

SOCIAL RESOURCES AND PARENTAL WELL-BEING: A COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND GERMAN PARENTAL EGO-CENTRIC NETWORKS

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According to Amartya Sen's "capability approach" (Sen 1985), people's well-being depends on their opportunities for self-realization. These opportunities, in turn, are closely related to the social resources that are integrated into their network of social relations. The nature of these social resources (social capital) and their importance for well-being are closely related, in turn, to the culture in question and its traditions, and can vary accordingly from one society to another. Although certain structural similarities can be found between Japan and Germany, for example they are both ageing societies with comparatively low birth rates (Atoh 2008) and are both experiencing increasing job insecurity (Genda 2005), Japan's historical, cultural, and religious heritage differs significantly from that of post-industrial western societies like Germany. By comparing Germany and Japan, I demonstrate that Japan's historical, cultural, and religious heritage also results in a different cultural and historical significance being assigned to social relations and network structures.

Japanese society is relatively homogenous in terms of ethnic origins, language, and religion. Buddhism and Shintoism are part of society and influence Japanese life. However, their influence is different to that of religions in western societies. In Japan, religion has an important homogenizing influence, but it does not have a direct influence *per se* on the behavior of families; there is no rivalry between different religious perspectives as is common in many western societies. On the other hand, however, Japan shares many of the pressures that have contributed to the transformation of families in western societies.

Japan is an urbanized post-industrial society with excellent transport and communications infrastructure. Life there can be expensive; the demand for a multitude of consumer products is high and comparable to that found in North America and Western Europe. As part of the socio-economic changes in Japan in the post-war period, important changes occurred in regards to the status of women. In particular, these are reflected in increases in educational attainment and labor force participation (Rindfuss et al. 2004). The proportion of women in the 25–29 age group with higher education increased from 10 percent in 1970 to 56 percent in 2010 and slightly exceeded

that of men from the same age cohort (53 %) (Statistics Bureau 2014a). The structure of the Japanese labor market tends to be strongly segregated between men's and women's jobs, more so than in Germany. Japanese women tend to have more part-time jobs, which do not offer any opportunities for career advancement. In contrast, Japanese men can find regular full-time positions with opportunities for career advancement and promotion in companies, which expect employees to invest a lot in their jobs and to socialize with their colleagues after work (Rindfuss et al. 2004). Official working hours in Japan are 8.5 hours per day (Ogura 2014). According to Ogura (2014), however, 85 percent of Japanese men work more than the normal 40 hour work-week: 20 percent of men aged 20 to 40 work even more than 60 hours per week. These long working hours are often accompanied by commutes exceeding five hours per week (Tsuya 2004). Mothers remain the most important people when it comes to childcare in Japan, and many women give up their jobs or reduce their working hours when they become mothers (Tsuya 2004). Despite this, one out of three mothers with children under the age of four was in employment in 1999 (Rindfuss et al. 2004). The number of married Japanese couples who live with one of their parents is in decline (Ogawa and Retherford 1997). However, compared with most post-industrial western societies, inter-generational cohabitation is still relatively common in Japan, and in the case of first-born sons, it applies to one third of all couples (Rindfuss et al. 2004). It also remains the norm for unmarried young adults in Japan to live with their parents. In 1994, 82 percent of unmarried adults between 20 and 28 years of age lived with their parents (Rindfuss et al. 2004). Young unmarried adults who live with their parents have large incomes as they do not pay anything for their food and accommodation (Rindfuss et al. 2004). As one study demonstrates, this can play a role in subsequent marriage choices, in addition to the partner's character (74 %) or affection and feelings for the partner (65 %): A further 45 percent of women specified a man's income and 28 percent his career as important factors when it comes to choosing a spouse (NIPPONICA 1999).

Traditionally, a very high proportion of Japanese men marry. Between 1920 and 1955 only 2 to 3 percent of Japanese women and men in the 40–44 age group had never been married (Rindfuss et al. 2004: 841). The proportion of women in the 25–29 age group who had not yet married increased from 21 percent in 1975 to 60 percent in 2010 (Statistics Bureau 2014b). In 2010, 10 percent of men and 5 percent of women in the 50–54 age group had never been married (Statistics Bureau 2014b).

Motherhood, childrearing, and caring for ageing parents are marital duties in Japan, particularly for women. When women marry, it is expected that they will assume these roles. Marriage is also seen as a life-long commitment.

