time (Ishii-Kuntz 2003). Nevertheless, a series of such governmental campaigns led to several major changes in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law and the creation of work-life balance policies.

The prototype of the Japanese Child Care and Family Care Leave Law dates back to the 1975 law that guaranteed child care leave only for female nurses and nursery school teachers. It was the 1992 revision of the law that, for the first time, allowed fathers to take a leave. This revision was initiated out of the government's concern over the sharp decline in birth rates. However, the proportion of men taking child care leave remained quite low for many years. Partly in response to this problem, minor revisions of the law were made in 1995 and 2005. Then, in

2010, major revisions were made including the following four father-friendly elements:

(1) Husbands of homemaker wives are allowed to take the leave.
(2) If husbands take the leave during their wife's maternity leave (8 weeks after the birth), they can obtain the second leave after the maternity leave ends.
(3) If husbands take the leave, it can be extended to 14 months instead of 12 months (Papa and Mama Childcare Plus).
(4) Penalties will be imposed on companies that do not comply with this law.

Figure 2: Proportion of Women and Men Taking Child Care Leave (1996–2016)



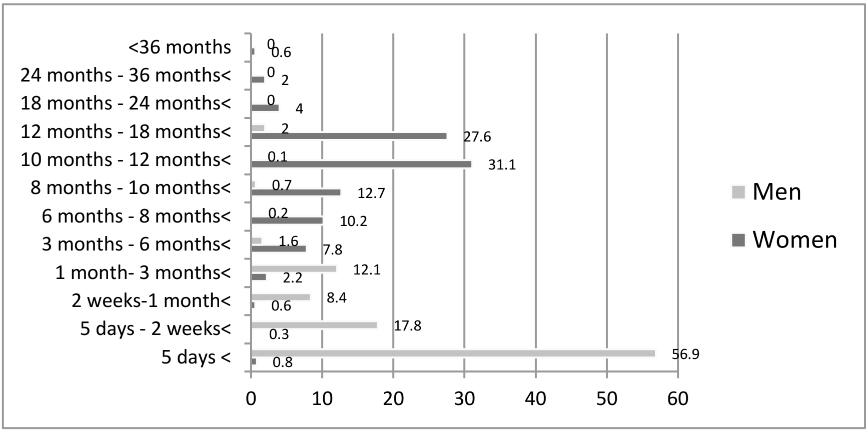
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2017) figure compiled by the author.

With these revisions, the proportion of men taking child care leave went up to approximately 2.63 percent in 2011, a 1.29-point increase from 2010 (MLHW 2011). This proportion, however, is still significantly lower than that of women (87.8%). As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of women taking child care leave increased from 49.1 percent in 1996 to 81.8 percent in 2016. In contrast, the proportion of men taking child care leave remained below 1 percent until 2005. Ever since the 2010 revisions of the law, more than 2 percent of men have been taking child care leave, with the highest number of 5.14 pescent recorded in 2017. However, this figure is far below the numerical goal of 13 percent that the government had set for the year 2020 (*Ikumen* Project 2017).

It is also important to note that there is a gap between mothers and fathers in terms of the length of child care leave. For example, the data of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MLHW 2015a) reveals that 31.1 percent of mothers take 10–12 months leave whereas only 0.1 percent of men take a leave of the same length (see Figure 3). Instead, of fathers who take child care leave, the majority

(83.1%) takes a short leave of less than a month, with the highest proportion (56.9%) taking the leave for less than five days. Atsumi (2010) coined this extremely short-term child care leave of fathers as *nanchatte ikukyū* ("just joking child care leave") because taking such a short leave sounds like a "joke."

Figure 3: Length of Child Care Leave for Men and Women (%)



Source: Employment Equality Basic Survey, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2015), figure compiled by the author.

Interestingly, despite the low proportion of fathers taking child care leave, as shown in Table 1, approximately 32 percent of Japanese men would take such a leave if they were given a chance (Nissei Basic Research Institute 2008). Reasons for this ideal vs. reality gap include lack of understanding and resistance of their bosses, coworkers, family and friends as well as paternity harassment that these fathers experience before and after taking the leave (Ishii-Kuntz 2013).

Table 1: Intention to Use Work-Family Balance Policies (%)

	All	Men	Women
Child Care Leave	50.9	31.8	68.9
Shortened Work Hours	48.9	34.6	62.3

Source: *Kongo no shigoto to katei no ryōritsu shien ni kansuru chōsa* [Survey on support for balancing work and family], Nissei Basic Research Institute (2008).

Work-life balance is still a relatively unknown term among the general public in Japan. According to the report of the Gender Equality Bureau (CAO/GEB 2016a), about 42.2 percent knew the meaning of work-life balance in 2016. However, the governmental efforts for work-life balance have been made alongside with their campaign for the increased paternal involvement and women's labor force participation.

The government's approaches to promote work-life balance include a "Charter for Work-Life Balance" and an "Action Policy for Promoting Work-life Balance" which were formulated in 2007 and the "Change! JPN Campaign" which was launched in 2008. The Charter and Action Policy was created by the Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-life Balance that consisted of representatives from related ministries, economic and labor groups, and local governments.

One of the goals set by the Charter and Action Policy is to create a "society where people can choose from a variety of working and life styles" (CAO/GEB 2016b). Under this goal, two categories related to fathers' participation in child care were included. One was to increase the number of men taking child care leave from work, and the other was to increase child-rearing and housework hours spent by men who have children under 6 years old. The aim of "Change! JPN Campaign" is to raise the awareness of work-life balance among the general public and to encourage workers to change their lifestyles. A frog (*kaeru* in Japanese) is used as a campaign mascot partly because "*kaeru*" also means "to change" in Japanese (see Figure 4). Any individuals and groups including companies can sign up for this campaign and are given opportunities to introduce their practices of work-life balance.

Figure 4: "Kaeru JAPAN Campaign" Slogan and Mascot

Note: The campaign slogan is "Let's try changing one work-style. Kaeru (change)! Japan."
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2017).

In summary, gender inequality, demographic changes, child care leave law, and work-life balance policies point to the direction of fathers' active involvement in child rearing. At the same time, several men's groups that promoted gender equality in families and workplaces in the 1990s, and the increasing research focus on fatherhood since the late 1980s have contributed to the rise of the *ikumen* phenomenon (Ishii-Kuntz 2013).

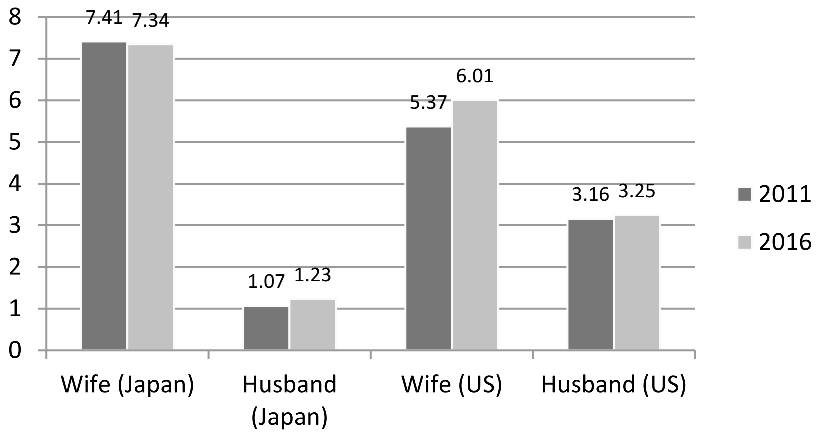
3 Research Findings on Fathers' Participation in Child Care

With the emergence of *ikumen,* general understanding toward men's involvement in child care has been increased in Japanese society (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). However, has the frequency of fathers' child care actually increased over time?

Concerning child care hours, Japanese fathers, on average, spend 0.39 hours per day (MIC 2001). This is in stark contrast to the 3.22 hours per day that mothers spend on child care. Figure 5 also shows that whereas Japanese women spent about 7.34 hours per week on housework and child care in 2016, the comparable figure is only 1.23 hours for Japanese men. This gender gap of 6.11 hours is quite significant, especially when compared to the 2.76 hours gap in the U.S. data.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of fathers who frequently participate in a variety of child caring activities. Overall, Japanese fathers' involvement in child care has increased from 1999 to 2011. The most frequent category of child care provided by fathers is bathing their children. Given the shape of Japanese style bathtubs, fathers are most likely to take a bath together with their children rather than "giving a bath" to them. It was also found that fathers play with their children more frequently than changing diapers, feeding, sleeping together, and taking to or picking up the child at a day care center. This means that fathers' child caring

Figure 5: Hours (per week) Spent on Child Care and Housework in Japan and USA (families with at least one child under 6 years of age)

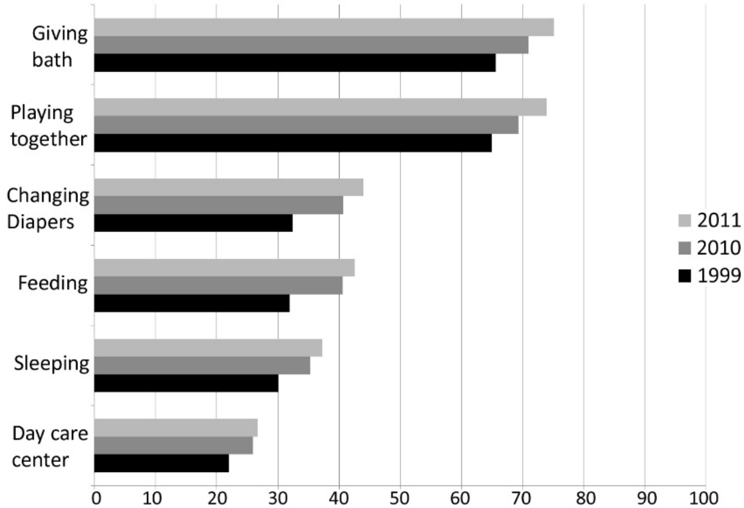


Note: These hours include housework, elder and sick care, child care and grocery shopping.
Source: Basic Survey for Social Life, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2016), figure compiled by the author.

tends to be centered on intrinsically "fun" activities such as bathing or playing together with their children, rather than "dirty" work such as changing diapers.

The data collected by Central Research Services (CRS 2012) also found that 71.5 percent of fathers reported that work demands prevent them from participating in child care. This is followed by traditional gender ideology (37.2%), lack of support and understanding from family members and companies (34.4%), and not knowing how to take care of the children (31.4%). Interview data also revealed that long work and commuting hours, a traditional work environment and childhood background limit paternal involvement (Ishii-Kuntz 2013).

Figure 6: Japanese Fathers' Involvement in Child Care (%)



Source: *Chichioya no ikuji sanka ni kansuru yoron chōsa* [Public opinion survey about fathers' participation in child care], Jiji Press (2011), figure compiled by the author.

3.1 Factors Affecting Fathers' Participation in Child Care

Past research examined relative resources, time availability, gender ideology, household demands, maternal gatekeeping, and workplace environment and practices, as factors encouraging or limiting fathers' involvement in child care (Ishii-Kuntz 2009, 2013). Relative resources are usually measured in terms of differences in income and educational attainment between wives and husbands. The tenet of this hypothesis is that the spouse with the greater amount of resources is less likely to be engaged in unpaid work such as housework and child care. This hypothesis has been largely supported in U.S. studies (e.g., Ishii-Kuntz and

Coltrane 1992). In Japan, Kazui *et al*. (1996) found that wives' higher income is positively associated with their husbands' participation in child care.

Time availability refers to how much time fathers spend at home while being available for their children. Thus, time availability is positively related to fathers' participation in child care. Of the factors influencing paternal involvement, time availability is perhaps the only factor that has been consistently supported by Japanese fatherhood studies (e.g., JILPT 2007; Nagai 2001). That is, Japanese fathers who spend longer hours at home are more likely to be involved in child care compared to those who spend less (Ishii-Kuntz *et al*. 2004). Time availability is usually measured by fathers' work hours, thus shorter work hours are associated with greater availability at home, which, in turn, increases their participation in child care.

According to gender ideology hypotheses, husbands who hold a liberal gender ideology are more likely to be involved in child care than those with more traditional ideology. In qualitative studies (e.g., Ishii-Kuntz 2003), Japanese fathers who support gender equality are shown to be more involved in housework and child care. Many of these fathers reported that their past experiences, such as having been raised by liberal parents, taking college classes on gender, and reading books and articles on feminism, influenced the way they value gender equality.

Another hypothesis that has been supported in Japanese studies on fatherhood regards household demands. According to this hypothesis, greater demands for child care are associated with a greater number and younger ages of children. Put another way, having more children and having younger children would increase the necessity for fathers to be actively involved in child care (Ishii-Kuntz *et al*. 2004: Kato *et al*. 1998). Another dimension related to the household demand is intergenerational co-residence, meaning that the presence of mothers or mothers-in-law who can help their daughters with child care would decrease the demands for child care by husbands. Therefore, husbands in three-generational households are less likely to be involved in child care compared to those in nuclear families (Ishii-Kuntz and Maryanski 2003).

Maternal gatekeeping refers to wives' efforts to allocate housework and child care, and to set up the boundaries of domestic labor. In Japan, wives who welcome their husbands' participation in housework and child care are likely to have husbands who are actually involved in domestic labor (Nakagawa 2009). Finally, fathers who are employed by family-friendly companies are more likely to be engaging in child care (Ishii-Kuntz *et al*. 2004). In contrast, lack of understanding by bosses and coworkers toward men's participation in child care discourages fathers from taking child care leave, flex time, and shortened work hours. Additionally, men who work for father-friendly companies such as those encouraging both women and men to take child care leave are much more likely to be involved in child care (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2016).

3.2 Fathers' Child Care and Recent Policies

Some of these factors affecting fathers' involvement in child care and housework have been incorporated into the government's policies and campaigns. First, given the finding that couples' income gap may be limiting fathers' participation in child care, it is imperative for the government and companies to promote women's continued employment to narrow the gender gap in income. The gender gap in terms of employment opportunity and income has been addressed by the Japanese government's new policy called "The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace" which was inaugurated in October 2016. According to this law, businesses with over 301 employees as well as the central and local governments are required to set public numerical targets for women's employment and promotion to managerial positions. They also have to disclose this information to the public. Although this law attempts to narrow the gender gap at the workplace and to create a female-friendly workplace, it may have a limited impact since the government did not include mandatory targets and penalties for companies that fail to fulfill their goals. Additionally, smaller companies will only be required to *make efforts* to promote women's careers. Given that Japanese women are more likely to work for medium- to small-size companies, this law may not have the intended effects on many women workers. Also, as long as many women drop out of the labor force at the birth of their children, even if they eventually return to work as part-time workers, the gender gap in income will remain relatively unchanged.

Second, as stated earlier, fathers' shorter work hours, which would increase their availability at home, are positively related to their participation in child care. The governmental effort concerning men's work style reform is one example of policy response. Prime Minister Abe established the "Council for the Realization of Work Style Reform" in 2016. The Council consisting of ministers, researchers, journalists and business leaders had met ten times to finalize the recommendations to reform work styles for both men and women. Many major companies also joined together to declare themselves as companies to revolutionize work hours with the statement "We declare we are ending excessive working hours, not only within our own companies but throughout society" (Shirakawa 2016). It is clear that the most important objective of this work style reform is to reduce long work hours which have been criticized for many years because of the workers' health risk such as *karōshi* (death by overwork) and inability to balance their work and private lives.

As a part of the work style reform, the government-initiated "Premium Friday" campaign was launched in February 2017. This campaign seeks to curb Japan's long work hours by letting workers finish early at 3 p.m. on the last Friday of every month. The Premium Friday was set on the last Friday of the month because many Japanese companies pay salaries on the 25th. The nation's largest business lobby, Keidanren, is also encouraging its more than 1,300-member companies to participate in this campaign. One clear purpose of this campaign is to boost the Japanese economy by increasing workers' spending on shopping and eating out, thus it may not be directly related to fathers' participation in child care. Nonetheless, shorter work hours may increase fathers' time availability at home, and this type of work reform campaign may provide an opportunity for companies to reevaluate long work hours that they have been imposing on their own workers.

It is important to note that this campaign may only have a limited impact on smaller companies because of the difficulty of their employees leaving early, or that they will simply have to make the time up on other days. Nevertheless, this type of work style reform may also encourage Japanese workers to spend their annual paid leave entitlements, since they typically use only about half of their paid leave annually. Partly to work around this problem and enforce time away from work, Japan has 16 annual public holidays, more than some other countries including the U.S. and France.

Finally, family-friendly workplaces in which fathers can take child care leave or shorten their work hours were found to encourage fathers' participation in child care. In order to increase the number of fathers taking child care leave, the government has been constantly evaluating and revising the Child Care Leave Law. One such effort was to increase the salary compensation during the leave and extend the length of the leave up to 3 years. In addition, the government is considering adopting the "papa-quota" system that was introduced in Norway in 1992. As explained earlier, the 2010 revision of the Japanese Child Care and Family Care Leave Law incorporated "Papa and Mama Childcare Plus," meaning that if fathers take the leave, the entire child care leave can be extended to 14 months, 2 months longer than when mothers alone take the leave. The papa-quota system which was first introduced in Norway gave a stronger incentive for fathers' child care leave than Japanese law because it included one month of child care leave reserved only for fathers, and if they did not take it, then the entire leave was shortened to 11 months from 12 months.

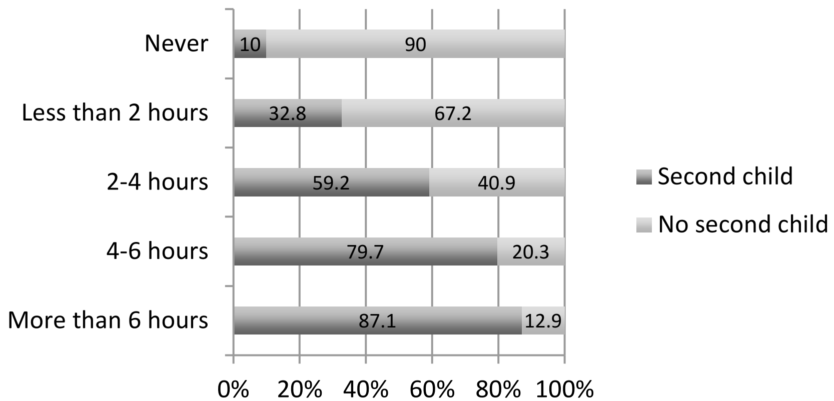
Some businesses are also moving forward to mandate child care leave for their male workers. For example, Recruit Holdings, a major multifaceted company in Japan started their mandatory child care leave program for male workers in April 2016. Prior to this, the company allowed two-day voluntary child care leave for men. However, the revision allows men to take up to 20 days of child care leave and 5 days within this period are mandatory. In Mizukoshi's study (2017) of the four large Japanese corporations that received the "*Ikumen* Corporation Award" for encouraging their male workers to take child care leave, it was found that these companies had adopted many "advanced" practices such as creating posters to promote the importance of men taking child care leave, requiring bosses to report to their seniors about the well-being of male workers on child care leave, and forming a team to make plans for work during the absence of male workers.

3.3 Effects of Fathers' Child Care Involvement

The effects of fathers' child care have been examined focusing on children, wives, marriage, fathers themselves and their work style (see Ishii-Kuntz 2013 for a summary). Many of these studies examined the effects on their children and found that fathers' active involvement in child care was associated with their children's higher levels of sociability and autonomy (Ishii-Kuntz 2004; Nakano 1992), language development (Honda 1981), emotional development and stability (Kato *et al.* 2002), and children's sense of closeness to parents (Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* 2016). Focusing on college students, Onodera (1993) also found that those young adults who have a strong bonding with their fathers have a closer relationship with their mothers and have a greater sense of independence compared to their counterparts who have distant relationships with their fathers.

In regard to the effects on wives, we know that husbands' increased level of child care involvement reduces child care stress and anxiety of their wives, which is, in turn, directly associated with wives' positive attitudes toward their own parenting style (Yamane 2000). Husband's participation in child care also increases the levels of wives' happiness and marital satisfaction (Aoki 2011; Yamato 2001). In addition, men's work style and parental involvement are found to influence wives' work-related factors. For example, husbands' longer work hours are associated with wives not continuing to work after child birth (Abe 2001). In contrast, wives whose husbands spend more time in child care and

Figure 7: Husbands' Housework and Child Care Hours and the Birth of Second Child



Note: Sample consisted of couples living in the same household with no missing data between the first and the 14th survey. If couples have more than two children, the second child is the youngest child.
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Longitudinal Study of Adults in the 21st Century (2015b), figure compiled by the author.

housework are more likely to be employed full-time (Iguchi, Nishimura and Fujino 2002; Yamagami 1999).

Although child caring fathers experience similar stress and anxiety as mothers do over the daily routine of child care and housework (Fuyuki 2008), fathers' participation in raising their children also has positive effects on the fathers themselves. Shimizu (2008), for example, found that fathers who are actively involved in child care frequently expressed a sense of pride, relief and hope. In another study, longer hours of fathers' child care were related to their greater sense of personal growth (Takaoka, Shao and Kimura 2006). Ishii-Kuntz (2013) also found that almost 91 percent of fathers in her study reported that they have grown to have more compassion toward other family members after becoming a parent. In a qualitative study of fathers who have taken child care leave, Ishii-Kuntz *et al.* (2016) also report that fathers' child care experiences increased the level of flexibility at the workplace.

In summary, fathers' participation in child care has various positive effects on their family members and themselves. It also encourages their wives' continued employment and increases the likelihood of wives holding full-time jobs. The Japanese government has been making concerted efforts to increase paternal involvement, largely in response to the sharp decline in birth rates. As shown in Figure 7, a panel study found that 87.1 percent of women gave birth to the second child when their husbands spend more than 6 hours in housework and child care on days off (MHLW 2015b). This is in sharp contrast to only 10 percent of women whose husbands never participate in housework and child care, who gave birth to their second child. Although fathers' participation in child care is not the only factor affecting fertility rates, the governmental efforts to improve child care leave law and work-life balance policies are seen as yielding the expected results.

4 Suggestions for Achieving Work-Life Balance

In this chapter, gender disparity and demographic changes were explained as they contributed to the rise of *ikumen*. Child care leave law and work-life balance policies in Japan were then discussed as tools to encourage men's child care involvement. Various research findings about factors contributing to fathers' child care as well as the effects of paternal involvement on children, spouses, and workplace were presented. Based on these backgrounds, two types of changes, structural and attitudinal, can be suggested in order to increase paternal involvement and thereby achieving Japanese fathers' work-life balance.

4.1 Structural Changes

Structural changes include providing flexible work styles, father-friendly workplaces, improving child care leave laws and policies, creating fathers' community networks and increasing the number of day care centers. As discussed earlier, one factor that stands out as contributing to the increased paternal involvement in Japan is the shorter work hours. Thus, efforts are necessary to promote flexible work styles for fathers including shorter work hours which, in part, can be achieved by cutting their overtime work. Taking advantage of flextime and “flex place” arrangements and paid leave should also be encouraged to allow fathers’ active participation in child care. Many Japanese workers have already been using “flextime” but “flex place” arrangements including “telework” in which employees regularly perform their work outside the traditional on-site work environment should also be encouraged. Given fathers’ time availability was found to be directly related to their active child caring role (JILPT 2007; Nagai 2001), these efforts should focus not only on introducing such systems but also on finding out how men can find it easy to take advantage of these flexible work style options.

Second, a father-friendly workplace can be realized partly by raising the awareness of fathers’ child care among bosses and coworkers. This can be accomplished by training sessions for *ikuboss* and *ikudōryō* (coworkers who are understanding of the needs for fathers’ child care involvement). Encouraging company men to create supportive networks can also yield a father-friendly atmosphere. The word *ikumen* was originally coined by a group of fathers who worked for a Tokyo-based advertising company. This group of fathers formed an “*ikumen* club” at their own workplace, and they disseminated information about their fathering experiences on their homepage (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). Additionally, *ikumen* role models can be those coworkers who have taken child care leave and/or flextime. Providing opportunities for them to share their experiences with others formally or informally would also contribute to creating a more father-friendly workplace.

Third, improving child care leave laws and policies includes introducing the “papa-quota” system in the law as previously explained. Despite father-friendly revisions of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law in 2010, the rate of men taking the leave still remains quite low compared to that of women. The length of fathers’ child care leave also tends to be extremely short. Therefore, with the introduction of the papa-quota system, not only can we expect more fathers taking the leave but also for longer durations. In addition, compensations for parents during the child care leave should be increased. The revision of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law in 2016 increased the compensation to 67 percent of a parent’s income for the first 6 months after the birth, and down to 50 percent for the remaining 6 months. Then, as of October 2017, the duration of the compensation was extended from 1 to 2 years. Although these changes are welcomed, not being able to receive the whole salary of one parent is still a large financial loss for younger families in Japan. One of the reasons why close to 90 percent of Norwegian fathers are taking child care leave is because 100 percent of their salaries are compensated for 44 weeks, and 80 percent for 54 weeks of their child care leave (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). The Japanese Child Care and Family Care

Leave Law, therefore, needs to stipulate more complete compensation for parents taking the leave. Another change is needed to get rid of any unfair practices for parents taking the leave. One of these practices includes not counting the duration of child care leave as "employment." Thus, for example, when applying for a house loan in which the duration of the employment is an important criterion, parents who took child care leave are at a disadvantage because their employment history is shorter than that of their coworkers who worked the same length in the same company, but who did not take child care leave.

Fourth, in an interview study, Ishii-Kuntz (2016) found that fathers who have taken child care leave often felt isolated from their family members, friends and coworkers. Given these findings, one structural change includes building fathers' community networks in which they can share their child caring experiences. "*Mamatomo*" (mothers' friends) in Japan refers to female friends of the mother and they exchange all sorts of information, anywhere from child care advice to bargain baby goods. We are starting to hear the word "*papatomo*" (fathers' friends) more often in recent years, but they do not seem to be as active as *mamatomo* in exchanging useful child care-related information. There are now many community centers including child rearing cafes that provide opportunities mostly for mothers to make *mamatomo* friends. This type of community support should be extended for fathers seeking friendship with other child caring men. Activities of NPOs are also important for *ikumen* to receive psychological support and understanding from other fathers with similar experiences. As previously mentioned, an NPO such as *Fathering Japan* can provide advice and support for child caring men to prevent fathers from becoming isolated in the community.

Finally, an urgent structural change includes solving the persistent problem of the day care center shortage in Japan (Ishii-Kuntz 2018). The Japanese government had been emphasizing the importance of women's active participation in the labor force. However, it has been extremely difficult to accomplish this goal, mainly due to the shortage of day care centers. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW 2017) announced that despite local variations, more than 20,000 children annually have been on the waiting list to enter day care centers since 2010. This problem caught the wide public attention by one mother's online claim in 2016, entitled "*Hoikuen Ochita. Nihon Shine*!!" (Didn't get a slot in day care. Drop dead, Japan!!). This mother whose child was not admitted to the day care center stated that this shortage is inconsistent with Prime Minister Abe's commitment to promote women's active labor force participation (Osaki 07/03/2016).

