
Historical Origins of the Male Breadwinner Household Model: Britain, Sweden and Japan

Osamu Saito

Hitotsubashi University

Studies of historical origins of the male breadwinner household model cut across the boundaries of economic history, labour history, women's history, and welfare state studies. The model is said to have been established between the mid-19th and the mid-20th century in many countries. This essay begins with a brief survey of literature on the historical path to breadwinning, with special reference to Britain, Sweden and Japan. The literature survey is followed by the examination of a hypothesis put forward by the economic historian Jan de Vries, which focuses on household production by married women, first in west European historical contexts, and then with Japanese pre-war data. It is argued that one of the factors accounting for the rise of the breadwinner regime was an increase in the demand for home-produced goods and services, a factor specific to a particular phase of development where the market supplied no acceptable substitutes for most of these. At the same time, it is emphasized that culture-specific factors, such as family formation rules, traditional systems of welfare, and the government's stance and policies, are also important for a better understanding of the rise of breadwinning in each historical case.

I. Introduction

According to traditional interpretations, the male breadwinner household was established between the mid-19th and the mid-20th century in many countries. It was a product of industrial capitalism. Industrialisation brought about not just an expansion of manufacturing and other non-agricultural sectors, but also meant the separation of home and work. With rising standards of living, a fruit of the former, the latter process led to male breadwinning: indeed, the male breadwinner household's heyday is said to have been in the 1950s (Seccombe 1993, 208). This claim is consistent with the synthesis in family history in the 1970s, where the early phases of industrialisation saw the family household responding to changing labour markets, thus becoming a family wage economy. This was followed eventually by a family consumer economy, which witnessed the birth of a male breadwinner household: "By the first decades of the twentieth century married women in working-class families spent more time at home, less time earning wages. Household and child care responsibilities demanded a new expertise which in turn required more time than it had in the past" (Tilly and Scott 1978, 213). In the field of welfare state history too, it has been sug-

* This essay is a somewhat different version of the author's Japanese-language paper, which appeared in *The Japanese Journal of Labour Studies* 55, (September 2013): 4–16, under the same title (the subtitle is added to this version). Bibliographical help offered by Makoto Akagi during the course of this revision is gratefully acknowledged.

gested that social security measures introduced in the period from the 1880s to 1914 were designed to fit the paternalist notion of the male breadwinner family, and thus influenced subsequent planning ideas, such as the Beveridge Report of 1942, for the welfare state (Orloff 1993; Osawa 2011, 8–10).

However, the post-war development of the welfare state was multifarious; and it has been suggested that the multiple developments can be better understood by referring to each country's historical commitment to the male breadwinner norm (Lewis 1992). Looking back from this vantage point, the historical process to the male breadwinner household regime turns out to be equally varied depending on initial conditions, the level of development, the state's attitude to gender and work, and so on. In view of the typologies of welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990; Lewis 1992), it is likely that Sweden followed a path considerably divergent from Britain's, while in non-European countries like Japan, historical patterns must have been considerably different.

At the same time, we can also approach the pre-1950 phase of evolution from a different angle. When discussing the Scandinavian model of welfare state in the making, Esping-Andersen noted in passing that the area's "private welfare market was relatively undeveloped" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 32). It is not quite clear which time period he referred to, but in any country there must have been a period in which welfare markets stayed underdeveloped. In the Scandinavian countries, the social democrats had the will to establish welfare states at all costs; but without such political will and resources, it is likely that families in other countries responded very differently when the markets could not cope with rising demands for various "welfare" goods and services. Indeed, this is the point put forward by the economic historian Jan de Vries (2008), and his argument is worth exploring in relation to historical origins of the male breadwinner household model.

This essay begins with a brief account of three different paths to male breadwinning. Section II looks at Britain, Sweden and Japan in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with special reference to the level of economic development and structural change on the one hand, and the distinction between family and household formation systems on the other. Then, we will turn to de Vries's hypothesis, which is supposed to be at work across countries in a specific phase of development. De Vries's argument that an increase in the demand for home-produced goods and services accounted in part for the rise of the breadwinner regime, a factor specific to a particular phase of modern economic growth where the market supplied no acceptable substitutes for most of these, will be explored in both the western European context (section III) and with Japanese historical data (section IV). Finally, section V will conclude this essay.

