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Masculinities and Sexualities Matter! A Secondary Study on Demographics

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I, Mathilde Moe Strand, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree

Signature:

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Date:

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Abstract

A new demographic era with population ageing and declining fertility as growing demographic phenomena are slowly restructuring societies at multiple levels, with Japan now dealing with the impacts related to this. As home to the oldest population in the world, combined with a low fertility rate, the country must adjust to and deal with many social challenges, but also opportunities, related to these changes. Especially during the last 50 years or so, masculine norms and sexual identities have gone through huge transformations which can be connected to the rise of new demographic dynamics and phenomena. The findings show that the demographic restructuring of Japan is challenging traditional masculine norms and sexual identities, as young Japanese citizens try to adjust to not only a new economic structure, but also a social society in vast change. A society where both traditional and modern values and norms are demanding its space, at the same time as a stagnating economy is putting pressure on a continuously decreasing working-age population. However, traditional demographic studies have been slow in including social aspects as a complementary component in their studies on populations, but within a changing demographic landscape there is a need for an approach which also embodies a social understanding of demographic changes. Only that way one can develop more productive policies and recommendations to buckle with them as they further develop.

Keywords: *Fertility decline, population ageing, masculinities, sexualities, Japan*

Table of Contents

List of Tables, Figures and Acronyms

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

BSRI	Bem Sex-Role Inventory
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CDR	Crude Death Rate
IOM	International Organization for Migration
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

Today we are living in an era of demographic change, with population ageing and fertility decline growing to become the most prominent demographic features, and population projections indicate that both features will continue their dominance for decades, if not even centuries to come (World Bank Group, 2016). Declining fertility and population ageing are two demographic phenomena bringing with them new challenges and responses which the world we live in today is not custom to, especially when combined together. An ageing population puts pressure on the existing adult population to not only keep the economy going, but also to provide care and services for a continuously growing elderly population. However, with an overall decrease of the working-age population due to declining fertility rates, many countries are, and are going to, be left in a challenging demographic and social position (World Bank Group, 2016; UN, 2019). Therefore, it is of great international interest to examine thoroughly the different outcomes, responses and components related to demographic phenomena, as a deeper understanding of them increases the chance of adopting the right strategies, incentives and policies to buckle with them.

Masculinities and sexualities are two such components, even though they traditionally have not been given much attention in traditional demographic inquiries (Baumle, 2013). Incorporating masculinities and sexualities into population studies can help to provide not only a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary demographic phenomena, but also of masculinities and sexualities itself.

Japan is the country commonly referred to when addressing the subject of demography today, simply due to its unique demographic position. The country is currently home to the oldest population worldwide, including having one of the lowest fertility rates in the world, meaning that the proportion of children and young adults are decreasing at a fast rate (Suzuki, 2014; UN, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016). However, this is a process which have been going on in Japan for quite some time, so the impacts related to this process are currently showing itself at every level of the Japanese society. This research paper therefore finds it valuable to examine the issue at hand with applying Japan as a case study. The aim is to develop an improved understanding of the relationship between contemporary demographic phenomena and sexualities and masculinities.

1.1. Problem Statement

Masculinities and sexualities are often neglected and/or undervalued in traditional demographic research and inquiries. Masculinities and sexualities are important social and cultural factors which are ingrained into every level of society, and its influence should therefore be acknowledged and examined by researchers conducting demographic research.

1.2. Research Objectives

The research objective of this study is to develop an improved understanding of how demographic change towards declining fertility and an ageing population relates to sexualities and masculinities. I will do so by (i) reviewing demographic theory and (ii) discussing and refining the interpretation through the use of information and accounts of demographic change in contemporary Japan.

1.3. Research Question(s)

In this research study I have selected only one research question that I am going to examine by the application of two research strategies. The research question is as followed:

How does demographic change relate to sexualities and masculinities?

The research question is broad, but I will narrow it down by (i) mainly focusing on the demographic phenomena of fertility decline and population ageing and (ii) applying the question to a Japanese context.

1.4. Structure of Thesis

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 2 explains all the methodological choices and reflections made in this research study. First, the chapter will provide some reflection on the field of social science in general, before going into the more practical methodological choices, like the process of gathering data. Lastly, the challenges, limitations and ethical considerations related to the study are discussed

Chapter 3 consists of a theoretical approach and analysis. The chapter presents relevant theory which again are put into context, before being interpreted and analysed. A brief introduction to the field of demography will be given, before both a global and more Japanese-specific overview of demographic history, as well as demographics in its current state, are presented. Further, relevant theory in regard to sexualities and masculinities is provided

In *Chapter 4*, the theory and interpretations made in chapter 3 are furthered analysed and reflected upon as to provide an answer to the research question(s), as well as to provide some supplementary debate.

2. Methodology

The methodology presents the framework of research. This chapter will be spent going through, step by step, all the methodological reflections, choices and procedures which made this research achievable.

2.1. Social Science: A Catalysator for Social Change

I want to start this section with some abstract reflections on science in general, and specifically the field of social science.

