



# CAREER AND CARE: DIFFICULTIES WOMEN FACE IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A Comparative Study between the Welfare States  
of Japan and the Netherlands

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## Introduction

Difficulties women experience in career development have been widely discussed and are a worldwide issue. This becomes evident when looking at, for instance, the number of women in management positions. Companies' top functions are still mainly dominated by men and research has shown that Japan, among others, is a country which is still very much behind in placing women in top positions. Research by Devillard et al. (2013: 18) has shown that only a meager 2% of the women in Japan have been able to reach top positions. Even though the number of women in top positions in the Netherlands is not very impressive either, they have done considerably better with 15% of the top positions being populated by women (CBS 2014: 115). One of the reasons women are having difficulties might be the division between work and caring tasks, also one of the most recurring themes in female career development research. This paper is aimed at the relation between the form of welfare state in these two countries and how these models work for combining care of children with a career. In which form of welfare state would women be most successful in combining a career with family care tasks?

As just stated, a comparison between the Netherlands and Japan will be made in this paper. Why? Because my first thought was that it is interesting to see to what extent two, as western classified countries, would be different and similar at the same time. From a personal point of view, this particular subject of research had sparked my interest, since my internship in a Japanese hotel. I noticed how everyone was always busy and did not have much spare time. Some women in the company did have young children, also in higher positions. This made me wonder how they were able to combine both a full-time job with the care for their children, while in the Netherlands, many women choose to work part-time. However, part-time workers often do not seem to populate the top positions. It sparked the question what the welfare state could do to support families in combining their caring tasks with their vocational lives.

Difficulties in finding a balance between work and family might be one of the factors impeding women from climbing to top positions. In the case of the Netherlands it might seem very beneficial to be able to work part-time in order to take care of one's family, because part-time work is fairly high-quality compared to Japan. However, working a part-time job might still mean that one has to give up on any wishes along the lines of career development. Looking at this work-family balance in both the Netherlands and Japan will therefore give interesting insights in how views are in terms of gender roles and the career development of women. Traditional views of women being responsible for taking care of the family, which are embedded within the Japanese and Dutch culture, also transfer to the corporate culture.

The corporate culture might also be one of the reasons causing career obstructions and therefore, this paper will also discuss what kind of policies have been created in order to encourage women to develop their careers and to lift obstructions that are standing between women and career development to higher positions. This has been proven to be difficult, since action has been taken, but there are still many companies reluctant to invent policies. Even though Japan and the Netherlands have existing forms of legislation on the matter of female discrimination within the top positions, obviously they are not enough to take care of the problem.

To form a base, this paper will first discuss different points of view in order to form a framework and to explain what theories on welfare state models exist and what these models imply for the development of careers. With this theoretical framework, I will be able to come to a conclusion on what form of welfare state will be best to combine care and career.

## **1. Views and discussions on types of welfare state and its influence on gender roles**

The employment situation of women has always been and subject of discussion. Not only in Japan and the Netherlands, but worldwide countries deal with the vocational inequality of women in the labor market. This inequality expresses itself in various ways; in wage differences, horizontal segregation and in the development of careers. The discussion on why women have different career tracks and on how their careers develop differently from those of men has been ongoing and widely discussed. There are many factors which influence career choices. In this research in particular, I aim to examine how the welfare state can influence career development and what effect it has on volitional decisions. In this thesis, literature on the matter of career development will be discussed with the goal to form a framework for the rest of this thesis and to exemplify what theories on this subject have been made in past and current discussions.

Hobson (1990) explains that women are often vulnerable within the family, vulnerability is linked to women still being dependent of a breadwinning husband. The extent in which family members can make decisions is in turn linked to earning power. Hobson argues that resources and tasks are distributed and consumed unequally within the family, because certain family members have more power within the family than others. For instance, in a situation in which the man is the breadwinner, the wife would have less power and less saying in which tasks are divided. Therefore, Hobson (1990: 236) thinks that this creates a desire to escape dependency and distributional conflict can be seen as an important motive for women to seek employment, regardless of the earnings of their husbands.

The reasons why the question of power is important with regard to this thesis' subject, is that when conflicts or frictions within the points of view of two family members exists, the

bargaining power of the man or woman becomes stronger when the other is dependent on them. In other words, in welfare states in which gender equality is more pronounced, both the man and woman of the family would have equal bargaining power. This is important when discussions or frictions exist about who has the responsibility for care tasks, for instance.

Again, in this case pros and cons exist within welfare states. For instance, the United States and Sweden are at opposite ends of the overall gender equality spectrum, but in case of dependency the differences are less pronounced. While in countries where gender equality plays a big role, even the slightest differences might be the biggest. When using Sweden as example, the differences between earned wage between men and women are very small, but even this small difference might still determine that the one with the largest salary might have the best bargaining position and it comes down to the women who has to take responsibility for the care tasks eventually (Hobson 1990: 243). Hobson (1990: 244) even argues that states which have less gender equal social securities and less protection from the welfare state end up having the most egalitarian marriages. Of course this depends on certain factors, such as the amount of hours worked by women.

Fraser (1994) further argues that while some welfare states might be more focused on the needs of the ones who fulfil the caregiver role within the family. Many welfare states are mainly focused on one earner, the man. Even though the male breadwinner and female homemaker models are no longer preferred and outdated, women who are unmarried or divorced are still struggling, since they do not earn a breadwinner's wage, comparable to that of men. Fraser (1994: 592) adds to this that in current societies, in which divorces, single mother households or unmarried women are getting more frequent, welfare states need to adjust themselves in order to protect people from uncertainties.

Orloff's research (1996) concludes that there is not one particular form of welfare state that can achieve gender equality. Fraser (1994: 593) does agree with this point of view, but adds that there are forms of welfare state that might get close to achieving gender equity. She therefore introduces two models: the "breadwinner model", which aims to achieve gender equity through promoting women's employment and state provision of employment-enabling services such as day care; and the "caregiver parity model", which promotes gender equity by supporting unpaid care work and in which the state provides caregiver allowances.

A recurring theme in Fraser's research (1994) is gender equity, which cannot be defined by using terms such as equality and difference. Gender equity is a much more complex term, which is a compound of five basic principles (Fraser 1994: 596-599). First of all, the anti-poverty principle, in other words, the prevention of poverty by the state. Secondly, the anti-exploitation principle, which means the prevention of exploitation of vulnerable groups. Third, the equality principle, which exists of three conceptions: income equality, leisure-time equality and equality of respect. Fourth, the anti-marginalization principle, in which social policy should promote women's full participation equal to that of men in all areas of social life. And fifth, the anti-androcentrism principle, which means that states should not set men as norm and should not expect women to assimilate to them. Gender equity can only be realized when it satisfies all of these five principles.

