

“Women, the Family, and Labor in Japan”

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Abstract

Research shows that many women in industrialized nations opt out of the workforce due to increasing family demands and unsupportive labor policies that do not account for this burden. One state in particular that exemplifies this trend is Japan. If women in Japan are opting out of the workforce to take care of their children because of unsupportive labor policies, what explains this discrepancy? The purpose of this capstone is to investigate the role of state labor policies in Japan on inhibiting women's workforce participation. To investigate this paradox, I conducted cross tabs analyses of women's employment pattern data and public opinion data collected in the International Social Survey Program's Family and Changing Gender Roles III survey. Additionally, in my analyses I used data from six other countries in three different capitalist welfare regime typologies - liberal, conservative, and social-democratic - to note whether trends in Japan reflected trends in any of the three regimes.

Introduction

A recent article in the *Washington Post* describes a new policy in Japan that allows a woman filing for divorce to claim as much as half of her husband's company pension. After the new law went into effect in April 2007, the divorce rate rose by 6.1 percent. Many men blame the divorce spike on the long hours companies require men to work, leaving them little time to spend with their wives. This, they believe, negatively impacted their marriages (Harden 2007). While men work, women are left to take care of the children and other household chores. While this policy addresses family law in Japan, it also raises questions about other areas of gender issues in Japan. Do women have access to company pensions outside of their husbands? If not, what keeps them from attaining access to jobs that grant them pensions? What prevents women from working in these prestigious jobs? How does this affect men and women in a familial context?

The state of labor as well as family politics in Japan is puzzling to many because it defies conventional wisdom. Many women opt out of the workforce in order to take care of their children; the level of gender segmentation in employment is correspondingly quite high (Haussman and Sauer 2007). Approximately two-thirds of working women opt out of the workforce when they become pregnant rather than take maternity leave (Weathers 2005). Scholars have argued that state policies, particularly with respect to labor and family planning policies, reinforce this behavior (Haussman and Sauer 2007; Mikanagi 2001). One might expect that these factors would encourage larger families. Yet, the fertility rate in Japan has steadily declined since the 1970s. How can these observations be reconciled? In this study, I explore the relationship between state welfare policies and patterns of women's labor throughout the family

cycle. In addition, I probe the reasons that the Japanese labor market persistence of gender segmentation.

In this paper, I ask “What is the extent to which the state welfare policies affect women's workforce participation in Japan?” The Japanese workforce is highly segmented by gender, with women typically occupying jobs in the “mommy track.” These jobs often are only part time and do not allow flexibility for men or women to take time off for the purpose of child care. Requirements like longer hours and frequent travel time discourage many women from taking these jobs. The Japanese government has made a considerable effort to comply with the UN’s Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to secure equal opportunity for women in the workforce since the 1980s. One example of this is the development of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1985. Despite policies like these aimed at ensuring women’s access to the workforce, many criticize the lack of policies requiring businesses to make changes in job requirements to ensure that women may be promoted to full time positions but can still take time off to raise children (Edwards 1988). Scholars have argued that the Japanese government’s welfare policies are “de-familial,” meaning that they require parents to provide the main support for childcare and eldercare (Crompton 1997).

State labor policies support the equal opportunity for women in hiring, training, and promotion (Molony 1995). In 1999, the Japanese government passed a revised Equal Employment Opportunity Law to strengthen maternity leave requirements, to include protection against sexual harassment, and to expand the 1985 EEOL in order to ensure that women are guaranteed an equal opportunity in all stages throughout the workforce, from recruitment to retirement (Sakai 2001). Despite these policies assuring equal opportunity, a variety of factors, including an increased age at which women decide to marry for the first time from 22 in the

1960s to 28 in the 1990s, cause many to assume that women opt out of the workforce, or are forced out, in order to take care of their children (“Japan” 1980; Klitsch 1994).

One main reason that women put off entering into marriage is because they want to focus on having a career rather than having a marriage and family (Klitsch 1994). This research also indicates that women are having children at later ages, and they are also having fewer children than they did decades ago. All of these factors contribute to Japan’s fertility crisis. Despite this population crisis, abortion and contraception are widely supported in Japanese society. In fact, while formal restrictions on abortion exist, the state rarely enforces them (Norgren 1998). In this respect, the state appears to support women’s reproductive choices. But if research maintains that the lack of efficient state regulation on labor causes women to opt out of the workforce to raise children, why is the fertility rate so low?

This question is important because a wide body of research cites Japan as having unique contradictions in government policy and women’s labor. For example, research shows the state appears to support women’s equality of opportunity in the workforce, but neglects to pass supportive welfare policies that would allow women to work outside of the family. Currently, research criticizes Japanese social security policies for neglecting women and forcing single and older women into poverty. Married women in Japan stay at home to provide childcare and eldercare not covered by the government, and as a result do not have time to work outside of the home (Mikanagi 2001). Research therefore suggests that this equal opportunity legislation is merely rhetoric.

However, this research neglects to explain that these contradictions between a state’s values and the effects of its policies frequently exist in other countries. A wide variety of nations have conflicting values, often ensuring equality of opportunity while discouraging married

women from working, especially if they are also mothers to small children. One example of this phenomenon is the Netherlands. The Netherlands is often characterized as having liberal, egalitarian views but female employment remains relatively low (Treas and Widmer 2000). While the state, reproductive health, and labor are all intertwined in Japanese politics, their relationship remains unclear. Do the state's policies affect both women's decisions to work and to have a family? Are other factors, such as social stigma around working women and family size, more indicative of whether women will work outside the home in Japan?

In this paper, I investigate the ways in which state regulation in Japan affects women's workforce participation. This question describes the puzzling way in which the state, labor, and family planning are interconnected in Japan. To answer my research question, I used the capitalist state welfare framework that Esping-Andersen's research outlines. Past studies on the relationships between the state, the family, and labor have used this framework to analyze the women's participation in the workforce in capitalist welfare states like Japan (Crompton 1997; Stier, Epstein, and Braun 2001; Treas and Widmer 2000). I used cross tabs to compare patterns in women's employment in seven different countries including Japan to note any similarities in workforce participation. Also, I used cross tabs to examine the public opinion of each country to women's workforce participation to observe whether the different state welfare regimes were macrocosms of the public's opinion and if Japan reflected this trend.

In the next section of the paper, I outline the background literature on that addresses the puzzle of how the state, family planning, and labor all affect women. This section is divided into three main areas that address the bodies of research conducted in state regulation of family planning, state regulation of labor, and state regulation of both reproductive health and labor in

Japan. Following the literature review, I outline the methodology for the project and detail both the framework that I use. I then present and analyze the results of the tests.

Literature Review

The state plays an essential role in preserving the sexual subordination of women as a social group (MacKinnon 1991). Many feminist scholars have theorized the ways in which the state regulates gender, and thus help establish and maintain power relationships between genders. Two critical means by which governments do this, scholars argue, are through policies involving reproductive health and labor law.

Reproductive Health and State Regulation

Reproductive health is both a social and individual phenomenon, and one facet of this phenomenon in Western cultures is abortion. The political determination of “who should decide” whether or not a woman should have an abortion is inherently sexist, primarily because it forces a regulation of sexuality (Petchesky 1980). Additionally, political actors such as politicians and interest groups frame reproductive health as a conflict between the individual need of each women to control their own bodies (and decide for themselves if they should have an abortion) and society’s need to regulate their freedom of choice for both public health and morality reasons (Moen 1981). In this sense, the issues of children as a collective good, women’s decision to have children or not, and the practice of sexual regulation become social issues.

Some Western feminists, however, find the rhetoric of “freedom of choice” limited because it neglects serious issues that affect women’s reproductive health. For example, reproductive health also encompasses a range of health care options often lost in political rhetoric, like protection from disease and violence, sexual enjoyment, and access and control

over reproductive health information (Dixon-Mueller 1993). The “right to choose” may be an important issue, but a true definition of reproductive health encompasses a larger, more comprehensive idea of healthcare and family planning.