In marriage, household tasks are strongly divided on a gender basis. Responsibility for the vast majority of chores is assumed by women (Rindfuss et al. 2004). For example, in 2000, Japanese women spent 29 hours per week doing housework compared to the three hours spent by their male counterparts; 30 percent of men did no housework at all (Tsuya 2004; see the chapter by Fankhauser, Holthus, and Hundsdoerfer for more details on the issue of housework). An ISSP survey from 2012 delivers similar results, while differentiating between housework and care work, and allowing for a comparison with German data. Japanese women reported spending an average of 18.5 hours per week on housework, compared to men who reported only 4 hours. In Germany, this gender gap is not as pronounced, as women spend between 14 and 15 hours on housework, while men reported spending roughly 7 hours (ISSP Research Group 2016). These results are in line with previous ones: Greenstein (2009: 1045), in his international comparison of wives' housework share and gender equity, calculated almost 90 percent of housework share for Japanese wives, and roughly 70 to 75 per cent for East and West German wives. These results indicate a more egalitarian division of household tasks in Germany than in Japan. Female labor market participation also differs between the two countries.

Due to the dual education system in Germany, the number of women with tertiary education is considerably lower than in Japan, not allowing for direct comparison. The large proportion of women with academic education in Japan is put into perspective when employment is considered: while twice as many Japanese women achieve a higher education than in Germany, only 68 percent of these women are employed, compared to 84 percent in Germany (Stephens et al. 2015: 89). Female employment rates are lower for all levels of educational attainment in Japan. The gender gap in employment for those with tertiary education is only 5 percent in Germany but 24 percent in Japan (Stephens et al. 2015: 89). Germany has a substantially lower average working time than Japan (OECD 2017) and a lower marriage rate (OECD 2016). All these factors influence social relations of mothers and fathers in Germany and Japan. Due to the traditional division of paid and unpaid labor in Japan, it can be expected that the parents' social relations will be more aligned with their respective domains. The workplace plays an important role for fathers, while family and friends are the domain of the mother – whereas in Germany the gender division of these spheres is less evident.

By comparing social relations in Germany and Japan, I examine here the extent to which Japan's historical, cultural, and religious heritage causes social relations and network structures to assume a different kind of cultural and historical significance than in Germany. I then analyze the

extent to which integration into social relations influences the subjective well-being of mothers and fathers in Japan compared to their counterparts in Germany.

As part of a comparative study on parental well-being, the egocentric networks of a total of 2,153 mothers and 2,088 fathers with children under the age of six were surveyed in Japan and Germany (in 2012 and 2009 respectively). The questionnaire used in Japan was translated from German and structural and social differences were taken into account in the transfer and translation process. For more on the surveys themselves, see Huber (2018) in this volume. For the assessment of the parents' personal networks, six name generators (survey questions to generate personal networks of respondents) were used, for which a maximum of three persons were named per generator. Nine different types of relations were recorded (spouse/partner, children, own father and mother, spouse's/partner's father and mother, friends, work colleagues, and others) and the residential distance was recorded for some of them.

Based on these data, it is possible to extrapolate and analyze some information on the social relations and the resulting social resources of the parents in Germany and Japan. In order to examine the significance of the surveyed social relations as a resource in relation to the parents' subjective well-being, I draw on the concepts developed by James Coleman (1988, 1990), Pierre Bourdieu (1983), and Mark Granovetter (1973).

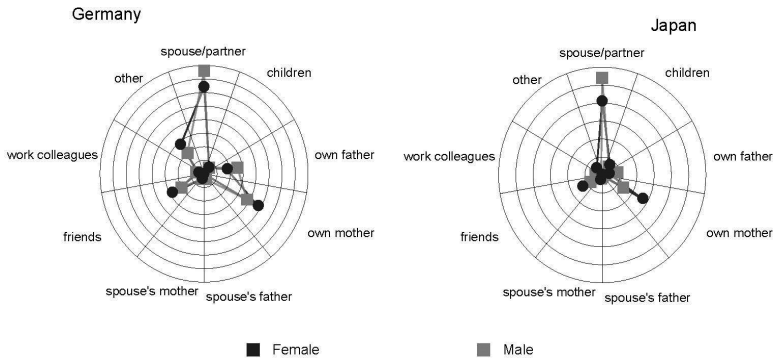
A COMPARISON OF THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

In both surveys, mothers and fathers (ego) were asked to indicate the persons (alteri) with whom they interact in different situations, and whom they are able to approach when they need help and support.