It is quite astonishing to think that as long as humans have had the ability to reflect and make assessments about the world surrounding them, science has existed. Social science is the branch of science devoted to the study of human thought and human behaviour (Bernard, 2013). By studying human thought and behaviour, researchers have the opportunity to shed light on and offer an explanation for everyday social phenomena and constructions. In that way social scientist can be strong advocates for social change (Bryman, 2012; Bernard, 2013). One aim of this thesis is to promote social change by expanding our view of demography as a field, as well as to expand our understanding of masculinities and sexualities within the context of Japanese demography.

2.2. Selection of Research Subject and Case Study

When I first started the process of actively developing a research subject for my dissertation, I went through a number of different possible topics before ending up with a final conclusion. I knew it would be essential to decide on a research topic within realistic boundaries. As 'just' a master student it became clear that both my academic and financial resources would be limited. There were a number of fascinating subjects that had my interest, but which were not realistic to complete a study on.

The idea for my chosen research subject first arose while watching a French documentary with the name "Love and Sex in Japan" (Lassaigne, 2017). The documentary tries to address what it refers to as a phenomenon of 'a growing social distancing' between men and women in Japan, especially sexually and romantically. These changes are quickly linked to the demographic transition the country is going through. However, the main focus is put solely on

the quirky aspects of Japanese sexual and romantic culture, like 'solo weddings', 'hugging cafes', 'boyfriend-for-hire services' and young Japanese men who now prefer virtual manga heroines over the company of a real women (Lassaigne, 2017). Little effort is put into a deeper analysis of the mechanisms which lay behind the development of these social phenomena. As a result, one is left with a rather superficial and simplified account of love, sex and gender relations in Japan.

Further, the documentary also makes a bold statement by saying that the demographic future of the country is in the hands of a generation which has turned its back on interpersonal relationships, and where young people, especially men, are more invested in a virtual reality (Lassaigne, 2017). After watching I was left with a feeling of frustration, as I felt that we as viewers were left with a puzzle full of missing pieces. The documentary only scratches the surface of the complex demographic era which not only Japan, but a continuously larger part of the world is a part of. The documentary fails in its mission to display in a nuanced way how this relatively new demographic era is influencing levels of social life, and vice versa. However, this only intrigued my academic interest in demography and the social aspects of the field even further. By doing som additional investigation, it became clear to me that there is a lack of an idiographic approach in studies on populations in general (Bernard, 2013).

I found that I wanted to try applying an idiographic approach to a demographic inquiry, and when addressing demography, Japan became a logical choice for a case study. Being home to the oldest population in the world has made it an object of comprehensive research and speculation within the field of demography (Suzuki, 2014). The combination of a very low mortality rate and a fertility rate among the lowest in the world has placed the country in its current demographic position (Suzuki, 2014; UN, 2015). As of October 2019, the proportion of those aged 65 or over accounted for 28 percent of the Japanese population (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2018). To put this into perspective, it is estimated than only around 17 percent of the Norwegian population consisted of people above the age of 65 around the same period in time (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.; UN, 2019).

2.3. Qualitative Research with a Twist

Within social science, qualitative research is seen as the norm, as words and subjective experiences usually share priority over numbers and the accumulation of general patterns and universal conclusions (Bryman, 2012). This research study is no exception to this norm since the nature of this study must be said to have a qualitative focus, even though quantitative

sources like official statistics have been applied to the study. The aim of this study is on gaining a subjective understanding, rather than to create universal conclusions.

Commonly in qualitative research, and particularly within the field of social science, it has become ordinary practice for the researcher(s) to engage and/or emerge themself directly with the study participant(s) and/or research area(s). However, there exists a degree of flexibility within the field. Meaning that there are many ways to conduct a qualitative study. Some circumstances will not include field work or other forms of direct communication with individuals, or contact with the study area (Bryman, 2012). For practical reasons this has become the case for this research study, where instead of field work a literature study of Japan has been conducted.

2.3.1. Secondary Analysis

This research study has tried to produce reliable answers to the research questions by conducting an analysis of secondary data. But what exactly does such an analysis entail and what are the benefits of a secondary analysis in the first place?

A secondary analysis is the re-analysis of already existing data. Data which has been previously gathered by others, therefore naturally coined as secondary (Bryman, 2012). All the data used for the purpose of this study stems from secondary sources. There are mainly two types of secondary sources analysed in this study:

i) Official statistics collected by governments and international organisations;
ii) Data collected by other researchers

Official statistics (i) are considered to be a fundamental part of demographic research. As the purpose of a typical demographic study is to measure and document characteristics and changes within a rather substantial population size, statistics have been regarded as the common choice for collection of data within the field. The focus has been on revealing general population patterns, as to make any in-depth analysis when dealing with a large sample size will be both challenging and unproductive. There is normally no room for subjective and unique individual experiences in a traditional demographic study by the use of statistics. On the other hand, data collected by other researchers (ii) will usually have a more narrow and context-sensitive approach compared to statistics (Bryman, 2012). The advantage of combining both types of data is that it provides a researcher with the possibility to produce a more comprehensive account of social reality from multiple levels. This again will increase the overall credibility of a study, as one is better able to display the different nuances and

complexities that play a part in the development and conservation of certain social phenomena, like for instance population ageing.