4.2 Attitudinal Changes

As previously shown, the rate of men taking child care leave remained quite low for many years after the 1992 revision of the law. This suggests that having laws and policies alone will not necessarily increase fathers' participation in child care.

Therefore, efforts should also be directed to change Japanese attitudes toward a more equal sharing of child care and housework between husbands and wives. These attempts include the federal and local government's continued awareness raising campaigns, companies' training of *ikuboss* and *ikudōryō*, supporting NPO activities and lobbying, emphasizing gender equality in the educational curriculum, and creating more gender-sensitive media in Japan.

First, the Japanese government-initiated campaigns for increased fatherhood along with the creation of the *Ikumen* Project contributed to raising public awareness about the importance of fathers' participation in child care. However, as previously shown, the public awareness of work-life balance remains low. This is perhaps because the Japanese public considers the promotion of men's child care involvement and work-life balance as separate domains. However, since the latter is also an important drive toward more equal sharing of housework and child care between husbands and wives, the government should continue to make concerted efforts to promote both men's child care and work-life balance. At the local governments' level, many programs for the father-to-be have been introduced as "*pre-papa*" classes. A *boshi-techō* (mother-and-baby notebook) is given to all pregnant women in Japan, and it is used to record the growth of their babies. Some local governments have been distributing *fushi-techō* (father-and-baby notebooks) for fathers with pregnant wives (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). These efforts need to be continued and enhanced in order to increase men's interest in child care. In addition, some city governments have been offering courses about child care for their own male employees to raise their awareness of the importance of child care (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). Thus, efforts both at the federal and local government levels need to be continued.

Second, as previously pointed out, lack of understanding by bosses and coworkers for men's child care involvement has been frequently cited as a reason for not taking child care leave. Thus, it is imperative for managers and coworkers to increase their own awareness about the importance of paternal involvement. Third, NPOs such as *Fathering Japan* can contribute to raising the awareness of paternal involvement not only among the general public but also among the companies. For example, "*IkuBoss* Corporate Alliance" encourages companies to promote diversity and work style reformation for their workers. With this awareness raising effort for supervisors, companies' understanding for men's child care involvement is expected to increase. *Fathering Japan* is also actively involved in the lobbying efforts to introduce the papa-quota in the child care policies. These efforts are necessary to change our attitudes toward child caring fathers.

Third, it is quite a challenge to change the attitudes of adult men and women about gender-equal sharing of child care. Thus, efforts need to be made in educating younger people through an innovative curriculum in elementary and secondary education. In 2003, the United Nations gathered experts from around the world to discuss the "role of men and boys in achieving gender equality"

(UN/DAW 2003). The final report of this expert group meeting states that "schools are important sites for learning about gender equality" (UN/DAW 2003: 16). It also recommends classroom discussions about gender roles, and in the case of Japan, home economics education can be expected to facilitate this type of discussion. In fact, various hands-on programs including students' discussions have already been implemented in elementary to college education in Japan. These programs include the following:

(1) Bring the baby to school program: Fathers, mothers and their babies living in local communities come to elementary schools a few times a month, and a group of girls and boys is assigned to take care of the babies. This includes cuddling, holding and nursing.
(2) Reading program: Junior high school students are invited to local day care centers to read books to children.
(3) Role play program: High school students are engaged in role play of being a mother and a father, and they are given a scenario that they are contacted by their baby's day care center because their baby is sick. Then the students take the role of a mother and a father to solve the problem. After the role play, students are divided into small groups to discuss and evaluate the actions taken by the mock mothers and fathers.
(4) Fathering home stay: A program offered by Fathering Japan gives college students opportunities to visit families in which fathers are actively involved in child care.

All of these innovative programs offer opportunities for students to learn about gender-equal sharing of child care and housework. In doing so, these children, especially boys, learn the importance of gender equality, which may be carried on into their adulthood. It may take a long time to achieve this goal, but it is perhaps the most effective way to change men's attitudes toward gendered child caring practices at home.

Finally, fostering gender-equal attitudes toward child care can be achieved by creating more gender-sensitive media. In the U.S. where media literacy education is much more advanced than it is in Japan, there exist so-called media watch groups that point out discriminatory practices in the media. In contrast, Japanese media seems to be quite gender-insensitive because of the rampant discriminatory remarks against women and mothers. For example, when children's food poisoning from eating school lunches was revealed in 1996, a morning show host stated that this kind of food poisoning occurs because mothers were no longer making children's school lunches. This type of blame for mothers is still often heard in the Japanese media today, and many of these gender-insensitive comments have remained uncriticized by experts and the general public alike (Ishii-Kuntz 2013). Changing Japanese people's attitudes toward more egalitarian gender roles thus involves extensive media literary education as well as public campaigns to promote gender sensitivity in the Japanese media.

5 Summary

Despite efforts by the government and businesses to increase fathers' participation in child care, it still remains largely a women's responsibility in many Japanese families. At the same time, demands for fathers' child care are ever increasing, not only because of women's participation in the labor force but also because of the society's aging. In recent years, the problem of "double care" has emerged. Double care refers to an adult child being responsible for both child care and elderly parents' care. With the delays in marriage and child birth, the likelihood of double care is increasing for the middle-aged generation. Some studies (Kuroda 2014; SONY Life Insurance 2015) reported that about 8.2 percent of mothers with children have experienced double care in the past, and 27.1 percent of people in their thirties will be involved in double care within the next few years. In particular, 36.1 percent of men in their 40s and 37.4 percent of women in their 30s are expected to take part in double care.

Given these trends and the slow progress of promoting paternal involvement, it is now urgent to come up with unified efforts to promote Japanese men's participation in child care. Ishii-Kuntz (2013) argues that the success of introducing the papa-quota system and the subsequent increase of fathers taking child care leave in Norway owe much to the efforts made by unified groups such as the government, businesses, employers' groups, labor unions, NPOs, churches, media and educational institutions with clear goals of promoting women's labor force participation and the sharing of child care at home. In case of Japan, the government has made the initial and subsequent efforts toward more equal sharing of child care. This "top-down" approach needs to be evaluated, and unified efforts by the concerned parties in Japan are sorely needed in order to promote and practice gender equality in routine housework and child care.

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Current Situation of Domestic Violence in Japan

Chie Maekoya

1 Introduction

Violence in intimate relationships is a worldwide problem. Globally, about one third of all females have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners (WHO 2013). The WHO (2005) conducted a study with 24,000 females from ten different countries (including Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania) and results revealed that the proportion of females having experience of physical and/or sexual violence ranged from 15 to 71 percent, and that Japanese females experienced the least partner violence (15%) among these participating countries. The proportion appears to be lowest, yet there are still females suffering at the hands of their spouses and domestic violence (DV) is also a serious social issue in Japan.

DV is defined as a pattern of behaviors by which one spouse tries to maintain control over the other by using different forms of violence and intimidation in intimate relationships. Characteristics of DV are that offenders intend to threaten victims and victims fear their offenders' behavior, and therefore physical violence does not need to be present to define it as DV (Bancroft, Silverman and Ritchie 2012: 4). Intimate partner violence (IPV) is another term that is used to describe this pattern of behaviors and it not only includes violence in married couples but also within unmarried romantic relationships. However, the term domestic violence (DV) will be used throughout this chapter since it focuses on spousal violence only.

A recent government survey in Japan (CAO/GEB 2015a) suggested that females are likely to be vulnerable to experiencing violence by their spouses (16.6% of males and 23.7% of females reported their victimization; among these victims, 5.7% of males and 11.4% of females had life-threatening experiences.). Although different behaviors are used as a way to control victims, the same study showed that physical abuse was the most experienced form of violence by both males (10.8%) and females (15.4%) (see Table 1). Although males are also victimized by their spouses, females, who are more vulnerable to DV victimization, will be the main focus in this chapter. As the facts of spousal violence have become more obvious, several systems of prevention are becoming established in response. In this article, the available systems to protect DV victims in Japan

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_10

will be introduced. Furthermore, the impacts of DV on victims and their children will be also mentioned.

Table 1: Prevalence of DV

	Total	Males	Females
Total	20.3%	16.6%	23.7%
Physical	13.2%	10.8%	15.4%
Psychological	10.6%	9.1%	11.9%
Economical	5.0%	2.3%	7.4%
Sexual	4.5%	1.5%	7.1%

Source: CAO/GEB 2015a.

2 Development of DV Victim Assistance in Japan

Nowadays, DV is considered as a problematic behavior, but the attitude toward DV only started to change about two decades ago. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing gave significant encouragement to the movement recognizing and preventing violence against women in Japan. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform Action were adopted unanimously, and from then on, violence against women has started to be seen as a universal action together with eleven other critical areas of concerns. About 5,000 Japanese people from non-profit organizations attended the parallel NGO Forum (MOFA n.d.) and thereby felt empowered to make efforts to improve the situation of women in Japan. Additionally, the first national survey on DV victimization, which was conducted by the Japanese government in 1999 (CAO/GEB 2000), provided an essential boost to the movement. The study, with questionnaires distributed to 4,500 males and females 20 years of age and older, revealed that 0.5 percent of males and 4.6 percent of females have experienced violence from their spouses that threatened their life. The results impressed upon the public the fact that DV is a conduct that can threaten an individual's life and thus needed legislation, while the Japanese government back then was not positive about the creation of a legislation for DV victims (Kainō 2013: 12–42).

2.1 An Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims

The Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (hereinafter referred to as the "DV law") was enacted in 2001. This law focuses on protection measures such as establishing Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, protecting victims, issuing protection orders, and so on. The law was amended three times in 2004, 2007, and 2013. Each amendment brought better conditions for victims. For example, the definition of DV became extended so that not only physical abuse but also psychological and sexual abuse was included; ex-spouses and partners in a *de facto* marriage were also included to be subject to protection orders and so on. Yet more changes are needed to secure the victims' safety in a real sense. According to the DV law, it is clearly stated that spousal violence constitutes a serious violation of human rights that includes criminal acts, and in this regard spousal violence is defined as "bodily harm by one spouse (illegal attacks threatening the other's life or body) or the words and deeds of one spouse that cause equivalent psychological or physical harm to the other" (Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims of 2014).

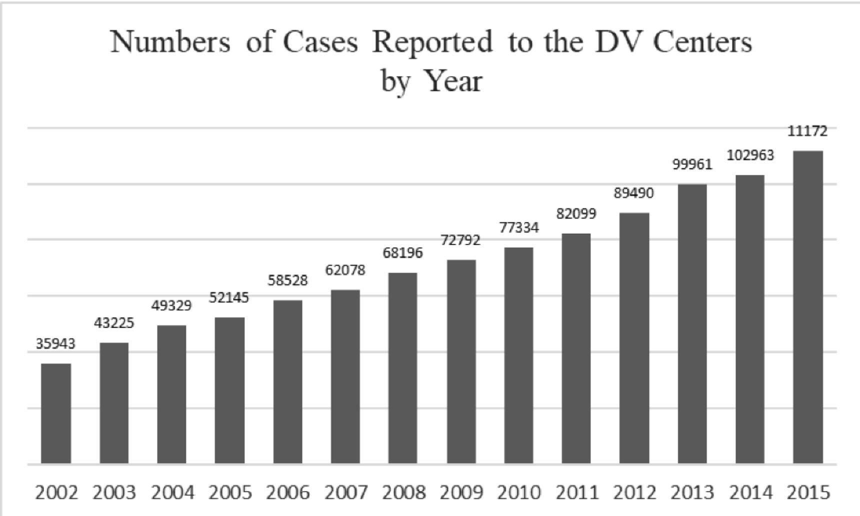
2.2 Places Where DV Victims Can Seek Support

Based on the DV law, places where victims can seek and receive support have been established, yet for some victims, these are not an option to use. A national survey (CAO/GEB 2015a) indicated that more than half of all victims did not seek help after being abused by their spouses. Among those females who sought consultation, family and/or relatives (31.9%) and friends and/or acquaintances (29.8%) were the most common places to seek help. However, agencies where victims can receive different types of support are not likely to be their choice. 1.8 percent of victims contacted the police, and 1.5 percent of victims contacted public agencies such as Spouse Violence Counseling and Support Centers.

(1) Spouse Violence Counseling and Support Centers

The Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers (hereinafter referred to as "DV Centers") stipulated in Article 3 of the DV law are places where victims can seek help from the local government. Women's Counseling Offices and other facilities such as Child Guidance Centers, municipal welfare offices, and public health centers in prefectures and cities serve as DV Centers and there are now 279 DV Centers in total throughout Japan (CAO/GEB 2018). The number of DV Centers and their users has increased (see Figure 1) as the DV law was amended. The DV Centers were originally only able to set up in prefectures, but now facilities in cities can also serve as DV Centers. The centers provide the following services to prevent violence from spouses and protect victims: (1) consultation and introduction of relevant organizations; (2) providing counseling; (3) assuring safety in case of an emergency and providing temporary protection for victims and their accompanying family members; (4) providing information and other forms of support that promote the self-reliance of victims; (5) providing information regarding the use of the protection order system and other forms of support; and (6) providing information regarding the use of facilities where victims may reside and receive protection and other forms of support. In the fiscal year 2015, the DV Centers received 111,172 cases (34,072 cases were visits, 72,246 cases were phone calls, and 4,854 cases were by other means), of which 98.2 percent were from female victims (CAO/GEB 2017). Victim advocates in the DV Centers play an important role in victim recovery. They provide information on resources to ensure the victims' safety; assistance and encouragement to help rebuild the individual's life; and, on top of that, they relieve victims from their isolation during and after the abusive relationships (Iwamoto *et al*. 2017: 53–64).

Figure 1: Numbers of the Cases Reported to the DV Centers by Year



Source: CAO/ GEB 2017.

For those who want to escape from their offenders, temporary protection shelters are available. Women's Counseling Offices, which serve as DV Centers, are not only open to those with DV issues (38.1% [31,956 people] of all users), but also to those with different issues such as family conflicts and economic problems. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare reported that 4,577 females and 5,117 accompanied children used the temporary protection shelters for a period of about two weeks. 85.1 percent of the users experienced violence at the hands of family members and/or intimate partners (72.7% experienced violence from a husband; 7.9% from children, parents, and other family members; and 4.5% from unmarried intimate partners) (MHLW 2017).

(2) Victim Support Centers by Private Sector Agencies

While DV Centers are run by local governments, there are other types of organizations,that are run by the private sector such as non-profit organizations. They constantly contact the victims so that they have a better understanding of the victims and their situations. Unlike public sector agencies, which are vertically structured and tied by laws and systems, NPOs can be flexible and respond to victims' needs (Iwase 2009: 22–31). Currently, 125 private shelters are recognized by local governments (CAO/GEB n.d.) but often face some difficulties. There are some organizations that had to close their services due to financial difficulties and lack of personnel. Although it is obvious that they provide fundamentally needed social resources for most victims, conditions surrounding these organizations are not adequate. More cooperation between public sector agencies and private sector agencies is urgently required (Iwase 2009: 22–31; Kainō 2013: 12–42).

An organization that plays a coordinating role is the All Japan Women's Shelter Network, which was established in 1998 as a grassroots organization with the aim of stamping out violence against women and children and assisting DV victims' recovery. It was officially registered as a non-profit organization in 2003. There are more than 100 private shelters and 76 of them have become a part of this umbrella organization (Asian Network of Women's Shelters n.d.). Their efforts have influenced the development of victim assistance for DV in Japan. They have held their annual symposium since 1998, where all service providers get together and discuss current issues regarding DV victims. The first symposium was held under the title "The Spread Shelter Movement," and their movement for creating a law and support centers for DV victims led to the enactment of the DV law in 2001 and later amendments to it (Kondo 2007: 9–16).

Moreover, the Yorisoi Hotline, a contact point that victims can reach to talk about their personal struggles, has also been a helpful tool for victims. It was originally created as a 24-hour hotline in October 2011 to support victims in the affected areas after the Great East Japan Earthquake (Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures) and it has operated with government subsidies since March 2012. It is a free 24/7 hotline that accepts phone calls from people struggling with poverty, suicidal thoughts, being a sexual minority, DV, and sexual assault. The service has also been expanded to people who don't speak Japanese. However, it is clear that there are not enough lines available for people who wish to use this service. Though there were more than 11,060,000 calls in total in the fiscal year 2015, only about 250,000 calls were connected to counselors, and 4.9 percent of these calls were from people who wanted to talk about DV and sexual assaults (SISC 2016). In other words, there are many DV victims who cannot reach this service even if they try to seek help by phone.

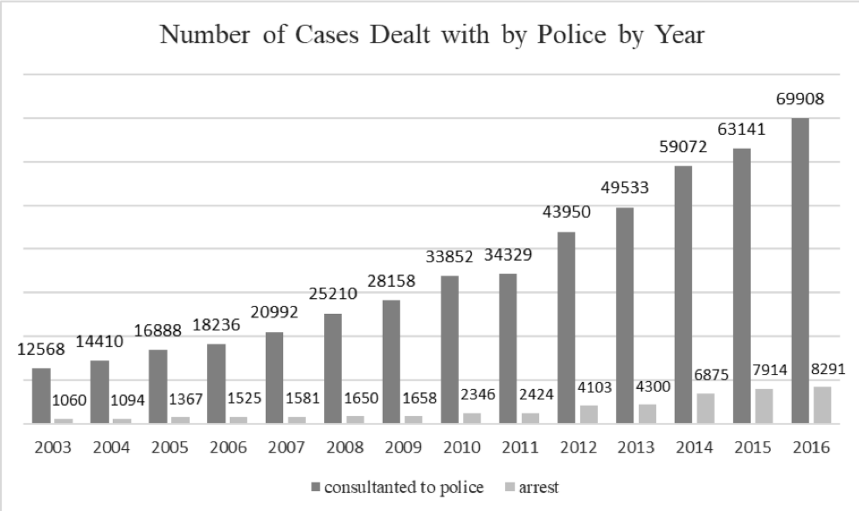
Although various types of victim support by both public and private sectors are available, there is no system offered by public-sector agencies yet to provide guidance to victims who are passive. For example, victims who seek help with the police have to decide by themselves whether they want temporary protection and to file a claim (Iwase 2010: 115–132). Unless victims seek support, it is difficult for them to receive available assistance and as a result, many victims are prone to becoming isolated. On top of that, the existence of such support centers is not well known by the public. A recent national survey (CAO/GEB 2015a) shows that only 32.4 percent of Japanese people are aware that there is a place where they can consult someone about DV. The result of the same survey conducted six years ago showed that 29 percent of people knew about victim support, which indicates that public awareness has not improved much.

(3) Police

Based on Article 8.2 of the DV law, the police have to provide assistance to victims who seek help so as to prevent their further victimization. For most of the victims, escaping safely from their offenders is a primary concern. Even if victims flee from violence, some offenders try to find their victims' whereabouts. If someone is missing, his/her spouse can file a report to the police. A missing person's report is a procedure to request the police to search for the missing person. In order to prevent offenders from chasing victims, victims can request a special response from the police for a missing person's report that is submitted by their DV offenders. Article 26.2 of the Regulation on Activities Regarding Detection of Missing Persons sets the exception of not disclosing the whereabouts of the missing person: if the missing person is a victim and the notifier is a DV offender, the offender would not be notified about the detection of a missing person unless the victim agrees to it when contacted by the police. If victims make this request before offenders file the report, the offender's report will not be received by the police. On the other hand, if violence is reported by victims after the offender filed a missing person's report, the police would not disclose finding the victims even if they do find them.

Another assistance that can be provided by the police is enrolling in the registration system for emergency call notification. By registering victims' phone numbers, address, and details of their previous concerns, police officers are able to quickly recall the victims' history and current situation, and their arrival time to these victims is shortened when emergency calls are made by the victims. In 2016, the National Police Agency (2018) reported 69,908 cases where victims consulted the police about their physical abuse and life-threatening experiences. Eighty-five percent of these victims were female and their ages were from their twenties to their forties (twenties: 22.8%, thirties: 29.4%, forties: 24.8%). Furthermore, 69.2 percent of the victims were still in a marital relationship.

Figure 2: Number of Cases Dealt with by Police by Year



Source: National Police Agency (2018).

Assistance to 21,271 cases was provided based on victims' requests. Among them, instructing them on measures to protect themselves was 32.3 percent of cases (6,868 cases), request for a special response to a missing person report was 12.3 percent (2,615 cases), advice on negotiating to prevent victimization was 5 percent (1,071 cases), contacting the offenders for negotiation was 4 percent (8,383 cases), use of police facilities as a place to negotiate with offenders was 1.7 percent (386 cases), and other instances, including the emergency call notification registration system was 40 percent (8,513 cases). Further services that the police provided to the victims were the rental of security devices and connecting them to relevant organizations and patrols. Lastly, there were 8,291 cases of arrests which included two cases of murder and 100 cases of attempted murder. As Figure 2 shows, the number of DV cases that the police deal with has been increasing from year to year.

(4) Municipalities

Residence registry is the official record that shows one's address and can be obtained from the city hall by a person who is registered as living in the same household. When moving to a different place, one must register the move. However, victims who are escaping from offenders, and therefore need to hide their whereabouts for their safety, can apply for support measures in the Basic Resident Register (MIC, n.d.). Municipalities, which receive the victims' applications, determine the necessity of the support measures based on the record of victims consulting the police or DV Centers. If their application is approved, the offender's access to this information would be restricted. This support measure is ended after one year unless it is requested again by the victims. While these support measures provide some protection of the registered information, lawyers advise registering with an address that is safe to be known to the offenders, if the risk of being harmed by the offenders is high. There is always a risk that a residence registry is released by human error, or that a municipality would not refuse to release it to the offenders' attorney if they requested it as an *ex officio* (Hasegawa, Sato and Kani 2014: 63; Kojima 2014: 224–226).

2.3 Protection Orders

In response to a victim's petition, protection orders are issued to protect victims from further violence by their offenders (Article 8.2 of the DV law). The DV law regards violence as not only physical violence but also the words and deeds that cause equivalent psychological or physical harm to victims; however, victims who were sexually and psychologically abused by their offenders are ineligible to file a petition. To put it another way, only victims who were physically abused or whose lives were threatened can file a petition, and they have to prove that they would have a continuously high risk of being victimized in the future. Furthermore, victims who sever a marital relationship with offenders can only file based on the violence suffered during their marriage, but not violence suffered after the divorce (Akita District Court n.d.). As prerequisites, victims must consult either the police or the DV Centers about their victimization. If such consultations are not made, a notarized affidavit must be made explaining their victimization and claiming the risk of further victimization.

Protection orders consist of the following two types: (1) where offenders are prohibited from approaching the victim at the victim's domicile or any other place where the victim stays, and from loitering in the vicinity of the domicile, workplace, or any other location normally frequented by the victim for a six-month period, 2) where offenders are requested to leave the house where they live with the victim and prohibited from loitering near the domicile for a two-month period. During this period, victims are supposed to be able to leave their old place and move to the new place safely without the risk that their offenders are going to stalk them when they find out the location of their new place. In addition to those orders, there are orders that prohibit approaching the victim's children and relatives, and those that prohibit phone calls and other behaviors for a six-month period. In 2015, protection orders were issued to 2,400 cases; 139 cases were dismissed, and 431 cases were withdrawn (CAO/GEB 2016). The average time to issue orders is 12.7 days (CAO/GEB 2015b); however, this time period needs to be shortened. According to the survey given to the DV Centers (CAO/GEB 2013: 9), 15.5 percent of the centers answered that there were cases where the order needed to be issued immediately because of the high risk of the offenders stalking the victim and subsequent violent behaviors. Once the protection order is made, the police are notified, and they contact the victim to ensure their safety, as well as contacting the offender to advise them to follow the order. Offenders who violate the protection order are punished by imprisonment with work for no more than one year, or given a fine of no more than one million yen (Article 29). The number of arrests for breaching protection orders was 104 in 2016 (National Police Agency 2017).

The creation of protection orders would save many victims, yet there are still barriers to enacting them. The main factors that make it difficult for victims to file an order are concerns about securing the victims' safety and low public recognition (Tejima 2012: 143–161). For those victims who stay in shelters, it would be difficult to leave the shelters and go to the district court to file by themselves. In fact, victims' risk increases when they try to leave their offenders, so extra caution is needed. For example, conditions of estrangement increase the risk of being killed by extremely controlling offenders in abusive relationships (Campbell *et al*. 2003: 1089–1097). According to a national survey (CAO/GEB 2015a), public awareness of the DV law is very low. About 80 percent of the population is still not aware of the DV law (not knowing the existence of the DV law (16.5%), and knowing the law but not knowing its contents (66.7%)). In addition to these points, victims gave the following reasons for not filing protection orders (CAO/GEB, 2007): fear of the offender's response (34.8%), not knowing the system of protection orders (28.1%), and not being in the right frame of mind (25.3%). Even if the victims eventually file a petition, there are still further obstacles. It has been pointed out that there are differences among prefectures in issuing the orders due to operational disparity, even though DV occurs at a similar rate in each prefecture, and offenders' risk of using violence is sometimes underestimated due to their attitude of remorse in court (Kani 2014: 94–96).

3 Characteristics of DV Family Relationships

Relationships between DV offenders and victims are very unique and complex. It is crucial to understand these relationships in order to understand the victims' struggles to leave their offenders.

3.1 Concepts Explaining Why Leaving is so Difficult for DV Victims

A concept of the cycle of violence, which was introduced by Walker (1979), is often used to understand the dynamics of DV. A common pattern of violence is experienced in most violent relationships with the cycle consisting of three phases: the *tension building phase*, the *acute battering phase*, and the *honeymoon phase*. In the *tension building phase*, minor incidents of physical and psychological violence occur, and the tension is escalating. In the meantime, victims try to reason and stop their offenders' behaviors. Then the actual violence occurs in the *battering phase*. In this phase, some victims try to take action by seeking support outside the home and deciding to leave their offenders, yet the next phase, the *honeymoon phase*, makes it difficult for the victims to end their relationships. After the violence has been carried out, offenders often express their regret and apologize in many different ways, giving victims mixed feelings towards their offenders. Throughout this process, both offenders and victims minimize the violence and often deny there is a problem. Unless victims are aware of the problem or someone intervenes in the situation, ending the relationship is hard.

Another concept that is helpful to understand why it is so difficult for victims to leave the relationship is traumatic bonding: a strong emotional attachment formed by victims in an abusive relationship (Dutton and Painter 1993: 105–120). This special attachment has two features: power imbalance and intermittency of abuse. Usually there are power differences between offenders and victims. The more power imbalance that exists, the more negative images that victims have about themselves. In romantic relationships in particular, power imbalance increases a person's power or makes them powerless. As Walker (1979) has suggested, when going through the three phases, victims receive both aversive and pleasant treatment from offenders. Under such conditions, traumatic bonding seems to become more powerful and victims are likely to become emotionally vulnerable. Even if victims finally try to leave their offenders, their fears can become reduced and their hidden affectionate attachment toward offenders can become amplified. If offenders are present with loving affectionate attitudes, which is characterized by the *honeymoon phase*, victims may decide to return to their partner due to them being less scared and the offenders fulfilling their needs.

