Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Single Cycle Degree programme

in Languages, Economics and Institutions of Asia and North Africa

Final Thesis

Working Young Women's Happiness: A Comparison between Japan and Italy

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Academic Year
2020 / 2021

要旨

イタリアと日本とは違う国であり、世界の違う場所にあり、文化と考え方も違う。にもかかわらず、とても似ている側面もある。本論文ではイタリアと日本で働いている若い女性の幸せを比較している。現在、幸福のグローバルランキングでは、イタリアは日本とほとんど同じ立場を占めているが、イタリアはもっと幸せのレベルを表している。そして、特に男女格差などを考えると、日本人とイタリア人女性の労働条件も似ている。本研究は文学とインターネットで探した公式書類を参照した。

幸福の研究を分析すること、諸国の女性の標準を比べることは複雑である。理由として、数十年前まで哲学者、社会学者、心理学者などは幸福を研究していたが、最近幸福の勉強に公的機関も興味を持っている。第１３条の憲法で「幸福」という言葉を使っている日本は国政を行う上で人々の幸福が必要であると考えられている。近年諸国と国際組織も指標などを通じて具体的なデータを使う経済学者を加えて幸福の研究を始めた。

故に、今日の幸福の研究に学術的な視点の必要があると考慮し、本研究は理論的なアプローチから始める。社会学的な視点を中心とし、結論では最終的に更新された情報から日本とイタリアの比較をする。

第一章では、幸福の一般的な定義、その由来そしてその理論について書く。その上、イタリアと日本の幸福の文化的な様相を分析する。最後に衡平法、達成、友情、仕事に関する幸福に影響を与える要素において、女性の働いている労働条件を研究する。

第二章では、第一章で述べた三つの要素を通じて、日本の若い女性の労働条件を分析する。１９８６年の EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law)のように、合法的な改良があったが、まだ男性とは大きな差がある。ステレオタイプはまだあり、消えるのは難しく、そして男女格差もあるので、女性の条件は重

要である。というので、新たな契機や日本と違う世界を見つけるために女性は外国で勉強し始める。

第三章では、第一章で述べた三つの要素を通じて、イタリアの若い女性の労働条件を分析する。イタリアでも１９７１年の労働者の法律の３００法のように、合法的な改良を設け始めたが、まだ女性の労働条件のため改良が足りない。イタリアでも日本でもいる女性は妻や母としてだけ見られたくなく、経済的に自立したい。日本でもある男女格差のせいでまだ既成概念が残っている。女性にとって自分のキャリアを継続的に発展させるのはまだ難しい。

第四章では、今まで観察した方法を通じて日本とイタリアを比較する。次に、各国の伝統的な家族型の価値や考え方に基づく文化の中である男女格差などに集中する。更に、UN の World Happiness Reports (WHR) と OECD の Better Life Index (BLI)を通じて日本とイタリアの幸福を分析する。最後に近年のコロナウイルスのせいで、幸福・仕事・人生の質に集中してどんな変化があったのかを論じる。

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Introduction

Italy and Japan are two very different countries, in different parts of the world, with different cultures and different ways of thinking. Yet, they are very similar on some aspects. In this thesis a comparison is made between the happiness of young working women in Japan and Italy. Both countries result being not so far from each other in the global happiness rankings, with Italy being a bit closer to the top positions than Japan. Also, the working conditions of Japanese and Italian young women result in being similar, in particular when considering gender gap and unpaid care work. This research was conducted through reading literature as well as studying documents on institutional websites on the internet.

Studying happiness and comparing its level between women of two different countries is complicated, because until a few decades ago happiness was studied by philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, while in the last decades the study of happiness became a goal to aim also by institutional organizations. Japan is in some ways a precursor, because the Art. 13 of its Constitution expressly mentions happiness as a goal for who is governing. In the last years also other nations and international organizations started conducting research on happiness, involving also economists, that try to measure it through indexes and other parameters starting from concrete data.

Therefore, this research starts with a theorical approach, considering that studying happiness today requires a multidisciplinary perspective. It proceeds in the central part with a more sociological perspective, and it concludes with the analysis of reliable and updated international indexes that allow for comparisons.

In the first chapter there is a general definition of happiness, including its source as well as different theories. Furthermore, the cultural aspects of happiness are analyzed, considering the Japanese and the Italian one. At last, through three different factors – equity, achievement, camaraderie – that influence happiness at work, the working situation of young women was studied.

In the second chapter is analyzed the working situation of young Japanese women, through the three factors mentioned in the first chapter. There were legal improvements, like the EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law) from 1986, but there were still strong differences with men. Also stereotypes are still present and difficult to erase, making women's situation complicated with also a gender gap

difficult to close. Women started to go studying abroad to find new opportunities and discover a world different from their Japanese one.

In the third chapter the working situation of young Italian women is analyzed, through the previously mentioned three factors in the first chapter. Also in Italy legal improvements started to be made, as the Law 300 in the Statute of the Workers of 1971, and others, but they were and are not enough for the improvement of women's working condition. Women in Japan and Italy do not want to be seen only as wives or mothers, they want to be economically independent. Due to the gender gap, there are still differences between men and women, and, as in Japan, stereotypes are still present. For women it is still difficult to have a linear development of their careers.

The last chapter starts with a comparison of Japan and Italy through what observed in the previous chapters. It follows a focus on gender gap and the unpaid care work, very present in both cultures due to their strong traditional family model. Furthermore, through the World Happiness Reports (WHR) by UN, the Japanese and Italian happiness are analyzed, also utilizing the Better Life Index (BLI) by OECD. Lastly, a short excursus on the changes happened in recent years due to COVID-19 is made, concentrating on happiness, work, and quality of life.

Chapter 1: Happiness

This chapter analyzes happiness first in a general way, then focuses on cultures, mainly Japan and Italy because this thesis is a comparison of happiness between these two countries, and lastly on work, because in the next chapters the working situation of young women of the same two countries just mentioned will be analyzed.

1. General definitions of happiness

"Happiness is a state of mind" (Haybron 2013, 10) is a common set phrase we usually encounter when analyzing the concept of happiness from a psychological perspective. "Am I living a happy life right now?", "Do I feel happy in this moment?", "What is happiness?": these may be some of the questions we ask ourselves in certain moments of our lives. Questions to which may not be so easy to give an answer, considering that also the term of happiness does not have one singular definition. Its meaning may differ in many ways depending on the culture, so what we consider a positive event or experience can extremely vary in another part of the world.[1] In cultures that consider happiness as a personal achievement, individuals, as part of their search for happiness, are usually highly motivated to enrich their own being with positive characteristics. On the other side, in cultures where happiness is seen as a realization of social harmony, achieving personal happiness will not be strongly desired, because people understand that if they wish for it social harmony will not be realized, as also a form of happiness which is based more on a social level.[2] We can, for example, see a difference between Occidental cultures (including America and Europe) and the Asiatic culture. In the first one, happiness is one of the goals to reach and obtain through effort, it's a personal achievement. In the second one, happiness is understood as connectivity and interdependence, so being in relation with others is the core of my thoughts, motivation and action: we ourselves are important, but we create each other also through the interdependence with other people.[3] In any case, a possible definition of the term happiness is a general and positive emotional state, not necessarily

[1] Yukiko UCHIDA, Vinai NORASAKKUNKIT, Shinobu KITAYAMA, "Cultural Constructions of Happiness: Theory and Empirical Evidence", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004, pp. 224.
[2] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 229.
[3] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 225.

influenced from particular events.[4] Happiness is distinct into the hedonic and eudaemonic concepts, it is also defined as a condition of harmony and psychological balance.[5]

Haybron adds that

> the social dimensions of happiness also get little attention, beyond the importance of relationships for the personal pursuit of happiness. Yet happiness is not simply pursued at the individual level. How happy we are depends very strongly on the people around us and the kind of society we inhabit. And some of the most pressing questions about our pursuit of happiness concern the way we, collectively have chosen to seek fulfilment and how it affects our fellow human beings. Not to mention the natural world on which we depend. (Haybron, 2013)[6]

Aside of the individual level we also have the transient and the unit level. With unit level is meant a collective happiness, but there are still not enough studies about it. It looks like it mainly depends on the performance of the organization where the unit finds itself. Moreover, if the collectivity of the unit reaches too high numbers, it will become harder to manage and consequently the possibility to reach happiness gets lower.[7]

Also, the way of saying "money does not make happiness" is sustained by Haybron, because we do not necessarily need to be rich to be happy. It is understandable that money can help, but it is not the answer to happiness. If individuals get to feel some love, some beauty and not too much suffer, then the majority of them will consider themselves happy. The existence of even only one nation that is happy with very little, raises many doubts and questions about what happiness is in our contemporary world.[8] Haybron also adds that even if money is important, happiness

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[4] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 226.

[5] Antonella DELLE FAVE, Ingrid BRDAR, Teresa FREIRE, Dianne VELLA-BRODRICK, Marié P. WISSING, "The Eudaimonic and Hedonic Components of Happiness: Qualitative and Quantitative Findings", *Social Indicators Research*, Milano, Springer, 2011, pp. 185, URL link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-010-9632-5, (2021-06-30).

[6] Daniel HAYBRON, *Happiness. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 13.

[7] Cynthia D. FISHER, "Happiness at Work", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, pp. 403, URL onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00270.x?casa_token=dtu6Y3riVJ8AAAAA%3AJPTgwSYY4QRZYwOnC2jKUMBJoXPmWzrnpYkFRRUN_c2nsZVQ_fz3KVSUzZ3g0CDWsRw-fOlnd4aVGXs, (2021-06-28).

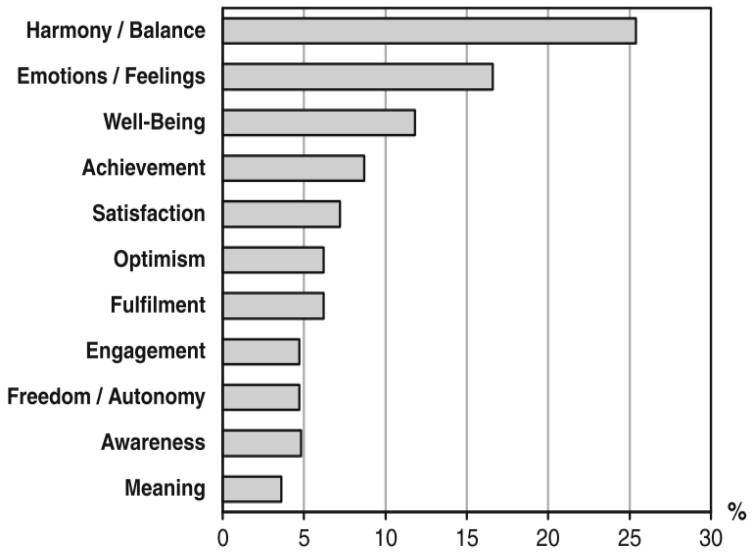
[8] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 7-9.

does not have a price. Everything depends on the relation we see between money and happiness. The author affirms, that we get to decide how important money is for us, and, consequently, how much it can influence us. Even if money has a big impact in our lives, after a certain limit this relation gets weaker.[9] Haybron also makes an example to understand the influence money can have in our lives. If you would live in a poor country and to receive your mails you need to go to the post office by yourself, you would meet people and you would interact with them. Thanks to this, your relations would become better and in general there would be more interaction. This means that not only money, but also the context is very important.[10]

The definition of happiness is divided in two different ways by Fisher:

> the largest divide is between hedonic views of happiness as pleasant feelings and favorable judgments vs eudaimonic views of happiness involving doing what is virtuous, morally right, true to one's self, meaningful, and/or growth producing. (Fisher, 2010)[11]

Thus, there is a distinction between hedonic from eudaemonic happiness. The hedonic one focuses more on subjective well-being, while the eudaimonic one focuses on psychological well-being. The authors also affirm that these two categories of happiness have overlapping constructs.[12]



Graph 1: DELLE FAVE et al., "The Eudaimonic…", cit., pp. 194.

[9] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp73.
[10] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 75.
[11] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 385.
[12] Luca IANI, Marco LAURIOLA, Kristin LAYOUS, Saulo SIRIGATTI, "Happiness in Italy: Translation, Factorial Structure and Norming of the Subjective Happiness Scale in a Large Community Sample", *Social Indicators Research*, Roma, Springer, 2013, pp. 954.

The definition of happiness can also be observed from two different points: the content (the characterization of happiness and psychological structure) and the context (life domains connected to happiness).[13] The study of Delle Fave et al., conducted in 7 nations (Australia, Germany, Croatia, Italy, South Africa, Spain and Portugal) with a maximum of 666 participants, associates happiness first to family and immediately after to relationships, while at the last place we find leisure/free time, a very rational aspect. On the other side, between the psychological factors associated to happiness we find at the first-place harmony/balance followed then by emotions/feelings, while at the last place we find meaning, as we can see in graph 1.[14]

The concept of harmony has been prominently developed in the Greek tradition. Examples can be the philosophy of number of Pythagoras or the concept of *ataraxia* (freedom from anxiety or worries) of Epicurus. Despite many different interpretations across history, in particular the idea proposed by Epicurus of happiness does not rely in hedonic terms upon pleasure. It rather refers to the ability of a person to maintain serenity and balance in both challenging and enjoyable times.[15]

In a folk perspective, we often ask ourselves what makes a person happy and why some people are happier than others. The usual answer can be that something around them makes them happy, something they have in their life, or maybe someone has a disposition to be happier than others, or the situation itself and the interaction with people make happier, or happiness gets impacts thanks to a voluntary behavior.[16] Also, the more a relation with someone is of good quality, the more it makes the person happy.[17] Fisher also adds

> set point theories suggest that individuals are predisposed to a certain level of happiness, and usually return to that set point relatively quickly following temporary disturbances due to favorable or unfavorable external events. (Fisher, 2010)[18]

Not only being happy, through the Japanese concept of *ikigai*, what is important for a human being is living his own life giving it a value, finding a meaning in it.[19] Also,

[13] DELLE FAVE et al., "The Eudaimonic…", cit., pp. 198.
[14] DELLE FAVE et al., "The Eudaimonic…", cit., pp. 193-194.
[15] DELLE FAVE et al., "The Eudaimonic…", cit., pp. 199.
[16] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 391.
[17] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 396.
[18] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 392.

it is actually wrong to say that we have the right for happiness, because happiness is not owned by anyone.[20] Having the right on something means that ownership of it is also included, but in the case of happiness is different, because is not something one only person can own. As L.W. Sumner's theory affirms, to be authentically happy, our own happiness needs to have its fundaments in our own life and needs to reflect our real selves.[21] Haybron reiterates:

> Just hanging out with friends can be highly meaningful and fulfilling. Doing things for them, even more so. Since the great majority of people have social lives, this suggests that one need not pursue great accomplishment to lead a perfectly meaningful, fulfilling life. It may be that few people truly fit the stereotype of the mindless consumer leading an empty, meaningless life. (Haybron, 2013)[22]

1.1 Theories of Happiness

Haybron, in his book *Happiness. A Very Short Introduction*, introduces three different theories which analyze happiness: (a) Emotional State Theory, where happiness is studied as a positive and emotional condition, (b) Hedonism, where pleasure is a synonym of happiness, (c) Life Satisfaction Theory, where we can already hypothesize that happiness is seen as being satisfied with your life. The first two theories understand happiness as a feeling, while the latter as a judgment.[23]

> Emotional state theories of happiness make intuitive sense and explain the importance we attach being happy. […] Hedonistic theories also vindicate the seeming importance of happiness, but don't seem to fit the ordinary notion of happiness very well. Life satisfaction theories have some intuitive plausibility, but can't seem to make sense of the value we place on happiness. (Haybron, 2013)[24]

1.1.1 Emotional State Theory

In this theory happiness is considered a positive and emotional condition. To analyze it, Haybron divides happiness into three dimensions: attunement, where you are

[19] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 97.
[20] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 94.
[21] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 87.
[22] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 106.
[23] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 11.
[24] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 41.

feeling at home and you lower your defenses; engagement, where you put or put not effort in doing your activities; endorsement, that is an emotional state that points out the positivity present in your life.

In the term attunement we find feelings such as peace of mind, confidence or expansiveness. To make a physical example, we would identify this dimension as a relaxed posture. We can also think about tranquility, the starting point of happiness. There may be the possibility to be happy without tranquility, but then it would become harder to go on without. In this case tranquility can be understood as "settledness", that is a kind of internal stability and confidence. There are three basic aspects of attunement, which are internal calm (so what we understand with tranquility), confidence and spiritual or mental expansiveness. This means that attunement, from an emotional point of view, is the real core of happiness.

Vitality and flow are the conditions for the dimension of engagement. We can imagine it as a carefree walk. This means we are being part of our own life, we are being active in it, even if we are making big efforts to reach our goal. Vitality can be found on the axis exuberance-depression. Flow identifies the moment in which, when we are completely involved and concentrated in the activity we are doing, we lose all our senses of self-awareness. Its opposite is boredom. It can help us to escape from the routine that, maybe, we do not need to follow anymore, where a change is needed.

In the dimension of endorsement, feeling happy and other emotions can be found. A very natural physical externalization can be our smile. Thinking in a general way, the condition of "feeling happy" gathers in itself a multitude of emotions, but it is important to not mistake it with a peak of joy due to exultation, when, for example, our favorite soccer team scores a goal.[25]

Out of these three dimensions, it looks like happiness gathers in itself not only emotions and moods, that we have experienced throughout our life, but also nonconscious aspects of the emotional conditions we have. The temper of a person, so the part that reacts to external stimulus and differs between individuals, tends to be preexistent and fix, it is very different from the mood propensity, that changes depending on the events and circumstances we encounter during our existence. This

[25] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 19-23.

mood propensity, together with our mood and emotions, form our emotional condition.[26]

1.1.2 Hedonism

Delle Fave et al. (2011) affirm that hedonism is a search of positive emotions and of life satisfaction. They also affirm that there are three ways to achieve happiness when subscribing to hedonism: meaning, pleasure and engagement. If you are able to bring these elements to their maximum you will have reached also the highest level for a complete life. From their hedonic point of view happiness is compared to life satisfaction. Moreover, it is seen in other ways: an experience of accomplishment and fulfillment, where cognitive evaluation is a strong characteristic; a transient emotion, that we understand as joy; a long-term of meaning-making, with identity development thanks to the actualization of potentials and the pursuit of what we consider relevant goals. The way of thinking happiness has changed through time, because in old times it was believed that the achievement of happiness was impossible.[27]

In one of his articles, Veenhoven gives his definition of hedonism: "a way of life in which pleasure plays an important role". He also adds

> on one hand hedonism is associated with good taste and the art of living well, on the other hand with addiction, superficiality, irresponsible behavior and short-sighted egoism. (Veenhoven, 2003)[28]

As we understand from Veenhoven words, hedonism has a very close relation with pleasure, this means it can be strongly influenced from it. As we all personally know and as we can deduce from what mentioned in the article, there are different types of pleasure, for example the one we get through the mind, the body or through a personal creation. On top of it, hedonism can be paradoxical, because, even if it is compared as the "enjoyment of life", it contributes to happiness in a short term and not long. Due to the fact that we want to reach happiness we will never feel completely satisfied and this will let us unsatisfied. Moreover, this situation can bring us to

[26] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 26-28.
[27] DELLE FAVE et al., "The Eudaimonic…", cit., pp. 186-187.
[28] Ruut VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and Happiness", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, pp. 437, URL link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023/B:JOHS.0000005719.56211.fd.pdf, (2020-06-09).

dependence, losing control on reality, or boredom or to the slow deterioration of social relations, meaning that isolation will be the result.[29]

Considering that hedonism is a positive balance between pleasant and unpleasant experiences[30], people sustaining hedonism affirm that we should not avoid or leave by the side pleasure, because it is an important part of our nature. Besides, it is scientifically proved that pleasure does not only reduce stress, but it also keeps a person healthy.[31] There are two different ways in which hedonism manifests itself: one is a general mind-set, while the other one is specific behaviors. The manifestation starts in values, more specifically, in the moral appreciation of our enjoyment. We also have the reflection of hedonism in personality, in particular in the trait that we call "sensational seeking", which is a tendency to pursue intense and varied experiences.[32]

Making practical examples, stimulants as drugs, alcohol and tobacco may be used, but they do not necessarily have a correlation with what we understand as happiness. On the contrary, a person who drinks moderately is more likely to be happy than a heavy drinker.[33] In Europe, tobacco is usually associated with unhappiness, so the factor of smoking together with the one of not being happy may help to reach happiness, but this is not a rule and it does not happen directly because of them.[34] Usually, if you first do not feel happy a possible way is to start the use of drugs, so the correlation with happiness is negative.[35] Lastly, on an individual level, if the sexual life is stable, people tend to be happier than the one who are inactive.[36]

1.1.3 Life Satisfaction Theory

This theory, as mentioned before, is more based on judgment. Being satisfied with our life "is to regard it as going well enough by your standards. […] is a global evaluation of your life. […] it takes you to be the authority about your life, and ties your happiness to your view of what matters for you" (Haybron 2013, 35-36). We do not necessarily need to be emotionally happy, most of the time we are satisfied about the

[29] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 439.
[30] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 28.
[31] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 440.
[32] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 443-444.
[33] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 446.
[34] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 448.
[35] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 450.
[36] VEENHOVEN, "Hedonism and…", cit., pp. 452.

life we are living even if we are not feeling happy at our most, because it is a step-by-step to reach out the goal we are aiming for.[37]

> When many bad conditions or many good conditions are aggregated together, they have a pronounced cumulative effect on life evaluations. It can be concluded that life satisfaction relates in strong and predictable ways to life circumstances at the societal level. It also can provide weights for how various conditions affect people. (Diener, 2012)[38]

From these words we can understand that small events concentrated in one only moment do not have a strong influence in our life, differently happens if many similar positive, or negative, situations accumulate in the same period. In this case the judgment we have on our life will be highly influenced by them. It is therefore important to consider our life events in the whole. Most of the life satisfaction is obtainable if we have long-term factors during our existence, some of which keep being stable, while others slowly change with time. Other factors depend on specific occasions. If we perceive in our lives that important areas became different, then there is a bigger change of positive life satisfaction. With specific life events, as for example widowhood and childbirth, life satisfaction differs significantly from those people who did not experience such events. Also changing income can influence, in some cases, life evaluation.[39]

> Between the chronic very long-term effects that persist over many years (such as income levels and personality) and the short-term situational effects such as priming, life satisfaction can be influenced by medium-term factors that may continue for months or a few years. (Diener, 2012)[40]

This means we have a big variety of factors that can influence our life satisfaction, every event and action we encounter, even if very small, gives its contribution to our life evaluation.

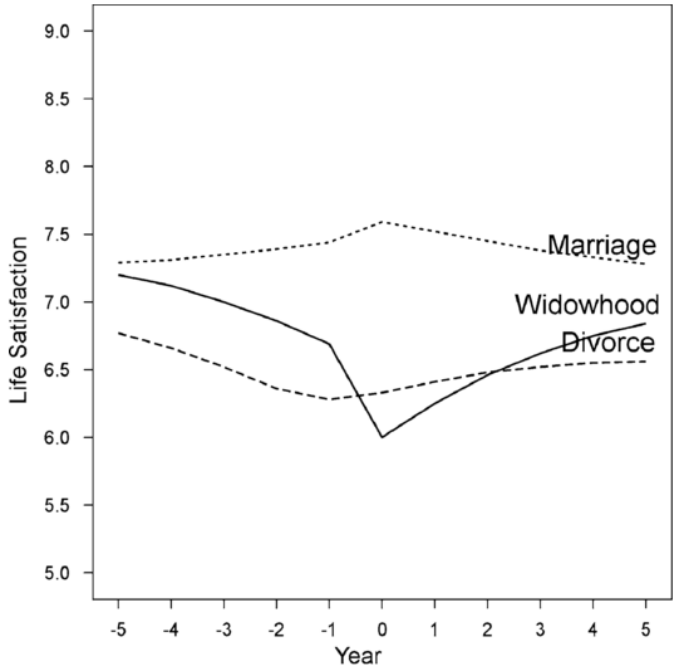
> Life satisfaction scores are influenced both by personal factors in people's lives such as their marriage and work, as well as by community and societal circumstances. Thus, life

[37] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 36.
[38] Ed DIENER, Ronald INGLEHART, Louis TAY, "Theory and Validity of Life Satisfaction Scales", *Soc Indic Res*, USA, Springer, 2012, pp. 502, URL link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11205-012-0076-y.pdf, (2020-06-09).
[39] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 504-505.
[40] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 509.

satisfaction can provide an added window on what is going well or badly in a society, as experienced by the citizens themselves. (Diener, 2012)[41]

It is understandable, that due to the fact that we have to interact with the outside world, every exchange with our personal and external world is an experience that influences our way of thinking on our life.

Considering specific life events, Diener et al. (2012, 506) show us in the graph 2 on the vertical axis three different possible events with the life satisfaction reported in numbers from 5 till 9 and on the horizontal axis the years, 0 means when the event took place, on the left the years previously and on the right the years after the particular moment.



Graph 2: DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 506.

As we can understand from graph 2, the years preceding a positive event as marriage get a higher life satisfaction until the very day, then it goes back to the normal evaluation. On contrast, negative events as widowhood or divorce are preceded from a worst and worst life satisfaction, because in many cases you know and understand that soon there will be a sad event in your life. After these negative periods we strive to get back to normality and that is the reason why the life satisfaction gets almost back to normality.

[41] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 521.

When people are finding themselves at a very low level of life and industrial development of their nation, sheer survival becomes the main goal in their lives and happiness is reached when they obtain basic necessities to live. When they start to get higher levels of physical and economic security, they start to give more importance to the fact of having free choice in how they can live their lives. For minority communities this manifests itself from discrimination on emancipation, for women in increasing emphasis in equality between genders and for politicians on democratization.[42] We also need to consider that all the choices made associated to life satisfaction are corresponding to the culture in which they are living. So, when filling up a survey to the question "Are you satisfied with your life?" there were other type of questions, for example about the political world, this can influence our answer on the next questions.[43] Keeping the same idea, if before filling up this kind of survey there was a positive episode that made us feel better, we tend to answer with a higher satisfaction. This means that a little part of our mood can influence our opinion in that moment.[44]

1.2 Sources of Happiness

Where does happiness come from? When people talk about their happiness, they might overstate it and there are two reasons to explain it. The first one is "positivity biases", these influence our way of thinking: we tend to be overly positive when reflecting about ourselves and our future. This phenomenon is known as positive illusions. The second reason is that we do not have a clear idea of what being happy means. So, we can affirm to be happy without knowing it can be conceptualized in many different ways.[45] What we understand as happiness is usually decided by the society we live in.

There are some elements that many consider as important sources of happiness for any kind of person during the flow of their lives. Humans can adapt well to the changes that occur in his life and they are also resilient, which means that he can react to and overcome various difficulties. According to Haybron, between the principal sources of happiness, we find security, outlook, autonomy and relationships.

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[42] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 512.
[43] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 511.
[44] DIENER, INGLEHART, TAY, "Theory and Validity…", cit., pp. 517.
[45] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 50.

The first source, security, is logical, because nobody would feel happy if they feel in danger or under threat. Activities that involve physical danger bring the individual to concentrate on that moment, clearing the mind from emotions like worry, which may occur when he finds himself in an opposite situation, the one of complete security. To feel happy, we only need to feel secure, it does not mean the security we feel is real. There are different typologies of security. The first one is the security expressed by Epicurus, the Greek philosopher. He talked about the "material security" and affirmed that the more material things you possess the more your insecurities and vulnerabilities grow. This means that luxury is not always the answer to feeling happy.[46] The second typology is "social security", through which you feel secure being in a relation or in a community. The next one is "project security". Making a project means that you make plans for the future and set goals, in this case, you feel secure the probabilities of success of your project will be high. We identify in this plan and being unsuccessful would make us feel unsuccessful consequently feeling also unhappy. The last typology is "time security". This depends on how we manage and organize our time. If we have plenty of time to do an activity, I feel secure of myself, if, on the contrary, the lack of time would cause stress and the level of happiness would get lower. In many occasions, if something is taken to the extreme it will not be good anymore, the same approach can be applied to security. If a person feels too secure, he or she will become less proactive in doing things, risking to stop his own personal development. So, risk needs to be approached rationally, this is one of the ways to promote happiness.

The second source mentioned earlier is outlook. It does not depend on our behavior, and it is not a choice. Haybron made the example of saying to a person suffering from cancer that it is his fault to be dying, because people who behave well stay healthy. This means that, thinking that you can chose to be happy is a wrong affirmation. Happiness is closer to an ability of a person, that you build with your own efforts through time. "Acceptance and positivity" are two approaches when talking about "outlook" and "happiness". Positivity does not need explanation. Acceptance means to not react too badly when plans do not go the way you predicted. It is about accepting things as they are without trying to change everything and "make it fit", so keeping your expectation modest. "Caring for others" is another type of outlook and

[46] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 52-55.

when doing so we tend to be happier. Some examples of "caring for others" can be to spend money for other people and a strong sense of moral integrity. A last type for outlook is "intrinsic motivation", where you are doing something, as a job or an activity, without a second aim, as on the contrary money and career have. You feel your job as a vocation, as something made for yourself.[47]

The third source is autonomy. Humans always have this innate sense to always aim at autonomy, meant as auto-determination.[48] For Mark Piper, autonomy

> refers to a property of self-government or self-determination such that an autonomous person is a person who is in some sense effective in governing herself according to a self-conception that captures her authentic or true self, and that autonomous actions refer to individual cases of such self-governing behavior. (Piper, 2016)[49]

The last source, relationships, is one of the things that people require for feeling happy: family, friends, a community. One of the best signals in a community or in a friendship is trust, it brings to a sense of security, we feel loved, accepted and protected.[50]

2. Cultural aspects of happiness

2.1 Happiness in Japan

Uchida (2004) maintains that Japanese people have a strong motivation to seek more intersubjective and communal forms of happiness, instead of pursuing a happiness that is only personal.[51] He also sustains personal happiness often damages social relations, that is why the realization of social harmony creates happiness.[52]

> Individuals in East Asian cultural contexts are highly motivated to adjust and fit themselves to the pertinent social relations. Commitments to social roles, social

[47] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 57-63.
[48] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 65.
[49] Mark PIPER, "Achieving Autonomy", *Social Theory and Practice*, 42, 4, 2016, pp. 768.
[50] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 68-69.
[51] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 230.
[52] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 226.

> obligations, and readiness to respond to social expectations are all manifestations of this socially oriented motivation for realizing an interdependent self. (Uchida, 2004)[53]

Japanese people's way of thinking, as the one of many other nations, is said to hugely depend on family and community. On one hand, these have a great influence on decisions, but on the other hand there is big autonomy in other parts of life, as, for example, daily routines.[54]

One factor that has a great influence on happiness is marriage. The life of one person is hugely influenced by the existence of the partner and the cohabitation with her.

