Legitimizing Family-Supportive Contexts in Globally-Affiliated Financial Advisory Firms

in Tokyo, Japan

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Gender, Race, Sexuality & Social Justice)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2019

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Legitimizing Family-Supportive Contexts in Globally-Affiliated Financial Advisory Firms in Tokyo, Japan

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Abstract
State-level legislative efforts to address the persisting M-curve pattern in female labour force participation in Japan are not translating into widespread implementation and uptake of work-family policies. While it has been established that the gendered norms of the male ideal worker and female primary caregiver are entrenched in the Japanese workplace and significantly impede the compatibility of motherhood and work, few have investigated how the globalization of business is impacting the influence of such norms. Or subsequently, how this affects policy uptake by working mothers. Drawing on document analysis of organizational and nationally-mandated work-family policies, as well as 13 in-depth interviews with professional working mothers at three leading globally-affiliated financial advisory firms in Tokyo, this study examines how women engage in multi-level translation and use of work-family policies. Document analysis of national legislations and the multi-national work-family policies of one of the organizations found that the policies of their Japanese offices corresponded fully to the national legislative framework. Despite this alignment, narratives revealed that the women leveraged the presence of international work values and practices in their workplace to justify their use of progressive work-family policies. The working mothers engaged with policies based on the “global” institutional, social and ideological resources that they perceived as safeguarding their careers. Their use of these resources was interdependent with presumptions of what constituted “local” and “global” values and their association of the international with gender equity and modernity. This study argues that these women used these strategies to legitimate a way of working that recognizes the demands of parenting, thus, exposing possibilities of the legitimization of work-family policies in different cultural contexts.
Lay Summary

State level legislative efforts to address the exodus of women from the workforce following childbirth in Japan are not translating into widespread uptake of work-family policies by working mothers. Previous research emphasizes local cultural gendered norms of work and parenthood as inhibiting policy use both due to employers’ expectations of a committed worker who can work long hours and women who must struggle between adhering to workplace expectations and social norms of the female caregiver. Consequently, this is resulting in women “choosing” to leave full-time work. However, the globalization of business and work values is impacting business norms and workplace practices. This study examines the context of three globally-affiliated consulting firms in Tokyo, offering an analysis of cross-national policy adaptation and interview data from 13 working mothers, to better understand the relationship between local gendered norms, workplace values and working mothers’ perceptions of and engagement with work-family policies.
Preface

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, Alice Harada Bannister. The interviews reported in Chapters 5 were covered by UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) Certificate Number H18-02491.
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Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking the Musqueam people for hosting me for the duration of my study, both as a student and as a guest on their lands.

I owe special thanks to my co-supervisors, Dr. Sylvia Fuller and Dr. Leonora Angeles, for their invaluable feedback, academic guidance, emotional support and understanding throughout this journey. Thank you for taking the time to provide the coherent and thought-provoking feedback that allowed me to develop as a researcher. I offer my gratitude to Wynn Archibald and Carmen Radut, for keeping me connected with the Institute and answering my myriad of queries throughout my degree. I extend further thanks to my cohort, Dabney Meachum and Marika Yeo, and especially to Sejin Um for being my most caring critic, library partner and friend.

To my study participants: the biggest thanks of all. Thank you for your time, one of your most precious resources, in helping me understand your daily labour and explore ways in which we can change the lives of future generations of women in Japan.

Special thanks are owed to my mother, who has supported me throughout my years of never-ending education. You managed to navigate parenthood and work all by yourself, supporting me financially and ensuring that I always felt that my opportunities were infinite. I have always taken my own path, and your independence has always inspired me to know that I have the strength to do so.
Dedication

To my mother, Yoko Harada
CHAPTER 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview: Motherhood and Employment in Japan

There has been increased state effort and legislative reform since the 1970s in Japan to redress the institutional and cultural barriers that impede the compatibility of motherhood and paid employment. The Japanese government has looked to the international arena for policy inspiration on legislation targeting the prevention of gender discrimination and safeguarding equal employment opportunities (Gottfried & O’Reilly 2000). Japanese national work-family policies center on access to childcare leave, the introduction of temporary flexible work options upon return to work - such as reduced work schedules and exemption from overtime - and permanent mechanisms such as flexitime (ILO n.d.; Nishimura & Kwon 2016). These are policies that have spread internationally and are standard components of state and private initiatives designed to alleviate the issue of the motherhood penalty\(^1\) in numerous cultural contexts. Despite these recent efforts, female employment patterns in Japan continue to be characterized by the M-curve.\(^2\) The rate of continued employment around the birth of a first child only rose from 23.9% between 1985 and 1989 to 26.8% between 2005 and 2009 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2015/6). Women and mothers continue to be “crowded” into non-regular employment and non-career track work\(^3\) - both associated with long-term disadvantage - or leave the paid workforce completely (Gottfried 2008; Nakamura & Ueda 1999; Nemoto 2013; Osawa Kin &

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\(^1\) The disadvantage of motherhood in employment has been labelled ‘the motherhood penalty’. This refers to the pay gap between mothers and childless women after controlling for differences in experience, education, working hours and individual factors, with a significant portion of the penalty attributed to mothers’ reduced labour force participation (Budig et al. 2012:165).

\(^2\) The M-shaped curve in female employment patterns emerges as a result of a large proportion of married women opting out of the labour market to commit to domestic work, especially childbirth and child-rearing, during their late 20s and early 30s and typically returning to lower-quality jobs during their early 40s (Brinton 2001; Yu 2005 as cited in Nishimura and Kwon 2016:70).

\(^3\) Non-career track work refers to women hired by companies to carry out administrative tasks with little promotion prospects and no requirements for training, on the assumption that they will leave the workforce upon marriage. In return they are guaranteed little or no overtime and are not required to relocate to other offices (Nemoto 2013).
Lack of progress has been due to enduring institutional barriers such as the dual labour market\(^4\) and insufficient availability of childcare services\(^5\), as well as cultural norms. For example, uptake of extended paternity leave\(^6\), a key component of work-family legislative reform, remains at just under 3% and points to persisting gendered norms in work and family spheres\(^7\) (Mun & Brinton 2015).

State mandated work-family policies are not translating into widespread policy use\(^8\). Previous studies draw attention to the importance of organizational-level context in determining policy success (Brinton & Mun 2016; Mun & Brinton 2015; Suzuki & Stickland 2007), attributing policy failure to dominant cultural norms of the male ideal worker\(^9\) and the female full-time caregiver\(^10\). However, changing demographics and business practices are impacting organizations in Japan. With increased globalization of business operations, as well as an increasing number of dual-earner couples making up the workforce, further analysis is necessary to interrogate what happens when the global meets local. How are gendered norms in the workplace negotiated by working mothers in organizations where international and local values and work practices co-exist? How does this impact the use of work-family policies?

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\(^4\) This refers to the division of the employment between an internal market of core full-time workers typically recruited as graduates and trained within a company and the peripheral market of all other non-regular workers (part-time, dispatch and temporary) (Rebick 2005).

\(^5\) The Report on Status of Day-care Centers found there were 22,741 children on waiting lists nationally in 2013 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2013).

\(^6\) Extended paternity leave has been available since the 2007 Equal Employment Opportunities Amendment.

\(^7\) Childcare leave can be divided equally by parents: in 1999 56.4% of women and 0.42% of men took childcare leave, this rose to 90.6% of women and 1.23% of men by 2008 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2013).

\(^8\) For this study, I refer to the national legislation on work-family policies that are guaranteed for workers on full-time contracts, workers referred to as seishain in Japan. Part-time and non-regular employees are not always eligible for these policies (ILO n.d.).

\(^9\) Ideal worker norm is the model of the give-it-your-all, fully committed worker who prioritizes work over personal life and presumes a worker is willing to stay long hours in the office (Morrone & Matsuyama 2010).

\(^10\) Full-time caregiving or primary caregiving norms are associated with women and are linked to the notion of intensive motherhood; it entails full-time responsibility of caring for children and domestic tasks (Hein 2005).
This qualitative research study examines globally-affiliated organizations in Tokyo with the aim of understanding: (a) to what extent are the work-family policies of these global organizations adapted to the Japanese context, and (b) how do professional working mothers engage with these policies within spaces where local and global values and practices co-exist? This study consists of two parts. First, a document analysis of national employment legislation and case study of a leading global affiliate financial advisory firm. This component of the thesis examines how global work-family principles are adapted into policies for a local Japanese work setting. Second, an analysis of primary qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews with 13 professional working mothers who are full-time employees at three global financial advisory firms. This offers direct insight into mothers’ perceptions and use of work-family policies within the context of a global entity structure and Japanese workplace. This study is particularly interested in how these women’s perceptions are interdependent with their negotiation of local and global (gendered) norms and practices within these spaces. This triangulation of sources aims to uncover how working mothers engage in multi-level translation and use of work-family policies, to construct a bigger picture of the relationship between local gendered norms, workplace practices and increasing globalization of business operations.

1.2 Understanding the Motherhood Penalty in Context

The design, implementation and uptake of work-family policy is shaped by employment structures, country-specific cultural context and workplace culture; as such, use of the same policy can differ drastically between countries. Countries looking to other nations for policy-models therefore cannot be guaranteed they will experience the same results. Despite this, meta-analysis studies suggest that there is lack of research into the successful transfer of work-family policies
cross-nationally (Hegewisch & Gornich 2010; Grimshaw & Rubery 2015). In Japan, this lack of research is further aggravated by the wide gap between state level policy formulation and policy implementation at the organizational level. Addressing this gap in policy usage, Brinton and Mun (2016) posit the importance of blanket national policies to gain internal legitimacy in a company before it can become widely used. Similarly, other studies have found that creating a supportive workplace culture and organizational gender climate is essential in making employees feel comfortable to use nationally-mandated policies (Hein 2005; Mun & Brinton 2015; Nemoto 2013).

In the current age of globalized business, there is a pressing need to take into consideration the multi-level translation of policy and how policies can become legitimized within different cultural contexts.

Several case studies of Multi-National Companies (MNCs) and global companies like IBM and Merck (Muse 2011; Poelsman et al. 2008) suggest that global strategies for policies such as flexitime should be country-specific rather than have a universal design. Poster and Prasad’s (2005) case study of MNCs in the US and India found that perceptions toward work-family policy were determined by local norms of work-family organization and whether the spheres of work and family were distinctly separated (India) or separated by a more permeable barrier (US). Meanwhile, other cross-national studies suggest that countries in similar cultural groupings display similar work-family conflicts, signalling the potential for the transportability of policies (Hill, Yang, Hawkins & Ferris 2004). Cross-national differences in policy impact have been researched at a macro level but more attention needs to be directed toward linking cross-national policy mobility to policy engagement within an organizational context where the interaction of policy, cultural norms and workplace culture can be examined at a more micro level.
This research addresses a gap in the current literature on motherhood and employment in Japan by generating new knowledge regarding how cross-cultural work-family policy mobility interact with local gendered norms. Observing work-family policies through the eyes of Japanese mothers working in global firms in Tokyo provides fertile grounds to explore the interaction between local and transnational cultural values of work and family, at the intersection of local/global organizational practices, client demands and policy. In addition, this is a “study up” approach (Kubota 2016), engaging with skilled, professional women working in top tier organizations, who can be considered a privileged sector of society. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that this study cannot offer generalizable insights for working mothers across Japan, this approach offers several research advantages. Examining the negotiation of norms within this context offers a unique insight into factors that constrain or encourage adherence to gendered norms in the workplace, since these are women who enjoy higher socio-economic positions and guaranteed access to nationally-mandated work-family policies. Understanding how these full-time working mothers navigate such competitive and fast-paced sectors can uncover strategies that women are using to work in ways that enable them to maintain both roles despite the time-demanding nature of their work. This is especially significant when considering the heavily male-dominated demographic of this industry which is reflective of wider Japanese business demographics, and as such, the applicability of the findings to working mothers outside these firms should not be completely negated.

From an economic and demographic perspective, research into factors inhibiting policy usage is crucial for resolving the under-utilization of the potential female labour force and mitigating the fertility crisis\textsuperscript{11} currently facing Japan. Counteracting the consequences of the

\textsuperscript{11} Japan’s fertility rate was at 1.4 in 2016 (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN)
ageing population and labour shortage\textsuperscript{12} necessitates, at least partly, the maximization of female labour force participation through the establishment of widely available and widely usable work-family policies. As various policy models gain success in ameliorating the motherhood penalty in other countries\textsuperscript{13}, it is important to understand how they could be effectively \textit{implemented} within other cultural contexts. For example, extant research indicates that policy environments in industrialized countries that have “highly developed work-family reconciliation measures” and high female labour force participation rates, like those in Nordic countries, have higher fertility rates (Hein 2005). From a feminist perspective, gendered norms of work and motherhood restrict the life and work trajectories of many Japanese women and men, who find themselves making career and family “choices” constrained by social norms that make two fundamental spheres of life seemingly incompatible. The “business case” for gender equality in the workplace has been acknowledged by numerous countries including Japan (Steinberg & Nakane 2012); however, approaching work-family policy from the economic perspective alone ignores issues of gender equity in the home, daily care work and the actualization of universal work-life balance which are highlighted in this study.

As non-regular employment grows in Japan, understanding the experiences of working mothers in full-time employment is vital to alleviate the channeling of women into precarious forms of employment\textsuperscript{14}. In these forms of employment, access to childcare leave and support systems, higher salaries, promotion opportunities and stability are lacking (Gottfried 2008; Osawa

\textsuperscript{12} The productive age population was at 64 percent in 2011 and it is estimated to drop to 51 percent by 2055 (Minister for Gender Equality 2011)
\textsuperscript{13} The Dutch model of equal treatment of part-time and full-time work (hourly wage and benefits) and the introduction of economic disincentives for not taking advantage of paternity leave in Iceland have reduced the motherhood pay gap and increased use of divided parental leave respectively (Steinberg & Nakane 2012).
\textsuperscript{14} Part-time and temporary forms of employment in Japan are increasingly being described as ‘precarious work’ due to long-term wage disparity and lack of wage increase, unequal enrollment in social insurance programmes and for temporary workers the lack of legal protection for early dismissal (Osawa et al. 2012).
et al. 2012; Seto et al. 2006; Weathers, 2001; Yu 2002). Studies agree that such stability increases long-term motherhood survival in employment. If legally guaranteed work-family policies are not widely being used in full-time employment, then further research must consider how policy design can be revised or mechanisms of accountability for usage reinforced to respond to the impact of gendered norms and practices in impeding their usability.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The central objective of this study is to examine: how are norms of motherhood and work negotiated by working mothers, within spaces where local and global work values and practices co-exist? How does this relate to work-family policy usage? At a macro level of analysis, the case study examines the cross-national adaptation of policy to the Japanese work setting to observe to what extent policies are reflective of local norms. At a micro level, interview data provides insight into how Japanese working mothers make sense of the official and/or unofficial work-family policies available to them within these organizational contexts. This is an inductive research study using applied thematic analysis to confirm, challenge, or generate new theories related to the current literature (Braun & Clarke 2006).

My specific research objectives include the following: (1) to examine and analyze a global firm’s adaptation of global work-family principles into local work-family policies, specifically into the Japanese context (2) to uncover the negotiation of competing gendered norms and work practices by working mothers within the intersection of a Japanese work setting and a global entity; and (3) to analyze and interpret how this negotiation relates to policy usage.
The macro level objective 1 is addressed in the case study and policy analysis of national legislation in the first part of this study, meanwhile the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data from the interviews fulfil the micro level goals of this research, objectives 2 and 3.

1.4 Guide to the Following Chapters

Chapter 2, Examining Motherhood and Employment in Japan, reviews the scholarly literature regarding the current situation of motherhood employment in Japan. It brings together the relevant cross-national and local work-family literature with the socio-historical context of gendered ideologies of family and employment, providing an overview of the factors shaping motherhood disadvantage in Japan. It further highlights key findings from literature into work-family policy transfer and organizational culture in global companies and MNCs, in which a gap is identified and where this study aims to contribute knowledge.

The following third chapter, A Qualitative Approach to Work-Family Policy Use, explains the methodological design of the study as well as the research’s analytical framework, detailing the justification for these approaches in addressing the research objectives. The fourth chapter, Global Companies, Global Policies? Translating Work-Family Policies at a National and Organizational Level in Japan, presents the case study findings on Company A and outlines the comparative analysis of the company’s work-family policies in Japan against four other OECD countries with comparable welfare systems, employment structures, or female labour force participation. This chapter also includes an overview of current national legislation regarding guaranteed work-family policy provisions against which Company A’s policies are assessed to understand the extent to which policies were adjusted to the local Japanese context and commonalities and differences between the three firms observed in this study.
The fifth chapter, *Navigating Norms and Legitimizing Non-Local Practices in Globally-Affiliated Companies in Tokyo*, presents the key findings from the in-depth interviews and offers an analysis of these findings to directly address the research questions: how do working mothers negotiate gendered norms within workplaces where local and global values and practices co-exist? How does this relate to work-family policy usage? The significance of the findings is then discussed in relation to the extant literature to reflect on the wider implications and contributions of the study to our current understanding work-family policy uptake in Japan.

Finally, this thesis concludes in chapter 6, drawing the research outcomes and findings to a close and proposing recommendations for future directions of research.
Chapter 2. Examining Motherhood and Employment in Japan

Family structures, demographic trends and the business environment are undergoing significant changes in Japan and this comes hand in hand with evolving gendered ideologies in the work and family sphere. Globalization has been instrumental in these changes and continues to have serious implications for business and work-family interfaces in the coming decades. The motherhood penalty has been observed internationally and research into cross-national policy transfer has been growing. Research into female employment patterns and barriers to motherhood employment in Japan has been conducted at both macro and micro levels, part of large-scale cross-national studies and subject of organizational case studies. In this chapter, I review cross-national work-family studies to understand the common structural barriers to motherhood employment observed internationally. I further review how this interrelates with the socio-historical context of labour structures and gender ideologies in Japan, and finally examine the literature on organizational workplace culture and MNCs global policy strategies to connect the global and local dynamics that shape the parameters of my study.

2.1 Cross-National Perspectives on The Motherhood Penalty

Cross-national meta-analyses of the motherhood penalty and the impact of work-family policies on female labour force participation have highlighted how the same policy can be taken up differently between countries and even between social groups within countries (Budig, Misra & Boeckmann 2012; Grimshaw & Rubery 2015; Hegewisch & Gornich 2010; Steinberg & Nakane 2012). Such studies demonstrate that usability of policies like childcare leave vary according to a country’s welfare state, employment systems and cultural norms. By analysing international pay gap data against length of leave, for example, Hegewisch and Gornich (2010) have highlighted the
significance of adjusting the length of maternity leave guaranteed by national legislation in different countries dependent upon the gender egalitarian nature of the country’s social welfare system\textsuperscript{15}. Some cross-national studies like Korabik, Lero, and Ayman (2003) factor in welfare structures and gender ideologies to create cultural groupings of countries, which provide a model of analysis with a more accurate basis for policy recommendations. However, comparative studies of OECD countries are still limited in their applicability to policy usage in countries like Japan due to a combination of Japan’s socially conservative welfare state and its distinctive and highly regulated employment system, as will be explained more fully below.