When applying these principles on different types of welfare state, Fraser (1994) argues that one can measure whether or not a state is able to achieve gender equity. Furthermore, it would point out the states which are most gender neutral. Fraser actually applied this theory on her two models of welfare state, but it could also be applied to models of "female" and "male welfare states" proposed in the research done by Orloff (1996).

According to the five principles theory, it appears that fulfilling every single one of them is rather rare and quite ambitious. However, it does give a good measurement of the female friendliness of a state. For instance, the breadwinner model, which promotes women's employment and is most popular in the United States, would do great at its anti-poverty and anti-exploitation regimes. However, it would do much less for the promotion of leisure-time equality, since it assumes that all of women's current domestic and care work responsibilities can be shifted to the market or state, which is unrealistic. Above all, this model would just promote women in their employment. It would not do much for the work culture and existing stereotypes that still exist (Fraser 1994: 603-605). While women would be able to obtain breadwinner jobs, women who do not strive for such positions, would still be vulnerable.

On the other hand, the caregiver parity model, which aims for equity by supporting informal care work and is most popular in western Europe, fulfills the five principle in a different way. For instance, whereas the breadwinner model might be good for achieving anti-marginalization, this model actually reinforces the view that women should be caregivers, which might also strengthen stereotypes within the volitional culture. On the other hand, it would do better at achieving leisure time equality, because this model would support women in switching from full-time to part-time positions (Fraser 1994: 608).

Even though these models could have a major positive impact on gender equity, these two models are yet two ideals which are not completely realized yet in any state. Even though these models seem utopian, obviously they are not utopian enough, since they still seem to lack in certain terrains, such as vulnerability of women who fall outside the system (Fraser 1994: 610).



This is where the role of the welfare state plays an important part. According to Orloff (1996: 2) feminists argued that the welfare state should adopt more responsibilities, such as day care, education, housing, medical services and other services dedicated to the care of dependent citizens. Even though these responsibilities are not primarily seen as responsibilities of the state, gender issues have often been highly politicized. Furthermore, feminist movements in English speaking countries have most often aimed their analyses at family, sexuality and the labor market to locate male sources of power. However, they agree that the state is crucial for gender and sexual politics and that the state is constitutive of gender relations (Orloff 1996: 4).

However, there is a separation in visions whether the state reproduces gender inequalities or whether it ameliorates gender inequalities. On the one hand, there is argued that the state does influence the form of gender relations, but the hierarchy remains. Key mechanisms that make sure this gendered hierarchy remains are: gendered divisions of labor, in which women are responsible for caregiving tasks and domestic labor; the family wage system in which men earn a higher wage, which implies that they are breadwinners for an economically dependent family of women and children and traditional marriage, which also implies the gendered division of labor and a double standard of sexual morality (Orloff 1996: 6). Furthermore, states tend to reproduce gender through the process of the claiming of certain benefits. Men tend to make claims on the welfare state as workers, whereas women make claims as family members. Therefore, welfare states are often gendered in “female welfare states” or “male welfare states”. This phenomenon is inevitably linked with inequality (Orloff 1996: 7).

On the other hand, there are analysts who argue that welfare states ameliorate gender relationships. There seems to be a relation between the type of welfare state, in terms of the expenditures on social welfare, and the feminization of poverty. In the case states have a lower expenditure on social welfare benefits for families, poverty among women seems to be much lower. However, these arguments do not take into consideration that certain groups are vulnerable to poverty, which becomes clear from the example of the Japanese welfare state. Even though labor market conditions are very unequal, the feminization of poverty is not an area of concern, since there are very few single mothers. If there were greater numbers of single mothers, the opposite would be the case (Orloff 1996: 9, 10).

Somewhat comparable to the theory on female and male welfare states, Skocpol (1992) distinguishes between “paternalist” and “maternalist” welfare states, in which the former means that men are seen as heads of the dependent family who receive benefits based on labor-force participation and the latter means that female-dominated public agencies implementing regulations and benefits for the good of women and their children (Orloff 1996: 13). This particular case also shows that states that offer positive action and policies towards women, affects women workers’ progress (Orloff 1996: 24).

In any case, both groups of analysts who support the ideas of a state which reproduces or ameliorates gender inequalities, do not take into consideration the complexity of policy variation. Both ideas only consider uniformity or linear dimensions of variation. When analyzing whether or not the welfare state influences gender relations, there must also be thought about other factors which might influence the reproduction of amelioration of gender relationships, such as vulnerability of certain groups of people to vulnerability of falling into poverty. Furthermore, states that conduct “familist” policies, seem to assume that there has to be one

breadwinner (often the husband) and one who is dependent on the breadwinner (often the wife), who has to take care of all (unpaid) caregiving work (Orloff 1996: 24).

Alongside these two theories on gendered welfare states, came a new development: Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990) introduced a new view on comparative scholarship and introduced variation across national systems. With the introduction of three dimensions that characterize welfare states, he proposes that the labor market and the state are related to each other in terms of the effects of the welfare state on social stratification. In his view, three regimes exist: liberal, conservative-corporatist and social-democratic welfare capitalism (Orloff 1996: 26).

Within these dimensions, conservative regimes promote subsidiarity, in other words, the woman's dependence of the family. Social-democratic regimes promote individuality and provide more services to those responsible for care work (which still is assigned to married women). Finally, liberal regimes do not care for gender relations and leave service provision to the market. Of course, there is not one single pure case of these regimes and many feminists have protested against the neglect of gender within this model, but these three dimensions do offer an interesting view on the relation between state and care work.

Orloff (1996: 28) reviews research done on Esping-Andersen's work and it becomes evident that every regime seems to have its pros and cons in terms of care work. For instance, in a country where little public provision might be offered, mothers' caregiving work might be better supported, which is actually the case in the Netherlands (Orloff 1996: 28).

Using the foregoing theories on which welfare state or state model is the best, together with all the criteria they have to fulfill, I would like to see which one applies to the Netherlands and Japan and see how these systems fulfill and how they lack in fulfilling the needs of women

when it comes to career development and providing support in these tasks. Obviously, as I mentioned before, there is not one model or one particular form of welfare state that will satisfy everyone. Some models, like the ones used by Hobson's (1990), are quite utopian and are more an ideal that can be strived towards. However, these models do give a good impression on the reasons why care and career might be either easy or difficult to combine. They provide us with the information that certain welfare state forms are not beneficial for women to combine family with work whatsoever, which is important to keep in mind when comparing Japan to the Netherlands.

## **2. The Japanese form of welfare state and work-family balance**

### **2.1. The Japanese employment system**

To get a better grip on the effects the welfare state has on the employment situation of Japanese women, I will clarify how the employment system in Japan works and what current points of discussion are within the system. Above all, the welfare system in Japan will be explained and how this system works in terms of care tasks and the positioning of women within society. A clarification of the system and the welfare system will provide a basic understanding of the influences it might have on women's working lives and vocational choices. Furthermore, it will give insight in what obstructs women from developing a career.