According to Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009), in the traditional Japanese gender roles, the man had a full-time job, while the woman was, and is still seen as, a housewife. It would have more a practical sense, instead of a romantic one, giving more emphasis to the economic and social status. Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009) state that marriage also provides a higher emotional support to Japanese men than to Japanese women, because they would find in their partner someone that cares about their house and then children while they are working. In the first years of the 1900, the most of women's education meant preparation to marriage and family, these two elements were considered for Japanese women as a "life employment" (in Japanese, *eikyū shushoku*) and a complete dedication was expected from them. This kind of gender separation started in the 1920s. Now, more and more studies are concentrating on the "delayed marriage" and the "non-marriage" phenomenon. The average marriage age has increased from 24 in the 1970 to 27 in the 2000, for both men and women.[55] As of 2018, the mean age rose to 31.1 years for men and 29.4 years for women.[56] Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009) say that women are trying to postpone their marriage so as to bear later the responsibility to be a Japanese wife and mother. More and more single women are staying at home with their parents. They are being called, as a polemic interpretation of their lifestyle, "parasite singles", because they are portrayed to have a nice lifestyle at low cost, but this does not mean it is true. Also, divorce is seen differently from many women now, as a solution to escape from a situation where they are not happy with their

[53] UCHIDA et al., "Cultural Constructions…", cit., pp. 226.
[54] HAYBRON, *Happiness…*, cit., pp. 67.
[55] Gayle KAUFMAN, Hiromi TANIGUCHI, "Gender and Marital Happiness in Japan", *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, Louisville, International Journals, 2009, pp. 69-71.
[56] Martin PIOTROWSKI; Erik BOND; Ann M. BEUTEL, "Marriage counterfactuals in Japan: Variation by gender, marital status, and time", *Demographic Research*, 43, 2020, pp. 1086.

partner. Moreover, more and more couples do not want to live with their parents anymore, and they also can not because of urbanisation.[57] Before the 1920s, the usual Japanese family structure was the so-called "three generation household", where the children kept living with their parents even after marriage and kids. This structure started to decline, reaching 51.6% in the 1960 and 39.9% in the 1980.[58] From the graphs in the E-Stat official website, we can understand that from 1995 to 2015, the latest available data, nuclear families including other relatives reduced its number from approximately 7 million to less than 5 million. In the meantime, the number of nuclear families and people living alone increased.[59] Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009) maintain that, in the Japanese marriage, the husband seems to be happier, they work and bring money home, while the wife keeps the house clean and keeps account.[60] The "modern family" model originated in the middle class was supported and accepted. It looked like the ideal of living in a comfortable way and Japanese people wished to live always in the same manner.[61] Kimoto (1997) also adds

> the perfection of the material basis of family life was that the companies had made a "promise of happiness". [...] the workers as husbands/fathers did not think that their absence from home would cast a shadow on their families. (Kimoto, 1997)[62]

Even if companies were promising happiness, reality shows husbands working overtime and having less time to spend with their families. We understand that the Japanese society is involved in the life of its inhabitants, also the one regarding their family. The structure is so strong that it reaches the feelings of its people. Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009) affirm that if the wife would have a part-time job, this would influence negatively the happiness of the husband, because the low wage of their wife would provide little or no fringe benefits.[63] An important element for the happiness of the couple seems to be housework. If the husband helps more at home, wives result to

[57] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 73-74.
[58] Linda G. MARTIN, Suzanne CULTER, *Mortality Decline and Japanese Family Structure*, Population Council, 1983, pp. 633-636.
[59] *General number of households*, "Dashboard E-Stat", URL https://dashboard.e-stat.go.jp/graph?screenCode=00400 (13-10-2021).
[60] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 77.
[61] Kimiko KIMOTO, "Company man makes family happy: gender analysis of the Japanese family", *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, 29, 1, 1997, pp. 9.
[62] KIMOTO, "Company man makes family happy…", cit., pp. 13.
[63] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 81.

be happier.[64] Another element that has a strong positive effect on the happiness of the marriage of both genders is the health of the partner. If one feels healthy is even happy, but if also the partner is healthy, both will feel way happier. If there is an egalitarian behavior at home, usually Japanese women feel less happy because they expect more help at home from their husbands, but because men do little, or even nothing, at home, women wanting the opposite feel unhappier in their marriage. In the study of Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009), a good number of the respondents live with someone of a different generation: around 15% with babies, 28% to 29% with children that can go to school, and around 37% with adult children. Also, 15% of women live with their parents' in-law, on the other side 18% of men with their own parents.[65] During childcare, the most difficult part with a negative influence on happiness is when the child has to go to school, this meant they were very dependent from the parents, or from when they will be older, which is the time they already learned to respect their parents. Moreover, grandchildren living at home bring happiness, a sense of youth and a general fun.[66]

In general, competency, autonomy, and relationality are three human psychological needs, which help integration and growth, bring to a civil society, that can produce well-being and happiness. Steinhoff (2015) discovered that higher happiness' levels can be connected to a stable couple relationship and volunteering's activities, while average happy people had an education, high income and political engagement.[67] Manifestations are not only an event to make people listen to your voice, but everything before it, all the preparations unite people, make them feel useful and consequently happy. It is a way to spend time with friends and other people sharing the same ideas.[68]

When talking about happiness, also the opposite may come to your mind. Unhappiness is closely associated to interpersonal mistrust in Japan, also other elements are connected: being divorced or single, being between 50 and 59 years old, being a widow or separated, having a low income, having an average education, having a bad

[64] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 79.
[65] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 77.
[66] KAUFMAN, TANIGUCHI, "Gender and…", cit., pp. 81-82.
[67] Patricia G. STEINHOFF, "Finding Happiness in Japan's Invisible Civil Society", *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Honolulu, Springer, 2015, pp. 101.
[68] STEINHOFF, "Finding Happiness…", cit., pp. 117.

health.[69] A typical unhappy Japanese person is someone with all these last-mentioned elements.[70] Tokuda and Inoguchi (2008) affirm that

> the significant association between interpersonal mistrust and unhappiness may explain why the Japanese are among the unhappiest people in industrialized countries despite having the highest life expectancy and the greatest healthy longevity in the world. (Tokuda, Inoguchi, 2008)[71]

There are multiple mechanisms that can bring to unhappiness due to interpersonal mistrust. When ties to family, friends and society are weaker, as also having a low perception of social support, interpersonal mistrust levels get higher. Due to this decrease of networks and social ties, also the feelings of happiness of the individual decreases.[72] From the research of Stack and Eshleman (1998), on a scale from 0 to 1, with 1 as the highest level of mistrust, we understand that 72% of the participants do not completely trust people around themselves. Even if only 7.6% of the participants rated his own happiness as unhappy, between the industrialized countries Japan remains one with the lowest levels of happiness, with an OLS (Ordinary Least Square - it is a method for estimating the unknown parameters in a linear regression model) coefficient of 0.051.[73]

2.2 Happiness in Italy

In the XVIII century the Italian illuminists started to elaborate their idea of happiness, which was defined as one of the fundamental destinations of humanity.[74] Happiness and culture were considered together, and their cooperation was possible through the work of the governments, the collective action, and engaged the whole society.[75] In the second half of the century the term of happiness transformed into a new conception of social organization. Bevilacqua (2017) affirms that in 1793 happiness

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[69] Yasuharu TOKUDA, Takashi INOGUCHI, "Interpersonal Mistrust and Unhappiness among Japanese People", *Social Indicators Research*, Tokyo, Springer, 2008, pp. 349.
[70] TOKUDA, INOGUCHI, "Interpersonal Mistrust…", cit., pp. 358.
[71] TOKUDA, INOGUCHI, "Interpersonal Mistrust…", cit., pp. 356.
[72] TOKUDA, INOGUCHI, "Interpersonal Mistrust…", cit., pp. 358.
[73] Steven STACK, J. Ross ESHLEMAN, "Marital Status and Happiness: A 17-Nation Study", *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 60, 2, 1998, pp. 532.
[74] Massimiliano MORI, Paola RUMORE, "Kant e l'Illuminismo", Università di Torino, Carocci, 2020, pp. 341.
[75] Piero BEVILACQUA, *Felicità d'Italia. Paesaggio, arte, musica, cibo*, Bari, Editori Laterza, 2017, pp. 6.

became a human right, but as observed before, happiness does not belong to anyone. Previously happiness was thought to be reachable only *post mortem*, after death.[76]

In the XIX century the centrality of the individuum as well as his pursuit of happiness became very important. Happiness was seen as a result of being satisfied with immaterial needs, as the emotional, intellectual or spiritual one.[77]

Now, as already mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are 5 determinant factors influencing happiness, introduced by the US General Social Survey, where marriage is the most important. In Occident the classic one has clearly defined gender roles in the couple. At least one of them will have a stable economic income that will guarantee for the family, and in case of a division of roles, this part was dominantly embodied by the male partner. Thus, while the man will provide for a financial support, the woman will take care of the house and the children. Who is able to guarantee economic stability will be seen by the woman as a possible future husband.[78] Between the 1995 and 2000 the situation started to change: there was an increase by 10.9% in female employment. Dual income started to become reality in Italian families.[79] A woman with a high propension to marriage life tended to stay without a job, to leave it before marriage or to enter in particular segments of the labor market. For a man, on the other side, it will be very important to reach as soon as possible professionals successes if he has a strong desire to marry. Thus, in theory a woman that wants to have a career will first find a job and only later marry, that will mean pregnancy and everything that concerns motherhood.[80] Impacciatore (2004) maintains that there is a strong tendency to create a familiar union only after the studies, which are the mandatory school studies as well as the university one, for both man and woman, most of all for the latter. In Italy, individuals with a high level of education marry less and later, thus a high education level deletes the time of the first marriage. Also, having a job and being economically independent speeds up the formation of a union for men, while for women it seems like

[76] BEVILACQUA, *Felicità d'Italia…*, cit., pp. 8-9.
[77] Giuliana NUVOLI, "Il diritto alla felicità: scrittrici 'socialiste' fra Ottocento e Novecento", *Forum Italicum*, 2020, pp. 227.
[78] Roberto IMPACCIATORE, "Risorse individuali e scelte di primo matrimonio in Italia", in A. Angeli, L. Pasquini and R. Rettaroli (by), *Nuovi comportamenti familiari e nuovi modelli*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2004, pp. 2.
[79] Elisabetta SANTARELLI, "Economic resources and the first child in Italy: A focus on income and job stability", *Demographic Research*, 25, 2011, pp. 312.
[80] IMPACCIATORE, "Risorse individuali…", cit., pp. 17-20.

to be the opposite.[81] When talking about familiar behaviors in Italy the delay in the process of becoming an adult is very peculiar. The duration of the studies has progressively increased and young people, most of all men, stay at home with their parents way longer than their peers in the rest of Europe, because they take their time in the process of becoming an adult. Staying long at the house of their parents influences the age in which they will get first married, in the period from the 1980 to the 1998 moved from 27,1 to 30 years for men and from 23,9 to 27,1 years for women. In general, Italy keeps being characterized by traditional values, with a strong propension to marriage and a persistent division of gender roles.[82] In more recent years, 2016, the average age of the first marriage rose to 35 years for men and to 32 for women.

A study investigated the relationship between happiness and self-reported health in a sample representative of the province of Trento, Italy, in 2011 with 817 participants. This territory was chosen because contained inequalities (as also health disparities) characterize it, as well as exceptional levels of social capital (which indicators are the frequency of meeting up with relatives and/or friends), economic well-being and entrepreneurial diversity.[83]

> Happiness is found to be the best predictor of health in all of the stages of the analysis. The possible effect of happiness on health may work through two main channels of transmission. First, happiness and positive attitudes towards life prevent the autonomic nervous system from activating physiological reactions that could have cumulative detrimental effects on health. Second, happy people may be more inclined to behave healthily (e.g. engaging in sports and watching their weight) and to avoid unhealthy behaviours such as smoking, drinking and overeating. (Sabatini, 2014)[84]

When someone feels happy, there is a higher possibility that he or she will report a higher good health, the rise is of a 23.5%. Also, the satisfaction in one's own economic condition has a 14% probability to report good health.[85] In general life-satisfaction is positively and significantly linked with single domains of satisfaction with one's job, financial and economic conditions, friendships, family, leisure and

[81] IMPACCIATORE, "Risorse individuali…", cit., pp. 4.
[82] IMPACCIATORE, "Risorse individuali…", cit., pp. 7.
[83] Fabio SABATINI, "The relationship between happiness and health: evidence from Italy", *Social Science & Medicine*, Roma, Euricse, 2014, pp. 15.
[84] *Ibidem*.
[85] SABATINI, "The relationship between…", cit., pp. 186.

environment.[86] Thanks to happiness, there is also a positive and significant correlation between satisfaction with relationships with friends and social trust, as well as a negative correlation with age, the study of Sabatini (2014) mentioned.[87] Happiness and quality of friendships are strongly associated, best friendship quality has to be considered an important predictor of happiness.[88]

3. Happiness at Work

On a workplace, Fisher (2010) distinguishes three different levels of happiness: transient level (Why do we have moments where we feel emotionally better and other less?), person level (Why some people at work are feeling happier than others?), unit level (What are the effects of team mood on performance and individual mood?). Happiness and satisfaction at work are usually measured every 2, 3 or 5 years, because it is believed they do not change in a short-term period. Thus, there is a constant that creates a stable happiness on the workplace throughout time. Also, there is a negative or positive disposition while working. Additionally, how long can we stay happy when we are feeling happy? In this case, Fisher (2010) talks about short period, because emotions are defined as a short-term reaction to our own personal well-being related events.[89]

> Many work-related happiness constructs focus largely on the hedonic experiences of pleasure and liking, and/or positive beliefs about an object (e.g. job satisfaction, affective commitment, the experience of positive emotions while working). […] Further, happiness constructs and measures vary as whether they focus mainly on 'cold cognitions' such as beliefs and evaluative judgments or on 'hot' affective phenomena such as moods and emotions. […] Locke described job satisfaction largely as affect: 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences. (Fisher, 2010)[90]

For happy feelings Fisher (2010, 391) distinguishes three targets: «(1) the work itself, (2) the job including contextual features, and (3) the organization as a whole». To understand an element as a whole, it is always important to first divide it into pieces and

[86] SABATINI, "The relationship between…", cit., pp. 183.
[87] SABATINI, "The relationship between…", cit., pp. 190.
[88] SABATINI, "The relationship between…", cit., pp. 182.
[89] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 386-387.
[90] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 388.

analyze them one by one. In the case of happiness at work, the job itself can greatly influence our happiness. If it is the job of our dreams, it means we always wanted to do it and we feel at ease while doing it. This creates a great atmosphere for us and consequently our level of happiness can get very high. Out of the job, also the context is important. We need to consider the colleagues we are working with, where the job is situated, and many other contextual features, as Fisher (2010) mentioned. Lastly, the entire organization we are working for can make big changes and in any case influence our happiness and satisfaction in our job.

Fisher (2010) affirms that happiness seems to be a function of environmental circumstances and events, stable tendencies in an individuum, and the fit between two, adding the chance of a limited modification through intentionally and chosen varied volitional acts. We can use these categories to describe antecedents of happiness in different organizations. The Great Place to Work Institute concludes that an employee is happy when he can trust the people he is working for, when he has pride in what he is doing, and he enjoys the people he is working with. Trust in the employers, built on respect, fairness and credibility, is seen as a cornerstone. Also, if you want to produce an enthusiastic and happy workforce, three factors are critical:

- Equity (dignified and respectful treatment, security, fairness);
- Achievement (job challenge, pride in the company, feedback, empowerment);
- Camaraderie with teammates.[91]

These three factors will be the red line of this thesis throughout the chapters and are concentrated on the working environment, but in general, people high on core self-evaluations, as self-esteem or emotional stability, and on dispositional positive affectivity tend to be happier in their job as well as in other places.[92] A person that is usually happy can make positive consequences happen and the organization as well as the colleagues can enjoy them.[93]

> The effects of objective work environments, job design, personality, and psychological climate on more distal outcomes such as performance, organizational citizenship behavior,

[91] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 394.
[92] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 397.
[93] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 401.

> and turnover are often mediated through happiness-related constructs such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, and mood at work. (Fisher, 2010)[94]

With these words it is clear that happiness at work is important not only for the employees, but also for the organizations themselves, because it becomes a great influence in the whole working place. Also, in the workplace, both chronic conditions in the organization, job and task, and short-lived events influence happiness. Stable attributes of an individuum, such as personality, and also the right balance between the individual's expectations, preferences and needs, and what the organization/job provides influence happiness.[95]

4. Conclusion

In this chapter at first was given a general definition of happiness, including also different theories and the source of it. Secondly, cultural aspects of happiness in Japan and Italy were analyzed. Lastly, happiness at work has been studied, finding three different factors that influence it: equity, achievement and camaraderie. These three elements will be used as a guideline in the following chapters.

5. Surveys

There are various official surveys that can us help to also measure happiness, some of them are the following:

World Database of Happiness (WDH). "All the research findings on happiness in the sense of life-satisfaction are gathered. They want to know what makes people happy, what kind of organizations and societies make humans feel happiest. At present, they have 15363 publications in bibliography, 22719 distribunational findings (how happy people are) and 21698 correlational findings (what goes together with happiness)." URL https://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/

Gallup. "It is a global analytics and advice firm that helps leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. They study the will of customers, employees, citizens and students, knowing more than anyone in the world. 99% of the

[94] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 401.
[95] FISHER, "Happiness…", cit., pp. 404.

world's population is represented by the World Poll, with more than 90 years of data collection experience."
URL https://www.gallup.com/home.aspx

US General Survey. "Since 1972, for more than four decades, the General Social Survey (GSS) has studied the growing complexity of American society. It is the only full-probability, personal-interview survey designed to monitor changes in both social characteristics and attitudes currently being conducted in the United States."
URL https://gss.norc.org/

Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS). "It is a Japanese version of the General Social Survey (GSS). They want to solicit political, sociological, and economic information from people living in Japan. They provide data for analyses of Japanese society, attitudes, and behaviors, which makes possible international comparisons. The JGSS surveys are conducted once yearly or once in two years."
URL https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/series/209

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). "The SWLS is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. The scale usually requires only about one minute of a respondent's time. The score goes from 5 to 35 and it was developed in 1985."
URL https://novopsych.com.au/assessments/well-being/satisfaction-with-life-scale-swls/

Asia Barometer Survey. "It is the first cross-national survey focused on democratization in East Asia, and is also the first cross-national survey led by East Asian scholars. At present it has more than 30 years of history. This research team previously led a cross-national research project on "Political Culture and Political Participation in the Different Chinese Cultural Areas: A Comparative Study of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong," becoming the first political scientists to carry out a national randomized survey in mainland China."
URL http://www.asianbarometer.org/

Public Opinion Survey on the Life of the People. “10,000 Japanese nationals of age 18 years or above nationwide were the target. They want to capture the various points of view on people’s awareness and needs concerning their lives, such as perspectives on their families and homes or current and future lifestyles, and use the data as basic resource for general administration of the government.”
URL https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/

Public Opinion Survey on Social Awareness. “10,000 Japanese nationals of age 18 years or above nationwide were the target. They want to survey the trends for the fundamental awareness of people toward society and the country, and to use the data as basic material for general administrative purposes.”
URL https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/

Chapter 2: Working Japanese Young Women

In the previous chapter, three different factors critical to produce a happy workforce were mentioned. They are used in this chapter to analyze the situation of working young women in Japan, mainly in the period from 2000 to 2015. At the end of this chapter also a little vignette about the customs at the Japanese workplace is added.

1. Equity at Work

Before the 1950s Japanese women did not have many working opportunities, also when their working conditions improved, they still lacked experience and knowledge, which would help them to fit in the society. This is also because, before the 1900s, Japanese boys and girls were separated in school, after their sixth year. At that point Japanese girls would be trained to stay at home, without being able to go to university.[1] At the beginning of the 1800s until the mid of the 1990s, the situation was different. Around 2/3 of the single and married women in Japan in the age range from 25 to 34 years were working. This workforce is mainly understood as a support and supplement to men in the companies.[2] In general, women had more chances to take a break from their professional career during marriage, birth and childcare.[3] There was a legal improvement through the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (from now on EEOL – 1986), that "ensures equality to Japanese women in all areas from hiring to retirement, on-the-ground practices vary" (Rosenberger 1999, 28).

> Since 1986 many large and medium companies have developed a *sogo* track in which women may take a test and move up into higher positions that require special skills, responsibility, and low-level management; the *sogo* track still differs from the

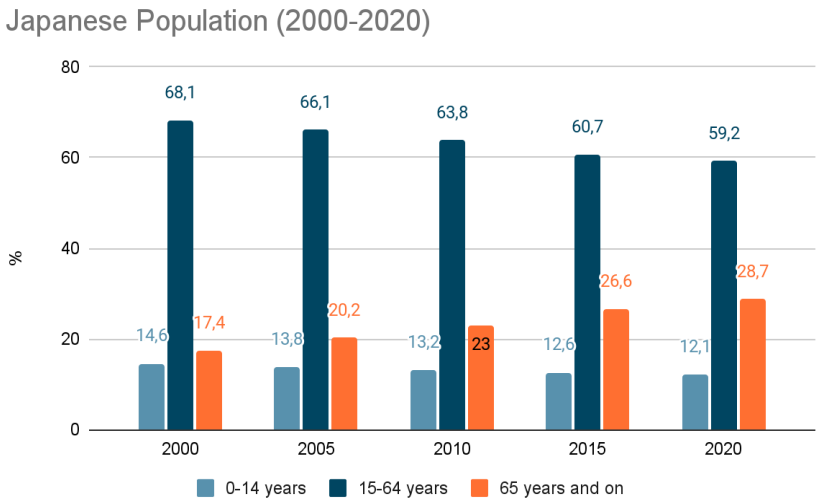
[1] Shina KAN, "Japanese Women Move Forward", *Far Eastern Survey*, New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950, pp. 122-123.
[2] Nancy ROSENBERGER, "Business Anthropology in a Work Subculture: Korean and Japanese Young, Single, Working Women", *Practicing Anthropology*, Oregon, Society for Applied Anthropology, 1999, pp. 28.
[3] Sachiko SENDA, "Kikon josei no shūgyō keizoku to ikuji shigen no kankei – shokushu to shussei kōhōto o tegakari ni shite" (Relationship between continued employment of married women and childcare resources – using occupation and birth control as clues), *J. of Population Problems*, 58, 2, 2002, pp. 3.
仙田幸子、「既婚女性の就業継続と育児資源の関係―職種と出生コーホートを手がかりにして」、人口問題研究、第５８巻２号、２００２年、pp. 3.

> mainstream, mostly male, managerial track that trains people for the highest positions and assumes complete dedication via overtime and transfers. (Rosenberger, 1999)[4]

Thanks to this law, more changes started to take form, even if, as Rosenberger (1999) explains, there are still differences between male and female workers. The two-track system already existing in many Japanese companies was reinforced as a response to the EEOL. The first one was the *sōgōshoku* for elite/management track, and the second one was the *ippanshoku* for a more general/clerical track.[5]

> The elite managerial track customarily involves career opportunities and upward mobility, but requires that employees be willing to accept mandatory transfers and long working hours; in the general or clerical track, opportunities for promotion are limited, as are job responsibilities. (Gelb, 1991)[6]

Now women have the possibility to move up into higher positions, but this new track is not the same as for men. At this point Japanese society is not yet prepared to give same opportunities to women as men. Generally, Japanese women would be able to contribute way more than the company is allowing them to do. In 1998 the categories *ippan* and *sōgō* would be lifted, giving way to tests for promotion open for everyone,



Graph 1: Population's Pyramid (jinkō piramiddo), in "Dashboard E-Stat", URL https://dashboard.e-stat.go.jp/pyramidGraph?screenCode=00570&regionCode=00000&pyramidAreaType=2, (05-01-2022).

[4] ROSENBERGER, "Business Anthropology…", cit., pp. 29.
[5] Joyce GELB, "Tradition and Change in Japan: The Case of Equal Employment Opportunity Law", *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, Sakado, University of Hawai'i Press, 1991, pp. 58-59.
[6] *Ibidem*.

even if the training kept being diverse. It is natural that also women aspire for promotions, but, even if now the EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law) is existing, they have to face the big obstacle of stereotypes.[7] These are still being part of Japanese society. A particularity of the Nipponese population is that most of it is old, which keeps concepts longer in people's mind. With the years passing by, the older population, from their 65 years and on, is getting bigger and bigger. As we understand from graph 1, in the last 20 years the older population grew from 17,4% in 2000, to 23% in 2010, and to almost 29% in 2020. What was actual and believed at younger ages of the old population still remains alive with them also in later years, keeping concepts and thoughts alive in the society.

Having in the years a bigger part of the old population that keeps ideas and stereotypes alive is also one of the reasons, with also the system of employment, why the realization of gender equality did not develop further from the new century. When Shinzo Abe became Prime Minister in 2012, he named his promotional campaign "Women's Park"[8], with the goal of equality between men and women in politics as well as in the economic world. As a result, in 2014 five women were nominated minister. The author, Maria Dyatchina, affirms that Japan has a strong gender equality code and that it is only a matter of time before it also becomes an equal society from a gender point of view.[9] The problem is that women keep being framed almost and only as mothers and wives. People assume that all women should have or had these kinds of experiences, and it does not help the cause of gender equality in many fields, as the political one. It does not give space to other forms of womanhood different from the standard one.[10]

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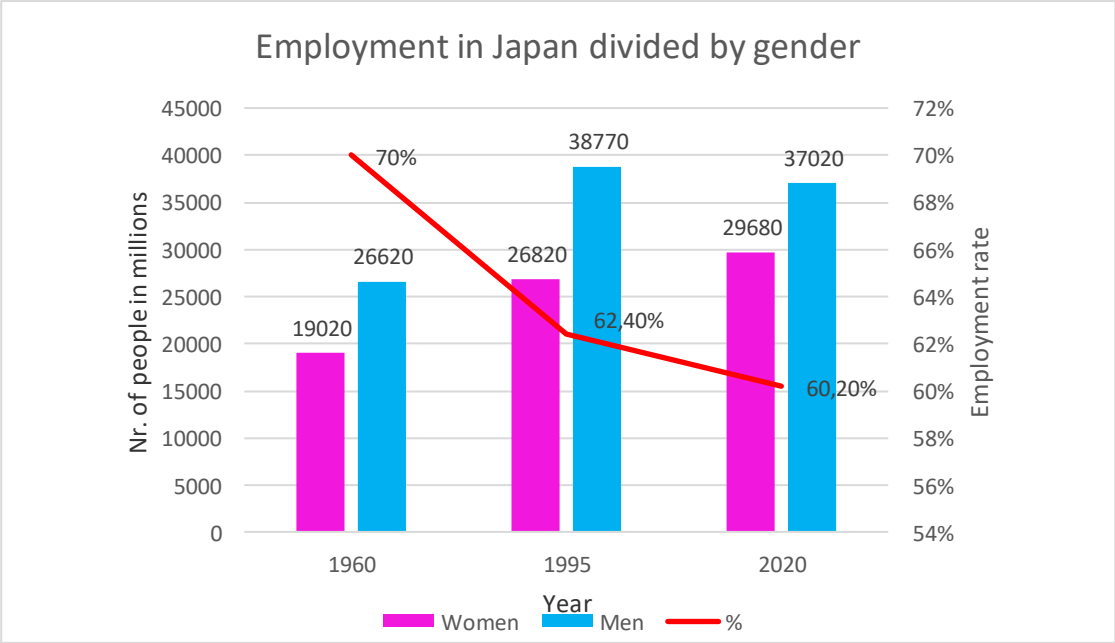
[7] ROSENBERGER, "Business Anthropology…", cit., pp. 29.

[8] This is the website: http://women.benesse.ne.jp/.

[9] MARIA, Dyatchina, *Honkenkyū de wa 21 seiki no nihon danjobyōdō seisaku no tokuchō to mondai ga kōsatsusareteiru. Sonota, nihonnioite no danjobyōdō no hatten mitooshimo kōsatsusareteiru* (This study examines the characteristics and problems of Japanese gender equality policies in the 21st century. It also examines the prospects for the development of gender equality in Japan.) 「本研究では２１世紀の日本男女平等政策の特徴と問題が考察されている。その他、日本においての男女平等の発展見通しも考察されている」, in "Academia.edu", (30-09-2021).

[10] Emma DALTON, "More "Ordinary Women": Gender Stereotypes in Arguments for Increased Female Representation in Japanese Politics", *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, Sakado, University of Hawai'i Press, 2013, pp. 39.

A typical stereotype is mentioned by Kitamura (2005): "Japanese women are consistently clad in kimono, looking gentle and graceful, and are deprived of their own voices".[11] Analyzing the life and job of the women working in big companies, we can better understand the differences with men, for example in bonuses, incomes or working stability. There is no equilibrium and most of the women that are working are more and more part-timers.[12]



Graph 2: Employee (rōdōsha), in "Dashboard E-Stat", URL https://dashboard.e-stat.go.jp/graph?screenCode=00040, (31-10-2021).

As we can see from graph 2, the number of working women increased in the years, from 19 million in the 1960 to almost 27 million in 1995, thanks to the improvement in their working conditions, and reaching almost 30 million in 2020. There is still a big difference with the number of working men, that, as of 2020, amount to 37 million. Interesting to notice the employment rate: even if more people in Japan are working, the employment rate decreased of almost 10%, from 70% in 1960 to 60,2% in 2020. One of the possible causes, may be that women do not leave work anymore, but they keep staying in the same company also after marriage.

[11] Aya KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within: Images and Identities of Japanese Women", *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal, Hawai'i*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, pp. 38.
[12] Yuko OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men. Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 10.

Women usually start employment immediately after their studies, of high school or university. In some companies they were "hired into the general secretarial or *ippan* track in which they are not eligible for promotions above the clerical work" (Rosenberger 1999, 28). They would then leave their job when getting married and having children, to than work again around their 40 years. Going back to a full-time job after marriage and children was very difficult for a woman, because the companies were recruiting only who just ended their studies. Thus, it will be easier for them to find a job in small businesses or a part-time job, having also less benefits, even if they had to work as much as a regular employer.[13] This is a characteristic of the so-called M-shaped curve, which will be explained later in this chapter. Also, in Japan the income increases with seniority. Due to this fact, it was more convenient for a company to employ young women, because they would cost less: being at the beginning of their career the company would need to pay the lowest salary. On the top of it, the company would provide a monetary incentive to the women that would resign for marriage or childbirth, there was the custom that previously women would receive a tap on their shoulders (*katatataki*) suggesting them that it was time to quit. This custom was left aside with the introduction of the EEOL law.[14]

A couple of times a year supervisors asked for a report to their employees. The one of the women was the most worrisome, because women could not reach a promotion, so they would clearly state their opinions, without fearing the reaction of their supervisors.[15] Usually, in the company different grades are given to the performance of their employees, which go from A to E. Women would always receive C, unless something really negative had happened. Thus, it would become very difficult to get bonuses or promotions, affirms Ogasawara (1998).[16] Also, there was the possibility that the latter would be seen as a bad worker to the eyes of the manager, this is the reason why supervisors would worry about women. On the other side, men that wanted to get higher in their career had to be cautious in writing their opinions in their report, else they would stick to their position without getting promoted.[17] In the 1990s the situation

[13] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 17-19.
[14] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 64-65.
[15] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 137.
[16] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 31.
[17] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 137.

started to change, maybe due to the burst of the bubble[18], which brought the company to reconsider its costs, because an increasing number of women was working for longer than the usual 3 or 4 years before getting married.[19]

Women also feel a strong inequality with men when talking about work outfits. They feel like their job depends on what they are wearing instead of considering their talents at their best.[20] Recently, in 2019, the movement #KuToo was born in Japan. It asked to create an environment where people could wear comfortable shoes independently from their gender. Japanese women bringing high heels every day, all day long, are showing that it is not good for their health, and they feel forced to wear such uncomfortable shoes. On the top of it, even if shoes are an object to walk, they are closely connected to women's sensuality, and choosing which kind of shoes to wear should be a personal freedom.[21]

Nowadays, a way to get a promotion is the so-called *tenkin*, which is the transfer of an employee to an office that may find itself in another city or in another country. For this reason, it would become impossible for that person to daily go to work, so there is the necessity to move to the new place. Many Japanese firms have adopted this practice, which is taken for granted in the society of Japan.[22] With time, till now, the age of the employee to transfer got lower, and now more people in their twenties and thirties are doing it, without a real difference in gender.[23] Now women are given the same opportunities as men for *tenkin* by their companies, and in the procedure of accepting their own *tenkin*, "women employees may nevertheless be treated differently from men in terms of being provided with more information up front" (Fujita 2016, 129). Even if, in a working and married couple, it is usually the wife that quits her job to stay at the

[18] The economic bubble was created by the stagnation of the prices in the Japanese market from 1986 to 1991. In 1992 the prices rapidly increased, resulting in the burst of that bubble.
[19] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 167.
[20] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 25.
[21] *Hiiru, panpusu kyōseini No! Sekai de mo kakudai '#KuToo undō' to ha* (No to compulsory high heels and décolleté! What is the "movement #KuToo"), in "FNN Prime Online", URL www.fnn.jp/articles/-/1386, (26-10-2021).
「ヒール、パンプス強制に No！世界でも拡大。『#KuToo 運動』とは」、FNN プライムオンライン、URL www.fnn.jp/articles/-/1386, (26-10-2021).
[22] Noriko FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships, and Women's challenges in employment and Family", *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 50, Sakado, University of Hawai'i Press, 2016, pp. 116.
[23] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 122-123.

side of her husband, who accepted the transfer from his corporation.[24] This said, not all women want to become housewives, usually experienced through the first childcare leave of one year, and many would change job, searching for a new one in the city their husband had to transfer to. Note that many times marriage and *tenkin* coincide, to make the relationship stronger for the couple.[25] Thus, even if the women's condition has advanced in the workplace, it seems there are still some obstacles for working mothers in the practice of *tenkin*. On one side, it is needed if they want to have a career and a challenging job, on the other side they can not forget of their reproductive role, if they want to become mothers. In the latter case, this practice would become a career disadvantage or a source of trouble for them.[26]

> These struggles arose because the firm seemed to have no idea of how to treat two employees equally as a couple when it came to the practice of *tenkin*. […] A second reason is that the practice of *tenkin* still rests to a large extent on the "salaryman" model. Men are supposed to undertake *tenkin*, and women are encouraged to support their husbands so that they are able to commit fully to their firms. (Fujita, 2016)[27]

For this reason, career women kept encountering difficulties in both sustaining their roles as mother and wife, and in advancing in their careers. Although companies may be trying to give more opportunities to women, the result is that for female workers it becomes really difficult to manage their lives.[28]

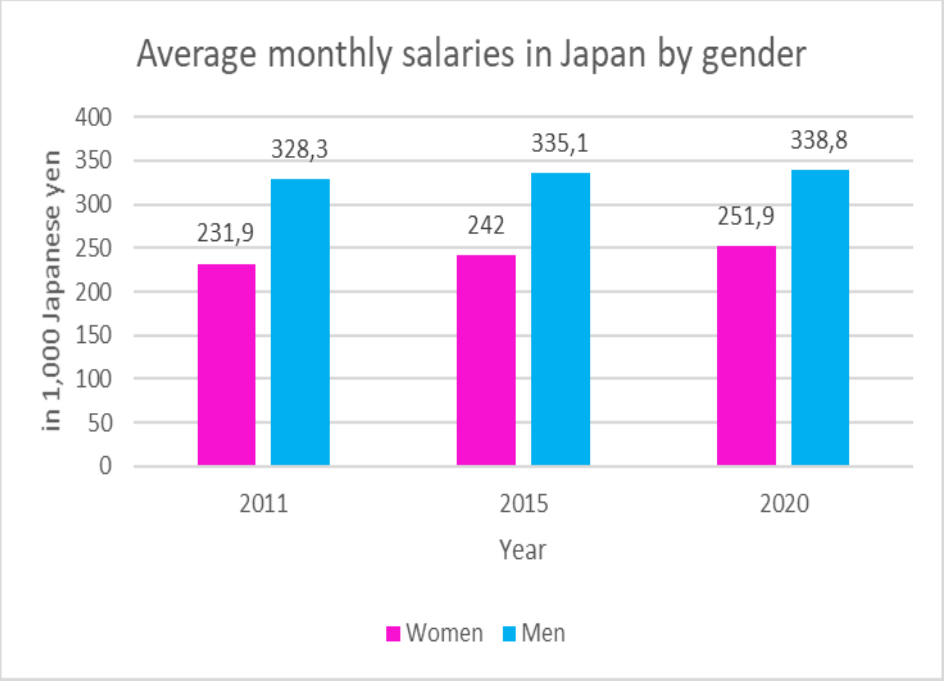
2. Achievement at Work

> What made her anger the most was that, after all those years of assiduous work, she never got a promotion and kept doing the same mansions that were assigned her when she first entered the company. In those ten years, not for even one day were assigned different tasks, even if she arrived on time at 8 in the morning and would work overtime till 9 in the night. No matter how hard she tried, the most delicate assignments, as financial

[24] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 116.
[25] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 119.
[26] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 129-130.
[27] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 128.
[28] *Ibidem*.

concession and similar, were saved for men, and Masako was obliged to carry out only assistant roles. (Natsuo, 2019)[29]

With these words, the author Natsuo is representing the situation of the majority of women in Japan in the period before the EEOL. For example, when a woman was doing a job for a man, as writing a report, her name would not even be mentioned in it, and the man would take the whole merit about that work. Even the bosses, in the case of a paper written by a man, he would try to recognize him to the company, while, in case of an office lady, no real effort would be made.[30] There was an unspoken policy, in regional and smaller companies, for which women would retire when they had to give birth to children and would not take into consideration advancement in the company. In addition, their pay compared to the one of their male colleagues was considerably less.[31] On average, a woman in a big company had to work till her 51 years to get the same quantity of income earned by a man in his first 4 working years.