A common misconception among students, and generally in academia is the belief that all research needs to contain the use of primary data (Bryman, 2012). However, this study will show that there are many advantages linked to the use of secondary data alone. As a master student with limited resources both in terms of finances, time and academic network, but with a desire to conduct a study with a relatively large scope, secondary analysis became the rational and logical choice of method. A secondary analysis is both time-saving and economical, which not only gave me more time to focus directly on my study, but also the opportunity to conduct a research with a broader scope. Further, data from well-established researchers and institutions will often be of a higher quality than what I, a student with limited resources, would be able to produce on my own I argue that this research study would simply not been feasible without the use of secondary data, especially due to its large scope.

Another advantage with conducting a secondary analysis is that it opens up for new interpretations of previously collected data. Interpretations which for different reasons might have been lost or simply not given priority by researchers in their original studies (Bryman, 2012). This is particularly relevant for the types of data with a more quantitative focus, like official statistics. The original focus of these statistics has been to reveal general demographic patterns. However, I argue that those statistics can, and also should be used, to teach us more about the origin, expansion and future outcomes of social phenomena and dynamics.

2.4. Data Gathering through the Internet

The first step after getting an idea for a piece of research is as said to establish what is already known on the subject, and to figure out where there is there is a gap in knowledge (Bryman, 2012; Bernard, 2013). A scroll through the internet would often be the natural way to start this process. The internet has since the early 1990s grown to become an important part of academic research, and many researchers regard the use of internet as an useful tool for gathering of relevant information and research material (Bryman, 2012). Most of the data gathered for the purpose of this thesis have been done so by the use of internet. I therefore find it relevant to go through the procedures used in obtaining it.

There are a few things one always needs to keep in mind when relying on the internet as the dominant approach for gathering of research material. First, there are several ethical and practical obligations related to the use of internet for scientific and academic intentions. They

are mostly concerned with the credibility and trustworthiness of internet sources and how to locate them. Credibility and trustworthiness are vital elements in all forms of research, but the use of internet raises some very specific concerns (Bryman, 2012). In this particular matter the internet has not been used as a communication platform between the researcher and potential study participants, but exclusively as a tool for gathering of pre-existing data. This eliminates many of the ethical and practical concerns, but there are still some pitfalls to look out for, like for instance the selection of search engines, databases and keywords used in the search for research material.

Search engines can deliver biased search results, and the same can be said for most databases. Professor of Information Research and Information Retrieval, Dirk Lewandowski (2015), goes as far as to state that an unbiased search engine does simply not exist and that it would also be impossible to create one. There are human beliefs and assumptions which alter the designs of algorithms, which again influence the order of search results. This mean that a unbiased result can never be proven as human beliefs and assumptions can never be said to be entirely objective. This notion is backed up by Bernard (2013), who makes the statement that true objectivity within social research is an illusion. However, he also points out the importance to still continue to strive for objectivity. So, with that in mind, I developed some strategies to reduce the level of bias and subjectivity inquiries. One such step has been to spread the risk of bias by using a number of different search engines and databases. Below (Table 1) are displaying the search engines and databases used for gathering of data. All are established search engines and databases tailored for academic use, excluding Google Search. The reason for including this table is to illustrate the thought processes which went into the gathering of data. A total of 11 different search engines and databases have been used to eliminate biased search results. As said, one can never obtain full objectivity, but keep biases at a minimum.

Table 1: Search engines and databases used in the study.

Article1st (OCLC)	An index of articles from 12600 journals in numerous fields, including social science
BRAGE NMBU	NMBU's Open Research Archive
Google Search	Currently the most used search engine in the world
Google Scholar	Search engine that indexes full texts or metadata of scholarly literature across multiple disciplines
Microsoft Academic	Free public search engine for academic publications

Oria	Provides access to most of NMBU's electronic and printed resources
Scopus (Elsevier)	Reference and citation database
United Nations Digital Library	Includes UN documents, speeches, voting data, maps etc.
Web of Science (ISI)	Provides access to multidisciplinary databases of bibliographic information
World Bank Documents	World Bank documents online

Additionally, the choice of keywords also plays an important role in the search for data on the internet, as the application of the correct keywords limits the possibility of missing out on relevant research material. However, there is not a simple answer as what to label as correct keywords. The main strategy used to make sure that useful data has not been overlooked has been to test out and use a number of combinations of words, mainly by the use of synonyms. For instance, when searching for relevant information regarding masculinities in Japan, I have conducted several separate searches for the topic with the use of different keywords and combinations of them for each independent search. I believe that this has drastically decreased the risk of valuable information getting overlooked. (Table 2) below will showcase the main keywords and the possible synonym(s) used.

Table 2: Keywords used in search for research material.

Main keyword	Synonyms
Demography	Population studies, Population study, Population inquiries
Fertility	Virility, Pregnancy, Potency, Productivity
Ageing	Mature, Maturing
Sexualities	Desire, Lust, Sensuality, Passion, Sexual urge
Masculinities	Manliness, Manhood, Machismo, Virility

2.5. Analysis and Coding of Collected Data

When the search for appropriate data has reached its saturation point, there is a need to review the material so that one can separate the relevant data from the redundant one. All data used in a study must serve a distinct function or purpose, for instance either by filling a gap in knowledge or by assisting in developing an argument (Bryman, 2012). To simplify this process there are a number of different methods one could use. In this case, there has been conducted a thematic analysis of the gathered data. A thematic analysis is by Bryman (2012) described as the dominant approach for analysing qualitative data, and includes the search for relevant subjects and categories, which again can be divided into more specific themes and

subthemes. This makes it easier to not only process the data, but also to weed out any unnecessary information.