In the introduction, the models of welfare states by Esping-Andersen (1990) were introduced. These three models were the social democratic model, the conservative model and the liberal welfare-state. As I mentioned in the introduction, it would be hard to fit in all welfare states over the world within exactly one of these models each. The case of Japan proves this is difficult, since many researchers doubt it fits within any of these models at all and think that it

is either a hybrid with characteristics of all of these models or a completely different model (Esping-Andersen 1990; Peng 2000).

The first approach, Japan as a hybrid of multiple welfare regimes, argues that Japan has characteristics found in all three welfare regimes. These are characteristics such as low state welfare expenditure, the strong reliance on the market for income and the family for social services and the existence of positive labor market policies (Peng 2000: 90). The Japanese employment system was traditionally supported by three pillars: lifetime employment, seniority based wages and enterprise-based unionism. Community consciousness was added later as a fourth pillar. Lifetime employment basically means employees stay with one organization for their entire working lives; an uncommon system in the rest of the world (Hattori & Maeda 2000: 1; Peng 2000: 92). The seniority based wages imply a system in which the junior employees of a company earn relatively low wages, compared to labor productivity, but their wages will increase as they stay longer in the company (Hattori & Maeda 2000: 3). This makes Japanese workers very dependent on the labor market, rather than on the state. Actually, the main purpose of the Japanese post-war regime was to achieve basic economic security for the family and making the workers dependent on the labor market rather than the state, was meant to achieve economic growth.

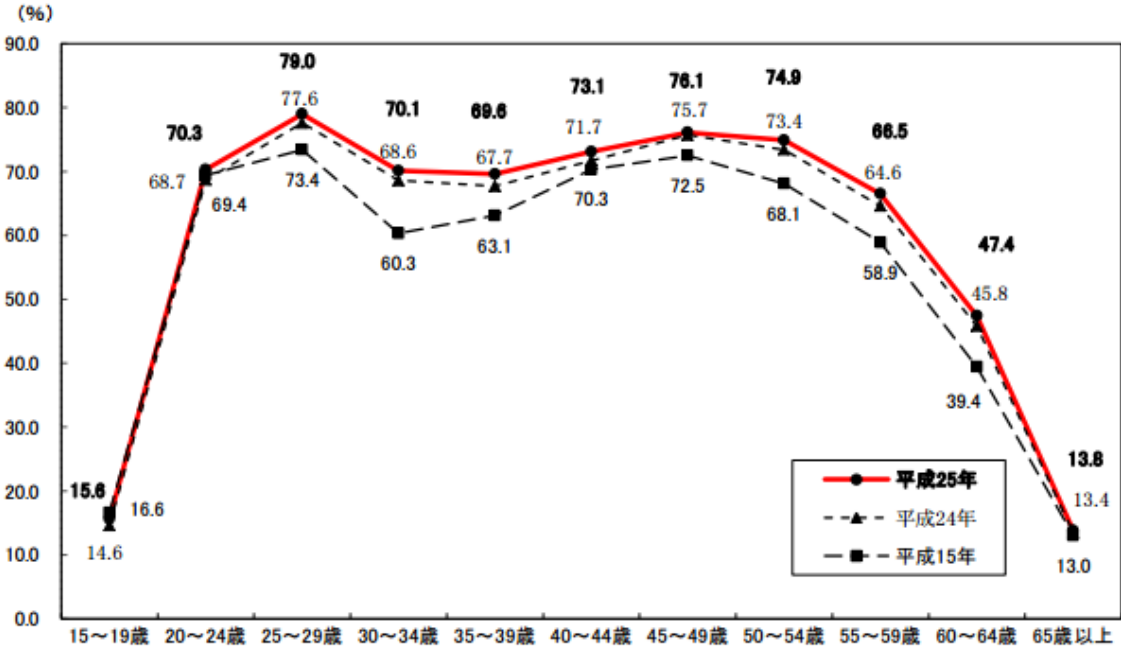
The second approach is the corporate-centered welfare society approach, which argues that the Japanese welfare state is a unique form of state. It implies that the state and labor market formed a consensus, whereby the workers and their families were governed by the companies they work for. Concretely this means corporate principles are part of family life, which implies that men should work long hours, women should be at home as housewives and all other elements that counter these institutional rules are to be marginalized (Peng 2000: 93).

This model is also aimed to achieve large economic growth, but it also means that lifetime employment obligations and seniority wages make it hard for those who want to change company mid-career. However, the model establishes stable employment, since in this way employers are increasing the chance employees choose to stay with the company for a longer time. This lifetime employment system with seniority based wages has been a preferred way of managing for a long time (Web-Japan 2011: 2, Hattori & Maeda 2000: 1). Above all, an employee can only be offered fringe benefits while they have a regular contract. These fringe benefits mean that they are offered extra facilities; such as housing for non-married workers, leisure activities; such as tourist trips and special allowances in addition to their normal salary. In sum, this means that loyalty to a company is most beneficial for the employee and it implies that it encourages them to value their jobs above private and family life (Web-Japan 2011: 2, Peng 2000: 94).

Even though the Japanese welfare system originally aimed to cater for the needs of working men, around the 1950s women also began to work and the former ideal family of working salaryman and full-time housewife began to erode. The most common reasons they started to work were to supplement the family income and the costs of children's education (Peng 2000: 103). However, the Japanese welfare system has been disadvantageous for women, who are looking for a stable job as well as time for family life, since this system has been mainly aimed to facilitate male employees. As both men and women are hired by companies straight from school, these companies invest in their employees, in order to make sure they stay for a longer period of time. However, women with a desire to have children are forced to make a decision between a career at the company they work for, with all the benefits available and remain childless, a drop out of the work force in its entirety or to return to their previous function, while keeping on working on the same level as they did before. Since the

Japanese government is not particularly advanced in terms of family and female-friendliness, many women opt to drop out of the work force when having children and return to work at a later age, causing an M-shaped curve (figure 1).

図表 1 - 2 - 2 女性の年齢階級別労働力率



資料出所：総務省「労働力調査」(平成 15、24、25 年)

Figure 1. M-shaped curve of women’s employment Japan. The vertical axis shows the percentage of working women, the horizontal axis shows the age categories. The circle, triangle and square show respectively the measured amounts of 2013, 2012 and 2003. (Kōseirōdōshō 2013: 3)

However, this model of management only works for growing companies and in times of economic growth and the ideology of lifetime employment is no longer sustainable. (Hattori & Maeda 2000: 4, Web-Japan 2011: 4). A common development has been an increasing number of people switching jobs. This development has caused traditionally managed companies to become less interesting for young employees, resulting in a flattening wage profile. In other words, there are only senior employees working for businesses with about the same wage range.