Graph 3: Average monthly wages, in "Dashboard E-Stat", URL https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123514/japan-average-monthly-wages-among-full-time-female-workers/ and https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123510/japan-average-monthly-wages-among-full-time-male-workers/, (31-10-2021).

[29] Kirino NATSUO, *Le quattro casalinghe di Tokyo*, by Lydia Origlia, Padova, Beat Bestseller, 2019, pp. 248. Translation done by the author of this thesis.
[30] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 31.
[31] ROSENBERGER, "Business Anthropology…", cit., pp. 29.

Now, as we can see from graph 3, the situation has changed. Even if, as of 2019, there is still a gender pay gap of the 23.48% in Japan[32], women monthly gain around the 74% of men pay in 2020, respectively 251900 Japanese yen and 338800 Japanese yen. In 2011 there was a 71% and in 2015 a 72%. This is also thanks to the rising rate of enrollment to university. In 1990 there was a rate of 15.2% for women and 33,4% for men; in 2010 it rose to 45,2% for the first and 56,4% for the latter.[33] Now, in 2020, both genders have reached the 58% of enrollment in university.[34]

Figure 1: Tea Ceremony III (1995) - Mariko Mori

The artist Mariko Mori tried to portrait in her photographs the situation of Japanese working women in the second half of the 1990s, after the burst of the bubble and on. Interesting is her photograph named "Tea Ceremony III" taken in 1995 (Figure 1), where she herself is the model. We can see a young woman serving tea in the street. She is wearing a sort of metallic costume, as to indicate the mechanization of office ladies, with a smile on her face that let us understand how women had to adapt at their role. Mariko Mori wants to show us how women can paradoxically be connected and

[32] *Gender Pay Gap*, in "Statista", URL https://www.statista.com/statistics/934039/gender-pay-gap-select-countries/, (01-11-2021).
[33] Setsuya FUKUDA, "The Changing Role of Women's Earnings in Marriage Formation in Japan", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 646, 1, 2013, pp. 112.
[34] *Japan higher education enrollment rate by gender*, in "Statista", URL https://www.statista.com/statistics/1198580/japan-higher-education-enrollment-rate-by-gender/, (01-11-2021).

disconnected to what is happening around them. Even if they are doing a very familiar action, as the one of serving tea, this makes them feel as foreigners, aliens, as the costume as well as the ears remind us, it makes visible what is usually unseen.[35] The visible disjunction between the passerby and the office lady was made on purpose to express the general disregard and ignorance of these women by male superiors and coworkers that shared the same spaces. Her futuristic-looking appearance is supporting this interpretation.[36]

Women wanted to challenge the ideal image men had of them. They started to look for new opportunities and many chose to go abroad for their studies, work or just interaction with other people. In this way they could learn intercultural communication.[37] Due to the fact that young women were still living with their parents, they could save money and 80% of them would go abroad at least once a year.[38] Many Japanese women were feeling as foreigners in their own country. They started to perceive a "gap" that was becoming bigger: on one side many men continue to be looking for a "traditional" woman, that stays at home while cooking, taking care of their children and also doing housework; on the other side more and more women are looking for a partner that shares their same hobbies, interests, but also helps in the housework as also the rest, they are aiming to a life of mutual share.[39] Women are looking for a new way to live their lives: they understood that if they manage to fluently learn another language, for example English, they are professionally wanted. Consequently, many Japanese women begun to prefer a life abroad and marrying a foreign man.[40] Else, they started to delay their marriage as much as possible, because they could not find their ideal man.[41] In 1991 the 64% of the Japanese people leaving abroad for studying (*ryūgaku*) was consisting of women, of which most of all were

[35] Jonathan WALLIS, "The Paradox of Mariko Mori's Women in Post-Bubble Japan: Office Ladies, Schoolgirls, and Video-Vixens", *Woman's Art Journal*, Philadelphia, Old City Publishing, 2008, pp. 3.
[36] WALLIS, "The Paradox of…", cit., pp. 8.
[37] Karen KELSKY, "Postcards from the Edge: The "Office Ladies" of Tokyo", *U.S.-Japan women's Journal. English Supplement*, Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i Press, 1994, pp. 4.
[38] KELSKY, "Postcards from…", cit., pp. 7.
[39] KELSKY, "Postcards from…", cit., pp. 16.
[40] KELSKY, "Postcards from…", cit., pp. 13.
[41] KELSKY, "Postcards from…", cit., pp. 17.

office ladies.[42] While in 2004 the percentage increased reaching the 68% (13.000 women), in 2017 it decreased a bit to 61%, but still way more than Japanese men.[43]

From 1990 to 2009, there was a rise from 15% to 44% of women attending universities or four-year colleges, while the number of men increased from 33% to 56% only. Around the same years, from 1989 to 2008, newly hired women who graduated from college increased their proportion from around 14% to 55% of the total.[44] Nemoto (2013) affirms that women need to emulate masculinity in order to become visible on a management ladder, such as being tough, ruthless or even thrusting. This mostly happens in male-dominated firms, where gender stereotypes are more expressed than in gender-integrated law firms.[45] There was the phenomenon called "vertical segregation", where women were exclusively concentrated in low-level management and clerical positions.[46]

> Young women workers are expected to display traits of subordinate femininity, behaving as assistants or sex objects. Regardless of the increase in the number of female workers and managers in Japanese firms, negative stereotypes of women managers and workers as mean, incapable and unprofessional remain strong. (Nemoto, 2013)[47]

This also created a "self-reinforcing cycle" that reduced women's motivation, due to the lack of women managers, for an upward mobility.[48] The ratio of female managers was less than 5% in 1999.[49] In 2014 they reached the 11% considering the industrialized nations, researched Viglione (2014).[50] While in 2020 they decreased to 10,7%.[51] Even

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[42] KELSKY, "Postcards from…", cit., pp. 13.

[43] *Summary of the number of Japanese students studying abroad!* (nihonjingakusei no kaigairyūgakushasū no suiimatome), in "Education Career", URL education-career.jp/magazine/data-report/2019/number-study-abroad/, (31-10-2021).

[44] Kumiko NEMOTO, "When culture resists progress: masculine organizational culture and its impact on the vertical segregation of women in Japanese companies", *Work, Employment & Society*, Kentucky, Sage Publications, 2013, pp. 154.

[45] NEMOTO, "When culture resists progress…", cit., pp. 157.

[46] NEMOTO, "When culture resists progress…", cit., pp. 155.

[47] NEMOTO, "When culture resists progress…", cit., pp. 164.

[48] NEMOTO, "When culture resists progress…", cit., pp. 156.

[49] ROSENBERGER, "Business Anthropology…", cit., pp. 28.

[50] Attilio VIGLIONE, *Più donne per il Giappone. Per la ripresa del paese è fondamentale un ruolo più attivo delle donne nel mercato del lavoro*, in "L'Indro", 2014, URL lindro.it/piu-donne-per-il-giappone/, (01-11-2021).

[51] Archibald CIGANER, Jocelyn BROWN, *Il Giappone alza la posta sulla corporate governance e sulla riforma normativa*, in "T.RowePrice", 2021, URL www.troweprice.com/financial-

with such a low percentage of business Japanese women, their impact is receiving international attention. Two Japanese women were rewarded by Veuve Cliquot in 2018. Veuve Cliquot is one of the biggest champagne producers in the whole world that celebrates businesswomen with the same innovative spirit as Madame Cliquot since 1972. The art critic Hasegawa Yuko won the Business Woman Award, while the CEO of Kesennuma Knitting Co. Mitarai Mizuko won the New Generation Award.[52]

In April 2016 the "Act of Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace" (*josei ketsuyaku suishin hō*) became effective. This legislation encouraged companies to promote in the workforce the active participation of women through different measures, as the increase of the number of female managers (Gender Equality Bureau 2016). With these reforms, women's employment received higher attention, however, the contribution to their promotion in the workplace was very little because of the *tenkai* system, previously mentioned.[53]

3. Camaraderie at Work

Noritoshi (2011) sustains that, colleagues at the workplace play a very important role in the analysis of happiness, or unhappiness, of young people. He says that their presence in someone's life gives hope to that person, which keeps them going on.[54] For example, a survey of Nikkei Marketing Journal made a comparison between people in their 20s with people in their 30s, that are the second generation of baby boomer[55], and people in their 40s, that are the generation of the economic bubble. It turned out that young women spend more on wine or meals with friends and colleagues, while men would spend more on fashion, books, cosmetic and videogames.[56] In particular for

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intermediary/it/it/thinking/articles/2021/q3/japan-ups-the-ante-on-corporate-governance-regulatory-reform.html, (01-11-2021).

[52] Forbes JAPAN Redaction, "*Vūvu kuriko bijinesu ūman awādo, nihon no genzai wo daihyōsuru futari no josei ga senshutsu*" (Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Awards, two women who represent the present Japan), in "Forbes JAPAN Brand Voice", 2018, URL forbesjapan.com/articles/detail/23052, (12-11-2021).
Forbes JAPAN 編集部、「ヴーヴ・クリコ　ビジネスウーマンアワード、日本の現在を代表するふたりの女性が選出」、Forbes JAPAN Brand Voice、2018年、URL forbesjapan.com/articles/detail/23052, (12-11-2021).

[53] FUJITA, "'Tenkin', New Marital Relationships…", cit., pp. 115.

[54] Furuichi NORITOSHI, *The Happy Youth of a Desperate Country. The Disconnect between Japan's Malaise and Its Millennsials*, by Raj Mahtani, Tokyo, Japan Library, 2011, pp. 104.

[55] The first generation of baby boomers are the children born after the WWII. The second generation of baby boomers are the children of the first one.

[56] NORITOSHI, *The Happy Youth…*, cit., pp. 83-84.

women, this survey confirms that spending time, and money, with friends and colleagues makes them feel better.

"Social interaction is a complex process, consistent of more layers and power-laden", affirms Kitamura (2005, 49). The same author describes the Japanese woman as a performative identity, this means, it is always an ongoing construction, it is a work in constant progress.[57] This performative and changing identity can be also seen as an adaptation to survive in a society that sees women in a certain way. Kitamura (2005) identifies this performative identity as the following:

> Crucially, Japanese women are not Japanese women per se. They "do" and "become" that identity of necessity and in accordance with the dominant prescription ascribed to their gender – be it the classic "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*) model in Japan or the exoticized "Other" stigma abroad. (Kitamura, 2005)[58]

Japanese women find themselves always set inside a social matrix. Only from this perspective they can present themselves to the outside, to other people. All of their acts are attributable to a very common image of a Japanese wife and mother, yet women may use this kind of image to manipulate the situation they found themselves in for their own ends.[59] The behavior that is predominantly attributed to Japanese women, such as having a quiet and shy attitude or a strict self-discipline, may be used only for their own purposes, thinks Kitamura (2005). There is the possibility they take advantage of their stereotypes.[60] Thus, the Japanese woman is an overflowing category with no univocal definition applicable.[61]

At their workplace women would usually have a good relationship with each other, but it was difficult for them to gather all together and let people hear their voice about what was going on with their situation in the office. In average, young Japanese women would have worked in a company, after their studies, for three years before getting married. This short amount of time makes it difficult to group together and act for a change.[62] For women became more important being married than their working status.

[57] KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within…", cit., pp. 57.
[58] KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within…", cit., pp. 41.
[59] KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within…", cit., pp. 41.
[60] KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within…", cit., pp. 47-48.
[61] KITAMURA, "Subverting from Within…", cit., pp. 56.
[62] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 46.

In some companies, there was a sort of ritual for when a woman was going to marry. When this was happening, the wife-to-be would dress up nicely and she would go saying goodbye to all the colleagues she met in her working life in that company, giving each of them a small gift, as a nice tissue or sweets. This ritual could happen also because of a common procedure, where the husband would have to transfer in another city and the woman could not work in that company anymore. The older office ladies would than feel left behind. Usually, old women that are still not married would be seen as strange. Also, old and married women would be seen with different eyes as well, because people ask themselves why they are not doing a part-time job (*baito*), so they may think there were economic problems, when maybe these women just want to keep working in that place.[63] The reason why people would have this last opinion is because there was an age-specific pattern followed by Japanese women. This pattern is shown as an M-shaped curve.[64]

> This curve indicates that the public labor force of women increases from their teens to their late 20s, declines during their 30s, increases again in their 40s, and finally declines at a continuous rate from their 50s onward. (Nosaka, 2010)[65]

For this reason, after their marriage and children, Japanese women would usually go back to work with a part-time for than leaving again at the retirement. This pattern is related to the Japanese division of labor strongly based on gender.[66] Typically Japanese women remain the first important source of caregiver for children and the elderly. Even if they have to work outside the home, which they normally do, they also have to shoulder the responsibility of household duties.[67]

In the relationship with male colleagues, in the case of a man not being nice with his female colleagues, the woman would refrain from taking initiative or give him some extra help, as remembering deadlines or similar information. Due to the fact that they could not be evaluated in a serious way to get a promotion, office ladies would feel free to refuse a request that would be more a favor than a duty, even if the person in question

[63] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 62.
[64] Akiko NOSAKA, "The M-shaped dilemma: life strategies and fertility trends among working women in contemporary Japan", *Ethnology: An International Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology*, Pacific Lutheran University, 2010, pp. 23.
[65] *Ibidem*.
[66] *Ibidem*.
[67] DALTON, "More "Ordinary Women"…", cit., pp. 27.

was very important for their company. So, they would not give a great relevance to the hierarchy at their workplace. If the hostility was very strong, but it would happen only very few times, office ladies would completely refuse to do a job for that man. Thus, it was very important for men to be always in a good relationship with their female colleagues. The most humiliating form of resistance that could ever take place would be the so-called *sōsukan* (total neglect). In this case, the male colleague would be ignored not only by one woman, but from also all other female colleagues in the office. In any case, it is a very rare event.[68]

4. Japanese customs at Work

In the Japanese workplace, involving also women, two customs regarding Saint Valentine and the transfer to another office of a colleague are interesting and help us get closer to the understanding of the Japanese culture.

Saint Valentine is the day when women give as a present some chocolate with a small message to their male colleagues to generally thank them. When more women wanted to give their sweet to a same colleague, for example a superior, it was usual for them to gather and together buy one bigger gift for him. Due to this event, the popularity of men was measured in how many chocolate packages he would receive. This custom was also used as a method to make male colleague understand if they were not really liked by the women. The office ladies had their own particular ways: they would give the chocolate later, for example in the afternoon instead of the morning, in contrast to the colleagues that they preferred; they would break down the chocolate on purpose and then hand it over anyway to the interested person; they would give less chocolate packages, because in this case the number of received packages counted more than the brand of the chocolate. The concepts of "anonymity" and "ambiguity" come to mind. "Anonymity" because male colleagues would never really know who gifted what to them, also because many times office ladies would organize themselves in groups. "Ambiguity" because very often male colleagues would not understand if the message delivered together with the chocolate package would be sincere. There could also be the case where it would just be given as a formality due to the occasion of Saint Valentine and not because female colleagues wanted to deliver it.

[68] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 114-138.

For the transfer of a colleague to another office it was custom to send a bouquet to the new place he would start working, instead of hand it personally during the last day of work in the "old" office. In this way, the office ladies of the "new" workplace would already understand some information of the person they are going to work with from the number of bouquets sent and also from the price of the flowers themselves. If the newcomer would receive no bouquet at all, it was easy to imagine that maybe he particularly liked in the previous office.[69]

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have analyzed various topics concerning the young Japanese women working. There was a change from the past, in the working conditions of women, using than a track system of two different levels, the *sōgōshoku* one for elite/management, and the *ippanshoku* which is the general/clerical one. Even with this improvement, there were still strong differences with men. At their workplace, women were also encountering the problem of stereotypes, that is something difficult to avoid, also because the Japanese population, being old, keeps alive some concept that may be not needed anymore in the contemporary period. With the passing of time, more and more women work, their number increased every year, reaching almost 30 million in 2020. The working life of a woman assumes an M-shaped pattern, because she would start working immediately after her studies, then she would stop for childcare, to than work again, but as a part-timer, until her retirement. Before, being unable to reach a promotion, women would feel free to express their real opinion at work, without fearing the judgments of their superiors. With the practice of *tenkin*, transferring to another office, also women got the chance to reach a promotion, but many difficulties are still ahead. Also, even if in the past their income was considerably lower than the one of men, and now they reached a higher monthly salary, there is still a high difference with the one of their male colleagues. The artist Mariko Mori, with one of her photographs, clearly shows how office ladies can feel about their workplace. With time, women found a new opportunity in going abroad and learning languages. They start to travel and discover a world different from their Japanese one. Lastly, the relationship between women and men at their office has been observed.

[69] OGASAWARA, *Office Ladies and…*, cit., pp. 98-113.

Chapter 3: Working Italian Young Women

In this chapter the situation of working young women in Italy, mainly during the years 2000 and 2015 is analyzed. As in chapter two, the same three different factors, critical to produce a happy workforce, mentioned in the first chapter, will be used.

1. Equity at Work

In Italy, the International Organization of Work (OIL) n.100 introduced in 1951 the wage equality between man and woman. Workers are guaranteed an equal remunerative treatment through the evaluation of the value of the job, regardless the worker is a woman or a man.[1] Also the Constitution, the laws of the state, as well as the Statute of the Workers (Statuto dei lavoratori) with the Law 300 of the 1971, sustain the wage equality and the tutelage of working women. The Law 300 became than reinforced with the Law 1204 in 1971, sustaining the protection of mothers-to-be and mothers in relation to the working conditions and to the preservation of their working position.[2] In the 1977, the Italian Parliament approved the law on equal treatment between men and women at work, reaching the complete equality between male and female workers, solving in a formal way the difficult topic of the equal wage.[3] The Statute of the Workers is still effective nowadays, and its last modifications were done in September 2016. Thanks to women's and workers' movements, these norms sustained the entrance of many women in the paid business world.[4]

Even if from a legal point of view, equity at work seems solved, the data show a different situation. In Italy the employment rate of women is very low, resulting in Europe as one of the lowest not altered gender pay gaps, meaning that the gender pay gap is unadjusted. This happens mainly because the woman manages the family, affecting sensibly their decision to go back to paid work. This scenario is present also in whole Europe, but it is more evident in Italy with its prevalent traditional family model, where men work providing the greatest economic support, while women stay more at home taking care of it. Moreover, only Italy presents the situation where paid work

[1] Eloisa BETTI, *Le alleanze delle donne italiane per la parità salariale: il contributo dell'Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro*, Roma, Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro, 2020, pp. 5.
[2] Tania TOFFANIN, "Donne al lavoro in Italia tra parità formale e disparità sostanziale", *Le grandi questioni sociali del nostro tempo*, Venezia, Università Ca' Foscari, 2018, pp. 123.
[3] BETTI, *Le alleanze delle donne italiane…*, cit., pp.7.
[4] TOFFANIN, "Donne al lavoro in Italia…", cit., pp. 123.

hours for women decrease when their children are born, while on the other side the ones for men increase. In other countries, family composition does not seem to affect working hours.[5] In particular, the Italian nation

> is characterized by a "familistic" welfare state and a traditional cultural value system. Italy represents a peculiar context, characterized by increased job pressures and job insecurity, which interfere with employees' private lives, and a limited externalization of care, with a major role played by the traditional family through informal help. (Spagnoli, Lo Presti, Buono, 2019)[6]

As we understand, this situation has a great influence on women's employment rate. Women in Southern Italy and also, in general, the ones with a lower formal education are the mainly affected. Some reasons of this circumstance, making it difficult to reconcile family and work life, are the scarcity of services for children, the one for elderly, not forgetting rigid work arrangements. Consequently, also a career progress becomes difficult, many women tend than to choose atypical and precarious jobs.[7] This means that there are still large gender gaps, even if narrower, in the labor market, but it does not depend on an important progress of the working conditions of women, but depends on the worsening of the working conditions of men.[8] Cultural, organizational and structural impediments are making it more difficult to get closer to a greater gender equity. As also Mencarini and Tanturri (2004) affirm, "on the one hand prevailing social customs and norms favour male employment to female one, and, on the other, there is a lack of caregiving services and an inflexible labour market".[9] Women nowadays want to work, being independent economically, they want to be considered not only mother and wife. This tendency has not been matched by a growing equality outside of the family. Giving birth to a child can seriously compromise their job opportunities. The situation of the Italian women is marked by a strong gender asymmetry in family and time

[5]Andrea CUTILLO; Marco CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices and Family Responsibilities: The Gender Wage Gap in Italy", *Feminist Economics*, 23, 4, 2017, pp. 4.

[6] Paola SPAGNOLI; Alessandro LO PRESTI; Carmela BUONO, The 'dark side' of organisational career growth: Gender differences in work-family conflict among Italian employed parents", *International Journal of Manpower*, 41, 2, 2019, pp. 152-153.

[7] Annalisa ROSSELLI, *The Policy on Gender Equality in Italy - In-depth Analysis for the FEMM Committee*, European Parliament, 2014, pp. 22.

[8] ROSSELLI, *The Policy on…*, cit., pp. 23.

[9] Letizia MENCARINI; Maria Letizia TANTURRI, "Time use, family role-set and childbearing among Italian working women", *Genus*, 60, 1, 2004, pp. 132.

organization, and a very low fertility. It ends up that women, between their work and family, have to work more than their partners.[10] The arrival of a new baby also often corresponds to a rise in the working hours of men. Even if there is a dual income in the couple and the woman wants to keep her job, the traditional gender role makes her reduce the time for herself and for her paid work.[11] Men that are graduates or have a white-collar job, are less involved in the tasks of their household. What could bring a little change in this situation is if the couple lived together before marriage. In this case there is more symmetry, and the traditional family model would be less followed.[12]

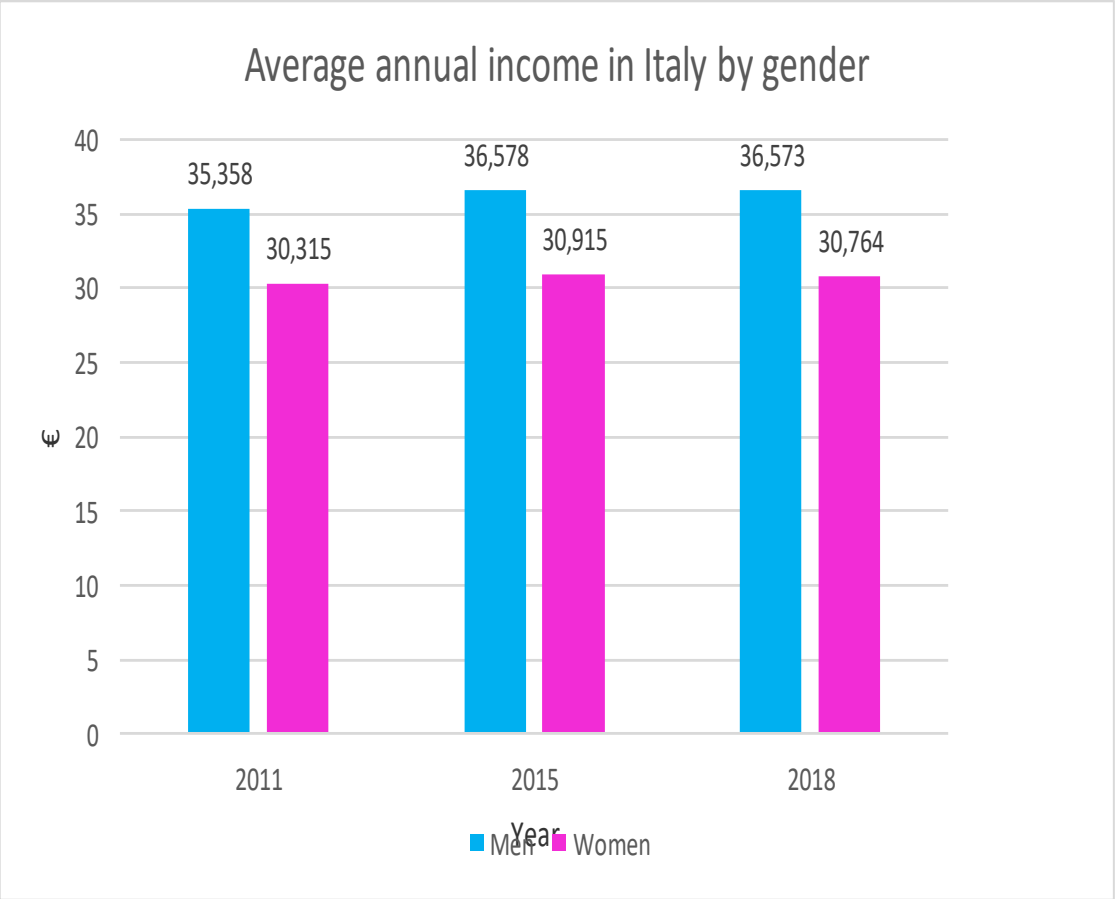
Considering Europe, Italian women find themselves at one of the lowest positions in the labor market, the most penalized are the ones with one or more children.[13]

> Measures enabling flexibility or a reduction in working hours, and rules regarding periods of voluntary leave from work and time off in order to look after family members, are highly desirable and can help families to organize their time in relation to the needs of the life cycle. However, if aimed prevalently at women, they have a negative impact on gender relations, leading to different levels of responsibility in terms of domestic tasks, effectively inhibiting the development of women's human capital and consequently the possibility of gender equity in the labour market. For instance, shorter working hours for women who opt for part-time employment means a greater share of domestic responsibilities, thereby making the division of family labour even more asymmetric. (Mencarini, Tanturri, 2004)[14]

Mencarini and Tanturri (2004) maintain that if the responsibility for providing care stops to be considered a private matter, the non-paid job's unequal division will result into inequality in the labor market.[15] Thus, the unequal division of non-paid jobs does influence the labor market. To get closer to a more equal gender system, legislative measures that encourage men in getting more involved in care-giving and domestic tasks would be helpful, for examples parental leave periods for fathers only. These measures would essentially have a symbolic value, but they would greatly contribute to

[10] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 125-126.
[11] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 124.
[12] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 117.
[13] Federico QUADRELLI, "La condizione delle donne nel mercato del lavoro italiano (2012)", *Academia*, 2012, pp. 2.
[14] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 132-133.
[15] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 133.

changing people's mentality.[16] Struffolino and Raitano (2020) describe the Italian case were "flexibilization targeted young workers who, as a result, became highly vulnerable to unprotected employment".[17]



Graph 1: Reddito netto, in "I.Stat", URL http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_REDNETFAMFONTERED#, (18-12-2021).

Considering the similar years as in chapter 2, also in the Italian case there is a gender pay gap. Graph 1 shows the average annual income in Italy, making a distinction between male and female workers. The data gathered by the I.Stat are available till the year of 2018.

An Italian woman earns till 30% less than a male colleague at the same level. The gap is bigger in manager positions and smaller in employees' professions or with low

[16] MENCARINI, TANTURRI, "Time use, family…", cit., pp. 134.

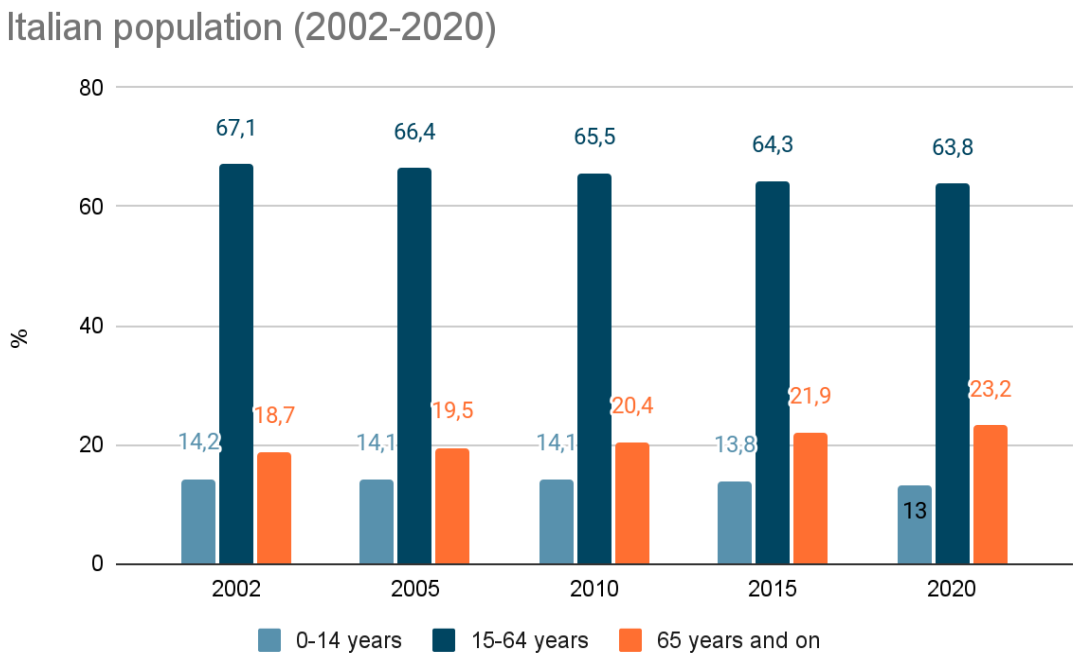
[17] Emanuela STRUFFOLINO, Michele RAITANO, "Early-Career Complexity Before and After Labour-Market Deregulation in Italy: Heterogeneity by Gender and Socio-economic Status Across Cohorts", *Social Indicators Research*, Springer, 2020, pp. 252.

qualifications, without going under the 7%. In 2014 the employment rate of men in the EU-28 was 70.1% while the one of the women was 59.6%. In more recent years, the percentage of working Italian women is not more than 52%, with more than 10 percentage points difference with men. It does not get better if we also consider the quality of the female work: in Europe, Italy is the less capable nation to include women in the labour market, and it does then most of the times precarious or part-timers, particularly in caregiving. The Italian nation is also in the first positions, at a European level, when talking about vertical segregation. Counting 7,2 million manager positions available in Europe, only the 35% is taken by women, while in Italy female managers are only the 22%, which means one woman every five.[18]

In the case of work and career, as well as promotions, in the study of Spagnoli et al. (2019) men report having more chances of development of their careers and wages than their female colleagues.[19] When choosing a job men and women have different preferences: men consider pay grade as more important, while women employment benefits, control over time use, and job security.[20] "Such different preferences also derive from the difficulties that women face in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance, leading their occupational paths to be an outcome of limited choices", affirm Cutillo and Centra (2017, 26). In any case, job security and employment benefits give both to men and women higher chances to be a wage earner. The chance of self-employment is increased by a flexible paid work schedule only among women, and this confirms again that women are looking for work-life balance that satisfy them.[21]

[18] Cinzia ALBANESI, Rita CHIESA, "Le relazioni tra generi sul luogo di lavoro", by Comitato Unico per le pari Opportunità, in *A prescindere dal genere: pari opportunità, empowerment e diversità*, Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2019, pp. 39-40.
[19] SPAGNOLI, LO PRESTI, BUONO, "The „dark side" of organisational…", cit., pp. 156.
[20] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 26.
[21] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 13.

We can not forget that gender stereotypes are still persisting in cultural beliefs. A possible reason why it is difficult to abate these gender stereotypes may be the old



Graph 2: Popolazione italiana, in "Istat", URL http://dati.istat.it/#, (05-01-2022).

population, that keeps alive such concepts. As we can see in graph 2, the old Italian population percentage is increasing little by little with the passing of time.