A thematic analysis is more commonly thought of as a method used to analyse data gathered through field work where most of the data consist of primary data from interviews and field observations. However, a thematic analysis is an approach lacking an identifiable heritage, meaning that there is not a distinctive cluster of techniques defining the approach (Bryman, 2012). Ultimately this mean that when researchers report using thematic analysis as an approach, the techniques they use can vary. This is why it is important to establish what a thematic analysis embody in each context. In this context it embodies the thematic analysis of secondary sources which have been coded first into main categories, before being divided into themes and even narrower sub-themes, as illustrated below (Table 3), where all the data concerning masculinities have been coded through the use of a thematic analysis.

Table 3: Thematic analysis of data on masculinities.

Main category	Masculinities
Theme 1	Global masculinities
Subtheme 1	Hegemonic masculinities
Subtheme 2	Inclusive masculinities
Subtheme 3	Intersectionality and masculinities
Theme 2	Japanese masculinities
Subtheme 1	Salaryman masculinities
Subtheme 2	Herbivore masculinities
Subtheme 3	Digital masculinities

To code data in such a manner as illustrated are useful for a number of reasons (Table 3). Mainly it simplifies the process of analysing data, which again makes it easier to relocate information when needed and to spot repetitions, similarities and differences within data (Bryman, 2012). Further, it has also been helpful in establishing potential gaps of knowledge within the collected data, which again has assisted in answering the research questions. Sometimes it is not what one can establish with absolute certainty, but what can not be confirmed which are information of a higher scientific value, as it uncovers where within the research there is a lack of expertise and where there would be valuable for researchers to devote more time and attention.

2.6. Challenges and Limitations

In all forms of research, one will bump into some difficulties on the way. This is an undeniable fact known to every researcher. However, the ability to show insight and awareness of the challenges and possible limitations of your own research are also an vital part of the research process. Challenges and limitations can stem from errors done by the researcher themselves or other external factors, which then normally derives from gaps or restrictions that exists within a specific field or area of research. Awareness and insight within a field of study are of great scientific value, as it can be used to challenge the ways in which we conduct and facilitate research. This again opens up for the development of new and better research strategies. For instance, in this thesis I try to challenge the belief that a clear distinction has to be drawn between qualitative and quantitative research, and to open up for the idea of combining both a nomothetic and idiographic approach. Traditionally in social and natural sciences alike, researchers are quick to fall into old patterns and to hold on to traditional research methods and strategies which are tied to their specific field. However, an increasing number of scientists and academics are starting to realise how science can benefit from a combination of the two research traditions, a so called mixed-method approach (Bryman, 2012; Bernard, 2013).

Although this study would have to be categorised as a qualitative study by nature, it still highlights the benefits of combining and using both qualitative and quantitative data within one study. Bryman (2012) makes the argument that what he refers to as the artificial and natural divide between qualitative and quantitative research is mostly exaggerated. With the artificial and natural divide, Bryman is referring to the orthodox notion where quantitative research is perceived as artificial and qualitative as naturalistic. Quantitative research is often regarded as only providing an artificial account of how our social world operates, while qualitative research is often deemed the polar opposite, as one observe people directly in their natural social environment. However, I will make the argument that this orthodox divide is neither beneficial nor in line with reality. In both forms of research one can normally spot traces of the other. The contrast between the two approaches is in that sense not necessarily as black and white as often portrayed to be. To break down this well-established assumption could contribute in developing a greater acceptance and understanding of the advantages linked with combining qualitative and quantitative methods in research

Relying on secondary sources alone has, as stated, many conveniences. Nonetheless, with every research method there will be both pros and cons. Secondary sources have the unique

possibility of both narrowing and widen the scope of research. Data of a secondary nature has given me the opportunity to select a topic with a wider scope than with the use of primary data. On the other hand, it has limited my scope of research as the data I am relying on to answer my research questions are not specifically tailored to do so (Bryman, 2012). The data is produced for other purposes than to provide an explanation to the questions I seek answered. Therefore, I have had to make some adjustments and compromises during the research process to make my research an achievable project. With primary data I would have had greater freedom to explore unconventional topics from a wider range of angles, but the scope of my study would at the same time be drastically limited due to a shortage in resources.

Another challenge linked to the fact that the applied data is not tailored for my research purposes, are the fact that I have no hands-on familiarity with the data and its possible complexities (Bryman, 2012). Especially challenging is this when one are dealing with quantitative measurements and data sets where there is a higher risk of misinterpretation of data. When there is a lack of familiarity, one requires more time to process and interpret the data. Additionally, many data sets operate with different variables with different characteristics and functions. A factor which can raise some worries when one tries to combine and compare them against each other. This has however not been an issue of high concern as data regarding general population patterns like fertility, mortality and migration usually follow predetermined universal guidelines and standards. Still, small discrepancies between different dataset can occur.

Further , I am aware that due to my language barrier, I most likely have missed out on some fruitful information which could have enhanced my findings even further. There exists an abundance of valuable sources written in Japanese that have not been included in this research study for that particular reason. I have chosen not to use any Japanese sources at all, due to a lack of resources in terms of expenses, and also for ethical reasons. The ethical aspect centres around relying on other people's interpretations and translation of sources which I would have no way to quality check in the rightful manner.