3.2 Impacts of DV on Victims

Psychological impacts caused by DV are also obstacles for victims to end abusive relationships. A national epidemiological survey that was carried out in the US (Okuda *et al*. 2011: 959–962) revealed that DV victims have a higher risk of psychiatric disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and substance use disorder. A Japanese study (Yoneda 2009: 150–154) reported that DV victims who called at shelters had traumatic injuries and internal manifestations such as gastric pain and poor appetite, as well as psychiatric disorders. Victims with psychogenic reactions including post-traumatic disorder were 62 percent and ones with bipolar disorder were 20 percent.

A Japanese survey (CAO/GEB 2015a) indicated victims' actions upon leaving their offenders when violence was used: 8.7 percent of victims separated from their partner, 39.2 percent of victims wanted to separate but did not, and 42.2

percent of victims did not want/intend to separate from their abusers. Furthermore, more than half of the victims (63.8%) reported that they did not separate for the sake of their children. Some victims believe that they should avoid making their children worried and anxious, and avoid being a single parent; however, it is reported that exposure to violence has a negative impact on children as stated below (see 3.3 Impacts on Children). Additionally, financial worries (36.2%) and hopes that their offenders would change (21.4%) were also given as reasons for not separating from their offenders.

Even though victims face serious problems in their lives, they are less likely to have family/relatives or friends with whom they can talk or get support from (Kuzunishi and Ueno 2013: 35–46). Thus, at this critical time, social support would be an important resource for victims. Victims are likely to have less social support due to their offender's controlling behaviors and it is associated with females' negative psychological functioning. Victims with social support are clearly less depressed and traumatized (Levendosky and Graham-Bermann 2001: 171–192). More specifically, the availability of support from a group they belong to is likely to decrease symptoms of depression, and thus getting victims connected to social networks is regarded as being very important (Suvak *et al.* 2013: 455–466). For those females who were able to seek help, social support such as tangible support, appraisals of support, and a sense of belonging were associated with engagement coping, which is a form of coping that involves taking active steps to improve an individual's situation (Taft *et al.* 2007: 3–17).

Resources, including social support, are important to reduce the victims' vulnerability. People with few resources specific to their lifestyle are likely to have a higher chance of becoming victims and a lower chance of recovering if victimized (Dussich 2006). Many victims' personal struggles continue even after separating from their offenders due to a lack of resources. With regards to situations that made victims struggle in daily life after separating from their offenders, many victims reported that they did not have enough money to live on (54.9%) and that their physical and emotional conditions were not yet recovered (52.9%). These tendencies were reported in particular by victims who separated in different time frames: from less than six months to more than five years (CAO/GEB 2007). Six months after leaving a violent relationship is when females become the most psychologically vulnerable. Compared to other time periods, the victims in this period had lower confidence about their decision of leaving, showed higher temptation to return to their previous relationship, and developed trauma symptoms (Lerner and Kennedy 2000: 215–232).

A study that interviewed abused Japanese females who successfully separated (Fujita 2014: 198–207) suggested four phases for the recovery process. In the first stage, victims suppress their recognition of their victimization so as to maintain their family. Victims assume they have faults, and they have expectations of their spouses, yet this expectation turns to disappointment and they start recognizing what is happening in the next phase. The third stage involves actions and deep thinking with ambivalent emotions about leaving. Lastly, victims escape from the DV relationship emotionally and physically. They can then reestablish connections with others and regain their strength. Securing a time and place where victims can feel safe is the most important step in order to facilitate victim recovery (Herman 1992).

It is important to note that most people who have been abused remain vulnerable to further victimization. In other words, they have a high chance of becoming victims again. Studies have indicated that females' past DV experiences significantly increase the probability that they will experience violence in a future relationship, particularly with sexual violence (Coker *et al*. 2000: 553–559). Similarly, victims of sexual assault have a higher chance of becoming DV victims. About a quarter of DV victims were sexually assaulted in the past (All Japan Women's Shelter Network 2009: 11–48). Moreover, the author's own studies revealed that females who were victimized by their partners are likely to victimize their offenders and *vice versa* (Maekoya 2007: 42–49).

3.3 Impacts on Children

Children who grow up in violent families are at risk of being exposed to violence in different ways. It can be broadly classified as follows: children who witness violence between their parents; children who are abused by DV offenders; children who are abused by DV victims; and children who are not directly exposed to violence but might have a sense of discomfort.

Witnessing DV is defined as a type of psychological abuse in the Act on the Prevention of Child Abuse (Article 2.4). In 2016, 24,998 children who witnessed DV were reported to the Child Guidance Centers, which are public sector agencies for providing children's services by the police: this number accounted for 46 percent of the total cases of reported child abuse, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse (*Asahi Shimbun* 09/03/2017). A national survey (CAO/GEB 2015a) showed the possible reoccurrence of child abuse incidents in DV families. Among DV victims with children, 27.3 percent of them reported that their DV offenders also abused their children. Psychological abuse, including yelling, ignoring the children, and denying their existence was reported by 23.1 percent of them, and physical abuse including beating, kicking, and throwing things was reported by 13.8 percent. In the same survey, 45.3 percent reported that there was no violence, and 8.3 percent reported that they did not know if violence occurred against children. Similarly, another study (Tokyo Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs 2015) revealed that these children were vulnerable not only to violence at the hands of offenders but also of victims. Among victims who visited the DV center in Tokyo, 39.7 percent reported offenders' violence against children and 15.5 percent reported that DV occurred in front of the children. Furthermore, 10 percent of the victims self-reported their own violence against children.

In such circumstances, the children willingly or unconsciously play roles in their families. Cunningham and Baker (2004) have categorized these roles which are shown in Table 2. The children play their role in order to cope with their situation; yet, this involvement gives these children negative emotions such as guilt. Witnessing DV is an already traumatic experience, yet it is easy to imagine how being forced to play such roles would affect children negatively. Studies have suggested that those children exposed to DV are likely to develop both internalizing symptoms, including depression, insecurity, and posttraumatic stress disorder, as well as externalizing symptoms, including adjustment problems and aggressive behaviors (Lourenço *et al*. 2013). This tendency continues even after separating from the DV offenders. There are some cases of children who visit offenders after the parents separated due to DV. A study (Kita *et al*. 2017: 361–377) suggested that even after separating from abusive fathers, negative impacts on children were high. After six years, these exposed children were likely to have mental and behavioral health problems after visiting their fathers.

Table 2: Roles of Children Exposed to DV in Their Families

Categories	Roles
Caretaker	Children take care of younger siblings and their mothers (victims). They perform personal care and household tasks and if violence between parents happens, they protect their siblings.
Victim's Confidant	Children know and understand victim's feelings, concerns, and plans.
Offender's Confidant	Children are treated nicely by offenders, who tell them justifications of their use of violence. They might be asked to report victims' response to offenders.
Offender's Assistant	Children are asked to assist in offender's violence against their parents.
Perfect Child	Sometimes children are used as offenders' excuses for using violence against their parents (scapegoat), thus, they try to be perfect to avoid their parents being abused.
Referee	Children mediate between offender and victim parents.

Source: Self-created chart based on Cunningham and Baker (2004).

Moreover, children are likely to have negative emotions towards both parents. According to a report these children exhibited hatred and fear towards both parents and used violence themselves at home (Tokyo Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs 2015).

Furthermore, the relationship between DV and sexual child abuse by offenders has been a concern of some victim advocates. The National Association for Directors of Child Guidance Centers (2013) is one of them. Among all child sexual abuse cases reported to the Child Guidance Centers, 21.5 percent of the children seemed to have witnessed (including being a possible witness) DV between their parents. Furthermore, this phenomenon was reported by the All Japan Women's Shelter Network (2009: 11–48). Children who were exposed to DV are vulnerable to sexual child abuse by the offender, their own father. For DV victims who become powerless, it is difficult to protect their children and therefore their offenders' conduct could continue. If that is the case, unless their parents (DV victims) escape from the offender, children also continuously have to struggle.

Similar to some DV victims who repeatedly experience violence, children exposed to DV also become vulnerable to further violence. For example, being exposed to DV among their parents is associated with bullying, offending, and victimization at school, especially among girls (Baldry 2003: 713–732). Also, females who have been exposed to physical and emotional abuse from their fathers toward their mothers are at significant risk of experiencing their own DV in adulthood (Coker *et al*. 2000: 553–559). Children in DV families observe that violence can be a tool to control others in a power structure where the stronger one (mostly the fathers) controls the weaker one (mostly mothers). Children learn to use violence as a way to deal with others or to solve conflict.

4 Conclusion

This article has summarized the systems available to victims for protecting themselves, as well as the ways how victims and their children are impacted by domestic violence.

As the social awareness of DV has been raised in recent years, different systems have been developed accordingly. The DV law came into force in 2001, and some other protective measures have also become available since, but improvement is still needed. For example, regarding the use of protection orders, the protection of victims and securing their safety does not seem to be guaranteed. The average time necessary to obtain a protection order is more than ten days. Although the length of time for victims to vacate their residences was expanded to two months by the first amendment of the DV law, vacate orders have now become even less likely to be issued (Kojima 2014: 18). Therefore, more changes are needed for the next amendment. Furthermore, it has been pointed out (Human Rights Now 2013: 14–20) that courts often underestimate the offenders' violence, and relevant people/agencies such as the police and lawyers do not have enough understanding of DV. People who get involved with victims should have opportunities to receive regular training to avoid secondary victimization.

DV is a unique relationship and victims' complex emotions are probably difficult to understand for laypeople. Some people might think that if offenders use violence and victims do not like it, then the sufferers should just leave their offenders; yet, the situation is not that simple. Studies have shown that victims are exposed to real dangers and are scared by their offenders, and hesitate taking action against their offenders so as to prevent further victimization. It has also been indicated that some victims have mixed feelings: they want to leave their offenders, but at the same time, they do not want to leave due to the complex emotions towards offenders and the lack of resources. Thus, we come to understand why there are some victims who return to the offenders even after seeking support. It is especially necessary for people and institutions who are officially involved with the handling of victims to know about these characteristics.

The argumentation in this chapter has further shown that impacts on children of DV families can also be severe. Children exposed to violence are likely to develop emotional and relationship problems. Additionally, they tend to become vulnerable to further victimization. This transmission of violence can be avoided by implementing prevention measures and psychological treatment for the traumatized children of abused individuals.

Lastly, instruction for victims and public awareness must be regarded as one of the most important tools to reduce DV victimization and victims' suffering. Studies have revealed that if victims recognize their vulnerabilities and learn how to use and increase their resources, they could reduce the risks of being repeatedly abused and enhance their recovery (Dussich 2006).

It can be summarized that understanding the character of DV and its impacts on victims needs to be facilitated among the public and among institutions dealing with DV, for social support plays an important role in the victims' physical and psychological recovery.

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Germany and Japan in Comparison: Similarities and Differences of Welfare Institutions

End of the Housewife Paradigm? The Comparative Development of Work-Family Models in Germany and Japan

Yoko Tanaka

1 Emerging Family Models after the Male Breadwinner/Female Housewife Model

The male breadwinner/female housewife family model became the dominant family paradigm in many industrialized countries during the postwar period. A wealth of literature has analyzed this model that is characterized by a male head of household in a nuclear family who receives sufficient income to support a wife and children, with the wife engaging in domestic and care work without pay. The man's full-time employment is protected by social insurance programs and supported by the woman's full-time homemaking and mothering. This model—the basis of the modern nuclear private family—has also been critiqued as a combination of patriarchy and capitalism (Fraser 1994; Hirota 1979; Lewis 2001; Ochiai 2000; Takenaka 1983; Tilly and Scott 1978; Ueno 1990, 1994; Walby 1990, 1997).

Much of the scholarship on this family model has focused on its decline and the transition to alternative family models, particularly since the 1990s. According to this scholarship, the housewife model is evolving into variations of the "work/family-life balance model" (Blossfeld and Drobnic 2002; Daly 2011; Fraser 1994; Goldin 2014; Lewis 2001; Scott, Crompton and Lyonette 2010).

One such model is known as the "universal breadwinner model," "adult-worker model," or "equal double earner model." This model assumes the full integration of both men and women into the labor market over the life course and holds women to the same standards as men. It has become a political goal for most U.S. liberals and feminists, and is also reflected in the family policies of former state socialist countries. It follows a gender-neutral vision of society where responsibilities for domestic and care work, though not yet equally distributed fairly between the genders, are delegated either to market services or to state infrastructure.

A second type of family model is the "caregiver parity model," where domestic work is supported by the welfare state through family policy. This has been the political vision of most Western European countries with social-democratic leadership, despite the fact that it leaves income inequality and female labor market marginalization largely unaddressed (Lewis 2001). Although the caregiver

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_11

parity model assumes that men and women participate in the labor market as equal dual-earners, in reality the contributions of men and women to paid work and care can vary greatly. This model has led to gender-differentiated welfare systems supporting the “supplementary earner model,” whereby women’s paid labor only supplements that of their male partner. Although this model differs from full “dependency” on the husband by the “traditional” housewife, this new independence is limited as women are still dependent on their husbands (Daly 2011: 2).

A third type is the “earner-caregiver model,” “dual-earner/dual-caregiver model” or “gender equality model.” This is the model on which the new family policy in Germany is based (Fraser 1994; Gornick and Meyers 2009; Lewis 2001; Scott *et al.* 2010). In 2017 the German government proposed a “dual-earner/dual caregiver model” in its second Gender Equality Report. According to this report, the organization of paid work and (unpaid) care work should be performed by everyone regardless of gender, enabling individuals to combine paid employment and care work in equal measures during the life course. The overall objective of this model is that opportunities and social risks become more equally distributed between genders over the life course (BMFSFJ 2017). The report also refers to new family patterns that are not congruent with the standard family.

However, the discussion of alternative family models does not necessarily correspond to the actual evolution of the male breadwinner/female homemaker model. Studies have revealed that there are significant international differences and complexities in the formation and evolution of the housewife model, and issues in international comparisons warrant further research (Blossfeld and Hakim 1997; Lewis 2009; Pfau-Effinger 1999, 2004). Scandinavian countries, for example, never experienced a historical era where unpaid housewifery was the dominant social model, and neither was this the case in postwar socialist countries (Lewis 2009; Pfau-Effinger 1999, 2004). The range of the prevalence of the housewife model, as well as its decline, is surprisingly diverse, offering various pathways by which the family structure has evolved. The assumptions around the development of the housewife model and the conditions for its historical evolution require more detailed examination from an international perspective. Such examinations indicate that the development and evolution of the housewife model and work-family models vary widely between countries.

In this chapter we use a cross-national comparison of Germany and Japan to explore these basic questions: What conditions gave rise to the dominance of the housewife model, and how socially pervasive was it actually? What factors have prompted its change or preceded its evolution? To what extent has the housewife model evolved into other family models, and to what extent does it remain unchanged? Toward what kind of alternative family models is the housewife model evolving, or is it even evolving at all?

In addressing these questions, this paper examines the historical evolution of the housewife model in detail, asserting the importance of the socioeconomic conditions through a comparison of Germany and Japan. These two countries are taken up as case studies because they provide relevant examples of societies where the housewife model was historically dominant in the post-war period and has only recently begun to decline. Although comparative studies are still very limited, Germany (and the former West Germany) and Japan show an astonishing resemblance in respect to the former ascendency of the housewife model and its decline in spite of their geographical distance (Gottfried and O'Reilly 2004). The trajectories of these two countries, both of which have retained the housewife model, reveal how postwar institutions and norms have endured in spite of changing socioeconomic conditions.

In addition to their commonalities, this study also reveals a significant difference in the trajectories of current family models. This distinction is not as visible in state-sponsored family policies, but rather is seen in institutions of employment and workplace practices. While much of the existing literature has focused on state welfare policies, this analysis reevaluates the importance of employment structure and workplace norms.

Finally, the remarkably similar yet still divergent transformation of the postwar housewife model in Germany and Japan illustrates the essential difference in the conception of gender equality and alternative family models in both countries.

2 Conditions for the Emergence and Evolution of the Housewife Model

2.1 The Housewife Model in Male-Dominated Economies

First of all, it should be noted that in both Germany and Japan the housewife model emerged from a particular historical situation where husbands were wealthy enough to independently support their families. At first this model was limited to the upper and middle classes, but it gradually became widespread, particularly during and after the economic miracle, or the high economic growth period after the Second World War.

In Germany, the housewife emerged among the upper and middle classes at the end of the 18th century and expanded to middle class bourgeois families in the 19th century (Frevert 1986; Himeoka and Kawagoe 2009; Kocka 1996; Saito 2007). In Japan, the housewife model of the upper classes also became dominant in the middle classes by the end of the 19th century, eventually expanding into the upper strata of the working classes by the beginning of the 20th century (Chimoto 1990; Yazawa 2009).

The housewife model, which originally emerged among a limited social circle, became the dominant family model during the high economic growth period after the Second World War (Frevert 1986; Goldin 1994; Mayer and Schulze 2009; Milz 1994). Male employees, particularly in the growing manufacturing industries, became the primary engine of economic development. In both

Germany and Japan, these years of high economic growth saw even working-class families, where wives and mothers formerly had to engage in manual labor outside the home or do piecework at home to support the household, gradually begin to adopt the housewife model as the husband's income increased and the standard of living improved (Chimoto 1990, Himeoka and Kawagoe 2009; Kaufmann 1995; Sommerkorn 2002). In spite of regional differences, the housewife became the idealized image of the new modern family and prevailed as the new dominant social norm until the end of the economic growth period (Kimoto and Nakazawa 2012; Lauterbach 1991; Nave-Herz 2002; Takenaka 1989).

Both Germany and Japan shared the following social condition leading to the widespread adoption of the housewife model: economic growth based on the male-dominated manufacturing industry. The development of well-paid jobs for men made housewifery economically feasible in both countries. Economic growth and the concurrent development of the male-dominated manufacturing industry were some of the most important determinants in the spread of the housewife model.

After industrialization, the heavy industrial sector became the primary economic engine in both Germany and Japan. In this sector, jobs required physical strength, long-term training, and skill acquisition. This led to relatively favorable labor conditions, adequate income, workers' long-term commitment to firms, and a predominantly male workforce. In part due to the influence of labor unions, workers came to enjoy higher incomes along with employment benefits and social insurance, enabling them to provide sufficient livelihood for all family members (Gordon 1988; Hyodo 1971; Kocka 1969; Tanaka 2001).

This male breadwinner model was limited to a social minority at the beginning of the 20th century, but it spread widely after the Second World War, particularly during the "economic miracle" years when the manufacturing industry, with its male-dominant labor unions, became the main economic pillar in both countries (Gordon 2017; Hagemann 1995; Hausen 1997, 2000). This relatively stable, long-term male employment with improved earnings and benefits in the manufacturing industries provided the economic basis for the development of the "male breadwinner" and "housewife" model.

This model contributed to gender inequality in both West Germany and Japan. As manufacturing industries required more male labor in the workplace, growing opportunities for higher education and vocational training were provided to men, which created an economic basis for a social consciousness of perceiving men as being superior to women. At the same time, traditional forms of female labor, such as independent self-employment, agricultural work, and home piecework gradually decreased in the postwar period. With the improved household conditions brought about through their husbands' work, more and more women devoted their time to unpaid housework and caring for family members rather than engaging in paid labor (Frevert 1986; Hamaguchi 2015; Iwakami 2010; Kumazawa 2000; Miyashita and Kimoto 2010; Ochiai 1994; Omori 1990; Trappe *et al*. 2015; Takahashi 1983).

As a result, male employment was shaped by the so-called normal, regular, or standard work, called *Normalarbeitsverhältnis* in German and *seishain* in Japanese (Mückenberger 1986). The concept of the female homemaker as the full-time housewife became a new social ideal complementary to the regular male worker, called *Vollzeithausfrau* in German and *sengyō shufu* in Japanese.

This gender division developed quite similarly in both countries and retained a long-lasting influence on institutional structures and policymaking, particularly in tax and social security systems. It has also continued to influence social consciousness as an internalized norm. Discourses on a mother's duty to raise young children by herself, particularly children under three years old, have a lasting impact in both countries; indicated in terms such as *Rabenmutter* (literally "raven mother," a derogatory term for a mother who works outside the home) in Western Germany and *sansaiji shinwa* (literally "the myth that the mother must take care of the child until the age of three") in Japan. This belief is still common among the older generation, although it has been losing ground in both countries since the 2000s.

2.2 Structural Changes to the Male-Dominated Economy

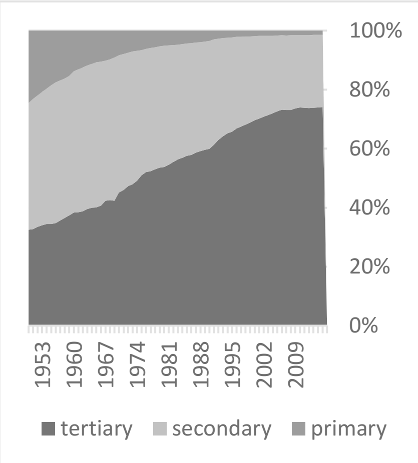
Ironically, the socioeconomic foundation upon which the housewife model was based began to erode even while the model prevailed as a norm in society. The conditions giving rise to the housewife model—a manufacturing-based industry and a male-dominated high-growth economy—have begun to decline. Although these long-term socioeconomic structural changes have been gradual and therefore often remained unnoticed, they can be identified as the most critical factors for the evolution of the housewife model.

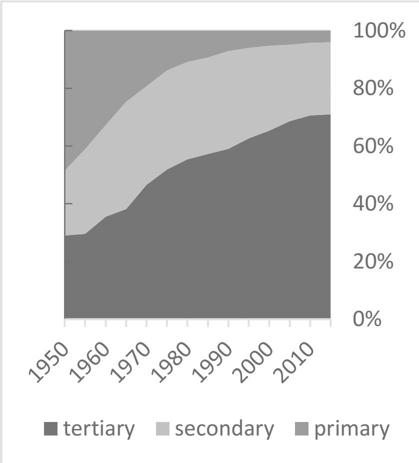
The first element is the transformation of economic structures from the manufacturing industry to the service industry (Figure 1 and 2). Male-oriented employment continues to decrease in both countries, while the service sector is recruiting more female labor. Although manufacturing remains firmly entrenched as the competitive core economic sector in both countries, lower employment rates have been eroding the basis of the "male breadwinner model."

The second element of structural change is women's higher education, which has weakened previous male privileges in the labor market.

Figures 3 and 4 show the number of men and women who have received university education, including at two-year "junior colleges" in Japan and three-year vocational colleges in Germany. In Germany, the number of female university graduates surpassed male graduates in 1995, and this surplus has continued until today. In Japan the number of female graduates, including from universities and two-year "junior colleges," surpassed that of male graduates in 1989, although the number of female graduates from four-year university programs has not yet reached that of men.

Figure 1: Industrial Structure in Germany, 1950–2015
Figure 2: Industrial Structure in Japan, 1950–2015



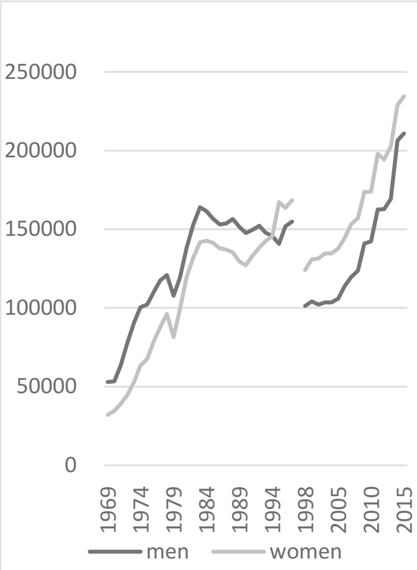


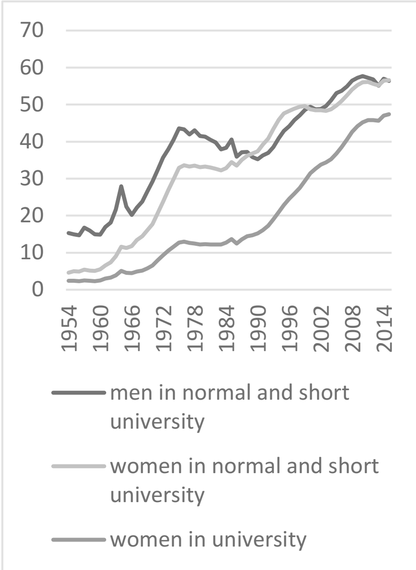
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis, Ergebnisse der Erwerbstätigenrechnung im Rahmen der Volkswirtschaftlichen Gesamtrechnungen.
Source: e-Stat, National Census.

This means that close to 50 percent of the labor market for university graduates has come to be occupied by women. Corporations can no longer refrain from making use of the female workforce, and gender differences in educational levels as well as in professional competence have disappeared in both countries. The conditions that facilitated the rise of the housewife model, such as limited educational and employment opportunities for women, almost entirely disappeared after the 1990s in both countries, and female employment rates steadily increased as a result (Figure 5).

The period between 1971 and 1984 saw the lowest ratio of female employment in West Germany, with only 46.3 percent of women engaging in wage labor in 1970, and only 46.9 percent in 1984. In West Germany, the housewife model was especially dominant during the 1970s and until the middle of 1980s. In Japan, the lowest ratio of wage-earning women was recorded at 49 percent in 1975. After that, it continued to increase gradually. In West Germany, the housewife model was more pervasive than in Japan until 1990. After unification, the higher female employment rate in East Germany increased the ratio so that it exceeded that of Japan, and by 2015 it was at 70 percent.

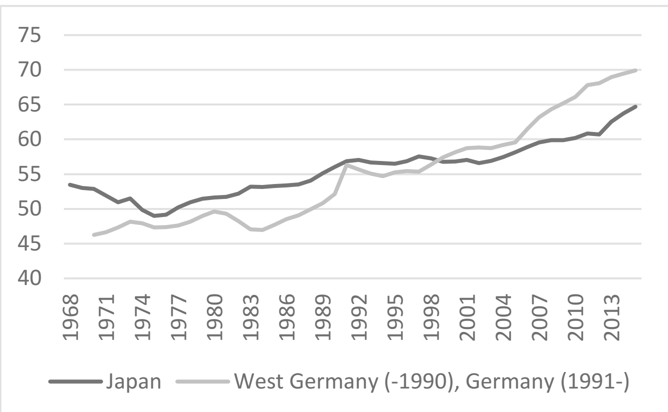
Figure 3: University Graduates in Germany, 1969–2015
Figure 4: University Graduates in Japan, 1954–2015





Note: Including short-term universities for applied sciences. The decrease of numbers in 1998 is due to the change of the definition of 'graduates'.
Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch, Schulentlassene, Schulabgänger, Schulabschluss.
Note: In German three-year vocational colleges the ratio of male students exceeds that of women, whereas in Japan two-year "junior colleges" are mostly attended by female students.
Source: Ministry of Education/Education and Science, Shingakuritsu.

