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Structural and Institutional Bases for Gender Equality¹

— Two cases among welfare states: Sweden and Japan —

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1. Introduction: Gender logic in the constructions of welfare states

If we assume that the gender logics in different policy regime can shape people's choices and practices in everyday life, we need to explore what preferences people have when it comes to gender equality and how those preferences have been formed. Individuals' preference-formation is considered to be among the most difficult issues in the social sciences.

In studies of welfare states, there is an assumption that institutions shape interests and preferences (Korpi 1989, Pierson 1996, Hobson 1998). Barbara Hobson (1998) opens up the black box of the interest formation through an analysis of Swedish women's collective agency, which, according to Hobson, has been shaped by welfare state institutions and ideological frameworks (Hobson 1998).

In this context, it is important to explore how social and economic resources are (re)distributed to women relative to men. This analytical dimension has been the central issue among feminist scholars in the study of welfare states. One of the main frameworks for analyzing variations in gender logics in welfare states is the male breadwinner model proposed by Jane Lewis and Ilona Ostner (1994). They suggest that the persistence with which states adhere to traditional views on division of work between women and men can be traced using indicators such as (1) how women are treated in tax and social security systems, (2) the level of social service provision such as child care, (3) the nature of married women's participation in the labor market. They have applied this typology to Western European welfare states and argued that in most welfare systems, women's rights to welfare have been indirectly dependent on a male breadwinner in the family, and women have tended to make contributions to the family wage and the bourgeois family form. Using the above indicators, Lewis and Ostner have proposed a model of welfare states that reflects the strength of the male breadwinner ideology by using three levels; the strong male breadwinner model, the moderate male breadwinner model and the weak male breadwinner model.² In the "strong male breadwinner society", women are excluded from the labor market, as wives are

economically dependent on their husbands, and are expected to be responsible for care work at home; entitlement to social security is also established through their husbands. Britain, Germany and the Netherlands exemplify this category.³ In the “moderate male breadwinner society”, women are treated as both mother and wife, and as paid worker. France represents this type. The “weak male breadwinner society” has moved furthest away from the male breadwinner model, and women are assumed to be paid workers and are supported by citizen-based entitlements to benefits and services, such as parental leave. Sweden and Denmark represent this type.

The strength of male breadwinner ideology in society can be a barometer of the resources available to women. It indicates how resources are distributed to women by taking into account their earnings compared to men’s and how egalitarian women’s gender attitudes are. My assumption is that a society with a weak male breadwinner ideology is empowering for women since they are treated as individual agents in policies and have greater access to resources in their own right rather than as dependent wives. Conversely, women are assumed to be less empowered than men in societies with a strong male breadwinner ideology where women are treated as dependent on their spouses and thus, resources are not equally distributed. In this vein, Sweden and Japan seem to represent opposite ends of the spectrum. Sweden is seen as a paradigmatic case of the weak male breadwinner society, while Japan can be assumed to be a strong male breadwinner society.⁴ The Japanese welfare system is often characterized as a family oriented welfare model because families are still considered to bear the primary responsibility for care work (both childcare and elderly care). It means that women are both explicitly and implicitly encouraged to assume the role of the caregiver in a family. This type of welfare model was developed in conjunction with Japan’s economic expansion in 1970s. The main goal of the state during this period was merely “economic growth” and social welfare for people was left to the private sphere (Harada 1992).

By contrast, Sweden embodies a fundamentally different model, which is not a family oriented model, but an individual citizen worker model. Sweden is often characterized as the most advanced welfare state in terms of gender equality. Since 1970s, the state has defined and treated women and men as worker citizens and parent citizens (Siim 1994, Hobson 1994), and policies attached to individuals supported individualization and independence of women and created conditions that encourage both men and women to combine working life and family life (Näsman 1992, Björnberg 1992, Axelsson 1992, Sundström 1991). The new initiatives taken by the Swedish government during the late 1960s and early 1970s to promote women’s market work led to a change of the breadwinner ideology – from the male breadwinner ideology to the

two-breadwinner ideology (Acker 1988).

Applying the concept of institutional bases of power (Takahashi 2003), we can assume that Sweden (a weak male breadwinner society) has promoted gender equality and provided bases of power for women to greater extent than in Japan (a strong male breadwinner society), which has not sought to promote gender equality in its social political discourses. The Japanese government did not take the gender issue into consideration until the middle of 1990s. However, there seems to be as yet no political consensus regarding how gender should be incorporated into the policy triangle of state, market and family.

How can we compare the construction of gender and also the gender logics in these two cases of the weak and strong male breadwinner societies? In this study, I highlight how gender issues, especially women's role in family and society relative to men's, have been treated in the social discourses and policies in these two societies. The purpose is to show how different societal resources such as laws, policy and institutional rules, have been constituted as bases of power in the respective societies. In addition, I explore how "gender" has been incorporated in each of these bases of power, and also how it has affected legitimacy or internalization of "gender" collectively and individually.