II. Diversity in the Path to Male Breadwinning

Historians of the welfare state have paid a great deal of attention to political actors, policies, and institution building. In comparative perspective, however, it is evident that

structural factors at work initially are crucially important in accounting for any observed differences in the historical process between countries before World War II. In the 19th century, Britain was the workshop of the world, having a large manufacturing sector. More important is the finding that even before the classical industrial revolution her share of secondary-sector occupations had already been considerable. In contrast, Sweden and Japan were more or less agrarian during the long 19th century. While modern factory sectors emerged, proto-industry occupied a central place in the rural occupational structure, offering peasant families—especially women—a variety of non-agricultural employment opportunities until the end of the period in question. According to recent findings from an on-going project at the International Network for the Comparative History of Occupational Structure (INCHOS),¹ in England and Wales, the secondary-sector share of male employment increased by more than 10 percentage points from 1710 to 1851. If females are to be added to the male percentages, then the secondary share must have remained remarkably stable at a level around 45% over the 150-year period. This extraordinary finding implies that at the beginning of the 18th century, the primary-sector share of employment was already below the 50% mark, and fell below the secondary share during the course of the century; in other words, before the industrial revolution. Moreover, much of the countryside was highly stratified with a substantial group of “labouring poor” at the bottom of the stratification (except for a few family-farm areas in the north). On the other hand, in Sweden, it is estimated that the primary-sector share in 1900 was a little over 50%, the secondary share 25%, and the tertiary share a little over 20%; while for the same year in Japan, the percentages stood at 64, 18 and 18 respectively (with sexes combined for both countries).² There is a small gap between the Swedish and Japanese levels, but their levels are so vastly different from Britain’s that the two countries should be grouped together against Britain. Given the high propensity for women in the peasant sector to be in the workforce, this difference in the initial condition between Britain on the one hand, and Sweden and Japan on the other, must have exerted a profound influence on the subsequent processes of the rise of male breadwinning in the two groups of countries.

Turning to the dimension of family and household structure, it is Britain and Sweden that fall under the same heading. According to John Hajnal’s influential thesis, both countries belong to a regime of the European marriage pattern; or more precisely, the pre-industrial north-west European family formation system (Hajnal 1965, 1983). This means that from early times on, the family form was a nuclear one and both marriage and

¹ The following account draws on draft chapters on England (by Leigh Shaw-Taylor), Sweden (by Pernilla Jonsson, Inger Jonsson, and Fredrik Sandgren), and Japan (by Osamu Saito and Tokihiko Settsu). The chapters will appear in Saito and Shaw-Taylor (Forthcoming). For England and Wales, see also Shaw-Taylor and Wrigley (Forthcoming).

² It should be noted that the Japanese estimates were made with by-employments included in the calculation. It increased the estimated percentages by just a few points, although its effect on sectoral labour productivity differentials was considerable.

formation of the household were neither under social nor kinship control. This is a very different picture from traditional Japan, where the dominant form was a stem system in which the heir son started his marriage life in the parental household. There are scholars who claim that in pre-industrial Sweden as well, the stem family was a dominant form in the sense that one son married and took over the farm on the retirement of his father. However, it is clear that this stem-like family arrangement found in parts of Sweden (and also of central Europe) was compatible with what Hajnal called the general north-west European household formation rules, while customs associated with other variants of the stem family were not (Hajnal 1983, 70). In Japan's stem family system, a variant of the latter, marriage was not necessarily linked to succession (Saito 1998, 2011). The concept of headship was thus different from the European notion. It was the family (*ie* in Japanese), not the head of the family, who owned property; the head was "merely the manager thereof" (Saito 2011, 468). To put it differently, both English and Swedish family systems are compatible with the concepts of individualism and autonomy, and hence the modern notion of citizenship; by contrast, Japan's family system is not.

We could introduce a couple of other criteria. But even with these two, it is evident that each of the three cases is historically distinct. So what does the historical evidence tell us about the origins of the male breadwinner household in these distinctly different societies?

The British case has long occupied centre-stage in the male breadwinner debate (for a survey of literature and evidence, see Creighton 1996; Janssens 1998; Burnette 2008, chap. 5). However, recent research results cast doubt about the stereotyped timeframe of periodisation. A series of publications by Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries have established that male breadwinning was already widespread among wage-earning households well before the British industrial revolution. One dataset they collected contains 1,161 household budgets dating from 1787 to 1865 (Horrell and Humphries 1995, 1998). The other is taken from a collection of 617 autobiographies written by working-class men of the 18th and 19th centuries: it is a sample of cases (60–76% of the total) where both parents are present, together with the information available for mothers' participation in economic activity and their earnings (Humphries 2010, chap.4). The former includes more cases of pauper families, while the latter's occupational coverage is thought to have been closer to the working-class average; but because of the difference in the sample size, the former can be regrouped by occupation and sub-period, while the latter cannot in most cases. From these two datasets, several observations may be made.