Regarding the person with whom the surveyed mothers and fathers felt they could speak about important personal matters, first on the list in both countries was the person's life partner, followed by the respondent's own mother and their friends. In Germany, however, also those persons were frequently specified who did not originate in the family context and were not friends either, such as members of associations, neighbors, and acquaintances. The main differences between the sexes in this context arises predominantly in the designation of the life partner as the person with whom the respondents could speak about important personal issues: whereas the surveyed mothers indicated that they discuss personal matters more frequently with their own mothers, the fathers specified their partners more frequently than their mothers. Overall, the Japanese respondents specified a lower percentage of persons outside the couples'

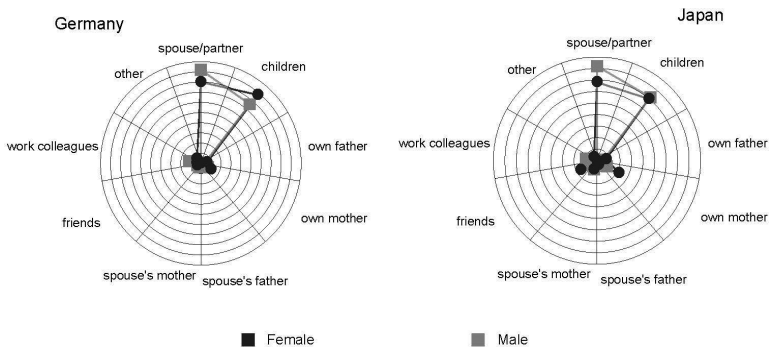
relationship and the relations with their own parents than their German counterparts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion of alteri with whom ego talks to about important things



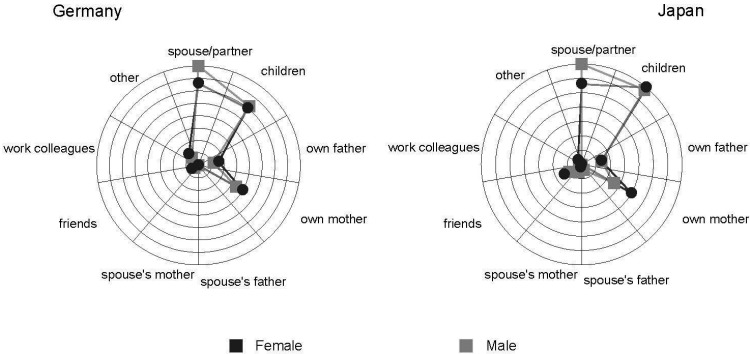
No major differences were observed between German and Japanese parents in response to the question about the persons "with whom meals are regularly taken together" (Figure 2). The majority of both mothers and fathers specified their partners and children in this case.

Figure 2: Proportion of alteri with whom ego usually eats together with



The same applies to the question as to the persons with whom the respondents felt "a close connection" (Figure 3). In this case as well, the majority of mothers and fathers in both countries specified their partners and children. In addition, both mothers and fathers in both countries felt more closely connected to their own mothers; their relationships with their fathers appeared to be more distant as own fathers were specified in significantly fewer cases here.

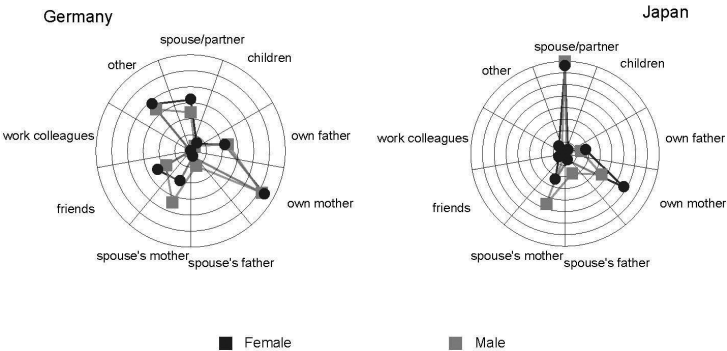
Figure 3: Proportion of alteri with whom ego feels connected to



Clear cross-country differences in social relations emerged when mothers and fathers were asked about the persons to whom they can turn to when they need support with childcare (Figure 4). The results here show that the mothers and fathers in Germany could rely on a broad support network. In addition to their own parents, this included parents-in-law, partners, friends, and other persons. Among Japanese mothers and fathers, the proportion of support relations was considerably smaller and mainly included the partner, the respondent's own mother, and the mother-in-law. References to other persons were minimal. In both countries, fathers referred to their mothers-in-law as a person they could approach far more frequently than their own mothers. Apart from this, there were no major differences in terms of the persons indicated by the respondents in both countries.