Socially conservative welfare states are characterized by the “institutional locus and division of social care responsibilities that demonstrate the persistence of a male breadwinner model” - and by default the primary female caregiver model (Gottfried & O’Reilly 2000:50). The legacy of the male breadwinner model in the Japanese welfare system is evident in the design of the tax system, family allowances and limited public support for early childcare\textsuperscript{16} (ibid.; Steinberg & Nakane 2012), which is based on the assumption of a single earner household and expectations of private caregiving. Regulations regarding household dependents such as spousal tax breaks\textsuperscript{17}, in combination with Japan’s progressive income tax system (Deloitte 2017), means that familial rather than individual units shape employment decisions. This distorts how international policy recommendations based on dual earner households can effectively impact female labour behaviour.

\textsuperscript{15} Longer maternity and childcare leave can result in negative consequences such as a higher depreciation of human capital and therefore a higher motherhood pay penalty. Hegewisch & Gornich (2010) find that the optimum maximum length of leave can be determined depending on the country’s welfare structure.

\textsuperscript{16} The fertility issue and labour shortage has meant increased public support for childcare services in Japan; nevertheless, studies still define Japan as a socially conservative welfare state due to the implications of household earnings and children on tax regulations and also highlight how public expenditure on child care and early education in Japan is still in the bottom quarter of the distribution of OECD countries (OECD 2004).

\textsuperscript{17} This system allows employees with a dependent partner to be eligible for tax reductions. Until recently, the threshold income level was 1.03 million yen but the 2017 tax reform in Japan increased the threshold to 1.5 million yen and introduced a stage by stage reduction scale until dependent earnings of 2.01 million yen (See Deloitte 2017).
following childbirth in Japan (Gottfried & O’Reilly 2000; Osawa et al. 2012; Suzuki & Stickland 2007). Gottfried and O’Reilly (2000) illustrate this point in their comparative mixed method study of Japan and Germany\(^\text{18}\); they find that unless the working mother in a dual earner couple has a mid to high income and/or higher income than her spouse, which typically necessitates full-time employment, the household unit may be in a better financial position if the mother works limited part-time hours or not at all. In the case of Japan, a lack of childcare facilities (Nishimura 2016) and high income taxes can also influence a women’s decision to switch from full-time to part-time employment. As a result, the reach of policies like extended paternity leave may be more limited in Japan where such breadwinner-based regulations significantly affect the calculation of reservation and opportunity wages by working parents, influencing childcare and career decisions. This simultaneously has serious implications for employer perceptions within these contexts since their awareness of these regulations has enabled them to take advantage by maintaining salaries just below the level of the dependent tax reduction threshold (Gottfried 2008). Policy impact therefore differs between gender-egalitarian leaning and breadwinner countries and will further have a stratified effect depending on socio-economic classes.

The M-curve in female labour force participation is correlated to the highly regulated nature of the Japanese employment system and further distinguishes the Japanese labour market from most other OECD countries, with the exception of Korea (Nishimura & Kwon 2016). Unlike other industrial nations, the majority of longitudinal national survey analyses in Japanese studies have found that educational attainment has had little or no positive impact on women’s re-entry into the workforce after childbirth - rather it is occupational characteristics that play a significant factor in determining successful return to work (Nishimura 2016; Nishimura & Kwon 2016; 2018). Germany is also defined as a socially conservative state due to remnants of the breadwinner model in their tax systems, childcare support services and historical encouragement of (female) part-time work (Gottfried & O’Reilly).
Raymo, Musick & Iwasawa 2015). It follows that in Japan, employment status and the occupational characteristics of work such as hours, skills and training are significant when it comes to negotiating work and family obligations. Occupational privilege, regardless of education, therefore should facilitate women’s return to the workforce and indicate that women with higher socio-economic statuses such as those with professions or skilled full-time employment have a higher level of choice in their life/career trajectories.

However, despite national legislation and reforms guaranteeing childcare leave for full-time employees, which to date nearly a hundred percent of large companies have adopted, sixty percent of women still exit the workforce annually after having a child (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2012). Many studies link low uptake of work-family policies, such as maternity leave, to the dual labour market that remains a strong marker of Japan’s employment system, based on a protected internal labour market of core full-time workers and a weak external labour market of peripheral non-regular workers (Gottfried 2000; Rebick 2005; Weathers 2002). Studies have identified how this strictly regulated internal labour market structure discourages the use of work-family policies due to the potential short and long-term repercussions. Mechanisms such as extensive internal training, seniority-based wage setting, service overtime and promotion requirements such as generalist skills gained from departmental rotations signify that work leaves or work hour reductions directly hinder long-term career trajectories (Nemoto 2013; Nishimura 2016; Rebick 2005; Suzuki & Stickland 2007). In the shorter term, most literature pinpoint the excessive working hours that characterize Japanese working culture to be a significant barrier to the initial return to work after maternity leave and uptake of work-family policies that reduce working hours (Gottfried 2008; Nemoto 2013; Yu 2002).
The pressure to work longer hours as a show of commitment by employees is exerted from management-downwards and as an internalised fear. For example, interviews with working mothers in numerous Japanese studies suggested the prevalence of unofficial workplace expectations such as the early return to work following childbirth despite legal standards (Nemoto 2013; Yoshizaki 2001). At the state level of policy formulation, quantitative research is useful in matching policy design to a country’s structural framework, yet it may not address the complexities of translating policies from the state to organizational level. As such, the triangulation of survey data and smaller scale qualitative data from interviews, as seen in these studies, proves useful in uncovering subjugated knowledge such as unofficial practices and norms in the workplace which impact initial policy engagement and long-term career choices.

Japan’s full-time employment system has been increasingly deregulated in the last couple of decades; seniority-based wage systems and promotions have been relaxed and the career/non-career track system was ended (Rebick 2005; see also section 2.3 below). This suggests that certain institutional contributors to the long-term penalty for women who take leave are being addressed. However, to what extent the relaxation of these systems rather than changes in practices can alleviate wider structural and institutional barriers is still to be determined (Rebick 2005; Weathers 2002).

In addition to institutional factors, most studies cite the lack of childcare availability in restraining women’s return to work and use of work-family policies in Japan (Lee and Lee 2014; Nakamura & Ueda 1999; Nishimura & Kwon 2016; Unayama 2012). Although there is disagreement amongst the literature regarding whether institutional barriers like long hours or the lack of childcare availability are more important in determining withdrawal from the full-time labour force, it can be argued that the two issues are very much interlinked and further correlate to
Japan’s non-egalitarian gendered division of labour. Since Japanese women remain the designated primary caregiver, issues relating to long hours and the lack of childcare facilities directly delegate childcare responsibility and related needs to the mother, either through the re-categorization of her work responsibilities, or partial or complete withdrawal from the workforce. Those who do leave full-time employment typically find themselves returning to lower quality and less well-paid part-time or non-regular employment (Suzuki & Stickland 2007).

2.2 Japanese Workplace Culture and Gendered Norms

There is wide agreement across research into the motherhood penalty regarding wider institutional barriers, both in Japan and internationally. However, policy success requires a supportive environment in the workplace - and how supportive a workplace is towards working mothers is highly correlated with a country’s cultural ideologies regarding the gender division of labour (Correll, Benard & Paik 2007; Brinton & Mun 2016; Mun & Brinton 2015; Nemoto 2013; Yoshizaki 2001; Yu 2002). Qualitative studies link long working hours to the gendered division of labour, which is embedded in full-time employment in Japan, namely the cultural norm of (male) ideal workers and (female) unpaid caregivers (Morrone & Matsuyama 2010; Nakamura & Ueda 1999; Nemoto 2013; Nishimura 2016). Nemoto (2013) uses a gendered organizational perspective to examine how long work hours result in the depressed aspirations of both mothers and non-mothers, leading to dichotomised patterns of employment between women who inevitably find themselves having to emulate masculine norms - or opt out.

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19 This problem becomes even more evident when nursery school regulations are brought into the discussion, such as the necessity for both parents of a nursery school applicant to be in full-time employment (Nishimura 2016).
She further brings to light the historical context of long working hours and its association with masculinity and nationalism, which she argues underlies the country’s ongoing resistance to legislative change regarding working hours and reinforces social acceptance of gendered divisions of labour. Some studies emphasize the legacy of Confucian ethics and gender ideology in Japanese society and the foundations of employment structures; according to a Confucian value system in the Meiji period, order and the nation-state were maintained via women’s dominance in the domestic sphere, and male commitment and loyalty to their company (Freiner 2012). Assumptions regarding the definition of success within the workplace context are therefore distinctly gendered because they are interconnected with assumptions of what constitutes the ideal worker. However, the influence of these underlying socio-historical ties of these Japanese work practices may need re-consideration in light of globalization, changing demographics and recent discourses regarding the importance of work-life balance (Steinberg & Nakane 2012).

US studies on the motherhood penalty also find that, beyond accounting for depreciated human capital, statistical and normative discrimination hinders mothers’ employment and notably that the use of work-family policies can accentuate their vulnerability to discrimination (Benard & Correll 2010; Correll et al. 2007). Policies are often perceived solely as programs for women, whether implicit or explicitly. Such flawed perceptions are also highlighted in other studies as undermining their usability, both from a working father perspective and for women who do not want to appear as if they are getting special treatment and/or risk resentment from other team members (Poelmans et al. 2008; Hein 2005). Brinton and Mun’s (2016) Japanese study of HR managers’ perception of work-family policies illustrated the gendered assumptions of policy use; interview participants proudly stated that their company offered generous childcare leave to allow female workers to fully commit to child-rearing then return to fully commit to work. Their study
emphasised the unanimous “taken for grantedness” of the fact that employment leave policies were only a mother's issue, as well as the ability to maintain both norms of intensive motherhood and ideal worker through the encouragement of long maternity leave and discouragement of reduced hour work schedules upon return to work (ibid.270). These findings from various cross-national contexts, suggest the interconnected nature of gendered norms, work practices and policy use.

2.3 Gendered Organization, Managerial Support and Internal Legitimacy

While normative expectations of the male ideal worker and the female full-time caregiver are observed in varied cultural contexts, studies point to the deeper entrenchment of these gendered roles within the Japanese workplace due to remnants of the ippanshoku and sogoshoku system. The Japanese government’s earlier attempts at addressing gender inequality in employment, whilst maintaining the status quo of the internal labour market system, reinforced gender segregation within workplace functions and contributed to Japan’s current low levels of women in management (Cho, Ghosh, Sun & McLean 2017). Mun and Brinton’s (2015) analysis of national statistics comparing organizational demographics and leave policy in Japan suggests that workplaces that have higher use of parental leave are linked to higher percentages of women in managerial and leadership positions and having an HR representative (male or female) on the corporate board. This is based on the assumption that government pressure and blanket policy implementation are not enough to ensure the wide use of leave policies, which must gain internal legitimacy through supportive organizational gender climate and enforcement of accountability. However, these

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20 ippanshoku refers to non-career track work involving more administrative tasks and set working times but no career development. Sogoshoku was the pathway for those looking for career development, typically involving long hours. Whilst the systems were designed with the aim of reducing gender inequality by creating paths that offered workloads and schedules to fit workers’ expectations of work-life balance, ultimately a small percentage of women entered career track positions (Rebick 2005).
studies do not explicate how HR evaluations of policies or representation on the board impact employee use of policy and how employees view the legitimacy of available policies. There is also an important distinction between a workplace culture that supports the use of work-family policy due to the rejection or weak influence of cultural norms of work and motherhood, and an organizational context where there is an established framework of accountability to ensure employees are able to use their legal entitlements.

This limitation is also seen in Morrone and Matsuyama’s (2010) study in which employees felt that government and organizational policies did not alleviate pressures of childcare norms and gender ideology since their ability to use policies was governed by their workplace culture – yet the study does not specify whether this was a question of legitimacy or accountability. To address this limitation, an examination of workplace culture necessitates an analysis of norms and policies from multiple angles: the working mothers’ knowledge and perception of the official/unofficial policies available to them, chains of accountability for accessing these rights, and their individual understanding of and conformity to gendered norms within the context of their work unit.

The perceived usability of work-family policies has also been attributed to peer and managerial support - both in terms of first line support (line managers to whom the employee reports) and top management. Studies look at this aspect of the workplace both from a relational perspective (Blair-Loy & Wharton 2002; Meurs et al. 2008) and from a commitment perspective, for example, senior management’s involvement with diversity or work-life and work-family initiatives (Hein 2005; Poelmans 2008). From a relational perspective, Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) specifically point to the importance of the perceived power of an employee’s managers and their ability to protect employees from perceived negative effects on their careers. While this may play a contributory role in the use of work-family policy, the exercise of managerial power to
shield working mothers would indicate the manager’s commitment to their employee in some form, whether due to their understanding and acceptance of the employees’ needs or their desire to retain a good employee. Support can also come in various forms both passive (i.e. authorizing flexitime schedules) and active (i.e. assigning jobs that fit their schedules but still providing experiences that would help their career advancement) (Cho et al. 2017).

In the context of Japan, the business case for work-family policies has essentially “won over”- or at least been accepted by the larger organizations from a legal and labour retention perspective²¹. Brinton and Mun’s 2002 interview data found childcare leave policy to be a business strategy rather than a commitment to gender equality, aimed at the retention of talented female workers in whom the company had invested high levels of resources - supporting other studies’ observations of dynamics of the dual labour market. The necessity to hire and retain female labour is acknowledged at state and organizational levels, but how this business demand and gendered norms interact - both from employer and employee perspectives - is still unclear. Nevertheless, there is general agreement in the literature that managerial and peer support significantly impact the perception of policy usability; how this relates to the perceived legitimacy of policies within the workplace versus accountability in safeguarding use requires further research.

2.4 Globalization and MNCs: Global Work-Family Interfaces and Cross-National Work-Family Policy Transfer

Globalization of business and achieving balance between global strategies and local differentiation has become a growing concern in various fields of organization and human resource

²¹ For example, businesses that meet certain requirements and attain objectives relating to work-family support are accredited by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare and allowed to use the “Kurumin” mark in recognition of their family friendliness. This is an ongoing legislative measure (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2016:186).
management (HRM) (Poelmans et al. 2008). There are calls for greater qualitative research involving case studies of MNCs to explore the impact of globalization on work–family policy development (Hill et al. 2004; Meurs et al. 2008; Poelmans et al. 2008). Local contextual factors such as normal business practices (including typical working hours), legal requirements and public infrastructure, are currently considered as determining policy design and implementation. As such, for work-family programmes to be “meaningful”, they must be localized (ibid. 171-3).

Qualitative case study research into this area is still lacking but several case studies of MNCs and transnational parent/subsidiary companies offer analyses of survey and interview data, finding that local cultural norms “prevail” against global or cross-nationally imposed policies. A case study of global pharmaceutical company Merck\(^\text{22}\) indicated that not only would local culture prevail, but that it should be local culture that determines policy requirements to address work–life balance issues (Muse 2011). Similarly, Petescru (2008) proposes that IBM’s plans to create a global work-life business strategy was impeded by regional reports which highlighted huge discrepancies between countries, leading them to conclude that each country should be treated separately - flexible work options were to be implemented according to country-specific legislation and culture (Poelmans et al. 2008). However, this study’s findings were contradicted by Hill et al.’s (2004) statistical analysis of IBM survey responses\(^\text{23}\) which found that the global work-family interface model they created was compatible with their four-group model composed of culturally

\(^{22}\) Merck has offices in 77 locations globally (Muse 2011)

\(^{23}\) The data for this article came from the IBM 2001 Global Work and Life Issues Survey. A stratified random sample of 59,250 (20% of all IBM employees in 48 countries) was recruited to take the survey, and 25,822 (9% of all IBM employees) responded, for a participation rate of 44% (Hill et al. 2014:1304). Meanwhile Poelmans et al.’s (2008) case study offers a comprehensive review of IBM’s overall work-life business strategy, analysing the general conclusions that emerged from quantitative surveys and qualitative data collected by the company since 1989.
related groups of countries. They suggested that this provides evidence to support the transportability of work-family policies, specifically job flexibility, cross-nationally rather than having to be only culture-specific. Whilst these studies seem to suggest divergent conclusions, the overarching patterns that emerge from the two studies is a set of universal complaints or difficulties that employees voiced - such as the need for more active support from management in utilising flexible policies and the provision of emergency back-up care (Poelmans et al. 2008; Hill et al. 2004).

Hill et al. (2004) further brings to light the possibility that their data may have been limited by the fact that the company had “a strong corporate culture” that, at least partially, “transcends” national borders (2004:1300). This accentuates an important consideration when examining global affiliate firms in understanding to what extent organizational contexts constitute a “culture” that extends beyond the physical location of an office. In Poster and Prasad’s (2005) comparative case study, they found that shared corporate identity did not signify common perception and uptake of work-family policies. Their transnational analysis of the interaction between local and global cultural practices compared employee perceptions of work-family policies of three high tech firms in the US and India, where two of the companies were a parent (US) and a subsidiary (India) company. They found that local constructions of work/family spheres significantly impact policy use since the permeable boundaries of work and life spheres in the US conflicted with the solid separation of work and family in India, influencing how they perceived policies such as teleworking, and ultimately weakening the ability of such policies to ease work-family conflicts.

Whilst local norms seem to prevail in Poster and Prasad’s study, Brumley’s (2014) case study of a Mexico-owned multinational company in Mexico found the emergence of a hybrid organizational culture in which a globalized notion of the ideal worker and neoliberal values of
competition merged with the local gendered ideology of paternalism. This transformed the career progression of the female employees from an “iron ceiling” to a “glass” one since values of ambition and competition fuelled career development but gendered norms still impeded equal reward. The variation in case study research findings reflects variation in organizational workplace cultures and calls for more qualitative case study research within different cultural contexts, specifically in Japan where highly regulated state level legislation is not translating into ground level use.