First, married women's average rate of workforce participation in the period between the end of the 18th and the mid-19th century was at 56% for the former sample of poorer families and 29–36% for the latter, supposedly more representative sample. Considering the estimated proportions of married women returning an occupation in the 1891–1911 census enumerations (reported in Table 1), and considering those census-based estimates cover middle- and upper-class families as well, the Horrell-Humphries estimates for earlier

Table 1. Estimated Proportions of British Married Women in Employment, c.1780–1911

Marital status	I-a	I-b	II		
	Autobiographical sample (Working-class occupations)	Family budget sample (Biased towards the poor)	Census returns (Sample of 13 localities in England and Wales, covering all occupational classes)		
	c.1780–1865		1891	1901	1911
Single	–	–	70.7	69.8	73.5
Ever-married	–	–	17.1	14.6	16.2
Married—spouse present	29–36	56	9.5	7.5	10.8
Widowed	–	–	42.5	40.4	34.9

Sources: (I-a) Humphries (2010, 105, table 4.5), excluding cases where the husband and wife had the same occupation (if included the figures are 41–47%, suggesting that the proportions were higher for the self-employed); (I-b) Horrel and Humphries (1995, 98, table 1), mean of sub-period percentages; (II) Garrett et al. (2001, 300, table 5.8.1), based on a sample of around 20,000 ever-married women in each of the three censuses.

working-class married women cannot be regarded as particularly high. Second, according to the former sample, the participation level was higher in low-wage regions than in high-wage regions. Together with the first observation, this can be taken to imply that the higher the husband's earnings, the lower the wife's participation rate. Third, the latter sample indicates that among the self-employed (where the married woman had the same occupation as the husband's), more married women were in the workforce than in working-class families. Finally, the former sample's tabulation by sub-period shows that the decline in married women's contribution to the family income was not uni-linear. It increased from 15% in the late 18th century to 25% in the 1815–40 period, and began to decline to under 20% in the 1846–65 period. All this suggests that the overall percentage of married women in employment may have declined to a certain extent during the 19th century. But more importantly, given the finding about the percentage of their contribution to the family income, it is hard to claim that their participation rate must have been at a much higher level. Male breadwinning predated the age of industrial capitalism: "Not only had nuclear families come early in the British case. The male-breadwinner family also preceded industrialization..... Whether its origins were in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, or even earlier in the medieval period, by the eighteenth century a male-breadwinner family system appears established" (Humphries 2010, 120).

Sweden shared the same characteristics of the pre-industrial north-west European family formation system, but remained far more agrarian, with its per capita GDP at roughly half the UK at the end of the 19th century, while today the nation is renowned for its welfare provision wholly separate from the male breadwinner model. The origins of this post-war Swedish model are found in the 1910s. After the introduction of workers' sickness

and factory inspection schemes around 1890, the parliament passed several legislations of national significance which increased the government's social transfer spending as a percentage of GDP. The 1880–1930 period saw social spending rising in almost all countries in the West, with Sweden among the leading countries of this upward trend (Lindert 2004, 12–13). However, more significant here is the state's stance revealed in those legislations, of which the Old Age Act of 1913 and the new Poor Relief Act of 1918 were considered to be particularly important for the gender question. Not only did the two legislations mark the growth of state spending, but they also made it explicit that the government's stance was gender-neutral (Sommestad 1998, 168–73). The 1913 legislation of pension for the elderly, which is well known for its universality, actually extended the principle of individual entitlement to women regardless of marital status, occupational status and income—the point which “has seldom been noted” (Sainsbury 1996, 63). In 1918, poor single mothers became entitled to receive child supplements, but only when they were permanently unable to work, suggesting that any individual who became unable to perform breadwinning duties was given an entitlement, regardless of sex.

Lena Sommestad believes that one of the background factors accounting for this early history of the gender-neutral welfare state lies in the fact that traditionally, farm women performed a number of domestic as well as outdoor tasks, which were often regarded as “breadwinning” activities. Thus, state support for sickness and old age was judged most needed in the countryside initially. Although campaigns for state intervention intensified in urban areas from the late 19th century on, the 1913 Act is in fact said to have been “shaped by farmers' demand for a ‘people's insurance’” (Sommestad 1998, 169). Another set of factors were mass emigration and declining fertility. Emigration, which was extensive until about 1910, “served to nurture an ambivalent, but largely permissive, attitude towards women's gainful work” (Sommestad 1998, 167). The falling birth-rate, apparent after World War I and reaching an international low in the mid-1930s, and the population debate that followed, would probably help to explain why the government took a maternalist social policy at the time when men's wages were rising and the ideational tide turned to domesticity; i.e. when “Sweden could well have moved towards a male breadwinner model” (Sommestad 1998, 171–73). The post-war state inherited this “citizen-based” approach to social provision, in which citizens' entitlements were “individualized” rather than “familialized” (Sainsbury 1996, 69).