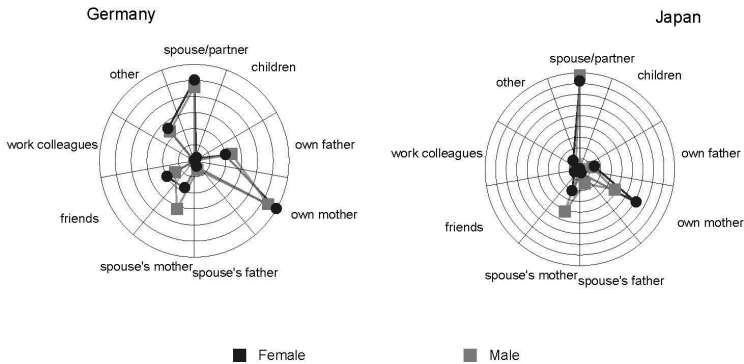
Similar results were obtained when the question was asked who respondents could ask for help if their child was sick (Figure 5). Here

Figure 4: Proportion of alteri who ego can call to take care of the children



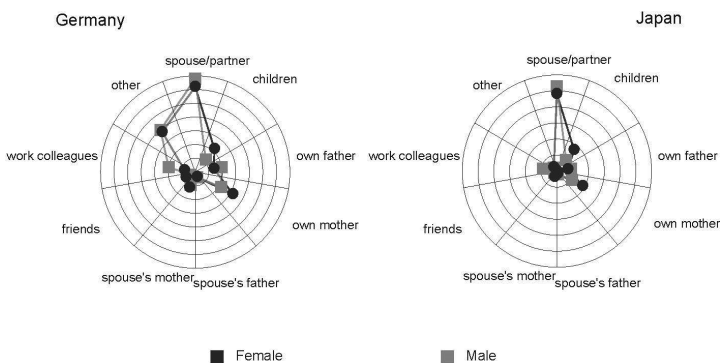
too it emerged that the social relations of German mothers and fathers are far more diverse than those of Japanese parents. In Germany, when parents need support, they mainly approach their own mothers, their partners, or mothers-in-law. However, friends, fathers and acquaintances also provide help and support. In Japan, the respondents' partners or own mothers or, in the case of fathers, the mothers-in-law were the main persons identified as providing help in such cases.

Figure 5: Proportion of alteri who ego can ask for help when children are sick



Social relations do not have only positive sides, however, and can also generate conflicts, which occasionally lead to disputes. Because such social relations are a burden and can also impair the well-being of mothers and fathers, the respondents were asked to indicate the persons with whom they argue from time to time (Figure 6). In both countries, the life partners were those indicated most frequently here, followed by the re-

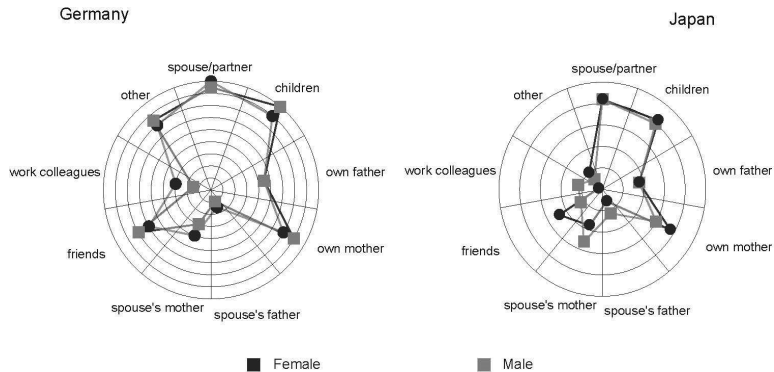
Figure 6: Proportion of alteri with whom ego sometimes has conflicts with



spondents' own parents, their children, and, more frequently in the case of men, work colleagues. The German respondents also reported arguing with other persons, who were recorded under the category 'others'. With the exception of work colleagues, there were no major differences between the persons indicated by fathers and mothers in both countries.