Most of all when talking about work-family commitment, there is a high chance for women to be confronted with this kind of gender-specific expectation.[22]

> We might expect women in their early careers to be more likely to work in flexible jobs than men because they anticipate and seek to fulfil the requirements of their *master status* by demonstrating a stronger commitment to their (current/future) family than to their career. Opting for a flexible job might be reinforced by discriminatory hiring and firing practices of employers, because they anticipate (stereotypical) lengthy and/or frequent breaks in women's active participation over and above the compositional effects in observable characteristics associated with rising female participation. (Struffolino, Raitano, 2020)[23]

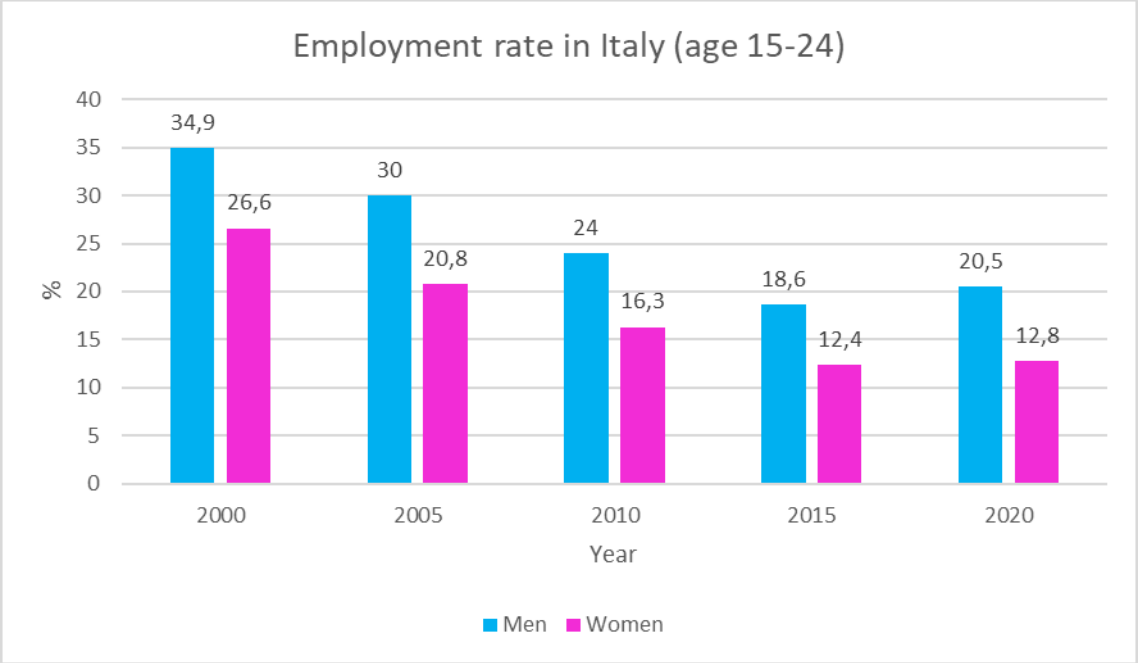
[22] STRUFFOLINO, RAITANO, "Early-Career Complexity Before and…", cit., pp. 238.
[23] *Ibidem*.

As we understand from what Struffolino and Raitano (2020) affirmed, women tend to consider more their family than work, and for this reason they choose a more flexible job. Doing so they involuntarily reinforce the stereotypical thought that women need to take multiple breaks in their working life due to, for example, the birth of their children. Cutillo and Centra (2017) also maintain, that there is the possibility that employers want to take advantage of women's preferences and needs, to then penalize them on their wages when they will get hired in the job they choose to reach a work-life balance that may satisfy them.[24]

2. Achievement at Work

Around the beginning of the 21st century, thanks to a higher education, the most rapid increase of women's occupation was registered in Italy after beginning of the 70s.[25] Consequently, more educated women entered the labor market. Now education has become one of the most important factors to participate in the business world.[26] Moreover, Scherer and Reyneri (2008) maintain that the most educated women are the most attached to the labor market, being the ones that spend the most time in it.[27] On the one side, there is a decrease in the unemployment rate of young people from 30.3% in 1995 to 20.3% in 2007.[28] On the other side, in the next graph the data from Istat about the employment rate of young Italian individuals is shown.

[24] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 2.
[25] Stefani SCHERER, Emilio REYNERI, "Come è cresciuta l'occupazione femminile in Italia: fattori strutturali e culturali a confronto", *Stato e mercato*, 2008, pp. 1.
[26] SCHERER, REYNERI, "Come è cresciuta l'occupazione…", cit., pp. 3-4.
[27] SCHERER, REYNERI, "Come è cresciuta l'occupazione…", cit., pp. 15.
[28] Ilaria MADAMA, Matteo JESSUOLA, Paolo GRAZIANO, "Flessibilità e sicurezza, per chi? Sviluppi di policy e conseguenze nel mercato del lavoro italiano", *Stato e mercato*, 2009, pp. 12.



Graph 3: Reddito netto, in "Istat", URL http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_REDNETFAMFONTERED#, (18-12-2021).

From graph 3 we understand that, even if at the beginning of the 21st century the employment rate increased greatly thanks to education, with the time passing by, instruction does not represent anymore the main factor for individuals to get a job. In the 20 years period shown, the percentage of both men and women dropped of around 14 percentual points, anyway keeping men with the highest employment rate in 2020, same percentage of women in 2005. Also, Colleoni and Arvidsson (2015) maintain that the percentage plunged, with women suffering the lack of employment the most.[29]

Traditionally the career is described as a linear progressive development "from the bottom to the top", meaning it as a transition from organizational positions with relatively low status, responsibilities, and remuneration, to higher positions, happening through promotions. Promotions or bonuses represent the most used method of dynamism in an organization. This development pattern results strongly attached to the male working experience, but not well-suited to describe the evolution of women's career. For example, an event as maternity can condition the working "line" of women, breaking it and not having a linear development anymore.[30] As also previously

[29] Elanor COLLEONI, Adam ARVIDSSON, "La partecipazione dei giovani al mercato del lavoro: il ruolo dei co-working space per i giovani freelance", by Lidia Katia C. Manzo, *MI GENERATION - Il piano di governance delle politiche giovanili della città di Milano (2013-2014)*, Milano, Comune di Milano, 2015, pp. 141.

[30] ALBANESI, CHIESA, "Le relazioni tra generi…", cit., pp. 44.

mentioned, in Italy professional paths are driven by different factors: employment benefits as well as job security are more important when women need to take a decision, while to men pay grade results as more important, affirm Cutillo and Centra (2017). Thus, occupations that have low penalties in case of career interruptions, as well as occupations that allow a reconciliation between family and work, may be preferred by women. Motherhood is seen by employers as matter that creates conflict between family and work, for this reason jobs that are considered more important are reserved for male colleagues. This causes in other occupations an overcrowding of women.[31] There is an over-representation of women in part-time jobs as well as in other non-standard arrangements.[32] In Italy, the proportion of employed women in managerial positions is lower than the average in Europe.[33] Looking at the percentage of women working in a part-time job in 2014 got close to 31%.[34] In 2020 this percentage has almost reached the 35%.[35] More than half of these part-timers is involuntary. This means that full time jobs are decreasing, and young women, in case of maternity, can not rely on an income.[36]

Conti and Sette (2013) in their research also confirmed that Italy, compared to the OECD countries, is one "with the lowest female labour force participation rates". The employment protection also varies widely depending on the characteristics of the firm individuals work at. The first dissimilarities to be noted are between the employees in the public and the private sectors, where workers can find more or less job security. Other differences are present in the private sector, depending on the firm, if it is large or small. Also, contracts can make a difference, because they can be permanent or temporary and so influencing the job security of their workers. Conti and Sette (2013) also mentions that the Italian Statistical Agency documented some evidence of employers pressuring women to not have children, suggesting that the firm does not want them to take the maternity leave. Consequently, the low participation rate was accompanied also by a fall in fertility rates. From a 2.7 in 1970 it went to 1.34 in

[31] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 2-4.
[32] STRUFFOLINO, RAITANO, "Early-Career Complexity Before and…", cit., pp. 236.
[33] Anna Maria MANGANELLI, Andrea BOBBIO, Chiara VOLPATO, "Sessismo e atteggiamento verso le donne manager", by Comitato Scientifico in *Differenze e Disparità: le questioni sui generi in psicologia sociale*, Parma, Università di Parma, 2009, pp. 13.
[34] ROSSELLI, *The Policy on Gender…*, cit., pp. 23.
[35] Statista 2021 (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1110811/youth-part-time-employment-by-gender-in-italy/) (15-12-2021)
[36] ROSSELLI, *The Policy on Gender…*, cit., pp. 23-24.

2005.[37] It rose a bit in 2010 with 1.44 to fall back to 1.36 in 2015 and also less in 2020 with 1.24.[38]

Albanesi and Chiesa (2019) maintain that, the choices as well as the development of the women's career are influenced by internal/psychological factors, as not enough self-trust or fear of success, and by external/social factors, as discrimination and lack of support from others.[39] For example, Toffanin (2018) wrote, in the process of renewing a company many women may lose their job and their only choice has not been a replacement in other sectors, but the return to the household, to take care of the family.[40] Other women decided instead to go abroad. For the first time after the 90s, in 2014 the number of Italian emigrates surpassed the one of foreign immigrants that reached Italy. Mainly were young individuals between 25 and 34 years old.[41]

Achievement is also reached through the evaluation of the employer, that directly influences the working income. Having a larger labor income makes workers feel a higher job satisfaction.[42] Fiorillo and Nappo (2014) in their article affirm that the Italian married as also the widowed individuals are the most satisfied with their occupations. The relationship between job satisfaction and age has the shape of an "U", with very young and old individuals being the most satisfied. This phenomenon can be explained by the little experience of judgment of the labor market that young workers have. With the gain of more experience, their satisfaction drops during middle age to then get higher again by the end of their work life.[43] In Italy job satisfaction can also be increased through the help of friends when looking for a job, because there is a chance of a longer tenure and a wage premium, affirm Fiorillo and Nappo (2014).[44] Job satisfaction is also considered by both men and women as the best motivator for work-life choices.[45]

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[37] Maurizio CONTI, Enrico SETTE, "Type of employer and fertility of working women: does working in the public sector or in a large private firm matter?", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 37, 6, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 1304-1305.
[38] Statista 2021 https://www.statista.com/statistics/734484/fertility-rate-in-italy/ (15-12-2021)
[39] ALBANESI, CHIESA, "Le relazioni tra generi sul luogo…", cit., pp. 40.
[40] TOFFANIN, "Donne al lavoro…", cit., pp. 127.
[41] TOFFANIN, "Donne al lavoro…", cit., pp. 125.
[42] Damiano FIORILLO, Nunzia NAPPO, "Job satisfaction in Italy: individual characteristics and social relations", *International Journal of Social Economics*, 41, 8, Emerald Publishing, 2014, pp. 685.
[43] FIORILLO, NAPPO, "Job satisfaction in Italy…", cit., pp. 694.
[44] FIORILLO, NAPPO, "Job satisfaction in Italy…", cit., pp. 696.
[45] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 10.

3. Camaraderie at Work

The construction of a social network as well as ways to acquire skills useful for the building of one's professional career were originally created through "internal" paths at the working place. Traditionally, young workers were employed as apprentices, usually through word of mouth of a worker inside the company. This person would than guarantee the willingness of the young worker. Once trained, the young worker would receive a formal acknowledgment of the learned skills. This acknowledgment could then be used in the labor market or in the same company where the trainer sheep took place to gain career's progresses. Today, differently from the young apprentice, young people have to create by themselves a working network, affirm their skills in their sector and build their own knowledge, not only out of the traditional workplace, but also individually.[46]

Nowadays, a very important characteristic in a workplace is also the atmosphere that can help colleagues to better get in touch with each other and develop a broader knowledge of the job itself. This is identified as the coworking space. From the research of Colleoni and Arvidsson (2015), Italy is at the 8th place between the nations with most coworking spaces in the world. The coworking space is a space of collaboration and sharing arranged from the low levels based on the ethic of the "open source" and the "do-it-yourself". In this context, individuals give advice, help each other, sharing their own knowledge, experimenting, and practicing creative and innovative solutions.[47] The share of knowledge is one of the fundamental reasons of the participation at the space of coworking. In particular, the possibility to receive help while developing one's project and getting feedback about one's ideas, the possibility to learn from others and most of all the chance to get different professional points of view from individuals different from one's own, even if used in the same general working environment. Thanks to a coworking space, many coworkers have the chance to get in contact with professionals, such as people with a specific knowledge, as well, and from these interactions fruitful working relations can be created. In this way, coworking itself becomes an important form of business opportunity generation.[48] The share of knowledge plays an important

[46] COLLEONI, ARVIDSSON, "La partecipazione dei giovani…", cit., pp. 145.
[47] COLLEONI, ARVIDSSON, "La partecipazione dei giovani…", cit., pp. 145.
[48] COLLEONI, ARVIDSSON, "La partecipazione dei giovani…", cit., pp. 147.

role in a coworking space, and Colleoni and Arvidsson (2015) maintain that the internet is one of the most favorite tools to acquire new skills at work. The need of sharing competences through interactions with people with different skills is one of the main reasons why individuals prefer being in a coworking space. The same values and the same creative attitude are the most shared elements.[49]

A phenomenon happening in the working place is the so-called syndrome of the queen bee. This happens because manager women that always found themselves in an environment always full of men want to conceal themselves between their male colleagues, and for this reason they start to oppose themselves to the promotion of other female colleagues and to assume "male behaviors". According to dominant gender stereotypes, women are expected to be kind and have gentle manners, while a more authoritative behavior is automatically connected and considered normal in a man. It can happen that, when women get employed, they get high expectations, and when they are actually good at their job other women see them as a "danger", starting to put a spanner in the work until the victim does not accept the situation or directly quits the job.[50] The environment strongly influences the result expectancy and auto-efficacy. Thus, if individuals collect positive experiences connected to a certain career, then his sense of auto-efficacy will increase together with the expectancy of success in that sector. On the opposite side, if the experiences won't be positive, the interest in that particular career will decrease, as it may happen in the situation previously described. The influence of the socio-cultural context is a determining factor in defining individual professional choices. Albanesi and Chiesa (2019) define two different mechanisms: the proximal influence and the distal influence. The first one concerns factors that intervene in the process through which individuals transform interests in goals and try to realize goals in actions. At this level, discrimination and lack of support can strongly influence women's career. The second mechanism, the distal influence, concerns the impact of context factors and background on experiences, that then condition auto-efficacy and expected results. A significant distal factor is represented by gender stereotypes.[51]

[49] COLLEONI, ARVIDSSON, "La partecipazione dei giovani…", cit., pp. 164.
[50] *Donne in ufficio, che guerra. Ecco perché si cannibalizzano*, "affariitaliani.it", 2014, URL https://www.affaritaliani.it/costume/donne-lavoro131014.html?refresh_ce (08-12-2021).
[51] ALBANESI, CHIESA, "Le relazioni tra generi…", cit., pp. 40-41.

Differently from the previous chapter, when researching for camaraderie between young Italian women, information can hardly be found. This topic, as many others when studying the situation of women at work, is strongly connected to pregnancy and everything concerning it. Hereafter, a short introduction to pregnancy while working in Italy can be found.

In general, work is put at the first place, when colleagues dedicate less time to their job for familiar reasons, even if they complete all the tasks asked in their contracts, not always other colleagues express a favorable opinion. Above all, women are the ones to feel elements of hindrance and obstacle to their working activities when trying to fulfill their parental work.[52] In Italy maternity is protected, and, in the EU, it has one of the longest maternity leaves, about 22 weeks, and also the parental leave is generous. However, the Italian productive context needs to be taken into consideration. Firms with less than 10 employees amount to the 95%, and employers who fear maternity leaves, because it would reduce their female workforce for a certain time due to the long absence, sometimes resort to, as Rosselli (2014) maintains, "the unlawful practice of asking young women to sign an undated letter of resignation, to be used in case of pregnancy to justify their dismissal". A law called "dimissioni in bianco" was established to fight this circumstance in 2007, but no significant results were obtained. Currently it is under discussion in the Parliament.[53] Rosselli (2014) also better describes maternity and paternity leaves.

> Besides a compulsory maternity leave of 5 months for all employees and self-employed women with a social security membership (that is, 73% of the mothers in 2011), the so-called "Law on reconciliation of work and family life" has extended the parental leave to both parents. Each parent is individually entitled to a parental leave for a maximum of 6 months and 10 months for the couple. If the father takes up at least 3 months, an extra bonus of one month is granted to the couple. In the public sector, the father is entitled to 100 per cent of the salary for up to 30 days. After that, in general, the salary is reduced by

[52] Fortuna PROCENTESE, "Interdipendenza relazionale e ruoli di genere: processi di costruzione sociale", by Comitato Scientifico in *Differenze e Disparità: le questioni sui generi in psicologia sociale*, Parma, 2009, pp. 55-56.
[53] ROSSELLI, *The Policy on Gender…*, cit., pp. 23.

> 70 per cent for a maximum of 6 months and to zero for the remaining period. Very few fathers take up extended parental leaves. (Rosselli, 2014)[54]

This is the Italian situation in recent years for working women. Women encounter many difficulties during their pregnancy and after their maternity leave when they return to the office. Toffanin (2018) maintains, that women have to bear the presence of employers that impose intense exploitation of pregnant women, as if they want to punish them for wanting a child, or other employers that impose such unbearable working conditions to the point that neo mothers decide to resign as soon as they come back to the office after their mandatory maternity leave. Italian companies mostly use tools such as giving lower tasks, transfers or refuse to give permits even when it's a right.[55] Cutillo and Centra (2017) add that 14% of mothers employed before giving birth to their children decided to resign immediately after their delivery. The two main reasons for their resignation were the need and wish to spend time with their children and the difficulties and problems in trying to reconcile work and family.[56]

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, three elements in the working lives of young women were analyzed: equity, achievement and camaraderie. At first, we study the development of the law to reach equity and how now equity is reached, at a formal level. The employment rate is low due to the fact that women have to leave their job to take care of their homes and children. Many women want to work and be economically independent, they do not want to be only seen as mothers and wives. It is considered that, if the husband would help more at home, it would create a more positive environment. Also, in Italy there is a difference in the income between men and women, with men earning till 30% more than their counterparts. Generally, when choosing a job, men and women have different preferences, and gender stereotypes are still present. It is difficult for a woman to have a linear career's development. Later, the grade of satisfaction of the job is also introduced. In the last section, it is analyzed the importance of the construction of a social network at work as also the importance of a coworking space, with Italy finding herself at the 8th

[54] ROSSELLI, *The Policy on Gender…*, cit., pp. 27.
[55] TOFFANIN, "Donne al lavoro…", cit., pp. 129.
[56] CUTILLO, CENTRA, "Gender-Based Occupational Choices…", cit., pp. 10.

place between the nations of the world with the most coworking spaces. At last, the syndrome of the queen bee is mentioned and pregnancy in Italy is introduced.

Chapter 4: Working Young Women's Happiness: a comparison between Japan and Italy

> Happiness is typically defined by how people experience and evaluate their lives as a whole. Since the majority of people spend much of their lives at work, it is critically important to gain a solid understanding of the role that employment and the workplace play in shaping happiness for individuals and communities around the world. (De Neve, Ward, 2017)[1]

This is what two authors of the World Happiness Reports – important documents that we will introduce later in this chapter – maintain and confirm about the very special link between happiness and work. As we will see later, work does not influence happiness only through its wage, work is important in shaping happiness in many other aspects: job type, workplace characteristics, income, and so on. It is also known that relationship between work and happiness runs in both ways, because also happiness has an influence on work. The happiness of employees has deep repercussions on the productivity and on the company performance.[2] Some companies, such as Apple, Google and Amazon, are introducing the figure of the Chief Happiness Officer to help and create a good environment in the office.[3]

De Neve and Ward (2017) maintain that unemployment is associated with misery and unhappiness at an individual and a macroeconomic level, because countries with high unemployment rates often have a low happiness index. Individuals in a working age, but not in the labor market (because they are stay-at-home parents, or have a disability, or are retired) evaluate their situation more unhappy if they are men. Work can bring to happiness or unhappiness also depending on the amount of time spent at work, and an important predictor for happiness studies is work-life balance as also job satisfaction, understood as engagement, depending also from the working environment, if individuals work alone or with others, if it is during the day or during the night.[4] Data from all over the world reveal a strong difference between blue- and white-collar jobs,

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[1] Jan-Emmanuel DE NEVE, George WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at Work", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2017*, United Nations, 2017, pp. 145.
[2] *Ibidem*.
[3] PAVEL, Krapivin, *How Google's Strategy For Happy Employees Boosts Its Bottom Line*, in "Forbes", 2018, URL https://www.forbes.com/sites/pavelkrapivin/2018/09/17/how-googles-strategy-for-happy-employees-boosts-its-bottom-line/?sh=353567e222fc (15-01-2022)
[4] DE NEVE, WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at…", cit., 2017, pp. 145-146.

with the first systematically bond to lower levels of happiness.[5] According to the Cantril ladder, explained later in this chapter, in the World Happiness Reports white-collars had a score of 6, out of 10, and blue-collars 4,5.[6] Data about part-time jobs are very variable, because everything depends on the reasons why a person is working as a part-timer. It can be a choice or a form of underemployment, which means that that person would have liked to find a full-time job but could only find a part-time job.[7]

At the opposite side of unemployment, another great manifestation of unhappiness at work can be observed in the "workaholism", defined as a work addiction, now recognized as an illness and a pathologic dependency both in Japan and Italy, where it is becoming more and more common between young individuals.[8] In Japan this phenomenon is so drastic that they created specific terms to describe it, which are *karōshi* (death due to overwork) and *karōjisatsu* (suicide due to overwork). This phenomenon started to be recognized only in the 1970s due to the high frequency of its happening, before that, *karōshi* was treated as a family matter. Overworking is almost seen as obvious in Japan, respecting the other colleagues that are doing the same for the company. The company itself represents family for its workers and for this reason it becomes almost normal spending most of one's time for it. This phenomenon hits both men and women, usually young. Justin McCurry (2017) wrote about this matter in his article, bringing up cases of young women dying from overwork in Japan. In 2016 more than two thousand Japanese workers committed suicide and dozens lost their lives due to strokes, heart attacks or other conditions caused by working too many hours. 80 hours of overtime are considered the time limit after which working more hours can become a risk for the person's health. In the article of McCurry (2017) it is also maintained that one out of five Japanese persons die due to overwork.[9]

In this chapter, firstly, the important points of the previous chapters are summarized, with additional data about gender gap and unpaid work. To better analyze

[5] DE NEVE, WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at…", cit., 2017, pp. 145.
[6] DE NEVE, WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at…", cit., 2017, pp. 156.
[7] DE NEVE, WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at…", cit., 2017, pp. 148.
[8] FRANCESCA, Milano, *Allarme workaholism, i giovani lavorano troppo (il 32% lo fa anche in bagno)*, in "Il Sole 24 Ore", 2019, URL https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/allarme-workaholism-giovani-lavorano-troppo-e-32percento-fa-anche-bagno-ABr3yYdB?refresh_ce=1 (24-01-2022).
[9] JUSTIN, McCurry, *Japanese woman 'dies from overwork' after logging 159 hours of overtime in a month*, in "The Guardian", 2017, URL https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/05/japanese-woman-dies-overwork-159-hours-overtime (24-01-2022).

the relation between happiness and work, as well to compare the happiness of young women in Japan and Italy with updated data, the World Happiness Reports, edited every year by the UN, and the Better Life Index, edited by the OECD, have been utilized. Lastly, a short excursus on the changes caused by COVID-19 in happiness and quality of life is introduced, on a global level, as also for Italy and Japan.

1. Comparison of equity, achievement, and camaraderie between the Japanese and the Italian situation

In chapter 2 and chapter 3, the situation of Japanese and Italian working young women was analyzed. From these previous observations we can affirm that the Japanese and the Italian situations are similar.

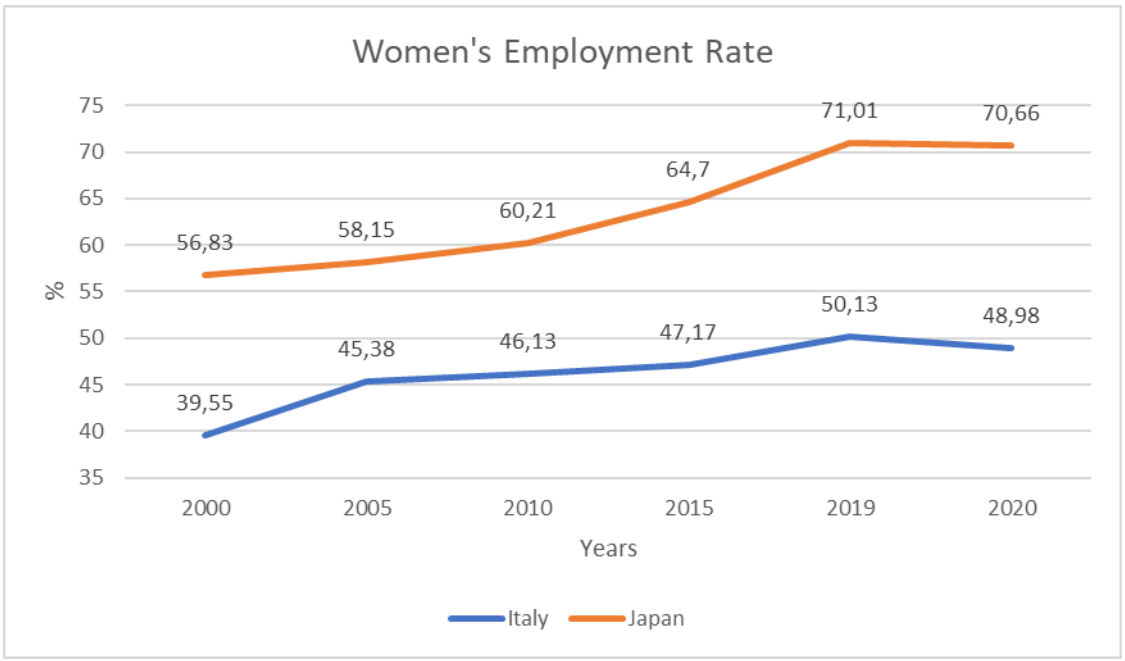
First, in both countries, due to the fact that there were bad working conditions, legal improvements were made. In the case of Japan, it was the EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law) in 1986, which reinforced the existent two-track system that kept being different for men and women. In the case of Italy, there were also legal improvements, considering as well as the Law 300 of 1971 in the Statute of the Workers with modifications till 2016, but it resulted more in a worsening of the men's working conditions, than in an improvement of women's working conditions (Rosselli, 2014). In addition, Quadrelli (2012) maintains that Italian women find themselves at the lowest position in the European labor market.

Considering the topic of stereotypes, they are still very present in both Japan and Italy. One of the reasons why is the old part of their population that is getting bigger. Comparing both graphs about demography in both chapter 2 and chapter 3, we can see how in the beginning of the 2000s the percentage of the old population from age 65 and over was 17,4% in Japan and 18,7% in Italy. In these years the amount of old people was very similar. In 2020 the percentage increased in both countries, but more in the Nipponese country. Japan rose to 28,7%, while Italy to 23,2%. Coulmas (2009) adds that longevity is seen as an indicator of happiness.[10] Having a bigger number of the old population means that beliefs and concepts of their generation are being kept alive also now. For this reason, stereotypes are difficult to overcome, also causing obstacles in

[10] Florian COULMAS, "The Quest for Happiness in Japan", *Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien*, 9, 1, Tokyo, Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, 2009, pp. 2. URL www.dijtokyo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WP0901_Coulmas.pdf, (2020-04-17).

reaching gender equality. Kitamura (2005) mentioned that Japanese women's stereotype depicted them as always gentle and kind, a feature strongly connected also to Italian women (Affari Italiani, 2014). This stereotype is strongly connected to the family model present in both countries, where the man is working, and the woman is taking care of the house and children. Moreover, considering the Japanese stereotypes, Kitamura (2005) asserts that Japanese women take advantage of the stereotypes that their society casts on them.

Another similar situation is the employment rate. For both countries, even if it rose from the beginning of the 2000s, the employment rate slightly decreased in recent years due to the COVID-19 situation that will be observed at the end of this chapter, as we can see from the OECD data in graph 1.



Graph 2: "OECD Data", URL https://data.oecd.org/emp/employment-rate.htm#indicator-chart, (14-01-2022).

For a woman it is difficult to have a linear development of her own career, due to possible interruptions like a pregnancy. Many women prefer to leave their job after marriage, that often coincides with the transfer to another city or another country mainly for husbands for work (the so-called *tenkin*). Japanese women usually tend to go back to work in a part-time job. This explains the M-shaped curve, mentioned in the second chapter. While in Italy it is becoming more complex for women to find part-time jobs. Moreover, in both Japan and Italy employers purposefully pressured women to leave the

job: in Japan it existed the habit to tap the shoulder of the lady (*katatataki*) to invite female workers to leave their job, while in Italy women had to sign a resignment paper without a date so that the employer could fill it out as soon as the woman would become pregnant. This was also one of the reasons why, in Italy, many women started avoiding getting pregnant, causing a very low fertility rate, one of the lowest in Europe.

Both Japanese and Italian women want to change their image, they want to work even after pregnancy, they want to be seen not only as mothers or wives. There is the intention to distance themselves from the traditional idea of family. Japanese women start to go studying abroad to discover other nations and start looking for a partner they like, without the social pressure to find a husband to become the perfect wife. Also, Italian women started to go more and more abroad, but in their families, they have more difficulties in organizing their time between work and family. With this asymmetry in the management of time between husband and wife, it ends up that, in terms of time, women work more than men. In the years, until recently, the average age of marriage increased for both countries, reaching, in the last five years, in Japan 31 years for men and 29 years for women, and in Italy 35 years for men and 32 years for women. This fact confirms how in modern times women are changing their priorities over marriage. This said, a data that shows us that this process will still take time is the female delegation in politics. Only looking at the percentage of women in the Parliament, their number is still low compared to the male's one: in Italy it reaches the 35,7%, while in Japan only the 9,9%.[11]

Also, as analyzed in chapter 2 and chapter 3, both Japan's and Italy's women earn up to 30% less than men, even if the women in both countries are now more educated than in the past, because education is becoming an important factor to enter the labor market.

Lastly, while we observed the interactions in a Japanese office and how female workers tend to stay in the office full-time until marriage, in Italy interactions are valued as precious and to reach a better communication between colleagues the co-working space is preferred. This circumstance is confirmed by the fact that Italy is at the 8th position in the world for most co-working space in its nation.

[11] "Global Gender Gap Report 2021", *World Economic Forum*, Switzerland, 2021, pp.229-234, URL www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021, (14-01-2022).

2. Gender Gap and Unpaid Work: a problem for Japanese and Italian women

In order to deepen and quantify the gender gap in both Japan and Italy, we utilize the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), published every year by the World Economic Forum, starting from 2006, to identify the advancement towards gender parity and to compare countries (154 in 2020 and more in 2021). The GGGI generates its index through four different factors: (1) work and economic opportunities, (2) education, (3) health, and (4) political leadership.

In 2020 the report outlines a global gender gap of 68,6%, where 100% means equality.[12] Analyzing the two countries we are interested in, it increases the gravity of the problem: in "The Global Gender Gap Index 2020 ranking", Japan and Italy are, respectively, in position 121 and 76. Both find themselves in disadvantage compared to their belonging area: Japan is third to last among the countries of East Asia and Italy is also third among European countries.[13]

Interesting data can be found analyzing the subindex of Japan and Italy. About health and education there is almost no more gender gap, while gaps are still present and oversized in work and economic participation and opportunities, and political empowerment.

Women around the world could reach the most progresses in education: "120 countries have closed at least 95% of their educational gender gaps" (Global Gender Gap Report 2020, 11). Italy and Japan, between the 153 analyzed countries, respectively have an Educational Attainment (Appendix, figure A1) score of 0,997 and 0,983 (the score goes from 0 to 1). Thus, both very close to 1.[14]

About the work participation, the Global Gender Gap Report (2020) maintains

> Lack of progress in closing the Economic Participation and Opportunity gap leads to an extension of the time it will be needed to close this gap. At the slow speed experienced over the period 2006-2020, it will take 257 years to close this gap. (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020)[15]

[12] "Global Gender Gap Report 2020", *World Economic Forum*, Switzerland, 2020, pp. 5, URL www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf, (15-01-2022).
[13] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 9.
[14] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 12.
[15] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 6.