Technological developments and globalization have significantly affected workers and families, and the globalization of business operations has developed alongside the development of more egalitarian gendered ideologies (Poelmans et al. 2008). Whilst work-family boundaries may still differ cross-culturally, concepts such as job flexibility have become increasingly common and desirable methods of attracting talent and meeting global business needs, especially considering the rise in dual-earner couples globally - including in Japan (Steinberg & Nakane 2012). The majority of organizational case studies emphasize the importance of a wider contextual approach to examining work-family negotiation beyond a purely cultural or organizational lens. For example, Poster and Prasad (2005) incorporate the hierarchical relationship between the US and India to link cultural norms with economic and socio-historical factors in shaping policy transfer across borders. In Japan’s case, gendered ideologies must be situated against the country’s Confucian and collectivist socio-historic backdrop and its strong economic positionality in the global scene. However, Japan’s relation with the global should also be understood in light of discourses of “internationalism” and modernity amongst younger middle-class women; Kelsky’s qualitative study (1999) uncovered how ambitious professional Japanese women aligned themselves with cosmopolitan associations and career opportunities to exploit “images of the West”
and open up spaces for “for oppositional female praxis” that defied dominant gender norms. This can be traced back to the propagation of images of Japanese women as “exclusively victims of Japanese men and traditional gender norms” in post-war Japan, and the resulting ‘memory’ of Japanese women’s liberation being secured solely by the US occupation (Yoneyama 2005:892,903). These studies highlight how popularized post-war narratives linked internationalism with female liberation and simultaneously foreclosed the possibilities for “progressive” thinking and actions to achieve gender equality as originating from the Japanese context (Kelsky 1999:237; Yoneyama 2005). These presumptions of modernity and the international must be kept in mind as a contextual frame through which to understand the positionality of global firms in Japan.

The variation amongst the case study findings is not surprising considering the multitude of factors that shape workplace culture; however, what is clear is that within the context of global companies, there is an interaction of diverse - and at times competing - values of work-family balance. These contexts have been theorized from a variety of perspectives that bring to light the cultural heterogeneity of these spaces. Whilst discussions on the impact of globalization are beyond the scope of this study, literature regarding global businesses emphasize the quasi-virtual nature of these spaces or “microinternationalisms” (Sassen 2008:151). In particular, Collier and Ong (2005) approach the impact of globalization not in terms of broad structural transformation, but rather the movement of ideas that are “abstractable, mobile, and dynamic” which re-constitute structures such as “society, culture and economy” (4). Phenomena such as regimes of ethics or values which determine what it means to live “the good life” (ibid.12, 34-36) are one example that Collier and Ong explore as easily transposing national borders and becoming “territorialised” into compositional spaces or networks known as global assemblages.
The internationalization of neoliberalism observed in Brumley’s (2014) case study, for example, illustrates how the process of globalization of neoliberal values was not a complete structural reform of local business but rather the subtle “reengineering [of] the values and substantive forms” of the individual and collective lives of the company (ibid.13-14). Within the context of global affiliate firms in Japan, examining both the work-family policies of the company and the ways in which working mothers make sense of these policies within their workplace, family and community environments helps position them within this assemblage of work-family values and practices. Collier and Ong (2005) further notes how actors, people operating and living within these spaces, are forced to shift between “modes of reflection and intervention” since these are contexts where diverse value systems compete and must adapt accordingly (2005:14). This approach can prove a useful theoretical framing in understanding how global connections interact with Japanese culture notions of work and family within globally-affiliated organizational contexts of business firms, and what these mean for the perceived legitimacy of work-family policies.

2.5 Gendered Norms and Occupational Considerations

Exploring the implications of local and global gendered values within organizational contexts, or as part of business strategies, further requires acknowledgement of occupational variations in gender demographics and workplace norms. Occupational variation should be taken into consideration when examining work-family policy use since certain arrangements, such as flexi-time, may be more easily accepted in certain occupations than in others. Work flexibility may not be as contentious among managers and professionals as in other occupations since the professional managerial class tend to have a higher general degree of autonomy over their work (Ehrenreich 1989); in fact, flexible work schedules can even allow employees to work longer hours.
Glass and Fodor (2018) bring to the fore occupational or sector-based differences in gendered norms in Hungary. Their analysis of organizational and job-level factors that contribute to employers’ perception of mothers as workers provide evidence for variation in hiring practices as a result of the perceived skill requirements and commitment expected of employees in financial and business services sectors. Finance companies consciously aimed to exclude mothers due to perceived incompatibility of their time commitment and ambition whilst business services strove to accommodate mothers due to their perceived soft skills. The findings are in line with extant research in the Japanese finance industry, which propose that for women to achieve success within such a male-dominated sector, they must emulate masculinity (Nemoto 2013). However, what these organizational studies (e.g. Glass & Fodor 2018; Blair-Loy 2001; Blair-Loy 2004) also illustrate is that gendered norms of the ideal worker are cultural constructions dependent upon occupational context. As such, it can be argued that while cultural assumptions are gendered, changing business practices (hours, expertise/skill-base etc.) and work-life values (increasing importance of work-life balance) have gendered effects which in turn impact workplace cultures and expectations of what embodies a good worker. Furthermore, participation within a particular occupation can equally influence workers’ gendered norms that are transposed into the domestic sphere.

For example, Blair-Loy’s (2001) study points to the emergence of extensive mothering as an accepted norm within more elite occupational spheres, which for many women may be considered a practice that is incompatible with cultural norms of motherhood. Her analysis of the schemas of devotion to family and devotion to work of three cohorts of female finance executives in the US provides useful insight into the evolution of these schemas, which are both internalised and shared public understandings. Unlike older cohorts who believed motherhood and work to be
incompatible, she found that the conflict between the schemas in the most recent cohort resulted in the formation of a new model of motherhood (Blair-Loy 2001:687-8). Her interview data suggested that broader cultural changes and stronger professional identities provided these women with the necessary ideological resources to feel confident in extending their parenting duties to third parties (such as babysitters). It further enabled them to incorporate the new egalitarian principles of their work sphere into their domestic world - and vice versa. She proposes that the conflict of different ideologies and models of a “desirable life” within the space of a male-dominated sector and within the wider frame of cultural change facilitated these women’s formation of new variations of motherhood - such as the acceptance of extensive mothering and the re-definition of motherhood as being a “good provider” (ibid.).

Blair-Loy’s (2005) study describes the gendered cultural conflict of worker and mother within the US. However, the findings can support the notion of spaces of global assemblage in which various local and external gendered norms and work practices are in co-existence and perhaps in conflict with each other. Extensive mothering is a single variation, inviting future research into what other ways gendered norms are confirmed, challenged or adapted within spaces of cultural conflict. It is important here to consider how cultural heterogeneity, or the perception of existing within a space of cultural heterogeneity or cultural conflict, provides the resources to challenge gender norms. In other words, how does the notion of global assemblage and the co-existence of cultural values relate to the construction of choice in the lives of working mothers?

2.6 Centering Women’s Narratives in Understanding Work-Family Policy Usage

Qualitative research into mothers’ employment enables us to understand the relationship between the construction of choice in the lives of working mothers and use of work-family policy.
Blair-Loy (2005) conceptualises female executives’ agency as shaped by their ideological and economic resources (mainstreaming of the feminist movement and their high salaries) versus structural and cultural constraints. This can be seen at a socio-psychological level where gendered norms can result in fears and anxieties that shape their professional decision-making and trajectories (Cho et al. 2017:76), or in guilt or stress that comes from the rejection of gendered norms which “haunt” them (Blair-Loy 2001:687). Meanwhile, structural and institutional systems and cultural norms frame the flexibility of their choice. Narrative therefore allows us to engage with the multiplicity and complexity of factors that shape working mother’s decisions in the workplace; Holloway (2010) centers the lived experiences of women and their decision-making when it comes to employment, specifically looking at their agency and self-perception of their commitment and competency at work and in childrearing. Her study offers strong qualitative data to support the argument that family structures and socio-cultural expectations at work and home have a strong influence in women's approach to work activities. The triangulation of the in-depth narratives of five women, with wide scale survey data from the JPSC (Japanese Panel Survey of Consumers), provides credible evidence of how the socio-historical legacy of the concept of ryosai kenbo (good wife, wise mother) influences female labour participation at three analytical levels - individual, cultural and institutional. Equally, Nemoto’s (2013) in-depth interviews with women and mothers working in the financial and cosmetic industries are useful in examining the impact of long working hours on female workers’ career aspirations, especially since Japanese companies continue to expect unpaid “service” overtime work, which is not reflected in national statistics.
Conclusion

What is evident from extant research is that the motherhood penalty results from structural-, institutional- and organizational-level barriers and biases, defined significantly by cultural gendered norms of parenthood and work. In Japan’s case, the gap between state level legislation introduced to address the issue and ground level uptake of work-family policies is particularly difficult to bridge since gendered norms of the male ideal worker and female primary caregiver are deeply embedded in cultural norms, workplace practices and employment structures. As globalization of business operations increases, case study and qualitative research regarding how the interaction of global work-family values and local cultural norms is still lacking. Addressing this gap in literature adds to our understanding of the interaction of gendered norms and work-family policy use and how this interaction is situated within workplace contexts.
Chapter 3. Qualitative Approach to Understanding Work-Family Policy Usage

Extensive qualitative and mixed methods literature attributes policy failure in Japan to the dominating cultural norms of the ideal worker (male) and full-time or primary caregiver (female). Previous studies have used quantitative approaches and large-scale surveys to measure the long-term socio-economic disadvantage that results from the incompatibility of motherhood and work and provide statistical evidence of the limited reach of policies in increasing female labour participation rates in Japan (Gottfried & O'Reilly 2000; Hill et al. 2004; Kawaguchi 2008; Lee & Lee 2014; Nishimura & Kwon 2016). However, qualitative methods enable access to the daily negotiation of work and family obligations, engaging with firsthand narratives which reveal how individual perceptions of the usability and effectiveness of policies by working mothers relate to the wider frame of gendered cultural norms. A qualitative methodology consisting of a case study, policy document analysis, and in-depth interviews was designed to meet the central research objectives of this study. This qualitative research design aims to examine the negotiation of gendered norms and practices within the dynamics of global organizations in Tokyo and uncover knowledge as to how Japanese mothers make use of work-family policies within spaces where they are exposed to competing values and practices.

3.1 Case Study of Company A

This is an exploratory case study, which seeks to understand the cross-national transfer and formation of work-family policies within a single organization. Yin (2003) argues that case studies are a preferred strategy in approaching “how” questions within research into contemporary and real-life contexts, with the aim of generating new knowledge regarding “individual, organizational, social and political phenomena” (13-14). The case study of company A seeks to address how a
global organization adapts its global work-family principles into local work-family policies. By observing how work-family policies compare within the structure of a globally-affiliated and uniform organization, this case study framework provides a manageable lens to observe whether or not a universal or local-specific approach was used, and to what extent policies were adjusted to the Japanese context. The subject selected for this case study is the financial advisory business of a global consulting firm, which was chosen because it is a global entity with offices in over 100 countries, but their Japan workforce is constituted of approximately 98 percent Japanese employees. As such, it offers an insightful subject for analysis in which to examine the interaction of a global and local network of norms and work practices.

Indeed, one of the main criticisms of case study research is the inability to generalize the results to phenomena outside the parameters of the case subject (McGloin 2008). General consensus has grown amongst social science researchers that case studies are designed to be “generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. [...] the investigators goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation)” (Yin 1989:21; see also Yin 1994; Eisenhardt 1989). Others also propose that, like scientific experiments, case studies rely on replicability and as such are credible sources of data to the extent that they are preliminary steps toward the validation of theories (Yin1989:40; see also Eisenhardt 1989). In line with these justifications, this case study aims to serve as a useful source of qualitative data for future studies that can investigate a larger sample of global firms so that more representative patterns can be identified. In addition, various data sources were used to triangulate the results to strengthen data reliability and credibility (Yin 2003; see also Trier-Bieniek 2012). This included research into publicly available information regarding
the company’s policies, access to official policy documentation or HR-provided policy information, and interviews with several working mothers at the company.

3.1.1 Policy Data Collection and Analysis

In order to situate the firm’s Japan-based offices in relation to its global network, I collected data regarding work-family policies from several of company A’s global locations and conducted a cross-national comparative analysis to test for their similarities and differences. Office locations were selected in several OECD countries across North America, Europe and Asia. Due to time and access constraints, not all OECD countries were included in the policy analysis, but key countries selected include: Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and Korea. These countries were chosen to represent a spread of continents and, more specifically, they were chosen due to their various differences and commonalities with Japan in terms of mothers’ employment. Germany and Korea offer similar institutional contexts regarding the motherhood penalty. Germany has previously been compared to Japan as a result of its conservative social welfare system based on the legacy of the breadwinner model and is similarly facing a fertility crisis (Gottfried and O’Reilly 2000). Meanwhile, Korea shares the distinct M-curve in female labour force participation rates with a shared history of Confucian gender ideology (Freiner 2012; Nishimura & Kwon 2016). Finally, Canada and the United Kingdom represent gender egalitarian-leaning dual-earner household welfare systems (Hein 2005; Steinberg & Nakane 2012).

Policy data was initially collected from the firm’s website and further requests to the company’s respective offices for policy briefs and documentation, were made through the Tokyo office. The amount of data collected to analyze was limited by variation in how much information was publicly available and how much documentation was provided by the various offices’ HR
department; for example, two offices provided a detailed and translated brochure or document relating to the polices whilst other offices provided a summary of key features. Whilst this offers limited precise details of policies in other countries, a pattern could still emerge through the comparison of the central features of their work-family support systems.

Company A’s Tokyo office provided full documentation regarding work-family policies which were analyzed against Japan’s national work-family policy standards and employment legislation to see what the country’s legal policy requirements were for a company of its size. This data was collected through secondary policy research from governmental, legal and organizational sources such as The Japanese Ministry for Justice, the Japanese Law Translation Database and the ILO (International Labour Organization) database. Such triangulation allowed me to examine whether there was any divergence between the policy sets, and if so, to what extent the firm's policies were adjusted to Japanese legislative standards. Specifically, the features of work-family policies compared were: the length of leave (maternity leave, parental leave and childcare sick leave), regulations regarding division of parental leave, availability and structure of reduced hour schedules and flexitime, and structure of pay reductions during leave and reduced hour schedules. Data collected in relation to national legislation further formed the basis of triangulation analysis against interview participants’ knowledge of their respective company's policies and employee rights in the second part of the study.

3.2 Interviews with Working Mothers in the Industry

The second part of this qualitative study used in-depth interviews with working mothers, which allowed access to direct data regarding some women’s work-family policy use at the organizational level. They are a rich source of data since assessing the real-life applicability and
use of policies at an organizational level requires significant engagement with the attitude, behaviour and emotions of those for whom the policies were designed. In-depth interviews can further provide insights into how mothers’ daily negotiation of policies and norms fit within the bigger picture of their expected work/career/life trajectories. Understanding these working mothers’ perceptions of policy usability and norms is particularly important in Japan where female exit from the labour market following childbirth remains high (Steinberg & Nakane 2012) and quantitative data methods alone cannot explain why this is the case.

Interviews have been a common methodological tool in understanding the motherhood penalty in Japan (Brinton & Mun 2016; Holloway 2010; Nemoto 2013; Yoshizaki 2001), and elsewhere (Blair-Loy 2001; Blair-Loy & Wharton 2002; 2004). Qualitative data in the form of personal narratives offer insight into the daily negotiation of work-family obligations and unofficial factors that affect usability of work-family policies, uncovering previously subjugated knowledge. In this sense, organizational case studies are particularly important since workplace culture can vary and engaging with mothers within this context provides insight into multiple levels of cultural expectations. Whilst surveys could have provided a wider scale sample of the subject population, in-depth interviews are a “flexible research instrument” (ibid.422) which allowed me to obtain a bigger picture of the contextual surroundings of the research problem (Undurraga 2012). Probing interview techniques for example allow details to emerge, details that perhaps the interviewee did not consider before, and which act as potentially significant data, as well as an insightful experience for the interviewee.
3.2.1 Interview Participants

In-depth interviews were conducted with thirteen Japanese mothers who work within the financial advisory businesses of three globally-affiliated accountancy and consulting companies: Company A, Company B and Company C. I gained access to the women through my previous professional connections with several senior level employees at Company A, who introduced the study to, and received approval from, the firm’s COO and Head of HR. Following authorization, I was introduced to their Diversity and Inclusion Leader who sent out my letters of initial contact to all potential participants; the letter included a short summary of the research, its objectives and my contact details (see Appendix A). Following the distribution of the letter, interested participants contacted me directly and all communication remained between participants and myself. The company played no role in encouraging or discouraging participants, nor any further role in relation to communication with participants.

The criteria for my interview participants were set as follows:

(1) Japanese female employees with one or more children: The term “Japanese” is defined as anyone who has one or both parents who are ethnically Japanese, who has Japanese citizenship and/or Permanent Residency in Japan and who has lived in Japan for the majority of their childhood and working career. I have imposed these criteria as this research aims to observe the interaction of global and Japanese workplace culture and how this impacts employees who were socialised within a Japanese work/life context and exposed to shared Japanese cultural norms. In order to maintain a focus on the motherhood penalty, the interviews were limited to female employees with children.

(2) Professional consultants working in client engagement: I delineated the subject population to mothers working on the client-side (local/global clients, high time demand) within
the male-dominated sector (male ideal worker/ female caregiver), to help control for “extraneous variation” and define the generalisability of the findings (Eisenhardt 1989:537). They all work within the same industry, dealing with the same client base and client demands, and have similar educational qualifications.

(3) Employees of any seniority level within the business: Interviewing employees at different levels within the business adds depth to the data set since it reflects on the relationship between career progression potential and work-family policies. It allows us to examine the negotiation of work-family policies at various moments throughout a career trajectory.

(4) Full-time contracted employees: certain state-mandated work-family policies and most organizational policies are only eligible for those in full-time employment. In addition, the significance of the dual labour market and the high percentage of women in Japan leaving the full-time market following childbirth makes examining how women manage their time between the institutional expectations of full-time employment (e.g. long hours and commitment) and childcare responsibilities crucial.

3.2.2 Interview Process

Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes; three were conducted face to face during my fieldwork in Tokyo whereas the remaining ten were conducted via video call applications such as Skype, Google Hangouts or Facetime. Those conducted face to face took place outside the workplace, such as a quiet restaurant or a coffee shop that the participants had suggested to ensure that they feel comfortable to speak as freely as possible without managers or co-workers overhearing them and potentially influencing their answers. This was an essential requirement for the interview procedure since discussing their views of workplace policies may be a sensitive
personal and/or professional topic for some employees. The remaining interviews were conducted via video call whilst the participants were either in their home, or in a privately booked meeting rooms at their workplace - conducting the interview on-site was discouraged, but due to their busy schedules, most participants strongly expressed it as their site of preference.