Based on the answers provided to all of these questions, it is possible to construct the networks of the mothers and fathers in Germany and Japan at the time of the survey (Figure 7). In Germany, we see that the social

Figure 7: Proportion of alteri in the network



relationships of families have a broad base. In addition to relationships with partners, children, and parents, they also include friends, colleagues, and other people like distant relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. No major gender-based differences emerge. These results tally with my earlier studies on family relationships in Germany (Hennig 2007, Hennig 2009).

In a previous study on the influence of network relationships of German men and women on their household workshare within the family, no relevant gender differences were identified either (Hennig 2009). Neither the network size nor the distribution of networks based on gender and context (family, neighborhood, work colleagues, friends, relatives, etc.) showed differences. Yet interaction within the network of women happened a bit more often with one and the same person and was founded on reciprocity, while men tended to have interactions with different persons not leading to reciprocation. As the gender differences in networks however were not large to any extend, we can rather only speak of tendencies than real differences (see Hennig 2009).

In Japan, it emerges that the social relationships are predominantly concentrated on close family relatives, i.e. partners, children, parents,

and parents-in-law. In contrast to Germany, there are fewer friendship-based relationships and clear differences exist between the sexes in terms of friendships and contact with colleagues. Japanese women report almost twice as many relationships with friends than men, yet they rarely have relationships with colleagues. Japanese men report the same proportion of relationships with friends as they do with colleagues. Contacts with other persons like distant relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances are merely marginal for the Japanese fathers in this study.

These findings coincide with research available on Japan. Social life in the form of invitations to visit people in their homes and vice versa is rare. Hence, families have very little external social contact in general (Neuss-Kaneko 1990: 148). The responsibility for maintaining social relationships is split. Men maintain relationships with work colleagues and women maintain those with relatives and their own circle of female friends.

Irrespective of whether Japanese women are in employment or not, they do more in relation to childcare, household chores, and school and neighborhood activities than men. The social relationship networks of men are centered on their professional work. Women do more to maintain contact with neighbors, friends, and relatives (Coulmas 2007: 47ff). This probably is related to the fact that friendships in Japan work under different premises than in Germany (Thomas and Haschke 2007: 107). The term 'friendship' (*Freundschaft*) in Germany is highly influenced by the 18th century idea of 'soul mates' (*Seelenverwandschaft*), which has the goal to have two people know, appreciate, and unequivocally appreciate each other (see Moore 2011). In contrast to other social relationships, friendship is seen as a form of human relationship which, unlike marriage, is not established through a ceremony and is not dependent on some form of role, as in the relationship with colleagues or relatives. Friendship is understood as a relationship between people who like each other and who enjoy doing things or simply spending time together. Friendship in this concept is based on the idea that it is a voluntary relationship without clearly delimited rules of interaction (cf. Argyle and Henderson 1986). Friendship furthermore is characterized by the fact that the people do not pursue certain goals, objectives, and it is not profit-oriented. Within friendship relationships, ideas of 'winner' or 'loser', of 'superiority' or 'hierarchy' are non-existent. That is why friendships are part of the private realm, even though they can be publically displayed.

Contrary to Germany, Japan's continuing vertical social order hinders the free building of friendships outside of one's own social group, as Japanese tend to rank or place strangers much more so in a vertical relationship to themselves, rather than regarding them as equal in terms of social status by default. Friendships in Japan are not clearly assigned to the 'pri-

vate' or 'public' arenas. In the world of work, colleagues who joined a company or organization in the same year or completed their apprenticeships at the same time often become friends. Deep and lasting friendships arise in such circles of more or less equals. In most cases this also involves the acceptance of an existing hierarchy between friends.