2. Historical review over the ideology of women's role in family and society in the two countries

A married woman's (or mother's) place has not always been in the home. During the pre-industrial period, a majority of workers in both Sweden and Japan were farmers, and most women were not full-time housewives. A Japanese sociologist, Emiko Ochiai (1994) argues that the phenomenon of being housewife among married women in Japan became popularized during the post war period and she refers to this male breadwinner family "the post war family". However, roughly three decades ago in both Sweden and Japan, feminists began to question their role as housewives. Here, I try to trace how the debates on this issue have developed in respective societies.

2.1. Sweden

As early as in 1930s, Swedish women mobilized around their right to work in the labor market, a core principle of Social Democracy (Hobson & Lindholm 1997). Women's collective interests were largely subsumed under the universal interests of workers (Siim 1993). Nevertheless, some feminist scholars (Kugelberg 1987, Winkler 1996) call the next two decades, the 40s and 50s, "The Housewife Epoch". This was a time of dramatic and rapid economic growth in Sweden and during this period it was

generally accepted that the role for a woman was that of a mother with small children; her place was in the home (Baude 1979, Winkler 1996). Women were expected to be politically active, but only involved in female issues, such as their household labor (Hirdman 1990, 1994). They were primarily mothers, and entitled to a voice on the issues affecting their work as mothers.

In the early 60s, open debates on the traditional gender division of labor began taking place. It was first and foremost liberal feminists who took in charge. Eva Moberg, in her article "The Conditional Release of Women" (1961) argued for the same conditions for women and men in paid work and for the same responsibility for children and home. A year later, the epoch making book, "The Life and Employment of Women" (= Kvinnors liv och arbete) was published. It was a collaboration of Swedish and Norwegian scholars, both women and men, who problemized the issue of sex roles. The new family ideology of this book was that both woman and man should contribute equally to the household economy, household work and childcare. It analyzed the meaning of the egalitarian role division in terms of work, power and prestige (Dahlström 1962, 1992). During the same period, a group of liberal and social democratic activists and opinion leaders built "Group 222" in order to put equality between women and men on the political agenda. Group 222 released a manifesto in March 1963 (Hederberg 1992:22-23), which eventually inspired policy makers to take some action (Baude 1992). The manifesto argued for:

- 1) Organizing support for children by taking two aspects, consuming and care, into consideration.
- 2) Making children the central concern regarding care and the care during the early period of childhood should be prioritized.
- 3) Promoting and developing public childcare and taking positive action for the issue around child care.
- 4) Planning new housing by considering the rationalization of household work.
- 5) Introducing individual taxation.
- 6) Promoting labor market policies that prohibit sex discrimination.
- 7) Introducing (reducing) working hours in order that men and women can combine work and family life.
- 8) Teaching a principle of equality between men and women in school. Work guidance should not distinguish between men and women.

The women's liberation movement and leftist (Marxist) movements that emerged in late

60s pushed the issue of equality between women and men forward. Another group of feminists called “Group 8” was formed in 1968. It was initiated by eight women who took up the issues such as public childcare. During 1970s and 1980s, women actively claimed their right to combine working life with family life (Ulmanen 1998, Lagerqvist 1998). Although this is a kind of chicken and egg history (whether the policy or women’s collective interests came first), we assume that the arguments made by Swedish women’s collectivities have helped to erode the strength of the male breadwinner ideology.

In order to promote gender equality and treat women as working parents, the Swedish government redistributed social provisions such as benefits (child benefits and parental insurance) and services (child care facilities for pre-primary school children and school children) and promoted women’s labor force participation in the 1970s (Hobson 1994, 1998). The identity of women as working parents has become stronger since then, and it is now firmly embedded in Swedish society. The proportion of full-time housewives has decreased dramatically since 1970s and by middle of 1980s, the full-time housewife had largely disappeared (Axelsson 1992).

2.2. Japan

Japan experienced a historical transition of its social and political system – both ideologically and legally – through World War II. During this period, the Japanese government encouraged women to be “mothers for the nation” by taking good care of the household while their husbands were out in the war (cf. Hara 1995). In the post-war period, this “motherhood” ideology was replaced by the ideology of “wifedom”. Under the leadership of the US Government, The New Constitution came into force in 1946.⁵ The American occupation forces announced that the emancipation of women was the key for a democratic society (Kuninobu 1998). Since then, many women’s organization started working actively towards equal rights. Junko Kuninobu (1998) labels the mobilization of women during the post war period “The third wave of women’s movement” that was mobilized by over ten million women belonging to different groups campaigning for their rights mainly as mothers. At that time, female activists and feminists struggled for their emancipation and fought against existing sex discrimination, but they did not represent the mainstream of the movement.⁶

Concerning women’s role in family, strong debates about the housewife role arose during the 50s and 60s. Ayako Ishigaki, in her article in 1955 “The discourse on housewife as the second occupation” (= *Shufu to iu daini shokugyo ron*), argued that women should have paid work and combine it with their work as housewives. Her

argument received more criticism than support. It was highly contested and the debate on the housewife during the 50s was called “The first debate on the housewife” which consisted of three different discourses; (1) the discourse that supports the difference of sex roles and women’s role as housewife, (2) the discourse that takes a stance as socialist and asserts women’s emancipation is to be achieved through participation in labor market, (3) the discourse that suggests women’s participation in society as citizens should be through their network activities, such as consumer movements (Komano 1982).