State policies have the ability to prevent women from labor force participation as well as to monitor and restrict their behavior. For example, an examination of the African Diaspora through a framework encompassing race, gender, and class oppression revealed that globalization, embodying “reproductive imperialism,” spreads coercive family planning policy aimed at restricting access to health services for racial “others” (Kuumba 1999). Domestically, governments and corporations alike use pregnancy to regulate which women can work and the settings in which they can work. Fetal health regulations serve as protectionist policies aimed at women specifically, despite the fact that scientific studies show that hazards in the work place affect both women’s and men’s reproductive health (Daniels, Paul, Rosofsky 1990; Bayer 1982). Wendy Brown (1992) also addresses the issue of state interference in women’s reproductive health in her article “Finding the Man in the State.” She notes that several policies, with state-assisted child support policies serving as one example, often invite “extensive state surveillance of women’s and men’s daily lives, work activities, sexual and parental practices, as well as rationalization of their relationships and expectations (Brown 1992).”

State policies play a limited role in the decline of fertility in industrialized countries, however. In the 1950s, fertility rates across these countries slowly began a decline that became more rapid in the 1970s (Bongaarts 2002; Kojima and Rallu 1998). While countries that support progressive family planning policies and the availability of reproductive health clinics show a pattern of increased contraception use, contraception use is not the main cause of fertility crises (Hirschman 1994; Klitsch 1994). Most scholars attribute this fact to the increasing age at which

women marry and have children rather than state policies (Bongaarts 2002; “Japan” 1980). Problems in linking government policy with the decline in fertility arise from a wide range of causes. Researchers conducting social experiments rather than empirical experiments face hardships when attempting to analyze this problem because social experiments are hard to completely control (Hirschman 2001).

Labor Policy and State Regulation

Is public opinion in industrialized nations supportive of women working outside the home? Traditional notions of gender roles assume that men need to be in the position of the breadwinner so that women have the ability to stay home to take care of the children and household responsibilities. It is because of traditional gender ideologies that research tends to focus on the question of why women work rather than why men work. Belief in such a strict “separate spheres” ideology that holds that men should only occupy the public sphere while women remain confined to the private sphere finds less support today in industrialized nations like Japan than in decades before the 1980s (Treas and Widmer 2000). While this tendency persists, variation across industrialized nations must be noted. More familistic countries like Japan support the “separate spheres” model more than other “de-familistic” countries. Also, public opinion overall is more favorable toward married women working when it does not interfere with other perceived female responsibilities, such as taking care of small children.

Similarly, public favorability of women’s work also depends on the time that women spend on work. For married women, public opinion is less favorable toward those who work outside the home more than others. Other factors, like the difference of perceived importance of family in individuals’ lives, affect how acceptable it is in industrialized countries for women to work outside the home. It is also overall more acceptable for single women that do not have the

responsibility of raising children or maintaining a household for her husband to work (Treas and Widmer 2000). This is an example of how many states, including Japan, often reflect societal views of gender roles in their social policies. While there are exceptions to this phenomenon, these past studies show state policies aligning with the public's view on how "acceptable" it is for women to participate in the public sphere.

Other research examines the relationship between labor and the state by investigating the relationship between the growth of demand for female labor and the decline in the gender gap of labor force population also (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2001). While the demand for female labor in the workforce creates more female participation in traditional "women's jobs," it also helps women gain access to other positions to which they did not have access in the past. It is also important to note that when married women gain access to the work force, public support for women in nontraditional labor roles also increases (Treas and Widmer 2000). Other scholars maintain that factors that determine whether women will search for paid work outside of the home are family size and economic need (Chaudhury 1979).

While different scholars offer different explanations for the cause of gender segmentation, research shows that increased participation benefits women who want to work in both traditionally female jobs like clerical work and traditionally male jobs, such as jobs in information technology and engineering (Chaudhury 1979). Scholars have often used case studies of gender segmentation in different countries to examine the way gender segmentation in labor dictates why women participate. Israel, for example, reflected patterns present in industrialized nations about women's participation in the workforce. In industrialized nations, women are largely underrepresented and mostly confined to part time work (Padan-Eisenstark 1973). Women may choose jobs on the basis of how "easy" it will be to leave and reenter when

they decide to take time off to have children, but institutional discrimination within labor still remains. Segmentation found in industrial countries also represents the larger problem of gender discrimination in the workforce through pay equity (Bergmann 1989). Based on this past research, a strong connection exists between the political climate of a country and the extent to which women participate in the workforce.

Some government reproductive health policies, seemingly well-intentioned, serve as protectionist policies that directly prevent women from participating in the workforce. These protectionist policies overwhelmingly affect women instead of men. Research indicates a lack of state regulation on male reproductive health as well as an overall failure to address male health concerns. Most reproductive health policies are directed towards women, and as a result governments tend to control women's reproductive health more than they control men's reproductive health in many countries.

State Regulation of Women's Reproductive Health and Labor Force Participation in Japan

Similar patterns arise in literature about the state's regulation of reproductive health and labor in Japan- reproductive health policy affects labor, and labor policy affects the choices women make involving their reproductive health. Rather than protectionist regulations interfering with women's participation in labor outside of the family, the lack of policies that address comprehensive health needs of women negatively impacts women's participation (Dixon-Mueller 1993). While the state provides opportunities for women to apply to jobs, short-sighted social security policy hinders their ability to work. Society largely expects women to provide childcare and expects men to work to support the family. Therefore, the lack of welfare policies that would support women's work outside of the family ultimately hurts women's

participation in the workforce. Women are unable to work in jobs without flexibility needed to balance a full-time corporate job with the responsibilities they have at home.

Research approaches the topic of labor in Japan by addressing the inefficiency of specific policies and the lack of important policy that would aid women's participation in the labor force. Analyses of the 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) discuss the efficacy of this specific policy in correcting widespread gender segmentation in the Japanese workforce. Scholars suggest that such a policy does little to correct women's place in the "mommy track" in corporate jobs (Schoppa 2006). Despite the policy, many women are hired for jobs in which they will not be eligible for promotion or can only work part time. Companies have little incentive to make jobs flexible for either women or men who wish to take time off of work to raise children (Molony 1995). Additionally, research notes that the EEOL does not provide a job evaluation system to address the issue of equal pay for equal work, and the EEOL also does not address the issue of "indirect discrimination." Employment discrimination based on different management tracks, for example, qualifies as indirect discrimination. Women overwhelmingly occupy part-time and temporary positions, and therefore any discrimination disproportionately affects them. Many Japanese companies give allowances for dependents to the employee who is "head of the household." Most heads of the household are men, rendering most women ineligible for these benefits. This data is an institutionalized form of the family wage – which was an argument used in many trade unions that a man's wage should be enough to support a wife and children (Sakai 2001). Women's wages are, as a result, viewed as only supplemental to men's wages. Although women have an equal opportunity to participate in the workforce on paper, equal opportunity does not exist in reality.

Because women are the primary childcare-givers, however, this discrepancy largely affects them more than men. Therefore, the gender segmentation of household labor affects women's ability to compete in the workforce in addition to the inflexibility of jobs in terms of requirements for long hours and geographic mobility (Edwards 1988). In other areas of the workforce, the economic burden of earning below the minimum wage on middle aged women in particular leads them to opt out of the workplace (Kawaguchi and Yamada 2007). This phenomenon reflects both conventional wisdom and past research on the topic. Conventional wisdom on the topic of women in the Japanese labor force suggests that women opt out of the workforce either because of the inflexibility of the available jobs or the insufficient wages available to them. In other words, public and private spheres are determined on gendered lines. Because women have the responsibility of bearing children, they are confined to a "reproductive sphere" or "private sphere" while men are able to participate in the workforce, or a "productive" or "public" sphere. Also, this past research suggests that familistic countries like Japan will support policies that do not favor women working outside of the home (Crompton 1997; Treas and Widmer 1997).

Why do so many women opt out of the workforce in Japan? One possible way to explore this paradox of the limited amount of women in the workforce is to look at research about women's activism around labor. Japanese women traditionally organized around labor issues in different ways. Although the Japanese government and women's groups did not interact as equal partners, women's groups often served as intermediaries in Japan's social management programs before World War II (Garon 1993). Recent studies show that women's groups today play a different role in Japanese politics. Half of the women's labor groups in Japan offer networks for professional women while the other half critique gender discrimination in the workforce (Khor

1999). The discussion of labor issues is not limited to professional work outside of the home, however. The *Shufu* (or Housewife) Movement in Japan provides women with an important outlet to organize around matters that affect their family. As housewives, Japanese women demanded changes in policy areas related to their role as family shoppers, such as consumer safety legislation (Khor 1999). The position of housewife has an important role in Japanese society, perhaps explaining why it is socially acceptable for women to opt out of the workforce or how women have internalized their reproductive responsibilities.