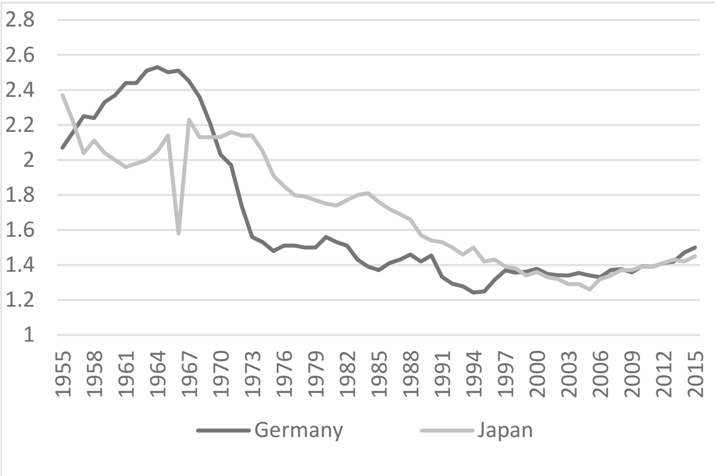
Figure 5: Female Employment Rate in Germany and Japan, 1968/70–2015



Source: OECD.

Another important phenomenon emerged concurrently in these two countries alongside the changes in employment structures. As Figure 6 shows, the birthrate has continued to decrease in both countries. In Germany the decline began in 1966, dropping below the population replacement rate in 1970, and falling to a record-low rate of 1.24 in 1994. In Japan the decline began in 1967, falling to a record-low rate of 1.26 in 2005. The birthrates of Germany and Japan have been almost identical across these two decades, currently rebounding at around 1.4 and 1.5. However, this is still far below the population replacement level and will eventually result in the long-term shrinking of the population and the labor force.

Figure 6: Birthrates in Germany and Japan, 1955–2015



Source: OECD Family Database.

There are various explanations regarding the causes of these declining birthrates, including the inclination of women to continue working, women's higher expectations towards men as marriage partners, the relatively low ratio of cohabitation outside legal marriage, the lower fertility of older married couples, and an increasing number of single adult children living with their parents (Atoh 2007; Obuchi and Takahashi 2004; Tsutsui 2015; Yamada 1999, 2007). Considering these elements, the low birthrate is fundamentally due to postponed marriage and childbirth owing to the relatively increased economic independence of young women due to higher education and improved labor market opportunities. Young women remain single for longer periods of their adult life in order to find a good partner or a good job, before eventually settling down to marriage and childbearing. The rapidly aging society, which is a result of these changes in fertility behavior, has triggered a sense of demographic crisis in both governments.

2.3 Political Reactions to the Structural Changes

In this context of analogous socioeconomic changes, both countries reacted to the fertility crisis with similar political measures. Both governments recognized the following two necessities: (1), to support working women as they became important for the labor force, and (2), to promote childbirth in order to avoid the problems of an aging society.

These apparently contradictory goals were to be resolved with policies designed to support working mothers by improving work-life balance and family-friendly environments. Supporting working mothers meant, in effect, that both governments officially abandoned the promotion of the housewife model. Recognizing the importance of both the female workforce and of childbearing at the same time, Germany and Japan launched policies to promote a new family model with working mothers as a political goal, particularly since the 2000s.

In Japan, the government began rolling out such policies in the late 1980s. Equality between men and women in the workforce was advocated in the Equal Employment Act in 1985, its revision in 1997, and the Basic Law for Gender Equality in 1999. Childcare leave for working women was introduced in 1992 as a response to increasing female workforce participation and declining birthrates. Legal revisions in 1999, 2005, 2010, and 2017 expanded childcare leave entitlements to both genders, lengthened the duration of leave from one to two years, and increased childcare allowances.

During this time the government made repeated attempts to increase the number of day nurseries with the Angel Plan (1994, 1999), and the Children and Childrearing Support Plan (2005). The Action for No Children on the Waiting List for Day Nurseries (2001, 2008) proposed increasing the number of spaces available for children in day nurseries from two million to three million. These policies were prompted by the so-called “1.57 shock” of 1989, when the birthrate fell to the lowest level in the postwar period, and the “1.26 shock” of 2005, when the birthrate fell again to the lowest level on record.

In the 2000s, additional reforms in working hours and family-friendly environments were advocated in the Plus One Countermeasure to Declining Birthrate (2002), the Act on Declining Birthrate (2003) and the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising the Next-Generation of Children (2003, 2013). In 2005, a State Minister for Gender Equality and Measures to Tackle the Declining Birthrate was appointed for the first time. Since the mid-2000s, emphasis has moved toward work-life balance policies, with the Charter for Work-Life Balance and Action Plan, as well as the Japan Strategy for Supporting Children and Family passed in 2007.

Since 1999, corporations with family-friendly policies have been receiving honors from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) with the Family Friendly Award, renamed the Equality and Reconciliation Award in 2007.

In the 2010s, these policies were rebranded by the Abe administration as policies to counteract a “national crisis” (*kokunan*). The second Abe administration passed the Children and Childrearing Act in 2012 and Urgent Measures for Ending the Declining Birthrate Crisis as well as the “Womenomics” policy in 2013. In 2014 Prime Minister Abe called for a “a society where women can shine” and introduced the Promotion of Women’s Career Activities Act in 2015. In 2016 the Abe administration rolled out a “Work Style Reform” campaign (*hatarakikata kaikaku*), which included a reduction of working hours.

These aforementioned policies attempted to reconcile women’s participation in the paid labor force with childbirth and childrearing. In short, the government has tried to promote a working mother model, clearly abandoning the housewife model.

The German government has implemented similar policies. Germany mandated childcare leave in 1986, six years before Japan, but the birthrate continued to fall until it reached an all-time low in 1994. The Work-Life Balance Award was first issued in 1998 by berufundfamilie Service GmbH, an independent audit board funded by the Hertie Foundation. In the 2000s, the German government established “family-friendliness monitoring” with the Alliance for the Family and Local Alliances for the Family in order to monitor “family friendliness” in corporations and communities. At the same time, research centers such as the German Economic Institute (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft), the Bosch foundation, and the Bertelsmann Corporation conducted empirical research on the effects of family-conscious human resources management in the workplace. Additionally, publication of the German government’s Gender Data Report began in 2005 and the first Gender Equality Report was released in 2011.

Based on the findings of these reports, Chancellor Angela Merkel and the former Minister of Family Affairs, Ursula von der Leyen, introduced comprehensive policies to improve work-family balance beginning in 2006. Just as the seventh Family Report in 2006 proposed, new family policies were planned to include a better allocation of resources such as time, money, and infrastructure to improve work-life balance, particularly for working mothers. These policies included the promotion of flexible working hours, telecommuting, parental leave and parental allowances, more men taking parental leave, rapid expansion of daycare nurseries, and schools with longer day hours. A parental leave allowance of up to 12 months was legally mandated in 2007, as well as a partner (father) bonus of up to 2 months. In 2015, the “Parental Allowance Plus” law made the combination of part-time work and extended parental allowance possible. These innovative policies promote the increased participation of fathers and a more equal division of childrearing between partners.

In Germany the discussion around family-friendly policies accentuated the potentially positive effect of these policies on economic profitability. This point was emphasized in the 2006 governmental report Family and Economy and the Success Factor Family award, which was launched in 2008. The government stressed that these measures were also beneficial for corporations, asserting that family-friendly policies not only improve work-life balance for employees, but also work to the economic advantage of companies by promoting increased job stability, motivation, and security.

Thus, the governments of both Germany and Japan have implemented similar measures promoting work-life balance to enable mothers to engage in wage-earning work outside the home. In response to structural changes in industry, labor market, and education, both governments adopted the common policy choice of embracing the new family model of working mothers. The target was to promote both female employment and childbearing, and policies distinctly diverted from the housewife model.

So far, it can be concluded that similar changes in socioeconomic structures and gender roles took place in the post-war period and that recent political measures in Japan and Germany to cope with these changes bear similarities. Clearly, the two countries are now aspiring to the dual-earner family model.

However, in spite of these undeniable changes and new policy initiatives, the actual transition from the housewife model to the dual-earner family model of working mothers has not been straightforward. Although the increase in female labor market participation is well documented in both countries, this has not necessarily led to the abolishment of the housewife family model. There is still a critical gap between the political and legal initiatives intended to facilitate the equal dual-income earner model and the de-facto retention of the housewife model. Before drawing any conclusions, a careful examination of to what extent the housewife model has actually declined or evolved into other family models, regardless of political intent, is necessary.

3 Resembling Evolutions of the Housewife Model

3.1 More Women in the Labor Market

Germany and Japan share significant similarities in historical changes to the housewife model. First, let us confirm female labor participation rates by age group in both countries using the well-known M-curve. Figure 7 and 8 show a continuous increase in the labor force participation rate of women in their 20s–40s over the past 40 years in both countries.

Until 1990, the employment pattern in West Germany was not M-shaped, indicating that numerous women remained housewives for life after marriage. This trend changed rapidly after unification and was also influenced by the inclusion of the former East Germany, where it was more common for women to work than in the former West Germany. The dip in the new M-curve pattern for the 30 to 34 age group completely disappeared by 1998. Although the female labor participation rate was still around 10 percent lower than the male participation rate as of 2015, it is approaching it.

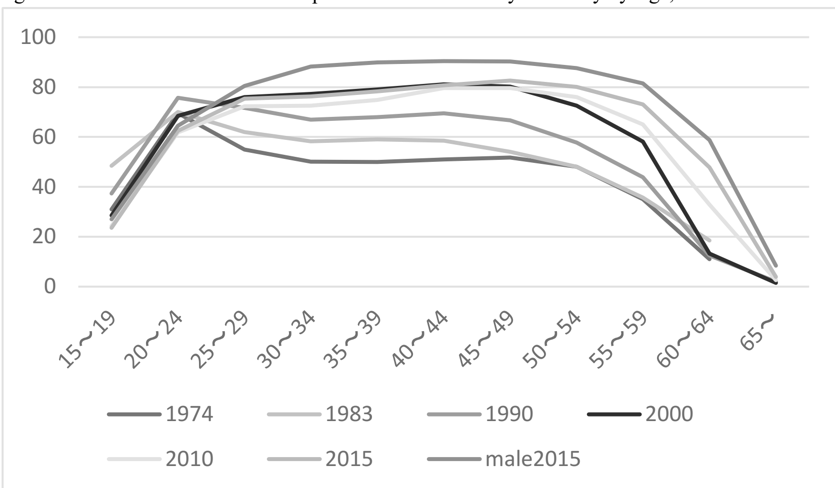
Japan's female labor participation rate has strongly retained its M-curve shape. In 1974 the dip of the M-curve was very deep, and this deep dip persisted even until 2000, after which it began to soften and became flatter by 2015.

Second, the basic household structure has accordingly shifted away from the housewife model. Figure 9 and 10 show the historical turning point in household types in both countries.

In Japan, the number of "housewife model" households, dominant during the 1980s, has continued to decrease. In 1992, the ratio of dual-earner households (*tomobataraki*) surpassed that of households with housewives. These two types of households competed for social dominance during the 1990s. However, after 2000 the number of dual-earner households increased sharply, jumping to 61.3 percent in 2015 and signaling that the housewife model had lost its preeminence. In West Germany, households with housewives were still the majority in 1984. However, dual-earner households continued to increase until they comprised 67 percent of families in 2012, while the percentage of housewife model families decreased to 22 percent.

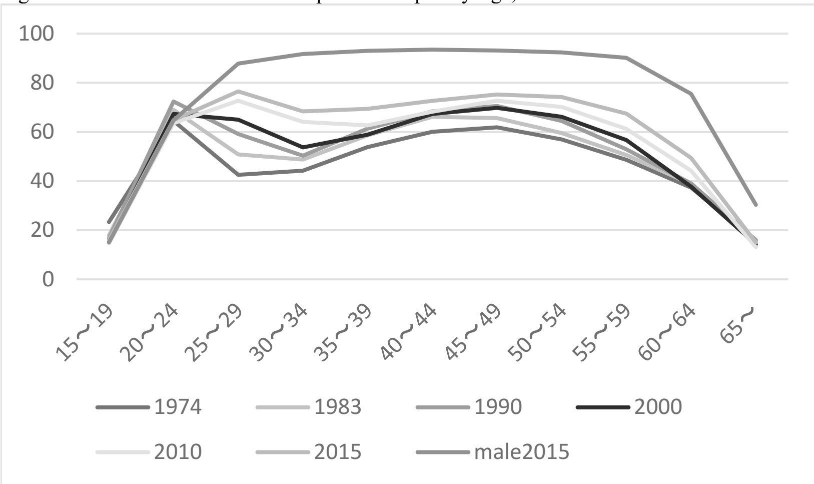
It was in 1985 in West Germany and 1992–1996 in Japan that the housewife model was surpassed by the dual-earner model.

Figure 7: Female Labor Force Participation in West Germany/Germany by Age, 1974–2015



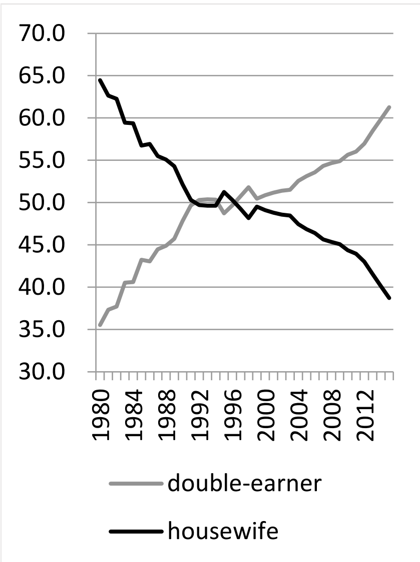
Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch, Labor Force Participation rate, GENESIS Datenbank. West Germany 1974–1990 united Germany 2000–2015.

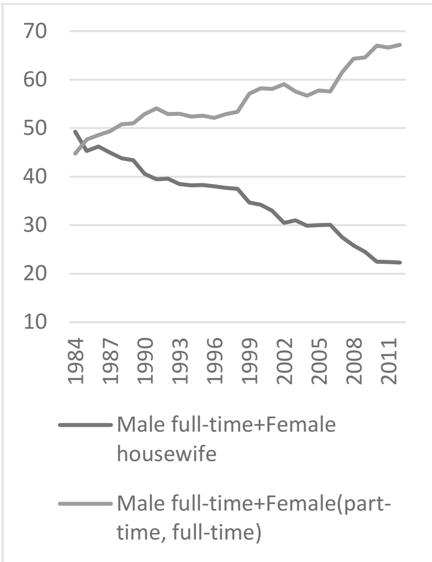
Figure 8: Female Labor Force Participation in Japan by Age, 1974–2015



Source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Labor Survey.

Figure 9: Household Types in Japan, 1980–2015
Figure 10: Household Types in Germany, 1984–2012





Source: e-Stat, Labour Particular Survey 1980 to 1999; Labour Force Survey 2000 to 2015.

Note: West Germany 1984–1990.
Source: SOEP, in: Absenger *et al.* (2014: 49).

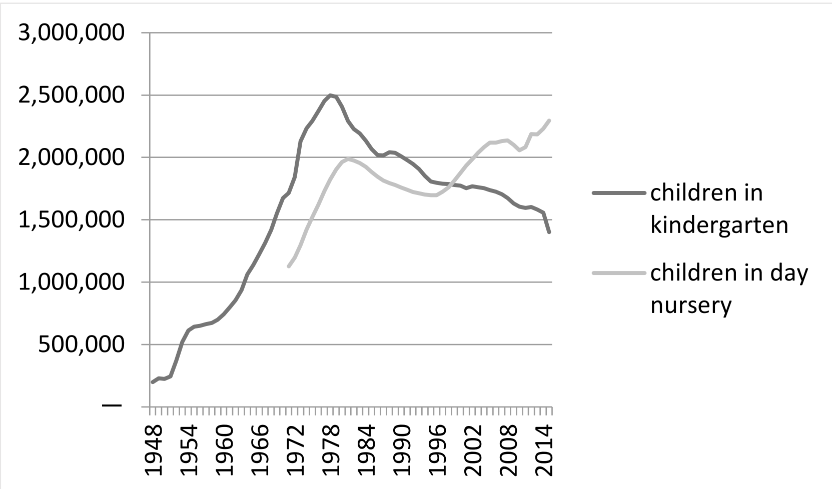
3.2 From Kindergarten to Day Nursery

Another piece of evidence which shows the evolution of the housewife model is the growing number of children attending day nurseries in both countries.

The housewife model supposes that infants and children are cared for at home by the mother. According to this model, children usually stay at home with their mother until they go to elementary school, or they may attend kindergarten (known as *Kindergarten* in Germany and *yōchien* in Japan) at the age of three years or above for a few hours in the morning. The original purpose of kindergarten was to begin educating small children prior to elementary school. Kindergartens are under the control of the education ministries and categorized as a type of preschool by the governments of both countries.

In contrast, children of families with working mothers attend day nurseries, *Kindertagesstätte (Kita)* in Germany or *hoikusho/hoikuen* in Japan. The purpose of day nurseries is to provide care for children in the absence of their mothers. Day nurseries accept younger children than kindergartens, even infants under one year old, and most children stay there until late afternoon. Day nurseries are under the control of the Ministry of Welfare and categorized as a function of welfare policy. Whether the child goes to kindergarten or day nursery reflects the position of mothers and the family model.

Figure 11: Number of Children in Kindergarten and Day Nursery in Japan, 1948–2015

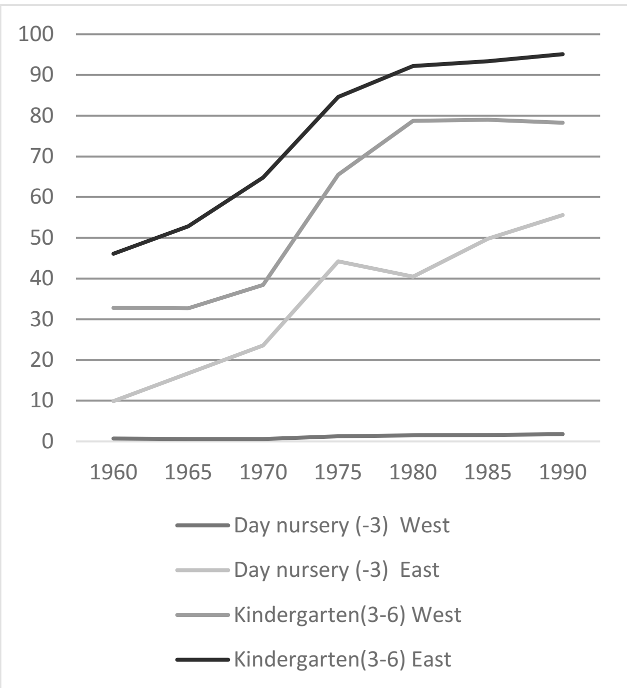


Source: Ministry of Education, Basic School Research; Ministry for Welfare and Work, Research for Social Welfare Facilities, Report on Welfare Administration, 1971–2015.

Figure 11 shows changes in the number of children in the two types of institutions in Japan from 1948 to 2015. It gradually became commonplace for Japanese parents to send their children to kindergarten during the 1960s and 1970s rather than having the mother care for them at home. The number of children in kindergartens peaked in 1979, after which it began a steady decline. On the other hand, the number of children in day nurseries also grew in in the 1970s in response to working mothers such as teachers demanding an increase in the number of available spaces in day nurseries as a part of women's labor union movements beginning in the 1960s. In 1998 the number of children in day nurseries surpassed that of children in kindergartens for the first time. This trend continued into the 2010s, which resulted in the long waiting lists for children to enter day nurseries (*taiki-jidō*) becoming a serious political issue in Japan.

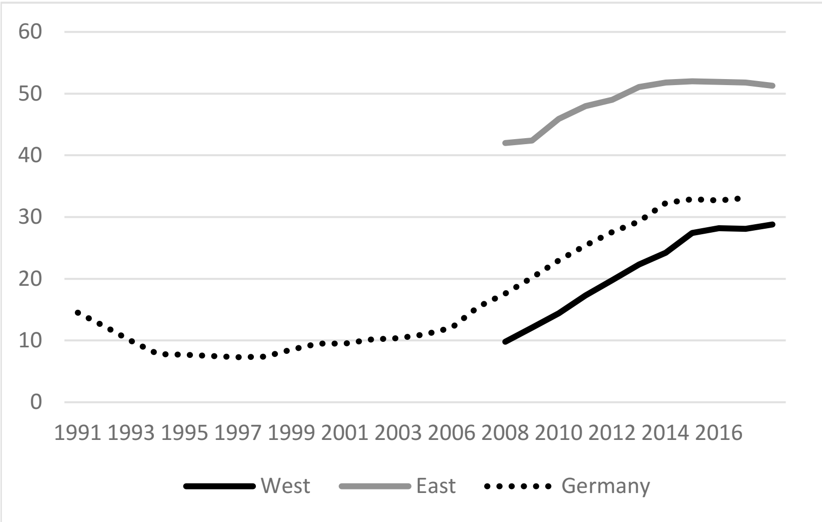
In contrast, the housewife model appears to have been more durable in West Germany than in Japan with regard to day nursery attendance. Figure 12 shows that the ratio of day nursery attendance remained extremely low until 1990.

Figure 12: Attendance Rates at Kindergarten and Day Nursery in West and East Germany, 1960–1990



Source: Braun and Klein (1995).

Figure 13: Attendance Rates at Day Nursery in West and East Germany, 1991–2017



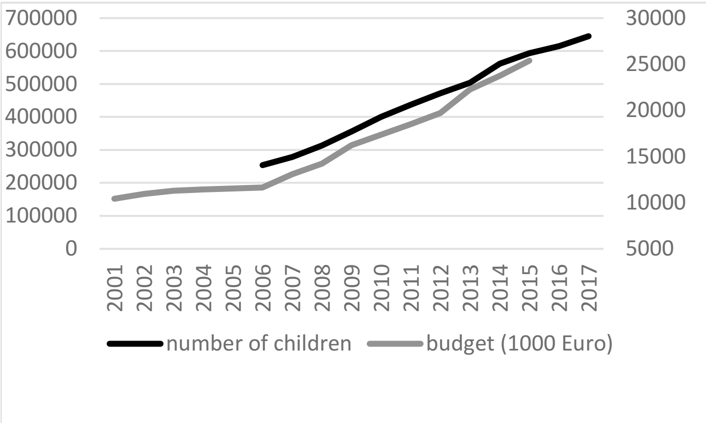
Source: Braun and Klein (1995); Statistisches Jahrbuch, Kinder- und Jugendhilfe.

Kindergarten attendance was also relatively low until the 1970s, although working mothers tended to use extra-familial childminders (*Tagesmutter*), or ask grandmothers to take care of their children (Mayer and Schulze 2009).

In contrast to West Germany, the day nursery attendance rate was high in East Germany as women were mobilized into the workforce (Geisler and Krevenfeld 2005; Helwig 1981; Trappe 1995) (Figure 13), with a ratio of 55 percent until 1990 (Mayer and Schulze 2009).

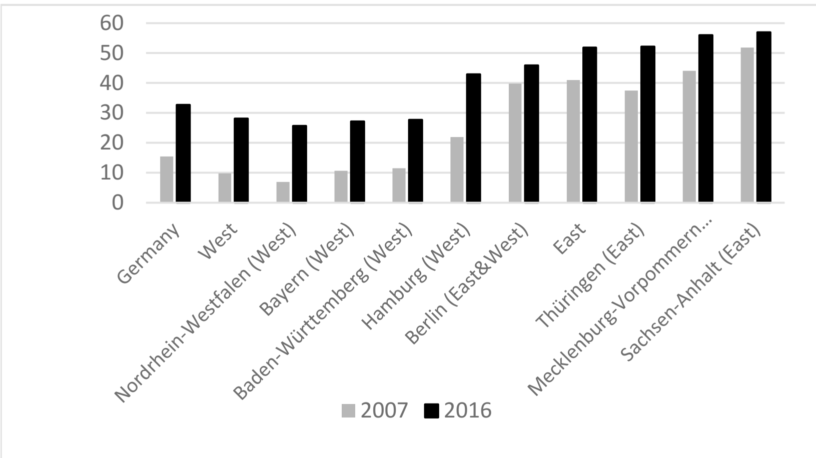
After unification, day nursery attendance in Germany soared to 14.5 percent, influenced by the higher rate in East Germany. However, the rate decreased during the next three years to 7 percent and remained at around 10 percent until 2005 (Figure 13). The situation particularly began to change after 2006, when family policies in Germany aimed to increase the number of day nurseries. As a result, the day nursery attendance rate and the budget for nursery schools are soaring (Figure 13, Figure 14). In order to compensate for the gap between day nurseries in the West and East, this investment in day nursery infrastructure was mostly intended to improve the child care situation in former West German states, such as Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, or North Rhine-Westphalia, and dramatically improved the attendance rate at day nurseries for children under three years old in these western states between 2007 and 2016 (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Budget and Number of Children in Day Nursery in Germany, 2001–2017



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis, Kinder in Tageseinrichtungen.

Figure 15: Attendance Rate at Day Nursery for Children Under 3 Years Old in Selected States and Cities in West and East Germany, 2007 and 2016



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis, Kindertagesbetreuung.

Through this more than ten-year effort, the West German postwar social norm that children should be cared for exclusively by their mothers appears to be fundamentally changing. The increase in day nurseries, particularly since the end of the 2000s, was an historical turning point for both Germany and Japan, providing the infrastructure necessary to evolve away from the housewife model.