Interviews were mostly conducted in English; two were conducted completely in Japanese whilst the rest were carried out in a mixture of English and Japanese, depending on the participants’ language ability or how comfortable they felt expressing themselves about a particular topic. There is a debate amongst qualitative researchers as to the “quality” of the data that comes from interviews that are conducted in person versus over electronic communication or phone calls due to the nature of the relationship and trust built between researcher and interviewee (Trier-Bieniek 2012). However, I found that interviews conducted over video conference went as smoothly as those conducted in-person, perhaps owing to the fact that interview participants were used to conducting meetings with clients via video call on a daily basis. Recording technology further allowed me to review body language and facial expressions.

The range and parameter of the interview questions helped me understand participants’ perceptions of and engagement with the work-family policies of their organizational firms, their views regarding motherhood and employment and how they understood others’ expectations of them, as well as questions around the broader culture of their workplace - such as their family-friendliness and working hours (see Appendix B). The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended to avoid influencing participants’ answers; further, the flexibility of this approach allows them to expand as much as possible and enables “the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team” (Gill et al. 2008:292). As the interviews unfolded, I introduced several new
questions that emerged from mothers’ responses. The flexibility of inductive research should allow us to “take advantage” of new lines of thinking that emerge, but as Eisenhardt emphasizes, it does not give “license to be un-systematic” (1989:544). As such, alterations to the original interview guide questions (see Appendix C) were kept in mind during data analysis and clearly highlighted in the data presentation and discussion.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

All engagement with interview participants began following ethics board approval for the project. In line with their guidelines and following access authorization by the three companies, participants self-selected into the study by contacting me through the information provided in the letter of contact. All participants were sent a consent form at least 72 hours prior to their interview to allow them time to reflect on their consent; consent forms were provided in both English and Japanese since fluency in English varied and it was important to ensure that participants fully understood their rights and issues of confidentiality (see Appendix D). I must acknowledge that the recruitment method and population sample chosen entailed certain ethical issues regarding social harm. Recruitment of participants was much more difficult than initially planned due to the size of the subject population. Within all the divisions of the three companies’ financial advisory areas, there were less than a handful of working mothers respectively and consequently maintaining confidentiality was a significant concern.

To mitigate the risk of identification, two strategies were chosen: 1. As much as possible, the data was reported in aggregated form in which common themes were reported rather than individual circumstances, narratives or experiences, and all answers were reported anonymously (all participants were assigned pseudonyms) 2. Individual cases and demographic information (i.e.
characteristics that are held by multiple participants, such as number of children, childcare arrangements and/or employee grade) were reported in a way which could never be linked with other information in a way that could be identifying. At times, achieving this meant that less central details of interview participants, such as their partner’s job, were interchanged, slightly altered, omitted, or reconstructed to create a composite narrative. In the presentation of the findings, the organization to which participants belonged was also not specified. Patterns that emerged from the data were consistent across Company A, Company B and Company C and as such it was not considered vital to include this information; this was also beneficial to further protect the privacy of the participants due to the small size of the research population.

To ensure the protection of confidentiality of the three companies, in particular Company A as subject of the case study, I omit any overtly identifying information. This goes for both publicly available and confidentially accessed data.

3.3.1 Research Limitations and My Positionality as Interviewer and Researcher

Being an “outsider”, as a researcher and as someone who did not grow up in Japan, had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it allowed the interview participants to speak more candidly about their views on negotiating work and family obligations and explicitly discuss their feelings towards Japanese cultural norms, both regarding work and gender roles. It further provided them with an outlet to discuss their daily work/family life, including both the difficulties they face and aspects they were grateful for, which some interviewees expressed to be an impactful and cathartic experience. This was especially the case for those who, at the time of the study, had not had a viable platform to do so.
Conversely, discussing certain workplace issues with an “outsider” - such as pay and promotion prospects - that directly impacted their careers made a couple of participants feel uncomfortable about revealing any negative perceptions. Additionally, these participants were highly conscious of the limited number of full-time working mothers in their division, and as such may have felt pressure to present their organizations in a more favourable light to mitigate any anxiety about confidentiality and/or the publication of their narratives in the study. To facilitate a trusting relationship with the interviewees, I was conscious of my body language, expressions, vocal intonation, and use of language (Undurraga 2012); yet beyond assurance of confidentiality procedures, such discomfort could not be avoided in qualitative unstructured interviews. Therefore, it must always be taken into consideration that interview data is limited by varying degrees of openness as well as “bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation” (Yin 2003:85).

The fact that the participants were aware of my Japanese background and my Japanese fluency ensured that they were able to express themselves fully, since English was not their native language. However, it also resulted in communication “gaps” that remained unspoken. Their perception of our shared cultural understanding sometimes left references to or explanations of cultural expectations or norms unvoiced; in these instances, my shared cultural background allowed these references to remain implicit references.

3.4 Data Collection, Coding and Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded as I went along; face to face interviews and Google Hangout video calls were audio recorded whilst Skype calls were both audio and video recorded. I also took notes during the interviews which recorded distinct body language and facial expressions whilst the transcripts noted corresponding hesitation and pauses. Parts of the
interviews in Japanese were directly translated into English in the transcript, unless they were
Japanese words or phrases with specific meanings that were difficult to translate, or where the
unique or figurative meaning would be lost in literal translation. Such Japanese terms remained in
the original with their contextual or semantic significance explicitly mentioned in the data analysis.
The process of transcribing played an important preliminary stage of data analysis since it allowed
me to familiarise myself with the data prior to coding. In addition, I could personally hear and note
hesitation, pauses, and elongated vowels, indicating topics that made participants uncomfortable,
questions that they had never considered before or expressions of negativity or disagreement about
something that they did not want to voice (see Devault 1991:108).

This research study uses an inductive analytical framework; as such interview data was
subject to applied thematic analysis where themes and patterns were identified from the data set
and interpreted as assertions relating to the research question (Braun & Clarke 2006:79). It is
crucial to be consistent and systematic in the coding process: identifying themes and patterns is “a
question of prevalence, in terms both of space within each data item and of prevalence across the
entire data set” (Braun & Clarke 2006:82; Saldaña 2016). However, qualitative analysis does not
necessitate a right or wrong method when it comes to calculating the number of instances that
legitimizes something as a theme/pattern or signifies its relative importance. I therefore assessed
each theme in relation to its context and came to a judgement to its importance by engaging with
the rest of the data set as well as extant literature.

To identify patterns, the data was initially organized into categories or codes generally
depicted by descriptive labels. Words and sentences formed the units of analysis and data was
attached to relevant codes. Codes were data-driven and informed by theories from previous
literature - it is important to highlight this point since I wish to avoid the lack of clarity that
surrounds the distinctions amongst qualitative data and inductive logic in relation to claims of grounded theory (Eisenhardt 1989). Prior theories prevalent in extant literature, such as agency (Blair-Loy 2005) and internal legitimacy (Brinton & Mun 2015), as well as established notions like “ideal worker”, “intensive mother” and “managerial and peer support”, shaped my approach to analysis. These codes related to cultural norms in the workplace and how working mothers perceived others would judge their work-family arrangements, as well as how they internally evaluated their work/family roles. They then connected to other potential codes surrounding how these cultural norms correlated to the practical implications of the work-family policies such as “time control”, “daily care work” and “trade-offs”, as well as emotional implications such as “guilt” and “gratitude”. Simultaneously, words or phrases that emerged consistently throughout the data were used, such as “performance-based evaluation” and “domestic company” which were specific to the organizational context of this study. This mixed approach enabled me to review whether emergent themes conformed to prior understanding of the research problem, challenged previous findings, or contributed new knowledge to the literature.

Since coding is “a heuristic [...] cyclical act” (Saldaña 2016:9), the dataset was read and re-read, and initial codes fine-tuned and sub-codes re-organized. They were subsequently accumulated into more overarching abstract or theoretical themes, which were reviewed internally to ensure meaningful data coherence and externally compared with other themes to ensure clear distinctions (Braun & Clarke 2006:91-2). The categorization of codes resulted in the formation of a wider theoretical framework based on the concept of “resources”, which was informed by Blair-Loy’s (2005) inter-cohort study of female executives’ agency. She defines the parameters of their agency in their work and family lives as being set by their access to resources versus structural and cultural constraints. In Blair-Loy’s case she found that the women used material resources
(income) and ideological resources (professional identities and increased feminist consciousness) to justify their multiple roles and create more gender egalitarian arrangements in both spheres. This notion of ideological resources emerged within my own data in the women’s normalization of de-gendered work values in their organization; however, in my study these values were linked to the presence of non-Japanese business practices, such as performance-based evaluations, and/or foreign peers/management and therefore further influenced the categorization of codes into the broader themes of “ideological”, “institutional” and “social” resources.

Nvivo, the qualitative analysis software programme, was used to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the coded data set, although paper data review and coding was also conducted throughout the process. Finally, transcripts were re-read alongside the finalized map of themes and sub-themes to ensure that it was a comprehensive representation of the data (Burnard 1991). This also acted as a final check that the context of codes was maintained, and things were not taken out of context (ibid.). A limitation of this kind of data analysis is that “all coding is a judgement call” and we approach it with our own subjective perspectives and filters (Saldaña 2016). As such, as with the interviews, a high level of self-reflexivity was important for this process.

Conclusion

The following chapter presents the findings of the first part of the study which addresses to what extent globally-affiliated firms in Tokyo adapt work-family policies to the local setting. It first examines and compares the work-family policies of Company A in Japan, Korea, Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom. The policies for the Japanese offices are analyzed against Japanese national legislation in relation to key legislative reforms regarding gender equality in employment. Finally, the chapter offers a brief comparison of Company A’s policies against
Company B and C to contextualize the policies accessible to interview participants in the second part of this study.
Chapter 4. Global Companies, Global Policies? Translating Work-Family Policies at National and Organizational Level in Japan

This chapter examines the cross-national translation of work-family policies across five global affiliates of Company A, aiming to understand whether policies are universally formatted or adapted to local (country) contexts and determine whether certain policies are subject to greater variation, or uniformity, than others. As detailed in the previous chapter, due to time and resource constraints, Company A was chosen as a subject of a single case study analysis of policies. The similarity of the business models of the three firms observed in this study\(^{24}\), and preliminary examination of publicly available information regarding their work-family policies in the same global affiliate locations, justified a single case study as sufficient in achieving the research objective. The Japan office’s policies are then compared against Japan’s national legislation, as well as the work-family policies of Company B and Company C, to provide the context of the formal policies and arrangements available to the interview participants in the second part of the study. For the parameters of this study, only data relating to childcare-rearing policies and the balancing of work and childcare obligations were examined at organizational and national levels\(^{25}\).

4.1 Case Study: Company A and its Global Affiliates

Company A is a global entity formed by a network of member firms as opposed to a multinational company operated from a Headquarters, which unilaterally governs employee policies. In membership firms, there is no central policy-making body which governs in-country operating

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\(^{24}\) All three firms, Company A, Company B and Company C, are globally-affiliated member organizations that do not have a HQ with centralized authority. Whilst work-family policies may vary between them and certain perks or additional financial benefits differ, examination of information available on the public websites of the global affiliates of Company B and Company C in South Korea, Canada, Germany and the UK revealed similar patterns of policy adaptation.

\(^{25}\) Work flexibility arrangements were included in this analysis; although they are available to all employees, they are a vital mechanism for employees with children to balance their work and family obligations.
policies, except for matters relating to corporate reputation for example brand usage and service accreditation. The central authority is therefore limited, and each member firm has a level of autonomy about how it operates. In general, the firms follow global directives yet the partnership in each country ultimately has authority in setting day-to-day operating practices. Nevertheless, Company A shares a front as a global organization with a unified organizational or corporate culture based on a set of global principles. In line with its global manifesto, the offices’ local websites promote its commitment to support employees with families as part of its promotion of diversity and inclusion.

South Korea, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany and Canada were the four OECD countries chosen for comparative analysis; similar indicators of the motherhood penalty have been established in these contexts and the countries showcase varying levels of legislative efforts to address the issue. South Korea is the only other exception amongst the OECD countries, alongside Japan, to still have an M-curve pattern in female labour force participation (Freiner 2012) and shares various commonalities with the Japanese context with regards to gender inequality. In terms of larger trends, South Korea is the only OECD country with a higher difference in gender participation rates than Japan at 28.5 points and 25 points respectively (OECD and IMF 2009 as cited in Steinberg & Nakane 2012:8), correspondingly low levels of women in management at 10.5% and 12.4% respectively (OECD 2017) and a fertility rate of 1.17 and 1.44 respectively (World Bank 2016). These trends have been associated with hiring practices, promotion policies and gendered practices in South Korean work culture such as corporate drinking culture, as well as gender inequity in the home26. Numerous studies have argued that these factors share many similarities with variables contributing to the motherhood penalty in Japan (e.g. Nishimura &

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26 Japan and Korea feature at the bottom of the World Economic Forum Gender Equality Index in division of household chores with a five to one ratio between women to men (World Economic Forum 2018:9).
Kwon 2016; see also Steinberg & Nakane 2012). These relate to the countries’ shared gendered ideologies rooted in the Confucian value system which distinguishes them from Western socio-historical development of family and industrial relations (Freiner 2012).

Germany has also previously been compared to Japan due to the remnants of the breadwinner ideology which underlie the social welfare systems resulting in similar facets of motherhood disadvantage in employment (e.g. larger share of mothers in temporary and part-time work). Like Japan, Germany offers a significantly longer parental leave amongst the OECD countries (ibid.) which, in combination with a lack of childcare services, can act as a “push” factor in incentivising female primary caregiving (Steinberg & Nakane 2012). It is likewise facing pressure to address demographic changes such as a fertility crisis, to a less serious extent than Japan and Korea, and a labour shortage (Gottfried & O’Reilly 2000).

The UK and Canada offer interesting alternative comparisons as representative of more liberal welfare regimes; both represent dual-earner and gender egalitarian-leaning welfare systems but have been defined as countries with little public policy provision for maternal employment (Gash 2009; Mahon, Bergqvist & Brennan 2016). Similar to Germany and Japan, working mothers in the UK were therefore more likely to be found in part time jobs and were subject to significant levels of wage imparity (ibid. 583). Meanwhile in Canada, most employed mothers are in full-time employment but are over-represented in lower wage occupations (Fuller 2018:1457). Federally guaranteed provisions for maternal employment are much more limited in comparison to Germany and Japan (OECD 2017), and as such Canada is considered a middle ground between the breadwinner model (e.g. Germany) and more gender egalitarian contexts (e.g. Norway) in terms of legally guaranteed paid leave and public spending on childcare (Fuller 2019:1465).
This sample of countries represents a subsection of the socially-conservative to gender egalitarian-leaning spectrum, sharing various commonalities with Japan in terms of female labour force behaviour and the motherhood penalty, yet varying levels of public support for maternal employment. This offers a useful basis of comparison to examine to what extent Company A maintains uniformity across a range of gendered welfare regimes, labour relations and varying levels of institutional provisions of work-family support.

Table 4.1a below presents the main features of the work-family policies of the five global affiliates of Company A. The table comprises policy information collected from official company policy documents, HR-provided employee handbooks and publicly available information provided by the company.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid leave period (mother)</strong></td>
<td>Up to child reaches one year of age* (guaranteed maternity leave is 6 weeks before birth and minimum of 6 weeks after birth) *Provided they have worked at the company for one year</td>
<td>Total 90 days (guaranteed maternity leave is 6 weeks before and minimum of 6 weeks after birth)*</td>
<td>First 17 weeks*</td>
<td>Total leave up to 12 months (guaranteed maternity leave of 14 weeks with 6 weeks before birth and 8 weeks after birth)</td>
<td>Total of 39 weeks (minimum of 2 weeks after birth)*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Provided they have worked at least 26 weeks at the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extensions of paid leave (mother)</strong></td>
<td>Guaranteed maternity leave 14 weeks before birth and 8 weeks after if twins Up to 1.6 years if employee cannot secure nursery school</td>
<td>Extend by 4 weeks if twins (minimum 8 weeks after birth)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Extend by 4 weeks after birth if twins</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extensions of unpaid leave (mother)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid leave period (father) and paid shared parental leave</strong></td>
<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Korea</strong></td>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td><strong>United Kingdom</strong></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total leave up to child reaches one year of age (paternity) to be taken consecutively</strong></td>
<td>Paid shared parental leave of up to 1.2 years. To be taken consecutively</td>
<td>Total of 3 days (paternity) to be taken within one month of birth of child</td>
<td>Total up to 4 weeks after birth (paternity) to be taken during the first year following the birth of a child. It can be taken consecutively or in increments in consultation with the performance manager</td>
<td>Total leave up to child reaches one year of age (paternity)</td>
<td>Total up to two weeks Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid shared parental leave for working parents with children under the age of six (40% of salary)</strong></td>
<td>Paid shared parental leave for working parents with children under the age of six (40% of salary)</td>
<td>*Paid paternity leave can be extended to 5 days but only 3 days are guaranteed paid leave</td>
<td>Paid shared parental leave of up to 28 months, until the third birthday of child. (If parents divide leave they can receive 2 months bonus leave or if they work 4 months part-time and consecutively, they receive 4 months bonus each, on top of 12 month paternity/maternity leave). 12 months of this leave can be transferred until the child reaches 8 years of age</td>
<td>Co-paid by company and health insurance. Pay is determined by whether employees work part-time during this period and division of parental leave. Paternity (parental) leave is paid at 65%-100% (depending on salary grade and whether the employee works part-time). Working part-time 25-30 hours entitles employee to half the previous monthly sum of a normal parental allowance.</td>
<td>Company provides Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) at GBP 138.13 p/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment structure</strong></td>
<td>Paid by unemployment insurance (66% of salary) Company provides annual paid leave pay during the childcare leave period, calculated by the number of years of service</td>
<td>Not specified (100% of salary) Company tops up employment insurance benefits to 100 percent of salary (Supplementary Employment Benefits) *</td>
<td>Co-paid by company and health insurance. Pay is determined by whether employees work part-time during this period and division of parental leave. Paternity (parental) leave is paid at 65%-100% (depending on salary grade and whether the employee works part-time). Working part-time 25-30 hours entitles employee to half the previous monthly sum of a normal parental allowance.</td>
<td>Company provides Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) at GBP 138.13 p/week</td>
<td>Statutory Shared Parental Leave Pay (ShPP) is determined by amount already received under SMP so the mother must have agreed to reduce SMP to be entitled to it (maximum of 39 weeks between SMP and ShPP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Provided they have worked at the company for one year
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies following return to work</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced working hours</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Reduced working hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for those with children until the beginning of elementary school enrollment and a 6 hour work day for those with children under three years of age</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salary will be reduced accordingly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexitime/ telecommuting/time banking available upon request and consultation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption from overtime available upon request (over 24 hours a month, except for cases where there is a problem with the normal operation of a project)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption from night-time work available upon request 10 pm- 5am (except in cases where there is a problem in the normal operation of the project)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary not reduced for first year</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary will be reduced accordingly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexitime/compressed work week/telecommuting/reduced summer hours/time banking available. Upon request and consultation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy information provision</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information available on employee intranet.</td>
<td>Information available on employee intranet.</td>
<td>Information available on employee intranet and disseminated via employee networks and information packages to parents on leave.</td>
<td>Information available on intranet and employee handbook.</td>
<td>Information campaigns on intranet home page and staff broadcast channels, employee network group for everyone. For parents, coaching programmes (during and after leave), online toolkits, advice and support and workshops and seminars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave

All the global affiliates included in the study guaranteed paid maternity and paternity leave. Paid maternity leave ranged from three months in South Korea to 1.6 years in Japan. Meanwhile, paid paternity leave varied even more significantly cross-nationally: the Japan and Germany offices had the more generous policies guaranteeing up to one year of paid paternity leave, followed by 4 weeks in Canada, 2 weeks in the UK and the shortest period of 3 days in South Korea. Nevertheless, South Korea, Germany and Japan had the longest paid parental leaves. Shared leave was most generous in Germany (up to 28 months\(^{27}\)), Japan (18 months) and then Korea (12 months). The UK offices allowed shared parental leave of up to a year, with pay determined in coordination with SMP allowances. The affiliate in Canada does not mention shared parental leave in their work-family policy documents, however a standard of 10 months paid parental leave is guaranteed by federal legislation.