The situation is different when observing the subindex work-economic participation (figure A2). This subindex is very interesting for this research because, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, the relation between work and happiness is strong. The subindex work-economic participation is built with statistic average of data about employment rates, wage equality for similar work, earned income, percentages of senior and manager positions. In this case, both countries have a poor performance and are also close to each other in the global ranking. On a score from 0 to 1: Japan has 0,598 at position 115 and Italy has 0,595 at position 117, both in the final section of the ranking.[16]

Instead, the subindex of political empowerment is based on the presence of women in important political roles for the State. In this case, both countries do not have a high score, but Japan has a clear gap. In the ranking, Italy is at position 44 with a score of 0,267, while Japan is around the last positions, 144, with a score of 0,049, just before countries like Iran and Nigeria. In this case, countries like Qatar and Kuwait have a better subindex than Japan.[17]

We understand that Italy and Japan are very similar: in health and education the parity between men and women is almost reached, while there is still a big gap in working and economic opportunities. Compared to Italian women, Japanese women are more in disadvantage due to the very little access to political roles. The authors of the Global Gender Gap Report (2020) describe Japan's situation as the following:

> Japan's gender gap is by far the largest among all advanced economies and has widened over the past year. The country ranks 121st out of 153 countries on this year's Global Gender Gap Index, down 1 percentage point and 11 positions from 2018. Japan has narrowed slightly its economic gender gap, but from a very low base (score of 59.8, 115th). Indeed, the gap in this area is the third-largest among advanced economies, after Italy (117th) and the Republic of Korea (127th). Only 15% of senior and leadership positions are held by women (131st), whose income is around half that of men (108th). The progress achieved in the economic arena has been more than offset by a widening of the political gender gap. Japan has only closed 5% of the gap in this dimension (144th). At 10%, female representation in the Japanese parliament is one of the lowest in the world

[16] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 12.
[17] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 13.

(135th) and 20% below the average share across advanced economies. (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020)[18]

It is also important, to evaluate women's life conditions, to measure the unpaid care work, that is defined as

> all unpaid services provided within a household for its members (by women, primarily, but also to varying degrees by girls, men and boys), including direct care of persons and housework and voluntary community work (Ferrant, Thim, 2019)[19]

These activities can be considered as a real job, because in theory a third person could be paid to do them, but they are not recognized by families, the society as well as by the System of National Accounts.[20] It is difficult to analyze it quantitatively, because these unpaid care works all happen in the domestic walls, without established timetables and no legal protection. Their importance is recognized by major institutions like ILO (International Labour Organization) or OECD, that provide insightful esteems and evaluations. The unpaid work started to be related with gender gap evaluations, because it also shows great disproportion between the load between women and men. The female overload of unpaid care work shows great resistance, because it is barely touched by the growth of income and from the improvement of economic and professional conditions. In general,

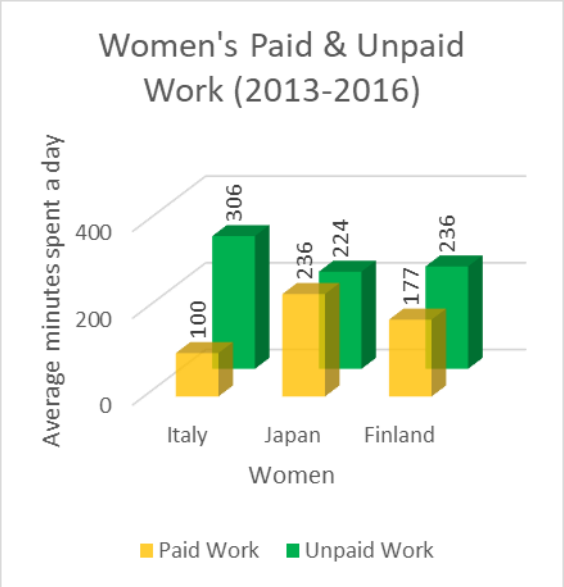
> education does not guarantee a reduction in unpaid care work for women: primary school education does not have a significant impact on the time women spend on routine housework, and, in some cases, is associated with an increase. Only women with higher education are likely to see a decrease in routine housework, due to increasing income and opportunities to substitute these responsibilities with market services. (Ferrant, Thim, 2019)[21]

Economic growth is only partially associated with reductions in the unpaid care work of women. In the developing countries women still commit a huge amount of

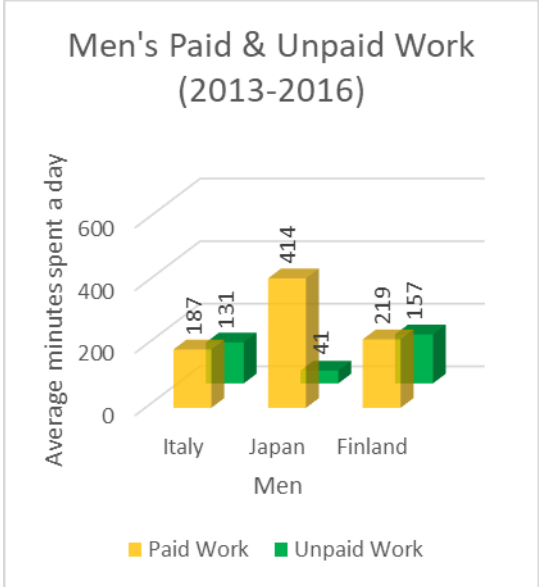
[18] "Global Gender…", cit., 2020, pp. 31.
[19] Gaëlle FERRANT, Annelise THIM, "Measuring women's economic empowerment: Time use data and gender inequality", OECD Development Policy Papers, 16, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2019, pp. 6, URL doi.org/10.1787/02e538fc-en, (15-01-2022).
[20] *Ibidem*.
[21] FERRANT, THIM, "Measuring Women's…", cit., 2019, pp. 5.

hours of unpaid work to, for example, collecting fuel or water. Also, an economic development of high levels does not automatically mean that there will be an equal redistribution of this kind of work between men and women, because restrictive gender norms keep placing the responsibility for childcare and domestic work on women. Already at an early age, girls and boys are confronted with gender gaps also in the unpaid care work, increasing for women at the time of childbirth and marriage. Even so, for men marriage may bring actually a decrease of their time spent on the needed unpaid work: if factors like age, location, number of children, and similar stay the same, then, compared to single men, the time spent on routine housework is less for married men.[22]

It is worth to notice, that Italy and Japan are, between the developed countries, the nations with higher load on women of unpaid work and childcare: more than ¾ of the whole unpaid care work is undertaken by women. Korea, Mexico, Turkey and Portugal are also included.[23]



Graph 3: "OECD Data", URL https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TIME_USE, (14-01-2022).



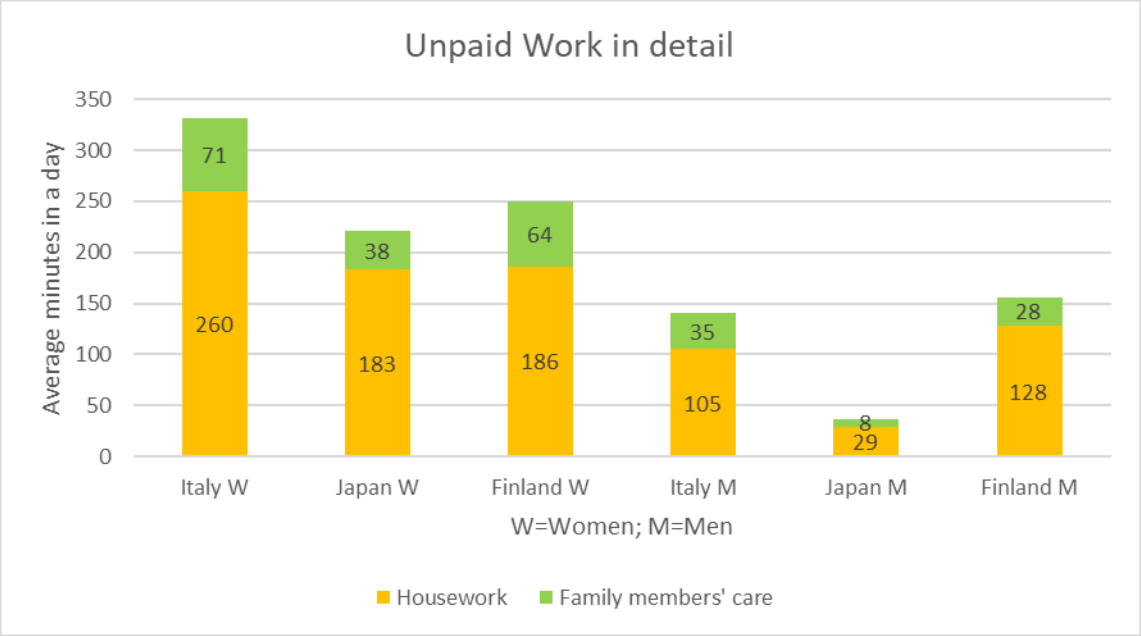
Graph 3: "OECD Data", URL https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TIME_USE, (14-01-2022).

In graph 2 and 3 the paid and unpaid work of men and women is put in comparison between Japan, Italy and the happiest country in the world, according to the

[22] *Ibidem*.

[23] "Gender inequality in unpaid work", *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2017, URL read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/the-pursuit-of-gender-equality/gender-inequality-in-unpaid-work_9789264281318-18-en#page10, (15-01-2022).

rankings of the World Happiness Report 2020, Finland. Italian women commit more than 300 minutes a day in unpaid care work: 260 in routine housework providing meals and 71 in taking care of other members of the family. Japanese women, compared to the Italian one, dedicate less time to their unpaid work: 183 minutes in routine housework providing meals and 38 in taking care of other members of the family. On the other side, Japanese women work more than double in paid work. Finnish women have instead more balance instead of Japanese and Italian women, with a total of 236 minutes: they commit 186 minutes in routine housework providing meals and 64 in taking care of other members of the family.



Graph 4: OECD Data https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TIME_USE (14-01-2022)

Observing also graph 4, it is curious to see how the time spent with their children, included in the "Family members' care", by Japanese men is in average 8 minutes a day, in contrast with the 16 of Italy and 13 of Finland. Also, while Italian men spend 131 minutes in unpaid work, of which 105 in routine housework providing meals and 34 in taking care of other members of the family, Japanese men have a total of both of 36. In contrast, the latter work 452 minutes. In this case, Finnish men work a load of time closer to the Italian one.

3. Measures of Happiness by the UN with the World Happiness Reports: comparison between Japan and Italy

What observed till now will be put in relation to other international data of happiness between Italy and Japan found in sources as the World Happiness Report (WHR)[24] of the UN (United Nations).

The WHR is a document created every year, starting from 2012, on behalf of the UN, that will become an important tool for the future, because encourages reflections and studies about happiness in every country of the world. The assignment to complete these reports was given to a group of independent researchers, the Sustainable Development Solution Network, directed from Jeffrey Sachs, professor at Columbia University. The first report (2012) starts with an important preface of Sachs, who declares the necessity of having a new science of happiness in the world.

> What is important to know is that both kinds of happiness have predictable causes that reflect various facets of our human nature and our social life. Affective happiness captures the day-to-day joys of friendship, time with family, and sex, or the downsides of long work commutes and sessions with one's boss. Evaluative happiness measures very different dimensions of life, those that lead to overall satisfaction or frustration with one's place in society. Higher income, better health of mind and body, and a high degree of trust in one's community ("social capital") all contribute to high life satisfaction; poverty, ill health, and deep divisions in the community all contribute to low life satisfaction. […] happiness differs systematically across societies and over time, for reasons that are identifiable, and even alterable through the ways in which public policies are designed and delivered. It makes sense, in other words, to pursue policies to raise the public's happiness as much as it does to raise the public's national income. Bhutan is on to something path breaking and deeply insightful. And the world is increasingly taking notice. (Sachs, 2012)[25]

The idea behind these reports took some time to become consistent. In the 1970s emerged an international debate about the limits of economic growth that was aiming only to the production of goods, exploiting the globe and creating wider differences. Big topics previously discussed by psychologists, philosophers and sociologists, now started

[24] All World Happiness Reports can be found here: https://worldhappiness.report/archive/.
[25] SACHS, Jeffrey, "Introduction", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2012*, United Nations, 2012, pp. 7.

to be approached also by economists, as topics about environment, sustainability, well-being and happiness. Scholars tried to find other ways to measure GDP with also other indicators. Then, the starting idea of creating these reports came from the sovereign of Bhutan, who wanted to have a different perspective and to give more importance to well-being and happiness as indicators to measure the economic development instead of GPD. From the 70s, the governors of Bhutan, a small Buddhist State in the Himalaya with less than a million inhabitants, started to affirm that happiness is more important than income, the GDP (1972).

> Since they were far away, not many people knew of their happiness. But the king in his goodness and wisdom decided this had to change. This made the people uneasy. And he wanted to give up many of his powers, which made them afraid. The king was married to four beautiful sisters and had many children. But he worried that future kings might not be as good and wise as he. So he wanted the people to rule themselves. To help them, he bequeathed the secret of his golden rule. And he gave it a name: Gross National Happiness. (The Economist, 2004)[26]

They introduced in their reign the Gross National Happiness (GNH) based on four keystones: sustainable development, environmental preservation, good government, promotion of the traditional culture. Many criticized these elements to be too Buddhist.

World Happiness Reports try to estimate the level of happiness in the different nations of the world. The following variables are used: "GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, social support, social freedom, generosity, and absence of corruption" (Helliwell, Huang, Wang, 2017).

The first two parameters are obtained from objective data coming from World Bank and World Health Organization, while the others through surveys conducted by Gallup. Every year, to gather data for the WHR, Gallup asks around 1000 individuals of each nation of the world to answer four questions, giving a vote through the ladder of Cantril. The Cantril ladder is an imaginary ladder with 10 steps, where the top represents the best life possible and the bottom the worst one.[27] In 1965 Hadley Cantril, a social psychologist, tried to measure happiness, also synonym of life satisfaction for

[26] "The pursuit of happiness", *The Economist*, 18 december 2004, pp. 109.

[27] John F. HELLIWELL, Haifang HUANG, Shun WANG, "Chapter 2: The social foundations of World Happiness", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2017*, United Nations, 2017, pp. 9.

him, quantitatively and comparing it to the one of other countries. Cantril asked individuals living in 14 different nations of the world, from the United States to Nigeria, from Japan to Brasil, to answer surveys about fears, happiness, aspirations and hopes. Regarding the survey about happiness, the question "Some people look happy and satisfied with their lives, others unhappy and unsatisfied. From a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means being extremely unsatisfied of one's life and 10 means being completely satisfied with one's life, where would you position yourself, in term of satisfaction and unsatisfaction of your private life?" was asked. Cantril found out that the global average was around 7,6, while the one of Americans was around 6,6: this was the first data that started the debate about the relation between income and subjective well-being, also later called "paradox of happiness".[28]

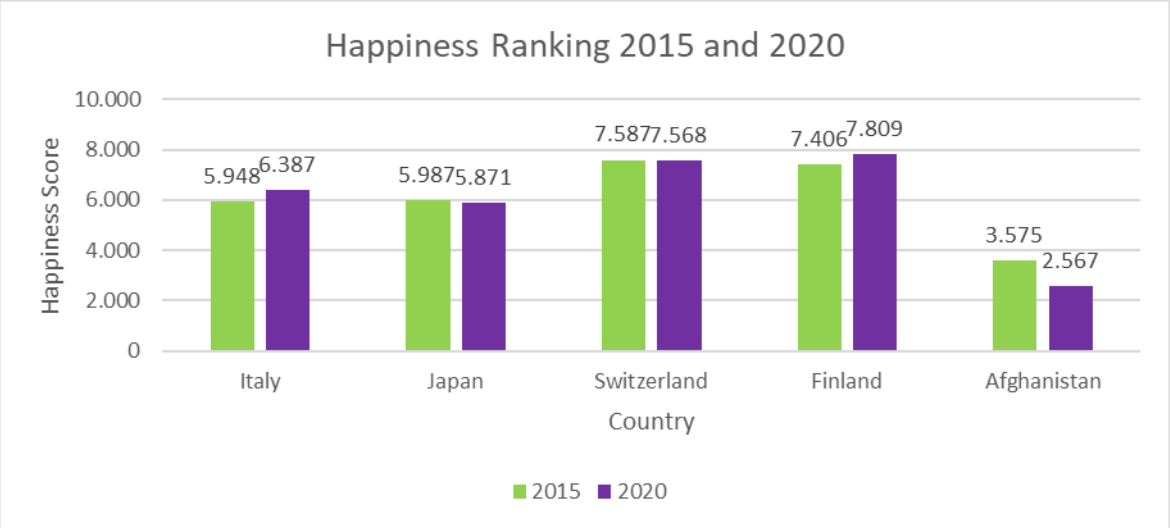
- Social support is measured as the national average of individual answers to the Gallup's question: "If you would find yourself in difficulty, would you have relatives or friends you can count on to get help when needed, or not?".
- Social freedom answers the Gallup's question: "Are you satisfied or unsatisfied of your freedom to choose what you can do with your life?".
- Generosity is calculated from the average of the answers to the Gallup's question: "Did you donate money into charity in the last month?".
- Lastly, the perception of corruption is measured as the national average of individual answers to the Gallup's questions: "Is corruption widespread in the government or not?" or "Is corruption widespread in companies or not?".

Gathering the different averages of these data, the WHR calculates the Happiness Score, also called Happiness Index, on a scale from 1 to 10 for every country of the world and builds a ranking, important for this thesis because we can compare Japan and Italy between themselves as also in the international ranking. Every year the WHR deepens the analysis of particular areas (as China, United States, Africa) and the study of specific topics, always considering happiness, that are being important in the global debate, as migration, urbanization, eco-sustainability, health policies. In the last 11 years, for two different times the relation between happiness and work has been studied: a part has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, while the other will be analyzed in the final part of this chapter.

[28] Luigino BRUNI, *Economia e Felicità*, in "Treccani", 2009. URL www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/economia-e-felicita_%28XXI-Secolo%29/, (19-01-2022).

The WHRs want to study happiness in both meanings, as we mentioned in the first chapter: as life satisfaction, but also as emotional states. Happiness as an emotional state is divided in six positive experiences and six negative experiences. The positive ones are enjoyment, smiling or laughter, happiness, feeling safe at night, feeling interested, and feeling well-rested. The negative ones are worry, anger, depression, sadness, pain and stress. These data are offered only by large world regions and not by country.[29] We will not analyze this kind of happiness, but it is interesting to observe that women in the world are usually happier than men when younger, to than become less happy than men in an older age (figure A12). On the other side, in case of sadness women in the world look sadder than their male counterparts (figure A13).

Observing the results of the rankings of the WHR the positions of Italy and Japan are not far from each other, confirming what suggested in the first part of this chapter.



Graph 5: WHR 2015 (URL https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2015/WHR15_Sep15.pdf) and WHR 2020 (URL https://happiness-report.s3.amazonaws.com/2020/WHR20.pdf), (14-01-2022)

As we understand from graph 5, in the WHR of 2015 the first position was occupied by Switzerland. Japan was at the 46th place followed by Italy in position 50. Afghanistan was at position 153 out of 158, with a score between 3 and 4, while Togo was last with less than 3. In 2020 Switzerland switched its first place with Finland, close

[29] Nicole FORTIN, John F. HELLIWELL, Shun WANG, "How does subjective well-being vary around the world by gender and age?", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2015*, United Nations, 2015, pp. 46.

to score 8, followed by Denmark, Switzerland and other countries located in North Europe. Italy rose to position 30 but staying after many countries of Western Europe and others like New Zealand, Australia, Canada and United States. Meanwhile, Japan fell to position 62, with a score close to 6, and Afghanistan fell to the last position with a score between 2 and 3. Finland stays at the first place in both rankings as also, as we will see later in this chapter, in the classifications of the OECD.

Thus, in the range of the last 5 years, Japan's situation became worst, while that of Italy improved. Before COVID-19, Italy was at position 30 with a score of 6,387, and Japan with 5,871 at position 62. Between the indicators of both countries, the GDP pro capita is not very different, while there is an important distinction between the one of generosity and perception of corruption.

Japan and Italy are also similar in performing large changing happiness in a range of 10 years, from 2005-2007 to 2014-2016, as we understand from figure A11. Japan finds itself at position 106, while Italy a bit further, at position 115.

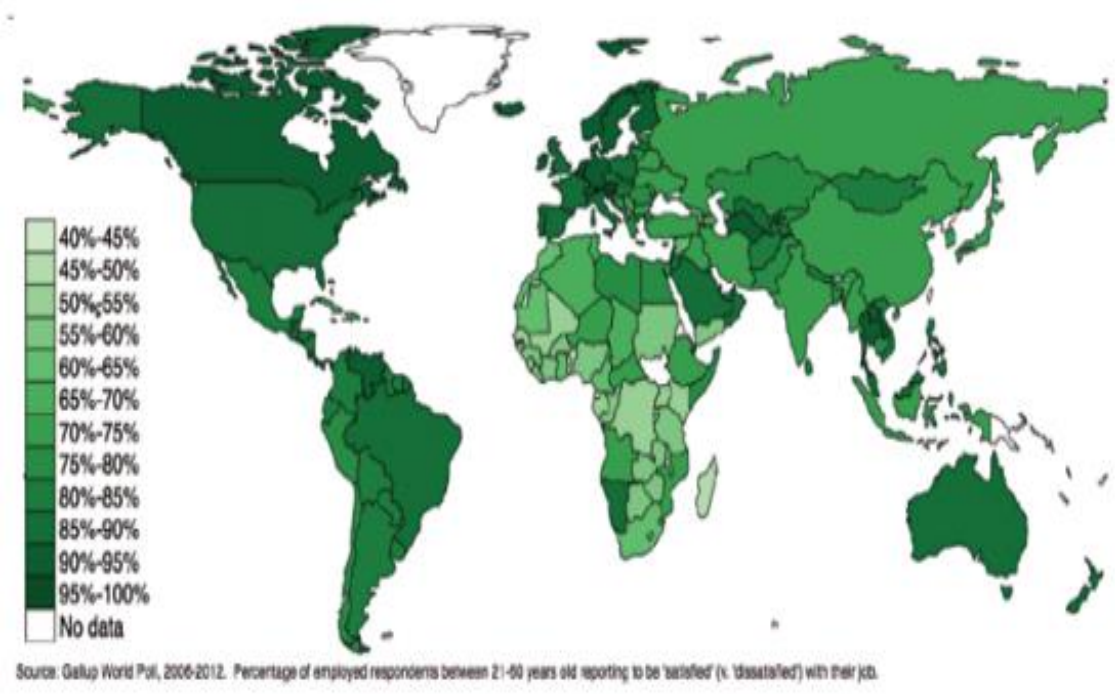


Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Around the World
DE NEVE, WARD, "Chapter 6: Happiness at Work", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, World Happiness Report 2017, United Nations, 2017, pp. 162.

Also in the WHR 2017 Italy and Japan are very similar in the map of "Job Satisfaction Around the World" (figure 1) as well as in the Ranking of Happiness 2014-2016 (figure A6). In figure 1 we understand that Japan has a job satisfaction of a range

between 70% and 75%, while Italy between 75% and 80%. In figure A6, out of 155 nations with Norway and Denmark occupying the first positions, Italy and Japan are very close, relatively occupying the 48th and 51st positions.

Thus, economic studies of human happiness affirm that "employment matters greatly for the wellbeing of individuals" (De Neve, Ward, 2017, 146). As we mentioned before, Japan and Italy have a job satisfaction that is similar, around ¾ of the total. This is connected to their ranking of happiness, finding them in the first third, not far from each other.

4. Measures of Happiness by the OECD with the Better Life Index: comparison between Japan and Italy

Also the OECD wanted to create its own index for happiness. Getting inspiration to the Stieglitz Report and its concept of well-being, the Better Life Index (BLI) was created in 2011.[30] The BLI is interesting for this thesis, because Italy and Japan are part of the OECD, and also, the subindexes of the BLI are more numerous than those present in the WHR. They can also be analyzed more deeply, and they include some sustainability issues. They are: housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety, and work-life balance. The BLI does not mention expressly the term "happiness", but to describe one parameter, Life Satisfaction, they use "How happy you are". The inspiration to the Stieglitz Report was not only to the content, but also to the intentions, because the BLI is not only an investigation tool, but wants also to involve individuals into a debate and give a tool to be better informed before making a decision that may influence the life of many people.

Today the BLI is an interactive web tool online with a graphic symbol of a flower with 11 petals. Every petal represents one of the 11 topics proposed and presented in the index. The petal recalls the concept of equality between the different elements. Thus, every element contributes, with the same weight, to the measure of collective well-being. Moreover, the platform gives the chance to individuals to create their own idea of well-being and then see what country better represents their expectations. For example, if someone finds security a determinant factor for its life,

[30] Better Life Index's website URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/.

this person would discover Iceland to be ideal for himself. While the environment would make Sweden the ideal country for that person because pollution is at its minimum. Data are updated every year. For every country there is a general overview before analyzing every topic in detail.

In the case of Japan, the general overview starts with these words:

> Japan performs well in some measures of well-being in the Better Life Index. Japan ranks at the top in personal security. It ranks above the OECD average in income and wealth, education and skills, jobs and earnings, housing, personal security, and environmental quality. It is below the average in terms of civic engagement, subjective well-being, social connections, work-life balance and health status. (Better Life Index website)[31]

While Italy's overview starts with the following:

> Italy performs well in few measures of well-being in the Better Life Index. Italy ranks above the average in income and wealth, work-life balance, civic engagement, social connections and health status, but below average in housing, subjective well-being, environmental quality, jobs and earnings, personal security, and education and skills. (Better Life Index website)[32]

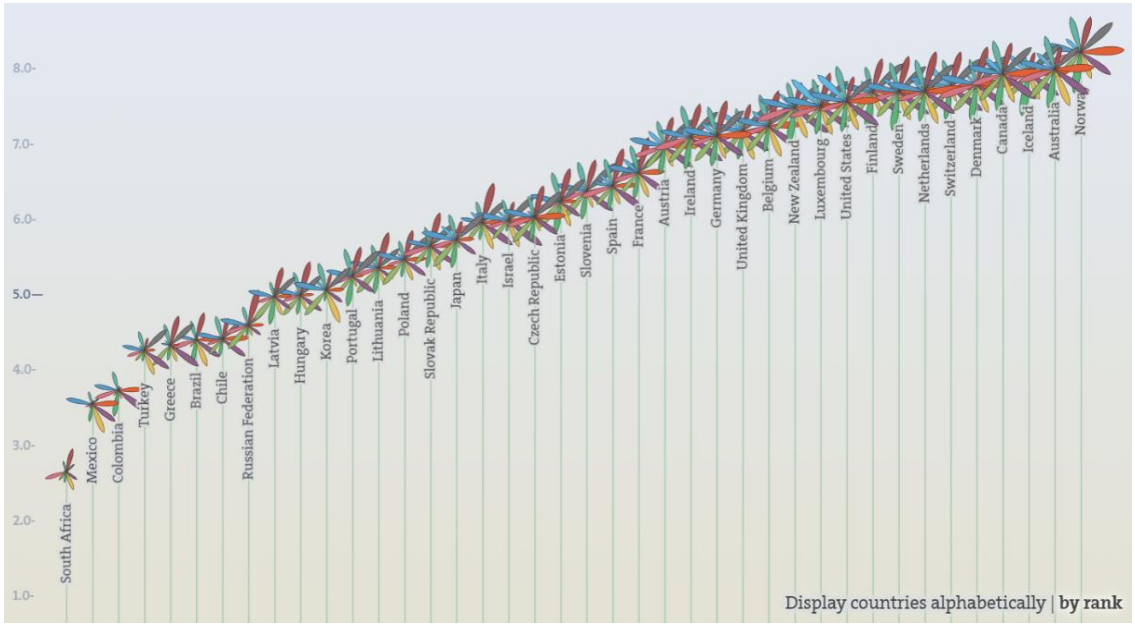


Figure 2: "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/, (18-01-2022).

[31] *Japan*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/japan/ (18-01-2022).
[32] *Italy*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/italy/ (18-01-2022).

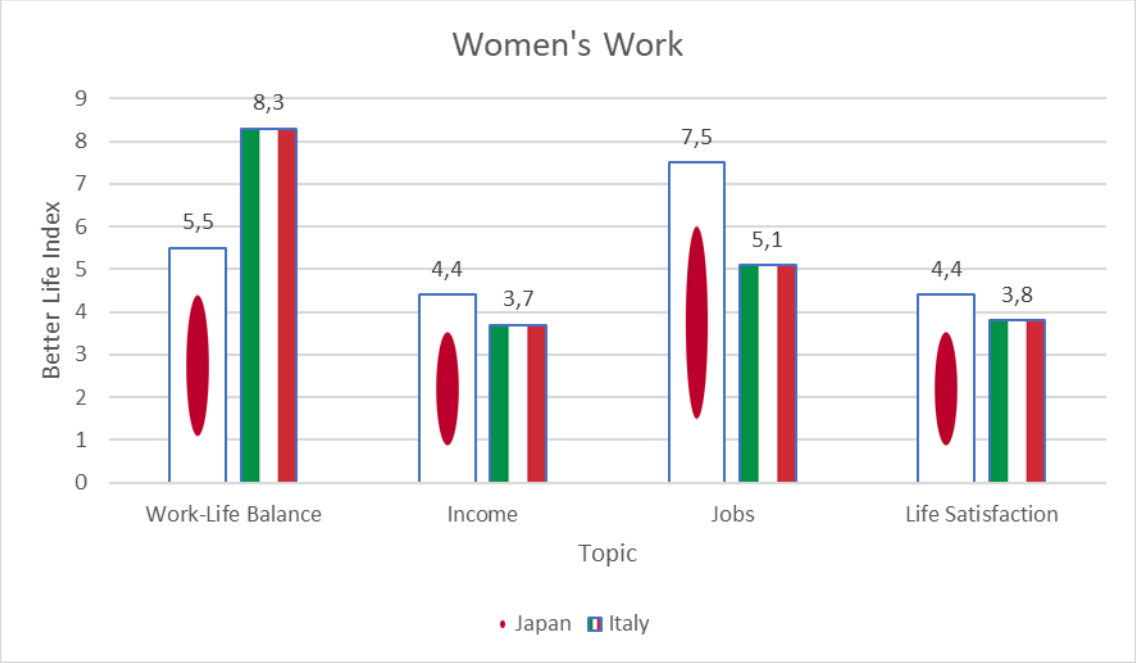
In the global ranking (figure 2), Japan and Italy are in a position one after the other, confirming what previously observed with the WHR. In the lead we can find Norway, Australia and Iceland, while at the end of the rank we find South Africa, followed by Mexico and Colombia.

Studying the topic "Life Satisfaction"[33], we understand that the average of happiness between OECD's countries is of 6,5 on a scale from 0 to 10. Both Italian and Japanese people are less satisfied of their lives compared to the OECD average, but Italians are happier than Japanese, due to their score of 6 and 5,9, respectively. Important for this research is the difference between men and women. In Japan women are happier with a score of 4,4 compared to the 3,5 of men. In Italy is the opposite: with a score of 4,7 men are happier than women, that score only 3,8.

The topic "Jobs" [34] includes the elements of job security, earnings, and unemployment. There is a great difference in the percentage of the working-age population aged 15 to 64 of the two countries: in Japan it is of 75%, while in Italy it reaches only 58%. Dividing by gender, the score for this topic in Japan is of 7,5 for women and 8,5 for men, while in Italy it is of 5,1 for women and 6,2 for men. Through the topic of "Work-Life Balance"[35] we also understand another side of the working situation of Japan and Italy. The OECD average of employees working long hours reaches 11%, almost three times that of Italy, that has about 4% of its employees working long hours, but much less than Japan, that almost reaches the 18%. It is interesting to notice, that, in the global ranking of the BLI, Italy is at the second position, only after the Netherlands, with a score of 8,3 for women and 9,2 for men. In this case Italy appears together with other countries of North Europe. On the other hand, Japan is sixth from last, with a score of 5,5 for women and 4,1 for men.

We will now compare these topics focusing only on Japanese and Italian women.

[33] *Life Satisfaction*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/life-satisfaction/, (18-01-2022).
[34] *Jobs*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/jobs/, (18-01-2022).
[35] *Work-Life Balance*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/work-life-balance/ (18-01-2022).



Graph 6: "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/ (18-01-2022)

Analyzing the situation of women, many in Japan work, more than average and more than the Italian women, that work less and also have less income. Also, in both countries the working conditions for women is worse than that of men. Yet, Italian women have a very high score for their relation between working life and private life, not forgetting that Italian men have even a higher score in this topic. In this equilibrium Japan is not in a better situation, even more for men than for women.