3.3 Working Women as Single or Childless

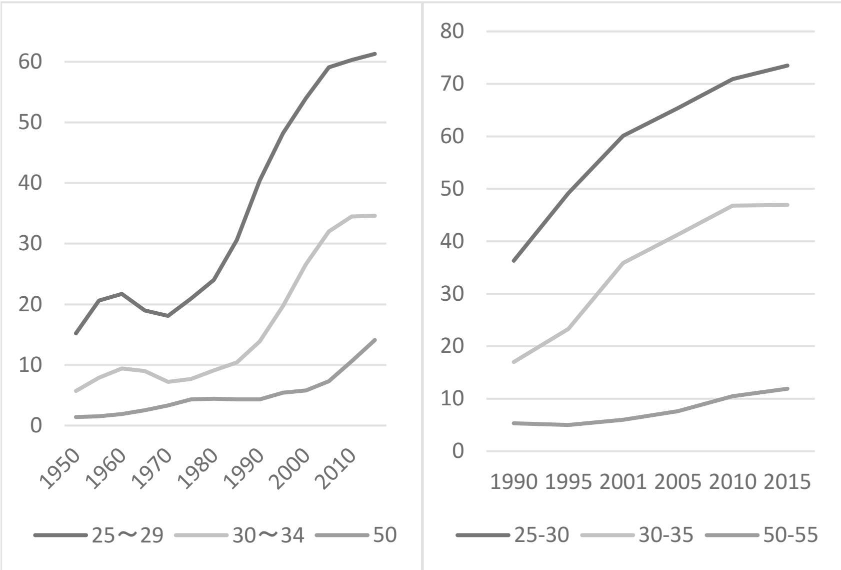
Although the expansion of the day nursery would ostensibly enable mothers to continue to work full-time while raising children, for most mothers this has not been the case. The evolution of the housewife model is more complicated than it appears. The aforementioned trends are not simply indicative of the decline of the housewife model but point to an increasing number of alternative family models in both countries.

First, one of the newly increased family models is single-person households or families with unmarried daughters. Working women aged 20 to 34 years are not necessarily married, but rather are single and either living alone or with their parents as "parasite singles" (Yamada 1999). Figure 16 and Figure 17 show the similarly growing ratio of unmarried women in Germany and Japan from 1950 to 2015 and from 1990 to 2015. As this graph makes clear, this ratio of unmarried women is growing faster in Germany than in Japan.

In Japan, the proportion of unmarried 25- to 29-year-old women increased from 18.1 percent in 1970 to 61.3 percent in 2015, while the proportion of 30- to 34-year-old unmarried women soared from 7.2 percent to 34.6 percent during the same time period. Interestingly, the proportion of unmarried women temporarily dipped in 1970 then plateaued until 1980, indicating the ascendency of the housewife model until the 1970s.

The situation in Germany has much in common with Japan. Figure 17 shows changes in the proportion of unmarried women from 1990 to 2015. The ratio of single women is even higher than in Japan: for 25- to 29-year-olds it is 73.5 percent and for 30- to 35-year-olds 46.9 percent.

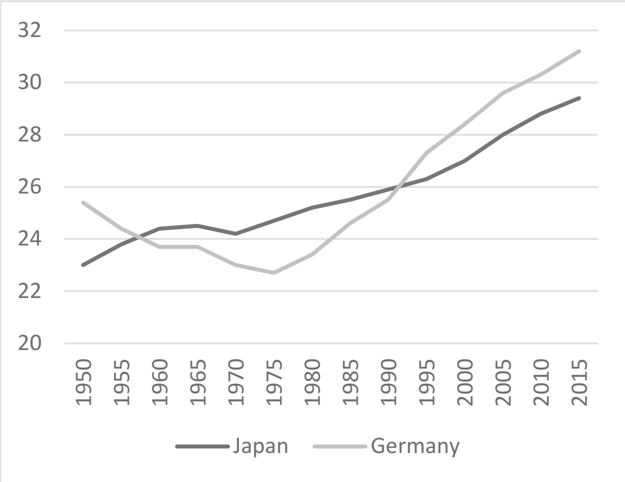
Figure 16: Ratio of unmarried women in Japan, 1950–2015
Figure 17: Ratio of unmarried women in Germany, 1990–2015



Source: Ministry of Welfare and Work, Population Dynamism Survey.
Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch, Bevölkerung nach Altersgruppen und Familienstand.

When we take a closer look at the age of first marriage in both countries, we find that the evolution of the family model in West Germany has been more dramatic than in Japan. Figure 18 shows that the average age of first marriage in West Germany actually fell after 1950, reaching its nadir in 1975 at 22.7 years old. This means that a very high percentage of young women in their early twenties married and became housewives during this time period. In 1991 the age of first marriage in Germany surpassed that of Japan, suggesting that the housewife model was more durable in West Germany than it was in Japan until the 1980s.

Figure 18: Average age of first marriage in Germany (West Germany) and Japan 1950–2015



Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch, Heiratsalter; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Population Dynamism Survey.

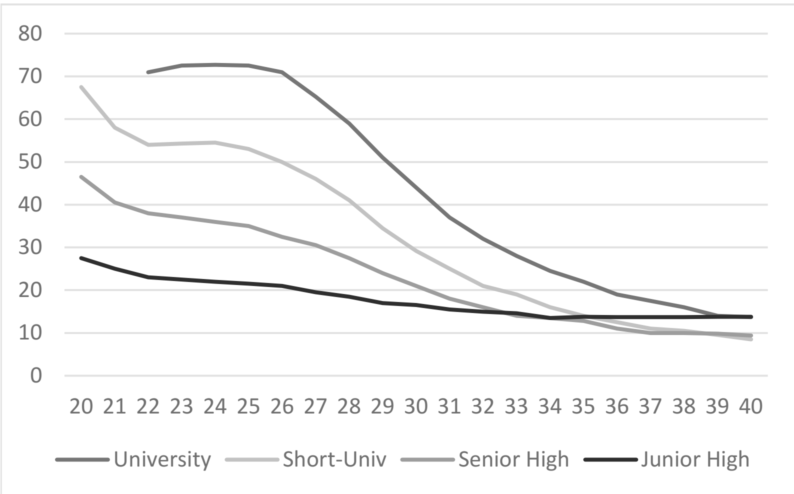
Second, the family model of couples without children has also increased. Women's growing educational achievement has resulted in not only increased singlehood, but also in the tendency of women to remain childless for a longer period, even after marriage. This phenomenon of "childlessness" occurred in both countries but received more attention in Germany (BMFSFJ 2011; Dorbritz and Ruckdeschel 2007; Hara 2009; Konietzka and Kreyenfeld 2007; Scharein and Unger 2005).

Figure 19 shows the ratio of childless married women to all married women in Japan by educational level. In 2000, 80 percent of married Japanese women with lower levels of educational achievement had a child by 26 years old, while more than 70 percent of married women with a university education were childless. University-educated women tend to delay pregnancy for their careers or enjoy the joys and freedoms of child-free living. However, increased childlessness among university-educated women is also due to the fact that many have difficulties becoming pregnant as biological fertility declines with age. In Japan, the problem of infertility has become serious, with 35 percent of couples suffering from it in 2015 (IPSS 2016).

A similar tendency exists in Germany. Figure 20 shows the ratio of childless women according to educational level and region. What is particularly striking is that women with a university education and with an Abitur[1] in the West have a significantly higher ratio of childlessness compared to women with lower levels of educational achievement—between 33 percent and 43 percent at the age of 40. This suggests that the effects of higher education on childlessness are substantial in Germany.

Thus, the delay in marriage and pregnancy, which is affected by increased levels of educational achievement, higher labor market participation rates, relative economic independence, and the feasibility of pursuing a career, has given rise to increasing numbers of alternative households: single-person households, cohabitation with parents as "parasites," and childless couples. Over the past twenty years, the choice not to have a child in one's twenties has become more common among women in both countries. The increase of these alternative family models has contributed significantly to increased female labor participation and to the flattening of the M-curve, and consequently also to declining birthrates in both countries.

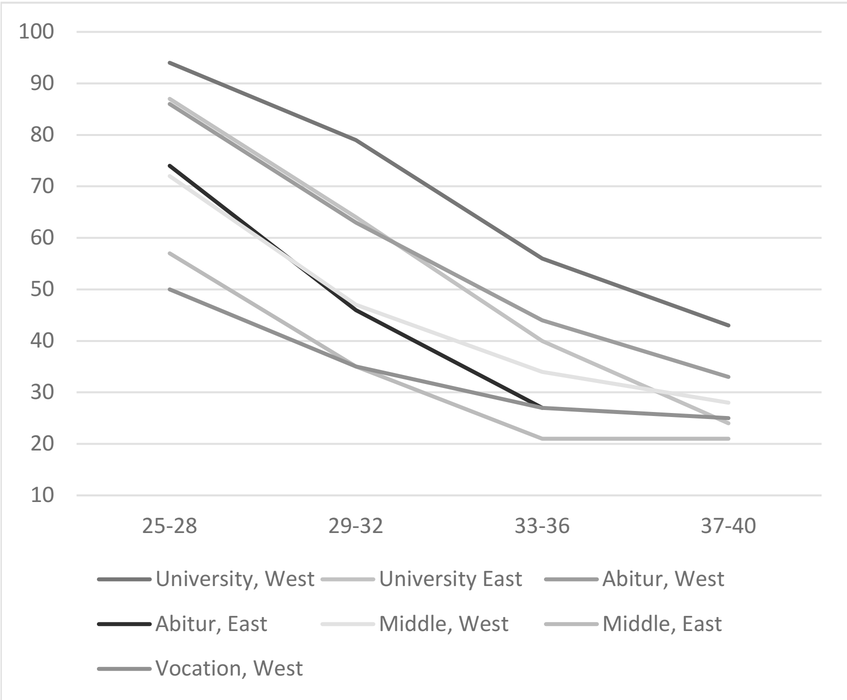
Figure 19: Ratio of Childless Wives Out of All Married Women by Educational Level in Japan in 2000



Source: Matsumura (2011: 9).

1 A qualification conferred to students who pass their final exams at the end of their secondary education, authorizing them to study any subject at any higher education institution in Germany.

Figure 20: Ratio of Childless Women by Educational Level in Germany in 2003



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2005: 812).

3.4 Mothers Still Leaving the Workforce

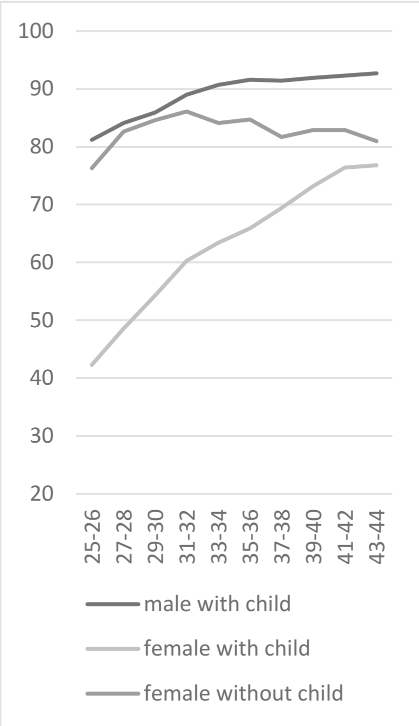
We have to ask, then, what about the women who are having children? In both Germany and Japan, in spite of various pro-family policies and the increased ratio of dual-earner families, having a child remains a significant impediment to women's participation in the labor force. This is due to not only the so-called motherhood wage penalty, but also to the more critical fact that women with children tend to quit their jobs.

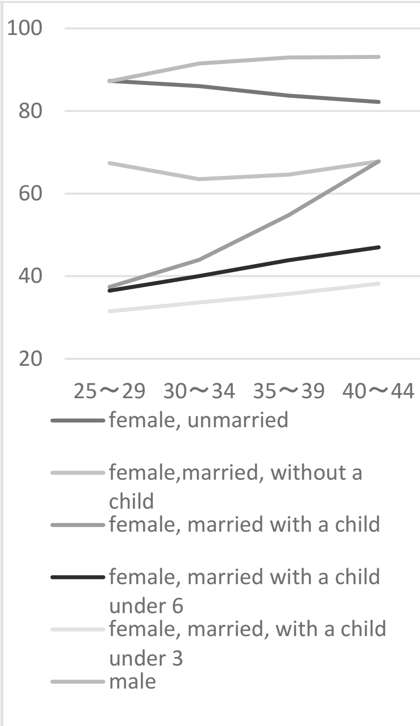
Figures 21 and 22 illustrate the differences in male and female labor participation rates for individuals with and without children of the 25- to 44-year-old age group in Germany and Japan in 2013. In Germany, the labor participation rate of women with children is much lower than of those without children. Among the 25- to 26-year-olds, the labor force participation rate of women with children was 42.3 percent, while the participation rate of women without children was 76.3

percent. The rate for 35- to 36-year-old women with children was only 65.9 percent in contrast to the 84.7 percent rate of childless women and the male labor force participation rate of 91.6 percent.

In Japan, the difference in labor force participation rates between women with and without children is as large as it is in Germany (Figure 22). The labor force participation rate for 25-year-olds in 2013 was 87.3 percent for unmarried women, while it was only 36.5 percent for women with children. This ratio increases to 54.8 percent for 35- to 39-year-old women, in contrast to 83.7 percent for unmarried women and 93 percent for men, whose figures are almost the same as those in Germany. For women with children under three years old, the labor force participation rate in Japan continues to remain low at around 30 percent.

Figure 21: Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex and Parental Status, 25–44 Years Germany 2013
Figure 22: Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex and Parental Status, 25–44 Years Japan 2013





Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Microcensus. In: WSI Gender Daten Portal 2014.
Source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Labour Force Survey.

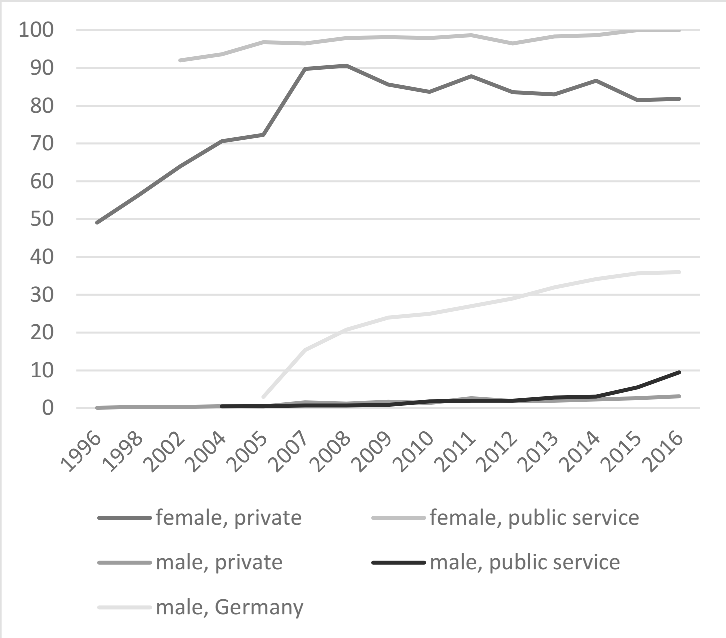
This low rate of mothers' labor force participation may seem odd when considering the institutionalized parental leave and parental allowance systems in both countries. In West Germany, maternal leave was established in 1979, parental leave was established in 1985, parental time or *Elternzeit* was introduced in 2000, and conditions for working parents continue to improve. In Japan too, childcare leave for mothers was established in 1975, parental leave in 1992, and conditions continue to improve with longer leave and increased childcare allowances. In summary, both countries established similar parental support systems about 40 years ago.

One difference between the two countries, however, exists in the ratio of workers actually taking parental leave. Among female public servants in Japan, parental leave is taken almost universally at rates of over 90 percent to 100 percent, similar to rates of German women employed in both the private and public sector. However, the utilization of parental leave by women in private corporations in Japan was rather limited until 2007 but has since increased to over 80 percent (Figure 23).

Another difference between the two countries can be seen in the ratio of parental leave taken by fathers. In Germany after 2007, parental leave and allowance was extended with bonus months, enabling a parent's partner, mostly fathers, to take two months of parental leave with a parental allowance. This had the effect of prompting fathers to take parental leave as well. Since then, the ratio of fathers taking parental leave has continuously increased. In Japan, despite various promotional campaigns by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and NGOs such as Fathering Japan, the rate of fathers taking parental leave has remained at 3 percent, a peak it reached in 2016. Due to prompting by the government, 9.5 percent of fathers in public service on a national level took parental leave in 2016. But this is still far below the German level, where the ratio of 3 percent in 2005 soared to 36 percent by 2016, an increase surely influenced by changing social and corporate practices.

The biggest difference, however, is that parental leave in Japan is not used by mothers as often as policymakers had expected. As Figure 24 shows, the ratio of new mothers who utilized the parental leave system and continued working was only 8 percent during 1990–1994 and 15.3 percent during 2000–2004, before finally increasing to a mere 28.3 percent during 2010–2014. This means that more than 70 percent of new mothers did not use this system, despite the fact that the system was designed to help them continue working. Although the ratio of women taking parental leave is steadily increasing, it is not as high as policymakers had supposed.

Figure 23: Ratio of Utilized Parental Leave in Japan 1996–2016, Germany (Male), 2005–2016

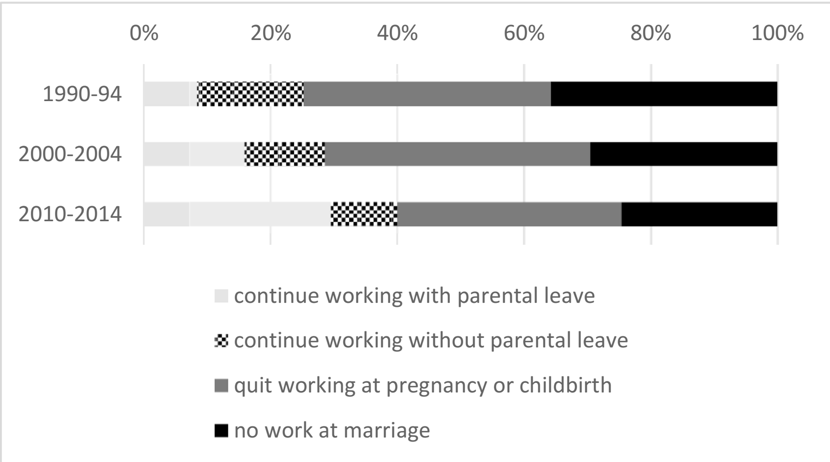


Note: Only father's ratio is shown for Germany.
Source: National Personnel Authority, Survey on Parental Leave for National Public Servant; Survey on Work Life Balance Institutions, MWHL, Basic Survey for Female Employment 2002–2006; Statistisches Jahrbuch.

On the other hand, the ratio of women who quit their jobs due to pregnancy and childbirth actually increased from 37.7 percent in 1990–1994 to 40.3 percent in 2000–2004, and then to 42.9 percent in 2005–2009. There were a number of women, moreover, who quit their jobs before or at marriage, or who did not have jobs to begin with. These women are housewives from the beginning of their marriages, although the ratio of these women has been decreasing.

Of all the women working before they had children, it is worth noting that more than 60 percent quit their jobs due to childbirth without utilizing parental leave during all periods from the 1990s until today. Although the numbers of women taking parental leave have certainly risen in Japan, especially since the 2010s, the number of women who do not utilize parental leave remains substantial.

Figure 24: Situation of Mothers After Childbirth in Japan, 1990–2014



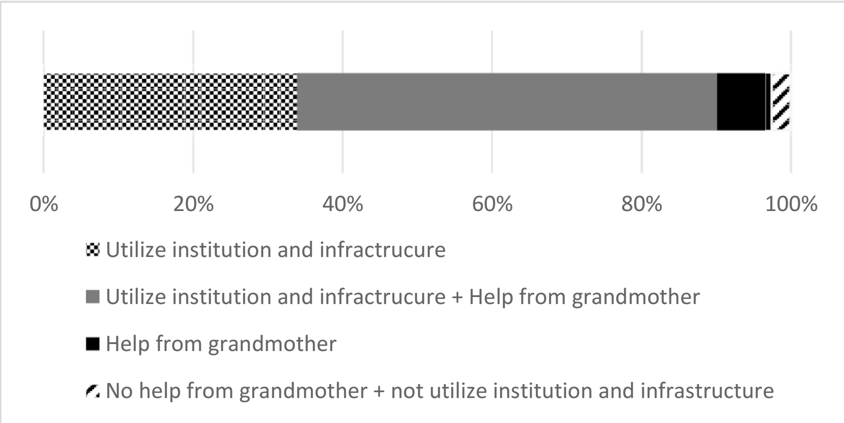
Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research,15th Fertility Survey, Couple Survey 2015.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that in Japan only full-time regular employees can utilize the parental leave system. Among full-time regular employees in the public and private sector, more than 40 percent of mothers continued working in 2005–2009 using parental leave (IPSS 2010). However, as we argue later, workplace practices make it almost impossible for part-time employees or other forms of irregular full-time employees to take parental leave. This stands in stark contrast to Germany, where part-time employees are entitled to take parental leave.

As a result, the parental leave system in Japan has largely remained a privilege for particular groups of female employees, such as full-time regular employees in public service and major private corporations. Because of this, the parental leave system has functioned for only 15 percent of all new mothers during 2000–2004, and only 28 percent during 2010–2014.

Even within this small circle of working women there exists a massive need to ask for help from grandmothers in order to continue working in Japan (Figure 25). The majority of the women who did continue working required this personal support.

Figure 25: Resources Utilized by Working Mothers With Children up to 3 Years of Age in Japan, 2015



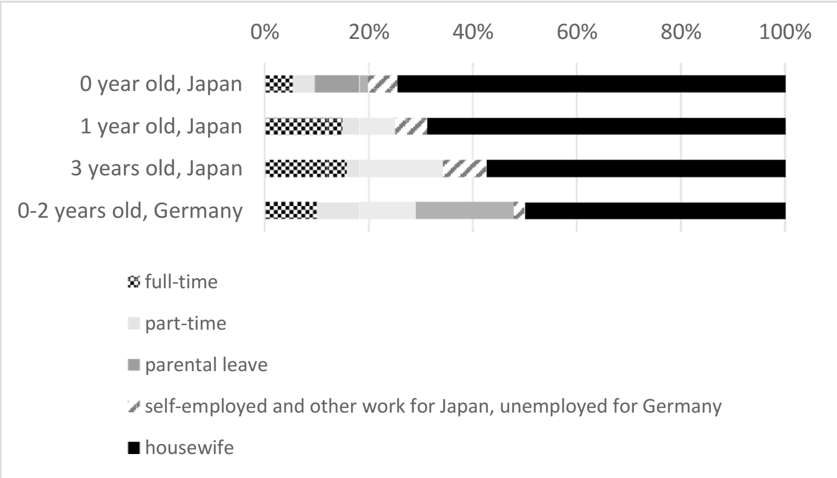
Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, National Fertility Survey (2015: 62).

Figure 26 shows the situation of mothers with children under three years old in Japan in 2001 and in West Germany in 2000. The ratio of women taking parental leave is much higher in West Germany than it is in Japan. Still, the percentage of women who quit their jobs was 50 percent in West Germany and around 60 to 74 percent in Japan, showing that the housewife paradigm has remained firmly entrenched as the majority family model.

In 2012 the ratio of full-time housewives decreased in both countries, as Figure 27 illustrates. The ratio of women with children up to 2 years old who quit working had fallen to 35 percent in Germany and 53–64 percent in Japan. In spite of this decrease, housewives remain the largest group. One-third of new mothers in West Germany and around 60 percent of new mothers in Japan still gave up working. It remains common in both countries for mothers to stay at home while their children are under three years old—a pattern followed by two-thirds of mothers in West Germany and 53–93 percent of mothers in Japan.

In summary, an undeniably large ratio of mothers with young children still adheres to the housewife model; these women tend not to participate in the labor market when they have children under three years old. In spite of institutionalized parental leave, parental allowance, and day nurseries, not every mother actually utilizes these resources—although the situation has been changing since the 2010s with the number of day nurseries and the ratio of mothers taking parental leave increasing in both countries.

Figure 26: Situation of Mothers with Children up to 3 Years of Age in Japan, 2001, and in West Germany, 2000

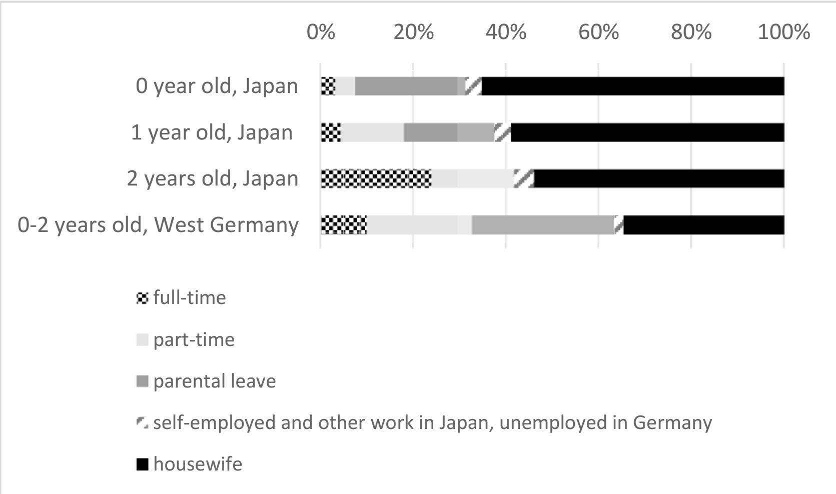


Note: As the data for 2-year-old children in Japan does not exist, data for 3-years-olds is used here.

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 21st Century New Born Children in 2001 Survey, No. 1–4; Statistisches Bundesamt.

Clearly, whether or not a family has children has played a critical role for the survival of the housewife model. The fact that housewives make up the largest group of mothers with young children shows that until recently the social norm that mothers should take exclusive care of very young children by themselves had not changed much.

Figure 27: Situation of Mothers with Children up to 3 Years of Age in Japan and West Germany, 2010–2012



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 21st Century New Born Children in 2010 Survey, No. 1–3; Statistisches Bundesamt, Datenreport 2016.

3.5 Part-time Model as the Majority

After children reach three years old, the family model often applies to mothers working part-time, which developed as the new majority model in both countries in a similar manner. The equal dual-earner model has never accounted for the majority of households in either country, but rather the supplementary-earner model became the predominant family model, particularly in West Germany and Japan (Blossfeld and Rohwer 1997; Hirota 1979; Honda 2010; Osawa 1993; Quack 1992; Takahashi 1983; Takenaka 1983; Takenaka and Kuba 1994).

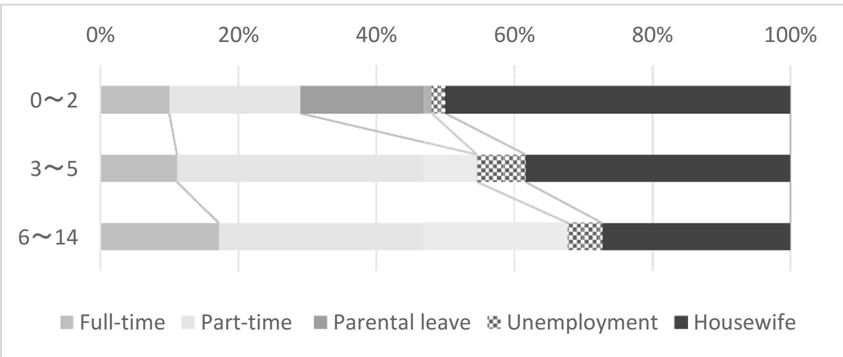
The historical development of part-time work has had a similar trajectory in both countries. Part-time work has been common since the 1960s in West Germany, East Germany, and Japan, when high economic growth during the postwar period required a larger labor force. The serious shortage in the workforce eventually resulted in the mobilization of housewives, especially at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Part-time work stagnated in the 1970s and 1980s in West Germany and Japan due to low economic growth after the oil shocks and the resulting corporate downsizing and unemployment, and the housewife model returned to be the norm.