Japan's experience with reproductive health policy also appears to contradict the trends displayed in other industrialized countries. The Japanese government legalized abortion long before the legalization of birth control pill in 1999. Similarly, relatively little controversy or stigma around abortion exists in comparison to birth control in Japan. While the government does place restrictions on abortion, it rarely enforces them. Women seeking abortion in Japan must meet specific requirements. Time limitations are based on the viability of the fetus, and abortion is usually allowed through the twenty-second week of pregnancy. Japanese law also allows for abortions for a range of causes that makes the procedure available to many women in Article 14 of the Maternal Protection Law. Examples of these include rape, hereditary mental or physical illnesses, leprosy, or if the continuation of the pregnancy would cause harm to the mother's health due to physical or economic reasons (Norgren 1998). A case study examining specific social and historical factors in Japan suggests that unique conditions contributed to this discrepancy. Norgren (1998) suggested that the Buddhist views on the fluidity of life and death in addition to Buddhist services for the souls of aborted fetuses contributed to widespread acceptance of abortion. Stigma around birth control, however, arose because of widely publicized health problems that it caused upon its legalization in the West (Norgren 1998).

While Japan's birth control policy strikes many as unique, its current fertility parallels similar crises in other developed nations. Birth control, in addition to other forms of contraception, does not play a significant role in Japan's fertility crisis as it does in other developed nations. Japan and France, in comparison to Russia as well as nations in the European Union facing a declining birth rate, experience this decline because of the increasing age at which women decide to marry (Kojima and Rallu 1998; Klitsch 1994). Women are spending more time on finishing college degrees and participating in the workforce before they decide to marry. In addition to this factor, there is also an increasing dissociation between marriage and parenthood in Japanese society in particular because of the decrease in marital births. Because women in Japan often must choose between their work outside of the home and rearing children within the home, research suggests that this is a main reason why women postpone marriage (Kojima and Rallu 1998). Surveys indicate that in the 1980s women reported more unfavorable views about marriage and greater acceptance of being single later in life (Klitsch 1994).

While current research shows the impact of the state, labor, and reproductive health on gender in Japan, further research is needed to demonstrate the interaction between all three factors. Because of the difficulty in testing the demand for female labor, a significant amount of the literature is primarily theoretical rather than empirical (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2001). Studies focusing on labor issues or reproductive health issues often use statistical data from surveys pertaining to that specific subject matter. For example, a study about the declining fertility in Japan used data collected from the 1974 Japan Fertility Survey in its analysis ("Japan" 1980). However, for a comprehensive study on the interaction of these three factors in Japan, further research must use both theoretical and statistical analysis.

Several articles analyzing state regulation, reproductive health, and labor used the Family and Changing Gender Roles II survey conducted in 1994 by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) (Treas and Widmer 2001; Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun 2001). These studies framed the statistical data about marital status, gender, and occupation within the context of the governments of the country's analyzed in their respective studies. This survey, in addition to using the feminist theoretical frameworks outlined in studies about the role of patriarchy in state regulation of gender, will help develop a complete analysis of the interaction of the state, labor, and reproductive health in Japan.

Methodology

To test my research question, I used the Family and Changing Gender Roles III survey conducted in 2001 by the ISSP. The ISSP, founded in 1983, is an ongoing program of cross-national collaboration on social science surveys. The survey I used is the second survey conducted that examines the family and changing gender roles. It contains data from 23 countries, including Japan. Respondents were persons over the age of 18, and they were asked to comment on their opinion about family issues and changing gender roles, such as working parents, division of housework, and management of household income. Demographic variables collected in the survey include respondents' sex, age, education, marital status, personal and family income, employment status, household size and composition, and occupation (Treas and Widmer 2000). Studies using this survey analyzed the results in terms of Esping-Andersen's research on capitalist welfare states.

Theoretical Framework

Esping-Andersen's research (1999) focuses on the typology of capitalist welfare states like Japan and links them to the behavior of the women's market (Crompton 1997; Stier, Lewin-

Epstein, and Braun 2001; Treas and Widmer 2000). This research differentiates between three models of welfare regimes: the social-democratic welfare state, the liberal welfare state, and the conservative-corporatist welfare state shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Three Esping-Andersen Welfare Regime Typologies

Welfare Regime Type	Characteristics
Conservative-Corporatist	1. most familistic 2. eligibility for social programs dependent on social statuses (e.g. family and religion)
Liberal	1. programs directed toward working class and poor 2. means-tested assistance prevalent
Social-Democratic	1. most de-familistic 2. middle class is included in social programs 3. social rights are universal

The social-democratic model is the most “de-familistic” of the models, with a universal approach to social rights that includes the middle class in social programs. The liberal model, however, provides only limited social insurance with programs directed toward the working class and poor. In the conservative-corporatist welfare regime, social principles are based on social statuses (for example, family, class, religion, and tradition) rather than egalitarian standards like the social democratic model (Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun 2001). This model is the most “familistic.” Within the capitalist welfare state model, “defamilization” facilitates women’s paid work – state programs subsidize the cost of support and care of dependents within the family. Without the need to take care of parents, women can use that time to participate in the workforce. Social democratic Scandinavian countries exemplify this model. Japan, in addition

to countries in southern Europe, exemplifies the reverse effect, or a highly familistic model of the capitalist welfare state (Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun 2001).

In familistic countries, the government allocates a low amount of spending on family services. Accordingly, women compensate for the lack of care by opting out of the workforce to provide care for the dependents on the family (Treas and Widmer 2000). In order to answer my research question about the relationship of state regulation, reproductive health, and labor, I analyzed the results of the ISSP survey within Esping-Andersen's framework to find a possible correlation between the "familistic" capitalist welfare state model and the demographic variables associated with working women, modeling this part of my analysis on the 2001 study by Stier, Lewin-Epstein and Braun. I conducted a cross-tabs analysis of women's participation in the workforce in their home countries, controlling for regime type. Although my focus is Japan, I included two countries from each welfare regime type as a point of reference for Japan. The Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun (2001) study defines Australia and the US as part of the liberal regime, Germany (West and East) and Austria as part of the conservative regime, and the Netherlands and Sweden as part of the social-democratic regime.

This study analyzed the employment patterns of women during two periods which there was a "high family demand" demand for women – the times that these women's children were in preschool and when the children were school-aged, in addition to the period in the women's lives while they were married but before they had children. I added to this research by including the period after all the children have left home to see if the participation rates increased when the family demand on women decreased. Women reported during these time periods whether they participated in the workforce full time, part time, or not at all (Stier, Lewin-Epstein, Braun 2001).

Research also shows that governments institutionalize family and gender ideologies in their national policies. Because of this phenomenon, the type of state welfare regime may also explain differing views on married women's paid work between liberal, conservative, and social-democratic states. Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun (2001) note that one indicator of the success of state interventions is whether state ideology is internalized by citizens and manifest in public opinion. Therefore, in my analysis I examined the relationship between the welfare state model and opinion of the respondents in the survey to married women's work outside of the home.

In order to observe the relationship between, I used the responses featured in Rosemary Crompton's study (1997) to analyze public opinion about employment and family life. In a cross-tabs analysis, Crompton's study compares the percentages of respondents that agree and disagree with the following statements:

1. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job;
2. A man's job is to earn money, a woman's job is to look after the home and family;
3. A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children;
4. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay;
5. Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income; and
6. Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.¹

In order to observe the relationship between welfare regime type, public opinion, and Japan's employment patterns, I controlled for both welfare regime type and gender in order to observe whether public opinion of both men and women reflects familistic policies, reflecting the methodology of the Crompton study.

¹ The statement "Most women have to work these days" was also included in the 1997 Crompton study, but was not included in the updated Family and Changing Gender Roles III survey. I exempted it from my study.

Hypotheses

I hypothesize that state policies in Japan discourage women's participation in the workforce. Correspondingly, I predict that the attitudes of Japanese men and women reflected in the survey will reflect the impact of these state policies. As Treas and Widmer (2000) note, people in industrialized countries tend to have more favorable opinions towards married women working outside the home overall, especially if this work is subordinate to taking care of their children. However, beliefs about children and maternal responsibility largely condition attitudes towards female participation in the labor force as well (Treas and Widmer 2000). Therefore, I expect that public opinion in Japan will be less favorable toward women's workforce participation than in the other industrialized countries I have included in the study.