2.7. Ethics

'Research is of great importance – to individuals, to society and to global development. Research also exercises considerable power at all these levels. For both these reasons, it is essential that research is undertaken in ways that are ethically sound' (The Norwegian Research Ethics Committees, 2014).

Most are familiar with the words 'with great power comes great responsibility'?. This proverb is popularly known as the Peter Parker principle after being popularized in a comic book series about a fictional superhero with the name of Spider-man. Anyhow, it may seem farfetched to bring up words from a comic book series in a research study, but this proverb is one which easily can be applied to all forms of research. Researchers are in a position of great power as one have the possibility to influence change on both a smaller and larger scale, and at every level of society (Bryman, 2012; Bernard, 2013). And with this power, there is also great responsibility. A responsibility to conduct and produce ethical research and research results. To establish what is ethical and what is not may be harder than imagined, and therefore it is good to establish som guidelines. The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (2014) have developed four general principles for research ethics. These are as followed: respect, good consequences, fairness and integrity. What is meant by respect is that all people involved in the research process, either as participants, informants or otherwise, must be treated in a respectful manner. Good consequences entail that researchers have the responsibility to assure that the work they produce has good consequences, and if any unfortunate consequences arises, that those are within acceptable limits. Fairness is that the implementation and design of a research study shall be conducted with decency. Lastly, integrity implies that researchers should behave with responsibility, openness and honesty, and in compliance with recognized norms of research ethics.

However, these four general principles leaves a researcher with a lot of room for own interpretation, and that it also what can be challenging when discussing ethics. Ethics is not objective, and even though there are universal ethical guidelines, there are still some grey areas where the ethical boundaries are not clear-cut (Bryman, 2012). What might be considered withing ethical boundaries for some researchers, might not be considered so by others. Therefore, as a researcher it is important to make it known where one stands in regard to ethics and to make this known. This chapter has already touched upon some ethical issues (Section 2.2). The following section will however dive deeper into the more abstract and complex side of ethics, like politics, personal interests, Ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism.

2.7.1. Politics and Other Interests in Social Research

As a social researcher one never operates in what Bryman (2012) refers to as a moral vacuum. Who you are as a researchers, your values, beliefs and biases, will always at some level influence your research. I have already talked about how human assumptions alter the design of algorithms used in the search for data, which again decide the order of search results

(Lewandowski, 2015). However, human assumptions and beliefs do not only affect the design of algorithms, they affect everything, including our political and national views and interests. Still, your own subjective beliefs are easier to be aware of and take into consideration when conducting research than political and national interests. Unfortunately, many research projects are highly politicized or commercialized as many studies are based on government or industry interests (Bernard, 2013). So how does one deal with that?

There is not one simple answer to that question, but I believe awareness to be a key component. Without awareness, there is little room for actions to be made. As a social researchers dealing with issues like politics and other interests is a part of the game. For this research study, the concern lays in the fact that all my data are secondary sources, where it is not only hard to quality check the data, but also to know the motives behind the research. I use secondary sources from the Japanese governments, which very well can be coloured by national interests. I also rely on sources from big international sources like the United and World Bank Group Nations, where particularly the UN has been criticized for being a politicized organization (Freedman, 2015).

2.7.2. Ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism

As a Western and privileged European, there is always an elephant in the room, an elephant by the name of Ethnocentrism. Anthropologist Elizabeth Baylor defines Ethnocentrism as 'a term applied to the cultural or ethnic bias – whether conscious or unconscious – in which an individual views the world from the perspective of his or her own group, establishing the in-group as archetypal and rating all other groups with reference to this ideal'(Baylor, 2016). Ethnocentrism is also linked to human assumptions, but I felt ethnocentrism is such an overwhelming and integrated part of academia that it needed its own section. The term alone can apply for any cultural group, but is today commonly associated with the Western world and its tendencies to analyse other cultures through so called 'Western lenses'. This is here we start to talk about Eurocentrism.

Eurocentrism is a term used to describe a cultural phenomenon where non-Western cultures are viewed from a European and/or Western perspective (Pokhrel, 2011). We are all from birth born into a specific culture which again has its own cultural practices, norms and beliefs. These shape us and our view of the world, and it is all an undeniable process. However, a huge ethical problem arises when the views of one particular cultural group is given superiority over others, as with Eurocentrism. By itself, Eurocentrism is no different from

how other cultures outside the West also views other Western cultures through their non-Western lenses. The difference is that eurocentrism has grown to hold a strong foothold internationally, including within academia. I have tried my best to avoid having a Eurocentric approach, but since most of my sources stems from Western academics, I know there is an increasing risk of a Western bias. However, I have tried to the best of my abilities to not only be aware of own biases, but the possible biases of my chosen sources. As a student it can be easy to not show a critical eye, and just regard the work of established researchers as credible.

3. Theoretical Approach and Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to conceptualize the study by introducing relevant theory, as well as to interpret and analyse it through the two research strategies applied.

3.1. The Field of Demography

'Demography is destiny'

This epigram has existed for a long time and might sound like an overstatement. However, it is true that our future is highly influenced by population dynamics and distributions (World Bank Group, 2016). Therefore, the study of populations, also known as demography, is an important field which not only holds great responsibility, but also power, power to implement changes that could restructure society as we know it. I then find it relevant to ask the following question: What is demography?