While there has been the tendency to classify the Japanese welfare state to a certain model, Esping-Andersen (1992: 187, 188) argues that the welfare state might be too new to classify within one of the fixed models in which modern European states, Asian states and America have been classified. Both theories of the hybrid welfare regime and the corporate-centered welfare society approach cannot be applied completely correct to the Japanese welfare state. Perhaps in some time, when the Japanese welfare state has been completely developed, we might be able to apply one of Esping-Andersen's (1990) models on Japan.

The Japanese welfare state is still undergoing change and mainly economical changes influence the existing system. This economical change might mean that companies as well will undergo a shift from rigid, lifetime employment systems, to more flexible systems in order to satisfy employees' needs. The effect has yet to be researched, but this change might positively affect women's vocational lives. Furthermore, the seniority based wage system will make place for a performance based wage system, rewarding employees for their good results instead of their loyalty to the company. On the one hand this system might be beneficial for women, since they no longer risk losing their status within a company, having to start all over with a lower wage. On the other hand, companies might define performance in different ways, meaning women might have to put in even more effort to stay on a certain level and their working lives might keep on conflicting with their family lives. This means in short that, both the seniority based wage system and the performance based system have their advantages and disadvantages. What kind of effect these systems have on the development of women's careers will be discussed in later chapters.

## **2.2. Work-family balance in Japan**

To develop one's career, much time and effort is required, especially when aspiring to fulfil managerial positions. With the traditional assumption that women are the ones who are the



caretakers of the family, these high end positions seem exclusively attainable for men only. There are many researchers who think this is still a prevailing perspective among the Japanese. Japan also proves to match Orloff's model of a paternalist state which reproduces gender inequalities (Orloff 1996: 6, 13). As will be elaborated throughout this paragraph, this expresses itself in gendered divisions of labor in which women are responsible for household tasks and superior wages of men. Especially Nemoto's research (2013) emphasizes this gendered division.

Acker (1998: 197) argues that the existence of two gendered separate spheres of paid work and family reproductive work is the reason why workplace differences between men and women are legitimized, consigning women to housework rather than to paid work and career development. Nemoto (2013: 513) adds to this that the only way women would be able to develop their careers would be if they follow the male work norm of time discipline, which means they would have to value their jobs above family work. Furthermore, working women who become mothers are stereotyped as being less competent and less committed to paid work. Guillaume and Pochic (2009: 33) even state that "family-oriented attitudes can be interpreted as explicit withdrawal from the competition for power". Above all, men working longer hours than women is what sustains the current culture in work places (Nemoto 2013: 514).

Throughout this study this work culture becomes apparent: there are many Japanese under the impression that motherhood is impossible to combine with the development of a career. About a third of the questioned women thought that caring for a child was not compatible with their jobs and 23 per cent stated that working long hours would make it difficult for them to raise a family (Nemoto 2013: 515). With a majority of the women having

this mindset, this is also the group of women which would be unlikely to be career oriented. Even if they were career oriented, they seem to experience certain difficulties. Then what makes it so difficult for women to combine their work with family care?

In many countries, it is prescribed by law that women who are pregnant have the right on parental leave. While in Japan women also have this right by law, many of them still experience a pressure to keep on working or even disapproval from their co-workers when they actually take the leave (Nemoto 2013: 520). Furthermore, after the parental leave period is over, many women still want to leave work earlier so that they can be home in time to take care of their children and prepare dinner. This causes a feeling of guilt among many women, which is further reinforced by the cut in salary they get for leaving earlier (Nemoto 2013: 523). Even though there are more and more companies concentrating on encouraging women to pursue management positions, the organizational custom of working long hours undermines corporate and individual efforts to reduce gender inequality in the workplace. Under this cultural pressure, most women who want to be seen by their (male) co-workers as dedicated to their companies will choose to remain childless (Nemoto 2013: 524).

In line with parental leave and working shorter hours, Gornick and Heron (2006: 155) state that working part-time would be no better alternative to combine family with work, since there is no high quality part-time work available in Japan (unlike the Netherlands, which I will discuss in the following paragraph). As discussed in the earlier paragraph on the Japanese employment system, Japanese law does not provide pay and benefit parity protection. Above all, when a worker's personal and family needs change, it is difficult to make a transfer from part-time to full-time work. This concept has been developed better in European countries such as the Netherlands and Germany, where this right should be granted (Gornick and Heron 2006:

157). Another downside of entering a non-regular contract is that workers who work shorter hours are forced to work at times set by the company. It is visible that many industries that require such flexibility also attract female part-time workers (figure 2) Full-time employees on the other hand, have more freedom to deviate from their normal work hours in this sense (Gornick and Heron 2006: 160; Fuwa 2013: 737).

**2013 Positions mostly populated by women**

	Women	Men
Retailers	473	408
Hotel and Catering industry	201	107
Teachers	143	125
Doctors, therapists and specialized nurses	538	151
Entertainment industry	106	69

(x10.000)

**2013 Positions mostly populated by part-time working women**

	Women	Men	
Retailers	323	99	68.3% of total women working part-time
Hotel and Catering industry	171	56	85% "
Entertainment industry	67	27	63% "
Manufacturing industry	142	96	52% "

(x10.000)

Figure 2. Positions mainly dominated by women also tend to be mainly populated by part-time working women. These are often the sectors that require flexible workers. (Sōmushōtōkeikyoku 2014)

In sum, family and work do seem to be fairly irreconcilable at the moment in Japan. Even though weeks are limited to 40 work hours, this seems to differ in practice, since this maximum does not take overwork into account. This results in Japan still being one of the countries with the longest work hours in the world (Gornick and Heron 2006: 152, 159).

Besides the irregular working hours of part-time and other non-regular jobs, there seems to be discrimination towards those who have family responsibility. Even though by law, parents and mothers in particular have certain rights when it comes to caring of families, in practice this proves to be different. Men or childless coworkers seem to show their disapproval towards women with families, which in turn feel guilty to leave work early (Yu 2002: 497). One solution to make it possible for women to stay at work longer, would be to increase the provision of childcare. This would make it easier for women to maintain their careers when having young children (Fuwa 2013: 738). However, as long as women are seen as the main caretakers of the family and childcare is not readily available, women who are ambitious to develop a career, will have to choose between employment and family.

### **2.3. Policies ameliorating the combination of work and care**

To visualize Esping-Andersen's (1992) ideas on the Japanese welfare state, it is important to look at certain developments within policies the state has created to improve the combination of work and family. Even though current company practices do not seem to be a big contributor, the call for female employees dates back to the 1970s (Lam 1992: 70). Due to pressure from the international community and market pressures, Japan was forced to change their company practices in order to raise gender equality. During the 1970s, more and more women started working in the service economy, which experienced an explosive expansion. Furthermore, the Japanese market experienced a sectoral shift, which caused the increased demand for highly educated women. There was also a shortage of skilled labor, which led to more women being hired for technology related jobs. Above all, the market for consumer products was dominated by female purchasers, which increased the need for female employees in companies producing these products. All of the forgoing has caused an increase in working women. Since company policies have previously been aimed at mainly male dominated work places, this increase in the

number of female employees has strengthened the call for more female friendly policies, not only to create a more female friendly working environment, but also in order to give them the same career development chances as men (Lam 1992: 70).