If my hypothesis is correct, then public opinion will correlate with the "familistic" views of the state. People currently in families will have less favorable opinions about married women working, and working women will have more favorable opinions about married women's work outside of the home than non-working women (Crompton 1997; Treas and Widmer 2000). Because Japan is an industrialized country, I predict that public opinion will not show overwhelming negative attitudes to women working outside of the home. This is because there is still variability between industrialized nations, with research showing the Japanese holding more support for the "breadwinner husband – homemaker wife" model than Germans or Swedes (Treas and Widmer 2000). Because of this, I predict Japan's results will show results similar to the liberal regime than the conservative or social democratic regimes.

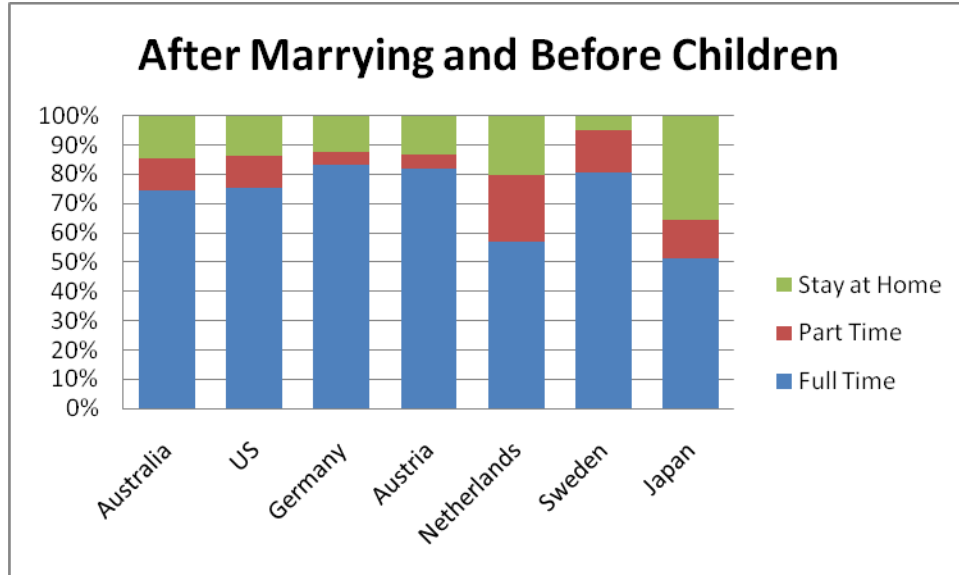
Results

Women's Workforce Participation

In my first cross-tabs analysis, I looked at the responses to survey question 3 in the Family and Changing Gender Roles III Survey. Part of question 3 reveals the extent of the female respondents' participation in the workforce while they were married and before they had children. I initially expected that my results would resemble results reported in literature using the Family and Changing Gender Roles II Survey, particularly the study conducted by Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun. In 1994, the majority of countries in liberal, conservative, and social-democratic regimes reported working full time before having children except for the Netherlands. The conservative regime countries, Germany and Austria, displayed the lowest rate women working part time at 4.4% and 4.8%, respectively. Overall, I found that all of the countries in my study reported higher rates of women working full time in 2001 than in the 1994 data set.² Women in liberal regime countries in 1994 did not report full time workforce participation past 70%, and women in conservative regime countries in 1994 did not report full workforce participation past 80%. Both liberal and conservative regimes have now exceeded 70% and 80% participation, respectively.

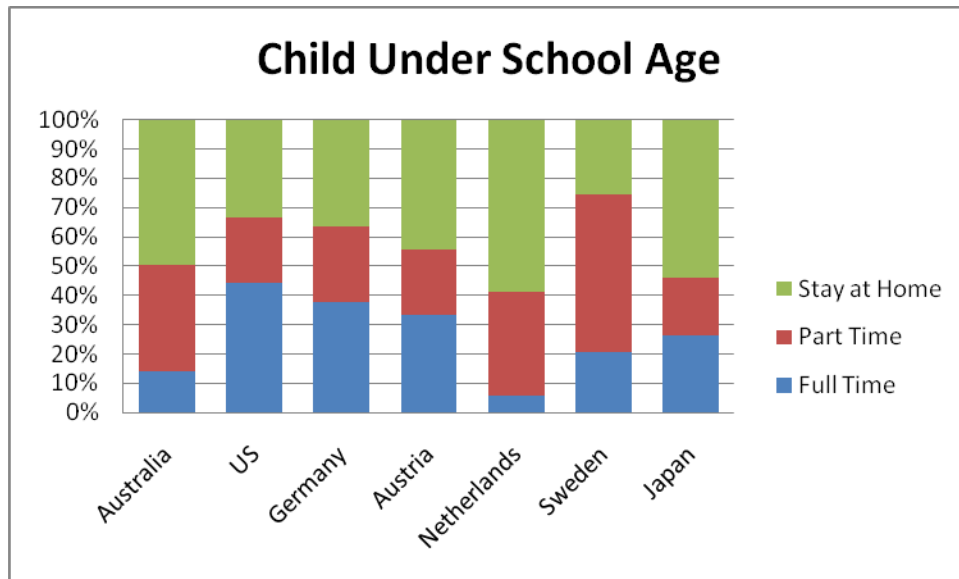
² This excludes Japan, which was not included in the Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun study using the 1994 Family and Changing Gender Roles II Survey.

Figure 2a: Women's Workforce Participation after Marrying and Before Children



However, striking differences exist in this category between the 1994 and the 2001 survey data. All countries including the Netherlands (57.2%) and Japan (51.4%) in my study reported working full time before having children. Sweden's data also exhibits differences from the 1994 data depicting women's participation in the workforce. In the 1994 findings, more women in Sweden stayed at home than worked part time, but in 2001 this was reversed. 14.3% of Swedish women in the survey worked part time and 5% of Swedish women stayed at home. It is important to note that Japan had the highest rate of women staying home before marriage- over one-third (35.4%) of Japanese women in the survey reported staying at home, while only 13.2% of women reported working part time. On the other hand, conservative regime countries have the highest employment rate of working women before marriage, with 83.3% of German women reporting full time employment and 81.9% of Austrian women reporting full time employment. In this stage of the workforce, Japanese employment patterns most resembles women's employment patterns in the Netherlands, but not the social-democratic regime as a whole because Sweden's data differs markedly.

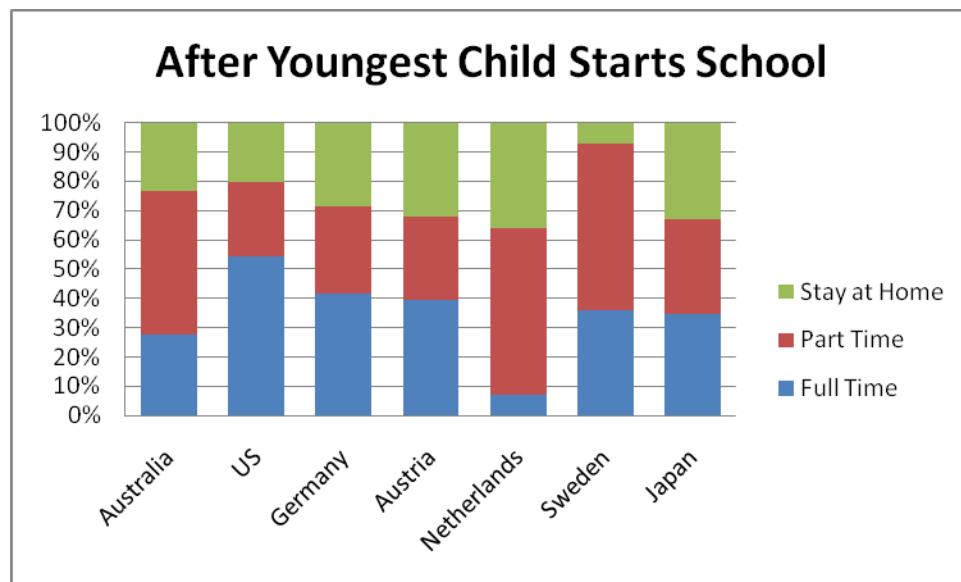
Figure 2b: Women's Workforce Participation When There Is a Child under School Age