This hierarchy is less important in the case of female friendships. Shared interests are the main factors here. The *shin'yū* relationships, which exist between intimately friendly persons who have no secrets from each other, arise here (cf. Reinhold 1981). Married women in Japan also have dyadic relationships with their husbands, children and parents, however these relationships are associated with elements of obligation and control, which prevent the emergence of complete intimacy in many instances. People involved in *shin'yū* relationships may experience greater intimacy than those involved in married and family relationships. "*Shin'yū* (literally: intimate friends) do not usually come from neighborhood or work groups but from women's school days" (Reinhold 1981: 85). "Friends from childhood, whose friendship has been reinforced through years of shared schooling [...] are considered as the closest (*shin'yū*), i. e. the length of the friendship is a decisive factor" (Reinhold 1981: 85). These relationships are not terminated upon marriage.

Such intimate circles of friends, the *shin'yū*, are horizontal and can be viewed *de facto* as egalitarian. They include women from very wide-ranging circles. A lack of hierarchical structure is a feature of the *shin'yū* groups. Thus they represent an important exception in the otherwise predominantly vertical organization of society in Japan. Through the candid reporting of worries and needs and the mutual response and engagement in such groups, reciprocity is attained "that is otherwise almost non-existent in this egalitarian form, even in 'modern' Japan" (Reinhold 1981: 87).

The proverb "*on o ukeru wa jiyū o uru nari*", "accepting a good deed means to give away the freedom" (Thomas and Haschke 2007: 114) conveys the Japanese understanding of helpfulness. People in need can be sure of the support of neighbors, friends, and relatives. However, at the same time, they are always aware that this system obliges them to provide mutual support and help. From the Buddhist point of view, obligations are connections with others that make people unfree. This may explain the marginal nature of contact with other people like distant relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances in Japan.

Based on the network data, we can draw conclusions about the structure of the relationships. For this purpose, some network measures were calculated which enabled the general comparison of the German and Japanese networks. Network size is the simplest measure and consisted in

this case of the number of persons named by the surveyed mothers and fathers. While the Japanese respondents specified fewer than five persons here, their German counterparts specified an average number of around five persons. Multiplexity is another measure. A relationship between ego and alter is understood to be multiplex if it is based on not just one relational dimension but several. For example, ego can nominate alter not only as an advisor on personal issues but also as someone who provides support in the event of illness and as someone with whom they occasionally argue. Hence multiplexity is a measure of the strength of the relationships in the network. Although multiplexity is somewhat higher in the Japanese networks than in the German ones, networks in both countries are dominated by close relationships.

Table 1: Network characteristics

	Germany		Japan	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Network size	4.98	1.68	4.6	1.30
IQV index	0.81	0.17	0.69	0.19
Proportion of persons in the immediate neighborhood	0.44	0.21	0.36	0.11
Multiplexity	0.75	0.19	0.78	0.19

The index of qualitative variation (IQV) is a measure of diversity, providing information about the qualitative variation of the relationship types in a certain network. In the case under examination here, it provides information about the distribution of relationships to the core family, the parents and parents-in-law, work colleagues, friends, and other named persons. The more varied the types of relations specified by the mothers and fathers, the more heterogeneous the composition of the network or, in other words, the greater the qualitative variation in the nominations in the network. The networks examined here are far more heterogeneous in composition in the case of Germany than in the case of Japan. In addition, the results of the calculations on the proportion of the specified persons living in direct proximity to the mothers and fathers show that this applies to 44 percent of the German parents' alteri and only 36 percent of the Japanese ones.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AS A RESOURCE AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR
SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

To examine the significance of social relationships as a resource for subjective well-being, I also draw on concepts developed by Coleman (1988, 1990), Bourdieu (1983), and Granovetter (1973). Families have at least three types of resources, or capital, which influence their well-being. Financial capital consists of monetary resources that can be used to purchase goods and services. Human capital consists of abilities and skills that individuals have acquired as a means of adapting to their environment, and generally takes the form of school qualifications or diplomas. For Bourdieu (1983), the concept of human capital, which he called "cultural capital", does not merely encompass institutionalized cultural capital, such as school qualifications. Instead, Bourdieu viewed the possession of objectified cultural goods and abilities as embodied cultural capital.

The concept of social capital was introduced as a complement to the concept of human capital. Social capital is an individual resource that arises from interpersonal relations and mainly takes effect in the formation of human capital (Coleman and Hoffer 1987). In view of the topic under examination, I focus here on social capital as an individual resource and not on its possible character as a collective good (Portes and Landolt 1996).