This study applies the definition of demography by Emily Grundy (2014) as 'the scientific study of population. It is concerned with the 'numbering of people' and with understanding population dynamics – how populations change in response to the interplay between fertility, mortality and migration'. The definition can be described as a hybrid between two different approaches to demographic research, formal demography and social demography.

Formal demography is the common approach used in a demographic inquiry and it centres around the quantitative aspects of population (Smith, 1992), meaning that it is limited to empirical measurements of population processes and theoretical interpretations. Hence, the most common way of conducting research within this approach is to collect information on a large group of people to identify general trends within it. This information is usually collected through structured, or standardized, interviews, from which the results are transformed into statistics. Formal demography mainly gathers data within three areas – fertility, mortality (in some cases life expectancy), and migration (Kaneko, 2008; Grundy, 2014). Fertility refers to

the number of births within a population, and a common way of measuring births within demography is by the use of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) or Crude Birth Rate (CBR). The TFR is 'the average number of children a women is expected to have during her childbearing years (between the ages of 15 and 49), given current birth rates' (Greiner, 2014, p. 67). CBR however, is 'the annual number of births per 1000 people' (Greiner, 2014, p. 67). Mortality on the other hand is measured through Crude Death Rate (CDR), which is 'the annual number of deaths per 1000 people' (Greiner, 2014, p. 71). Lastly, numbers on migration is often established through the Net Migration Rate, a measurement which is defined as 'the difference between immigration into and emigration from an area in a given period of time, such as a year' (Greiner, 2014, p. 81). Statistics on these three components reveal ongoing population dynamics, which in turn are used to make population projections. These projections are useful for governments when deciding on new policies and regulations (Kaneko, 2008). A weakness of formal demography is that it provides limited analysis of the influence of population dynamics in a subjective context. This is where social demography can offer a different perspective.

Social demography is an analytical approach described 'a field of study concerned with the analysis of how social and cultural factors are related to population characteristics' (Scott & Marshall, 2015). In a social demographic study, it is not enough to focus on empirical measurements, as the aim goes beyond explaining and revealing general population patterns and is rather to show how these dynamics interact with social and cultural factors within a given society. For that reason, the subjective experience of individuals are given attention and the focus is less on explaining and more on providing a deeper understanding and meaning to social and demographic phenomena (Greiner, 2014). Therefore, social demography is a branch of demography sharing common characteristics with the field of human geography, which is being defined as: 'a branch of geography centred on the study of people, places, spatial variations in human activities and the relationship between people and the environment' (Greiner, 2004, p. 5).

For this thesis, an integration of formal and social demography will be used, applying both objective measurements and a qualitative, interpretive approach to the subject.

3.1.1. Demography and Population Projections

Demographic studies are regarded as a useful tool for the development of population projections, and vice versa (Kaneko, 2008). However, not without controversy. The reliability

of population projections, also frequently referred to as population 'forecasting', are often put into question. Indeed, they are considered useful, but only when they are able to produce accurate predictions about the demographic future of populations. Professor Ryuichi Kaneko (2008) makes the following statement on the subject:

'...from a scientific point of view, exact predictions about social phenomena cannot be expected. For one thing, the complexity of social reality is such that it defies 'forecasting' with certainty. Furthermore, when properly used, predictions that affect policy will often alter the future that they describe' (Kaneko, 2008, p. 43).

The fact that social phenomena are complex and hard to predict mean that population projections are particularly vulnerable to errors and miscalculations. Population projections indicate future population changes, but cannot accurately foresee the future, and any level of uncertainty jeopardizes their validity (Kaneko, 2008). One such aspect of uncertainty, raised by Professor Hans Dieter Ölschleger (2008), is the fact that population structures and sizes are mobile. This makes it hard to envision and plan for future events and outcomes. Especially natural or human-made disasters would be almost impossible to anticipate. Nonetheless, population projections developed in recent times have usually been made with a high degree of accuracy (Kaneko, 2008). Still, there are several examples throughout history where demographers have not been able to predict certain demographic phenomena, such as sudden and massive changes in fertility. For example, in 1947 the American sociologist Pascal Kidder Whelpton and his colleagues failed to foresee the massive baby boom experienced by the United States in the years following the Second World War (Whelpton et al.,1947; Suzuki, 2014).

The fact that previous predictions alter future policies suggests a reciprocal relationship between the two. A reciprocal relationship describes 'a hypothesized set of relationships in which some event *X* causes a second event *Y*, and vice versa' (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Event *X* would in this situation refer to population projections, while *Y* refer to new policies. Population projections lead to the development of new policies, before new projections are made, which then again influence the development of a set of new policies, before the cycle starts again. Much faith is in that way put on the assumption that population projections are producing accurate accounts, which we know is not always the case. Wrongful predictions occur and when those lead to implementation of inappropriate policies it can bring forward some unfortunate outcomes.

3.2. Global Perspectives on Demographic Change

We as said live in an era of demographic change where new dynamics are re-shaping global demographics, and there are particularly two demographic phenomena marking the era – population ageing and fertility decline.