All offices also offered some form of emergency leave, which again differed in length as well as in specific eligibility. The Japan offices offered formal leave designated for employees looking after family members in emergency situations, such as 5 paid sick days per year per child (10 days if more than one child). Similarly, the offices in South Korea allow employees raising children under the age of eight to request family emergency leave (unpaid) and in Germany up to 24 months of parental leave to be transferred after the three-year parental leave period, until the child reaches eight years of age. The Canadian affiliate offers backup care or emergency short term care rather than leave, as well as Personal Time Off schemes (PTO) which are not specifically for childcare but can be used for family matters. The UK office also offered PTO which can be used for family matters.

\(^{27}\) Depending on division of leave and whether parents work part-time during this period.
Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements were formally available in all the offices with the exception of South Korea. Within these offices, the core measures available were the same (telecommuting, telebanking, flexitime, and reduced hour schedules) with the exception that the Japan offices did not offer a compressed work week. To an extent, Germany offered similarly flexible work arrangements with the option for employees to work part-time up to 30 hours during the shared parental leave period. The South Korea office had no official policies guaranteeing flexible work arrangements following return to work and no mention of flexible arrangements on their publicly available websites.

4.1.1 Global Organization, Global Policies?

The analysis shows that Company A as a global entity does not follow a universal format for work-family policies. Policies are adapted to each national context; nonetheless, there was a level of standardization across the offices in terms of basic safeguards of work-family reconciliation. Length of paid maternity and paternity leave, shared parental leave (paid/unpaid) and emergency care leave differed the most by country and strictly adhered to the legislative requirements for each location, as did paid leave payment structures. Offices in the socially-conservative welfare states (Japan and Germany) offered the longest leaves and specific family-orientated emergency leaves, which is in line with extant literature regarding increasing state-level effort in both states to incentivise maternal employment and address low fertility rates and labour
issues (Gottfried & O’Reilly 2000). This can also be seen in the South Korean context where work-family reconciliation has become part of the national agenda to address these issues (Lee 2018). Effort to address the motherhood penalty is particularly evident in the rewarding of shared parental leave in Germany and the coverage of up to 1.2 years of paid shared leave by the Japanese social insurance system. Interestingly, the Japan office was the least financially accountable for parental benefits since unemployment insurance covered pay at 66% of previous salary and the company only topped up pay with annual paid leave. At all other offices, employers and insurance were co-responsible for payments.

Offices in gender-equalitarian leaning liberal welfare states (Canada and the UK) also had relatively long leave allowances but less paid leave for childcare. Canada is still defined as belonging to the “liberal camp of welfare regimes” (Mahon et al. 2016:174) which leaves work-family policies to be determined by the demand side. Shifts between the Liberal Party and Conservatives in recent decades has meant that there has not been a full move toward a more social

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28 Since 2012, legislation in Korea guarantees 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, 3 days paid paternity leave (and 2 days unpaid), and either 1 year paid parental leave (private sector) or 3 years paid parental leave (public sector) which is paid at 40% of earnings (Won 2016).

29 According to federal law parents are entitled to parental leave (Elternzeit) and parental benefit (Elterngeld) and each parent is entitled to leave until the child turns three years old. During this time a salary is not paid but the job contract cannot be terminated by the employer (Kündigungsschutz) and they can work part-time up to 30 hours a week. Parental leave is salary-based at about 65% of the previous net income (minimum 300 Euro and up to a maximum of 1800 Euro per month). If only one parent takes leave, paid leave is up to one year whereas if both parents take at least 2 months of leave parental benefit will be paid for up to fourteen months. Leave can be divided evenly between the parents (IRO 2018).

30 Current federal legislation in Canada guarantees Employment Insurance of up to 55% of earnings (average insurable weekly earnings) with a maximum limit of CAD 562 in 2019 for maternity and paternity leave. Maternity leave benefit can be claimed for 15 weeks (between 12 weeks before due date and limited to 17 weeks after) and can be followed by parental leave benefit (within 52 weeks or 78 weeks). Standard paid parental leave is 40 weeks (55% of earnings) or can be extended to 69 weeks (33% of earnings); one parent can receive a maximum of 35/61 weeks of benefits. See: [https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/maternity-pay-leave/leave](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/maternity-pay-leave/leave).

31 Legislation in the UK mandates Statutory Maternity leave (ordinary) of 26 weeks with the option for an additional 26 weeks. This is guaranteed for all “employees” not “workers”. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) guarantees minimum GBP 116 p/week for 39 weeks for employees who have worked at the company for 26 weeks. Unpaid parental leave can be taken of up to 18 weeks until 18th birthday of child. See: [https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/leave](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/leave).
democratic structure, nevertheless a basis of state-level support has remained since maternity leave payments and parental leave were layered onto the federal Unemployment Insurance programme. In addition, Canada has been moving towards a dual earner structure and greater public provision of support in response to pressure from domestic feminist movements, unions, antipoverty groups and social workers (ibid.).

Similarly, being part of international networks such as the OECD, the UN, the Commonwealth (UK and Canada) and the EU (Germany and the UK) has influenced changes in public provisions for maternal employment. This can be seen either as a result of necessity to conform to guidelines, for example the UK is subject to EU regulations for gender equality in employment (Gash 2009), as well as political and civil pressure exerted by international players, as seen in the case of the UN and transnational feminist movements’ influence in Japan (Kodama 2018). Globalization and the transnational flow of ideas have undoubtedly played an important role in fuelling change and political contestation within these contexts (Mahon et al. 2016:166). To a certain extent then, a baseline of state-level provisions has been established amongst these OECD countries safeguarding work-family policy provisions. Whilst length of leaves and payment structures differed amongst all the affiliates corresponding to differences in national legislative standards, work flexibility policies were relatively consistent across the board and were officially guaranteed by offices in four of the five countries32. This indicates that job flexibility was a highly recognized work value internationally and was provided by Company A - even in the absence of legislation.

The affiliate in South Korea was the only office which did not formally include job flexibility in its work-family policies. Some studies have argued that this is a result of the time gap

32 These policies were not guaranteed in the South Korea office, however whether or not unofficial arrangements are available at the company could not be confirmed.
to prioritize “work-family balance” at a state level, with the issue only being accepted and legislated on from the mid-2000s in Korea by the Roh Moo-Hyun presidency despite feminist movements advocating for greater public provisions since the 80s (Ma, Kim & Lee 2016). Meanwhile state legislative efforts in Japan were triggered in the early 1990s following the “1.57 shock” (Fleckenstein & Lee 2017).

In addition, it should be noted here that company size may have been a factor in the provision of job flexibility policies; the importance of company size could also be seen in the case of the Canadian affiliate which offers Supplementary Employment Benefits which is a benefit only provided by more established or larger firms in Canada (Fuller 2018).

These findings are in line with organization case studies and quantitative research into MNCs and global firms which suggest a tendency for global firms to adapt policies to local contexts (Muse 2011; Petrescu 2008; Poster & Prasad 2005). Moreover, these results are not surprising considering the structure of the company as a globally-affiliated membership organization, rather than an MNC, means even higher levels of decentralized authority. Extant literature suggests MNCs are more likely than globally-affiliated companies to enforce a uniform global set of policies resulting from their stronger corporate uniformity and HQ authority (Hill et al. 2004; Poster & Prasad 2005; Quintanilla, Susaeta & Sánchez-Mangas 2008). Nevertheless, all companies tend to take into consideration the national legislative framework, national cultural and institutional distance and company level factors (the relationship the local company has with the overarching authority) when deciding on the transferability of its policies (Liu 2004; Myloni, Harzing & Mirza 2004). In the case of Company A, the higher degree of autonomy between the

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33 This refers to the fertility rate of 1989 in Japan.
34 Company top up of employment insurance of 55% of earnings up to 100% of earnings. See: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html.
global partners may have resulted in its more extensive alignment with each national legislative framework.

4.2 Japanese National Legislation Supporting Motherhood Employment

Since the 1970s numerous key acts and legislative reforms have been implemented to ameliorate the motherhood penalty, ranging from the prevention of discrimination (EEOA) to the guarantee of mechanisms such as family care leave and work flexibility to support work-family balance (see Table 4.2a). More recent acts such as the 2014 Japan Revitalization Strategy and the 2015 Act of Promotion of Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Workplace move on from the basic guarantee of rights and are geared towards the attainment of demographic goals. The Act of Promotion of Women’s Participation make it mandatory for private businesses with 301 or more employees to record and analyze information regarding female participation within their company and formulate and publish action plans which must include numerical targets and details of initiatives based on their findings (Japanese Institute of Labour and Training 2016). These acts aim to tackle wider barriers that contribute to the M-curve in female labour trends, such as female/working mother role models in management. However, these acts and their subsequent reforms only oblige organizations with over 301 employees to guarantee certain work-family policies and work-life arrangements.

Table 4.2a Recent Timeline of Key Legislation and Reforms in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Act on Securing of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity Law *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Child Care and Family Care Leave Law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These key legislative acts and reforms guaranteed a minimum standard for policies relating to leave, job flexibility and working hours. Employers are legally obliged to grant all applications for legal standard maternity, paternity and shared leave; however, it is up to the worker to apply for it (Izekue 2014:112). The Labour Standards Law Article 65 secured Maternity leave which guaranteed 6 weeks before birth (14 weeks for twins) and 8 weeks after childbirth, although the mother may return to work after 6 weeks upon her request and a doctor's approval (ILO). More recently, the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, Article 5, guaranteed paternity leave up until the child’s first birthday and it became possible to extend the length of leave up to when the child reaches the age of 1 year and 2 months if parents share the leave period. This could further extend to 1 year and 6 months if employees cannot get their child admitted to a nursery school (Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare). Since 2009 childcare leave benefits are paid fully during leave by those covered by employment insurance (typically full-time employees) (Nagoya International Center 2017).

Laws continue to be reformed in guaranteeing a range of shorter term medical and emergency leaves. One of the most significant legislative reforms was Article 16 in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law which increased leaves from five days to 10 days for employees with
two or more children under the age of 3, to look after the child in the event of injury or sickness to the child (Nagoya International Center 2017). Meanwhile, the Equal Opportunity and Treatment Between Men and Women in Employment Law continues to be reformed and Article 12-13, guaranteed female employees the right to request time off for health and medical examinations until 12 months after giving birth (Nagoya International Center 2017).

The amended Act on the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members (effective 2010) guaranteed policies related to job flexibility; employers must implement systems that reduce working hours for employees with children under the age of three and guarantee exemption from over-time. They are obliged to offer a combination of the following: a flexitime system, advancement or postponement of the hours for starting/finishing work or subsidization of family care costs. These are available upon request (Japan Institute of Labour Policy and Training 2016). Reduced working hours systems are only for workers whose prescribed working hours are over 6 hours and as such it is typically workers who are on full-time contracts who are eligible to take advantage of these policies. In addition, the provision of flexible working styles is not fully guaranteed since the laws allow for exceptions to flexibility in working hours due to business needs, as such some companies can find leeway in implementing such policies (Izukue 2014:43).

Work flexibility works alongside regulation on working hours secured by the Labour Standards Act, Article 32. Normal working hours are defined as no more than 40 hours excluding rest periods, 8 hours a day as statutory hours; exception to these hours are acceptable upon a written agreement with a majority labour union or representative. Unlike in other countries there is no legislation regarding rest periods, and therefore labour agreements specifying hours in excess have not been considered illegal (Izukue 2014). The Act also prescribes a system of
irregular working hours allowing for monthly and annual variation to cater for industries with seasonal fluctuations in business, such as in auditing and accounting (Japan Institute of Labour Policy and Training 2016). Nevertheless, workers taking care of children under the age of 3 are exempt from overtime work, upon their request. This exemption is from overtime in excess of 24 hours per month and 150 hours per year (Child care and Family Care law, Article 17) (Ministry of Health and Labour Welfare). This exemption extends to late night work between 10 pm - 4 am, upon their request (ibid.).

Finally, employers are obliged to consider a worker’s situation with regarding to child and family care before transferring them (ibid.). This can be used by female employees who believe that they cannot manage the work load required of their current position, however employers are not obliged to guarantee transfers.

How does Company A compare with Japanese national standards?

The Japanese affiliate of Company A appears to adhere completely to the national legislative framework of its Japanese location. For leave (maternity, paternity and shared), emergency leave and flexible work arrangements, the company’s policies fulfil every legally mandated requirement but no more. Throughout the company’s policy documentation, the majority of policies are outlined as being in accordance with the relevant national legislation - implying that national standards formed the primary basis of the policy guidelines. As a result of recent state level efforts to address motherhood disadvantage in employment, the Japan affiliate of Company A actually offered more generous policies than in the UK, Canada and Korea, such as family-related emergency leave, longer paid paternity leave and legally guaranteed flexible return to work.
4.3 Comparison of company A, B and C Work-Family Policies

Table 4.3a below outlines the main work-family policies of the three companies from which interview participants were recruited. Policy data was collected both from the information pamphlets available to employees on the internal intranet sites (as provided by the companies’ HR) and from interviewees’ knowledge of policies. The table shows that the central policies are nearly uniform across all three companies, specifically measures that allow job flexibility and reduced work hours. Company A and B adhere to national standards regarding the various forms of leave whilst company C offers a much longer shared parental leave, nevertheless, all three offer national standard emergency leave. Notably, Company B and C offer more perks in the form of financial aid for childcare and also provide more channels of information dissemination regarding the work-family policies and support systems available.

Table 4.3a Work-Family Policies at Company A, B and C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Company A</th>
<th>Company B</th>
<th>Company C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave</td>
<td>National standards for maternity, paternity and shared parental leave</td>
<td>National standards for maternity, paternity and shared parental leave</td>
<td>Up to two years shared leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child sick leave 5 days per year (one child), up to 10 days per year (two children and more) until 6 years age</td>
<td>Child sick leave 5 days per year (one child), up to 10 days per year (two children and more) until 6 years age</td>
<td>Child sick leave 5 days per year (total) until 6 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Flexibility</td>
<td>Flexitime Flexible work arrangements*</td>
<td>Flexitime Flexible work arrangements*</td>
<td>Flexitime Flexible work arrangements*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Hours</td>
<td>Available for workers with children under age of three</td>
<td>Available for workers with children under age of 12</td>
<td>Available for workers with children under age of 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption from overtime work</td>
<td>Available upon request</td>
<td>Available upon request</td>
<td>Available upon request</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company covers 60% of babysitter fee</th>
<th>Company covers 40% of babysitter fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company covers 60% of babysitter fee</td>
<td>Company covers 40% of babysitter fee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other**
- Information consultation
- Information consultation and seminars during leave and following return to work
- Information consultation and seminars during leave and following return to work
- Offers affiliated nursery school admissions (depending on availability)

*Flexible work arrangements include telecommuting and time banking but not a formal compressed work week.

**Conclusion**

This cross-national and cross-organizational comparison of policies, whilst limited in scope, provides an insight into commonalities and differences in work-family and work-life policies and values within the financial advisory industry in global firms in Tokyo. The case study of Company A illustrates that local legislative frameworks largely shape leave policies of local affiliates, even within a global entity, and triangulation against Japan’s national legislation indicates that there is little divergence between national and organizational policy in the Japanese offices. The examination of the different locations also brings to light a level of international uniformity in work-family support in the form of job flexibility, suggesting that the values of job flexibility and work-life balance are increasingly globalized. A brief comparison of Company A, Company B and Company C further indicates that whilst legal requirements are followed, some organizations further offer extra benefits to support employees with families, which is in line with previous literature that large organizations are looking for ways to attract female labour in the Japanese market (Brinton & Mun 2002; Brinton & Mun 2016). As such, this chapter provides a
useful backdrop against which to analyze working mothers’ perceptions and engagement with policies within their organizations in the next part of this study.
CHAPTER 5. Navigating Norms and Legitimizing non-Local Practices within Globally Affiliated Organizations in Tokyo

5.1 Findings

In exploring how working mothers made use of work-family policies within the three globally-affiliated financial advisory firms in Tokyo, this study sought to understand how they navigated gendered norms and practices within a significantly male-dominated and time-demanding sector. In particular, it aimed to uncover how competing norms were negotiated within organizations where global and local values and practices intersect, and how this may have impacted their engagement with work-family policies. Interviews with thirteen working mothers examined their daily balancing of work and family obligations, their official and unofficial work-family arrangements, their perceptions of policies and the workplace culture, and ultimately how they defined themselves as mothers and workers. A local/global duality threaded the narratives of the participants and framed three central themes that emerged regarding how they balanced their multiple roles in the work and the family sphere. These three themes were the institutional, social and ideological resources that the women believed safeguarded their use of work-family policies and arrangements, which was tied to their perceptions of the hierarchical and contradictory nature of local/global norms. These resources came in the form of the non-local practices of performance-based evaluation systems and supportive working culture (institutional), foreign managers, international clients and young staff (social) and the normalization of non-local values within their workplace (ideological).