However, during the 1990s part-time work by mothers increased rapidly, replacing the housewife model as the dominant social norm. More and more mothers tended to choose to work part-time, particularly after their children reached three years old.

In 2000, the ratio of mothers working part-time when their children were aged between 6 and 14 years old surpassed the ratio of housewives in West Germany (Figure 28). The ratio of women who took parental leave and returned to work full-time was quite limited, with mothers instead choosing to work part-time. While the ratio of housewives decreased as children grew up, the majority of mothers continued to work part-time. In East Germany part-time work was originally designed as a bridge from doing piecework at home (*Heimarbeit*) to full-time work, and the ratio of mothers working part-time remained lower than in West Germany. But it still was 27 percent in 2000 for mothers with children between 3 and 5 years old (Figure 29) (Trappe 1995).

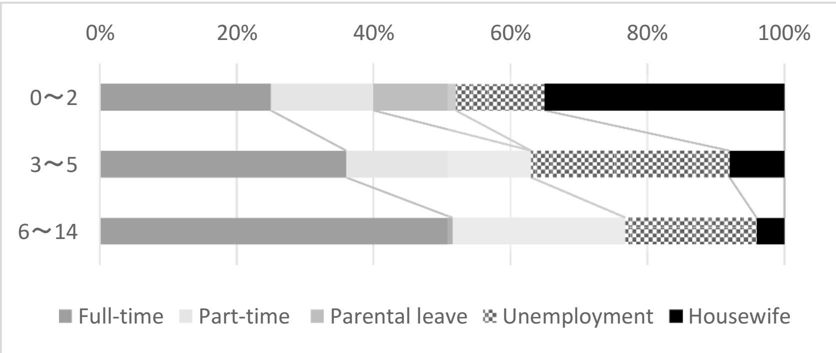
The situation in Japan in 2001 was similar to that of West Germany (Figure 30). The ratio of mothers working part-time increased as children grew older, from 3.6 percent of mothers with children under one year old to 45 percent of mothers of 11-year-olds. The ratio of housewives with children over 11 years old decreased from 74 percent to 26 percent.

Figure 28: Status of Mothers by Age of Children, West Germany, 2000



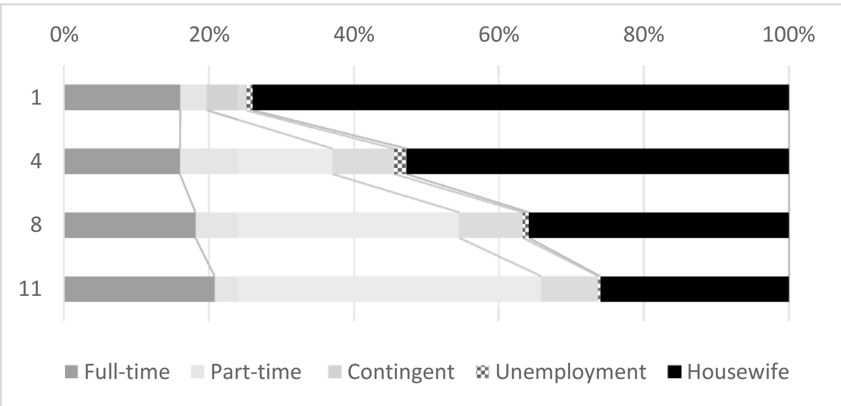
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Mikrozensus.

Figure 29: Status of Mothers by Age of Children, East Germany, 2000



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Mikrozensus.

Figure 30: Status of Mothers by Age of Children, Japan 2001



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 21st Century New Born Children in 2001 Survey.

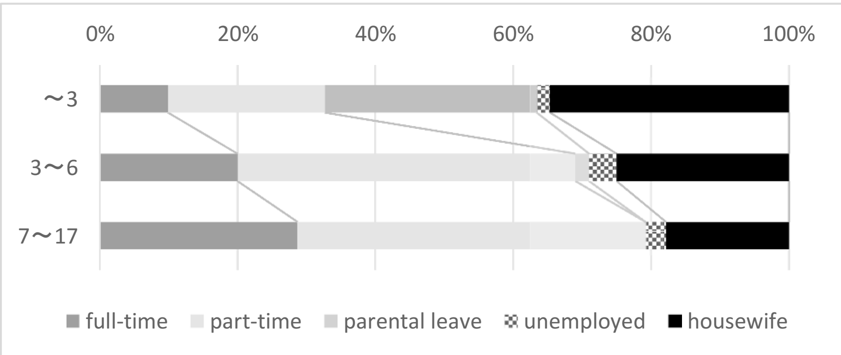
Here we can conclude two facts for the discussed period. First, the housewife model remained the primary social model for families with children under three years old in both Japan and in West Germany. By the year 2000, this family model had influenced social structures in East Germany, with the housewife model occupying the majority of households.

Second, for households with children aged three years and older, the housewife model evolved into the part-time model in Japan and in West Germany, while in East Germany full-time work was dominant. In Japan, the part-time model surpassed the housewife model in families with children aged 8 years and older and in West Germany in families with children aged between 6 to 14 years old. Thus, part-time work became the major employment form for mothers in both countries.

By 2012 this structure had witnessed the continued decline of the housewife model accompanied by the steady increase in mothers engaging in part-time work and full-time work (Figures 31, 32, 33).

West Germany is similar to Japan as it is characterized by the gradually increasing ratio of female full-time and part-time employees and a decreasing ratio of housewives as children grow older. Part-time work has become the most common employment form for mothers with young children, surpassing housewifery and full-time work in both countries. In East Germany, in contrast, there has been a noticeable increase of mothers working full-time, while both the ratio of part-time workers and housewives has decreased.

Figure 31: Employment Status of Mothers by Age of Children, West Germany, 2012

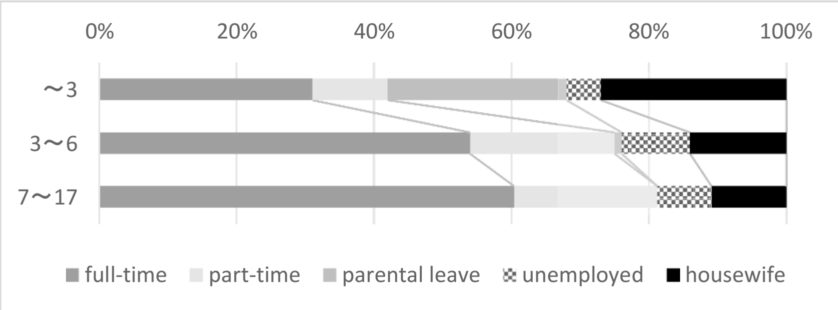


Source: Datenreport 2016.
Source: Sozialbericht für Deutschland.

In Japan the ratio of mothers working full-time has increased since 2001, but it remains a little over 20 percent (although this data is limited to mothers with children aged 7 years old and younger). The decrease of housewives in Japan was mainly due to an increase in part-time work. Figure 33 also shows another characteristic of working mothers in Japan: many mothers tend to quit full-time or part-time employment and become housewives when their children begin elementary school. This is because elementary school-aged children can no longer attend day nursery and Japan provides limited after-school childcare. Children thus return home from school early in the afternoon, obliging mothers to be at home. This is called *shō-ichi no kabe* or the “first-grade wall.”

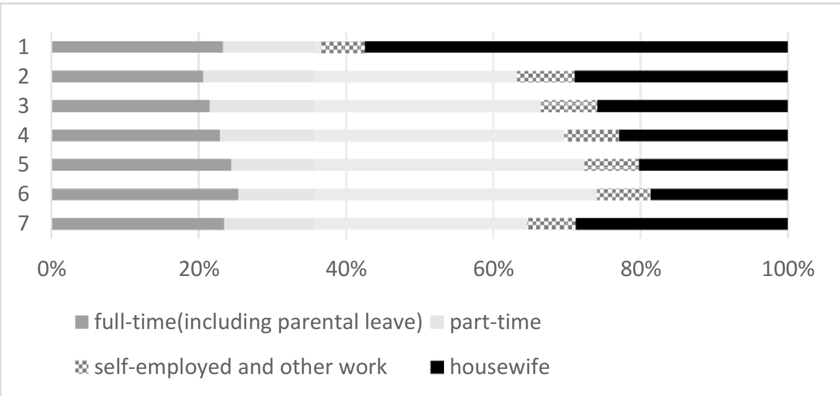
Data demonstrates that the part-time model, or the supplementary-earner model, has remained the major family model for households with children in both Japan and West Germany in a similar manner.

Figure 32: Employment Status of Mothers by Age of Children, East Germany, 2012



Source: Datenreport 2016.
Source: Sozialbericht für Deutschland.

Figure 33: Employment Status of Mothers by Age of Children, Japan, 2012



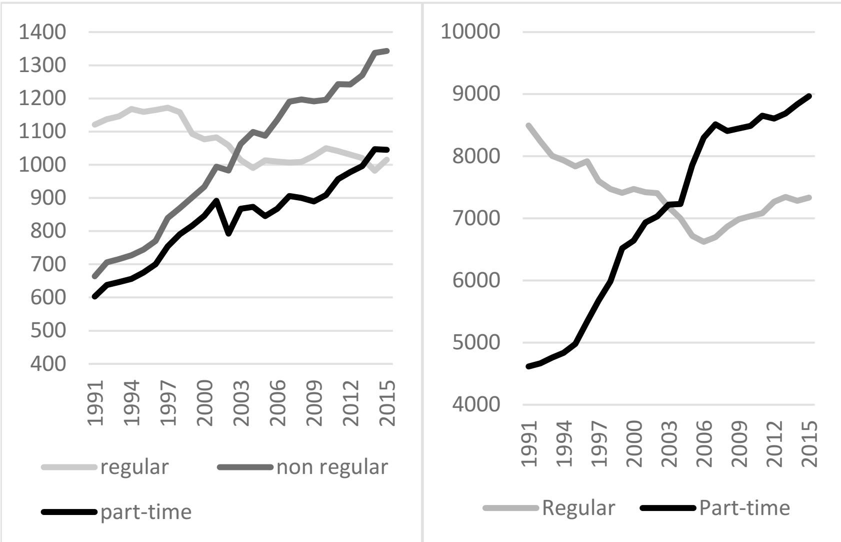
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 21st Century New Born Children in 2010 Survey.

Because of the growing number of mothers working part-time, the ratio of part-time female employees to all female employees in both countries has continually increased.

As Figure 34 shows, among Japanese women, the number of part-time employees surpassed the total number of full-time employees in 2013, while the number of non-regular employees, including part-time, agency, and contract workers, surpassed the number of full-time workers in 2003. In Germany, the number of part-time employees, including part-time employees working more than 20 hours a week and those in Minijobs (a term referring to tax-free part-time work with earnings below 450 Euro a month), also surpassed the number of regular workers in 2003 (Figure 35).

These figures clearly show that part-time work has become the main employment form for women in both Germany and Japan, and for West Germany and Japan, even as their children grow older.

Figure 34: Female Full-Time, Part-Time, Non-Regular Employees in Japan, 1991–2015
Figure 35: Female Full-Time and Part-Time Employees in Germany, 1991–2015



Source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Labour Force Survey.

Note: For comparison, the ratio for part-time employees in Germany includes part-time employees working more or fewer than 20 hours and those working mini-jobs.
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis, Atypische Beschäftigung.

3.6 Male-Dependency in Tax and Social Insurance Systems

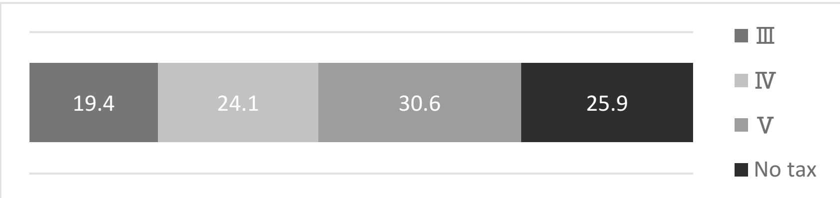
Thus, we can conclude that the growing ratio of female labor participation has given rise to various alternative family types, but these do not meet the requirements for being regarded as the gender-equal double-earner model. This is largely due to the increase of part-time work among mothers, along with the housewife model remaining dominant while children are under three years old.

The unequal gender structure in these models is reflected by how women are categorized in the tax and social insurance systems in both countries (Figure 36, Figure 37).

There are a variety of ways to jointly file taxes in the German tax system. Tax category 4 applies to married workers if both spouses earn a wage, so the equal double-earner family usually files taxes in the combination of 4 + 4. In contrast, tax category 3 applies to the breadwinner of the household and privileges him or her with tax exemptions. Tax category 5 applies to one of the spouses instead of tax category 4 if the other spouse is classified under tax category 3. The combination of tax category 3 + 5 only gives preferential treatment to the higher-earning category 3 spouse, usually the husband.

In 2012, 24.1 percent of German households filed for taxes in the tax category 4 + 4, which means that approximately one-fourth of German women filed taxes under this category. On the other hand, 30.6 percent of German women, the largest ratio, filed taxes in tax category 5. Furthermore, 25.9 percent of women reported no work and no taxable income. Between women in tax category 5 and the tax-exempt group, the total number of women dependent on their husbands amounts to about 56.5 percent, more than half of all women.

Figure 36: Tax Categories of Women in Germany, 2012

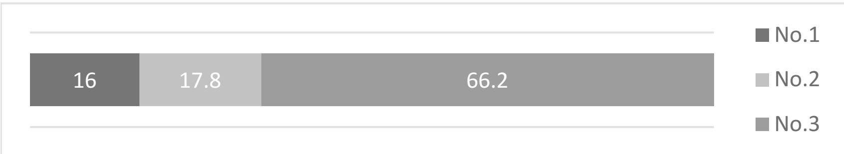


Source: Bundesministerium der Finanzen, Datensammlung zur Steuerpolitik 2016/2017; Statistisches Bundesamt, vorläufige Lohn- und Einkommensteuerstatistik 2012.

In Japan the social insurance categories are similar to the German tax categories. Social insurance category 1 is for the self-employed, farmers, and other working non-employees, regardless of marriage status or the spouse's employment status. Category 2 represents all employed persons paying into the social insurance system, including women working full-time, as well as a portion of part-time employees with relatively long working hours. These women are independently secure with their own social insurance. Social insurance category 3 represents non-working spouses or those with limited work, such as part-time work with very short working hours, similar to German *Minijobs*. These individuals (mostly women) do not have their own social insurance but are insured through their working spouse (usually the husband) as dependent family members. Japan's social insurance category 3 roughly corresponds to the German tax system's class 5 and tax-exempt persons.

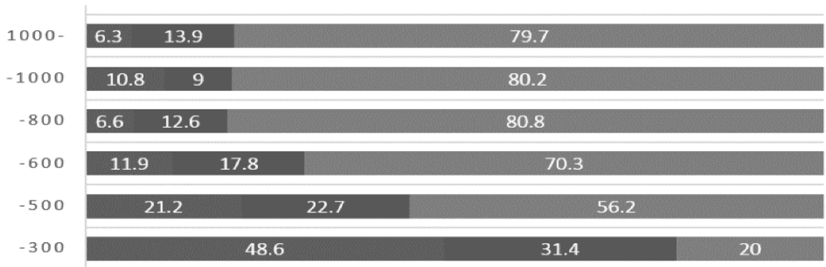
Figure 37 shows the distribution of pension categories for married women over 30 years old in Japan in 2010. Here we see that 66.2 percent of all married women over 30 years old are in category 3. This means two-thirds of married women are economically dependent on their husbands for social insurance. As the data on Japan only references married women over 30 years old, if younger women were included, the proportion of dependent women could be much closer to the ratio in Germany, where 56.5 percent of all women were taxed as dependent on their husbands.

Figure 37: Pension Categories of Married Women Over 30 Years Old in Japan, 2010



Source: Takayama's calculation based on Takayama (2015).

Figure 38: Pension Categories of Married Women Over 30 Years Old in Japan by Husband's Annual Income, 2010 (in 10,000 Yen)



Source: Takayama (2015).

Moreover, according to Figure 38, the ratio of housewives or mothers working in minimal part-time jobs soars to 80 percent in high-income households where the husband's average yearly income is more than 6 million yen, or about $55,000 (100yen=$0.90). Only in households with an annual income of less than 5 million yen (about $45,000) do mothers tend to work for longer hours and more independently. Therefore, a mother's employment form is influenced by the economic situation of the household.

This means, on the one hand, that the housewife model still retains its historical characteristic as a practice of the upper and middle classes. On the other hand, it also means that the increase in irregular precarious work for men since the 1990s has eroded the stable economic basis for the male breadwinner model itself, which has obliged mothers to work outside the home to meet the needs of the household, particularly for families with annual incomes under $27,000.

3.7 Coexistence of the Housewife and Part-Time Model in the Majority of Households

So far, we can conclude that the male breadwinner/female housewife model, which developed and prevailed during the postwar economic growth period in both Germany and Japan, remains firmly intact in the 2010s. Although changing economic and social conditions have provided new opportunities for female labor force participation, and pro-family policies have provided improved institutional and infrastructural environments in both countries, women’s dependency on a male provider after they have children has not changed dramatically. The housewife model continues to dominate as the majority household model, with 70 percent of women with children under three years old staying at home, both in Germany and Japan.

In spite of the improved institution of parental leave and allowances and the increasing number of day nurseries, the majority of new mothers quit their jobs without utilizing this system and stay at home as housewives in both countries. In 2000 this ratio was more than 50 percent in West Germany and 75 percent in Japan. In 2012 this ratio decreased to 35 percent in West Germany and 60 percent in Japan, but the housewife model still plays a significant role.

This housewife model is transitioning into the part-time model as children grow older, particularly in Japan and in West Germany. Part-time work has expanded as the major form of employment for mothers with older children. In 2012, 51 percent of mothers with children aged from 7 to 17 years in West Germany chose part-time work, as did 45 percent of mothers with children aged over 11 years in Japan.

In contrast, the ratio of mothers working full-time has remained low, increasing from 8 percent in the 1990s to around 20 percent in the 2000s, and finally to nearly 30 percent in the 2010s in both countries. However, the prevalence of the equal dual-earner model is still limited, with the exception of East Germany. This situation leads to the continuous dependency of women, particularly mothers, on a spouse for economic security and social insurance.

The evolutionary process from the male breadwinner/female housewife model into other forms of family has been very similar in Germany and Japan. In particular, the part-time model has become the dominant family model.

However, in spite of these obvious similarities, we need to take a closer look at employment conditions before concluding that this housewife-to-part-time-worker model means the same thing in both countries. Upon closer inspection there are crucial differences between part-time work in Germany and Japan. The future trajectory of the part-time model is then also likely to vary considerably because of the significant differences in the institutional and managerial practices of part-time work in the two countries. The different systems of part-time work result in a different balance of work and family, which will ultimately affect the possible future family models in the two countries. We will examine these issues in the final section.

4 Significant Differences in German and Japanese Part-Time Work

Although the term “part-time work” is universally applied, the systems of part-time work in Germany and Japan are radically different. As raw statistical data does not necessarily explain these institutional differences, we must examine the actual labor conditions of part-time workers in both countries in order to explore divergent trajectories for the future of women’s work and its influence on the family model.

To put it succinctly, in Germany part-time work is a variation of full-time work, and in Japan part-time work is a completely different status from full-time work. For part-time workers in Germany, working conditions do not differ considerably from full-time workers, except for total working hours and compensation, which is determined by the number of hours worked. In contrast, part-time work in Japan is a completely different employment status from full-time work, with part-time workers experiencing much less favorable working conditions. In spite of the misnomer “part-time,” part-time workers in Japan sometimes work the same number of hours—or even longer hours—than full-time workers. Even if part-time workers are performing similar jobs to full-time workers in terms of responsibilities and working long hours, they face precarious labor conditions simply because they are categorized as “part-time workers” by companies.

Simply put, Japanese part-time work is a marginalized, second-tier employment status, totally excluded from the corporate human resource management systems that exist for full-time workers. Contrastingly, German part-time workers are included in the workforce allocation system with the same or proportional working conditions as full-time employees.

It is noteworthy that management and workplace practices, along with legal institutions and welfare state family policies, play a significant role in labor relations and the actual labor conditions of part-time work.

4.1 Differences in Compensation Schemes

The compensation schemes are the most critical difference between part-time work in Germany and Japan.

In Germany, payment for part-time employees is determined automatically according to the proportion of hours worked and is based on the compensation of full-time employees. For example, if a part-time employee works 30 hours per week and the normal working hours are 40 hours per week, she would be paid

30/40, or 75 percent of the full-time employee's compensation. This pro rata payment system is clear and easy to calculate, and full-time employees' compensation, on which part-time employees' compensation is based, is regulated by collective agreements.

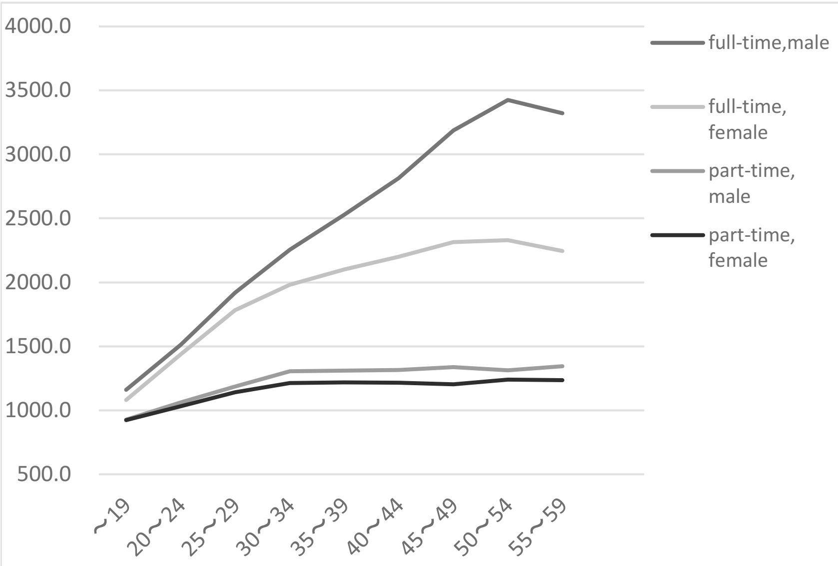
For Japanese part-time employees, however, the mechanism for determining compensation is completely different. Compensation for part-time workers is not linked to the payment of full-time employees. Part-time employees are paid an hourly wage in contrast to the monthly salary of full-time employees. This hourly wage is largely determined by the local labor market and is the same or slightly higher than the regional minimum wage. There is no system regulating part-time wages except for the minimum wage law. The average wage for part-time employees in Japan is $9.40 per hour, but in the retail industry it is $8.50 per hour, and in the food service industry only $8.30 per hour.

The determination of hourly wage rates is largely in the hands of local managers who hardly meet any regulatory criteria; wages are not necessarily linked to years of service to the company, worker qualifications, or job responsibilities. The most common complaint on the part of part-time workers is that compensation is "too small." Although the labor shortage in Japan in the 2010s has become increasingly serious, there has not been a significant increase in hourly wages in spite of a tight labor market.

In Germany, as laws prohibit discrimination between full- and part-time employees, part-time workers have the possibility of receiving pay raises and opportunities to participate in corporate training, although options are restricted compared to full-time workers. In contrast to their German counterparts, Japanese part-time workers have no prospects for pay raises or career development, even when they continue to work at the same firm for a long period of time and are required to demonstrate a high level of competence and assume great responsibility.

Figure 39 shows that Japanese part-time wages are not increasing with age. Although the income gap between male and female full-time workers is a serious problem, what is striking here is the enormous difference in the wages of full-time and part-time employees, particularly when corporate bonuses and benefits are included. The wages of part-time workers hardly change regardless of the worker's age, length of service at the same firm, and/or qualifications. This is one of the biggest differences between Germany and Japan.

Figure 39: Hourly Wages According to Full-Time/Part-Time Status, by Age and Sex in Japan, 2010



Note: Hourly payment, calculated on the yearly income including bonus.
Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Wage Structure Survey, 2016.

4.2 Differences in Corporate Benefits

In addition to lower incomes, part-time workers in Japan are disadvantaged in terms of social insurance and corporate benefits compared to German part-time workers.

In Germany, part-time workers are generally included in the social insurance system through the firm for which they work; only *Minijob* workers who earn less than 450 Euro per month are excluded. In Japan, only one-third of all part-time workers receive health and social insurance through their employer. Instead, most part-time workers are insured as their spouses' dependents.

With regard to paid leave, part-time workers in Germany take the same paid holidays as full-time workers if they work every weekday. In Japan, the situation seems similar at first glance, with legal regulations stipulating that part-time workers are eligible for paid leave after six months of working as well as parental leave, like in Germany. However, in reality it is not common practice for part-time employees to take paid holidays or parental leave. This is partly due to the fact that many part-time workers are not aware of these legal regulations, but mainly because they know applying for time off would be rejected and met with unpleasantness and even harassment by employers. Thus, most part-time workers will usually refrain from applying for leave. Employers and trade unions rarely urge part-time workers to take paid leave. This is the general understanding in Japanese workplaces, even though it is actually breaking the law.

The difference in corporate benefits is also significant. In Germany, corporate benefits such as Christmas bonuses are given to part-time workers, whereas in Japan, corporate benefits are very limited for part-time workers. Year-end and summer bonuses for full-time employees are either not given to part-time workers at all or given in very small amounts.

Furthermore, there is a substantial difference in contract terms between part-time and full-time workers. In Germany, most part-time workers are employed on an indefinite basis, although there are some part-time workers hired for fixed terms. In Japan, however, the vast majority of part-time workers are employed under a fixed-term contract. The contract terms vary from three months to six months to one year and contracts are often renewed multiple times. As a result, most Japanese part-time workers are forced to live in fear of their contract failing to be renewed.

In summary, German part-time workers are compensated according to the proportional ratio of working hours to full-time workers with equal opportunities for legal and corporate benefits. They work shorter hours under an indefinite contract. Japanese part-time workers, in contrast, are paid low hourly wages with minimal prospects for pay raises. Japanese part-time workers, who mostly work under short fixed-term contracts, rarely receive social insurance, paid leave, parental leave, or corporate benefits, even though some work the same long hours as full-time workers. Thus, we can see a vast difference between the status of proportionally compensated German part-time workers and that of precarious Japanese part-time workers, suggesting the future development of part-time work will be divergent in the two countries.

5 Conclusion: Historical Perspective of the Housewife and Part-Time Model

The chapter has reviewed the historical process of the rise, evolution, and decline of the male breadwinner/female housewife model in Germany and Japan. We conclude that this model, which developed on the basis of the male-dominated, economically eminent manufacturing industries during the economic growth period and became entrenched as the typical family norm during the 1970s and 1980s, has endured into the 2010s, although it has been challenged by various critical socioeconomic structural changes.