When this research study uses the term population ageing, it is referring to the part of the population at age 65 or over. In general, overall life expectancy is increasing at the same time as fertility rates in most countries are decreasing, contributing to a change of the global age structure towards a continually older population (World Bank Group, 2016). How countries choose to react and respond to these changes are crucial for the livelihood and well-being of current and future generations. Fertility decline and population ageing have been prominent demographic features for decades, but one must not forget that global demographics have gone through drastic changes since the end of the Second World War. Some of these are presented below (Figure 1), where the World Bank Group (2016) showcase global population dynamics from 1950 until 2050. All numbers for the period after 2016 are of course only predictions made by the World Bank Group.

Figure 1: Global population dynamics 1950–2050.
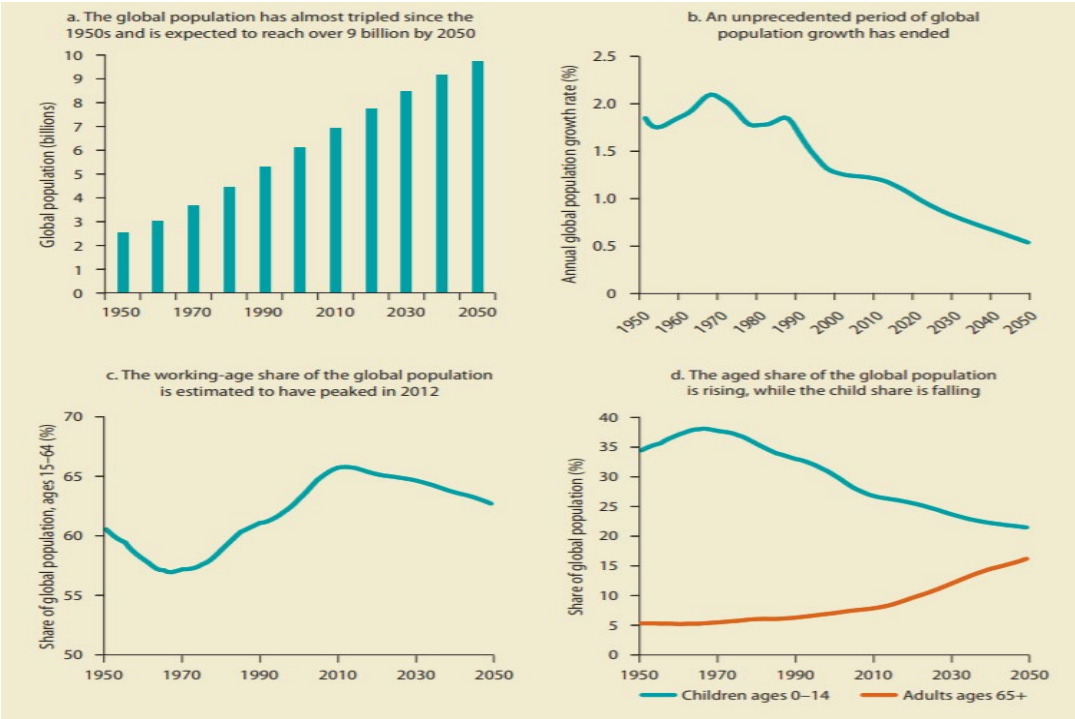
Source: World Bank Group, 2016.

(Figure 1) illustrates that not only has the growth of the global population started to stagnate, also the working-age share of the population is now decreasing after reaching its peak in

2012. Further, the number of people above the age of 65 is increasing, while the child share is falling (World Bank Group, 2016). All these dynamics can be linked to the demographic phenomena of declining fertility both directly and indirectly.

The Second World War brought on many socio-economic changes which are still projecting themselves in a multitude of ways. According to Kaneko (2008), the war has had what he describes as 'a tremendous impact on the population processes in the *affected* countries' (Kaneko, 2008, p. 45). With affected countries, Kaneko is referring to countries directly influenced by the war, and Japan is being included here. An example of such an impact is the rise of what is generally known as the baby boom period in the decades following the war. This period can in part be used to explain the rise of global fertility which the world encountered after the war. Nonetheless, baby boom is a term commonly used to explain the phenomena of high fertility rates experienced by primarily developed countries in the Westernized world after the war. One should therefore be cautious to use the term outside of this specific context (Bavel & Reher, 2013). Accordingly, when this thesis address the 'Western world', it refers to developed countries within Europe, as well as the United States, and lastly countries within Australasia. Even so, when the baby boomers became of employment age, they contributed to an increase of the global working-age population. This boosted the economic growth in many countries, carving the way for future development (Bavel & Reher, 2013).

Among other, the economic growth experienced by many nations helped to significantly improve the standard of living on a global scale, as well as being a vital factor in increasing life expectancy. According to the UN's *World Population Prospects* of 2019, in 1950–1955, global life expectancy was only around 47 years while in 2017 it had reached 72 years (UN, 2019). This supports the assumption that there is a correlation between living standard and life expectancy. The increase in the overall living standard has facilitated a profound change of the global age structure, not only by the increase in life expectancy, but by enabling people to choose to have fewer children. Many countries have made the transition from a developing to a developed country after the end of the Second World War, and in most cases it has led to a significant decrease of the fertility rate (World Bank Group, 2016). If the global living standard continues to rise, as is presumed, it is reasonable to predict that the global fertility rate will continue to decrease. All of these demographic factors combined have been fundamental for the creation of the global population dynamics we are seeing today. For instance, a declining fertility rate has contributed to the decrease of the working-age

population which now are creating economic uncertainty. What years before carved the way for development is now turning into a challenge.