The next category I looked at was the employment participation of women who had a child under school age. The Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun study indicated that the segments of the questionnaire indicating women's workforce participation while having children were especially important, because results are more likely to indicate constraints placed on women's participation when family demands are high within this timeframe rather than earlier when demands are relatively low (2001). In all countries, Japan included, there is a large shift in women's participation in the workforce. Women in Japan and the Netherlands report the two largest rates of non-employment, with 53.8% of Japanese women staying at home and 58.8% of Dutch women staying at home. When examining other aspects of this data, however, it is evident that there is a wide variation across regimes. For example, in the liberal regime, 14.2% of Australian women worked full time while 44.2% of American women worked full time. In the social democratic regime, only 5.9% of Dutch women worked full time while 20.6% of Swedish women worked full time when they had a child under school age. Out of all of the regimes, the conservative regime showed the most consistency during this stage in the family

cycle. 37.8% of German women worked full time while 33.2% of Austrian women worked full time. The two countries also exhibited similar percentages of women working part time and not at all during this stage. What is most noticeable at this stage is that Japanese women's rates of employment did not change as dramatically as all of the other countries in the study. While most full time participation rates fell 50-60 percentage points, full time participation in Japan fell from 51.40% to 26.3%, only a difference of 25.1%. There are also similar discrepancies in the part time work category, with part time employment slightly increasing by 6.6%. 18.4% more women stayed at home in Japan in this stage than in the pre-child stage, although all other countries showed a more dramatic transition. However, one must take into account the fact that Japan started off as having the highest rate of female non-employment by about 15% at first. In this stage, it still has the second highest rate at 53.8%.

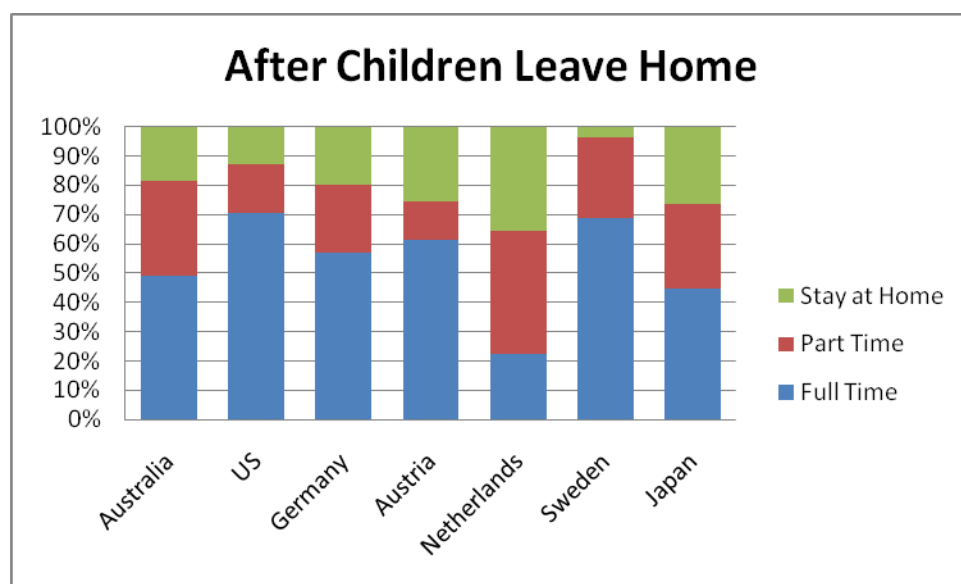
Figure 2c: Women's Workforce Participation after Youngest Child Starts School



In the third category, I looked at another stage during the family cycle where the demands on women begin to decrease- the stage after the youngest child starts school. Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun (2001) note that during this stage in the 1994 data, women across the

countries began to return to the workforce at varying levels. This general analysis holds true for the my data set as well. In Japan, roughly 1/3 of women reported participating full time, part time, and not at all. One major outlier in this stage appears to be the Netherlands, with 7.2% of women participating in full time labor, while 35.9% of women stayed at home and the majority (56.9%) of women worked part time. The US is the only country in this stage with a majority (54.5%) of women worked part time. The US is the only country in this stage with a majority (54.5%) of women participating in full time labor. While the conservative regime countries show the greatest similarity in behavior, the liberal regime countries and the social democratic countries differ greatly. Almost a majority of Australian women (49.2%) work part time but only 25.4% of American women work part time. While part time participation is almost identical in the Netherlands and Sweden at this stage in the family cycle, the levels of participation in full time labor and in non-employment are strikingly different. For example, 35.9% of Dutch women stayed at home while 7.10% of Swedish women stay at home. Also, it is important to note in this stage that the levels of participation in Japan do not greatly reflect those of any country or any welfare regime pattern.

Figure 2d: Women's Workforce Participation after Children Leave Home



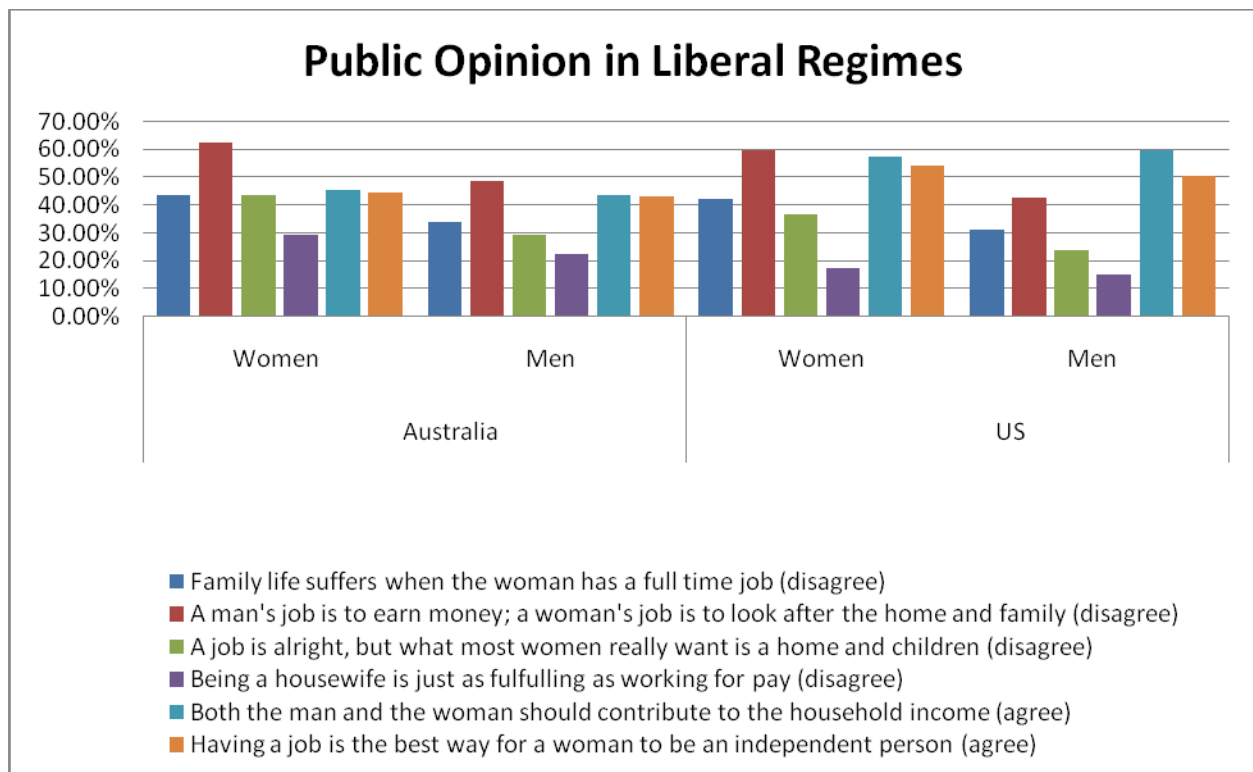
The last category I looked at in my study was the employment pattern of women after their children had left home, which was not analyzed in the Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun 2001 study. I included it in this study to observe whether or not women returned to the workforce after the children leave the home and women have less a low level of “family demand.” What is remarkable about this data is that only two countries come close to returning to the level of full employment that they exhibited before children, the US and Japan. After the children leave home, 70.7% of women in the US participate full time compared to the 75.5% of women that participated before having children. In Japan, 44.8% of women participated in the workforce after the children leave compared to the 51.4% of women that participated before having children. No country exceeded past levels of full time participation, and the two countries with the largest levels of non-employment at this stage were the Netherlands (35.7%) and Japan (26.3%). The largest percentage of women in each group belonged to the full time employment category, except for in the Netherlands where most of the women participated in the labor force part time. A majority of women (over 50%) returned to full time participation during this stage in the family cycle except in Australia, the Netherlands, and Japan.