In early 60s, the second debate on the housewife arose when Fujiko Isono emphasized the economic value of household work in her article “The confusion of the discourse of women’s emancipation” (= Fujin kaihoron no konmei). Even though these debates were intense and open, they remained largely at the academic level and did not result in any changes in social and political reality. In the 70s, the women’s collective liberation movement arose. The activists were mainly the women in the New Left movement. They tried to fight against male domination in society and criticized conventional family relations that taught women to be feminine, including the marriage system and an educational system (Kuninobu 1998). However, during this very same period, Kyoko Takeda argued for the value of the full-time housewife (Ueno 1982). Many women who felt their identity as housewife was threatened because of the above-mentioned movements supported Takeda’s argument. However, there has not been any strong collective claims-making from women around the gendered division of work in Japan. The feminist movements in 1970s turned out to be the movements of highly educated middle-class housewives to gain social rights as housewives (Shiota 1992). In the early 1980s, the Japanese government countered the feminist movements both explicitly and implicitly, institutionalizing women’s rights as housewives even more strongly through the tax and pension systems, which favored dependent housewives or part-time working housewives. The Japanese government’s foremost goal throughout the post-war period was the economic development of the nation. In order for the Japanese market (corporation and enterprises) to develop, company “warriors” were needed. Thus, encouraging men to be loyal and devoted employees was in the government’s interest. To achieve their goal, they had to make married women full-time housewives who could manage the household, and who could take care of both children’s and husbands’ health. In this gendered household structure, men became the sole wage earners while women became caregivers who were responsible for everything else in household. The still-dominant political ideology in Japan does not see married women as individual worker citizens. There is not yet much political space for gender

equality in this context. It is still common for many married women to identify themselves, first and foremost, as housewives even if they are engaged in paid work (mostly part-time jobs) (cf. Hara 1995). In recent years, the question of whether to reconstitute the basic unit in social policies, from family institutions to individuals has been raised. This has been highly contested among feminist scholars (Meguro 1987, Shiota 1992, Kimoto 1992, Ida 1995, 1998, Yoshizumi 2000, Osawa 2002). They agree that women and men should be treated equally as citizens, workers and parents in every respect.⁷ However, there has not yet been a mobilized women's constituency around the issue of mothers' rights as worker citizens.

3. Laws, policy and institutional rules as resources for women's empowerment

As discussed in previous section, feminist movements claiming equality between women and men emerged during nearly the same period in Sweden and Japan. However, the outcome of the movements turned out to be very different between the countries. This is partly because a clear shift in the gender role ideology occurred in Sweden, but not in Japan. There is no doubt that laws and social policy governing the family and practices in the economic sphere have influenced the process and the outcome differently in respective societies.

If one were to choose the key concepts for women's empowerment in these two social institutional settings, they would be (1) gender neutrality with gender equality and (2) independence. I consider that women are empowered as equal to men as greater gender neutrality with equality is incorporated in laws and social policies, and the more the institutional arrangements promote women as independent individuals rather than as dependent wives. In this section, I highlight and compare the institutional settings in three particularly important areas: family law, social policies and labor market in Sweden and Japan.

3.1. The law and policy settings

Family law

Under constitutional law in both Sweden and Japan, women are considered as equal to men. Women are not discriminated against as citizens and family members under the law. The Swedish marriage law, passed in 1987, abolished the patriarchal character of the former marriage law. The new marriage law emphasizes the importance of both wife and husband being economically independent individuals. In Swedish law, members of households are treated as individuals in all aspects. It states that both a wife and a husband should contribute economically to household depending on their ability (6. §1)

and share family work equally (7) (Saldeen 1994). The state has enacted “no-fault” divorce that permits divorce on demand by either party. In the event of divorce, all property belonging to the spouses is to be divided equally between the wife and the husband and neither of the spouses is required to pay any compensation, regardless of the reason for divorce. Only a parent who does not live with his or her child after separation is required to pay monthly child support. Moreover, the system is organized around individuals within a family in Sweden. It is possible for a wife and a husband to keep their family name. The personal registration is done individually and every citizen gets his or her personal number at birth.

In contrast, Japanese marriage law presupposes mutual dependency between a wife and a husband. It emphasizes their support to each other when necessary, but does not imply any independence within family. Although the traditional “IE” (clan or household) system⁸ was abolished after World War II, “IE” as an institution has not disappeared in the Japanese society. It is still institutionalized through the “KOSEKI” system, which is a registration system of Japanese citizens that takes the family as a unit. In contrast to the individually-based Swedish registration system, in the KOSEKI system, every Japanese citizen is registered under the name of the head of his or her household – in most cases, his or her father. When a couple is getting married, they build a new KOSEKI, most often by taking the husband’s name as the head of the household. The wife is registered in the new KOSEKI under the husband’s name. Female-headed households do exist, but they are either single female households who became independent from their parent families or represent lone mother households. The strength of family tie and individual’s dependency of family in the legal system are reflected in the divorce law. A married couple can get divorced only when both the wife and the husband agree to do it; if either party does not agree, the divorce will never be actualized. If there is a compelling reason for divorce, a party can make the case in court, but it is a time consuming process. A new proposal for divorce law, which allows a legal divorce five years after an official separation, is now under discussion. However, no change is being proposed for the treatment of property and arrangements for alimony. These are settled case by case in court. Economic compensation can be claimed by one of the spouses depending on the situation, but it is not common to receive alimony from one’s ex-spouse.