Even though the Japanese government has attempted to adapt legislation to create a more gender equal environment in work places, these measures were often only half-hearted and did not actually lead to more equality within companies. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA), which has been introduced in 1985, was the first step of the Japanese government to adapt the working environments within companies to the growing amount of female employees (Yuasa 2005: 196).

However, these legislations were merely created to utilize women in a more effective way instead of actually attempting to decrease gender inequalities in the work place or to give women a fair opportunity to develop their career (Lam 1992: 79). Even though in the 1980s the “female group leader” system was introduced, which sounds more progressive than it in truly was, measures like these only made the gender difference in work places bigger. In this particular case, the system made use of women to train groups of other female workers in lower positions and the leaders functioned as mediators between the male supervisor and the female team. In fact, this emphasizes the existing gender differences and the powerlessness of women to develop even more, since this suggests that men are not able to communicate with women and women would be better to train women. Furthermore, while women in this position would be able to show their supervisory skills, it actually did not threaten the role of the male supervisor (Lam 1992: 78).

Even with the introduction of the career conversion system, in which women were given the chance to develop careers via the “male route”, this system affected only a very small,

selected group of women to develop themselves towards a management career. The separation of a “career track” and “non-career-track” to begin with actually legitimizes total segregation of men and women. In other words, if a woman wishes to develop a career, she has to satisfy all requirements of the male career route, otherwise she would be unlikely to succeed within leading positions (Lam 1992: 82). Having responsibilities within the household is not desirable and women either choose not to have children or not to have a career.

In a research conducted by Luera (2004), even international treaties to increase gender equality within Japanese companies are by-passed. Flaws in the Japanese law make it difficult for these treaties to be effective. There are ways in which the laws created by the Japanese government in reaction to the international policies can be circumvented, so that even while the law is signed, it does not have any real effect in practice (Luera 2004: 618). What Luera’s research (2004) basically points out is that even though laws are created and policies are introduced to “actively” increase gender inequalities in the work place these actions have had no visible effect. Most of the policies introduced are passive in nature and can be avoided, since nothing is actually enforced. She argues that still many employers think that work should be something secondary in the life of women and that family should come in first place, implying that career development would never be a realistic option (Luera 2004: 621). Esping-Andersen (1992: 182) argues how the Japanese welfare state remains focused on familialism and a reliance on the private sphere, especially when it comes to child care. This thought is even stronger in Japan than in the Netherlands, where this ideology also exists, which is discussed in the following chapter.

While many Japanese companies stubbornly hold on to the traditional segregation between the tasks of men and women, researchers such as Abe (2007), Nakakubo (2007) and

Dyckerhoff et al. (2012) argue that gender equality is not only necessary for women to be given a fair chance to develop their careers, but it would also be beneficial for companies to make use of women's potential, especially in times of economic uncertainty. Abe's research (2007: 188), which assessed the effects of company's "positive action policies" towards the active improvement of women's positions, states that the productivity of women who are actively supported by their company is higher than among companies who do not have such policies. Overall, it is only to the companies' advantage to support women, which not only makes women more eager to work, but it would also decrease the prejudices amongst (male) colleagues that women would not be motivated enough to develop their career.

In order to get rid of the prejudices towards women and to achieve the increase of female seniors, there has to be a change of culture within companies. Dyckerhoff (2012: 10), for instance, argues that it is not merely the task of the human resources management to change policies and to enforce them, it is also important that CEO's and executives to support gender diversities and to actively set targets for the company in order to realize the possibility to have a family and a career. To teach women how they would be able to raise their ambitions and profiles, development programs have also been created. Furthermore, inequalities within the work place have to be actively monitored in order to track whether improvements are actually made. Among others, Shiseido is one of the companies which are actively attempting to change women's mindsets and to motivate them to make use of programs for talented women. In companies such as Nissan and Cisco, the CEO's have been actively hiring more women into managerial positions, Cisco's executive board now consists of almost 50% female managers (Dyckerhoff 2012: 13).

In order to enable women to combine their family responsibilities with a career, it is therefore not just an easy matter of government policies. In order for these policies to reach their full potential, companies and their employees must be willing to make these changes and there has to be a change of mindset from conservative, familialist and paternalist to liberal and progressive. Since the CEO is one of the most important figures within the company, the person who embodies what the company stands for, his or her opinion and efforts for the matter, are at least as important. Managerial commitment, governmental policies and development programs within companies must go hand in hand in order to actively increase chances for women to develop themselves.

### **3. The Dutch form of welfare state and work-family balance**

#### **3.1. Dutch welfare state and employment system**

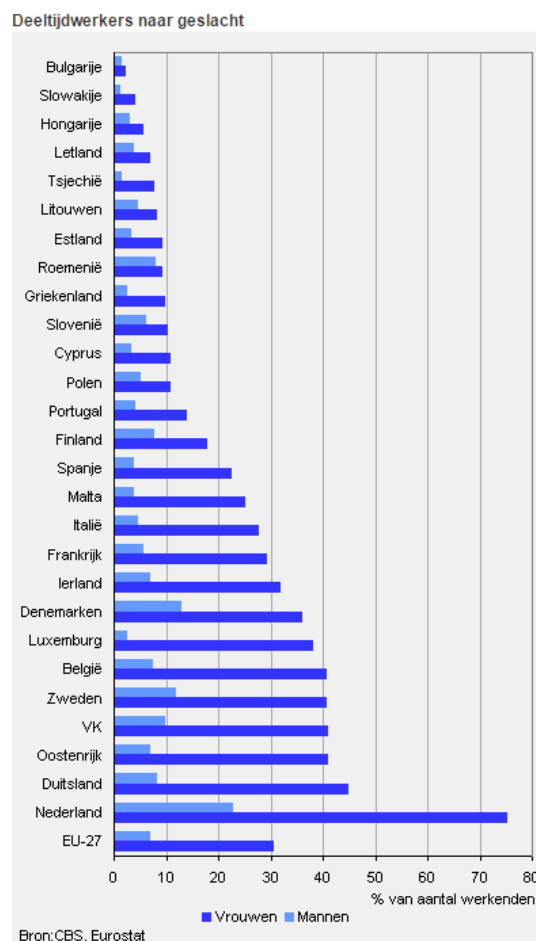
In comparison to the Japanese employment situation for women, the following chapters will discuss the Dutch employment situation, which shows both differences as equalities. In this particular case, the employment system will be discussed, which functions quite differently from the Japanese labor market. There are several factors that might prove useful in the search for an explanation on the work family balance for women. Also, the form of welfare state will be discussed the influence it has on childcare.