These changes have resulted in alternative family models through similar processes in both countries. An increase in unmarried women and childless couples reflects the changing position of women in education, the labor market, and economic independence. This has led to a higher female labor force participation rate and a lower birthrate, which has prompted both governments to enact pro-family policies and initiatives to promote work-life balance.

In spite of these policies, however, the housewife model continues to be the dominant family model for parents with young children into the 2010s. It is noteworthy that more than one-third of mothers in West Germany and 60 percent of mothers in Japan with young children left the labor market and stayed at home as housewives in the early 2010s. As their children grew older, the dominant family model chosen by mothers became the part-time model in Japan and West Germany. This model was chosen by nearly half of mothers with older children, while 20–30 percent of mothers remained housewives. On the other hand, the ratio of female full-time employees in equal dual-earner families has remained relatively stable at around 20–25 percent in Japan and has increased to nearly 30 percent in West Germany and 60 percent in East Germany. In short, the housewife model is still the majority family model for families with children under three years old, and the part-time model is the dominant model for families with older children, both in Japan and West Germany.

As a result, the male breadwinner model and the female supplementary earner model, rather than the equal dual-earner model, remain strong in both countries, particularly in terms of economic independence and social insurance. Only childless women tend to utilize their equal levels of education, competence, and labor market positionality. Pro-family policies have not yet changed this situation, although the 2010s are witnessing a new trend based on the new increase in day nurseries and more mothers utilizing parental leave.

However, the future development of the family model may differ significantly when we examine the actual conditions of part-time work in both countries. Corporate practices concerning part-time work demonstrate the significantly divergent development of the part-time model between the two countries.

In Germany, part-time work provides proportional income and equal labor conditions to those of full-time workers. It is easier for German employees to choose working hours without risking the loss of social insurance, corporate benefits, and their careers. Furthermore, the German government is working to provide parents with more options for transition between full-time and part-time work through new legislation. Under the proposed system it would be possible for employees with children to work part-time for a few years and then transition to full-time work. The goal is to make it possible for employees with family responsibilities to temporarily work shorter hours and then go back to full-time work. This would lead to more gender-equal employment and promote the equal-earner model over the long term.

Japanese part-time workers, in contrast, suffer from far inferior labor conditions compared to their counterparts in Germany, including low wages, no pay raises, few options for training and career advancement, less social insurance, little or no paid leave and parental leave, fixed-term employment contracts, and sometimes even longer working hours than full-time work. Part-time work in Japan is a term used by human resource management systems to designate second-tier status. The disadvantages of part-time work and the risks of gender inequality are much higher in Japan than in Germany.

The Japanese government, particularly the Abe administration, is also trying to reform the institution of part-time work with initiatives such as “a society where women can shine” and Work Style Reform (see also Schad-Seifert in this book). However, the government is requiring part-time workers to have the exact same conditions and responsibilities as full-time workers, such as very long working hours, managerial responsibilities, and sometimes job relocations, in order to receive equal treatment. The Japanese work “reform” is actually heading toward less flexible working hours, the opposite direction of the German work reform. These initiatives would result in Japanese part-time workers being stuck in the same conditions they have endured for many years.

Given the change in industrial structures and more equal conditions for men and women in the labor market, it would seem a matter of course that the housewife model that developed during the postwar economic growth period based on the male-dominated manufacturing sector would be replaced by the more equal dual-earner family model. However, even into the 2010s this transition has occurred only among a limited circle of women in both countries. The evolution of family models has been more complicated than was previously considered.

Childless couples tend to be more equal, resulting in a lower birthrate. In contrast, most families with children are still tied to male breadwinner models. There is no question that pro-family policies, such as parental leave and allowances, an increased number of day nurseries, and work-life balance policies have dramatically improved the situation, especially during these past decades. However, they have not yet achieved a fundamental shift of the dominant family paradigm. Families in the historical male breadwinner/female housewife model and its successor, the supplemental part-time model, still remain in the majority in spite of the social structural changes.

It is certain, however, that since the 2010s this transition is proceeding more rapidly than ever in both countries, due to improvements in pro-family institutions and the change of consciousness in the younger generation of men and women. We can expect a further paradigm shift of family models in the coming decades as young people who grew up during a time of increased work-life balance policies come of age.

Now that the German government is promoting the dual-earner/dual-caregiver model as the basis of its new family policy, the flexibility of German part-time work may further facilitate the transition between full-time and part-time work. This could potentially lead to new family models with increased gender equality in the near future.

Compared to Germany, the part-time work policy of the Japanese government remains stuck in the framework of the postwar corporate management system and does little to improve the disadvantaged position of Japanese part-time workers, particularly working mothers. Japan requires much more fundamental reforms in order to achieve a more gender-equal family model.

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The Politics of Balancing Flexibility and Equality: A Comparison of Recent Equal Pay Reforms in Germany and Japan

Steffen Heinrich

1 Introduction

Were it only for the number of laws, achieving the equal treatment of workers, regardless of gender, status, or age would only be a matter of time. In many OECD member states, law has obliged employers to treat employees equally for many decades, and in the last 5 years most member states have implemented measures to further strengthen these obligations (OECD 2017). Even governments with traditionally close ties to organised business, such as the current Japanese one, have called achieving equal pay a central policy objective. However, despite the increase in regulatory initiatives, there is little doubt that many unjustified wage disparities persist. For example, despite a steep increase in female labor market participation, still relatively few women achieve a salary and level of social security status comparable to men. Even in those cases where the same status is achieved nominally, surveys suggest that a considerable wage gap persists in Germany and Japan. These gaps largely coincide with the dual structure of labour markets that separates standard and non-standard employment (henceforth NSE),[1] where the latter tends to offer lower earnings, worse career prospects, and less social protection in comparison to the former.

The growing interest in equal treatment legislation partly reflects growing concerns about these gaps in both countries. In response to this new pressure, policymakers have passed numerous legislative reforms which seek to address inequalities in the labour market, i.e. between different types of workers and between men and women. Previous research suggests, however, that such measures will have a limited impact. In particular, Gottfried and O'Reilly (2002) have argued that the "socially conservative welfare states" of Germany and Japan

[1] Non-standard (also atypical or non-regular) employment refers to temporary agency work (called worker dispatch in East Asia), part-time, fixed-term, and marginal employment. Self-employment and family workers are excluded because they do not fall under the provisions discussed here. Standard (also typical or regular) employment refers to full-time and open-ended salaried employment.

U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7_12

combine traditional gender roles with a welfare state that favours the permanent employment of male workers and the "peripheral" labour market participation of women. Together, this creates high hurdles for any kind of effective equal treatment regulation.

In contrast, this chapter argues that the gap between growing regulatory action for equal treatment and persistent inequality is increasingly the result of a politics of balancing which tries to reconcile conflicting policy agendas. The conflict arises from the fact that policymakers are under growing public pressure to support equal treatment, but at the same time are wary of limiting labour market flexibility, which crucially relies on the use of NSE or, put differently, differentiated treatment of workers. In Germany and Japan as elsewhere, labour market flexibility has been crucially enhanced in the last two decades through structural reforms which have made it easier for employers to differentiate working conditions (Heinrich 2013). The dilemma for governments now is that choosing one side over the other is politically risky. If they choose equality over flexibility, they would face opposition from employers and may be blamed for negative effects such as a reduction in job openings. Prioritising flexibility by ignoring demands for equal treatment, however, may make them vulnerable to growing public unease over social and gender inequality.

This chapter argues that policymakers adopt balancing strategies in order to address both demands simultaneously. While they are ever more likely to pass legislation aiming at equal treatment, as is evidenced by the growing number of reforms, they combine them with flexible implementation. Often, this involves delegating rule-making authority to collective bargaining and corporate decision-making bodies or relying on soft law that encourages rather than mandates compliance (often described in Japanese as *doryoku gimu* or "obligation to make an effort"). This way, policymakers can signal commitment to equality while preserving some of the flexibility stemming from differential treatment of workers. Another consequence of this strategy is the increased relevance of employment institutions that emerged during the heyday of long-term and mostly male employment models, which are now commonly described as being in a process of gradual demise. In addition to their traditional role in providing a basis for long-term economic coordination, as political economists have typically argued, they now also provide strategic resources for policymakers to resolve difficult policy choices. This conceptualisation of employment institutions under German and Japanese capitalism not only helps to explain the gap between policy outputs and outcomes, but also sheds light on why Germany and Japan struggle to implement labor market policies that support gender equality and family policy's current focus on enabling women and men to better balance work and family life.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section two compares the structure of wage inequalities in Germany and Japan and reviews the political case for equal pay reforms in each country. Section three reviews standard explanations for continuing gaps between policy output and outcome, and then develops the argument of a strategic politics of balancing equality and flexibility. Sections four and five analyse the politics of balancing by evaluating the most recent equal pay initiatives in each country. Section six concludes with a brief comparison of the findings and an outlook on likely trajectories of future equality-related legislation.

2 The Case for Stricter Equal Pay Rules: Wage Inequalities in Germany and Japan

Germany and Japan are often described as similar regarding the fundamental structure of their political economies. They are known as prime examples of non-liberal or coordinated capitalism, but also as countries where the male breadwinner model is still comparatively dominant. This section addresses another striking similarity regarding the dualistic pattern of employment. Roughly 40 percent of all salaried employees in both countries today are in NSE,[2] and rising female labour market participation in recent years has been overwhelmingly in the NSE sector (see Figures 1 and 2). Moreover, labour market inequalities with regard to employment type and NSE largely overlap. Due to the increase in NSE, these disparities have become more relevant and increasingly subject to the criticism that they restrain the ability of such workers to reach a similar status of economic and social security as standard workers (for an overview cf. Emmenegger *et al.* 2012).

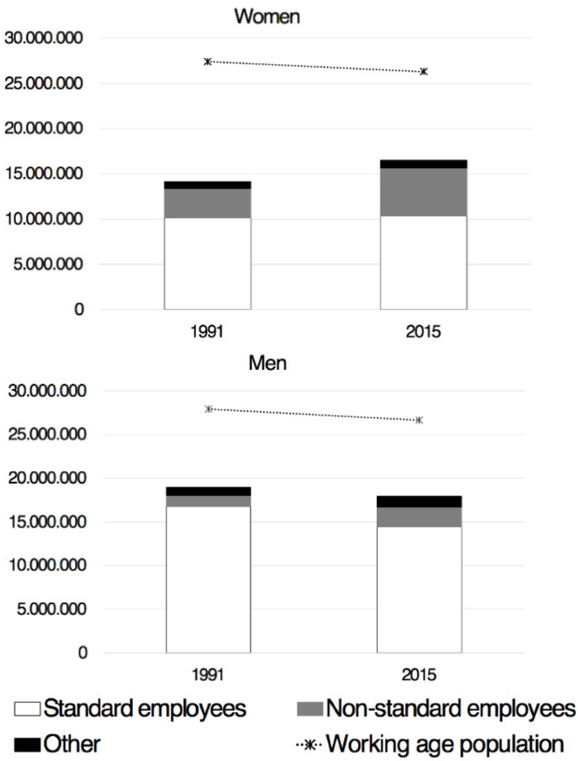
However, as this section will show, there are some differences that separate discourses on gender and employment type related inequalities. Whereas gender equality is rarely questioned as a norm today, equal treatment rules are more controversial in the context of NSE. For many German and Japanese firms, they constitute a major source of employment flexibility, which helps them to improve competitiveness. This has also been the official justification for many structural reforms since the late 1980s that have facilitated the use of various forms of NSE (Heinrich 2013). However, due to many overlaps it is often difficult to distinguish between the gender and economic dimensions of labour market disparities in practice. This is particularly true in Japan, where NSE was "implicitly designed for women" (Shire and Imai 2000). Female labour market participation has long been confined to routine work that does not require continuous or full-time employment, but also does not offer career prospects or working conditions comparable to standard jobs. The considerable gap in social security coverage between standard and non-standard workers in Japan partially results from the belief that women workers do not need them as their participation is only temporary or restricted in other ways. Even today, part-time workers are much less

2 For data on Germany see Seifert (2017), for data on Japan see MIAC (2017).

likely to be covered by public pension insurance, corporate schemes such as those for severance pay (*taishokukin*), or to receive bi-annual bonus payments as around 80 percent of standard employees do (Heinrich 2017a: 74–78).

Figures 1 and 2 confirm that the vast majority of workers in NSE are women. Despite a drop in the working age population, it is also noticeable that the number of workers in standard jobs has declined or remained stable. This implies that wage inequalities linked to employment type have become more widespread and affect a growing section of the workforce.

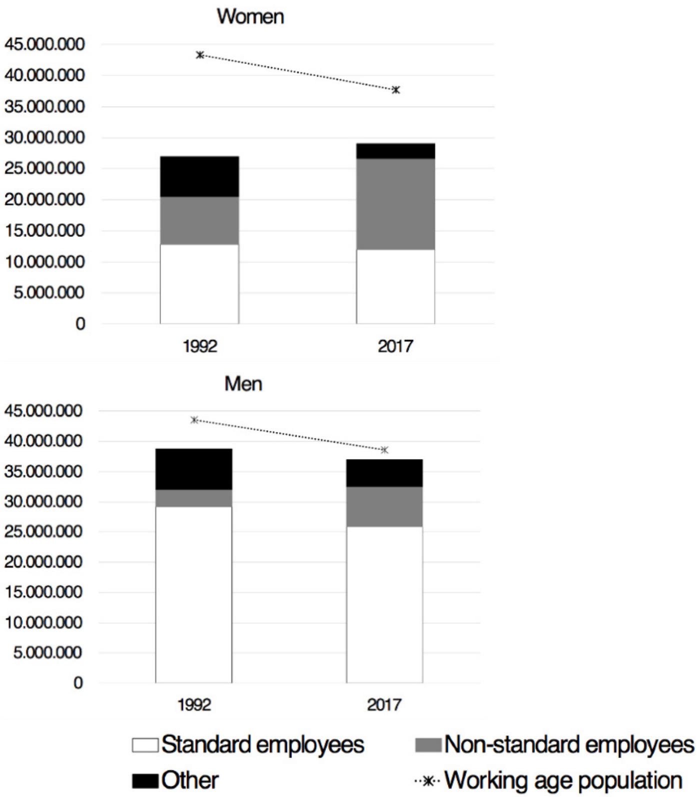
Figure 1: Changes in the Number of Workers by Employment Type and Sex (Germany)



Note: The category of standard employees includes part-timers who work more than 20h a week. Non-standard includes all other forms of part-time work (Teilzeit), fixed-term work (befristet), marginal employment (geringfügig) as well as temporary agency work (Leiharbeit). Other includes self-employed and unpaid family workers.

Source: OECD Labor Force Survey (2017) and Statistisches Bundesamt (2017), based on the Mikrozensus. Included are only Kernerwerbstätige, i.e. workers in training and those outside working age are excluded.

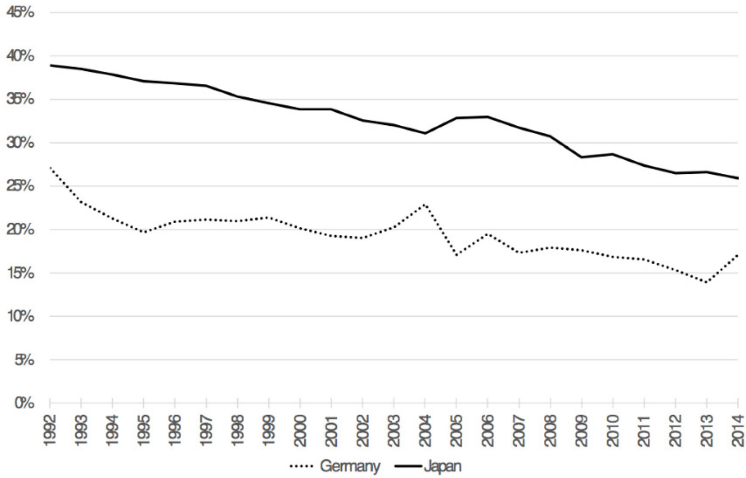
Figure 2: Changes in the Number of Workers by Employment Type and Sex (Japan)



Note: The category of regular employees includes executives. Non-regular category includes part-time, fixed-term, temporary agency, and marginal employment. Other includes self-employed and family workers.
Source: MIAC (1993, 2018).

To estimate how these structures affect wage inequalities, wage gaps are typically calculated by comparing median incomes (Figure 3). However, they reflect the influence of several factors such as individual differences in educational attainment, choice of occupation or field of study, and working hours, among others. Nevertheless, they do provide some hints at underlying inequalities as a recent study by the OECD argues. It finds that a substantial part of the gap remains unexplained and that the most likely explanatory factor is "discrimination in hiring, career progression and opportunities" (OECD 2017: 164).

Figure 3: Development of the Gender Wage Gap in Germany and Japan since 1992



Note: Shows difference between annual median incomes.
Sources: MHLW (2016a) and OECD employment database.

A similar pattern can be observed in the case of wage gaps between standard and non-standard workers. According to the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW 2016a), wages for non-standard workers in Japan are 36 percent lower than those for standard workers are. Here, factors such as the often-probationary nature and shorter tenure of NSE play an important role (ILO 2016: 192). Yet, as with the gender wage gap, there are strong indications that discriminatory practices are also significant. For example, half of respondents in a survey of Japanese workers in NSE report that there were standard workers at their workplace performing the same tasks (JILPT 2014: 17). German research suggests there are similar patterns of wage differentials and discriminatory practices. For example, one study estimates that German temporary agency workers earn 50 percent less on average than standard workers performing similar work at client firms (RWI 2011: 25–30). The labour market expert Elke Jahn puts the gap at 20 percent (*Zeit Online* 13/05/2016)—which is still striking considering that equal pay has been mandatory since 2003 (see section 5). Wage discrimination is even a common feature of part-time work in Germany. Here, gaps stem mostly from the fact that men and women doing similar work are grouped into different job categories, with women typically being associated with categories that offer lower pay (Lembke 2016 and section 5.). Discrimination also affects many so-called “minijobber,” that is workers in marginal employment with a maximum monthly pay of 450 EUR and only partial integration into the social security system (Keller and Seifert 2013: 55–77). Research indicates that employers frequently ignore equal pay standards when using mini-jobs and consider the special legal status of marginal employment as an implicit legitimisation of unequal treatment (Bosch and Weinkopf 2016: 3).

The growth in NSE is also often blamed for a rise in the so-called working-poor. In 2014 in-work poverty affected 9.6 percent of all salaried employees in Germany, up from under 5 percent in 2004 (Spannagel *et al.* 2017: 9). Similar arguments have been made for Japan (e.g. Sekine 2008).[3] In comparison, patterns of labour market inequalities and wage inequalities therefore appear very similar in Germany and Japan. Hence, in both countries a strong case can be made for stricter equal pay.

3 The Promise of Equal Pay for Equal Work and Why It Is Never Kept

Economic as well as gender-related justifications have always been relevant for equal pay regulations. The European Economic Community (now the European Union, EU) included in its founding document, the 1957 Treaty of Rome, a clause that obliged all member states to adhere to the principle of equal pay. This was to reassure French workers that “poorer” member states would not be able to engage in social dumping practices (cf. Klein 2013). A few years earlier, in 1951, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted Convention 100, which calls for “equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.” It was ratified by Germany (1956) and Japan (1967).

The current wave of regulations again draws from both motives. Advocates of more rigid equal pay regulations argue that they are necessary because many wage disparities remain hidden, not least due to a lack of transparency. Iceland has arguably gone furthest in this regard and since 2018 obliges firms with more than 24 employees to prove they are rewarding male and female workers equally. The economic argument for equal pay draws mostly from growing criticism of dualistic labour market structures and concerns over growing social inequality. That this argument matters is visible in the fact that German and Japanese governments have both justified several reforms in direct reference to NSE (see sections 4.3 and 5.3).

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[3] Cross-country comparisons are difficult due to differences in definitions and data sources. The National Tax Authority (NTA *kokuzeikyouku*) reported that the annual earnings of 24% of all workers in Japan and 41.6% of female workers were below the poverty threshold of 2 million Yen in 2016. See NTA (2017), p. 20.

3.1 Conservative Values and Institutional Legacies

Given the long history of equal pay regulations, it comes as no surprise that most research on policies addressing gender and labour market inequalities has asked why they seem so ineffective. One strand in the literature argues that the relative dominance of conservative social values is at least partially to blame. Gottfried and O'Reilly (2002) describe Germany and Japan as countries where conservative social norms with regard to gender roles coincide with a welfare state that firmly ties the level of social security to employment status. With the dominance of traditional breadwinning models that take continuous employment until retirement as the norm, Germany and Japan put many workers in NSE at a severe and permanent economic disadvantage. The peripheral role of female workers in particular is further reinforced by traditional gender roles, which imply very different societal expectations of men and women. In such an environment, equal treatment policies are unlikely to exert enough power to uproot deeply entrenched practices. Parkinson (1989) makes a similar argument when she describes the much-criticised non-coercive approach of the first Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) of 1985 as appropriate because neither men nor women in Japan at the time were "ready" for gender equality, i.e. saw it as an important issue. In Germany, conservative values also seem to have led to the conspicuously late transposition of European directives on equal treatment from the 1970s into West German labour law. According to Klein (2013), this reflected the widespread disinterest of policymakers in the issue of gender equality.

Data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) on gender roles indicate, however, that support for traditional gender roles has since declined considerably. The percentage of respondents agreeing to the statement that the household was women's work and salaried employment was the duty of men, dropped in West Germany from 37 percent in 1994 to about 17 percent in 2012 (unified Germany). In Japan, the respective rates are 40 percent and 24 percent. Although still noticeably more conservative in comparison to Scandinavian countries (only 5 percent of Swedish respondents agreed with traditional gender roles in 2012), this indicates a massive shift and decline in conservative values.

If values no longer seem to be a major issue, what about the shadow of employment and welfare institutions geared to permanent male and peripheral female employment? Indeed, women workers have traditionally been an important source of labour market flexibility in Japan. After the oil crises of the 1970s, for example, they were most likely to be made redundant (Osawa 2002), whereas migrant workers played a similar role in Germany (Vosko 2010: 126). Overall, governments went to great lengths to protect male/domestic core workers by keeping them in employment at the expense of peripheral workers. Political economists typically argue that this division is strengthened further by the dependency of many German and Japanese firms on models of long-term skill acquisition (Estévez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice 2001). This requires workers to stay continuously employed in order to gradually improve and update their skills. Yet, it also means that anyone who leaves the job market even if only temporarily faces significant challenges when trying to secure a standard job later. In this institutional environment, Gottfried and O'Reilly argue, the process of regulating for equality "remains trapped within the policy legacy of the male breadwinner model" (2002: 51).

However, many scholars now argue that the institutional arrangements that once favoured a specific type of employment are undergoing a transformative process of liberalisation that results in more heterogeneous institutional arrangements, and much more diverse employment practices. Mechanisms that once provided a high degree of standardisation of working conditions, such as the *shuntō* wage bargaining process in Japan or collective bargaining in Germany, have become more flexible since the 1980s and mostly apply to a shrinking core of manufacturing industries (Thelen 2014). This raises the question of whether current disparities are indeed solely the result of legacies of traditional employment institutions or whether they are, at least partially, also a consequence of the gradual demise of these institutions as they no longer provide the level of standardisation of working conditions for which they used to be known.

3.2 The Politics of Balancing Flexibility and Equality

While institutional and value-based explanations remain crucial for understanding current regulatory processes in both countries, this chapter argues that one also needs to take into account the strategic dimension of policymaking and how existing institutions may be used to resolve regulatory dilemmas. In the case of equal treatment, the main balancing act for policymakers concerns curbing the impact such rules may have on the type of labour market flexibility Germany and Japan have cultivated for most of the post-war period and which they have further enhanced through reforms since the late 1980s. The reforms have tried to enhance the competitiveness of firms by expanding the use of NSE (see e.g. Eichhorst and Marx 2011; Watanabe 2015). As surveys indicate that employers value NSE not least for its association with lower labour costs and higher numerical flexibility, it is likely that reinforced equal treatment rules may be perceived as a threat to a key source of flexibility. The challenge for policymakers is therefore to do justice to both demands without fuelling political discontent or—better still—while maximising political and electoral support by appealing to various constituencies.

The need for a politics of balancing is arguably increasing as the scope of equal treatment rules expands over time. Intended as well as unintended interaction with policies concerned with different objectives thus become more likely. Such interactions can vary widely, ranging from mutual reinforcement to mutual neutralisation. Yet even if some interactions may not be foreseen, policymakers are acutely aware of agenda conflicts as they are being constantly lobbied by different interests and are subject to electoral pressures. Consequently, balancing strategies are likely used by all governments regardless of their programmatic orientation. This does not mean that partisan differences are meaningless,[4] or that social coalitions, the influence of interest groups, or legacies of institutions which emerged in very different circumstances exert no influence. Nor does it deny the relevance of other motives such as attempts to exploit the popularity of equality policies for pursuing other goals.[5] However, all of these factors do not fundamentally alter the flexibility-equality dilemma German and Japanese policymakers face when devising equal treatment regulations. The following sections will demonstrate that institutions of long-term economic coordination between business and labour inhibit strategic capacities for policymakers and thus shape policy.

4 Equal Pay Reform and the Politics of Balancing in Japan

Despite its dismal ranking in the Global Gender Gap report published by the World Economic Forum (2017),[6] the evolution of equality regulation in Japan largely resembles that of other economically advanced democracies. It has moved from soft to hard regulation and has been expanding to address an ever-wider range of discriminatory practices (Table 1). Article 4 of the Labour Standard Law (LSL, *Rōdō Kijun Hō*), the most important labour law with regard to the regulation of working conditions, bans discrimination based on gender. Since Japan ratified ILO Convention 100 and the UN convention on the elimination of all discrimination of women in 1979, this is now widely thought to establish the principle of equal pay for equal work (Nishitani 2003: 68). This section will show that one reason for the limited impact of these measures is that they have been moderated through various forms of balancing.

4 Studies on Japan (Heinrich 2017a), Germany, and other European countries (Picot and Menéndez 2017) indicate similar partisan differences. Centre-right parties are more likely to frame NSE as an opportunity for workers, implying that there may be good reasons for some differential treatment. Centre-left parties are considerably more critical of NSE, frequently linking it to precarity and calling for stricter legal provisions.

5 For example, Stratigaki (2004) argues that the EU embraced work-life balance policies through part-time work only once it considered them useful for expanding the pool of potential labour. According to Huen (2007), higher fertility rates have been an important motive for gender equality policies in Japan.

6 Japan scores particularly low in the employment and economic opportunity dimensions and, at rank 114 out of 144 countries, falls well below the “global weighted average.”