The regulation concerning one’s family name after marriage has been one of the central issues among feminists in Japan. According to the current regulation, a wife and a husband must have the same family name, either the wife’s or the husband’s family name. However, women are still expected to marry into the husband’s family, so most

of them take their husband's family name. Recently, the parliament rejected a proposal for changing the law, since the majority was concerned that the proposal might contribute to dissolution of the family as a unit (caused by the individualization of the family). This was seen as not just a symbolic crusade, but also as a possible first step to questioning the KOSEKI system. As long as the KOSEKI system exists, the norm that women are subordinated members of households together with their children will continue.

Policies as bases of power

Since 1970s, the Swedish state has defined and treated women and men as worker citizens and parent citizens, and policies attached to individuals have supported individualization and independence of women and created conditions that allow both men and women to combine work and family life (Näsman 1992, Björnberg 1992, Axelsson 1992, Sundström 1991). The new direction taken by the Swedish government during the late 1960s and early 1970s to promote women's labor market participation has led to the weakening of the male breadwinner ideology.

The most important change that occurred in the above context was the individualization of policy characterized by the introduction of separate taxation in 1971. Gustafsson (1992) has analyzed the effect of taxation on female participation in the labor market in Sweden, comparing it with the German system, and argues that the different taxation systems give women different incentives or disincentives to enter into the labor market.

“Joint or split taxation tends to conserve sex roles and make women more dependent on their husbands by decreasing married women's economic remuneration from participating in the labor force and make market-related human capital investments” (Gustafsson 1992:82).

Other important strategies that contributed to the weakening of the male breadwinner family were the increase in the number of places in public day-care and the introduction of parental insurance in 1974 (Lewis & Ostner 1994, Sundström & Stafford 1991). There are other policies that have been subsequently introduced; i.e. parents' right for shortened working hours and right to leave from work to care for sick children. As the result, Swedish women participate in the labor market to almost the same extent as men.

In analyzing the Japanese case, social policies have instead given married women incentive to stay home and to be dependent full-time caregivers. In terms of care work,

the responsibility and obligation of the family have been taken for granted. This condition is quite opposite that of the Swedish model, in which welfare is not just left to the family – the state is involved to a large extent in the care sphere (see Table 1). In Japan, the Ministry of Social Affairs declared for the first time in 1991 the importance of “family policy” in its social policies and discourses. Explicit family policies have been already developed in Western welfare states to support the changing family functions in terms of married women’s participation in the labor market (Harada 1992).

Some scholars propose the term of “the welfare mix” for the contribution that each of three different social institutions - the household, the market and the state - makes to total welfare in society (Rose & Shiratori 1986, Maruo 1986). They point out that in a mixed society, the plurality of welfare sources is accepted and the degree of mixture is determined by the value of the dominant party in the state. And this explains exactly how the dominant party in Japan, the Liberal Democratic Party, has organized the Japanese welfare system for the last two decades. Japanese workers are not decommodified by high welfare benefits but remain highly dependent on their employers; they are entitled to benefits and services ranging from the inferior to the non-existent (Gould 1993). The conditions for workers are not gender equal. Even if a married woman works, she tends to have a part time job. It means that the level of welfare benefits she receives from her employer is not as high as the benefits provided to a full-time male worker. As for housewives, they are fully dependent on the benefits received through their commodified husbands.

Married women’s labor force participation has not been changed dramatically in Japan for the last two decades. In 1975, 51.3% of married women worked in the labor market, and the figure for 2000 is 56.9% (Naikakufu 2001:228). However, fully dependent housewives are less than half of married women. Looking at the families in which the husbands are employed, the proportion of full time housewives has been decreasing, from 37.1% in 1980 to 26.5% in 2000 (Naikakufu 2001b:5). However, most of married women who work as part time workers prefer to be a “partly working housewife” or “dependent part time worker” because of the treatment of wives in taxation and the social security system. Mari Osawa (1994) has referred to this quality as “the male-centered nature of the social insurance system” in Japan. Married workers (mostly women) do not need to pay income tax if they earn less than 1 030 000 yen per year (about 68 000 Swedish crowns: SEK) and also their spouse’s annual income is less than 10 millions yen. Besides, married workers (mostly men) are entitled to a tax exemption if their spouse earn less than 1 030 000 yen per year. According to Shibata (1990), this spouse deduction discourages Japanese married women from taking paid

work for two reasons; (1) the deduction system lowers the net marginal wage rate in comparison with the market wage for housewives and (2) it increases disposable income for some families. There is also another strong disincentive for married women to have paid work: the pension system advantages women who have been dependent housewives through their life and disadvantages women with paid work who have not been high income earners.