In sharp contrast with the British and Swedish cases, Japan's history of the welfare state is a recent one. As in many other countries, industrialisation begot social problems that demanded government intervention. But the pre-World War II state did not act swiftly. A few notable measures were implemented, so that social transfers increased gradually over time. However, none of the legislations were based on the principle of universal entitlements; much of the spending went to pensions for civil servants (of whom the overwhelming majority were male). In fact, if annuities and pensions for civil servants and military officers are excluded, then the proportion of social welfare spending to GNE declined from

0.2% in 1886 to 0.1% in 1935. It is true that even without public-sector pensions and annuities, the total transfers per capita increased modestly by 37% in real terms from 1886 to 1935, but over the same period total government expenditure per capita went up by 4.5 times (Saito 2014, 37). It is also true that Japan was poor by international standards. At the end of the 19th century, its GDP per capita was about half of Sweden. But, as Lindert has shown, social spending growth happened in various countries regardless of the level or growth rate of GDP per capita. Clearly, Japan “resisted” the global trend in social spending growth during the early phase of development (Lindert 2004, 15, 17).

Until about the mid-1950s, the Japanese economy had a large self-employed sector: farm households and family businesses in the secondary and tertiary branches. There, like 19th-century Sweden, important areas of productive activity were carried out by women, especially married women. From the late 1950s on, however, the economy started growing at an unprecedented pace. With the growth of the manufacturing industry, the corporate sector expanded and the self-employed sector contracted. A huge number of people left the countryside and formed households in urban areas, which took the form of a nuclear family. It was during this high-growth period that male breadwinning became the dominant form of the family household, and also the period that saw the establishment of Japan’s post-war welfare-state system. On the surface, this seems to suggest everything was a product of industrial capitalism. According to Mari Osawa’s interpretations, however, it owed much to big businesses’ employment practices. In the big business sector, employees, whether blue- or white-collar, were predominantly male, and long-term employment became their model career pattern. Correspondingly, the number of “full-time housewives” increased over the same period, i.e. until the end of the 1970s. This labour market segmentation gave rise to legislations based on the gender-based notion of the breadwinner-carer division. The whole system thus built has been described as “big company”-centred, and hence male-centred (Osawa 2002). With the slow-down of the nation’s growth rates and the emergence of a service economy since the first oil crisis of 1973, a number of reforms were pushed through in the 1980s and 90s. However, the end result was a social security system “even more rigidly locked in to the male breadwinner model than of any other country” (Osawa 2011, 54).

Each of these three paths was thus historically distinct. However, as noted earlier, de Vries (2008) has argued that all industrialising countries went through a phase in which welfare markets were underdeveloped, and it is this that accounts for the rise of the male breadwinner family. I shall now turn to this issue in the next section.

III. Women and Household Production

De Vries’s approach takes us away from the political economy of welfare provision. He focuses on household production—not the production of goods and services for the market, but of “products” to be consumed by household members; and on ways in which such goods and services were produced by married women.

His argument is placed in a much broader thesis on the longer-term transformation of household economy in the north-west European region. According to this framework of household economics, the economic history of the past several centuries is divided into four separate phases. In the first place, a long period before c.1800, there was an “industrious” revolution, during which families in early modern north-west European areas increased their working hours in an effort to augment their cash earnings to buy consumer goods available in markets. This meant an increase in the labour supply of women and children, as well as an expansion of consumers’ demand, both triggered by changes in household consumer preference. The transformation of the household economy laid the groundwork for the second phase, a revolution on the supply side. During this industrial revolution, despite a strong output growth, workers’ standard of living did not improve greatly, since the supply of total working hours was also on the rise. It was from the mid-19th century when working-class families’ real income started to increase. This third period saw the household’s preference field starting to change again, leading to the rise of male breadwinning. For any modest-income families who wanted to increase their quality of life, health and childcare areas gained special importance. This was because in the late 19th century, cleanliness and safety could not be bought from the market. “The market supplied no acceptable substitutes for most of them. In some cases, this was still technically impossible; in others the quality of the market alternative was low or it was unverifiable”; in such circumstances, “a division of labor within the household was the only feasible route to enter the realm of this consumption cluster for families of modest income” (de Vries 2008, 204, 205). Working-class wives withdrew from the workforce to “produce” such goods and services at home. In this way, the male breadwinner household model came into being. However, it also implies that the model would begin to collapse when such markets became established, another wave of change which he calls the second industrious revolution. He argues that this—in addition to other, oft-mentioned factors such as family limitation, home mechanisation and female education—must have been at work behind the post-World War II move towards a gender-neutral family model.