Overall, both the Netherlands and Japan proved to be outliers in this portion of the study. The Netherlands problematized the category of “social democratic” welfare regime, as the survey data from the Netherlands often mismatches the survey data from Sweden. Japan was unique in that it started off with relatively low full time participation levels and never showed any dramatic shifts in labor force participation as family demands on women shifted. At a first glance of this data, it seems as though more factors affect the rather than just the welfare regimes of the state.

Public Opinion

The next part of my study examines the public opinion of each country in each welfare regime. Figures 3a-3d show the different responses of men and women to the certain statements about women working and its effects on family life in the three different welfare regimes and in Japan. By comparing public opinion with the shifts in employment patterns in each country, I hope to observe to what extent a relationship exists between public opinion and regime type, as well as how the relationship of the data affects my analysis of Japan.

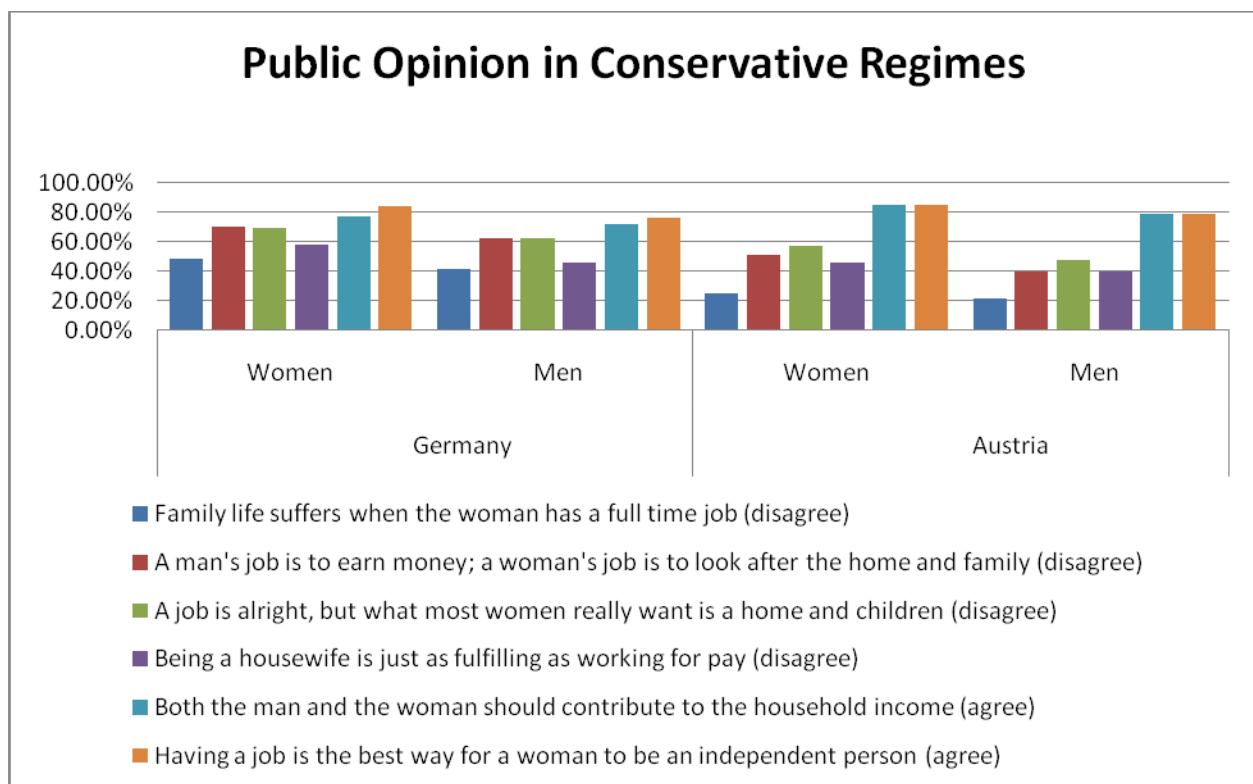
Figure 3a: Public Opinion of Women Working: Liberal Regimes



I first noticed that public opinion results in each country were a better indicator of women's employment patterns than the welfare regime types overall, potentially signifying the weakness of the welfare regime categories. There was a large variation within regime types as well as between countries in different regime types. In the liberal regime countries, women held more progressive views than men in every category. Both Australian and American women and

men were outliers in the category “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.” Only 29.1% of Australian women and 22.3% of Australian men disagreed with the statement, and only 17.3% American women and 14.9% of American men disagreed. Overall, the responses of women and men in liberal regime countries were more uniform than responses in other regimes. Australian respondents held slightly more progressive views than American respondents, except with respect to the last two categories of about the men and women contributing equally to the household income and the best way for a woman to be independent.

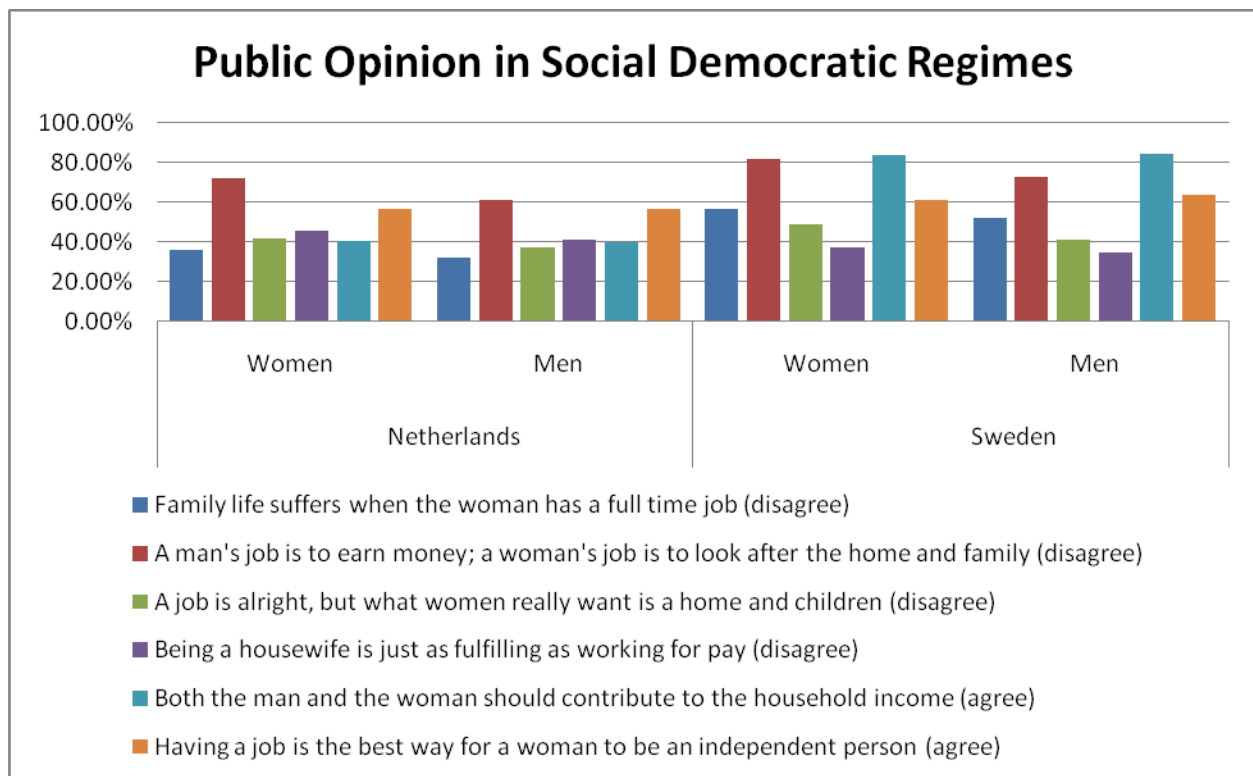
Figure 3b: Public Opinion of Women Working: Conservative Regimes



Conservative regime countries showed significant points of similarities and differences. Interestingly, both respondents in Germany and Austria had a higher percentage of progressive responses than Sweden to the questions of both women and men contributing to the household income and having a job as a way for women to be independent. Progressive opinions in these