Taking advantage of both formal work-family policies and informal arrangements was vital to the women’s time management between their daily work and childcare responsibilities. Job flexibility arrangements, babysitting services and child sick leave were essential to facilitate the
childcare tasks that the women were responsible for in the evenings and in cases of emergency. In terms of their roles as Consultants, participants described the nature of their work as project-driven and client-facing which signified the need to be constantly accessible to clients and complete work within tight deadlines. This also involved working predominantly in teams, under different project managers and participating in internal and external client meetings. Their ability to manage the characteristics of their jobs and limit the excessive working hours typical of financial consulting, rested on these women’s access to these resources which they felt sufficiently protected them from negative career repercussions, as well as their individual rejection of the Japanese image of the ideal worker. Simultaneously, the time demands of their work necessitated the rejection of the norm of intensive mothering, and as such the women’s narratives illustrated their re-definitions of what constitutes both a good worker and a good mother. Nevertheless, the experience of some women revealed that they were not necessarily guaranteed protection but rather had come to accept certain trade-offs in return for staying in full-time employment.

5.1.1 Profile of the Participants’ Job

All interview participants were full-time professional consultants involved in client-engagement work within the financial advisory industry. Their job responsibilities were described as supporting clients in the planning, execution and integration of successful M&A (mergers and acquisitions) transactions, which means their work is based on projects typically lasting between 3 weeks and 2 months. Due to the fast-paced and high stakes nature of M&A deals, involving tight time deadlines, the transaction of large sums of capital and negotiation of various competing demands, the job entails working under pressure. There was a balanced range in seniority level with three Associate Consultants, three Senior Consultants, three Managers and four Senior
Managers. Associates and Senior Consultants are responsible for the actual completion of the underlying data analysis and detailed scope of the work, interpretation of data, synthesis and presentations of data to be communicated to the client. Meanwhile, Managers and Senior Managers are responsible for delegating tasks, setting internal deadlines, day to day management of the project, completing/helping junior staff with more complex tasks and handling more important communications with clients. In tandem with Partners, they start to become more involved with business development for the company. Following childbirth, only one participant, Fumi, an Associate Consultant, had re-categorized her work responsibilities to accommodate for her work-family arrangements. Fumi and her manager decided she take on a support role in her team which meant no direct involvement with clients and completing tasks for projects that could be finished within a set timeframe and did not require her to attend to sudden client requests or problems. No participants were required to travel outside of Tokyo for their job, they did occasionally have to visit client offices but less frequently than other types of consulting work. The job requirements included broad professional understanding of financial services, some degree of functional specialization in one of the key industry areas and/or professional accreditations e.g. a CPA (Chartered Public Accountant) qualification or previous experience as a Business Consultant with an MBA-level background. All the women were university graduates and, with the exception of two participants, spoke conversational level English whilst nearly a third spoke business level English. The number of children amongst participants ranged from 1 to 4. The majority had only one child (nine participants), three participants had two children and only one participant had 4 children. None of the participants lived with their parents.
5.1.2 Dual Earner, Dual Homemaker? The Women’s Work-Family Arrangements and Use of Policies

The participants did not identify maternity leave as a policy that was difficult to request at their workplace. Eight of the participants had taken maternity leave whilst employed at their current organization and they felt no hesitation in requesting leave, apart from Yoko, Senior Consultant, who conveyed some anxiety talking to her manager since she had only been working at the company for a year when she became pregnant. Leave varied between 2 months and 1.5 years, although typically the women took between 7 months and one year, and all the participants had a strong understanding of national legislation regarding maternity leave rights. Length of leave, for all the women, was determined by their need to have started a full-time employment contract by April when nursery school begins. This refers to regulation that requires both parents to be full-time employees, which must be proved with certification, for their children to be eligible for full-time day care (see Nishimura 2016). The women’s childcare arrangements involved enrollment in nursery school plus a variation of support from grandparents, community networks\(^{35}\) and personal babysitters since nursery schools generally closed between 5pm and 7pm. In terms of regular childcare arrangements after nursery school, five participants had grandparents who picked up the children, two participants used community networks, and five had personal babysitters. Nearly half of the participants still picked up their children a few days a week. Whilst taking maternity leave was not considered problematic, the women voiced their struggle in managing both their work and parental roles when first returning to work, and as such seven of the participants had initially needed to use the *reduced hour system*.

\(^{35}\) Community networks include a system of family support which is organized by the municipal council. This connects parents in need of affordable childcare support with elderly neighbours who want to be involved with the community.
The husbands’ role in childcare on a daily basis differed significantly amongst the
participants and only two of the women indicated that they enjoyed an egalitarian division of
parental responsibilities. Yoko explained that her husband was not Japanese and worked for a
foreign company. He finished work around 6pm, which meant they could pick up their daughter
together at 6:30 pm most evenings. Equally, Momoka explained that her situation was “exceptional”
in the Japanese context, in that her husband’s job enabled him to work from home and subsequently
he had decided to take on the primary caregiving role. Meanwhile, the majority of the participants,
like Toshiko and Fumi, described their parenting as relatively equal by highlighting that their
husbands were in charge of certain childcare responsibilities – specifically taking the children to
nursery school every day. In Toshiko’s case, taking child sick leave was also divided evenly
between them; however, for the remaining women looking after sick children and responsibility
for childcare after nursery school - in the absence of other arrangements - was taken on by the
women. The majority of household tasks were also taken to be their responsibility; whilst
describing the division of household chores as relatively even, Toshiko suggested that 60 or 70
percent was done by herself and 30 percent by her husband. Nearly half of the women described
their husbands’ jobs as very demanding such that they could not do “everything” around the house,
nevertheless the women assigned specific tasks to them, such as washing the dishes. Equally, they
emphasized the fact that they left their husbands to take care of their own personal needs, such as
cooking for themselves or doing their own laundry.

Notably, two of the women explicitly described their childcare situation as a “one-ope-
ikiyu” (single parent operation), which they explained was a common term in Japan, whilst three
other participants implied the single parent nature of their daily routine due to their husband’s
inability or lack of desire to take on childcare responsibilities.
I would have been grateful, I mean he couldn’t do it anyway, but I would want my husband to come home earlier from work every day - like around the same time as me. You know once you pick up the kids from nursery school in the evening - I have two kids you know - so to make them dinner and get them bathed that kind of thing it’s like - bata bata bata*. It’s stressful. Generally, he comes home after the kids have gone to sleep, at around 10 o’clock (laughs) and sometimes, like once a week, he will come home early but by early I mean like 8 o’clock. [...] That’s because of overtime and also nomikai**. There are lots of nomikai in Japan (laughs). You know you want quality time with [the kids] but weekdays making them dinner and getting them bathed takes up the time and bed time comes, so... and I have two kids, so you don’t have time to give to each child individually, and if my husband were able to come home earlier to help ... but that’s difficult so.... Keiko, Senior Consultant.

*bata bata bata – A Japanese expression meaning to rush about hectically
** nomikai – drinking events organized by the company which employees are expected to attend

Keiko’s account illustrates one of the main frustrations for the women in that their husbands did not arrive home until after the children had gone to bed. The husbands of seven participants typically returned home between 8pm to 10pm which meant that this part of the daily childcare responsibilities had to be taken on by the women, particularly for those who did not have support from grandparents.

The unequal division of responsibilities was explained by the different gender norms, although some of the women simultaneously suggested that they were unsure to what extent it was because their husbands were unable - or unwilling - to negotiate arrangements with their work. Toshiko explained that, “my company is very family-friendly, but I think that’s because I am a working mother, so I don’t know if a working father can take leave if his kids get sick. [...] There are very different standards for working fathers and working mothers”. Similarly, Hiroko suggested that male workers were more hesitant to take leaves such as child sick leave and

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36 Corporate drinking has historically played an important role in Japanese working culture as facilitating peer bonding (typically male) and reinforce commitment to the company (See Allison 1994; Nemoto 2013).
paternity leave since, “[they get] pressure from the company, and pressure from male colleagues… I think pressure on dads is much higher than pressure to mums”.

Apart from Momoka, whose husband had taken on the primary caregiving role, the participants therefore used time flexibility policies such as flexitime and the reduced hours system so that they could pick up their children after nursery school when other care arrangements were not available\(^{37}\). At the time of the interview, the majority of the women were frequently using at least one, if not a combination, of the policies related to job flexibility: two participants reduced their working hours to go home between 4pm and 4.30pm, nine participants used flexitime, ten used *teleworking*, four used *time banking* and three opted for over time exemption. Teleworking was used to look after their children if they were sick or so that they could work overtime and was preferred over taking child sick leave. The use of the reduced hour system was significantly dependent upon the availability of grandparent support, with those women who had not needed to use the system at all citing the fact that their parents living nearby and picked up their children from nursery school on a frequent basis. Notably, four participants were still working an average 50 to 60 hours a week whilst using these policies.

Seniority determined whether arrangements were used formally or informally; more senior employees (manager and above) used these policies informally as they did not require authorization for working from home or using flexitime, meanwhile junior staff still needed prior approval to take advantage of these arrangements. Associate and Senior Consultants explained that requesting flexitime was easy and that it was basically a guaranteed perk since it did not affect number of working hours; meanwhile requesting remote work was less frequently requested and only seemed to be used by junior staff to attend to sick children. This was attributed to the team-

\(^{37}\) Nursery school finishing times differed depending on the school district and whether the school was public or private.
based nature of the work which meant being in the office made collaboration easier. Managers were responsible for scheduling team meetings and setting internal deadlines which meant they had a higher level of control over their time management and when they had to be in the office. However, seniority seemed to have little impact on determining the number of working hours - rather this was shaped by the division to which a woman belonged and her own work-family arrangements. As such, associate consultants and senior consultants were more likely to stay longer hours in the office, but managers spent a similar number of hours working from home.

Interestingly, extensive mothering was expected as a normal element of their daily balancing of work and family and all participants used external childcare support; in particular, four participants employed by Company B and Company C, which offered 60 and 40 percent subsidies for babysitting expenses respectively, highlighted this policy to be one of the most useful available to them. As such, there was a strong rejection of traditional norms of intensive motherhood. Several participants expressed varying levels of guilt or anxiety over not being able to spend more time with their kids yet none of the women showed any interest in exiting full-time work. Instead, they emphasized the quality of time they spent with their children and the advantages of having multiple roles.

Even if you’re working hard, if you think you can spend quality time with your kid then I think you know that you can be a good mother. And because I have a limited amount of time to spend at work, I feel like I concentrate more than other workers, so that makes me a good worker too. Momoka, Senior Manager

There is no correct answer to childcare or being a good mother, but I think it is important to enjoy yourself. First, parents have to enjoy themselves [...]. I think parents are important influences on their kids, so I want to continue learning and having a job whilst I raise my kids. Orie, Senior Consultant

The women therefore expressed their own notions of what signifies being a good mother, and the mutually beneficial relationship between their role as mother and worker. Maintaining both roles
was considered important to their mental and emotional health, or sense of fulfilment. In line with Orie’s account, happiness was central to what constituted a good mother for the majority of the women. Marie described how being both a worker and a mother helps her “avoid boredom” which is good for her mentality, whilst Aiko stated the importance for her kids to see and feel that she is “happy” and “enjoying herself”.

Whilst some expressed their desire to spend more time with their children, being a good mother was disassociated from full-time caregiving and staying at home. They further pointed to their role in developing future workplace practices that facilitated mothers’ employment. Ririka, for example, suggested that the fact that working mothers were a relatively new demographic in the professional workplace, “may be a chance to make our own new model” of how to define being a good parent and worker, and that this would even be a chance to “make our company better”. Despite the overall rejection of intensive motherhood, not all the participants were equally as confident in the compatibility of both roles and two women still doubted whether being a mother and staying on course for their career trajectory was possible.

For me, a promotion, as a working mother, means to be better than other full-time men, or to be a super woman like those American female CEOs, like Sheryl Sandberg, and other super business women. For me, it’s impossible. [...] I didn’t even want to be promoted. Sorry (laughs) but I am a very typical working mother in Japan (laughs). Toshiko, Manager.

I’m just grateful that we [working mothers] are being seen as people who do want a promotion (laughs). If I do express my desire to get promoted, then my team and boss will cheer me on. Even despite my time restraints, there isn’t any discrimination with regards to that. Keiko, Senior Consultant.

These accounts further uncover a normative assumption that Japanese mothers did not have career ambition due to the incompatibility of motherhood and employment. While Keiko believed that her team and manager would support her if she decided to work for a promotion, both their
accounts implied that there was still a struggle in balancing motherhood and work within their current organization.

To what extent the participants were confident in the compatibility of their roles and their use of these policies was shaped by how they made sense of their workplace in relation to their organization’s local/global context. Their perceptions can be categorized into institutional, social and ideological resources which they employed to support their work-family arrangements. In the following section I will discuss the nature of these resources and the role that they played in the women’s navigation of gendered norms in the workplace.

5.1.3 Institutional Resources: Performance-Based Evaluation Systems and Open Workplace Culture

A local/global duality shaped the participants’ perceptions of work practices and work-family values within their organizations in which certain practices, and the values they encompassed, were defined as Japanese while others were implied to be non-Japanese. Practices such as performance-based evaluation and the value of work-life balance were portrayed as non-local whereas the culture of long work hours, seniority-based promotions and male informal networking were defined as local Japanese business norms. To what extent the women perceived these local or non-local aspects to be prevalent or influential in their workplace therefore shaped how they made sense of their long-term career prospects within the organization, and how effectively they could manage their work and family obligations on a daily basis. Participants like Hiroko suggested that there was a concurrence of these local and non-local practices. Specifically, she highlighted how the influence of male informal networking continued to play a role in
determining career development at her organization, despite having a performance-based evaluation system in place.

So sometimes if I see promotion list, some nominees are understandable. Yes, he’s great he’s working really hard, but some people sometimes pose a big question mark. But this is still a Japanese company so... and also a partnership company so from the partner’s point of view, promoting someone to be a partner is more like having good friend [...] so in these cases the evaluation system is not very clear. Hiroko, Senior Manager

Her account of the co-existence of both business norms was reflective of the majority of the women’s perceptions, and further indicated the conflictual nature of the values since the influence of male informal networking hindered the transparency of the performance evaluation system.

This local/international duality of business norms and practices, whether explicitly or implicitly, was imbued with a hierarchical relationship between the Japanese and non-Japanese contexts with regards to gender equality. Non-local features within their company were described positively, associated with progression and the facilitation of mothers’ employment, whereas the limitations of such practices and the lack of a supportive environment for working mothers were attributed to the fact that they were “still” Japanese companies. Ririka, a Manager, expressed that in terms of gender equality and discrimination, things were improving in Japan, but it was still “very behind” America and European countries. Amongst four of the women, this perspective was accompanied by the distancing of their organization from Japanese practices and values, and this included a glorification of overseas employment practices and a belief in the exceptional nature of their firm as “non-Japanese” companies.

In my company, if the person has the ability to be promoted, they will be promoted but in typical Japanese companies such decisions are up to the boss so if the person is working more than three years, the boss will think, okay, we will give the next position to that guy [...]. Just performance; our company puts importance just on the performance. My ex company was the subsidy company of a very big [Japanese] company, so the atmosphere of the working culture was the same as the parent company. And they are still domestic. Long hours. There were not so many women working there, I mean there were many working as secretaries or assistants, but the business people are mainly men not women. They didn’t have these kinds of support plans [work-family policies], and also, there were
no working mums so compared to typical Japanese companies, my company is very supportive for mum and working dad as well. *Yoko, Associate Consultant.*

Yoko completely distinguished the values and policies of her company from her previous “still domestic” firm, highlighting differences in working culture, demographics and availability of work-family policies to conclude her current organization to be “very supportive” of working parents. This illustrated her belief in the exceptionalism of her company compared to Japanese firms, which was a pattern that emerged across several narratives and particularly when discussing company work-family policies and workplace culture.

Nearly half of the women explicitly highlighted how their company offered policies that were not available at other firms and, with the exception of one participant, xxx, the existence of such work-family policies was emphasized as uncommon. Marie, for example, brought up how she always enjoyed receiving reactions of surprise and compliments from friends for being able to take child sick leave. Similarly, when describing their workplace culture, all of the women mentioned the “casual”, “frank” or “open” “fuinki” (atmosphere or environment) as a factor that enabled their use alternative working arrangements. The reference to the openness of the working environment, or being able to communicate openly, was especially prevalent; the women supported this description with the example of their ability to tell their manager and team that they had to take the day off to look after their sick child. They further believed that this openness was how a number of male co-workers had been able to take long paternity leave - such as up to one month of leave - which they did not believe to be common or achievable for their Japanese counterparts.

To what extent the women’s organizations were considered exceptional related to how prevalent they saw non-local values and practices in their workplace, as such their belief in the credibility of the institutional elements was interconnected with their social resources.
5.1.4 Social Resources: “He isn’t a typical Japanese boss...”

The participants rationalised the distinction of their organizations from Japanese companies by its membership of a global network, or to the presence of foreign management and employees, which reinforced the operation and acceptability of non-local practices and values. Momoka, a Senior Manager, described how she saw her workplace drastically change and become more family-friendly and accepting of practices, such as flexitime and teleworking, when a foreign member of upper-level management joined. This partner was involved in the formalization of job flexibility arrangements which were previously used unofficially, into official organizational policy. She explained how they were a foreign national who came from “a more diverse, flexible and inclusive culture”, which positively impacted how employees responded to the formalization of these policies and increased uptake.

Orie, a Senior Consultant, similarly described her workplace as having benefited from the presence of diverse international workers in her division. She suggested that it created a more supportive environment for her as a working mother since she believed that there is a stricter “kachikan” (sense or system of values) in Japanese culture which meant employees, particularly Japanese men, “expected women to be in the home, basically”. In comparison, she described other cultures as having more flexible gender norms and consequently, she believed that the diversity of her workplace helped foster team understanding for the alternative working style of working mothers, such as her use of the reduced hours system. The influence of some form of global presence for enhancing the possibilities for better work-family integration was voiced by nine of the participants from across the three companies.

Japanese mentality doesn’t change much but still, if you are affiliated with a global chain or associations, you get to learn what’s going on overseas, or in your affiliated entities, you
feel like okay, we have to make these changes too, maybe not right now but we have to do it at some point... I think that’s a small start but still it’s a start. Aiko, Senior Manager.

[Interviewer: Do you think management talk about the difficulties faced by working mothers?]

Nope! (Laughs). Well actually, there is one partner, they are not (laughs) Japanese but North American, so their way of thinking is totally different from Japanese people, so they are kind of very liberal, their way of thinking or way of looking things is very positive and less prejudiced or less norm-based. Toshiko, Manager.

These accounts illuminate how the influence of the presence of a foreign manager or connection to international chains rested on the women’s assumption that gendered norms of parenthood and work were less prevalent in other cultures and that the discrimination of mothers was limited to the Japanese setting and “mentality”.