Table 1 summarizes different dimensions in social policies and provisions in Japan and Sweden. The most important difference between these two societies is, as pointed out earlier, the unit of social policies including the taxation system. In Japan, household is the basic unit in social policies. This contrasts with Sweden where individual is the basic unit in this context. We also notice that the benefits Japanese mothers can receive as individuals are also organized mostly through paid employment, and dependent upon their employers before the child was born. In Japan, it was as late as in 1992 when Parental Leave Act, which allows fathers to take parental leave, came into force. Employers with more than 29 employees are obliged to implement this benefit, which entitles either the father or the mother to take parental leave for one year after the childbirth. However, it has not yet been introduced at all workplaces, and the conditions vary depending of the size of the companies. Among large enterprises with more than 499 employees, 98.7% of them had introduced this regulation in 1998. The figure for companies with 100-499 employees was 88.5%, and the figure for companies with 30-99 employees was 74.0 % for the same year (Kousei Roudoushou Koyou Kintou Jidou Kateikyoku 2001).⁹ In terms of the benefit these workers gain during the year, however, the situation is not comparable to the Swedish case. As of 1994, among the companies that have introduced Parental Leave for their employees, only 60.6% supply a benefit to their employees. But, the majority of them (76.3%) merely pay the social security cost, which all employees have to pay, while workers take parental leave. It means that the workers are mostly unpaid during parental leave. Looking at these facts from another point of view, even if the regulation for parental leave applies to male workers, it is difficult to assume that fathers take parental leave instead of their wife considering the large difference in wages between men and women in Japan.¹⁰ Families are usually better off if wives take the leave because the family loses less.

Other social allowances, such as family allowance and housing subsidy (except for social aid for poor households), are paid to the male breadwinner through the market/employers in Japan. In Sweden, the social maintenance is organized and paid by the state through either the universal (e.g. child benefits) or the work-related benefit system (e.g. parental insurance).

In the care sphere, the number of places in childcare facilities in Japan is far fewer than in Sweden. Only 25.7% of pre-primary school children were in child care facilities in 2001 (Naikakufu 2001b:80), while the figure for Sweden was 74% in 1999 (SCB 2000). The difference can be explained by the fact that the state's support for childcare in Japan has not been as strong as in Sweden. We also find great differences in elderly care services between these two societies. In Sweden, the most prevalent pattern of elderly care is organized by the state. Some scholars argue that the demand for informal help from the relatives of elderly people has increased in accordance with the retrenchment of welfare caused by the economic recession (Eliasson Lappalainen & Szebehely 1996).

However, elderly people in Sweden are in general entitled to care services to which their Japanese counterparts are not yet entitled. Elderly care in Japan has been mainly left to the private sphere and it has long been a burden borne largely by housewives. It has been often the case that married women have been forced to quit their paid jobs in order to be full time "unpaid" care givers at home for elderly parents-in-law. As late as in April 2000, the new care insurance system was introduced in order to facilitate the process of elderly people getting state-sponsored care services. However, it remains to be seen whether the burden on families has been reduced in practice.

In addition to the above-described dimensions, it is also important to note that the Japanese legal system and policies favor marriage. Other family forms are penalized in one way or another in Japanese society. If couples are not legally married, they are not entitled to the same rights as married couples, nor do the children of cohabiting couples enjoy the same rights as the children of married couples. For example, in many work places, a father has no right to take parental leave unless he is legally married to his child's mother. In Sweden, there is no differentiation between the children of married couples and other children in this respect. Lone mothers in Sweden are entitled to the universal social benefit for their child as parents, while lone mothers in Japan receive a type of child allowance because their child has no father. In other words, Japanese lone mother families are still considered as households that lack the male breadwinner. Lone mothers cannot get this allowance if they find another male breadwinner to live with, since the household is no longer female-headed. In this respect, in Japan, the targeted policies for lone mothers tend to produce the stigma of lone mothers. This stands in contrast to Swedish lone mothers, who are integrated in the policies as the head of the households and not stigmatized or marginalized in the society (Hobson 1994, Hobson & Takahashi 1997).

As we have seen, women in Japan are not treated as independent individuals, as

working citizens, nor as mothers. They are considered as care-giving wives – in contrast to Swedish women who have rights as workers, and which take into account their situation as parents.

Table 1. A comparison of dimensions of social policy and social provisions in Japan and Sweden

Dimension	The Japanese model	The Swedish model
Strength of male breadwinner ideology	Strong	Weak
Unit of benefit	Household	Individual
Taxation	Joint taxation and special exemption for spouse and dependents	Separate taxation and equal tax relief
Old age pension	Pension for dependents exists	Individual
Social allowance/subsidy	Except for social aid, social allowances such as housing subsidy and family allowance are mainly paid to only formal full time workers by large-scale enterprises.	Paid by the state. Housing subsidy: means tested
Child benefit by the state	Means tested. Paid to breadwinner	Universal. Paid to mother
Social alimony for solo parents	Income related. Treated in the same way as social aid for low income earners.	Universal
Maternity leave, parental leave and benefit level for workers	Parental leave: 12 months. Benefit level is about 40% of earning. But level of benefits still varies among employers.	390 + 90 days. 60 days for mother and 60 days for father: 80% of earning. 270 days: 80 % of earning. 90 days: 60 kr/day.
Most prevalent full-time formal pattern of child care	Public/private day nursery	Public day care
% pre-primary school children in child care facilities	25.7 % in 2001 (24.7% in kinder garden)	80.2 % in 2002

Source: Naikakufu 2002.
SCB 2004.