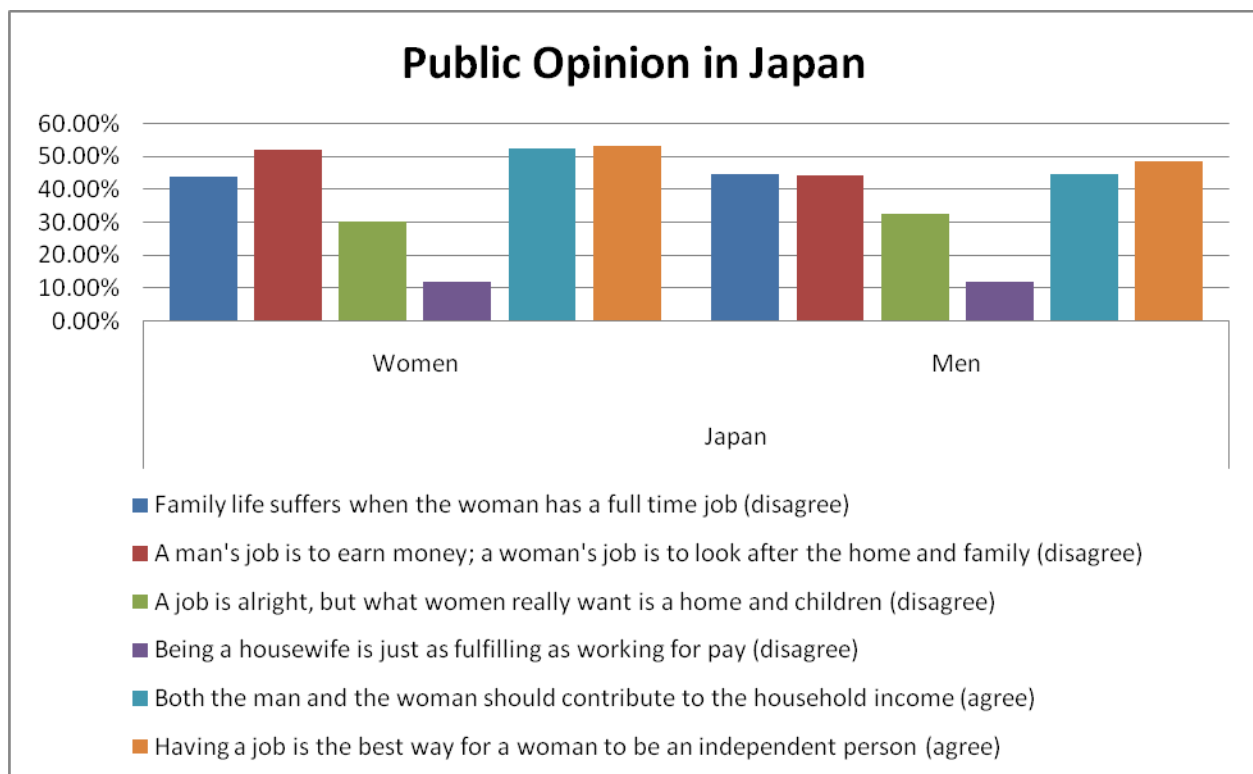
two categories were noted in both women and men, but these results were not universal within the conservative welfare regime. For example, Austrian women held much more progressive views than Austrian men in the statements about the differences between a man's job and a woman's job, as well as the statement asserting that what most women really want is a home and child. The statement about the differences between a man's job and a woman's job also created complications between Austria and Germany. 69.3% of German women and 61.4% of German men disagreed with the statement, while 50.2% of Austrian women and only 39.1% of Austrian men disagreed. When taking into account the types of questions asked the survey respondents, it seems as though the conservative regime countries agreed most over the questions of women's autonomy, whereas disagreement arose in the questions concerning conventional notions of gender roles.

Figure 3c: Public Opinion of Women Working: Social Democratic Regimes



The countries in the social democratic regime, the Netherlands and Sweden, differed from each other in most categories. The statement “Both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income” caused the most difference. 40.5% of Dutch women and 39.8% of Dutch men agreed, while 83.7% of Swedish women and 84.1% of Swedish men agreed with the statement. However, both Dutch and Swedish women and men both disagreed with the statement “A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family.” (72.4% of Dutch women and 61.2% of Dutch men disagreed, while 81.7% of Swedish women and 72.9% of Swedish men disagreed.) Also, it is interesting to compare these countries with the responses of the countries in the conservative welfare regime. Overall, the Netherlands and the Sweden yielded less progressive responses than Germany and Austria. This is surprising – one might assume that countries which have family-supportive policies would also have more progressive attitudes. However, in the case of these two regimes, the opposite is true.

Figure 3d: Public Opinion of Women Working: Japan



Japan's public opinion reflected moderate support to low support of women's autonomy and of progressive gender roles. 87.3% of Japanese women and 87.9% of Japanese men agreed with the statement "Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay." Similarly, about two thirds of both Japanese women and Japanese men agreed with the statement that what most women really want is a home and children. The responses from the Japanese women and men resonated most with the responses with the liberal regime countries, with some variation as Australian responses tended to be slightly more progressive than the American responses. In the Japanese responses there was also minimal difference between the responses of the women and men.

After considering all of the results of the data, I rejected my hypothesis that women's levels of workforce participation as well as public opinion in Japan would show patterns similar to the liberal regime countries – there was wide variation between countries within the liberal regime, and Japan stood as an outlier for many other countries in terms of employment patterns as well. However, I did not reject the hypothesis that public opinion in Japan would reflect employment patterns. In Japan and in most countries in the study, there were similarities between the level of women's participation in the workforce and public opinion of women working in their countries.

Analysis and Discussion

For the first section of my analysis looking at employment patterns, there were many differences both within and between the regimes that I did not anticipate when formulating my hypotheses. There were large differences in women's full time workforce participation between the Netherlands and Sweden, with women staying at home at a much greater rate in the Netherlands than in Sweden. Less pronounced differences occurred between Australian and

American women in the liberal welfare regime countries also. Also surprising, the participation in the conservative regime countries were a lot higher than expected. In fact, women's full time employment was higher than many other countries that have more family-supportive welfare policies. Japan also defied my initial expectations.

In my hypothesis, I originally predicted that women's employment patterns in Japan would reflect patterns in the liberal welfare regime countries. However, these patterns did not reflect either Australian or American patterns. Rather, Japan's results seemed most similar to the Netherlands. In both countries, there was a relatively low rate of full time participation in all 4 periods that were examined in the study. In the second section of my data, the results were initially puzzling as well – the conservative regime countries showed higher approval of women working than did most other countries in the study that had more family-supportive policies. The Netherlands and Japan both showed moderate and sometimes low support of women's participation in the workforce. Sweden's support for working women was high in both female and male populations, yet not as high as the conservative regime countries in many cases. While the Esping-Andersen framework has been used in many studies, this data suggests that countries that are labeled as liberal, conservative, and social-democratic do not necessarily adhere to these labels. There is a need for further research to shed light on the complex ways that welfare regimes affect women's work outside of rigid labels.

While these results initially seem puzzling, there are interesting patterns that emerge. The welfare regime type did not have much affect either on women's employment patterns or on the public opinion.³ However, the public opinion responses in each country overall reflected women's employment patterns in their own country. The moderate (and sometimes low) support

³ It should be noted that this study only analyzes national politics. Different forms of local-level politics and their effect on women's labor patterns are exempted from this study.

of women's autonomy or changing gender roles reflected the moderate to low participation of women in the Japanese workforce. Likewise, the relatively high workforce participation of women in the conservative regime countries was similar to the strong support of changing gender roles and women's workforce participation. The differences between Australian women's participation in the workforce from American women's participation were not found in the public opinion results for each country. Australian women consistently showed moderate to low participation in the workforce after having children, even after all the children had left home. However, the American data showed the opposite pattern. American women generally participated more than their Australian counterparts, but for the most part the public opinion was less supportive. Because workforce participation levels vary depending on when women decide to have children and when the children leave home, there will be at least some variation between countries – although this does not account for all the discrepancies in the data. Despite the puzzling differences found in the Australian and American cases, I concluded from these results that public opinion in the state served as a better indicator of the extent of women's workforce participation than the welfare regime type of the state.