De Vries (2008) is a synthesis articulating what he set out in the 1990s (de Vries 1993, 1994). So far, critical examination has been made almost exclusively on the first and second phases in Britain, although the debate remains inconclusive.³ However, there are a couple of important issues of broader significance to which little attention has been paid. One is the above-mentioned thesis on the rise and fall of the male breadwinner model; and the other is his claim that Hajnal’s European marriage pattern, or more precisely, the north-west European family formation system, defines the “geographical range” where the industrious revolution took place (de Vries 2008, 19). The latter is an important one since this article deals

³ It is, however, worth mentioning that there is one piece of supportive evidence for the claim that working hours increased in Britain from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century (Voth 2000), although whether this finding can be explained by the industrious revolution thesis is another matter.

with a non-European country, Japan, but the issue itself requires a separate exploration.⁴ I will, therefore, concentrate on the former.

De Vries's exploration of empirical evidence begins with women's workforce participation rates at national levels and their contribution to total family income in the Belgian case (de Vries 2008, 212–24). The trends found are generally consistent with the argument, but unsurprisingly, are not particularly convincing either. More interesting are research findings referred to by de Vries about gender biases with respect to intra-household resource allocation (de Vries 2008, 231–35). Various measures have been used—sex differentials in mortality, height, and literacy; and also women's stock of clothes. They are all concerned with “outcomes” of a biased allocation of resources between sexes. Of the works cited, the most interesting and intriguing are studies by Stephen Nicholas and Deborah Oxley on 19th-century female convicts transported from Britain to Australia (Nicholas and Oxley 1994). Their results suggest that discrimination against females existed from the late 18th century onwards, placing the “emergence of the male breadwinner half a century earlier” (Nicholas and Oxley 1994, 111), a conclusion that no longer surprises us given the afore-mentioned findings by Horrel and Humphries. However, another study by Horrel and Oxley, based on budget data for the late 19th century, has found that there was no straightforward correlation between the degree of children's contribution to the total family income and their treatment in the household (Horrel and Oxley 1999). While it is possible to argue, as de Vries does, that the parents' “objectionable” behaviour, such as discrimination against female children, receded as male breadwinning in fact became established (de Vries 2008, 232), the overall impression is that the evidence we have at the moment is far from unequivocal. In other words, the de Vries thesis remains as a working hypothesis.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the hypothesis is empirically plausible. The plausibility is derived from two sources. One is what standard household economics predicts. In the household context, when the principal earner's earnings decline, the subsidiary earner's supply of labour will increase. This is a “necessity” factor, which implies that when the husband's wages increase, his wife will think about the withdrawal from the workforce. Another, which may be called an “opportunity” factor, is the availability and terms of employment available for the subsidiary earner. A case in point is the disappearance of the cottage industry, which must have lowered market wage rates for women. In the case of Britain, two effects appeared in sequence. First, proto-industry declined as a consequence of the industrial revolution; then, from the mid-19th century on men's real wages began to rise. Which of the two effects was stronger is debatable,⁵ but what seems certain is that labour

⁴ For issues associated with an industrious revolution in the East Asian context, see Saito (2010) and de Vries (2011). The latter is a rejoinder to the former.

⁵ Decades ago, on the basis of English data for the working poor in the industrial revolution period, I suggested that the necessity factor outweighed the opportunity factor, i.e. the negative impact of the husband's wages on his wife's supply of labour was greater than the positive effect of female market wages in the local labour market (Saito 1979a, 1979b, 1981). The methods employed were rudimen-

market forces were at work for the proportion of married women in paid employment to decline.

The economic reasoning behind this is the theory of work-leisure preference. In between, however, as de Vries emphasises, there is an area of unpaid, domestic work. In fact, it is plausible that what increased was not leisure, but domestic work time. In the United States, for example, the entire population of housewives spent on average 52 hours a week on domestic work at the turn of the century, which increased to 56 hours in the 1960s (Vanek 1974; Mokyr 2002, 199), the finding based on which Ruth Cowan's *More Work for Mother* (1983) raised a question: why should they be, considering the fact that almost all technologies brought in to the household were domestic labour-saving?⁶ For the UK as well, the trend between 1937 and 1961 was similar (Gershuny 1983, 151; Gershuny 2000, 54). However, in a class society like the UK, it can be "an artefact produced by the conflation of the downwards effect of new domestic technologies for working-class women, and the substantial increase in work caused by the loss of paid domestic service in middle-class urban households" (Gershuny 2000, 67). The breakdowns do show a generally slow decline in unpaid work time for working-class wives and a doubling of middle-class women's domestic work time: the total hours spent for domestic work for the two classes converged by the early 1960s. However, as far as the period from 1937 to the early 1950s is concerned, the line for the working-class exhibits an increase parallel to the aggregate one (Gershuny 1983, 151; Gershuny 2000, 66). Thus the Anglo-American evidence strongly suggests that there was a phase in which the withdrawal of working-class wives from gainful employment led to an increase, not in leisure, but in hours they spent for unpaid, domestic work.