According to Coleman, social relationships are especially effective when they are connected via particularly short paths, the frequency of contact is particularly high, contacts are available for the greatest possible range of activities, and everyone is linked with everyone else. For Bourdieu, social relationships constitute above all resources "[...] which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group" (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu conceives social capital as a structural element that complements economic and cultural capital and should assist in the accumulation of different types of capital. Like economic and cultural capital, it is unequally distributed and reproduces inequalities through disparate life and contact opportunities.

For Bourdieu, social capital is determined from the sum of the group or network size and volume of capital held by the group members. According to Granovetter (1973), social relationships are particularly efficient when they are weak, that is relationships that are maintained with a maximum number of dissimilar people. Such people are difficult to reach spatially and usually linked with each other by chance; they are contacted for specific purposes. In Granovetter's view, this social capital accesses

other potential areas of society and tends to involve less social control than is the case in a network of “strong ties” as defined by Coleman (1988, 1990).

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Based on these briefly outlined theoretical concepts, two types of social capital were identified from the surveyed social relations of Japanese and German mothers and fathers. According to Coleman’s (1988, 1990) basic assumptions about social capital, whereby the greatest social capital is found in relations that are characterized by the maximum possible spatial availability, the greatest frequency of social contacts, the widest variety of activities (doing different things with the same person), and the network density (network members not only interact with the respondent but maintain dense relationships with each other), the “strong ties” are measured “close to theory”. According to this approach, social capital consists of a product (i. e. the multiplication of the discussed dimensions of network properties; Nauck and Schwenk 2001).

The dimensions are understood in the following way, based on question Q59 in the Japanese survey (i. e. the equivalent in the Germany survey; see the Appendix in Holthus, Huber, and Tanaka 2015 for the entire Japanese questionnaire, see Bertram and Spieß 2011 for the German survey; see Huber 2018 in this volume on the methodology of the surveys), which asks: “Among the people listed below, please tell us how far they live from your residence?”. A named person is classified as being available if he or she is living in the immediate neighborhood: complex activities are taken as given if the person named in variable Q58 “Who is doing the things below with you?” is involved in at least one expressive activity with the respondent (feeling connected or having meals together) and at least one instrumental activity (discussing personal things, receiving help, talking to often) is carried out; density is given if the network member is a member of the nuclear or extended family or lives in the respondent’s household. The ego-centered networks do not provide any information about the frequency of social contact, hence this dimension cannot be considered. A relationship is multiplex if the network person is named for several activities (multiplexity). The tie is strong if four conditions – availability, complex activities, multiplexity, and density – are met. Accordingly, Coleman’s social capital consists of the sum of the product of the four dimensions across all named network members. In a way, this measure of social capital complements the concept of weak ties. Although strong ties are closely linked with social homogamy and social control, the number

of weak ties reflects the reach of a given network within the entire social structure, an aspect that is particularly important for information-seeking (Granovetter 1973).

For Granovetter, social relations are particularly efficient when they involve weak ties, i. e. the network includes relations with many and dissimilar people. Spatial availability is difficult to identify for such persons; they are loosely connected with each other and they must purposively be contacted. This social capital as defined by Granovetter opens up other potential areas of society and tends to involve less social control than that found in a network of “strong ties” as defined by Coleman. According to Granovetter (1973), the index for qualitative variation (IQV) plays a key role in social capital.

With this measure, the variation of qualitative features is not recorded as a deviation from the mean, but as the degree of diversity of the characteristics of the qualitative features in the network. Roles are interpreted as the types of social relationships (based on Q58) that are associated with certain social contexts, such as relatives (nuclear family members and extended family members, friends, co-workers, and others). In this case, the index of the quality variation ranged between 0 and 1. For social capital as defined by Granovetter, the index of the quality variation is weighted with the network size.

The distribution of the two variables – “Coleman social capital” and “Granovetter social capital” – was recoded into three categories (low, medium, high) for each variable. “Low social capital” refers to all values that are lower than the median; “medium social capital” corresponds to values between the median and the 75 percent quantile; and “high social capital” applies to all values above the 75 percent quantile.

Table 2: Social capital comparison

	Germany		Japan	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Granovetter social capital	0.90	0.88	0.86	0.82
Coleman social capital	1.00	0.63	1.12	0.56

The descriptive consideration of the two measurements shows that the proportion of Granovetter social capital found in the networks of the German parents is slightly higher than that found in the Japanese parents’ networks while the Coleman social capital is slightly higher in the Japanese parents’ networks.