The variation between countries in the regimes could have many causes. One shocking disparity existed between the Netherlands and Sweden. How could a “progressive” state like the Netherlands be so disproportionately unsupportive of women's workforce participation? The Netherlands has been characterized in several studies as a state with low support of women working, despite its otherwise progressive policies (Stier, Lewin-Epstein and Braun 2001). Upon further examination of the Netherlands, it appears that the state only recently started reforming its policy affecting labor to meet the requirements set forth in the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A report from the United

Nations indicates that in 1999, the Dutch government began reviewing its policies in several areas to comply with these standards. Several new policies were enacted, such as the Work and Care Bill that provides for a four week leave for adoptive and foster parents, a flexible three month parental leave, and a 10 day leave per parents per year for the caring of a sick family member (UN 1999). The Family and Changing Gender Roles III survey was conducted in 2001, perhaps too soon to see if there has been more progress developing in the Netherlands due to the recent changes. While the policies' goal is to increase women's workforce participation, it could also affect Dutch public opinion. As more women are visible in the workforce, public opinion may shift to become more accepting of women's changing roles in Dutch society.

There were also noticeable differences between Australia and the US that at first seemed puzzling – how can two seemingly similar countries display opposite patterns in women's participation? Women in Australia face poverty after retirement due to the privatization of retirement plans affecting men and women differently. According to a 2001 study, legal forms that the government adopted during the privatization process assume that the employee participated in the workforce continuously for about 40 years (Smith 2001). This is mostly the experience of men, however, as women are burdened with taking care of children and may opt out of the workforce partially, completely, or may take a break from the workforce. Women spend half the time in the workforce than men spend in the workforce, and they are also paid lower wages. Women also do not accumulate retirement savings from their household work, and therefore men and women are affected differently in Australia by this policy (Smith 2001). This unique paradox in Australia may partially contribute to the differences that arise between Australia and the US in terms of women's participation in the workforce. However, more

research should be conducted in order to fully understand structural differences that could affect the large discrepancies between patterns in Australia and the US.

While in Japan the level of public support is similar to the level of women's participation in the workforce, it is important to note that women reentering the workforce tend to reenter part time (roughly one-third of women in the Family and Changing Gender Role III survey). This trend in Japan has been increasing in recent years as both the supply and demand of part time or temporary workers. Many of the people filling part time or temporary positions are middle aged women, yet research suggests that women take these positions when there are institutional barriers to women's full time employment (Yu 2002). While research portrays this as a problem specific to Japan, it is evident from this study that many capitalist, industrialized countries face these same difficulties. Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands all had sizable percentages of women returning to the workforce part time when the family demands decreased, for example. While many studies focus on the problems unique to individual states, it would be useful for research to focus on how these problems affect a wide range of nations.

Finally, there were limitations to my study that could cause researchers to overlook the complexities of the paradox. My analysis of the regime types included only two different types of countries for each type of welfare regime. All the countries in the study were industrialized countries as well, which is another factor that should be considered in future studies. The Esping-Andersen framework also is limited because it only applies to capitalist states. Furthermore, the Family and Changing Gender Roles survey only includes 24 countries. All of these limitations on the study of women's employment should focus on broader categories to better understand patterns of women's labor.

Conclusion

I originally conducted the study of women's employment patterns over the family cycle and public opinion of women's workforce participation to observe how Japan fit into the welfare regime categories liberal, conservative, and social democratic. After analyzing the results, I realized that these welfare regime categories are not the best way to analyze women's employment patterns. Initially, this seemed puzzling because the Esping-Andersen framework has been used in many other studies to show similarities between state welfare policies and women's employment patterns. But looking at the data in all the countries revealed similarities between the public opinion in a country and women's employment patterns in the same country. I then rejected my hypothesis that Japan would align with liberal welfare regimes countries for a few reasons. There was too much variation within each category for me to be able to classify which employment patterns could be classified as occurring in a liberal, conservative, or social democratic welfare regime. Women's workforce participation in Japan was considerably lower than countries classified in all three welfare regime categories.

However, I did not reject my hypothesis that the public opinion in Japan would reflect women's employment patterns in the country. The similarities between the employment patterns and the public opinion could reflect the extent that patriarchal values have socialized both women and men in Japanese society, or how women and men have internalized these values. Likewise, there were similarities between the level of support for women working outside the home and the percentage of women working through the cycle of family demand for the majority of states in the study. Future research on women's employment patterns should monitor these evolving levels of women's participation to see what other conditions serve as better indicators of women's workforce participation than welfare regime type. Studies about women's

workforce participation should include both Japan and the Netherlands to analyze their seeming departure from the trends in other industrialized countries.

Appendix

Table 1: Did the female respondent work outside the home full time, part time, or not at all under the following circumstances?

	Australia	US	Germany	Austria	Netherlands	Sweden	Japan
After marrying and before there are children							
<i>Work full time</i>	74.70%	75.50%	83.30%	81.90%	57.20%	80.70%	51.40%
<i>Work part time</i>	11.00%	10.80%	4.40%	4.80%	22.50%	14.30%	13.20%
<i>Stay at home</i>	14.30%	13.70%	12.30%	13.20%	20.30%	5.00%	35.40%
Number of Respondents	582	482	473	853	374	378	455
	Australia	US	Germany	Austria	Netherlands	Sweden	Japan
When there is a child under school age							
<i>Work full time</i>	14.20%	44.20%	37.80%	33.20%	5.90%	20.60%	26.30%
<i>Work part time</i>	36.30%	22.40%	25.60%	22.50%	35.30%	54.10%	19.80%
<i>Stay at home</i>	49.50%	33.50%	36.60%	44.30%	58.80%	25.20%	53.80%
Number of Respondents	537	496	476	914	388	412	429
	Australia	US	Germany	Austria	Netherlands	Sweden	Japan
After the youngest child starts school							
<i>Work full time</i>	27.50%	54.50%	41.60%	39.50%	7.20%	36.10%	34.80%
<i>Work part time</i>	49.20%	25.40%	30.10%	28.60%	56.90%	56.80%	32.50%
<i>Stay at home</i>	23.20%	20.10%	28.30%	31.90%	35.90%	7.10%	32.70%
Number of Respondents	512	422	399	759	348	352	388
	Australia	US	Germany	Austria	Netherlands	Sweden	Japan
After the children leave home							
<i>Work full time</i>	49.00%	70.70%	56.90%	61.60%	22.50%	69.00%	44.80%
<i>Work part time</i>	32.60%	16.80%	23.40%	12.90%	41.80%	27.30%	29.00%
<i>Stay at home</i>	18.50%	12.50%	19.70%	25.60%	35.70%	3.70%	26.30%
Number of Respondents	390	273	295	450	213	245	259

Table 2: Public Opinion of Working Women: Liberal Regimes

	Australia		US	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
V6: All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full time job (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	43.40%	33.90%	42.30%	31.10%
V11: A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	62.70%	48.90%	59.60%	42.80%
V7: A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	43.60%	29.00%	36.50%	23.50%
V8: Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	29.10%	22.30%	17.30%	14.90%
V10: Both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	45.30%	43.50%	57.40%	59.60%
V9: Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	44.40%	43.20%	54.20%	50.70%
Number of Respondents	705	607	672	481

Table 3: Public Opinion of Working Women: Conservative Regimes

	Germany		Austria	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
V6: All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full time job (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	47.60%	41.30%	24.40%	20.50%
V11: A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	69.30%	61.40%	50.20%	39.10%
V7: A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	68.90%	62.00%	56.10%	47.20%
V8: Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	57.80%	44.90%	45.30%	39.00%
V10: Both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	76.50%	71.70%	84.60%	78.10%
V9: Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	83.60%	75.50%	84.40%	78.30%
Number of Respondents	674	636	1217	728

Table 4: Public Opinion of Working Women: Social Democratic Regimes and Japan

	Netherlands		Sweden		Japan	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
V6: All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full time job (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	35.80%	31.70%	56.60%	51.90%	44.10%	44.90%
V11: A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	72.40%	61.20%	81.70%	72.90%	52.20%	44.40%
V7: A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	41.80%	37.00%	48.40%	40.70%	30.20%	32.80%
V8: Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay (percentage <i>disagreeing</i>)	45.40%	41.00%	36.80%	34.30%	12.20%	12.10%
V10: Both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	40.50%	39.80%	83.70%	84.10%	52.50%	44.80%
V9: Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person (percentage <i>agreeing</i>)	56.70%	56.80%	61.30%	63.80%	53.30%	48.80%
Number of Respondents	626	567	559	461	577	461

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