However, despite discursively distancing their organizations from Japanese ones, there was a strong acknowledgement that their workplace remained more Japanese than global. Even Yoko, who emphasized the fact that her company evaluated workers “only” based on performance, later expressed how there were still many “domestic managers” in her company who expected their employees to stay in the office until late. In addition to privileging the global nature of the entire firm above its Japanese counterparts, the working mothers therefore also took advantage of their social connections to align themselves to non-local practices and values within their organization. This enabled them to make use of work-family policies that were not conducive to Japanese business norms and practices, specifically policies relating to job flexibility and working remotely, even though their organization was still Japanese. They did so by discursively delineating “domestic” Japanese managers, who they believed may not be supportive of working mothers, from their own supportive managers who were described as being foreign, young, having a family (especially male managers who had working wives) or who did not follow “typical” Japanese thinking.
One of my bosses is slightly older but he has a working wife and two daughters, and he is not a typical traditional Japanese boss, he is half Canadian so (laughs) totally different, so he cooks dinner for the kids - everyday, he gets home at 6 o’clock - much earlier than me (laughs). [...] The other one is still young, he understands the situation is different from 20 years ago, so he respects younger people and in general I think he is a friendly person, so I don’t have any trouble communicating with him ... so I am very lucky to work with them. With other traditional Japanese old-fashioned type of partners, its a very different story trying to communicate with them. Hiroko, Senior Manager.

Her narrative reflected an important theme that emerged across the interviews that the women felt “lucky” to work with their partners and managers who understand their situation. It is important to note then that the women linked their use of work-family arrangements to managerial support. Hiroko’s narrative further demonstrated that whether or not the manager was Japanese was not necessarily crucial; rather, whether they were a “traditional” Japanese manager was the determining factor.

Interestingly, two of the working mothers not only discursively distanced themselves from Japanese business norms but did so practically by tying themselves to foreign managers, projects and client bases.

My boss was raised in a different country, so he doesn’t like inefficient jobs and he doesn’t want to work until late. […] In my current project, because the clients are foreigners they don’t work until late so - like with Japanese customers we have to reply to emails or call them back even though it’s late at night like 9 pm - but that doesn’t happen with my clients… so I try to be involved with the foreign or overseas projects. Associate Consultant, Yoko.

Yoko’s account highlighted her company’s global connection, specifically its foreign client base, as an important mechanism with which she could reduce her need to stay later in to the office or work longer hours. However, she was only able take advantage of this because of her English language ability, since her project manager could not conduct business in English. Moreover, there was no guarantee that she would be able to continue to work on overseas projects; as such, to what extent the women were use social resources to strategically manage their careers and facilitate the
demands of parenting was limited. Yet despite the project-based nature of their consulting work, which meant that they would have to work with different teams under different project managers, women’s connection to these non-traditional managers or international clients was still sufficient in justifying their continuous work-family arrangements.

Discursively and actively distinguishing local and non-local aspects of their work reinforced the working mothers’ perception of Japan being “behind” international contexts, and the co-existence of both resulted in their firms occupying a position somewhere between the tiers.

Yes, our company has a connection with global and, yes it is changing, but still inside it is more like a traditional Japanese company. I think. But I have never worked within international Japanese offices like a commercial Japanese company so I can’t really complain. Well, I can complain when I compare with our other global offices and in this industry but, for example, I don’t know what Toyota are doing, I don’t know about Nissan and so on. Yes, consulting industry is still very Japanese but my friends working with those commercial companies, traditional long-established Japanese companies, are always complaining about their work situation and they complain to me, oh your company is freer and more flexible so yeah… maybe I shouldn’t complain? (Laughs) Hiroko, Senior Manager

As such, the women indicated feeling more privileged than their Japanese counterparts in other companies, for having access to their work-family policies and arrangements. On one hand there was an element of gratitude for being part of a global network and having a supposedly and comparatively better working culture. However, for some women like Hiroko, there was also a sense of ambivalence as to what extent their own situations were desirable, suggesting that the comparative exceptionality of their organization muted criticism regarding the reality of their lived experiences.

5.1.5 Ideological Resources: Normalizing Non-Local Values in a Local Context

“Non-Japanese” work values, like the prioritization of performance and work-life balance, were normalized within the workplace to allow the compatibility of motherhood and employment
and validate women’s use of job flexibility policies. Regardless of their working hours, participants’
attitudes toward staying late in the office were surprisingly consistent. Eleven out of the thirteen
participants did not believe it to be necessary to ensure career advancement. Women working
longer hours (a third of the participants who worked an average 50 to 60 hour week) explained
that they controlled their work schedule and whilst they worked longer hours, despite the expected
seven statutory hours being acceptable, they still felt that they worked less than the typical worker
in the financial advisory industry.

Nobody forces me to be at the office for a long time for nothing, I don’t like that. Like if
somebody says you have to be in the office 9 am to 6 pm even if I don’t have anything to
do? That’s stupid, that’s nonsense, isn’t it? So, if I’m really busy - like I work more than
12 hours - that’s okay, but the following day for example I will work only 4 hours. That’s
okay with this company so at least you work 35 hours a week, that’s minimum; that’s okay.
I think I work probably a minimum 50 hours a week average, if I really count it seriously,
and that is not too many hours for this industry, and I am okay with that. Hiroko, Senior
Manager.

Similarly, for those on reduced schedules, their shorter hours were seen as a temporary phase in
their careers which would not hold them back from future promotion. Orie, for example, had re-
categorized her work responsibilities to reduce her working hours and although she expressed
frustration that she could not fully participate in the bigger and more exciting work projects, she
felt secure in re-joining them once her children were older.

At my company we can propose a career design tailored to each stage [of motherhood] and
I think the speed of promotion will be delayed or degree of involvement in the project will
be reduced. I think this is a trade-off. However, for example, I think it is important not to
leave the industry because of childcare and to continue to engage with work because tech
and business changes are very fast, so taking a break from the job is riskier. Orie, Senior
Consultant.

This sense of flexibility and choice was shared across the seniority rankings and both amongst
those who had joined their companies recently (1-3 years) and more senior level employees (5-10
years). More junior staff were less flexible with their time in the office as they were required to
be present for the core working hours. Yet even staff who were less established in the workplace and who did not have the same level of social networking as those with longer tenure, did not consider working long hours or being present in the office as crucial to their career enhancement or their reputation amongst the team.

Nevertheless, Orie’s account did bring to light how their perception of choice and ability to control the adjustment of work and life trajectories was dependent on the women’s willingness to accept a certain level of “trade-offs” in light of their alternative choices. She saw the slower speed of promotion as a necessary compromise to stay within her rapidly changing industry. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, Toshiko suggested that she would have to be a “superwoman” to be able to manage another promotion, a term that was used by several women. As such, several narratives alluded to a sense of sacrifice and the necessity for a level of adjustment of the women’s expectations when it came to their career ambitions. However, to what extent this feeling of sacrifice was expressed by participants was correlated to the level of external childcare support they were using, and those who had a higher level of grandparent support believed that they had not made any career sacrifices in order to raise a family.

The participants’ use of flexitime, time banking and teleworking policies did nonetheless indicate the women’s individual rejection of the Japanese image of the “ideal worker” and Japanese business norms of demonstrating commitment to the company. In fact, none of the participants expressed notions that reflected the traditional model of an ideal worker, instead earmarking it solely to the older generations of Japanese (male) workers and management. Momoka described the ideal worker as an employee who is able to get their tasks done “in a timely manner” and take full responsibility and accountability for their work. Like all the other participants, she felt that
using long hours as a measure of an employee’s value was something which did not have validity amongst her cohort or team.

I would say it is changing - sure some people think that working long hours means that you are dedicated to work and you’re a good worker. Ok. But I think it’s a matter of generation as well, I feel like older generation think that or tend to see it that way but not for the younger generations - when I say younger, I mean people in their twenties and thirties. *Momoka, Senior Manager*

Sometimes I go home very early but on other days sometimes I work very late, so I don’t think my team cares about my working style. Result of the job is all; so if we complete our work working time does not matter. *Ririka, Manager.*

Their belief in the illegitimacy of hours as a measure of value depended on the recent increase in rhetoric regarding work-life balance amongst younger generations in Japan, but also on their confidence in the credibility of their companies’ performance-based evaluation system. All the participants highlighted how their company’s respective evaluation systems were based on an employee’s performance, which was seen as an accountable mechanism despite the fact that Company B and Company C had only implemented the system a few years previously.

The majority of participants indicated that they were assessed and rewarded according to their skills and their delivery of client projects, whilst both managerial and consultant level participants went on to suggest that their need for limiting their work hours made them valuable assets to the company.

Regarding the working hours maybe there is a difference [between me and my co-workers] but I know I can offer a higher degree of service. *Laughs [...] Comparing working hours is useless for me.* *Senior Manager, Natsuko*

The Project Manager told me that if I am on the project everything goes very speedily and efficiently and we don’t do unnecessary jobs so he said he realized that the job should be done efficiently, so I hope they learn a little bit from me about how the job can be done efficiently. *Senior Consultant, Yoko.*

Natsuko and Yoko professed that they paid little attention to how other people in their workplace perceived their working hours and style. Whereas this was reflective of the general attitudes of the
participants, some of the women still revealed a sense of guilt resulting from their use of policies. Two of the participants expressed guilt because they were not obliged to work overtime like their co-workers or because they were working less hours than their co-workers despite getting equal pay.

This highlighted how some of the women felt as though they were receiving special treatment by taking advantage of these policies. For example, when Aiko, a Senior Manager, was asked about how she felt her team perceived her work-family arrangements, she replied to confirm the meaning of the question by asking, “Oh, you mean how they feel about my special treatment?” Fumi, an Associate Consultant, similarly described herself as “special” since she did not have to work longer hours which was “normal” practice in her workplace. Therefore, while they considered their use of flexible policies to be valid, they seemingly implied that they were not widely used despite being available for their co-workers. It is important to note then that none of the women felt that they were perceived of as being a bad worker as a result of their arrangements, but rather felt guilty for being exempt from the same expectations as others. Their ability to use the policies in a way that their co-workers could not, equally highlights how the women also leveraged local norms of primary caregiving to justify the fact that they were subject to different expectations.

Conclusion

The interviews found that the working mother’s engagement with work-family policies were interdependent with their negotiation of perceived competing business norms and practices within their workplace. Their narratives revealed their workplaces to be spaces where presumed “local” and “global” values and work practices co-exist. With and within these organizations, the
women strategically privilege the global to legitimate a more egalitarian and family-supportive context, and hence to work in ways that recognize the demands of parenting which perhaps their peers in Japanese companies may not be able to. Within these spaces, they leverage non-local institutional, social and ideological resources that validate their use of work-family policies and arrangements, although at times they make use of local norms of female caregiving to justify the distinction from their peers. They subsequently navigate gendered norms according to their own notions of being a “good worker” and a “good mother” to facilitate their maintenance of both family and work roles. For them, a good worker signified someone who performed efficiently, rather than someone who worked long hours, and a good mother constituted a happy parent and role model rather than a full-timer carer.

5.2 Discussion

The findings indicated that within globally-affiliated companies in Tokyo, the presence of international work values and practices facilitated the uptake of work-family policies by working mothers. Their perception of the presence of international practices and values opens up the construction of choice for the women, enabling them to take advantage of policies that they considered represented values that diverged from local norms. The presence of global management, employees or client bases were important social resources which were discursively and actively leveraged to manage their work and family obligations, yet they were not critical since several women without direct proximity to such connections also delineate themselves and their young cohort from typical “Japanese” practices. Rather, the perception of their companies’ institutional distinction from typically Japanese companies, and the normalization of the non-local values upon which the policies are based, provided sufficient ideological justification for their use of policies.
However, to what extent the women were able to fully reject notions of the ideal worker and intensive mother was limited by the fact that their workplace operates within the wider local context.

The strategies that the women used to navigate norms within their workplace further serve to obscure inequities at home, muting criticism regarding the unequal division of childcare responsibilities with their partners and the different gender standards of parenthood and work in Japan. The women leveraged the female caregiving norm to accommodate for the different social expectations of working mothers and working fathers, as well as the lack of sufficient childcare support. They perceive these norms as allowing them to make use of work-family policies more easily than working fathers; however, their ability to maintain these arrangements overshadows the amount of daily labour the working mothers are taking on to secure their long-term career trajectories.

5.2.1 Policies and the Primary Caregiver

The women and their organizations still exist within a wider Japanese context where gendered norms about work and parenthood operate. This signifies that, to an extent, the women were making use of certain work-family policies out of constraint and “acceptance” of the female primary caregiver role. Whilst the findings suggested their strong rejection of the norms of intensive motherhood, the women used teleworking, time banking, flexitime and child sick leave to facilitate their performance of the female primary caregiver role which they acknowledged to be the prevalent local norm. Participants explained that Japanese men were subject to greater pressure from bosses and co-workers as a result of gendered norms of parenting and work, which
made them more hesitant to take advantage of policies. The use of the term “one-ope-ikuji”\(^{38}\) by several participants, as well as the description of the daily division of childcare duties by the majority of the women, highlighted the inegalitarian division of childcare work. Engagement with policies therefore accommodated their need to be at home in response to their husband’s inability or reluctance to take on childcare responsibilities. An important theme that emerges is how the women perceived their husband’s role in childcare, and their desire for their partners to take on responsibilities following their return to work, rather than the husbands’ taking longer paternity leave. The impact was especially significant on those who did not have grandparent support in the evenings. This confirms that the ongoing non-egalitarian division of household work and childcare has a significant impact on female labour force behaviour (Nishimura 2016; Suzuki & Stickland 2007; Yoshizaki 2001). It further speaks to Nemoto’s (2013) study which brought to light the physical and psychological burden of unpaid family work and guilt in the workplace, which is overshadowed by career-based gender inequality. This indicates the need for greater focus in understanding workplace gendered norms for working fathers and achieving a more gender egalitarian of uptake work-family policies.

The constraints that shaped the women’s use of policies can also be seen in their lack of desire to leave full-time employment. Associate Consultant, Orie, suggested that taking a break from work was “riskier” than a delay in her promotion in return for reducing her work load, which implied an awareness of the duality of the Japanese labour market and leaving full-time employment (Rebick 2005; Suzuki & Stickland 2007). In addition, while the women expressed varying levels of career ambition and fulfilment from having multiple roles, it is important to note that their return to work was determined by the need to be in full-time employment to secure a

\(^{38}\) This term, signifying one-person parenting refers both to single parents and to a parent who is responsible for the operation of childcare responsibilities without help from their partner.
nursery school position for their children. As such, these finding support previous literature that the availability of childcare also played an important role in working mother’s career trajectories (Lee & Lee 2014; Nakamura & Ueda 1999; Nishimura & Kwon 2016; Unayama 2012). In addition, since nursery schools typically finished between 6pm to 7pm, with the option to extend only available in certain city wards, women who did not have daily external childcare support systems needed to be able to leave the office by this time. As such, their ability to use a reduced hour system or manage their working hours flexibly was vital to their ability to attend their family obligations.

5.2.2 Competing Norms and the Construction of Choice in the Workplace

The women were exposed to different working styles as a result of the operation of diverse sets of values and practices in their workplace. This signified the possibility of their own deviation from Japanese business norms that impede their ability to manage work and family obligations, specifically long hours and staying in the office as a measure of a good worker. The presence of some form of global management, employees or clients were seen as the social and ideological resources (Blair-Loy 2001) necessary to justify and protect their work-family arrangements. This rested on the women’s belief that foreign managers, clients and staff “don’t want to work late”, “have less norm-based-thinking”, value efficiency or had a more flexible set of values in terms of gender roles. As such, they felt confident that their management and peers were supportive of their working arrangements and the women did not feel it was necessary to “emulate masculinity” to continue working in extensively male-dominated industries (Nemoto 2013).

The findings further support Blair-Loy’s (2001) study which theorized the emergence of new models of motherhood in spaces where women experience competing discourses of ‘desirable life’, such as within a male-dominated sector and the wider frame of cultural change. In light of
the fact that the working mothers in global affiliates in Tokyo were not only positioned within a single cultural context but rather a global network, there was a greater dynamic of competing discourses of what values and practices constitutes a good worker. Blair-Loy (2005) conceptualized female executives’ agency as being shaped by their ideological and economic resources versus structural and cultural constraints. The findings suggest that the perception of being situated within a space of heterogeneity opens up their sense of agency, alleviating some level of cultural constraints by allowing them to reject or diverge from local cultural norms in the presence of an alternative set of values.

The co-existence of diverse norms within their organizations and the women’s alignment with non-local values, challenges previous case studies of MNCs and transnational companies, like Poster and Prasad (2005), Muse (2011) and Petrescu (2008), which suggested that local cultural norms prevail against global or cross-nationally imposed policies. In the case of Poster and Prasad (2005), they found that local norms significantly limited impact of policies such as teleworking. The cultural preference of a solid separation of the work and family spheres in India meant that being able to take work home did not ease the source of work-family conflicts like it did in the US, where there is a more permeable boundary between work and life. In the case of the working mothers in Japan, however, a major cause of conflict was time management and being at home after nursery school hours. As such, they used policies like teleworking and flexitime, which were considered discordant with Japanese business norms but enabled their management of work and family obligations and addressed the cause of their conflict.

Nevertheless, whilst practices like performance evaluation and work-life balance were defined as non-Japanese by the working mothers, the fact that their supportive Japanese managers and employees were delineated from “Japanese” thinking signified the merging of non-local values
into the Japanese value system, especially amongst the younger cohorts. This is supported by Collier and Ong’s (2005) notion that regimes of values are always crossing boundaries, “reengineering the values and substantive forms of the individual and collective lives of [a] company” (13-14). Work-life balance, for example, has been a concept that has been increasingly discussed in Japan and internationally, as such it is difficult to fully distinguish it as a local or non-value. The women normalized these values in their workplace, delineating a supportive environment within which they worked, from older “traditional” Japanese management, and validating new notions of being a good worker which made space for the demands of parenting.

Younger managers were described as having an understanding of the changing demographics of the workplace, as well as being part of dual earner couples themselves, which impacted how strong the influence of Japanese business norms like long hours in the workplace. This points to the significance of cohort effects in influencing workplace culture and the changing prevalence of gendered norms and practices. Such cohort effects and their role in constituting the ideological resources that support women’s ability to construct new ideals of motherhood has been seen in both local (Holloway 2010) and international studies (Blair-Loy 2001).