Finally, there is a possibility that the underdevelopment of the health and childcare market in this phase of development was a universal phenomenon which cut across the industrial-agrarian boundary. De Vries suggested this for the industrial West, where the separation of work and home was already the norm. As hinted earlier, the situation may also have been the same in agrarian Scandinavia. This possibility enables us to turn to Japan, a country equally agrarian and dominated by the self-employed sector as far as the period before World War II is concerned.

tary. A recent work which applied a more sophisticated methodology for a larger set of data suggests that the opportunity effect, measured in terms of elasticity, was greater than the necessity factor; although the estimated absolute size of the positive effect, 2.2, is implausibly large compared with that of the negative one, -0.4 (Horrel and Humphries 1995, 112, n 81). For a balanced judgement on this issue, see Burnette (2008), 320–21, where she has employed elasticity of -0.4 only for her simulation exercise.

⁶ One of the few attempts to give a theoretical explanation for the Cowan paradox focuses on the effect of popularized versions of medical knowledge upon ordinary homes (Mokyr 2000; Mokyr 2002, chap. 5). According to this model, when "expert knowledge" is accepted and internalized by ordinary families, it will increase the marginal utility of health and longevity. Thus, the model is able to account for the increase in input by married women, particularly of the middle class, but not necessarily of the working class (Burnette 2008, 322).

IV. Japan's Self-Employed Household

In 1941–42, NHK, the Japanese broadcasting corporation, followed the BBC's example in taking a large-scale survey of time budgeting of family households. Unlike the post-war National Time-use Surveys, the 1941–42 survey was conducted by using a “representative sampling” method: they selected family households which were considered typical and representative of an occupational group of the population. This survey, while posing a problem when trying to determine averages and weights, allows us to compare the occupational groups with respect to the allocation of time between gainful work, domestic work, and leisure, as well as between husband and wife. As such, the data sheds fresh light on the issue of women and household production in Japan of the early 1940s.

The surveyed households were grouped into the office-factory sector (where work and home were separated) and the self-employed (where work and home were not separated), according to the occupation of the household head. The former was further divided into office and factory workers and the latter into shop keepers and agriculturalists. Intra-sectoral differences are meant to reflect not just occupational characteristics, but income level differentials of the two sub-groups.

Table 2 sets out the results by sex and occupational category. As expected, white-collar couples' work time total was shorter than factory workers', and shop keepers' shorter than farmers'. The opposite holds for leisure time. Both findings reflected the income effect. Second, women's work time was longer than men's irrespective of income class and whether or not work and home were separated. For leisure, the opposite holds. Gender inequality persisted. Third, the hours actually worked by women of the self-employed were considerable: 5 hours a day for shop keepers, and nearly 8 hours for farmers' wives (recorded hours for office or factory workers' wives were negligible, a result explicable by the adoption of the representative sampling method). Finally, and more importantly, the difference between hours spent by women for domestic tasks between the self-employed and the office-factory sector was extraordinarily large: around 6 hours a day in the former, compared to a little more than 10 hours in the latter. If domestic work time of 10 hours were a workload for the married woman in the office or factory worker's ideal typical family household of the day, then it may be that women's contribution to productive activity in the self-employed household was made at the expense of domestic production of goods and services.

This proposition can be tested if individual-level data exist. Currently, a panel-data set is being constructed under the auspice of Hitotsubashi University's pre-war Farm Household Survey micro-database project, the data which allow us to explore the farm woman's supply of working hours for both gainful and domestic work in relation to her husband's working hours. In the very beginning of the project, I made an analysis, as a feasibility study, of a test sample of 17 farm households in four different prefectures for the 1931–41 period (Saito 2009). According to the results of this preliminary analysis, the farm woman

Table 2. Hours Spent for Work and Leisure by Sex, Occupational Category, and Type of Work: Japan, 1941–42

Occupation of household head	Work			Leisure
	Gainful work time	Domestic work time	Total	
(Hours per day)				
<u>Men</u>				
Office-factory				
White-collars	7.5	0.4	7.9	3.0
Factory workers	10.0	0.2	10.2	1.8
Self-employed				
Shop keepers	9.4	0.2	9.6	2.0
Agriculturalists	10.1	0.2	10.4	1.7
<u>Women</u>				
Office-factory				
White-collars	0.1	10.4	10.5	2.5
Factory workers	0.6	10.4	11.0	1.4
Self-employed				
Shop keepers	5.1	6.7	11.8	1.2
Agriculturalists	7.7	5.5	13.2	0.5

Source: NHK (1942–43). Means of seasonal averages.