3.2. The institutional rules in market

Looking at the institutional settings from the market perspective, Sweden experienced severe labor force shortages in the 1960s. When the government decided not to encourage large-scale immigration in 1966, it became imperative to increase married women's labor force participation (Lewis & Åström 1992). A combination of the state's motives for gender equal division of work and the interests of market actors pulled women into the labor market, especially into the expanding public sector. "The feminization of labor" occurred during the 70s and 80s, and the proportion of female workers within the total labor force increased from 37 percent in 1965 to 48 percent in 1990.

The legal arrangements treating both women and men as workers and parents have been applied both in the public and the private sector. Hence, the Swedish labor market can be seen as having parent-friendly institutions. The individual's right to access to a paid work and to continue working as a parent is, if we see it from the supply side, completely gender equal and neutral in Sweden. In theory, female workers have the same rights as male workers when they apply for a job and have the same chance to be promoted at the workplace. In reality, however, the Swedish labor market is considered one of the most gender segregated labor markets among Western societies (Jonung 1984, 1997, Wadensjö 1997). Female workers are still over represented in service and care work – especially in the public sector. In addition, female workers' average wage is not as high as male workers' average wage even if they work full-time.¹¹

The situation of the Japanese labor market is quite different from that of Sweden. As argued in the previous section, workers' welfare provisions are weak and their working conditions vary depending on the employers. The possibilities for women and men to be parent workers are determined by the companies for which they work. Mari Osawa (1994) has criticized "the Japanese corporate-centered society"¹² for its patriarchies and elitism. In such a society, a privileged group of workers who are regular employees of large corporations are able to enjoy much greater social security benefits than other groups of workers. The lifetime employment system and the seniority wage and promotion system are the features in such corporations and these systems have made it difficult for either women or men to be parent workers. The traditional view of female employees in large corporations has been "short life workers" who are expected to quit when they marry (nowadays, when they become pregnant). In companies that provide on-the-job training and have many opportunities for promotion because of the seniority promotion system, it is male workers who are trained – and not female workers. Thus, male workers who wish to establish a career with a company and stay there until

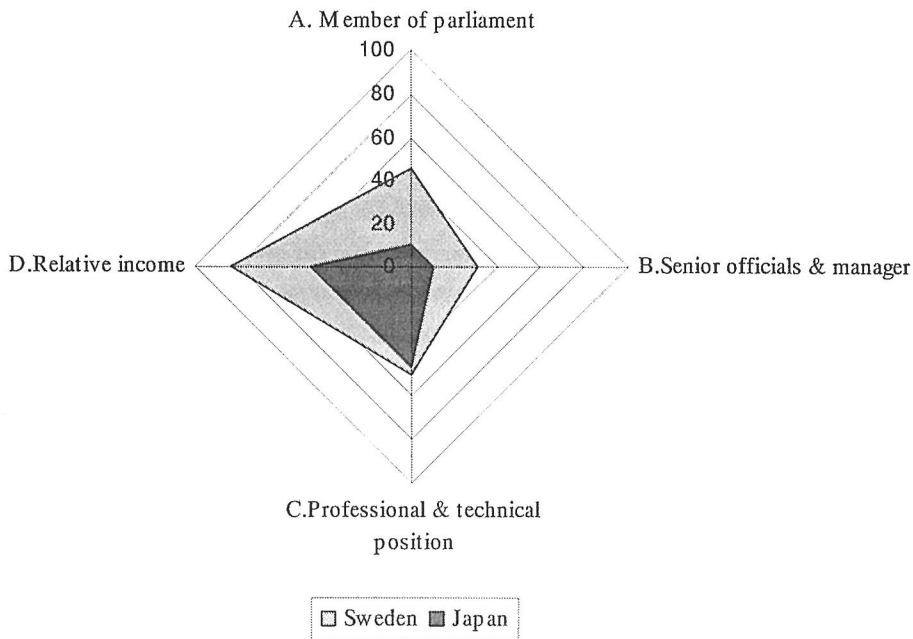
retirement are forced to become “corporate warriors” (Osawa 1994) who concentrate on their paid work in daily life, but not on the family at all. Their family life is often sacrificed to corporate loyalty.

The fact that women are less apt to enter firm-internal labor markets and receive less on-the-job training in Japan (Brinton 1993) makes prospects even more difficult for mothers to return to the labor market after having quit their former job after having married or had children. They have little chance to join the company as regular employees, but can only become non-regular employees called PAATO.¹³ It means that the welfare benefits she gets from her employer are not as high as the benefits of a regular worker, especially a male worker. In this way, women working as PAATO are taken advantage of in the Japanese labor market as a source of cheap labor with no power. However, the recent economic recession has been forcing large corporations to re-structure its employment system. The regular workers now fear that they will not be able to enjoy the life long employment as they have expected. This may imply that the situation for female workers gets even worse.