The participation of women in the labor market has always been extremely low. Until the 1980s, paternalist ideas dominated and women were often expected to take care of the family once they married, without having the responsibility of looking for a job to take care of their families. The reason this paternalist ideal prevailed during that time, is pillarization. This ideology dominated social and political life and divided the two into four pillars: Catholic, Protestant, social democratic and neutral (Kremer 2007: 90). The turning point for women in



the labor market occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the government realized that the Netherlands actually wasted a large amount of human capital, especially in the light of the ageing society.

The idea that part-time work is mainly female work, is very much applicable in the Netherlands. Kremer (2007: 93) argues that a high level of part-time work is often considered as a transitional phase between the male breadwinner model and the equality model where both men and women share care and work tasks. However, the Netherlands seem to be a different case, since part-time work is not transitional, but a standard practice. This becomes visible in a table presented by the CBS in 2009 (figure 2). The Netherlands prove to be number one in amount of people working part-time, both men and women. In that sense, the Netherlands can be labeled as a dual breadwinner/dual model (Kremer 2007: 94).



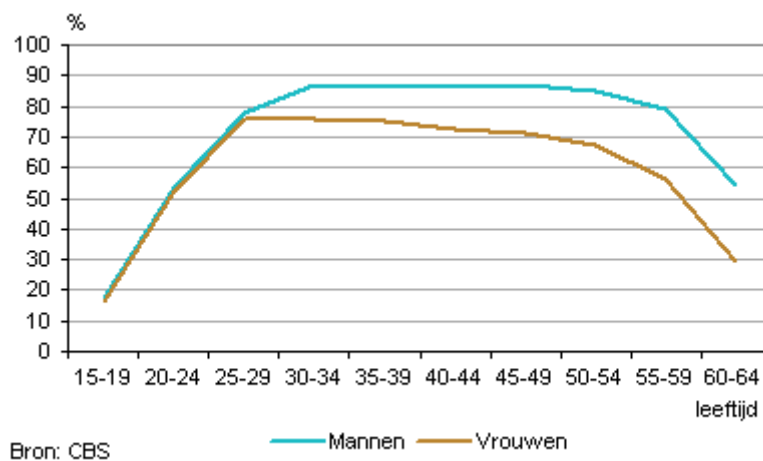
*Figure 3. Amount of men (light blue) and women (dark blue) working part-time in percentages of the working population, the Netherlands second last. (CBS 2009)*

There have been several positive social developments within the Dutch labor market. More vacancies have been created because of the recovering economy; more people dare to switch jobs, because job security has risen. In order, this causes the growth of vacancies for the jobs these people have left (UWV 2014: 14). Schmid (1997: 10) elaborates on this part of the Dutch employment system, because it has been the most successful in creating jobs in the European Union. Among others, the creation of part-time jobs has contributed to this “job miracle”. By the time of 1980s, no less than 65% of the Dutch women worked part-time, increasing their job participation and employment rates (Schmid 1997: 11). Unlike the case in many other countries, Japan among others, part-time work is voluntary and part-timers often have high levels of education. Not only women, but also many men choose to work part-time. Furthermore, as is also pointed out in the UWV report, part-timers have good social security unlike any other European country. The merit for companies to hire part-timers is often to be able to react to economic fluctuations, but this could hinder the sustainable integration of young people, female returners or workers on fixed-term contracts into the regular market.

The big percentage of part-time workers is due to the redistribution system. This means people work less hours and have a shorter contract, up to five years. This has created more jobs, but has also created a large group older people who are either unemployed or stuck in their permanent contracts. Even though this employment redistribution has created more jobs than anywhere else in Europe, the performance of workers is decreasingly important and workers are given little incentive to acquire new skills (Schmid 1997: 18, 23, 32).

Another social security of which families and most of the time women can benefit are the allowances for child care. Because full-time workers have the same rights as part-time

workers, part-timers can also make use of this system. Because of this development, more women have kept their jobs even though they had children, causing the following dome-shaped graph. Kremer (2007: 101) shows in another table that in 2000, much more than half of Dutch mothers with young children worked, 63 percent. It is typical for the Dutch case that mothers often work on a part-time basis, regardless of their educational background. However, part-time work seems to be the only feasible form of employment and full-time work is hardly an option.



*Figure 4. Dome-shaped curve of female employment in the Netherlands. The vertical axis shows the percentage of working men (blue) and women (brown), the horizontal axis shows the age categories. (CBS 2006)*

Figure 4 shows how women in the Netherlands tend to have less interruptions in their volitional lives and tend to continue working, also after marrying. The reason behind this could be for instance that Dutch women are more inclined to work part-time, because of possible caring tasks. As the next tables show, the most popular positions among women are also mostly filled by part-time workers. Again, it is notable how these positions are mainly ones that involve caring tasks, which are jobs often considered to be feminine.

1st quarter of 2015      Positions mostly populated by women

	Women	Men
Teachers	276	143
Day care managers	124	12
Retailers	421	233
Clercs	477	294
Doctors, therapists and specialized nurses	210	79
Medical specialists	177	45
Social workers	162	48
Nursing staff	245	20
Consulting services	255	175
Cleaners	230	96

(x1000)

1st quarter of 2015      Positions mostly populated by part-time working women

	Women	Men	
Teachers	208	57	75% of total women working part-time
Day care managers	105	9	85% "
Retailers	355	98	84% "
Accountants and secretaries	113	26	62% "
Clercs	367	78	77% "
Doctors, therapists and specialized nurses	155	21	74% "
Medical specialists	145	14	82% "
Social Workers	141	27	87% "
Nursing staff	232	13	95% "
Consulting services	205	83	80% "
Cleaners	214	63	93% "

(x1000)

Figure 5. Positions mainly dominated by women also tend to be mainly populated by part-time working women. (CBS StatLine 2015)

In conclusion, the redistribution system has taken care of the creation of many new vacancies, but also shorter working periods. This is the contrary of the Japanese system, in which workers are hired straight out of school. Therefore, an obstacle for young people entering the work force might be the demand of employers for working experience. However, the high social security and these short work contracts might create a favorable environment for women who are willing to work and to have children. The absence of the obligation to work

permanent and for long hours makes it easier for both men and women to manage time of their private lives as well as their working lives.

### **3.2. Work family balance in the Netherlands**

Comparable to the Japanese situation, the family roles in the Netherlands are mostly divided by gender, which aligns with Orloff's (1996) idea of a paternalist state. In other words, the men take care of the family income and woman takes care of the family and the house. It is true that there is still a prevalent traditional view on this task division. However, the way in which the Netherlands differ from Japan is in the amount of time women work. The Dutch point of view sheds a different light on the combination of developing a career and having a family.