Simultaneously, the women’s narratives signalled their legitimization of work-family policies in their organizations. They explained that their use of policies did not impede their work and in fact made them more efficient at their jobs, and as such it did not negatively impact how their managers or team perceived them. Despite the fact that they were still very aware that the policies were not widely used by their co-workers, the women believed that their alternative arrangements were justified. However, it should be noted here that whilst nearly all the women rejected the need to work longer hours, a third were still working 50 to 60 hours a week, and the use of flexitime and teleworking allowed the women to work longer hours. As such, to what extent
there was a rejection of long hours as opposed to being present in the office is unclear. The inattention to other people’s opinion presented by many of the participants regarding their working styles, in combination with the fact that many were still working long hours, could imply an element of “putting on a brave face” both for themselves and in the presence of an interviewer.

In addition, the legitimization of these policies would not have been sufficient without the women’s belief in the accountability of their companies’ official performance-based evaluation systems. Whilst the systems were relatively recent features at two of the companies, the majority of the women’s belief in the prioritization of performance over hours depended on the fact that there was an established mechanism of evaluation. The findings are significant in light of Mun and Brinton’s (2015) claim that blanket national policies require internal legitimacy. Whilst they support the notion that policies must be perceived of as legitimate within their workplace, which entailed policy compatibility with the values and practices of the organization, the women also needed certain institutional resources to engage with the policies. As a result, it can be argued that having the ideological and social resources alone may not be enough and that a combination of resources is essential to ensure policy uptake.

Several participants did question the transparency of the evaluation system when it came to promotions as a result of the persisting influence of working hours and male informal networking. This points to an important direction of research in motherhood employment in Japan, at a time when there is a national drive to increase the retention of the female labour force and increase female demographics in management. The lack of women in managerial positions acting as role models for junior staff has been explored in current literature (Nemoto 2016), yet more research is called for in understanding the ongoing significance of male social networks in the workplace.
Whilst there was a persistence of these norms within their organizations, the women still perceived their firms as exceptional and distinct from typically Japanese companies which also has important implications regarding policy uptake. The hierarchization of the “global” above the “local” supports previous literature regarding the “eroticization” of the international by Japanese professional women (Kelsky 1999); the women’s presumptions of modernity were very much tied to their perception of the international (Yoneyama 2005). The prevalence of terms like “still Japanese” and “still domestic” hinted that the women believed their companies needed to become less Japanese, that is more global or international, to fully accept practices that facilitate the use of policies and support mothers’ employment. The women’s disassociation from Japanese companies and “Japanese thinking” also implied a lack of knowledge regarding national, legally mandated policies, specifically regarding the amount of child sick leave and job flexibility.

While it must be kept in mind that this is only the case for large organizations, since mid-sized and small firms are not required to offer the same level of support, what happens if these “non-local” values and policies are understood as Japanese? The findings suggest that the working mothers legitimized the work-family policies and accepted the credibility of “non-local” practices and institutional mechanisms. As such, it calls for further examination as to what impact these systems may have if implemented in other firms.
CHAPTER 6. Conclusion

6.1 Key findings and contributions of the study

State mandated work-family policies in Japan are not translating into widespread policy use and understanding factors that determine usage by full-time working mothers is crucial in addressing the issue of the motherhood penalty. The exodus of female labour following first childbirth and the short- and long-term repercussions for women’s career trajectories and life “choices” are significant issues from both an economic and feminist perspective. Extant literature on the motherhood penalty has found that cultural norms significantly shape both employers’ perceptions of working mothers and female labour behaviour. Recent studies draw attention to the importance of organizational-level context in determining work-family policy success and the need for greater research into how norms and practices operating within a workplace culture impact policy uptake (Brinton & Mun 2016; Mun & Brinton 2015; Suzuki & Stickland 2007). Simultaneously, in light of increasing globalization of business, understanding cross-national differences in policy reach has also become an important consideration in understanding the potential for trans-national policy mobility, and how it interacts within organizational contexts. Current case studies and macro level research of global organizations still offer contradictory findings, however there is general consensus that policies should be “localized” (Hill et al. 2004:171) by adapting to local business practices and norms to maximize impact (Muse 2011; Petrescu 2008; Poster & Prasad 2005).

The triangulation of sources in this study linked cross-national policy adaptation to policy engagement within an organizational context to better understand how working mothers engage in multi-level translation of work-family policies. The first part of the study, chapter 4, documented national legislation and offered a case study analysis of the work-family policies of one of the
firms. It sought to understand whether policies were adapted to the local Japanese setting, rather than universally designed for global uniformity. It found that globally-affiliated firms adjusted their work-family policies in Japan to meet the local legislative requirements, which in fact signified that leave policies were more generous than in their offices in Korea, the United Kingdom and Canada. Findings also highlighted that job flexibility arrangements were the most standardized policy across the board, although notably Korea made no mention of it in official documentation. Companies B and C offered more generous arrangements in the form of babysitter subsidies and, in the case of Company C, extended maternity leave of up to two years. This supports findings from previous literature that “the business case” for work-family policies has been accepted by larger organizations in efforts to increase their female labour force (Brinton & Mun 2002; The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2016).

Chapter 4 provided the contextual backdrop for the second part of this study which analyzed primary interview data from 13 full-time professional working mothers employed within these firms. The study used the context of globally-affiliated financial advisory firms in Tokyo to explore a space at the intersection of local business and global organizational practices, management and clients, and understand how this impacted policy use. It found that working mothers’ engagement with the policies were interdependent with their perception of and negotiation with competing business norms and practices within their workplace. Narratives revealed their workplaces to be spaces where presumed “local” and “global” norms and practices were operating simultaneously, and they aligned themselves with different values accordingly to facilitate their multiple work and family roles. Predominantly, the women privileged “the global” to legitimate a more egalitarian and family-supportive context, and hence to work in ways that they believed may not be possible within “typical” Japanese companies. These global elements could be categorised as institutional,
social and ideological resources; the women perceived these resources to be crucial in safeguarding their work-family arrangements within the male-dominated and time-demanding financial advisory sector. However, they also privileged local gendered norms of the female primary caregiver to justify their need to use such policies.

I argue that the presence of international work values and practices facilitated the uptake of work-family policies by working mothers, as the operation of heterogeneous cultural norms and practices within their workplace opened the boundaries of their construction of choice. This enabled them to take advantage of work-family policies and arrangements that they felt represented work values that diverged from local norms. As a result, the women navigated their work and family spheres according to their individualised notions of a good worker, as someone who performed efficiently rather than someone who worked long hours, and a good mother, as a happy parent and role model rather than a full-timer carer. Notably, the strategic leveraging of the “non-local” was based on the women’s idealization of the international and presumptions that gendered norms were limited to Japanese working culture. This was intertwined with their images of modernity and the “backwardness” of Japan in relation to gender equality, which was observed in Kelsky’s (1999) study on the “eroticization” of the “international” by ambitious professional Japanese women.

However, the strategies also served to obscure inequities at home, muting criticism regarding the unequal division of childcare responsibilities with their partners and the different gender standards of parenthood and work in Japan. This study highlights how the female primary caregiving role cannot be fully rejected whilst working fathers cannot or do not make use of the same job flexibility and work-family policies. Rather than parental leave, initial return to work and the need to take on the majority of childcare responsibilities after nursery school were found to
one of the biggest sources of strain for the women. This is a significant contribution to better understanding why so many women exit the workforce after the birth of their first child.

Framing the analysis of the workplace in terms of institutional, social and ideological resources further addresses the limitations of previous organizational qualitative research into work-family policy uptake (Morrone & Matsuyama 2010; Mun & Brinton 2016) which did not consider the distinction between the legitimacy and accountability of policies. By observing both institutional and cultural factors shaping the women’s navigation of gendered norms and justification for their use of arrangements, it can be suggested that a combination of resources was necessary to reassure them of their protection from serious negative repercussions. Whilst managerial support and ideological legitimization provided useful resources in creating a more family-friendly workplace culture, the women still linked their individual rejection of norms of the ideal worker to the existence of an established system of performance evaluation. This indicates that both policy legitimacy and accountability were required to enable the women to use such strategies to maintain their arrangements.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This research study used a study up approach, which suggests that it is important to acknowledge the occupational and educational privilege of the participants and its limitations for the generalizability of the findings for working mothers across Japan. Participants were women of a relatively privileged socio-economic group and were not directly impacted by the Japanese social welfare system which influences career decisions to a greater extent for women with low to mid-level incomes (Gottfried & Reilley 2008). Equally, their professional experience and skill sets, for example, the English language ability of several participants, enabled them to work for leading
globally-affiliated firms in Tokyo. This allowed them access to a certain level of interaction with overseas clients, projects and global practices. Therefore, some of the strategies wielded by the women in the study may not be applicable to those without a similar skillset or working in domestic industries which do not necessitate it. The experience of Senior Consultant Yoko, who intentionally aligned herself with overseas projects by using her English language ability, further raises the question as to how much agency and “privilege” the women really had. Whilst she had the skillset to strategically manage her career by aligning with international managers and client bases, it can be argued that it was only those who have managed to do so who are able to successfully navigate motherhood and full-time demanding careers.

The women’s ability to manage their time flexibly may also be correlated to the nature of their industry. Project-based consulting work can now be done remotely due to technological advances and having deadline-driven work rather than daily tasks reliant on office networks may mean that job flexibility is more compatible with this type of work. This study focused on a small sample of interview participants and organizations and like most research this size, the scale of the project limits its wider applicability. It is also important to recognize the lack of intersectionality in this study’s design and data analysis, which only discusses gender as an axis of inequality. Examining the intersectional layers that frame the concept of “choice” and shape experiences in work and parenthood is significant and this study aims to provide the data for future research.

6.3 Implications and Future Directions for Research

The findings highlighted that the women’s use of work-family policies was linked to their association with the female primary caregiving role and their partners’ ability or willingness to achieve a more egalitarian arrangement in childcare and domesticity. This calls for more studies
into how working fathers navigate gendered norms and practices within the workplace and the factors that impede their own use of work-family policies, as well as the incorporation of other axes of inequality such as class and education. Similarly, this study invites future qualitative research, for example in the form of comparative case studies, to understand how differences could appear between globally-affiliated companies depending on variables such as industry and firm size. In this study, performance-based evaluation systems provided the institutional resources that the women used to legitimize, and gain a certain level of accountability for, their working arrangements. This was despite the fact that companies B and C had only adopted the system within the last few years. As such, there is grounds to propose the potential benefits of establishing similar systems in Japanese companies even though it is not a practice typically associated with Japanese business norms.

The narratives therefore offer some significant policy implications as to how non-local policies can be legitimized within a local cultural context and offer new insight into dominant perspectives on this topic. This is supported by Collier and Ong’s (2005) conceptualization of the transportability of the desirable life. The findings illustrated that work values such as flexibility and work-life balance were global and were already integrating into the value system of the younger cohorts of Japanese workers. As such, as globalization of business continues to develop it hints at the universalization of work practices and values. The finding from Chapter 4 demonstrated that the work-family policies available to the women corresponded to Japanese national legislation and were not exceptional to the global company entity. Hence the potential for the reach of these policies is limited if mischaracterised as non-Japanese. As such, if these policies and the values they encompass are accepted as Japanese, can socio-psychological level of gendered norms be overcome? Similarly, the findings highlighted that women struggled with time
management upon initial return to work and feeling as if they were getting special treatment for being able to take advantage of such policies. Future research should focus attention on how organizations can work toward implementing job flexibility and the acceptance of diverse working styles for all employees.

On a final note, understanding factors inhibiting policy use within full-time work is an important tool in reducing the movement of women into more precarious forms of employment. However, this research must develop alongside deeper examination of the legal and socio-economic disadvantages of the non-regular employment sector in Japan - which is significantly female-dominated and continues to grow.
Bibliography


LETTER OF INITIAL CONTACT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Translating Global Work-Family Policies into a Japanese Work Setting: Case Study of a Global Consultancy Firm in Tokyo

[Date]

[Address]

Dear [name],

My name is Alice Harada Bannister and I am an MA student at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. My faculty advisor, Dr. Sylvia Fuller is the head researcher (or Principal Investigator) and I am the co-researcher (or Co-Investigator), along with Professor Leonora Angeles.

I am writing this letter to see if you want to participate in the research on the experience of women with children balancing work and family obligations at your firm.

The objectives of this research are to:
(1) to analyze and interpret how global, national and workplace culture interact in this space and how this relates to work-family policy usage
(2) to analyze policy variation between the firm’s offices in Japan and their offices in other OECD countries
(3) to examine and interpret the firm’s relation to state mandated work-family policy standards
(4) to examine how the firm’s Japanese female employees with children engage with the work-family policies available to them
(5) to examine how mothers negotiate work-family policies with the long hours characteristic of financial consulting.
Given your suitability, I would like to interview you regarding your experience of this topic. The discussion will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. The interview will last around an hour, depending upon your time available. Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or remove yourself from the research at any time, and your decision will be respected.

I will write about the research process and findings and receive credits towards my Masters degree. I will also aim to produce an academic journal publication based on the research. If you are interested in participating, please call me at (X-XXX-XXX-XXXX). You can also email me at: X.

Sincerely,
Alice Harada Bannister
Master of Arts in Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice
Appendix B. Interview Questions

General questions about family and care arrangements

Interviewer: I’d like to start by asking you a little about your family and whether and how your family life affects your working life.

1.1 Can you tell me a little bit about your family? (how many kids do you have, how old are they, do you have a partner, what is your partner’s occupation etc.)
1.2 Who takes care of the kids when you are at work (if they are young)?
1.3 What happens when they are sick and can’t go to school (if they are school-aged)?
1.4 Did you have kids after you started working for the firm or did you already have kids when you joined?

Knowledge and Use of policies

1.5 Interviewer: So how do your work arrangements fit with your family and care arrangements?

1.6 What are the work-family policies in place at your firm?
1.7 How did you learn about the policies available to you?
1.8 Did you take parental leave at your firm and if so, how long was your leave?
1.9 If you did not take full advantage of the leave made available to you, why not?
1.10 If you are raising your child(ren) with a spouse, did you divide the leave and how?
1.11 Do you use the policies related to reduced working hours?
1.12 If you do not use any formal policies, do you have any informal arrangements with your co-workers/supervisor?

Workplace culture; Motherhood and work

Interviewer: Since we are talking about your work-family arrangements in relation to your managers and co-workers, I want to discuss your workplace in more detail.

1.13 How do you feel others in your team view your work-family arrangements?
1.14 Are there other working mothers in your team? What are their work-family arrangements like?
1.15 If you do use work-family policies, how did you feel bringing up the use of policies with your manager? With your team? If you do not use policies but rather informal arrangements, how was this brought up with your manager? With your team?
1.16 What would say about how family - friendly your workplace is?
1.17 Did you feel pressure to reduce your length of leave?
1.18 Did you feel any pressure not to work reduced hours when you initially returned to work?
1.19 Do you think that being a good mother and good worker are compatible or incompatible in your work place? Why do you think that?
1.20 How does your workplace culture compare to other places you have worked in terms of family friendliness?
1.21 How do feel about being a mother who works full-time?
1.22 Do you feel like you co-workers have any different expectations of you because you are a mother?
1.23 Is work-family policies a topic that is easily or frequently discussed at work?
1.24 Do you see many other women managing work and family obligations among manager level or higher? What does that look like?

**Managing long hours**

1.25 Interviewer: Next, I would like to talk about the nature of your work in more detail. What does your typical day at work look like?
1.26 How do you manage the client-facing and project-driven nature of your work with your family obligations?
1.27 Do the policies at your workplace help you manage your time?
1.28 How useable do you find the policies when considering the project-driven nature of your work?

**Impact of motherhood**

Interviewer: So finally, I would like to ask you a little about how you feel that these arrangements have impacted your work.

1.29 How do you feel your compensation (salary/bonus) or promotion prospects compare to peers who do not have children?
1.30 How do you feel that your work-family arrangements have impacted your relationship with your team? With your manager?
1.31 How important were your firm’s work-family policies to your decision to continue to work full time following childbirth?
Appendix C. Alterations to Interview Questions

Additional Questions asked to participants 4 - 13

Additional questions in ‘Workplace culture; Motherhood and work’ section

1. What is your definition of a good worker?
2. How would you describe yourself as a worker?

Additional questions in ‘Managing Long Hours’ section

1. Do your co-workers without children use job flexibility policies?
2. How many hours of over-time do you work on average a week?
3. How do you decide how many hours to work a week?

Additional questions in ‘Impact of Motherhood’ section

1. Do you want to be promoted? Why/why not?
2. How important was your team culture to your decision to continue to work full time following childbirth?
Appendix D. Letter of Consent

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Translating Global Work-Family Policies into a Japanese Work Setting: Case Study of a Global Consultancy Firm in Tokyo

Principal Investigator
Dr. Sylvia Fuller, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology & Affiliate of Institute for Gender, Race Sexuality and Social Justice  Tel: XXX-XXX-XXXX  Email: X

Co-Investigators
Leonora Angeles, Associate Professor, School of Community and Regional Planning & Institute for Gender, Race Sexuality and Social Justice  Tel: XXX-XXX-XXXX  Email: X

Alice Harada Bannister, Masters Student  Tel: XXX-XXX-XXXX  Email: X

Purpose:
You are invited to participate in a case study research project on the experience of working mothers in full-time employment in Japan. You are selected as a participant in this project because of your employment in the financial consulting business of your firm in Tokyo, Japan. Alice Harada Bannister will get credits towards her Masters degree for carrying out this research. The study will produce a Masters thesis as well as an article in an academic journal publication.

Study Procedures:
You are being asked to participate in an oral interview, lasting around an hour, in a location that is comfortable for you. Your comments will be kept confidential. It is up to you if you want to participate. You can refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. If you decide to participate, feel free to answer only the questions you are comfortable answering. With your consent, the interview will be voice-recorded. If voice-recording causes you any discomfort, notes can be taken instead.

Possible Risks:
A possible risk to participating in this research is feeling uncomfortable if you are asked a question that relates to a challenging situation in the workplace or something you want to keep private. Feel free to say that you do not want to answer any question.
Possible Benefits:
A possible benefit to participating in this research is for you to feel empowered from sharing your experiences and ideas. The research may also lead to social benefits for working mothers in your company, and others, in the future.

Confidentiality:
In order to protect your confidentiality and identity, during the research process, you will be given codes and fictitious names. All documentation of your interview will be kept in a locked cabinet in a UBC facility where the Principal Investigator will remain responsible for it, digital documentation will be kept in a passcode locked file that only the research team members (Dr. Sylvia Fuller, Leonora Angeles, Alice Harada Bannister) can access. Hardcopy data will be shredded, and digital data destroyed after 5 years after the date of publication.

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study:
If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without judgment. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this consent form. Your signature indicates that you received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in the study.

Signature of the Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of the Research Participant