There are also other topics that are interesting to have a wider overview on the female situation of both Italy and Japan. The topic of "Community"[36] is described as "quality of your social support network", because

> Humans are social creatures. The frequency of our contact with others and the quality of our personal relationships are thus crucial determinants of our well-being. Studies show that time spent with friends is associated with a higher average level of positive feelings and a lower average level of negative feelings than time spent in other ways. (Better Life Index website)[37]

With 92% of people believing to know someone to rely on in case of necessity, Italy is slightly higher that the OECD average and Japan, that have the same percentage

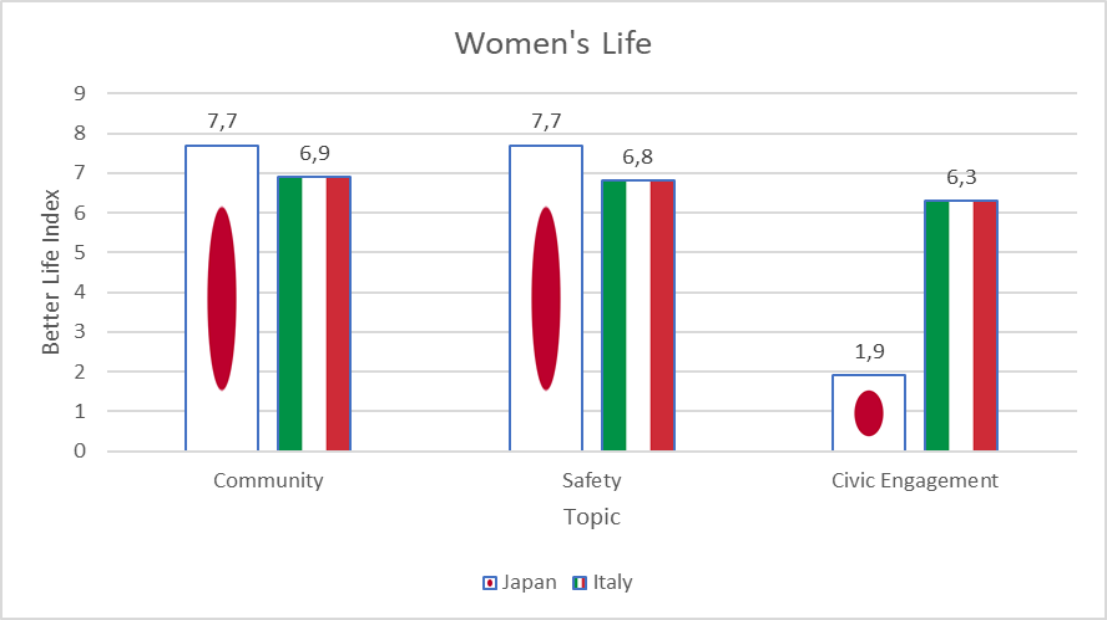
[36] *Community*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/community/, (18-01-2022).
[37] *Ibidem*.

of 89% in the section "Community" of the BLI. In Italy both men and women have a score of 6,9, meanwhile in Japan there is a visible difference, with a score of 7,7 for women and 4,1 for men.

"Safety"[38] is the topic where the homicide rate and feeling safe walking alone at night are considered. Security is a core element for one's well-being and the feeling of being vulnerable has a big impact on individuals. In Italy 58,4% of people affirm to feel safe when walking alone at night, less than the OECD average of 68%, while the homicide rate is of 0,6%, lower than the 3,7% of the OECD average. Italian women have a score of 6,8 and men of 7,6. In Japan feels safer for both women, with a score of 7,7, and men, with a score of 8,9, because almost 73% of people are feeling safe when walking home alone at night and the homicide rate is of 0,2%, lower than in Italy and the average of OECD.

The last topic we will analyze of the Better Life Index is the one of "Civic Engagement"[39], so the involvement in democracy, which indicators are the stakeholder engagement for developing regulations and the voter turnout. The trust in one's government is very important to maintain social cohesion between citizens as well as their well-being. Compared to the OECD average of 68% for the voter turnout, Italy is higher with a 73% and Japan lower with a 53%. Also with the second indicator, stakeholder engagement for developing regulations, the OECD index is of 2,4, very similar to the one of Italy od 2,5, but higher than the one of Japan, with an index of 1,4. In the ranking by gender, Japan and Italy are very far away from each other. In Japan women score 1,9 and men 2, while in Italy women score 6,3 and men 6,8.

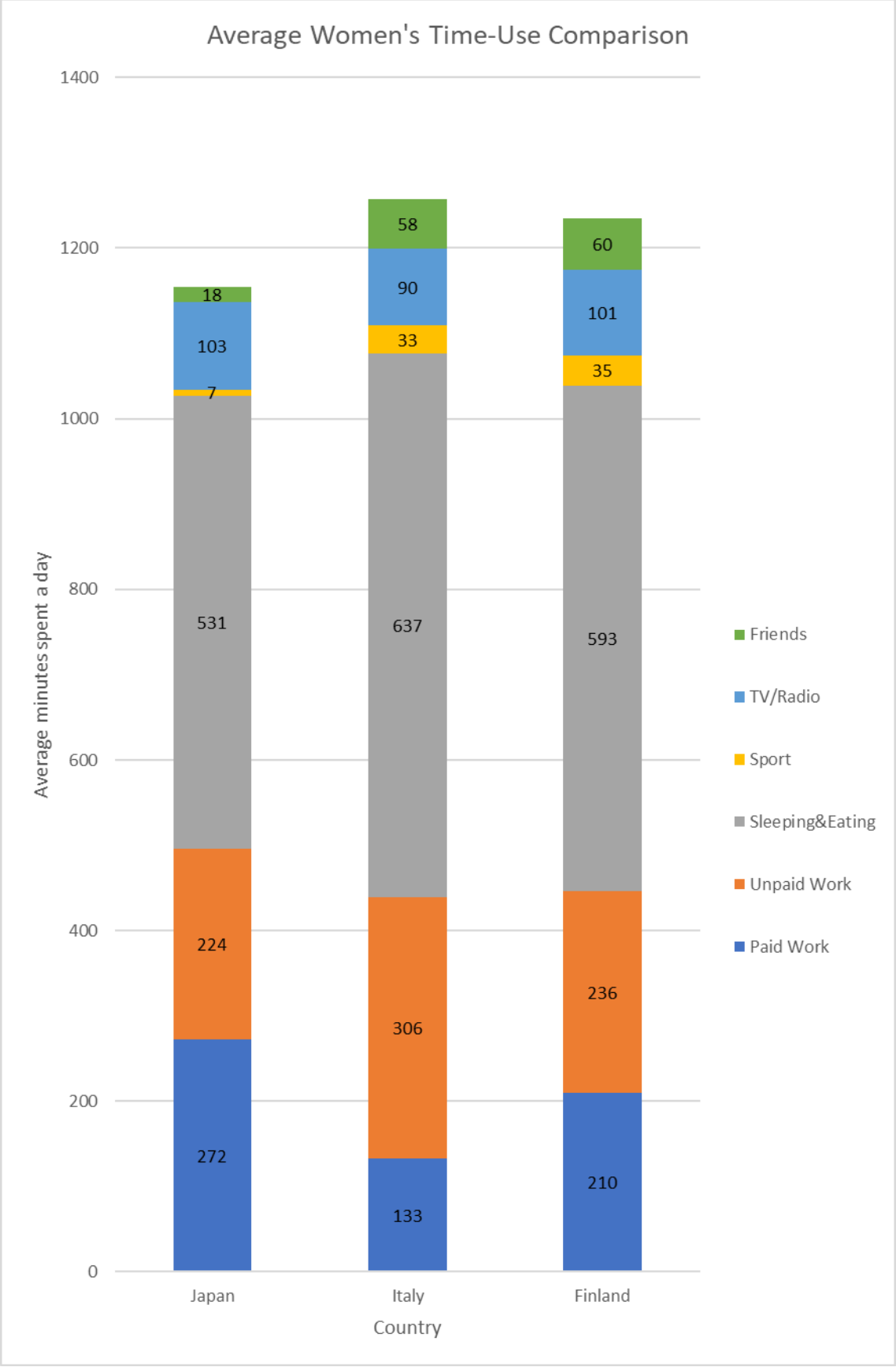
[38] *Safety*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/safety/, (20-01-2022).
[39] *Civic Engagement*, in "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/civic-engagement/ (20-01-2022).



Graph 7: "Better Life Index", URL https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/ (20-01-2022)

From graph 7 we can observe another aspect of women's life in Japan and Italy. Mainly, Italian women have more balance between their social relations, security and their trust in the government. On the other side, Japanese women score much lower in civic engagement, even if they have higher scores in both social relations and feeling safe at night.

Lastly, graph 8 shows the difference between paid work, unpaid work and other activities in a day of a Japanese and Italian women also compared to Finland, the happiest country in the world. Even if Japanese women work more than the women in the other two countries, they are closer to Finnish women, while there is an important gap between them and the Italian women, who work less. As for the unpaid work, again Japan and Finland dedicate a similar time, but are being surpassed by Italian women, that work almost one third more. In Italy, Japan and Finland most of the time is dedicated to sleeping and eating, even if Italy spends more time for it than Japan and Finland. Sport does not seem to be practiced very much in Japan, while it is given almost the same importance in both Italy and Finland. Also, all three countries watch TV or listen to the radio, but Italy a bit less. Lastly, Japanese women does not seem to give much time to friendship during their day. Italy and Finland are very similar in this contest, spending almost one hour with their friends. We can see that Japan and Italy have more aspects in common with Finland than between each other, regarding how they spend their time during the day.



Graph 8: "OECD Data", URL https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TIME_USE, (20-01-2022).

5. COVID-19 Effects on Happiness

It is still too early to make real evaluations about the effects COVID-19 had in changing quality of life and happiness since it started, but some data are already available, many through the World Happiness Report of 2021.

5.1 Happiness during COVID-19

Despite the 2 million of deaths in the world, the worst economic crisis after the WWII, a decrease of the 5% of the global GDP, high unemployment, a complete change in daily habits, months of lockdown and loneliness, WHR says that (subjective) wellbeing in the world did not decrease, in some countries and some cohorts of age it also registered a little increase.[40] Happiness as life satisfaction did not change, only temporary negative emotions did:[41] there was an increase of 8% worry and of 10% sadness, while temporary positive affects resisted.[42] Considering also the global ranking of happiness before and after the pandemic there were no big changes: countries that were happy before, kept their positions, as well as the opposite for countries that were in the last positions.

As we understand from figure A14 and A15, before the pandemic Italy is at position 30 with a score a bit higher than 6, and Japan at position 62 with a score a bit less than 6. In 2020, the year of the pandemic, Italy and Japan actually increased their happiness scores (figure A17 and A18), as their position moved, respectively, to 28 and 56. On the total ranking, both Italy and Japan can be considered not too far away from each other. Thus, we can understand that both analyzed countries became happier in the year of the pandemic, not in the affective day to day view but in the long time evaluative sense.

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[40] John F. HELLIWELL, Richard LAYARD, Jeffrey D. SACHS, Jan-Emmanuel DE NEVE, Lara B. AKNIN, Shun WANG, "Chapter 1: Overview: Life under COVID-19", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2021*, United Nations, 2021, pp. 7.

[41] HELLIWELL, LAYARD, SACHS, DE NEVE, AKNIN, WANG, "Chapter 1: Overview: Life…", cit., 2021, pp. 7-8.

[42] John F. HELLIWELL, Haifang HUANG, Shun WANG, Max NORTON, "Chapter 2: World Happiness, Trust and Deaths under COVID-19", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World happiness Report 2021*, United Nations, 2021, pp. 35.

5.2 Factors explaining why happiness resisted through COVID-19

How to explain this "resilience" of happiness in such a difficult time? The element of income decreased, but the ones of trust, generosity and support increased. We can say that in the period of the virus COVID-19 people keep being happy, but for different reasons: there is more trust in institutions, in one's family and in the society. According to the authors of the WHR, trust in the government played an important role, because institutions put a lot of effort in taking measures to protect their citizens against COVID-19. For this reason, well organized countries like Germany and nations of East Asia rose in the rankings, while others with confused health policies confused their citizens, like Latin America.[43]

> Societies with higher trust in public institutions and greater income equality were shown to be more successful in fighting COVID-19. (Helliwell, Huang, Wang, Norton, 2021)[44]

Happiness factors, "generosity", "someone to count on", and "trust", have a great role on resilience. Helliwell et al. (2021) add: "People have not toured the world, but many have rediscovered their neighbourhoods" and about the topic of trust maintain

> We find evidence that trust and benevolence are strong supports for well-being, and also for successful strategies to control COVID-19. We present new evidence on the power of expected benevolence, as measured by the extent to which people think their lost wallets would be returned if found by neighbours, strangers, or the police. All are found to be strong supports for well-being, and for effective COVID-19 strategies. (Helliwell, Huang, Wang, Norton, 2021)[45]

5.3 Happiness by age

Major changes in happiness due to COVID-19 have been by age, not by gender. Life satisfaction decreased considerably between young individuals, the most hit by unemployment and usually considered the happiest, while there was an increase for old individuals. It is almost paradoxical: the risk of death due to the virus becomes bigger as someone becomes older. Yet, in the period right before the pandemic and the year 2020,

[43] HELLIWELL, HUANG, WANG, NORTON, "Chapter 2: World Happiness…", cit., pp. 37-38.
[44] *Ibidem*.
[45] HELLIWELL, HUANG, WANG, NORTON, "Chapter 2: World Happiness…", cit., pp. 15.

the happiness of the over 60 increased of 0,22 in the Cantril ladder. In the WHR 2021, Helliwell et al. (2021) maintain that old people are feeling also healthier: only the 36% of over 60 reported to have had health problems in 2020, different from the 46% of the previous 3 years. Probably the elderlies are not feeling healthier, but the virus changed their perspective on life: they are feeling healthier because they avoided a deadly virus.[46] Before the pandemic, in the rich countries, the curve of happiness was U-shaped, where young and old people are the happiest. Today it assumed more the shape of a line that rises with age. Young people are being less satisfied than adults, who are less than elderlies. Old people discovered a support network in their family as well in their community and trusted the institutions that were putting efforts in protecting them.[47] It is important to remember that the surveys before the pandemic were conducted face-to-face giving a complete panoramic on the respondent's perspective. During COVID-19 it was not possible anymore to directly meet respondents, thus telephone calls were made.

5.4 Women during COVID-19

On one side women lived such a strong recession that Scarpetta et al. (2021) renamed it "shecession", or better "momcession", and there is an ongoing reorganization of the society about the familiar and working asset, with a worsening of the unpaid work situation. On the other side data about happiness in 2021 show that women stayed resilient and that their happiness did not undergo changes.

Women's resilience is noteworthy, because data show us, they were the most hit by the pandemic, first of all in the working aspect.[48] In 2020 in Italy the employment rate between women of age 15 to 34 was of 33,5%, while in 2019 it was higher, 35,9%. It diminished of 2,4 percentual points. For women from 35 to 44 years of age and from 45 to 54 years of age the employment rate was of, respectively, 61,7% and 61,8% in 2020, less than 2019 when they reached 62,4% and 62,3%.[49] In Japan, instead,

[46] Maria COTOFAN, Jan-Emmanuel DE NEVE, Marta GOLIN, Micah KAATS, George WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being during COVID-19: Impact, Inequalities, Resilience, and the Future of Work", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *World Happiness Report 2021*, United Nations, 2021, pp. 168.

[47] HELLIWELL, HUANG, WANG, NORTON, "Chapter 2: World Happiness…", cit., pp. 32.

[48] COTOFAN, DE NEVE, GOLIN, KAATS, WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being…", cit., 2021, pp. 160.

[49] LUCA Monticelli, Il Covid affossa le donne al lavoro: in due milioni costrette al part-time. Dati e divario con gli uomini, in "La Stampa", 2022, URL https://www.lastampa.it/politica/2022/01/19/news/il_covid_affossa_le_donne_nel_lavoro_in_due_milioni_costrette_al_part_time_-2835814/ (25-01-2022).

unemployment after COVID-19 was numerically smaller than in Italy, yet women experienced it in the toughest way. There was an average loss of 1,1% of male workers, while the one of female workers was of 3,4%, reaching peaks of 9,75% for irregular workers or in sectors where a face-to-face relation is needed, as restaurants, hotels, schools).[50]

The loss of work and its consequences are the strongest repercussions left by COVID-19 in the whole world. On a global average, remarks the WHR of 2021, four employed women out of ten were working, before COVID-19, in sectors were the virus hit the most: schools, restoration, tourism, primary assistance in hospitals, retail. Women endured the most, losing their jobs or underwent a reduction in their working hours.

School closures worsened the situation for working mothers. Single parents were at high risk, of whom four out of five are women, already at disadvantage before the start of the pandemic. Yet, adult women managed to keep their level of happiness.[51]

During the pandemic, between individuals that lost their job, maintain the WHR of 2021, there was a particular dynamic that may concern countries with a strong culture like the Italian or the Japanese one: this pandemic crisis "deletes" the social stigma on the person who lost his job.[52]

[50] KIKUCHI, Shinnosuke; KITAO, Sagiri; MIKOSHIBA, Minamo, "Who Suffers from the COVID-19 Shocks? Labor Market Heterogeneity and Welfare Consequences in Japan", *Center for Advanced Research in Finance*, 2020, pp. 24, URL www.carf.e.u-tokyo.ac.jp/admin/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/F490.pdf, (25-01-2022).

[51] COTOFAN, DE NEVE, GOLIN, KAATS, WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being…", cit., 2021, pp. 160-162.

[52] COTOFAN, DE NEVE, GOLIN, KAATS, WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being…", cit., 2021, pp. 165.

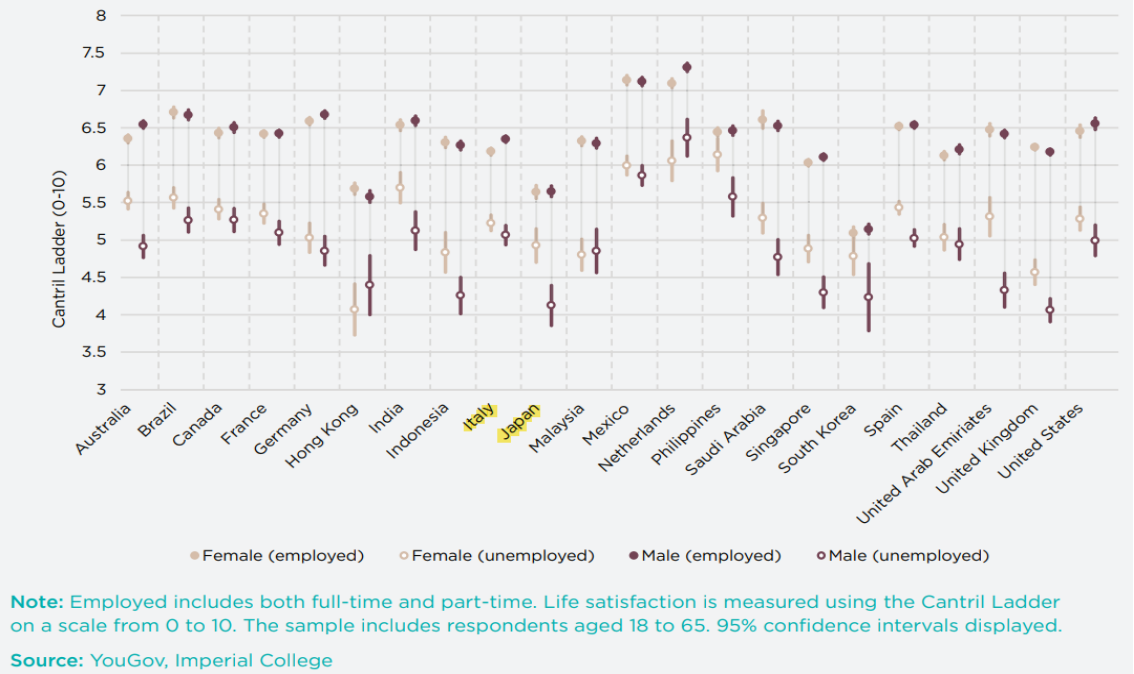


Figure 3: Life Satisfaction by employment status and gender (2020)

COTOFAN, Maria; DE NEVE, Jan-Emmanuel; GOLIN, Marta; KAATS, Micah; WARD, George, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being during COVID-19: Impact, Inequalities, Resilience, and the Future of Work", by Sustainable Development Solutions Network, World Happiness Report 2021, United Nations, 2021, pp. 166.

Observing figure 3, we understand that there is a difference of almost one point between Italian and Japanese employed individuals. On the other side, unemployed women of both countries do not find themselves far away from each other in this satisfaction scale. A big difference of life satisfaction is registered for unemployed Japanese and Italian men, were the first register a score close to 4, surpassed only by the unemployed men in the United Kingdom, and the latter are in a position midway between unemployed women in Japan and Italy. Generally, women managed to resist the shock of losing their jobs better than men: this is very evident in Japan, where unemployment decreased men's happiness more than women's, as we understand from figure 3.

> In line with previous studies, we also find that the effects of unemployment on life satisfaction for men have been more severe than for women throughout the pandemic. Labour market inactivity has also seemed to reduce life satisfaction more for men than for women, to an even greater extent than the gendered impact of unemployment. (Cotofan et al., 2021)[53]

[53] COTOFAN, DE NEVE, GOLIN, KAATS, WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being…", cit., 2021, pp. 168.

What saved women from being unhappy? The data suggests that it was their trust in institutions and in social support through their social and familiar connections. During the crisis, higher levels of life satisfaction were generally reported by men as well women with children than by individuals who still did not become a parent. Clearly, having a child at home did not only mean an increase of work for mothers, but it probably also contributed in keeping steady the levels of happiness.[54] As also confirmed by the sources used in the next paragraph and the WHR, it seems that both in Japan and Italy there was an increase, even if small, in the time spent by fathers in the unpaid work and in childcare, element that made mothers happier.

5.5 Unpaid Work during COVID-19

In Italy the pandemic had an impact on the time individuals had to spend in their houses due to the restrictions announced by the government to fight the emergency. As already mentioned, the traditional gender gaps in the Italian labor market as also the conservative gender roles result in women having to take care of almost all the housework and childcare. Before COVID-19, many grandparents would help every day taking care of their nephews to soothe the burden of the family. Due to social distancing the availability of grandparents needed to be reduced, increasing the load of family work already present due to the closing of child-care facilities and schools. The reaction of men and women was different: women, who's time spent in housework became bigger, reached the 68% and the 61% in childcare; for men are lower, respectively 40% and 51%. If men would participate more in domestic responsibilities, than women could participate more in the labor market.[55] Del Boca et al. (2020) maintain about the time spent by couples at home during the pandemic emergency:

> Compared to their partners, working women bear the brunt of the increased time needed for household chores and childcare. Men are more likely to be spending more time with their children, hence in more gratifying family work rather than chores. (Del Boca, Oggero, Profeta, Rossi, 2020)[56]

[54] COTOFAN, DE NEVE, GOLIN, KAATS, WARD, "Chapter 7: Work and Well-being…", cit., 2021, pp. 170.
[55] Daniela DEL BOCA, Noemi OGGERO, Paola PROFETA, Mariacristina ROSSI, "Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19", *Review of Economics of the Household*, Springer, 2020, pp. 1003-1004.
[56] DEL BOCA, OGGERO, PROFETA, ROSSI, "Women's and men's…", cit., 2020, pp. 1013.

The situation in Japan is very similar to the Italian one. The time of Japanese women spent on childcare and housework increased, compared to their counterpart, regardless of job type, occupation, frequency of telecommuting. A possible reason is that men had difficulties to adapt to the domestic work while COVID-19 was spreading, maintain Sakuragi et al. (2021). The presence of young children increased the time spent on housework for women, while the time on domestic work of men did not vary. Also Japanese mothers were relying on the help of their parents for daily childcare, but the measures to prevent the spread of the virus did not allow them to meet. This caused women to increase their time on childcare and housework.[57] Sakuragi et al. (2021) sustain

> Consequently, during the pandemic, mothers tended to spend more time on childcare than before. In contrast to the increase in housework time, an increase in childcare time may have benefits, increased time spent on childcare is associated with good health, whereas increased time spent on housework is associated with poor health, particularly among women. (Sakuragi et al., 2021)[58]

[57] Toshihide SAKURAGI, Rie TANAKA, Mayumi TSUJI, Seiichiro TATEISHI, Ayako HINO, Akira OGAMI, Masako NAGATA, Shinya MATSUDA, Yoshihisa FUJINO, "Gender differences in housework and childcare among Japanese workers during the COVID-19 pandemic", COROnaWork Project, 2021, pp. 11-14.
[58] SAKURAGI, TANAKA, TSUJI, TATEISHI, HINO, OGAMI, NAGATA, MATSUDA, FUJINO, "Gender differences…", cit., 2021, pp. 14.

Conclusion

Based on the data analyzed in this chapter, Japan and Italy result being in a similar situation on a world ranking concerning the level of happiness for working women, yet with a different way of reaching it. In both countries legal improvements were made in order to make women's conditions better, even if they did not stop stereotypes, still present due to the age of the old part of both populations that keeps them alive. In Italy as in Japan the employment rate increased in the last 20 years but decreased of a tiny percentage in recent years due to the pandemic. Both Japanese and Italian women want to distance themselves from their traditional family model, and for also this reason the average of marriage age has become higher.

The situation of gender gap shows us both interested countries at a position of disadvantage in their belonging areas. Through the Global Gender Gap Index, we also understand that, even if Japan and Italy almost closed their gender gap in health and education, they have a bad performance in work-economic participation and they also do not have a high score in political empowerment, where Japan has a greater gap.

The unpaid care work, due to restricting gender norms, has always been responsibility of women in both countries: reaching an average of 306 minutes a day for Italian women and 224 minutes a day for Japanese women.

As we observed at the beginning of this thesis, most of the scholars that studied happiness make a distinction between the one consisting of temporary emotions and the one consisting in the evaluation of one's life satisfaction. The latter aspect is the most utilized in this thesis, because it gave us the possibility to make comparisons. Considering happiness in the rankings of the World Happiness Reports, Japan and Italy have never been too far away from each other. During the years of COVID-19 Italy got a bit higher with her position, while Japan lost some. The field of study of the variables to calculate the Happiness Score are the same as the one utilized in this thesis for equity, achievement, and camaraderie. Equity and achievement utilize objective data, including the economic one of income, as also psychological factors comparable to the fourth variable (having freedom in choosing what to do with one's life), and features of the last variable, because Gallup asks about corruption in one's nation or company and it is relatable to the illegal methods employers used with women. Camaraderie can be connected to the third variable of social support, because it analyzes also psychosocial

features. Also in the Better Life Index ranking, Japan and Italy are close to each other. Considering women, the one in Italy have a better work-life balance, while the one in Japan work more time.

Lastly, during COVID-19, happiness, considered as life satisfaction, did not have big changes, but a big increase in negative emotions has been recorded in most countries of the world. In general, countries kept their positions in the WHR ranking, with Italy and Japan not too far away from each other. Factors that contributed to keep this kind of happiness were trust in institutions and social and familiar support, that became very important. Yet, also due to the loss of their jobs, young people resulted less happy and satisfied than adults and elderlies. At last, the load of unpaid work of women increased, but they stayed tough, also because they tried to look at the positive side of the situation, enjoying their time, more if they had children. It can be deducted that resilience, that women are capable of, is a factor that helps being happy.

The conclusion reached is a result of crossing socio-economic data from different sources. For now, studying happiness and making a comparison between two different countries is complicated, because it is only a few years that is being analyzed also by economists.

It can be said, that the science of happiness is born and it will have interesting developments. In the last decades, big international organizations and states gave to environmental topics a great role in their future projects. Interest in the science of happiness is shown and it will be interesting to see if future governments will make it a goal to achieve. Already many companies are giving importance to the aspect of happiness utilizing the figure of the Chief Happiness Officer. To analyze happiness different data are taken into consideration, the socio-economical type and surveys of opinion, but internet and the socials will become important sources to study happiness. About this, the last WHR utilized the website of Indeed.com to gather data. While Gallup’s surveys interviewed around thousands of respondents, Indeed.com could gather in a small amount of time thousands of hundreds of answers.

Appendix

A1. Educational Attainment

World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, Switzerland, 2020, pp. 12.

Educational Attainment

Rank	Country	Score (0–1)
1	Australia	1.000
1	Austria	1.000
1	Bahamas	1.000
1	Belgium	1.000
1	Botswana	1.000
1	Canada	1.000
1	Colombia	1.000
1	Czech Republic	1.000
1	Denmark	1.000
1	Estonia	1.000
1	Finland	1.000
1	France	1.000
1	Honduras	1.000
1	Israel	1.000
1	Jamaica	1.000
1	Latvia	1.000
1	Lesotho	1.000
1	Luxembourg	1.000
1	Maldives	1.000
1	Malta	1.000
1	Netherlands	1.000
1	New Zealand	1.000
1	Nicaragua	1.000
1	Russian Federation	1.000
1	Slovak Republic	1.000
26	Ukraine	1.000
27	Slovenia	1.000
28	Uruguay	1.000
29	Georgia	1.000
30	Chile	1.000
31	Norway	1.000
32	Namibia	1.000
33	Costa Rica	1.000
34	United States	1.000
35	Brazil	1.000
36	Iceland	0.999
37	Philippines	0.999
38	United Kingdom	0.999
39	Belarus	0.999
40	Albania	0.999
41	Venezuela	0.998
42	Dominican Republic	0.998
43	Spain	0.998
44	Cuba	0.998
45	Armenia	0.998
46	Paraguay	0.998
47	Ireland	0.998
48	Cyprus	0.998
49	Montenegro	0.998
50	Lithuania	0.998
51	Fiji	0.997
52	Romania	0.997
53	Serbia	0.997
54	Mexico	0.997
55	Italy	0.997
56	Ecuador	0.997
57	Kuwait	0.997
58	Poland	0.996
59	Sweden	0.996
60	Azerbaijan	0.996
61	Moldova	0.996
62	Croatia	0.995
63	Kazakhstan	0.995
64	Argentina	0.995
65	Panama	0.994
66	Trinidad and Tobago*	0.994
67	South Africa	0.994
68	Suriname	0.993
69	Greece	0.993
70	Hungary	0.993
71	Mongolia	0.993
72	Brunei Darussalam	0.992
73	Portugal	0.992
74	Mauritius	0.992
75	El Salvador	0.992
76	Swaziland	0.992
77	Switzerland	0.992
78	Belize	0.991
79	Barbados	0.991
80	Thailand	0.991
81	Jordan	0.991
82	Kyrgyz Republic	0.990
83	Qatar	0.990
84	Singapore	0.990
85	Bulgaria	0.989
86	Malaysia	0.989
87	Macedonia	0.988
88	Sri Lanka	0.988
89	United Arab Emirates	0.987
90	Bahrain	0.985
91	Japan	0.983
92	Saudi Arabia	0.983
93	Vietnam	0.982
94	Peru	0.981
95	Madagascar	0.980
96	Bolivia	0.980
97	Oman	0.977
98	Zimbabwe	0.977
99	Myanmar	0.975
100	China	0.973
101	Korea	0.973
102	Egypt	0.973
103	Germany	0.972
104	Cape Verde	0.972
105	Indonesia	0.970
106	Tunisia	0.970
107	Guatemala	0.969
108	Bosnia Herzegovina	0.967
109	Algeria	0.966
110	Lao PDR	0.965
111	Lebanon	0.964
112	India	0.962
113	Turkey	0.961
114	Rwanda	0.957
115	Morocco	0.956
116	Bhutan	0.954
117	Syria	0.953
118	Iran	0.953
119	Ghana	0.951
120	Bangladesh	0.951
121	Vanuatu*	0.947
122	Timor-Leste	0.946
123	Tajikistan	0.942
124	Cambodia	0.939
125	Zambia*	0.938
126	Kenya	0.938
127	Tanzania	0.921
128	Malawi	0.915
129	Uganda	0.914
130	Mozambique	0.904
131	Burundi	0.896
132	Papua New Guinea*	0.895
133	Nepal	0.895
134	Gambia	0.891
135	Senegal	0.888
136	Cameroon	0.885
137	Mauritania	0.879
138	Burkina Faso	0.873
139	Sierra Leone	0.860
140	Ethiopia	0.850
141	Liberia	0.839
142	Côte d'Ivoire	0.828
143	Pakistan	0.823
144	Iraq	0.812
145	Nigeria	0.806
146	Togo	0.778
147	Angola	0.759
148	Mali	0.757
149	Benin	0.733
150	Yemen	0.717
151	Guinea	0.680
152	Congo Dem Rep	0.658
153	Chad	0.589

A2. Economic Participation and Opportunity

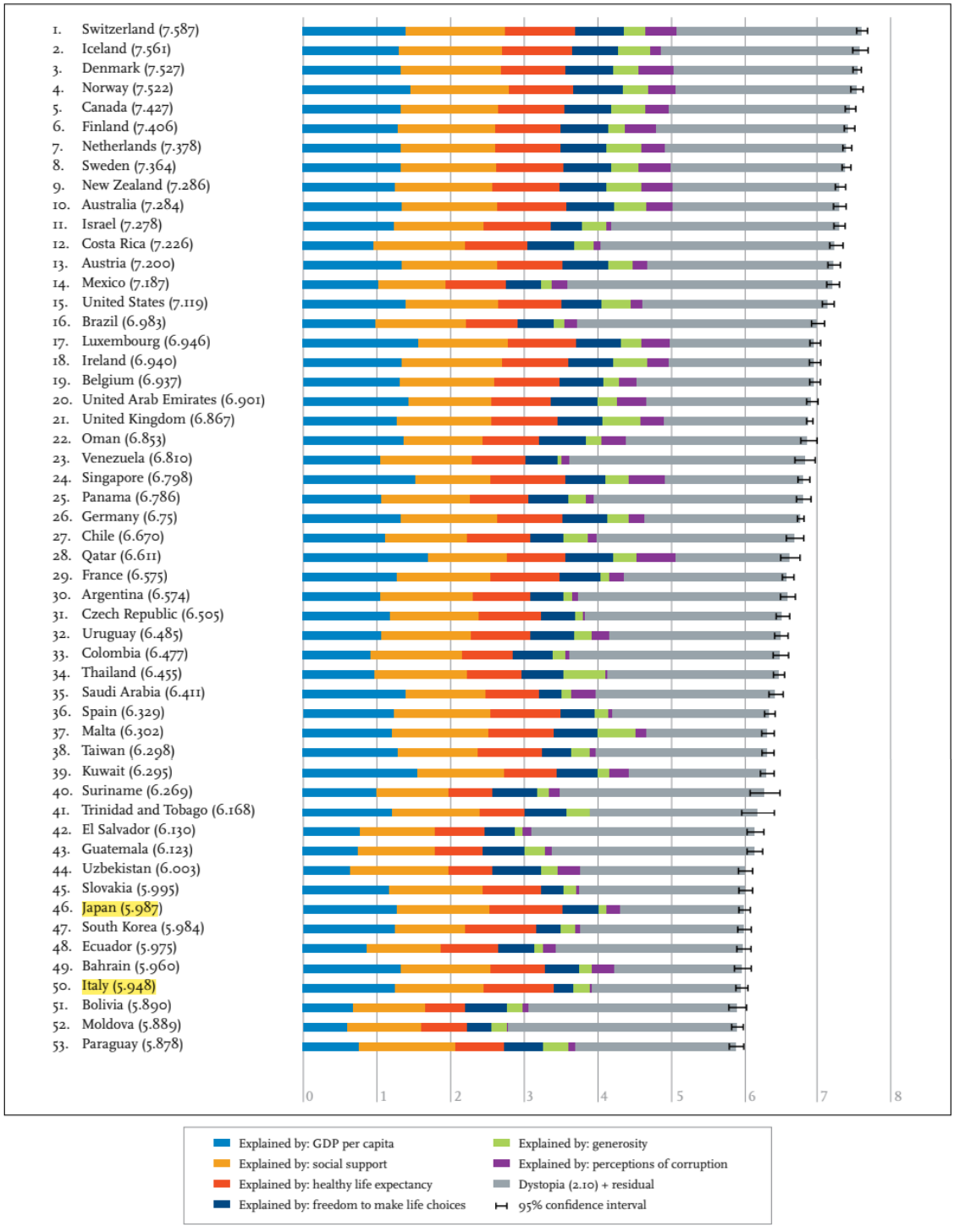
World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, Switzerland, 2020, pp. 12