Although the legislation against gender discrimination in the labor market was enacted more than a decade ago – and parent workers are entitled the right for parental leave for more than one year – the Japanese labor market situation is far from gender equal. Given the fact that the fertility rate in Japan has been decreasing, there is an urgent need for a change of the whole structure. Not only the supply side, including access to paid work and the possibility to become parent workers, but also the gender stratified structure in the market in terms of status and wage, fails to empower women as equal as men.

Looking at Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) shown in Figure 1, we understand that even though the gender stratified structure remains in both countries, the opportunities for employment and for pursuing a career are distributed more gender equally in the Swedish market than in the Japanese market. In all of the four explanatory factors in this context; 1) seats in parliament held by women, 2) the proportion of female legislators, senior officials and managers, 3) the proportion of female professional and technical workers, and 4) ratio of estimated female to male earned income; the gender disparity is much greater in Japan than in Sweden.

Figure 1. Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Source: UNDP 2004



4. Discussion

The way “gender” is incorporated in societal institutions such as law, social policy and the market can be assumed to affect the way the societal gender rules are (re)constructed, as well as the ways in which the individual’s gender norms are formed. In this paper, I have argued that the institutional setting in Sweden promotes gender neutrality with gender equality and treats both women and men as independent individuals in a family unit. In contrast, the institutional settings in Japan have not promoted gender neutrality with gender equality to the same extent as in Sweden. People are treated as dependent members of a family unit rather than independent individuals within a family. This means that the Swedish model provides more bases of power at the societal level for women compared to the Japanese model.

Although I have highlighted the construction of bases of power as important resources for women’s empowerment so far, a part of the outcome of power at the societal level can be also considered to have effects as the base of power at the individual level. For example, women can get more self-efficacy as women by

recognizing other women's attainment in different dimensions such as in politics, corporate management or academia. As presented in my model of gender mechanism for women's empowerment (Takahashi 2003), the operation of gender power seems to be very complex. However, I argue that the bases of power provided by institutional arrangements and policies increase women's subjective bases of power can operate in the family. In order to achieve a more gender equal society, we need to have more active policies that support women and men in combining work and family life without being constrained by gender.

Notes

1. This study is a revised edition of Chapter 2 of my doctoral dissertation. For further theoretical discussions in this context, see Takahashi (2003).
2. The feminist scholars view Gösta Esping-Andersen's (1990) central concept of "de-commodification" and his typology of welfare states as problematic because it assumes a commodified male worker as the norm (see Lewis & Åström 1992, Lewis & Ostner 1994, Shaver & Bradshaw 1993, Orloff 1993, Hobson 1994, Sainsbury 1994). In the study of 18 industrial nations, Walter Korpi (1999) has analyzed the interrelation between the condition of institutional settings in terms of social insurance system and gender logic in policy and inequality in terms of class and gender. According to Korpi's categorization, the Swedish model provides the general social insurance system, support for dual earner family and inequality level in terms of both class and gender. By contrast, the Japanese model has cooperative social insurance system, market dominating family policy, and high inequality level in terms of gender (no outcome is presented for class).
3. Lewis and Ostner (1994) argue that the most of western European countries seem to fall into the first model (strong male breadwinner). They conclude that further more detailed research should be done in order to extend this proposal beyond European countries such as USA and Japan. In addition, Jane Lewis discussed and pointed out need of further studies within this field at the latest seminar at CGS, Stockholm University, 18 April, 1996.
4. Looking at the latest GEM (= Gender Empowerment Measure) developed by UNDP, Sweden was placed on 2nd while Japan was on 38th place among the measured countries in the world (UNDP 2004).

5. The New Constitution states that “all citizens are equal under the law and shall not be discriminated against politically, economically, or socially because of race, creed, sex, social rank, or lineage”. The promulgation of a new constitution was accompanied by the revision of the civil code, which abolished the traditional household system “IE”. In “IE” system, family headship and household succession system were strongly embedded, and individual’s freedom of marriage and divorce was limited (Kuninobu 1998).
6. According to Kuninobu (1998), there have been four “high points” or “waves” of the women’s liberation movements in Japan since the Meiji restoration in 1868. The first wave emerged during the period of 1880 and 1890 followed by Meiji restoration and some feminist groups appealed for women’s autonomy and rights. The second wave occurred in 1911 when the first feminist journal in Japan “Seito” (= Blue stocking) was published by a group of young women headed by Raicho Hiratsuka, who advocated for women to become New Women in the Taisho “Democracy” period (1913 - 1926). This movement evolved into a dispute on motherhood among some feminist opinion leaders who took different stances such as liberal feminist, Akiko Yosano, claiming women’s autonomy through economic independence, maternal feminist, Raicho Hiratsuka, and socialist feminist, Kikue Yamashita. The third wave occurred directly after World War II as presented in the text. The fourth wave occurred between 1970 and 1985 and during this period many women’s liberation movements emerged.
7. The Japanese government put forward a plan for “Cooperative Society with women’s and men’s participation” as late as in 1999. It advocates the importance to build a society where both women and men can combine work and family life. Also, Prime Minister Koizumi points out the need for establishing more childcare facilities for working mothers. However, there is yet no political consensus about promoting gender equality in terms of the division of paid and unpaid work. In this vein, we see a similar tendency of the Japanese Government that enacted the Equal Employment Opportunity Law already in 1985, but without questioning other state policies such as the joint tax system and welfare programs supporting the preservation of the gender role (cf. Tsukaguchi-le Grand 1999).
8. The uniqueness of the Japanese IE system has been argued by anthropologists (Nakane 1970). For a splendid explanation of IE system applied to the modern Japanese society, see Tsukaguchi-le Grand (1999).
9. Looking at the companies with more than 5 employees, 53.5% had introduced this regulation in 1999 (Naikakufu 2001b:92).