4.1 Balancing through Soft Law and Flexible Implementation

Drawing on previous analyses of Japanese labour law, four main ways of regulatory balancing can be distinguished: (i) using non-coercive provisions that encourage rather than mandate desired change; (ii) wording provisions vaguely to limit the practical implications of a legal change; (iii) delegating decision-making power to the level of the firm where exceptions to legal provisions can be negotiated; (iv) flexible implementation which can entail postponing the implementation of rules and administrative guidance in close consultation with stakeholders. The first legal vehicle is commonly referred to as *doryoku gimu* or obligation to make an effort in the Japanese context, and the first EEOL of 1985 as well as the 1994 law on the treatment of part-time workers (see Table 1) are considered classic examples of this approach. The laws called for equal treatment between men and women and between part-time workers and full-time workers respectively but did not include any penalties for non-compliance. Advocates typically argue that *doryoku gimu* are nonetheless effective because they clearly communicate norms of desired behaviour, which in Japanese society is supposed to be a strong incentive for obedience. Others see them as a temporary measure in a still unreceptive environment that paves the way for hard law that is to follow later (Araki 2006: 35; Parkinson 1989). This argument seems to hold at least for the EEOL of 1985, which has since been reformed twice and whose provisions have become more detailed and concise (Table 1). However, there are many cases where *doryoku gimu* failed to establish effective norms (Araki 2006: 32). Moreover, such clauses may merely signal that disagreements among policymakers could not be effectively resolved (Tidten 2012: 115).

The main criticism, however, is that *doryoku gimu* renders the intention of provisions meaningless. After the introduction of the EEOL in 1985, for example, firms implemented the principle of non-discrimination in hiring by introducing a two-tier career system, consisting of an administrative and a career track. The former was designed exclusively for women and offered no career prospects, i.e. no significant wage rises in line with tenure, while the latter pretty much resembled standard male employment of the pre-EEOL era. This way, firms managed to adhere to the principle of non-discrimination while effectively continuing discriminatory practices. Another form of balancing concerns using vague wording for provisions, which makes it difficult or even impossible for workers to "prove" that their rights have actually been violated. For example, the 2007 reform of the part-time worker law was widely welcomed as a much-needed hardening of equal treatment regulations (Morozumi 2009). It stated that all part-time workers must be treated equally to those who "should be regarded like normal workers" with respect to the content of their work and qualifications. However, there has not been a single case so far in which a part-timer was able to sue for better working conditions based on this provision (Asakura 2016: 176–77).

The third form of regulatory balancing, the delegation of decision-making to labour-management bodies on the firm level or individual bargaining, is particularly common in the regulation of working time. For example, the LSL imposes clear restrictions on overtime and defines maximum working hours. Yet article 36 allows firms to negotiate longer working hours and a certain amount of unpaid overtime if they conclude an agreement with an elected representative for the majority of their employees or the company union. This explains why despite nominally harsh restrictions on overtime, Japanese full-time workers still work longer hours than most of their Western European peers. Another common characteristic of Japanese working time regulation is flexible implementation, the fourth form of balancing in Japan. Several Japanese governments used this strategy when a policy of reducing annual working hours to the overall OECD average was adopted in the 1980s. In the beginning, regulatory interventions resembled soft law that was to be followed by hard law later, including fines for non-compliance. However, when it became clear that small and medium sized firms in particular struggled to reach the goals set by the Ministry of Labour, the introduction of coercive rules was postponed several times. Eventually, average annual working hours did fall, however, the main cause of this success was a massive increase in part-time jobs (MHLW 2016b: 3),[7] whereas working hours for standard workers hardly changed.

Table 1: Main Reforms Concerning Equal Opportunity, Treatment, and Pay in Japan

Year	Law	Contents
1972	Law Concerning Welfare Measures for Women Workers (勤労婦人福祉法)	▪ Improves welfare of working women by calling on employers and all levels of government to take appropriate measures.
1986	Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) (雇用の分野における男女の均等な機会及び待遇の確保等に関する法律)	▪ Replaces law concerning welfare measures for women workers. ▪ Requires government to support gender equality and women's participation in the labor market.

7 Balancing may also happen through lax enforcement of rules, although intent is usually difficult to prove.

1993	Part-Time Worker Law (短時間労働者の雇用管理の改善等に関する法律）	▪ Mandates that employers should make efforts to treat part-time workers (workers working reduced hours) equally to standard employees performing comparable work.
1999	Revision of the EEOL	▪ Abolishes all gender-specific protections, such as prohibition of work on holidays or night shifts as well as a cap on overtime. Bans discrimination in recruitment, hiring, and job placement. ▪ Encourages the use of indirect discrimination concept. ▪ Strengthens enforcement by publicly naming firms not complying with EEOL provisions.
2006	Revision of the EEOL	▪ Makes rules applicable to both men and women. ▪ Extends protections to recruitment, hiring, job assignment, and promotion; lists specific areas of discrimination. ▪ Recognizes indirect discrimination, i.e. requirements for career track jobs that de facto disadvantage women such as a requirement for geographical flexibility.
2007	Revision of Part-Time Worker Law	▪ Departure from *doryoku gimu* approach: employers obliged to inform about working conditions; non-compliance can be fined. ▪ Part-time workers who should lawfully be treated equally to regular workers can claim illegal discrimination in courts.
2014	Revision of Part-Time Worker Law	▪ Expands the scope of part-time workers who may not be discriminated against; extends list of banned discriminatory practices.

2016	Revision of the Employee Pension Insurance Law (社会保険審査官及び社会保険審査会法)	▪ Obliges part-timers who work at least 20h/week and earn above certain wage threshold in firms with more than 500 employees to join employee pension insurance (*kōsei nenkin hoken*).
2016	Law to Promote Women's Participation and Advancement of the Workplace (女性の職業生活における活躍の推進に関する法律)	▪ Businesses with more than 300 employees are obliged to monitor situation of their female employees and report to employees on male-female differences with regard to working hours, tenure, and share of management positions, while smaller firms are encouraged to take up similar measures.
2020-2021	Work-Style Reforms (働き方改革実行計画）	▪ Changes to temporary agency worker law, part-time worker law, and labour contract law to strengthen principle of equal pay for equal work (adopted in June 2018). ▪ Equal pay rules apply to large firms from 2020 and SMEs from 2021.

Note: Japanese titles refer to official names, English ones to commonly used short forms. Year indicates when provisions came/come into effect. Only includes changes that directly address employment.

4.2 Why Japanese Policymakers Balance Flexibility and Equality

This raises the question why Japanese policymakers have felt compelled to adopt balancing strategies in the first place. One obvious reason is the massive increase in NSE since the 1980s, which has partially been motivated by structural changes, such as more women taking up paid employment instead of unpaid family work as well as by changing personnel practices of Japanese employers. Already in the early 1990s, laws were adopted (Table 1) to ensure fair if not equal treatment of part-timers for instance (Heinrich 2017a). Legislative reforms such as the deregulation of temporary agency work in the late 1990s (Imai 2011) increased the need for such rules as NSE expanded further. This, however, also increased the political salience of labour policy overall. Especially after the global financial crisis of 2008, equal treatment rules and reinforced restrictions on NSE became important policy objectives under a centre-left government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which took over in 2009. According to Shinoda (2008) the DPJ's historic election win can at least in part be credited to the fact that rising inequalities related to NSE had entered the mainstream of Japanese politics.

In the case of part-time work, which in the Japanese context can refer to forms of full-time NSE as well as to jobs where workers work reduced hours, the tension between flexibility and equality is also clearly visible. It has been long known that especially female part-timers who work full-time are particularly at risk of wage discrimination (Osawa 2001). The introduction of the part-time worker law in 1993 and its revision in 2007 are direct legislative responses to this problem. However, as mentioned before, both reforms balance equal treatment and flexibility by propagating balanced rather than equal treatment. The pressure for balancing is not least due to employers' resistance to rules that impact their ability to control labour costs and use flexible personnel policies. They have increasingly used NSE to improve their cost structure and increase their competitiveness (Watanabe 2015). Employers have also rejected proposals for equal pay on the grounds that it is simply not compatible with the Japanese wage system, which reflects different levels of commitment by different types of workers rather than discrimination (Heinrich 2017b: 134).[8]

These examples show that Japanese labour policy regarding NSE and women workers has long been characterised by the fundamental tension between flexibility and equality. If anything, the challenge to policymakers regarding the flexibility-equality dilemma has become bigger due to the growing political salience of labour issues and social inequality.

4.3 "Work-Style Reform": A Breakthrough for Equal Pay?

Seen against this background, the announcement of the so called "work-style reforms" (*hatarikata kaikaku*) by the LDP-led government in 2016 may seem like the accumulation of pressure that had built up over many years. Indeed, the package of reforms appears to break with several of the established approaches in Japanese labour politics just described. It also represents an unlikely departure for the LDP from its longstanding policy of labour market deregulation combined with soft law protections. In a strongly worded action plan published in March

8 Standard workers in particular are often expected to agree to frequent relocations, e.g. to branch offices, changes in tasks, and long working hours, whereas "part-timers" and other non-standard workers are usually bound to a specific location and only work on a limited range of tasks.

2017,[9] the government emphasised its goal of "eradicating" discriminatory practices, and in order to do so it seeks a consensus between business and organised labour. Unions are thus not only invited to contribute actively to all measures devised under the plan, but their consent is viewed as essential for all regulatory decisions. Furthermore, the action plan reads like the government's official acknowledgement that the dualistic structure of the Japanese labour market is "irrational." Last but not least, the process entails the publication of guidelines[10] with the purpose of clarifying situations where equal pay is warranted. This directly addresses the problem of vague wording common in existing provisions.

The reforms were passed in June of 2018 and will be phased in over several years. Most provisions will apply to large firms earlier than to SMEs. The proposals for legislative changes published by the Labour Policy Council (*Rōdō Seisaku Shingikai, LPC*) in September of 2017[11] as well as the actual reform passed in the summer of 2018 contain changes regarding equal pay for part-time, fixed-term, and temporary agency workers. To improve the effectiveness of the rules, firms will have to make transparent how they evaluate skill levels and other attributes that have an influence on pay. However, the plan also acknowledges the employer's right to consider a range of factors in wage setting such as tenure or differences in performance. This resembles the concept of balanced treatment from previous part-time worker acts, which finds differential treatment justified as long as it is "reasonable." Kojima, North, and Weathers criticise the law for not actually mandating equal pay. Instead, the "proposal eschews the job evaluation processes successfully utilized to promote fair compensation in other countries in favour of employers' subjective evaluation" (Kojima, North and Weathers 2017: 8). This implies that despite the stated intent to break with existing practices, the new rules will make it possible to stick with the principle of "balanced" rather than "equal" treatment.

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9 Available in Japanese on the website: https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/hatarakikata/pdf/honbun_h290328.pdf (accessed 08/08/2018). It is not the only policy shift by the LDP that has surprised observers. "Womenomics" which stands for the active promotion of female employment is another example. For a critical assessment see Dalton (2017) and Schad-Seifert in this volume.

10 Available in Japanese on the website: https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/hatarakikata/dai5/siryou3.pdf (accessed 08/08/2018).

11 The LPC is officially an advisory council in the MHLW but has a long tradition as a key locus of labour policymaking where employers and trade unions participate. The text of the proposals is available in Japanese on the website: http://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/05-Shingikai-12602000-Seisakutoukatsukan-Sanjikanshitsu_Roudouseisakutantou/0000177728.pdf (accessed 08/08/2018). Details on the legal changes entailed in the 2018 reform are available on the website: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/0000148322.html (accessed 27/09/2018).

With regard to temporary agency workers, the 2018 reform introduces for the first time the principle of equal treatment for this group of workers. Essentially, their pay and working conditions have to be equal to those of comparable standard workers at the client firm. Firms who wish to "lease" agency workers must inform them about the working conditions of its own standard workers, so the agency can adjust pay and other rules regarding the working conditions accordingly. In addition, any form of "irrational treatment" (*fugōrina taigū*) is declared illegal. Since no such regulation existed previously, this indeed seems like a big step toward equal treatment. Yet, it is questionable to what extent the reform will go beyond the established standards of the part-time worker law. Once again, the exact mechanism to identify "rational" treatment is ambiguous and also the identification of a "comparable worker" may prove difficult in practice. To judge the actual implications, it may thus be necessary to assess the envisioned oversight of implementation through the MHLW and labour inspectors. Nonetheless, there are indications that standards of equal treatment may be handled flexibly. For example, the law establishes two mechanisms for wage setting, one where temporary agency workers are paid the same wage as a comparable worker at the client firm and another where temporary work agencies set working conditions by negotiating labour-management agreements either with a company union or an elected representative for the majority of workers. These agreements have to be "reasonable" in order to be deemed legal (a ministerial ordinance will provide details, but the law holds that wages of temporary agency workers in such agreements must be above or identical with the "average" of standard workers in the same line of work). The official justification for this is that workers prefer income stability over equal pay, especially if they frequently move from one assignment to another (*Asahi Shimbun* 07/06/2017). A more critical interpretation is that this constitutes a case of delegating actual decision-making to the level of the firm in order to mitigate the impact of stricter equal pay rules. It is also conspicuous in this context that the 2016 action plan refers to similar provisions in Germany, where a considerable gap between the norm and practice of equal pay for temporary agency workers exists (see next section).

In summary, it can be said that both legislative changes strengthen norms of equal treatment, but at the same time establish or sustain channels for maintaining flexibility through differentiated treatment. One motive for this may be that the key motive has always been about economic growth rather than equality. In fact, some observers see the current push for equal pay rules merely as an attempt to support "Abenomics" which aims at increasing economic growth by encouraging hikes in real wages (Kajimoto 2016). In this sense, the work-style reforms serve merely as a signal to employers to consider raising wages.

5 Equal Pay Reform and the Politics of Delegation in Germany

As is the case in Japan, German legislation on equal pay and equal treatment has become stricter over time and has expanded in scope (Table 2). This is partially due to influence from European regulations, which have forced German policymakers to address gender equality despite longstanding disinterest in these issues, although this is rarely acknowledged in domestic debates (Klein 2013: 8). One important driver has been the emergence of the European Single Market, which is based on the four freedoms of services, capital, goods, and labour. It allows European workers to work and firms to offer services anywhere in the EU. European integration has thus added urgency to the question of how competition based on differences in the working conditions of workers from different countries can be resolved. Over the years, EU regulations have established a core of basic protections designed to prevent social dumping and ensure minimum standards of equal treatment, but the issue remains highly contentious to this day.[12] These regulations, however, still leave nation states considerable room for pursuing equality policies (i.e. that go beyond European standards) on their own, also because many aspects are not covered, such as social security (Fuchs and Bothfeld 2011: 16).

5.1 Social Partnership and the Politics of Balancing Through Delegation

Not least thanks to these European influences, German labour law may appear more comprehensive and advanced with regard to equal treatment than its Japanese counterpart. In the case of part-time work, for example, equal pay has been enshrined in law since 1985 (see Table 2) and is widely considered to be effective. According to this clause, wage differentials may only reflect differences in working time. One reason for the relative effectiveness of equal treatment for part-time workers is that the German system of collective agreements provides a high amount of transparency and comparability with regard to pay scales, job classifications, and other working conditions within industries and across firms.[13] A closer look, however, reveals that the principle of equal treatment does not apply to all worker groups equally. For example, an equal pay provision for temporary agency workers was not included in law until a major reform in 2003. Previously,

[12] A recent example is the controversy about the 2018 revision of the posted worker directive. Positions of EU member states often diverge depending on whether they are mainly the recipient or origin of posted workers.

[13] Although this does not necessarily apply to all workers in the same way, agreements differ with regard to content and details, and not all types of employees may be covered.

the focus of regulation had been (similar to Japan) on restricting the use of this employment form to minimise its impact on standard employment. The partial deregulation of temporary agency work through the so-called Hartz reforms instead aimed at providing more employment opportunities in particular for the long-term unemployed. This also meant that policymakers now had to consider mechanisms that limited social dumping. As a result, an equal pay clause was included that obliges employers to raise pay levels to those of comparable standard workers at the client firm after 6 weeks of an assignment.

However, the law also introduced the possibility of deviations from equal pay if the temporary work agency signs a collective agreement with a union. This approach was inspired by the Dutch regulations that constituted an important pillar of the "flexicurity" reforms of the 1990s and 2000s, which had required the consensus of social partners (Sol and Houwerzijl 2009). By giving unions and employers the chance to negotiate flexible regulations within the framework of collective bargaining, labour market flexibility was enhanced but full deregulation avoided. This also contained the electoral risk of controversial labour market reforms, something that was particularly appealing to German policymakers before and during the Hartz reforms (cf. Vitols 2008). The change offered on the one hand the opportunity for unions to integrate more temporary agency workers into formal bargaining processes. On the other hand, it provided agencies with an instrument to institutionalise and legitimise wage differences through collective agreements. After the change, the coverage of collective agreements was quickly extended to the vast majority of German temporary agency workers, but that also exempted almost all of them from the equal pay clause.

The resulting arrangement was quickly criticised for cementing rather than alleviating inequalities between standard and temporary agency workers. Moreover, critics questioned the ability of unions negotiating the new agreements to legitimately represent the interests of these non-standard and mostly non-unionised workers, as they represented sectors which temporary agency workers were subordinate to. The issue gained additional urgency due to a new European Directive on temporary agency work (2008/104/EC) which strengthened the principle of equal pay but left it to member states to decide whether they implement the rule through labor law or collective bargaining. The German government urged the social partners to strengthen the equal pay element in their bargaining, otherwise it would be forced to pass a legal equal pay clause (Voss *et al.* 2013: 43). In response, the social partners introduced a second bargaining process, which sets pay premiums for temporary agency workers (*Branchenzuschläge*) for each sector. These agreements are negotiated between unions in the user sectors and associations representing temporary work agencies. Instead of equal pay, they establish a principle of pay premiums which increase according to the length of an assignment.

Table 2: Main Reforms Concerning Equal Opportunity, Treatment, and Pay in Germany

Year	Law	Important provisions
1980	Equal Treatment of Men and Women at the Workplace Law (Gesetz über die Gleichbehandlung von Mann und Frau am Arbeitsplatz)	▪ Transposes the 1975 and 1976 EC Directives into German law.
1985	Employment Promotion Law (Beschäftigungsförderungsgesetz (BeschFG))	▪ Mandates equal pay for part-time workers who perform equal work.
1994	Second Equal Treatment Law (2. Gleichberechtigungsgesetz)	▪ Obliges government to promote women's employment in ministries and other government institutions. ▪ Mandates protection from sexual harassment at the workplace.
2000	Law on Part-Time and Fixed-Term Contracts (Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz (TzBfG))	▪ Strengthens principle that pay and fringe benefits must be in accordance with working time. ▪ Bans any form of discrimination with regard to employment. ▪ Full-time employees get right to part-time (reduced hours).
2001	Job-AQTIV Law	▪ Supports equal participation of men and women through expansion of training measures.
2003	Temporary Agency Worker Law (*Arbeitnehmerüberlassungsgesetz* (AÜG))	▪ Introduces equal pay and treatment rules for temporary agency workers compared to standard workers at client firm (*Gleichbehandlungsgrundsatz*).

		▪ Allows collective agreements to deviate from these rules.
2006	General Equal Treatment Law (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungs-gesetz (AGG))	▪ Obliges government to monitor equal opportunity. ▪ Obliges employers to install body to which employees can complain about discriminatory treatment.
2016	Reform of Temporary Agency Worker Law	▪ Mandates equal pay for temporary agency workers mandatory after 9 months unless specified otherwise in collective agreement.
2017	Law on Pay Transparency between Men and Women (Gesetz zur Entgelttransparenz zwischen Frauen und Männern)	▪ Gives employees in firms with more than 200 employees the right to request information about firm's pay structure. ▪ Obliges firms with more than 500 employees to regularly review their pay scales and to publish a report on equal treatment and equal pay.

Note: German and English titles are not official but commonly used in media and research. Year indicates when provisions came into effect.

5.2 Why German Policymakers Balance Flexibility and Equality

The reasons for balancing in Germany are in many ways similar to those identified in the case of Japan, though there are some noticeable differences. In particular, rising unemployment after reunification dominated labour politics for many years arguably overshadowing questions of equal treatment. Structural labour market reform that promised to lower unemployment by expanding NSE became particularly popular during the 1990s and resulted, among other things, in the deregulation of temporary agency work and fixed-term employment. Eichhorst and Marx (2011) have called this a shift in German labour politics from the ideal of establishing and protecting jobs with high standards to one of high labour market participation and low unemployment.

Similar to Japan, the global financial crisis led to new criticism of the social gaps associated with NSE. Surveys show that since the 1980s the percentage of respondents who think Germany is becoming unequal has steadily grown to over 80 percent (Marx and Starke 2017: 566). This change in public opinion was fuelled by a number of high-profile scandals, many of which involved well-known and respected firms, such as car manufacturer Daimler. These scandals subsequently directed some of the growing public unease with inequality to the issue of NSE. The scandals demonstrated widespread abuse of NSE, even in seemingly well-organised and profitable industries. Most criticism concentrated on so-called service contracts (*Werkverträge*), a form of subcontracting that allowed firms to pay in some cases extremely low "wages" as workers were paid for a specific service rather than per hour. Temporary agency work also came under the spotlight for similar reasons.

In the context of the scandals, news emerged that both employment forms together constituted a third of all employees in the automobile sector (*Spiegel Online* 17/11/2013), arguably Germany's most important and prestigious industry and the sector where the institutions of German capitalism and employer-labour coordination are still most widely in use. In the following months, re-regulation of NSE became a major topic in the federal elections and the coalition talks in the fall of 2013. Employers, however, swiftly and publicly voiced their opposition to any plan that would limit the use of either form of employment. Daimler even hinted at offshoring production from Germany should the new coalition government decide to introduce a statutory minimum wage and implement restrictions on service contracts and temporary agency work (*Zeit Online* 17/11/2013). This example illustrates the political pressure policymakers face whenever they consider intervening in work relations through legislation.

5.3 Equal Pay Reforms of 2017

The 2017 reform of the temporary agency worker law (*Arbeitnehmerüberlassungsgesetz*, AÜG) was the final measure of re-regulation the coalition partners agreed on in 2013. Along with new restrictions to the maximum length of individual assignments, the law introduced a reinforced equal pay clause, obliging agencies to pay equal wages from the first day of an assignment. This abolished the six-week waiting period that had been in effect before. However, the law maintains the provision that the social partners can negotiate alternative regulations through collective agreements. Only a few months after the revision came into effect, the influential IG Metall trade union (metalworkers) announced it had negotiated a new agreement with agencies (Specht 2017). Henceforth, temporary agency workers will receive equal pay not from day one of an assignment, but will instead, contrary to the law, receive pay premiums in line with tenure (*Tarifzuschläge*) below equity. Only temporary agency workers whose assignment goes beyond the new legal limit of 18 months will receive a salary that is higher than for comparable standard workers.

This agreement has been criticised on the grounds that the reinforced equal pay rule will do little to lift the wages of most temporary agency workers since the average length of assignments is only a few months. Some critics have explained this outcome with the organisational basis of IG Metall, which consists of workers in client sectors who may profit from additional job security if temporary agency workers are used as a flexibility buffer. Only few temporary agency workers are among its ranks. This hints at the sometimes-ambivalent role of unions in the politics of balancing. In many respects, collective bargaining in Germany seems to play a role similar to the options for negotiated deviations on the firm level in Japanese legislation.

The preference for collective bargaining over legislative interventions, similar to Japan, comes at a price, e.g. some sources of inequality are rarely addressed. According to Lembke (2016), many collective agreements entail provisions that amplify or even cause unequal treatment between men and women. This especially concerns wage disparities that emerge due to differences in job classification. Frequently, women and men fall into different job categories with different remuneration scales even when both perform similar work. Policymakers have been reluctant to address the issue through legislation, which is often credited to the constitutionally enshrined principle of *Tarifautonomie* (autonomy in wage bargaining). It is widely assumed that it creates high hurdles for legislative interventions. In principle, however, governments enjoy considerable leeway especially in cases where the social partners are unable to resolve issues of social hardship among themselves, which may well include cases of discriminatory practices. The fact that policymakers do not use this power suggests that it stems from a general strategic reluctance rather than from legal constraints. The arrangement also limits the ability of social partners to address inequalities contained in collective agreements. For example, when the main union federation for workers in the service sector, Vereinigte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (Ver.di), pledged to implement the principle of gender mainstreaming for job classifications in all of the collective agreements it negotiated, it eventually abandoned the plan due to a lack of progress (Lembke 2016: 17, footnote 28).

The discussion has shown that public pressure on policymakers in Germany has grown in recent years to address gender discrimination more boldly. Nevertheless, they remain reluctant to intervene legislatively through hard law. The most recent example of this is the 2017 announcement of a dialogue between the Federal government and the social partners on gender discrimination in collective agreements. The dialogue would discuss all sorts of possible counter-measures, but not any kind of legal change ("*auf untergesetzlicher Ebene*").[14]

6 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the legislative approaches the German and Japanese governments have adopted in recent years to support equal treatment of workers of different statuses, especially for women in non-standard jobs. It has been argued that to explain the conspicuous gap between a growing number of equal-treatment oriented legislation and persistent gaps with regard to pay and other working conditions, research should also consider the electoral considerations and strategic options of policymakers to deal with policy conflicts. The comparison shows that equal treatment legislation in Germany and Japan entails a political trade-off between labour market flexibility through differentiated treatment and equality through obliging employers to treat workers equally.

The shape of this flexibility-equality conflict is similar, not least because both economies draw on very similar sources of labour market flexibility. Due to the gradual demise of institutions based on male breadwinning models described by Gottfried and O'Reilly and others and thanks to changing attitudes toward gender roles, policymakers in Germany and Japan are today arguably under more pressure than ever to support equal treatment through regulatory interventions. At the same time, they are also under pressure from employers who vehemently resist attempts to limit their flexibility produced by differentiated treatment of workers they have gained in recent years. So long as policymakers find strategic options at their disposal that allow them to balance both conflicting demands, they will use them. The discussion also suggests that arguments of institutional path dependency (especially in the sense of limiting options) or explanatory models that interpret policy as a direct response to public opinion are at least partially misleading. Instead, actual legislative reforms appear to be determined just as much by strategic electoral considerations and lobbying as they are by the strategic options available to policymakers for mediating conflicts. It is also interesting to note that many institutions of labour-management coordination often described as fundamental elements of the German and Japanese variants of non-liberal capitalism (e.g. Hall and Soskice 2001) seem to provide most of these strategic capacities. This does not mean that regulatory change is impossible; however, it does suggest that exceptional political pressure is required to motivate policymakers to go beyond their latent preference for a politics of balancing.

[14] See German website: https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-und-arbeitswelt/lohngerechtigkeit/80398 (accessed January 2018). The section on the dialogue has been taken off the site since.

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U. Meier-Gräwe et al. (Eds), *Family Life in Japan and Germany*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26638-7

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