Economic Participation and Opportunity

Rank	Country	Score (0–1)
1	Benin	0.847
2	Iceland	0.839
3	Lao PDR	0.839
4	Bahamas	0.838
5	Belarus	0.837
6	Burundi	0.837
7	Zambia*	0.831
8	Latvia	0.810
9	Barbados	0.808
10	Guinea	0.803
11	Norway	0.798
12	Slovenia	0.797
13	Lithuania	0.795
14	Philippines	0.792
15	Cape Verde	0.790
16	Sweden	0.790
17	Namibia	0.789
18	Finland	0.788
19	Moldova	0.788
20	Singapore	0.782
21	Botswana	0.779
22	Thailand	0.776
23	Madagascar	0.769
24	Jamaica	0.767
25	Cambodia	0.759
26	United States	0.756
27	New Zealand	0.753
28	Brunei Darussalam	0.752
29	Mongolia	0.751
30	Canada	0.751
31	Vietnam	0.751
32	Russian Federation	0.749
33	Azerbaijan	0.748
34	Switzerland	0.746
35	Sierra Leone	0.745
36	Albania	0.743
37	Kazakhstan	0.742
38	Nigeria	0.738
39	Ukraine	0.737
40	Estonia	0.736
41	Denmark	0.735
42	Colombia	0.735
43	Ireland	0.732
44	Romania	0.728
45	Zimbabwe	0.728
46	Portugal	0.726
47	Panama	0.725
48	Germany	0.723
49	Australia	0.722
50	Luxembourg	0.721
51	Trinidad and Tobago*	0.721
52	Bulgaria	0.715
53	Liberia	0.714
54	Belgium	0.714
55	Honduras	0.713
56	Montenegro	0.712
57	Poland	0.711
58	United Kingdom	0.704
59	Swaziland	0.703
60	Netherlands	0.702
61	Georgia	0.701
62	Serbia	0.700
63	Tanzania	0.698
64	Uruguay	0.696
65	France	0.691
66	Cameroon	0.689
67	Israel	0.688
68	Indonesia	0.685
69	Venezuela	0.683
70	Papua New Guinea*	0.683
71	Chad	0.682
72	Spain	0.681
73	Cyprus	0.681
74	Ecuador	0.680
75	Belize	0.680
76	Greece	0.675
77	Croatia	0.674
78	Armenia	0.673
79	Rwanda	0.672
80	Hungary	0.672
81	Nicaragua	0.671
82	Uganda	0.663
83	Slovak Republic	0.663
84	Lesotho	0.662
85	Dominican Republic	0.660
86	Austria	0.659
87	Czech Republic	0.657
88	Kyrgyz Republic	0.654
89	Brazil	0.653
90	Peru	0.652
91	China	0.651
92	South Africa	0.649
93	Mozambique	0.648
94	Ghana	0.642
95	Paraguay	0.641
96	Angola	0.640
97	Malaysia	0.639
98	Vanuatu*	0.637
99	Suriname	0.635
100	Macedonia	0.635
101	Nepal	0.632
102	Myanmar	0.630
103	Argentina	0.623
104	Guatemala	0.623
105	Bolivia	0.623
106	Malta	0.621
107	Cuba	0.617
108	Burkina Faso	0.614
109	Bosnia Herzegovina	0.614
110	Togo	0.608
111	Chile	0.608
112	Costa Rica	0.607
113	Malawi	0.600
114	Kenya	0.598
115	Japan	0.598
116	Mauritius	0.596
117	Italy	0.595
118	Mali	0.591
119	El Salvador	0.590
120	Kuwait	0.589
121	Congo Dem Rep	0.589
122	Gambia	0.584
123	Fiji	0.584
124	Mexico	0.574
125	Ethiopia	0.568
126	Sri Lanka	0.558
127	Korea	0.555
128	Senegal	0.552
129	Côte d'Ivoire	0.545
130	Bhutan	0.544
131	Maldives	0.518
132	Qatar	0.512
133	Bahrain	0.510
134	Tajikistan	0.496
135	Timor-Leste	0.478
136	Turkey	0.478
137	United Arab Emirates	0.472
138	Algeria	0.461
139	Lebanon	0.442
140	Egypt	0.438
141	Bangladesh	0.438
142	Tunisia	0.434
143	Oman	0.431
144	Mauritania	0.411
145	Jordan	0.408
146	Morocco	0.405
147	Iran	0.381
148	Saudi Arabia	0.375
149	India	0.354
150	Pakistan	0.327
151	Yemen	0.273
152	Syria	0.249
153	Iraq	0.227

A3. Ranking of Happiness 2012-2014 (Part 1)

HELLIWELL, John; LAYARD, Richard; SACHS, Jeffrey, "World Happiness Report 2015", *World Happiness Report*, New York, 2015, pp. 26.



A4. Ranking of Happiness 2012-2014 (Part 2)

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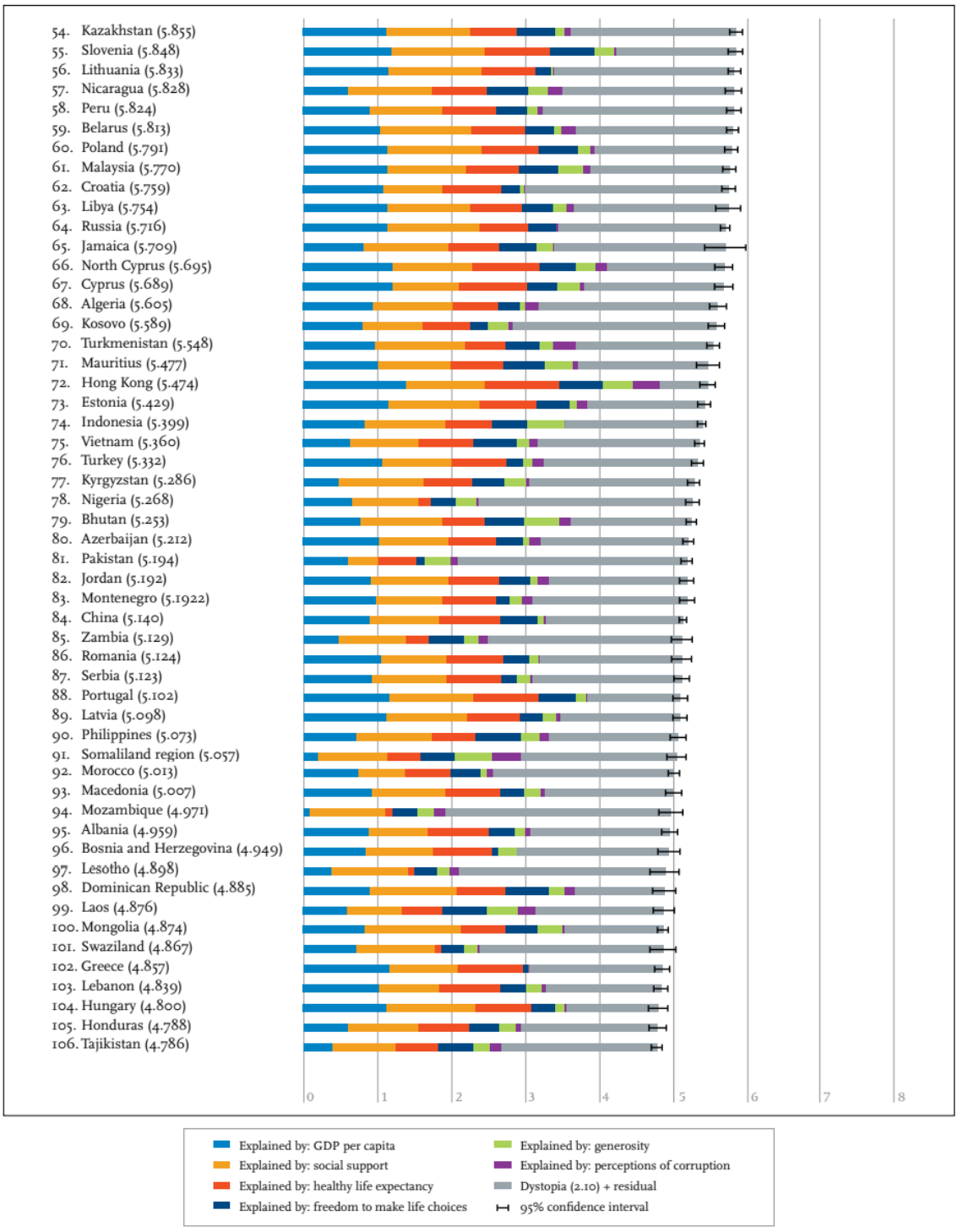

A5. Ranking of Happiness 2012-2014 (Part 3)

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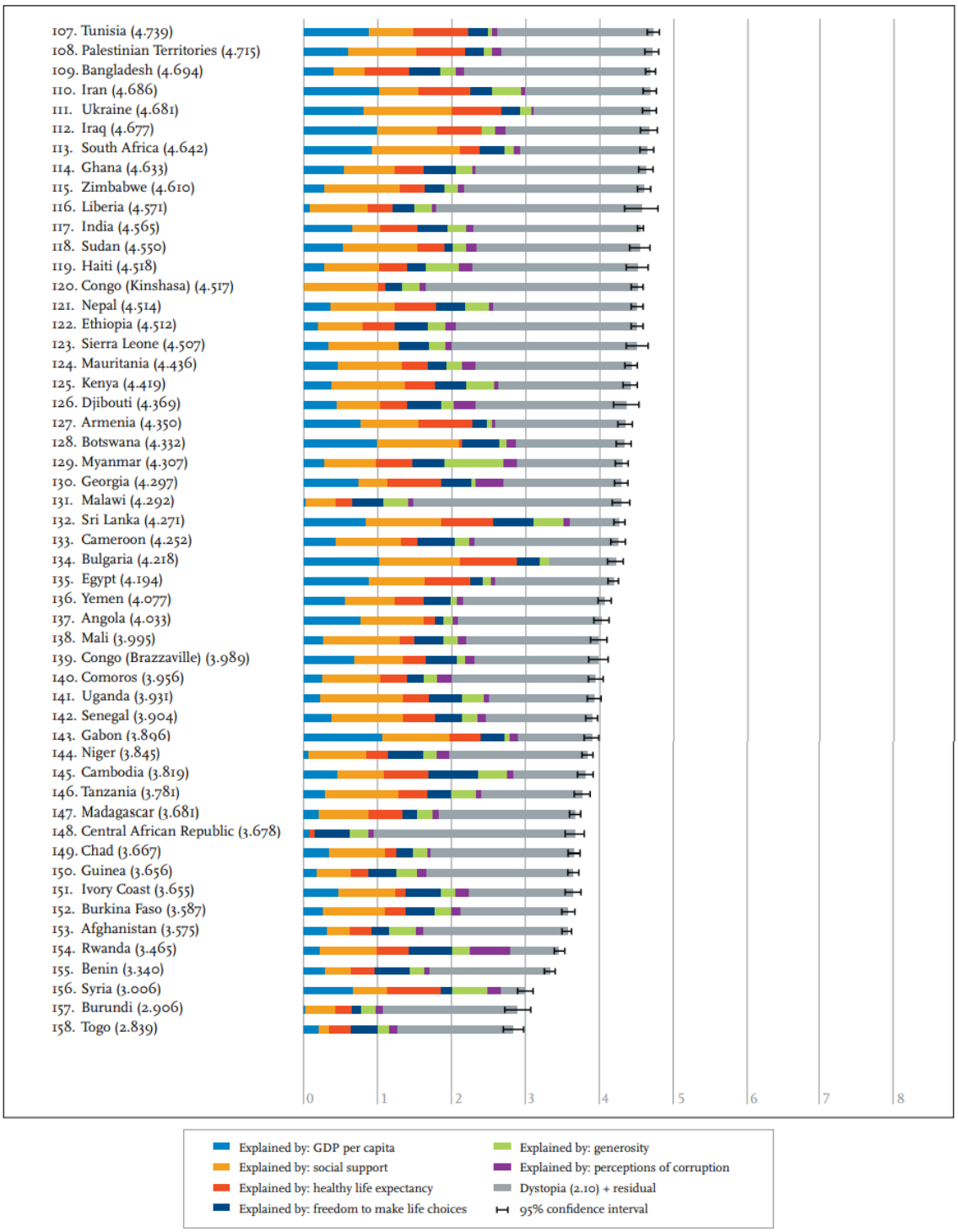
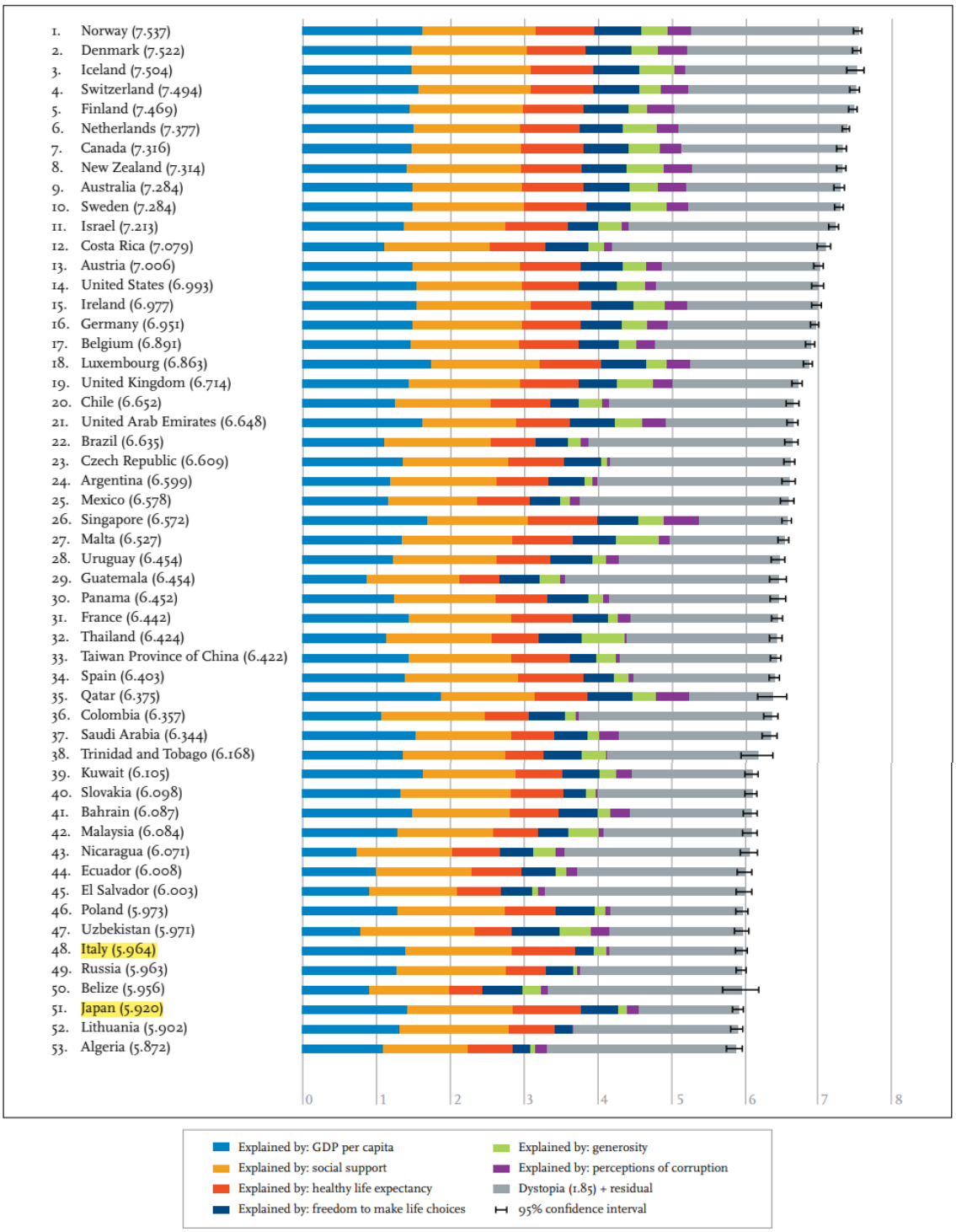


A6. Ranking of Happiness 2014-2016 (Part 1)

HELLIWELL, John F.; HUANG, Haifang; WANG, Shun, "The social foundations of World Happiness", *World Happiness Report*, 2, 2017, pp. 20.



A7. Ranking of Happiness 2014-2016 (Part 2)

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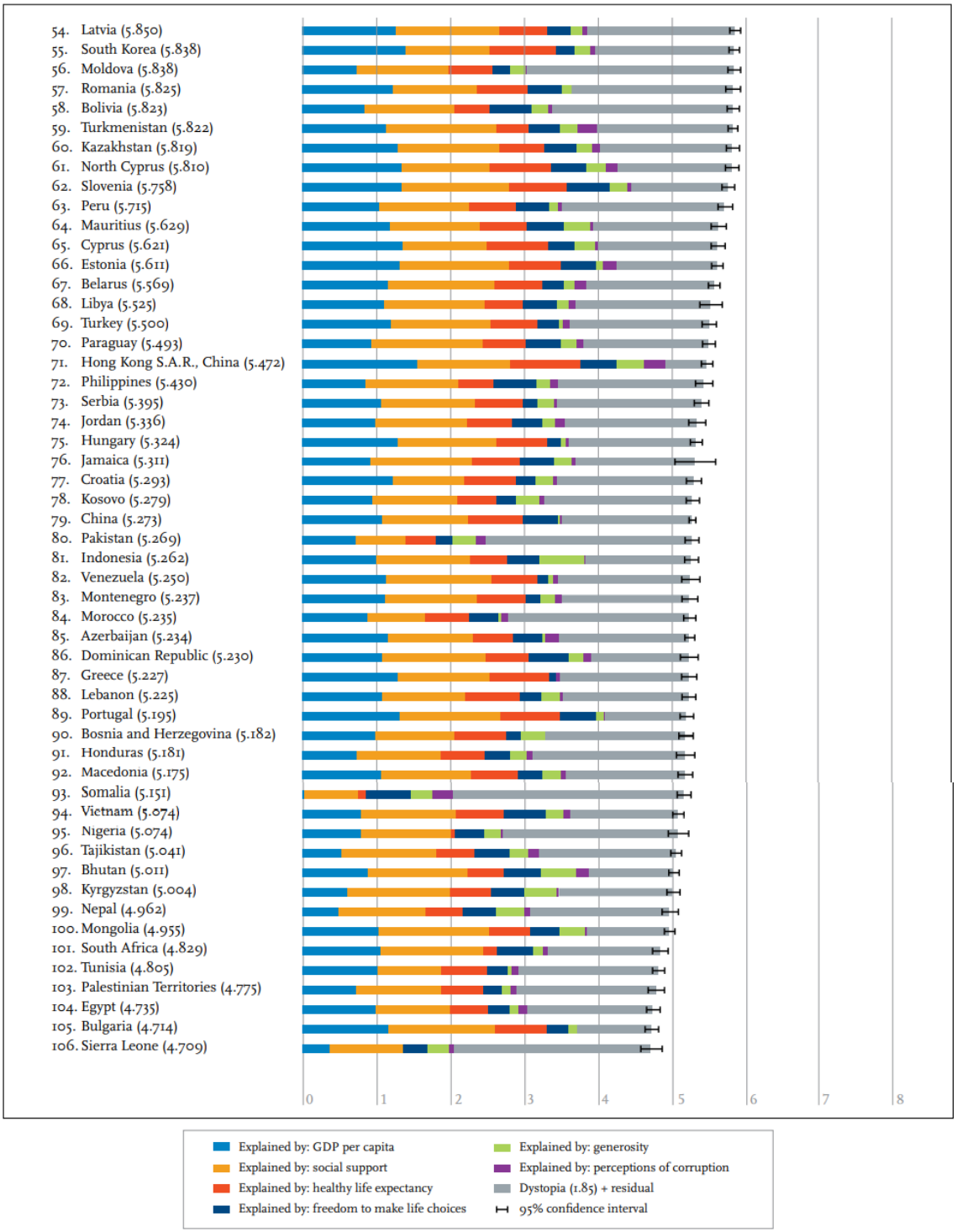
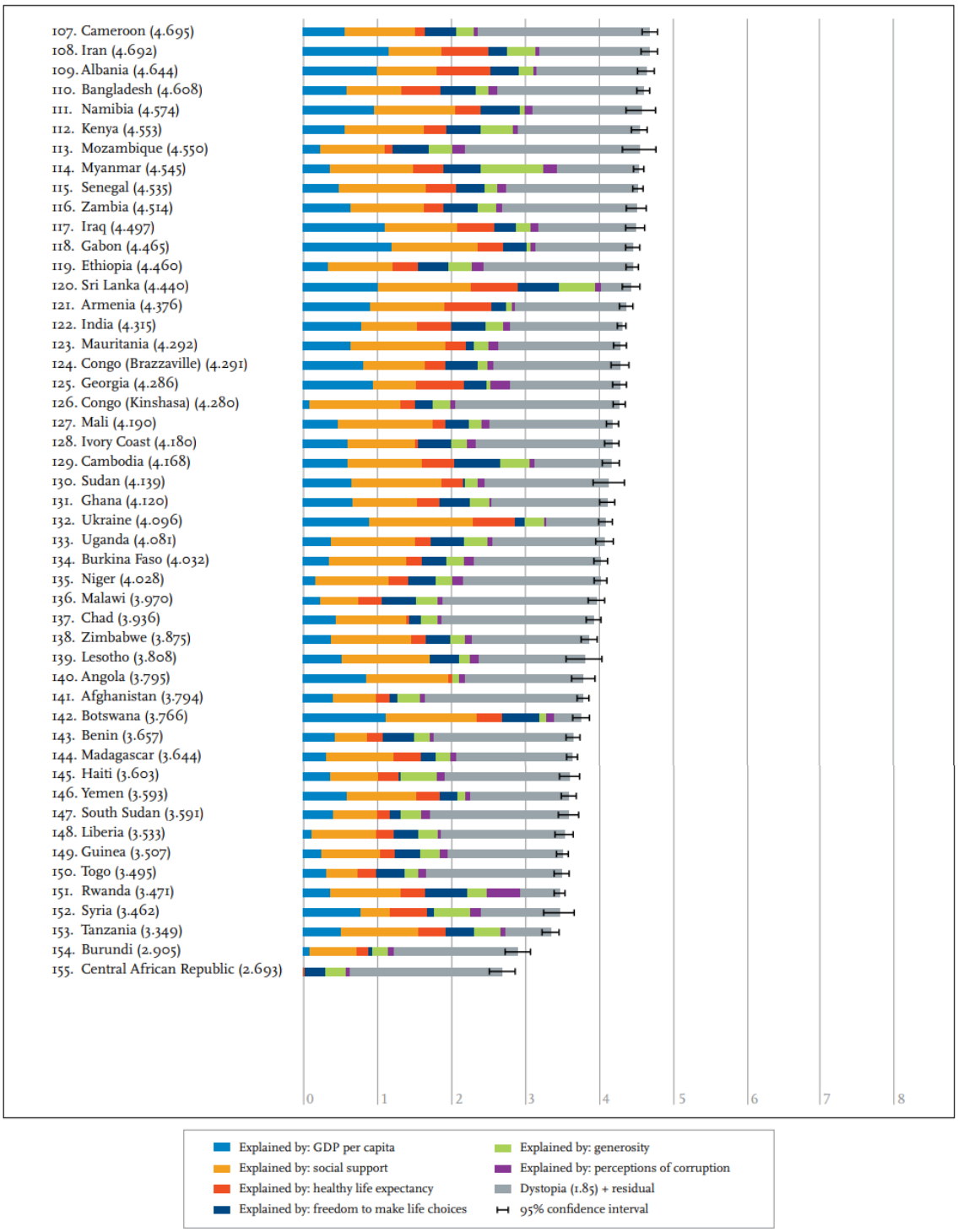


A8. Ranking of Happiness 2014-2016 (Part 3)

HELLIWELL, John F.; HUANG, Haifang; WANG, Shun, "The social foundations of World Happiness", *World Happiness Report*, 2, 2017, pp. 22.



A9. Changes in Happiness from 2005-2007 to 2014-2016 (Part 1)

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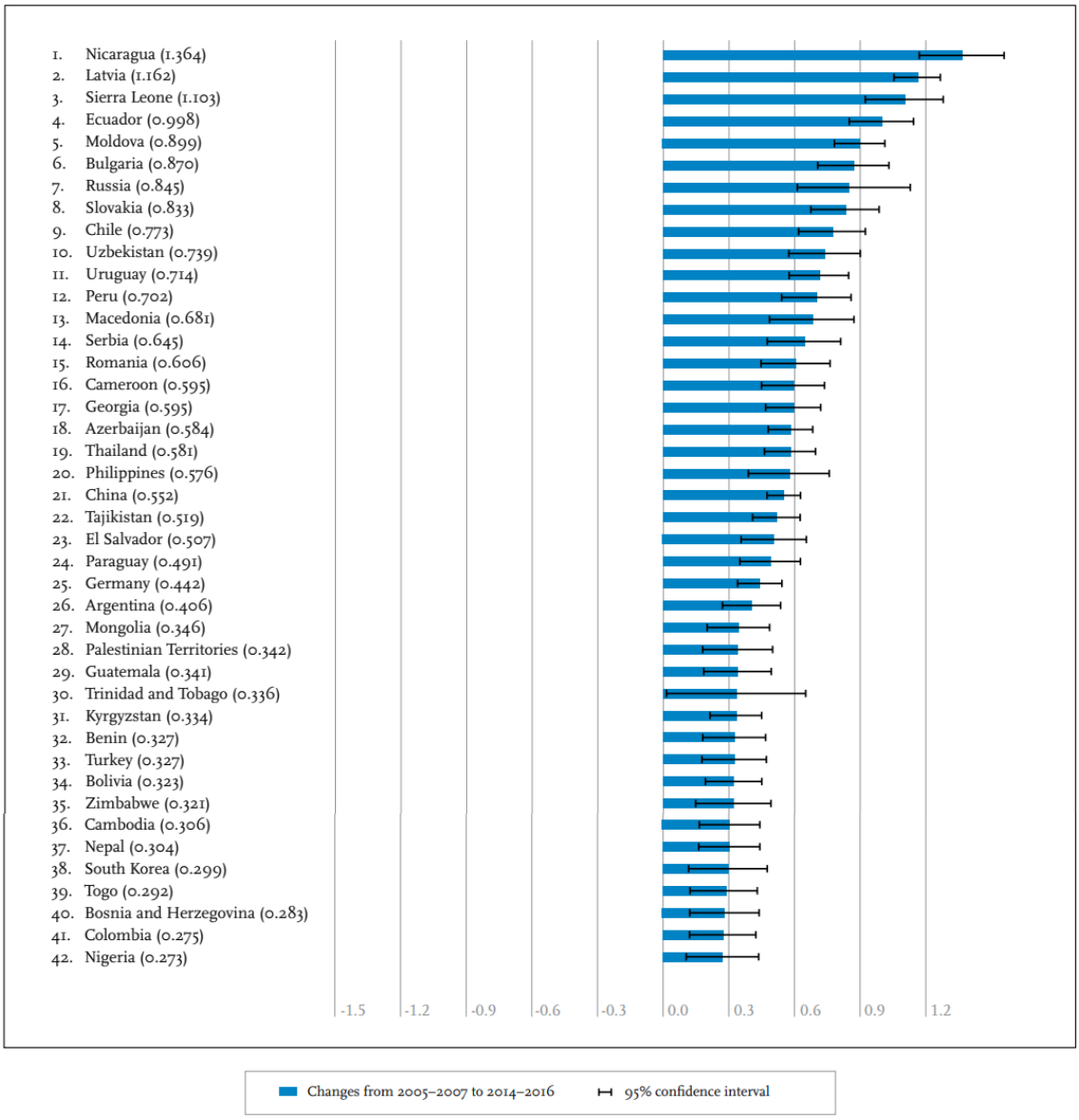
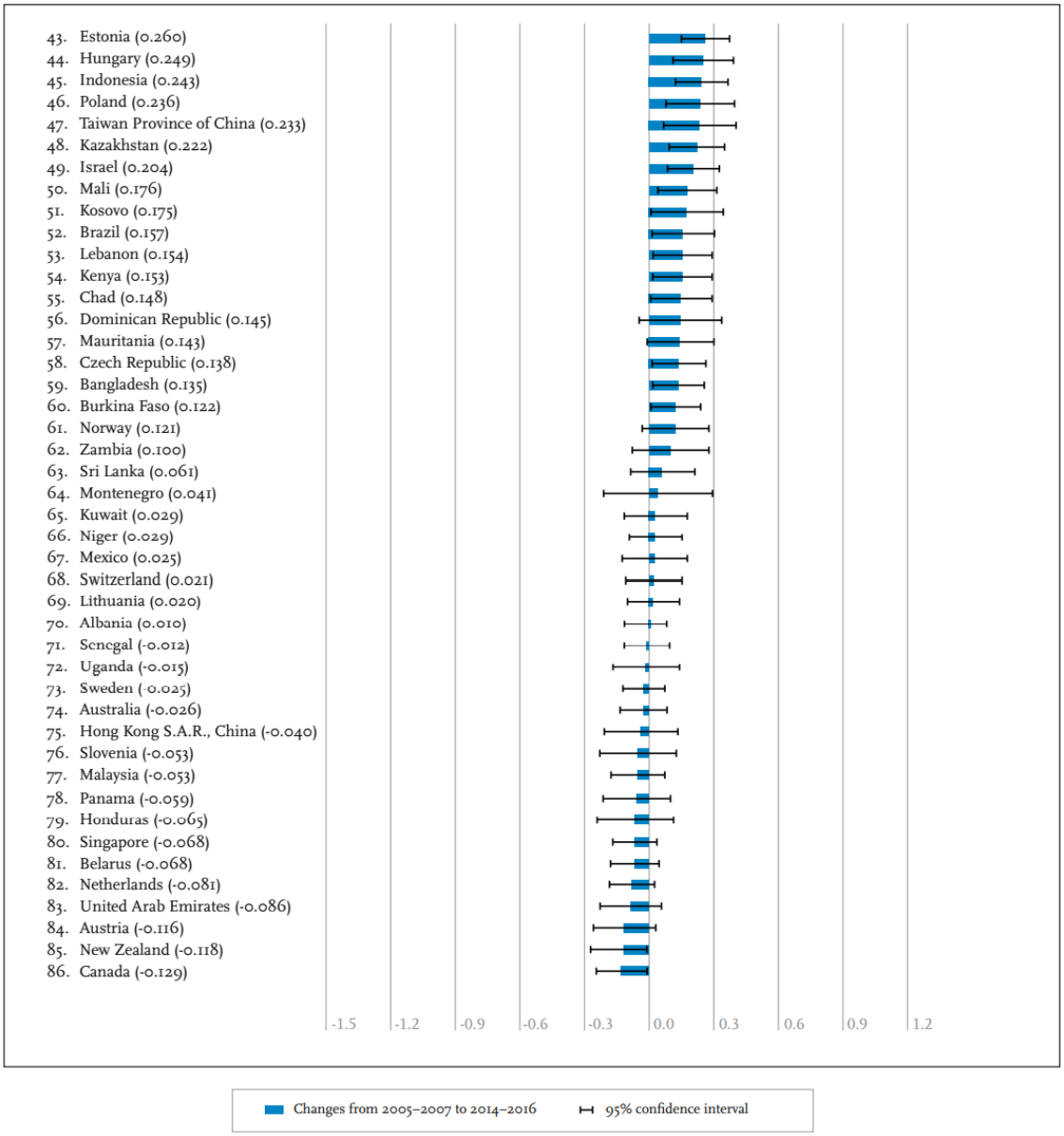


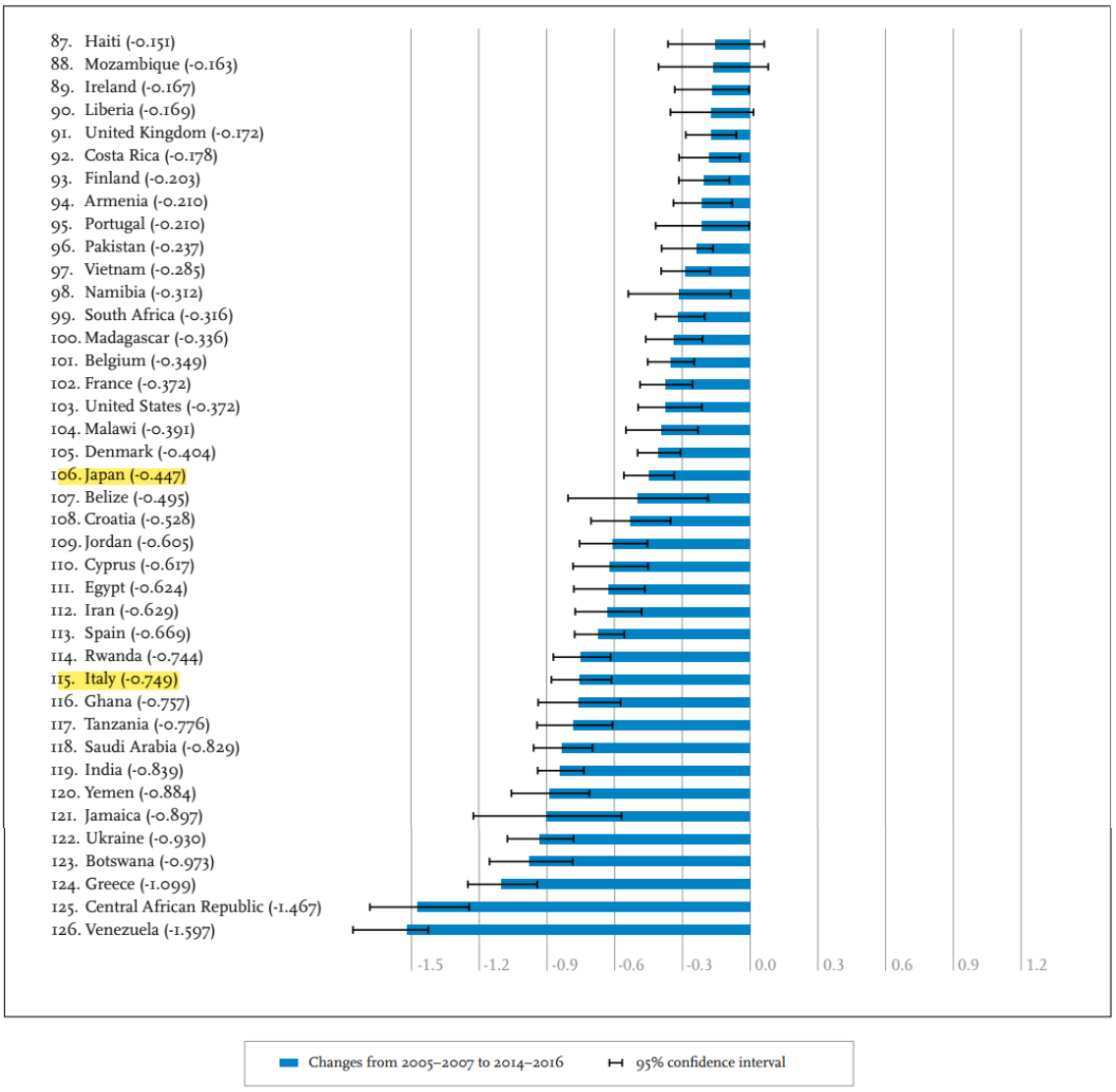
A10. Changes in Happiness from 2005-2007 to 2014-2016 (Part 2)

HELLIWELL, John F.; HUANG, Haifang; WANG, Shun, "The social foundations of World Happiness", *World Happiness Report*, 2, 2017, pp. 26.