The concepts of human and economic capital were developed following Bourdieu (1983, 1986). Human capital is based on the latest profes-

sional position of the survey participants and their educational attainment, and economic capital is based on their income for the last year and existing assets. To take the differences between the countries into account, the canonical scaling method used by Guttman (1944) was applied, a probability model which applies to the distribution of the variables within the sample. To maximize the correlation between the weighted variables, each individual category for all of the variables used is taken into account and weighted for a particular scaling characteristic.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CAPITAL TYPES FOR SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Below, I analyze the influence of the types of capital on the subjective well-being of the mothers and fathers in Germany and Japan. A regression analysis was calculated by gender for both countries controlling for employment and the number of children in the household.

The dependent variable is subjective well-being, which was surveyed using a scale of 0 to 10. The results of the regression analysis present a very different picture for men and women in relation to the types of capital. As neither employment nor the number of children in the household have any significant effect on subjective well-being in this analysis, they are henceforth omitted from the presentation.

Table 3: Overall life satisfaction: Parameter estimates

Term	Japanese male Prob> t	Japanese female Prob> t	German male Prob> t	German female Prob> t
Intercept	<.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*	<.0001*
Economic capital	0.0014*	0.1903	<.0001*	<.0001*
Cultural capital	0.0002*	0.0012*	<.0001*	0.0002*
Granovetter social capital	0.3208	0.4535	0.0011*	0.8768
Coleman social capital	0.6070	<.0001*	0.1236	0.0017*
R ²	0.0247	0.0349	0.0780	0.0665
Mean of response	5.87	5.64	7.56	7.33
Observations	1031	1102	976	1013

The mean values for subjective well-being in Japan are considerably lower than those obtained for Germany. What is involved here, however, I believe, is not a lower level of satisfaction, as assumed by some researchers; but is rather related to the fact that the concept of well-being in Japanese culture is based on the achievement of a moderate level of satisfac-

tion and not a maximum level as is the case in Germany. Uchida et al. (2015) point out that the idea that life is an up and down process is prevalent in Japan, hence an ideal level of 100 percent would not be considered realistic: instead the ideal is located at 75 percent. In other words the equivalent for a scale of 10 would be 7–8 in Japan. If the achievable moderate scale level of 75 percent for the Japanese respondents is assumed, there is little difference between the subjective well-being of the Japanese and German mothers and fathers. Whereas subjective well-being among Japanese fathers increases with higher economic capital and high cultural capital, for the mothers it increases with Coleman social capital. In other words, while integration into social relations has no influence on subjective well-being for men in Japan, involvement in close relations is a crucial factor for the well-being of women. It should be noted that the relations involved here are mainly intimate ones. Subjective well-being is even higher for women with greater cultural capital. In Germany too, integration into strong relations has a positive influence on the subjective well-being of women, albeit not as strong as in Japan. Among German women, the level of subjective well-being is mainly related to economic and cultural capital and is strengthened by the integration into strong family relations. Fathers in Germany present a similar picture to those in Japan; here too, economic and cultural capital influence subjective well-being. To this, however, the weak ties are added, which also contribute to greater subjective well-being as demonstrated by the Granovetter capital. The results would initially suggest that in addition to all of the historical, cultural, and religious differences between Germany and Japan, similarities also exist in terms of the factors that influence social relations, which are based on various role requirements, values, and norms for men and women, arising from the two societies' industrial legacies. Hence, with regard to the influence of the types of capital on subjective well-being, the similarities between the sexes appear to be more dominant than those between the cultures. This explanation is only partly applicable, however, as social relations are understood in a different way in Japan than in Germany. Japan is not only an industrialized society but also a collective society, in which social relations are based on mutual dependencies and are normative; in other words the values associated with interpersonal relations are deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Individualism is viewed as the opposite of a harmonious relationship and is equated with egotism and social isolation. People withdraw from others to be independent. Hence, developing and maintaining relations results in a deterioration in subjective well-being according to Uchida et al. (2015) and does not contribute to an improvement as is the case in Germany. The only exception to this are the already explained *shin'yū* relationships between women. To

conclude, this study shows that social relations have a different meaning for the subjective well-being of Japanese and German parents. As a result, something that is accepted as universal can actually have very different cultural meanings and consequences in relation to subjective well-being.

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