Like in Japan, in the Netherlands men are the ones that mainly fulfill full-time positions and develop careers, but most women do not choose to stay at home as housewives. Unlike Japan, women in the Netherlands do not have to make a definite decision of choosing either for a family or for a job. Instead of either quitting their jobs entirely or to keep on working full-time, most women in the Netherlands choose to work part-time. Therefore, "one-and-a-half earner" (anderhalf-verdiener) families, in which the man works full-time and the woman part-time, are most the most common phenomenon (Loohuis 2007: 7, Lucassen & Pool 2005: 79). The option to work part-time in the Netherlands would be beneficial for mothers who want a job on the side, since the benefits from working part-time are equal to those of full-time jobs (Bosch et al. 2008: 9, 12). Above all, working part-time in the Netherlands often does indeed mean that compared to Japan, this would only seem beneficial for women. However, is the Dutch one-and-a-half earner system also beneficial for women who want to develop a career?

There is an ongoing discussion on why women prefer to work part-time instead of full-time. Actually, many researchers argue that even though working part-time makes it easier for

women to combine family and employment (Bosch et al. 2008: 9), it does not make it easier for them to develop a career while having a family. In fact, many women who choose to work part-time, give up on opportunities to develop their career (Loohuis 2007: 5; Lucassen & Pool 2005: 81; CBS 2014: 88).

On the one hand there are researchers who argue that it is women's own choice to work part-time, especially Hakim (2003) and Van der Lippe and Claringbould (2002) are supporters of this theory. Their research has pointed out that women are in charge of their employment situation and that they decide themselves whether or not they are career oriented or more aimed on caring tasks. When women decide to work part-time, they are aware of the fact they have a low chance of reaching top functions. On the other hand, scientists like Hochschild (1990) and Kremer (2007) state that employment decisions are not gender-neutral and that these decisions are made based upon sex-strategies, which is a behavioral pattern by which a person tries to solve problems that are based on the person's on culture based sex-identity (Loohuis 2007: 10). Therefore, based upon the current ideology in the Netherlands, many women still choose to remain focused on caring tasks, rather than on career development. This is remarkable, since surveys conducted by the CBS (2014: 102) have shown that in general, most men and women are supporting an equal division of care and labor tasks between partners. In accordance with the arguments Loohuis (2007: 10) raises, the CBS also puts emphasis on the cultural reasons for not having an equal division of tasks in practice. According to the CPB (2006: 124), men and women do not have enough willpower to make a change in the current way of thinking.

Part-time work, in other words, might be a good option for women who do not want to develop a career. Even though the Netherlands are quite emancipated in the sense of equating

full-time benefits and part-time benefits, there is still inequality in the development of careers. In order to create better circumstances for women to be able to both care for their families, as well as being able to develop a career and to be eventually able to reach top functions, there has to be a change in the current system, but also in the mindset of people. The CBS (2014: 108) shows that an equal division of care tasks and employment within a family is the most desirable. However, to turn theory into practice, there must a shift in the way people think, since many researchers agree that women often choose their employment situations; even though it seems more beneficial to work part-time, full-timers seem to be more content than part-timers (Loohuis 2007: 35, 36; Bosch et al. 2008: 30).

Eventually, instead of decreasing gender differences in employment, the existence of part-time work might only increase these differences, since it reinforces the mindset of one person being the one to support the family, which is still the woman.

### **3.3. Policies ameliorating the combination of work and care**

While the sources are scarce, many Dutch companies have policies that actively attempt to encourage and promote women to top positions and to decrease existing gender differences and discrimination. The most probable reason these sources are scarce, is because there is not one umbrella policy, which dictates what the right steps are to take for companies to increase the promotion of women. However, there seems to be a consensus on what effective policies might be, based on case studies and questionnaires. There are ways in which the Dutch state has attempted to ameliorate gender inequality.

Similar to Japanese research results (Abe 2007), in 58% of the businesses executing diversity policies in the Netherlands, seem to have caused a higher employee productivity, since the contentment of employees has increased. Furthermore 62% of these businesses conclude

that diversity programs have attracted and maintained talented workers (Braakman 2010: 8). However, in order for policies to have effect, it is very important for companies to recognize what causes women to be obstructed in their volitional lives (Draulans 2001: 11). According to Merens et al. (2013: 4, 5), there are two main explanations. First of all, more men than women have ambitions to develop to top positions. A second explanation is that women experience more of a conflict in work-family balance. Other explanations, but also very important factors are, the persistence of gender stereotypes and the lack of mentors and role models.

In order to get rid of these obstacles and to actively encourage women to grow to top positions, a whole range of diversity policies have been created over the past years (Merens et al. 2013: 7). It appears that the Dutch government has not created any laws or policies themselves for female promotion purposes, other than the Management and Supervision Law (Wet Bestuur en Toezicht), which states that large enterprises should have a top existing of at least 30% women and of at least 30% men (CBS 2014: 110). However, it seems that these policies do have a positive effect on the promotion of women, since the number of women in managerial positions has increased more than in companies which did not have such policies (Merens et al. 2013: 9). Furthermore, the Dutch state has taken action by organizing their tax system in such a way more women can be involved in employment. Bosch et al. (2008: 12) explains how the Law on Child Care (Wet Kinderopvang) has improved government allowances for families who are in need of child care. However, the common belief in the Dutch government is that it is better for women to be the ones to take care of their children, rather than having them stay at a day care (Orloff 1996: 28).

Since the number of diversity policies is too high to mention in one paper, for now one of the most representative policies will be discussed, in this case, the charter "Talent to the



Top” (Charter Talent naar de Top). This charter has been established in 2007 in order to stimulate the government, companies and women to get more women to top positions within companies. Furthermore, this organization actively monitors problems, provides recommendations and helps companies to create progressive schemes in order to tackle diversity problems and obstacles that prevent women from developing their careers. Among these measures are flexible working hours, day care services, part-time work and facilities to work at home (Merens et al. 2013: 7). Monitor Talent to the Top, which is published every year, reports strategies and measures which have been taken by the signatories. Those who have signed the charter are obliged to set concrete goals and are bound to periods of time. It is striking that while many signatories commit themselves to the goals of the charter, many of them do not have a business case in which they recognize the importance of having a diverse management (Merens et al. 2013: 13).

What mainly appears from the monitor, is that companies seem to take basic steps in their policies. For example, in 71% of the cases, goals have been set to increase the number of women in the top and in 75% of the cases, CEOs have committed themselves to these goals. However, only 40% of the signatories have made gender diversity a core value of the organization, have recorded when and how these goals will be completed and have created a business case (Monitor Talent naar de Top 2012). Many of these follow up steps are just as important to reach satisfactory results in the promotion of women. It is not only important to make the management aware of the obstacles women are facing, but to make the diversity policies known to the whole company. Still, 26% of the charter signers did not have any policy or measure in order to communicate diversity policies to the whole company (Merens et al. 2013: 17).