A11. Changes in Happiness from 2005-2007 to 2014-2016 (Part 3)

HELLIWELL, John F.; HUANG, Haifang; WANG, Shun, "The social foundations of World Happiness", *World Happiness Report*, 2, 2017, pp. 27.



A12. World: Positive Experiences by Gender and 5-Year Age Groups

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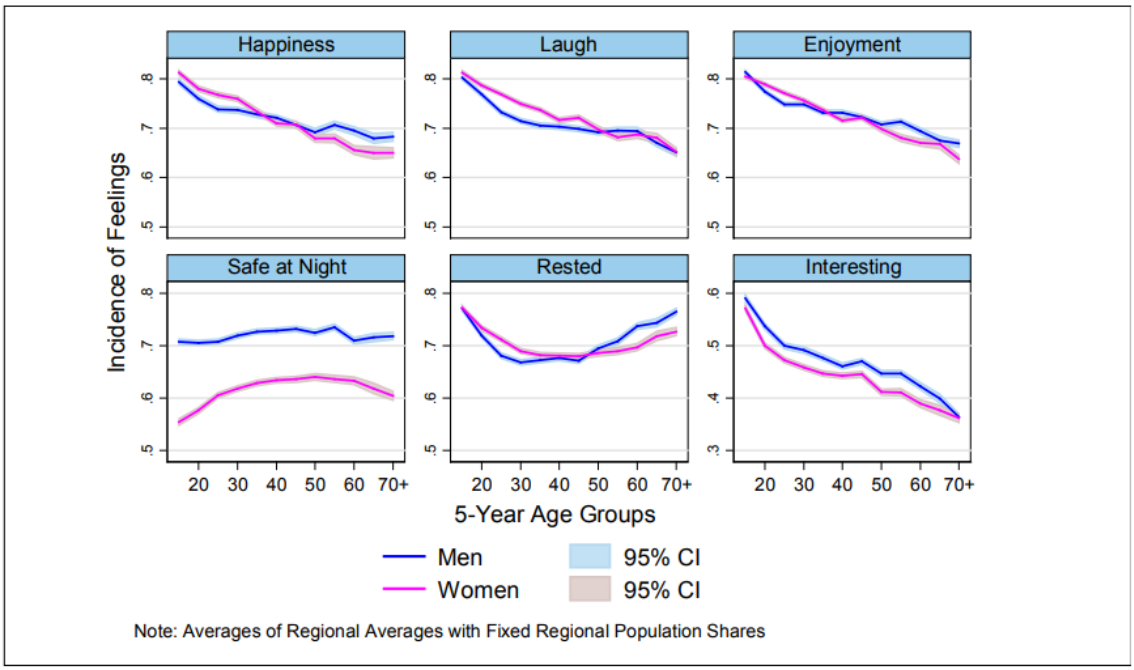

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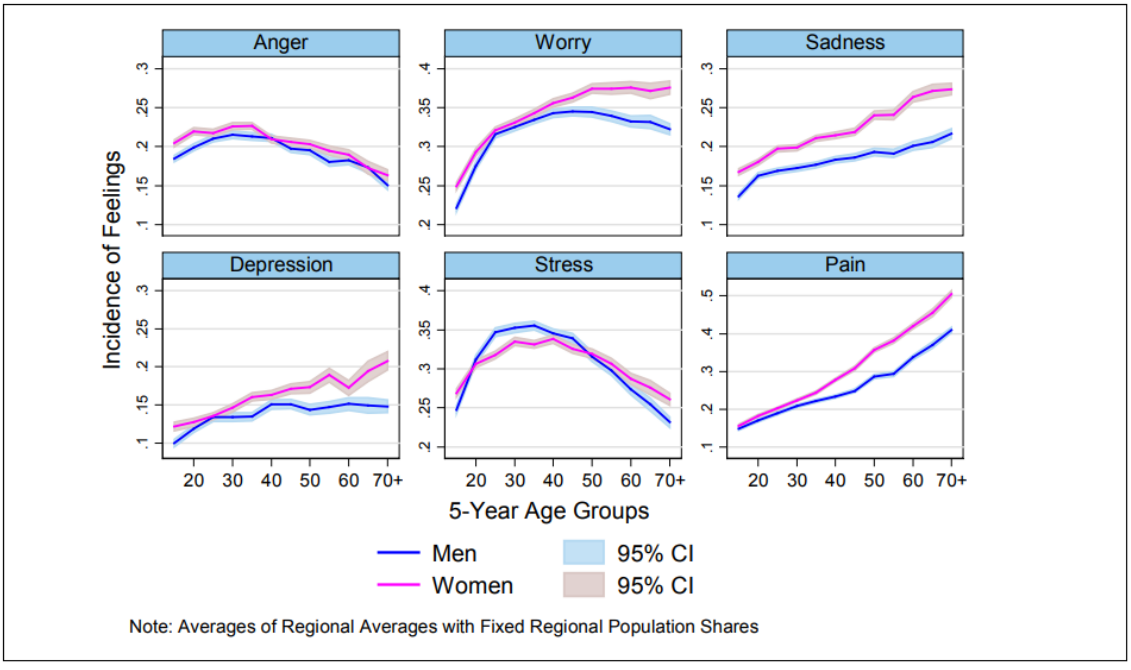

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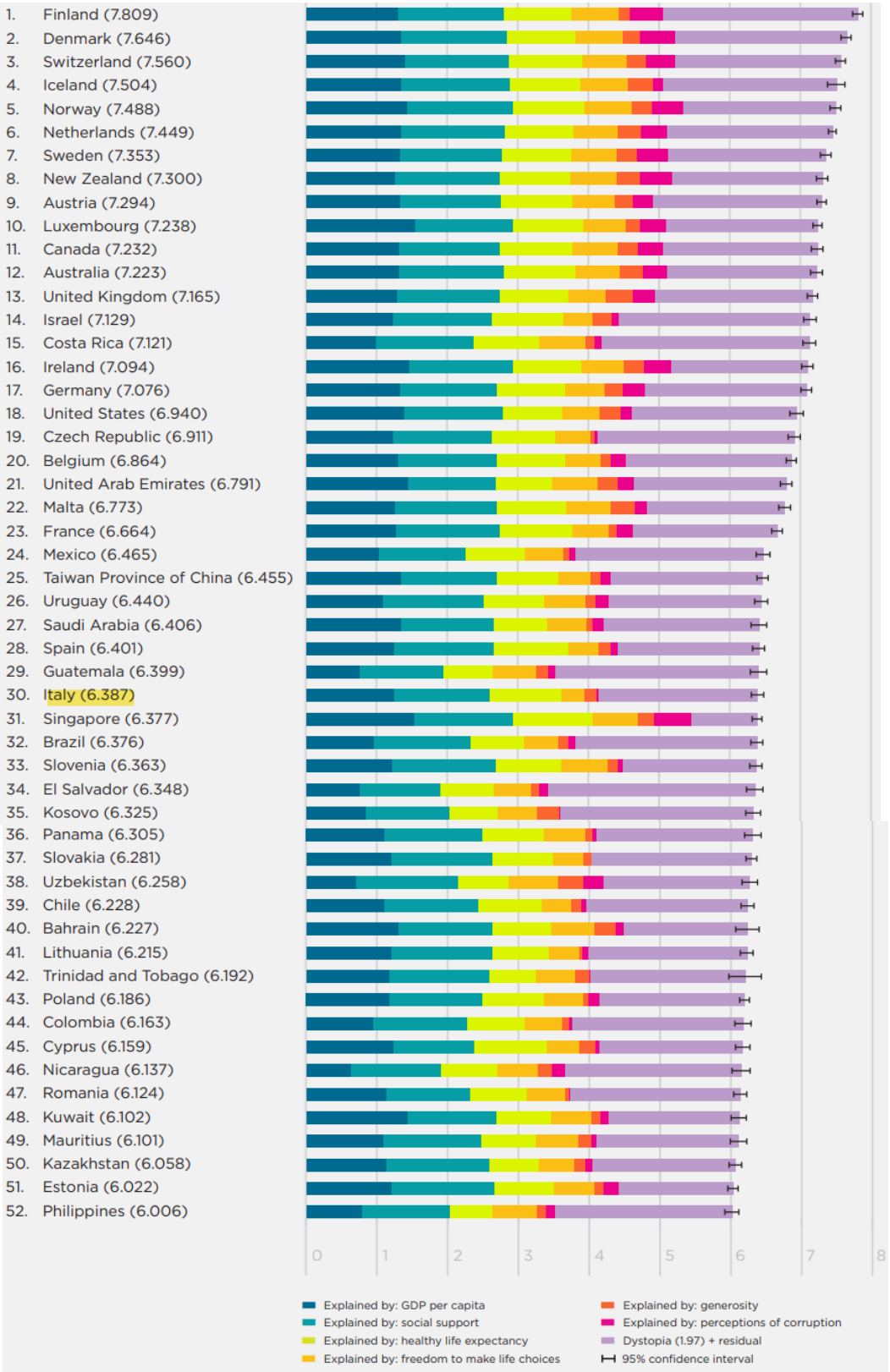

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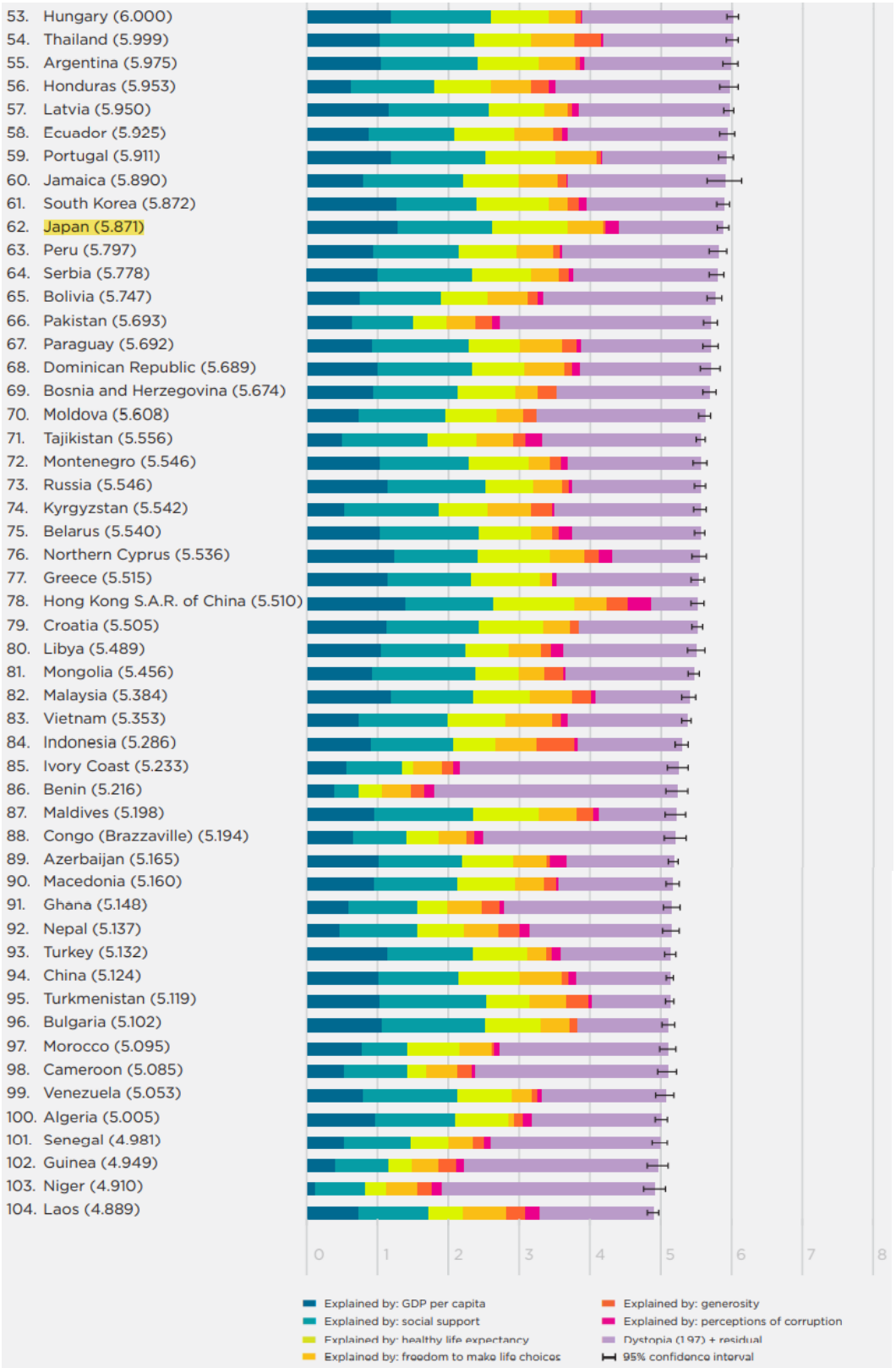

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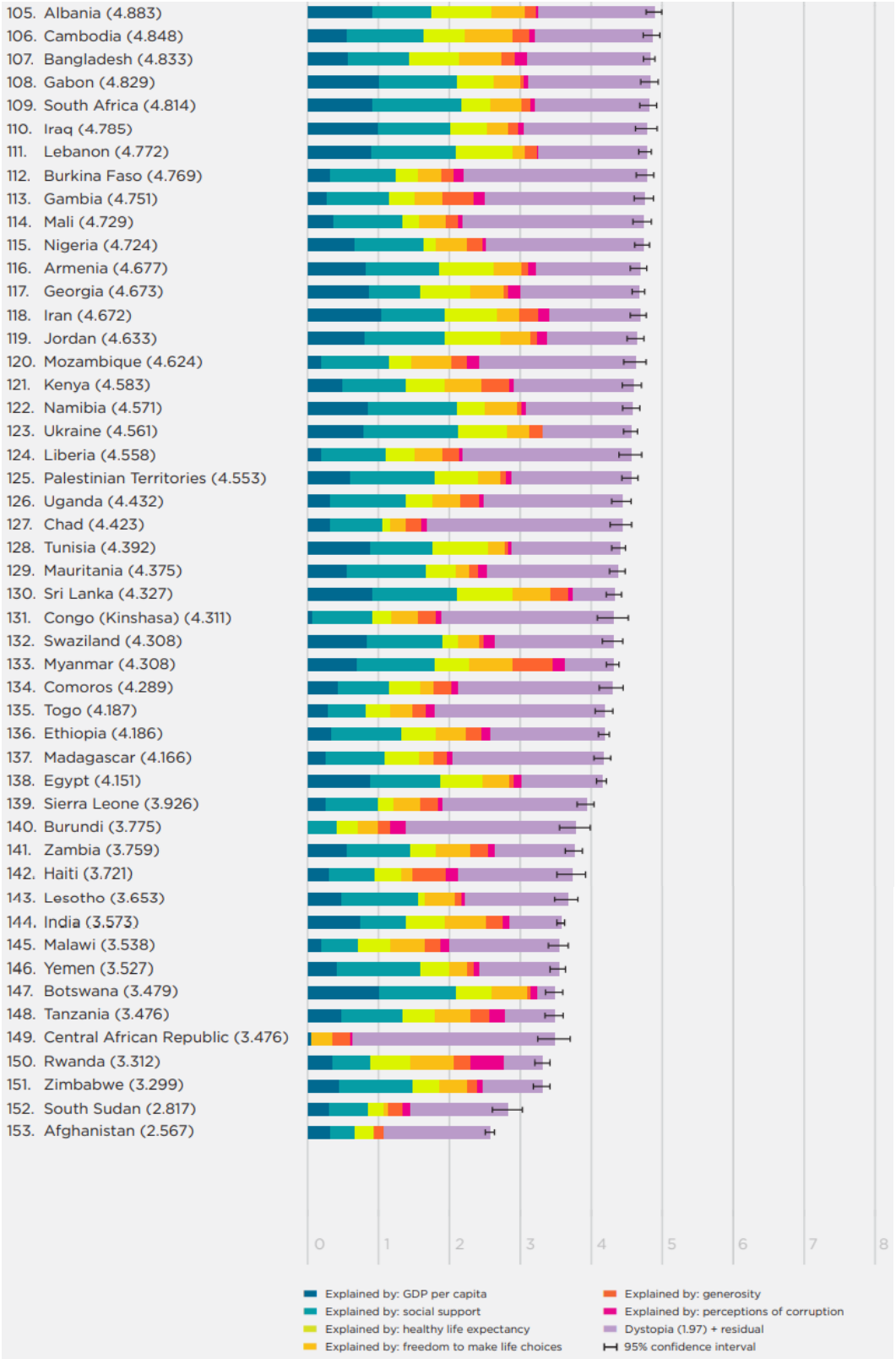

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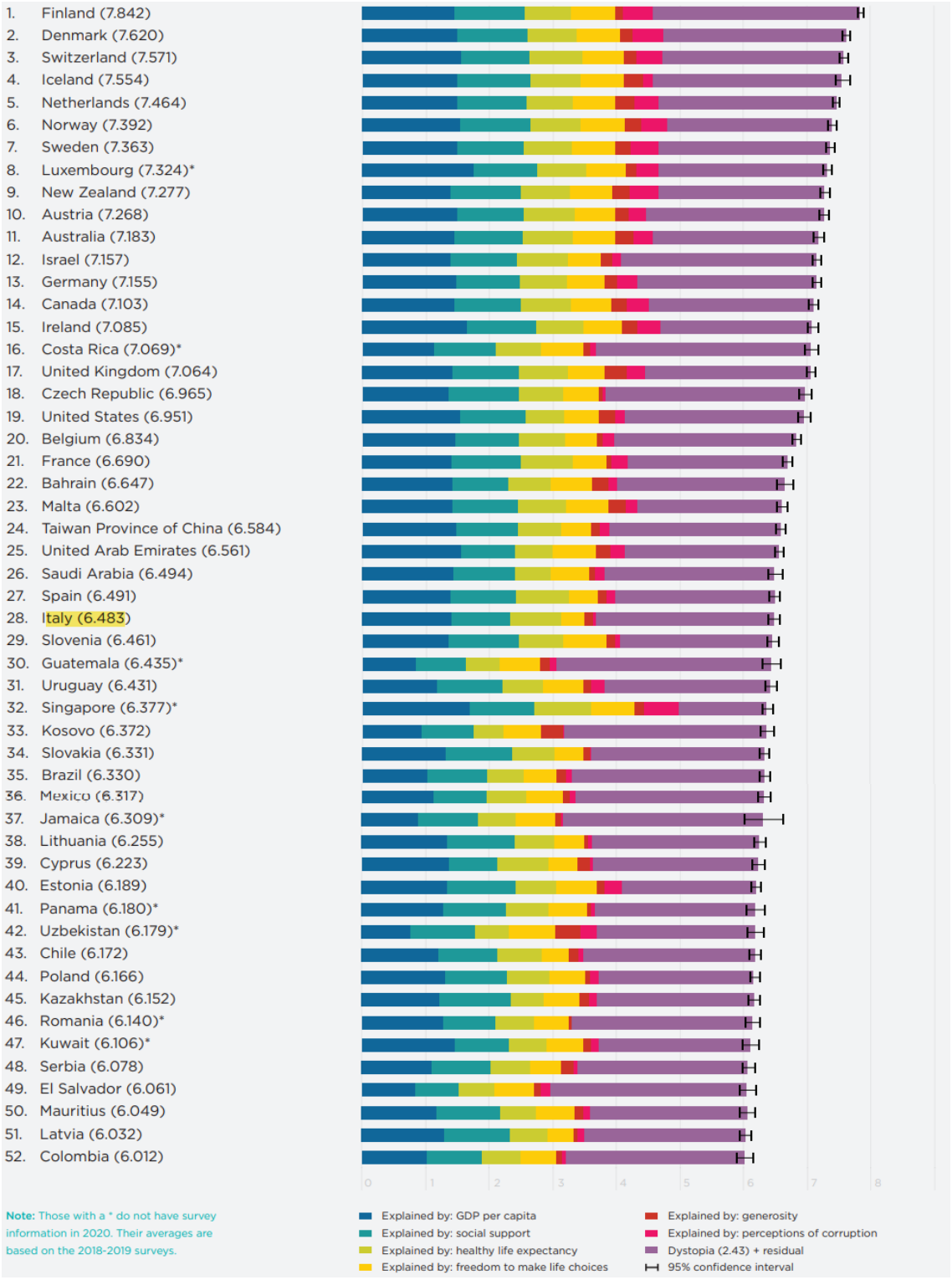

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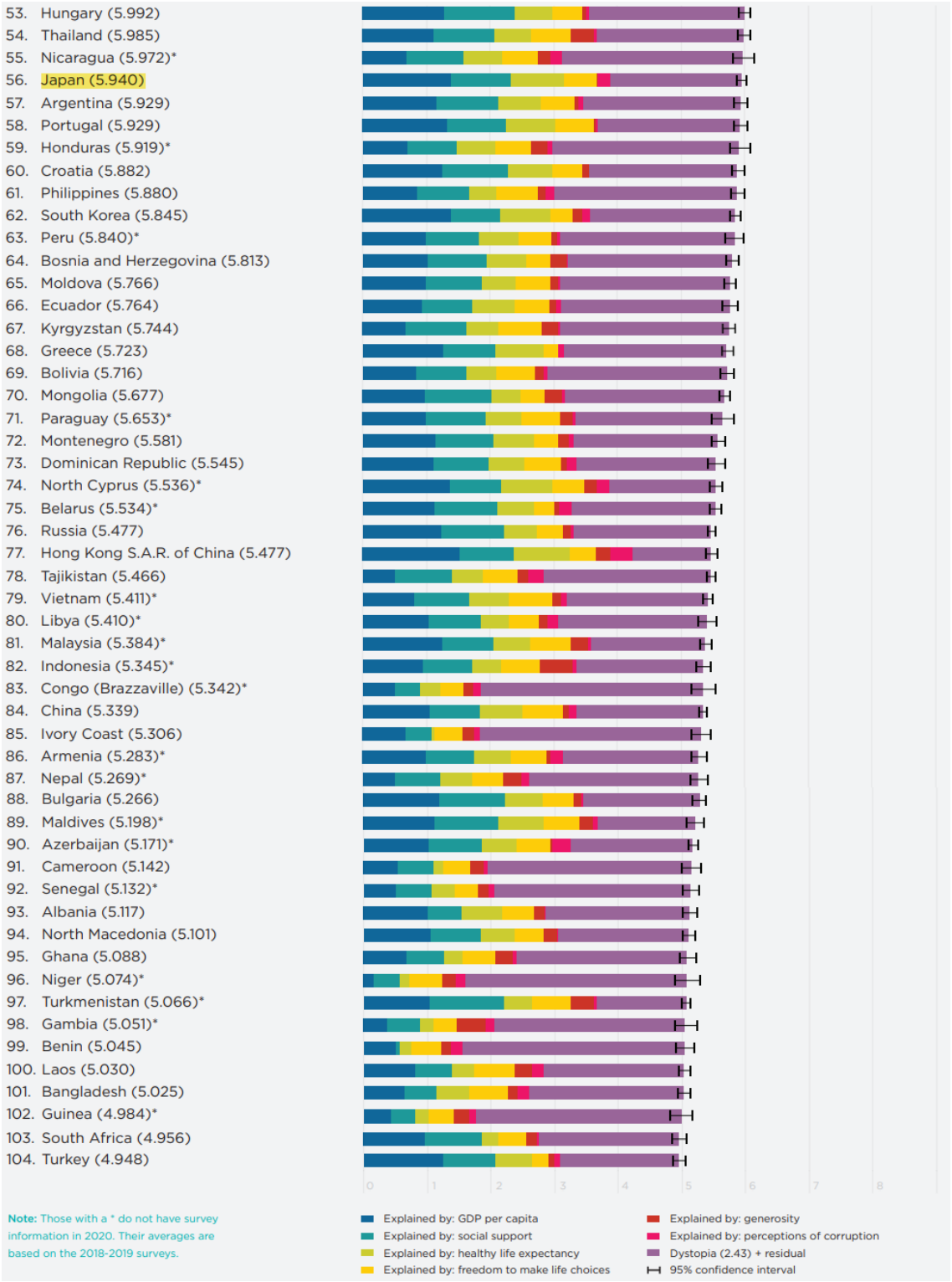

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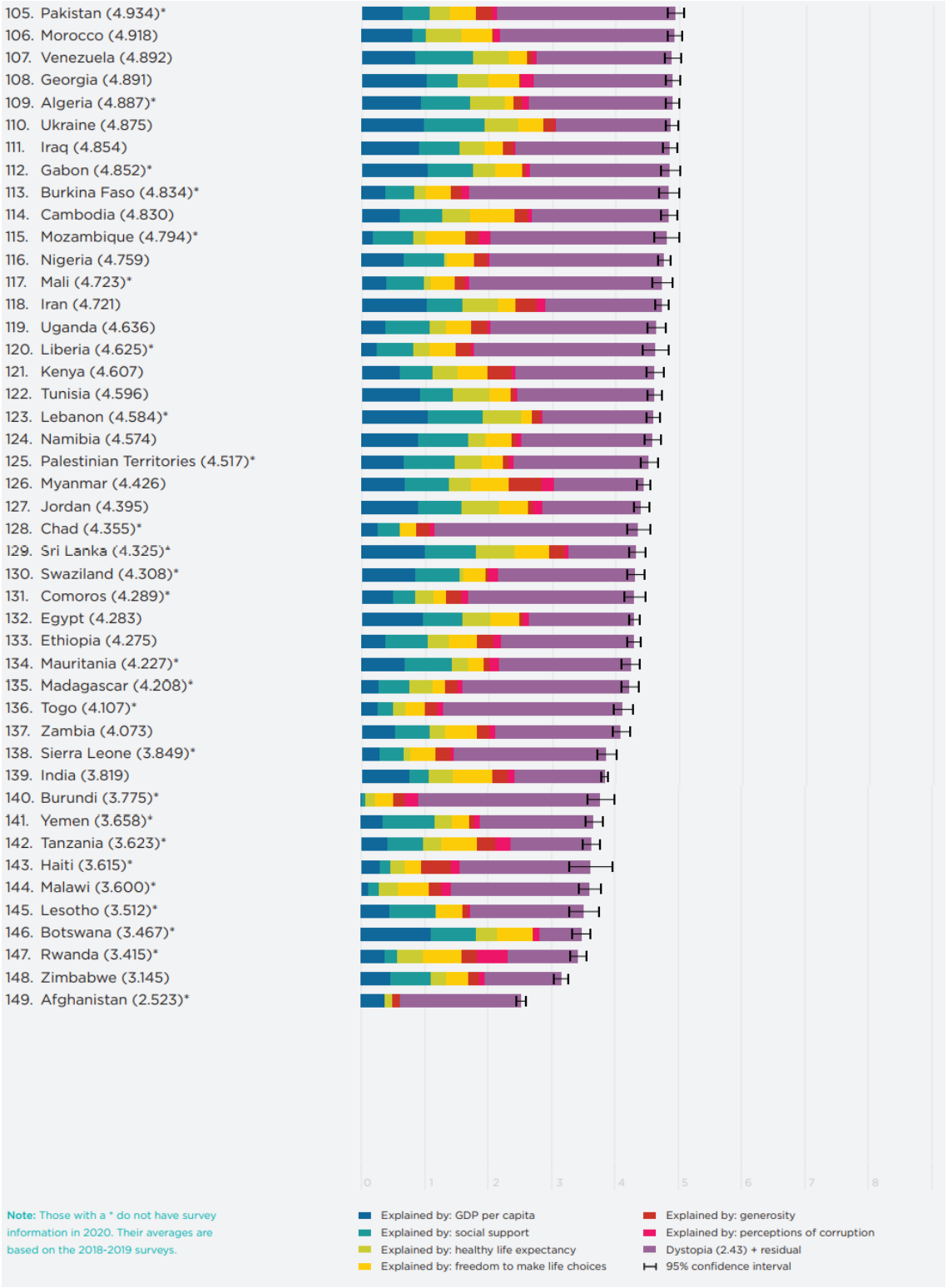

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Acknowledgments

This work was possible thanks to my professor Heinrich, who gave me his time and patience through the whole process of creation of this thesis.

My mother Rebecca, my father Virginio and my sister Giorgia kept being my strength and support through my academic life, making opportunities become real and believing in the person I am.

A very important figure that gave me her great support, listening to me, giving me ideas and always believing in me since the beginning of my research is my aunt Giulia. Together with her husband Buni, I felt being in a second home.

Even if in another country, I would like to thank Tabayashi sensei for her kind support since we ever met. I feel lucky and honored to have spent time together and I am looking forward to seeing each other again, in Japan or in Italy.

I would also like to thank one of the best persons I have ever met in my life, Antonella, one of my pillars since we became friends and helped me becoming the person I am today. Through our talks and sharing of ideas I could give a clearer image to the aim of my thesis and start working on it.

Thank you to Letizia and Renato for being there for me and caring about me, I feel really lucky and I will never stop thinking about them as the grandparents I could never have for more than half of my life now.

What made my academic experience better was the luck of sharing it with many different people, even if only for a short time due to the pandemic. I could find two amazing friends, Ilaria and Margherita, but also other great people I hope to keep in touch with, as Anna and Gianluca.

Last, but not least, are my friends Mariapaola, Riccardo, Federico, Gaia, Clara and so many others that remind me how happy life can be, that will always be there for me in every little achievement I reach, as I will be in theirs, supporting each other.