Note: All respondents were in the 31–45 age group. No breakdown by marital status is possible. Given the survey methodology, however, virtually everybody in this age group is supposed to have been married when surveyed.

readily increased her supply of working hours for gainful work whenever her husband had to work longer, thereby decreasing her hours spent for domestic tasks; but the elasticity calculated for domestic duties (-0.5) was half the size of elasticity for gainful work time (1.0). Obviously, this panel-data analysis should be revised when the database construction is completed. What I can say at this stage of investigation is that the findings are suggestive and in fact consistent with the above supposition. Prior to the established of the male breadwinner family, the level of time spent for domestic work by married women of the self-employed may well have been sub-optimal, but when circumstances enabled them to reduce time for gainful work, they would probably spend more than proportionally for the production of domestic goods and services.

V. Concluding Remarks

In the previous two sections, I have argued that there is some evidence lending support to the de Vries thesis. Clearly his hypothesis is worth further investigation. Be it in East Asia or the West, and be it in the rural self-employed or the urban wage economy, families who had just experienced a modest growth of income faced a new problem inherent to that

particular phase of development. A gradual increase in the demand for goods and services in the areas of health and childcare, indispensable for raising the quality of life, was met by the inability of the market to supply acceptable substitutes for most of home products. It was women who in most cases responded to the problem by increasing her hours of work to produce such goods and services at home, which led to the male breadwinner-female carer household regime in many countries.

However, this should not be taken to imply that the path to male breadwinning was universal. Differences in the type of family and kinship structure, the level of development, the extent of structural change, political institutions, and state policy all mattered. Each of the three cases we have examined were historically distinct as a result of different combinations of these factors. In the case of Britain, male breadwinning had already been the dominant household model before the industrial revolution—the late 19th-century situation is thought to have simply strengthened that model. In Sweden, by contrast, when “average incomes in rural districts were too modest to permit any exclusive private solutions to problems of poverty, sickness, childbirth or old age” (Sommestad 1998, 164), it was not families but the state that stepped in. In Japan, on the other hand, the male breadwinner household came to the forefront much later, in the post-war period of strong economic growth when the transition from self-employment to wage-earning took place on a massive scale. The British-Swedish contrast is due primarily to differences in the level of development and the extent of structural change. For the Swedish-Japanese contrast, on the other hand, the distinction between the nuclear and the stem family system is likely to account for differences in ways in which families responded to economic questions. Finally, how and when state intervened also varied from country to country. The Swedish state responded quickly when the problems of poverty, sickness and old age emerged, keeping a gender-neutral stance to those social security questions, while Britain’s response was made after a time lag without intervening in the existing culture of male breadwinning. In the Japanese case, while the pre-war state did not act at all, the successive post-war governments’ welfare system is so rigidly “locked in” to the male breadwinner model, that the transition to a post-industrial, gender-neutral regime is deemed difficult.

References

- Burnette, Joyce. 2008. *Gender, work and wages in industrial revolution Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. 1983. *More work for mother: The ironies of household technology from the open hearth to the microwave*. New York: Basic Books.
- Creighton, Colin. 1996. The rise of the male breadwinner family. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 2:310–37.
- De Vries, Jan. 1993. Between purchasing power and the world of goods: Understanding the household economy in early modern Europe. In *Consumption and the world of goods*,

- ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter, 85–132. London: Routledge.
- . 1994. The industrial revolution and the industrious revolution. *Journal of Economic History* 54, no. 2:249–70.
- . 2008. *The industrious revolution: Consumer behavior and the household economy, 1650 to the present*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2011. Industrious peasants in East and West: Markets, technology, and family structure in Japanese and western European agriculture. *Australian Economic History Review* 51 (2): 107–19.
- Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Garrett, Eiligh, Alice Reid, Kevin Schürer, and Simon Szreter. 2001. *Changing family size in England and Wales: Place, class and demography, 1891-1911*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gershuny, Jonathan. 1983. *Social innovation and the division of labour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2000. *Changing times: Work and leisure in postindustrial society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hajnal, John. 1965. European marriage patterns in perspective. In *Population in history: Essays in historical demography*, ed. David V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, 101–36. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 1983. Two kinds of pre-industrial household formation system. In *Family forms in historic Europe*, ed. Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett, 65–104. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horrell, Sara, and Jane Humphries. 1995. Women's labour force participation and the transition to the male breadwinner family, 1790–1865. *Economic History Review* 48, no. 1:89–117.
- . 1998. The origins and expansion of the male breadwinner family: The case of nineteenth-century Britain. In *The rise and decline of the male breadwinner family?*, ed. Angélique Janssens, 25–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horrell, Sara, and Deborah Oxley. 1999. Crust or crumbs? Intrahousehold resource allocation and male breadwinning in late Victorian Britain. *Economic History Review* 52, no. 3:494–592.
- Humphries, Jane. 2010. *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Janssens, Angélique. 1998. The rise and decline of the male breadwinner family? An overview of the debate. In *The rise and decline of the male breadwinner family?*, ed. Angélique Janssens, 1–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, Jane. 1992. Gender and the development of welfare regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 3:159–73.
- Lindert, Peter H. 2004. *The story*. Vol. 1 of *Growing public: Social spending and economic*

- growth since the eighteenth century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mokyr, Joel. 2000. Why “more work for mother?” Knowledge and Household Behavior, 1870–1945. *Journal of Economic History* 60 (1): 1–41.
- . 2002. *The Gifts of Athena: Historical origins of the knowledge economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- NHK (Nihon Hoso Kyokai). 1942–43. *Kokumin seikatsu jikan chosa* [National time use survey], 19 vols. Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Kyokai.
- Nicholas, Stephen, and Deborah Oxley. 1994. The industrial revolution and the genesis of the male breadwinner. In *Was the Industrial Revolution Necessary?*, ed. Graeme D. Snooks, chap. 5. London: Routledge.
- Orloff, Ann Shola. 1993. Gender and the social rights of citizenship: The comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states. *American Sociological Review* 58 (3): 303–28.
- Osawa, Mari. 2002. Twelve million full-time housewives: The gender consequences of Japan’s postwar social contract. In *Social contract under stress: The middle classes of America, Europe, and Japan at the turn of the century*, ed. Olivier Zunz, Leonard Schoppa and Nobuhiro Hiwatari, 255–77. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- . 2011. *Social security in contemporary Japan: A comparative analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Sainsbury, Diane. 1996. *Gender, equality and welfare states*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saito, Osamu. 1979a. Who worked when: life-time profiles of labour force participation in Cardington and Corfe Castle in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. *Local Population Studies*, no. 22:14–29. Reprinted in *Women’s work in industrial England: Regional and local perspectives*, ed. Nigel Goose (Hatfield: Local Population Studies Society, 2007).
- . 1979b. Occupational structure, wages, and age patterns of female labour force participation in England and Wales in the nineteenth century. *Keio Economic Studies* 16, no. 1:17–29.
- . 1981. Labour supply behaviour of the poor in the English industrial revolution. *Journal of European Economic History* 10, no. 3:633–52.
- . 1998. Two kinds of stem family system? Traditional Japan and Europe compared. *Continuity and Change* 13 (1): 167–86.
- . 2009. Noka setai-nai no rodo patan: Ryotaisenkan-ki 17 noka kohyo deta no bunseki [The farm household and intra-family work patterns: An analysis of micro-data for 17 farms in the inter-war period]. *Economic Review* 60, no. 2:126–39.
- . 2010. An industrious revolution in an East Asian market economy? The case of Tokugawa Japan and implications for the Great Divergence. *Australian Economic History Review* 50 (3): 240–61.
- . 2011. The stem family and labour markets: Reflections on households and firms in

- Japan's economic development. *The History of the Family* 16 (4): 466–80.
- . 2014. Was modern Japan a developmental state? In *State Building and Development*, ed. Keijiro Otsuka and Takashi Shiraishi, 23–45. London: Routledge.
- Saito, Osamu, and Leigh Shaw-Taylor, eds. Forthcoming. *Occupational structure and industrialization in a comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Secombe, Wally. 1993. *Weathering the storm: Working-class families from the industrial revolution to the fertility decline*. London: Verso.
- Shaw-Taylor, Leigh, and E. Anthony Wrigley. Forthcoming. Occupational structure and population change. In *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, 4th ed., vol. 1, ed. Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sommestad, Lena. 1998. Welfare state attitudes to the male breadwinning system: The United States and Sweden in comparative perspective. In *The rise and decline of the male breadwinner family?*, ed. Angélique Janssens, 153–74 . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, Louise A., and Joan W. Scott. 1978. *Women, work, and family*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Vanek, Joann. 1974. Time spent in housework. *Scientific American* 231 (5): 116–20.
- Voth, Hans-Joachim. 2000. *Time and work in England 1750–1830*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.