10. The average monthly wage of female workers was only 58.8% of the average monthly wage of male workers in 1976. The equivalent figure for 1997 is still low, 63.1% (Fujin Kyooiku Kenkyuukai 2000).
11. Although the solidarity wage policy implies “equal pay for the same type of work”, female workers do earn less than male workers. In comparing the difference in average monthly wages among full-time employees, female workers’ average wage is 76.8% of male workers’ average wage in 1994 (Nyberg 1997). But it is important to note that the difference in wages between men and women in Sweden is the smallest among the industrialized countries (SCB 1992).
12. A society which is corporate-centered is one “in which corporations and other organizations have grown so excessively that their purposes and principles of actions have taken precedence over those of individual members and those of the society itself, restraining the degree of freedom in the domain of personal life” (Osawa 1994:3).
13. It is important to define “part time work” in Japan because it is far different from the Swedish context. In Japan, it is called PAATO (from “part”-time). The main difference between PAATO and the formal full time work is not number of work hours, but the working conditions such as the contract period, difference in salary, bonus and the length of paid vacation. PAATO can work more than 35 hours per week and still remain PAATO. Those who classified as PAATO are not usually entitled to paid vacation, the same chance to be promoted and the same right to be protected as formal full time workers. They are simply inferior to full time workers in every respect in the work place.

ジェンダー平等を促進する社会構造と制度

ー福祉国家の2 類型：スウェーデン・日本ー

高橋美恵子

要旨

本稿の目的は、社会における平等なジェンダー論理は社会資源・個人資源の男女間での配分をより公平にし、女性のエンパワーメントを促進するという視点から、スウェーデンと日本のジェンダーをめぐる社会制度がいかに構築されてきたかを比較考察することにある。筆者はこれまでの研究においてジェンダーを人々の生活における志向や行動に影響する社会の下位構造であると捉え、女性が男性と同等の権力をもつことができるためのメカニズム（女性のエンパワーメント・メカニズム）を提唱してきた (Takahashi 2003)。社会及び家庭における女性のエンパワーメントを実現するためには、ジェンダーに平等な論理によって制度化された社会資源、つまり政策・法律等は不可欠であると考え、そのような社会資源は、性別役割分業に基づき男性を稼ぎ手とするジェンダー論理 (male breadwinner logics) (Lewis & Ostner 1994) を弱め、個人単位で資源を配分する制度を構築し促進する。また男女に平等な制度は社会全体のジェンダー規範に影響を与え、女性個人のジェンダー意識を高めることにもなる。

スウェーデンにおいては、1960 年代の男女平等論争の流れを受け、男性を稼ぎ手とする論理が弱まり、70 年代以降は個人を単位とした制度が構築されてきた。男女とも家庭と仕事を両立させるという理念に基づき、社会・個人資源は男女に平等に配分されるよう法制度・政策が整備されている。また今日においてもなお諸制度の改善を目指す議論が行われている。

それに対して、日本における社会資源の配分法はいまだ男女でかなり偏ったものであるといわざるを得ない。日本の諸制度は性別役割分業観に基づき、世帯を単位として構築されており、既婚女性の多くは夫の被扶養者として社会保障制度に組み込まれている。近年出生率の低下が進み危機感が高まっていることも考慮に入れると、家族状況に関わらず、就労を希望する女性の意識と行動が拘束されることがない制度へと変換されるべき時が来ているのではなかろうか。そのためには社会保障制度の改革と公的保育の拡充が不可欠であろう。

国連開発計画 (UNDP) のジェンダー・エンパワーメント測定 (GEM) 最新報告によると、スウェーデンは世界2 位で、日本は 38 位であった (UNDP 2004)。同数値は社会における女性のエンパワーメントの所産ではあるが、別の視点から

みると、女性にとっての社会資源の基盤ともみなすことができる。社会での重要な地位に占める女性の割合が増加することにより、女性の意識が高まり、より平等な政策が打ち立てられると考えられる。従来のジェンダー規範に拘束されることなく、男女とも家庭と仕事の双方の領域に参加することができる社会を目指し、取り組みを続けてきたスウェーデンから学ぶべき点は多い。

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