However, while one of the main obstacles of the promotion of women to the top is the corporate culture, which still mainly has masculine characteristics, this communication is one of the most important points which should be tackled. It is the corporate culture, which creates expectations of the kind of employee which is preferred. On this basis, new employees are selected and promoted who fit inside this culture, while the people who do not possess these characteristics are rejected (Braakman 2010: 20). Even though the state does give allowances to people who are in need of day care, there is still a lot of pressure from the government to arrange child care at home, since this is thought to be best for the child (Bosch et al. 2008: 12).

While every company differs and requires policies which fit within their business model, it can be agreed that certain policies are the most effective in the promotion of women's careers. HR instruments are one of them; promotion policies are to be reviewed, more facilities have to be created to combine work and family and mentoring and coaching has to be facilitated. According to the organizations that signed the charter, it is notable that part-time work among female managers is very well possible and more than 70% of these organizations actively facilitate these needs (Merens et al. 2013: 17). In addition to what has been mentioned in the earlier paragraph on work-family balance in the Netherlands, working part-time might not be a good starting point for the development of one's career, but once a certain position has been reached, many companies do agree on flexible working hours. However, in order for these policies to be entirely effective, the purpose has to be communicated throughout the whole company. Only then there will be a chance of changing the corporate culture, which is still mainly paternalist.

#### **4. Conclusion and discussion**

Based upon the theoretical framework discussed in the literature review, the goal of this research has been to examine what effect the Japanese and Dutch models of welfare state have had on the development of careers for women in combination with caring tasks. Some notable differences between Dutch and Japanese women have come forward. Differences that point out that even within economic strong and developed countries there are different employment systems and different effects of those employment systems on vocational lives.

Japan has a peculiar form of welfare state, based upon existing models such as Esping-Andersen's (1990) discussed in the literature review. Since the development of the Japanese welfare state has been quite recent, it has been subject to many changes and therefore, the system shows many similarities to different kinds of welfare state models. It seems to be social-democratic in terms of a commitment to maximum and full employment; conservative in terms of status-segmented insurance and familialism and finally liberal in terms of heavy reliance on private welfare (Esping-Andersen 1992: 182). This system has been primarily aimed at people who are not very likely to quit the workforce after a short period of time, in other words men. Since many of these companies are investing time and money in their employees, it is more difficult for women to leave their jobs temporarily in order to return to their primary jobs. This also applies to the life-time employment system, a system that is slowly disappearing, but it still prevalent in many companies. Promotions and benefits are defined by age and length of service, which puts women in a bad position, once leaving the work force for a period of time to look after the children. Especially the familialist characteristics of the Japanese welfare state contribute to the low state allowances for child care, which in this case would be the responsibility for families itself (Esping-Andersen 1992: 183).

In the Netherlands, the employment system works differently. Graduates are expected to have finished an education which matches the job they apply for. On the job trainings are possible, but are not the main source of know-how of the tasks. Furthermore, lengthy services to one company are disappearing as well as in Japan, which would make it easier to quit one's job and to change it for another. In addition, there is the availability for women to work part-time next to full-time, which most of the time implies a working week of 24-28 hours. While these parts of the employment system might seem beneficial for women who want to combine work with taking care of the family, statistics on the amount of women in top positions state differently. However, while day care for instance is more subsidized by the government, similarly to Japan, children are thought to be better off with child care arranged by the family than by a third party.

Therefore, the assumption of women entering a part-time contract in fact reinforces the traditional idea of a mother who stays at home for her children. Especially in Japan, this traditional gender divide within the household remains strong (Nemoto 2013: 515). Furthermore, women should have a masculine attitude towards their jobs if they are aiming for promotion. Nemoto's research (2013) has been just one of many articles that describe the corporate culture within most Japanese businesses as masculine, which puts a lot of pressure on women when pregnant or leaving early from work to take care of their families. This pressure either makes women lose interest in having a family or keeps them from developing a career in general. Above all, part-time is yet an underdeveloped concept, since it does not offer the same fringe benefits as regular jobs. Additionally, to the contrary of what the term part-time suggests, work hours in such a contract are often more rigid and fixed than those of a regular contract, which might even mean that working part-time in Japan for a mother of

young children might not be a good option at all and definitely not when aiming for top positions.

It is true that part-time work is often irreconcilable with the development of a career and climbing to top positions. However, part-time jobs are much more integrated within the Dutch employment systems and many one-and-a-half earner families exist. Part-time jobs are high in quality and often offer the same fringe benefits as full-time jobs, but are indeed not the right contracts to enter when aiming for a career. However, a big difference with Japan is that working part-time when arrived within the higher rungs of the company is possible (Merens et al. 2013: 17). Even though women experience less pressure from within their work environment than in Japan and the traditional views on the gender role divide within the family are changing in favor of women's careers, practice still proves different and the pace in which women can develop into management functions is still slow.

In order to make it easier for women and to encourage them to dedicate themselves to the development of a career, it is important for the government to intervene or for organizations to step up and create policies. This is easier said than done. The Japanese government has attempted to abolish gender discrimination in career development, such as the EEOL, but since there are many way this law can be bypassed, this and many other initiatives as described in the previous chapters have proven to be ineffective, while researchers such as Abe (2007) have pointed out that within companies with positive discrimination policies have more productive employees.

Braakman (2010: 8) concludes the same for the Netherlands and states that policies in fact have a positive effect on the will of women to develop their careers. While the Netherlands still have a long way to go to effectively promote women to top positions and encourage them

to develop a good start has been made with the charter Talent to the Top. With a great amount of signatories, which is ever growing, this charter has increased the awareness within companies of the importance of women in higher positions.

It is still difficult to say which form of welfare state is “the best” for combining work and family. As may be concluded from the research done by Fraser (1994) on the caregiver parity model and the breadwinner model, there is not one single form of welfare state in which both career and childcare can be perfectly combined. At most there are welfare state forms that would do better on the career development area and others at the provision of social facilities.

As has become clear throughout this research, both Japan and the Netherlands seem to be hybrid states if we follow the welfare regime models proposed by Esping-Andersen (1992: 182). Both Japan and the Netherlands seem to share the characteristic of being familialist states in their own way. Especially in Japan, the obligation of the younger generations to take care of the elderly and for families to arrange child care is under pressure. Women are obtaining educational levels equal to those of men and women are having fewer children to be able to go for both a career and a family. As the Japanese welfare state fails to provide any alternatives to the current familialist ideal, women can respond in two ways. Either one person within the family gives up their career to care for their families full-time, which means a great waste of human capital, or women will pursue careers but will refrain from having children in order to do so, which causes an ageing population and lower fertility rates (Esping-Andersen 1992: 186). In the Netherlands, the welfare state shows similarities within the practice of having family take care of children. With the assumption that children are better off with their families instead of leaving them in day care facilities, many women therefore choose to work part-time, to combine these care tasks with a job to contribute to the family income. With the increasing

number of women wanting to develop a career, these familialist characteristics of both welfare regimes are putting spanner in the works when it comes to career development.

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