Besides fertility, mortality and life expectancy, migration is another demographic component which has contributed to contemporary population dynamics, but in a comparably moderate way. The UN (2015) predicts that in the years 2015 to 2030 net migration will reduce population ageing in 24 countries by more than 1 percentage point. On the other hand, in 14 other countries net migration is predicted to have the opposite effect and is foreseen to increase population ageing with at least 1 percent point (UN, 2015; IOM, 2019). The influence on global demographics is predicted to be minor compared to the influence fertility and mortality and/or life expectancy will have in the same period. However, compared to the other two components, migration is especially hard to calculate, model or make predictions for. Partly because migration is often not a single static event, as people could choose to migrate several times during the course of a lifetime (IOM, 2019). Therefore, it is hard to say with accuracy what effect migration has actually had on global population dynamics. The other two components are not static either, but they exhibit a higher degree of dependability on a general basis.

To conclude, ageing is a central feature of contemporary global demographic change, and will most likely continue to be so for the unforeseeable future. Population ageing is anticipated to accelerate, and it is expected that every fifth person will be over the age of 60 by the middle of the twenty-first century. Particularly high income countries will feel the effect of the population ageing, and Japan is the country with the oldest population in the world today (Suzuki, 2015; UN, 2015, UN, 2019). So, in that sense, Japan could serve as an important indicator of what is to come.

3.3. History and Current Status of Japanese Demographics

According to different academic sources, the last 150 years or so of Japanese demographic history can be divided into four distinct periods, also known as demographic transitions phases (Atoh, 2008; Montgomery, n.d.). They are presented below (Table 4).

Table 4: Four eras in the demographic history of Japan.

Era	Time period
1: The first stage of demographic transition	1870–1945
2: The second stage of demographic transition	1945–1960
3: The era of 'population bonus'	1960–mid-1970s
4: The era of declining fertility	Mid-1970s–present

Source: Atoh, 2008; Montgomery, n.d..

The first stage of demographic transition is a period marked by the beginning of economic development and the process of modernization. The beginning of this period consists a high birth rate and high mortality rate, but gradually the population structure started to change (Atoh, 2008). Between a 72 year old time period the size of the population increased by nearly 40 million, from around 35 million to 74 million, mainly due to a combination of a decrease of the CDR and an increase of the CBR (Atoh, 2008). The mortality steadily declined as the survival rate of infants and children began to improve. What caused this improvement is not accurately determined but is rather believed to have happened for a number of different reasons that can be linked to the positive economic development experienced by the country at that time. Some examples of this are improvements in hygiene and general health behaviour, access to healthier nutrition and the rise of a public health system, including a larger focus on reproductive health (Atoh, 2008). The period of a combination of a low CDR and high CBR did not last forever, and as life expectancy and living standard started to improve as a result of economic development and modernization, so did the birth rate start to decrease. However, it did not start to decline until around 1920, when the postponement of marriages became a prevalent trend in the Japanese society. It is believed that between 60 to 70 percent of the decline of the total fertility rate (TFR) after 1920 is explained by this phenomena (Atoh, 2008).

The 15 years following the Second World War marks the second stage of demographic transition in Japan and is being described as 'an important turning-point in Modern Japan' (Atoh, 2008, p. 9), which laid the foundation for the demographic transition today, as it can be seen as the beginning of the population decline and as the rise of population ageing in the country (Atoh, 2008). The positive economic development which the country had been experiencing due to the process of modernization and urbanization was now at risk. For a small period, the country could not keep economic production at the same level as prior to the war but already by the mid-1950s the production had started to rise again. The fact that the country managed to stabilize and again increase its economic production played a vital role

for its demographic development. Predominantly because it raised the standard of living, which has proven itself to be a fundamental factor for the increase of life expectancy (Ölschleger, 2008).

In this 15 year period, the TFR first declined in 1945, then rose between 1947 and 1949, before it finally declined once more. The increase of the fertility rate between 1947 and 1949 is commonly referred to as the post-war baby boom in Japan, the same phenomena as many Western countries went through after the war. However, the Japanese post-war baby boom was short-lived, and was quickly followed by a dramatic decrease in the fertility rate, coined as 'the second stage of fertility transition' (Atoh, 2008, p. 10). The first stage began with the postponement of marriages, but this did not have the same drastic effect on the fertility rate. By the end of the 1950s, Japanese fertility were at replacement level but still continued to decline towards a stage of zero population growth. This trend has for the most part continued, except for a second baby boom in the first half of the 1970s, caused when the post-war baby boomers became of reproductive age and began to construct a family of their own (Atoh, 2008).

High economic growth is a key element in the third stage of Japanese demographic history, also known as the era of 'population bonus'. High economic growth helped transform the Japanese society into the modern Japan we know today. This period is marked as the beginning of a time where the fertility rate started to reach below replacement level, allowing the population bonus to fully develop (Atoh, 2008; Ölschleger, 2008). Academics argue that this 'bonus' was one of the major drivers behind the acceleration of economic development at that time (UNEPA, 1998), and describes a phenomenon where the proportion of children within a population is reduced and where a considerable part of the population consists of people within working-age. In the mid-1950s, the working-age share of the population was only around 60 percent, but by 1965 it had increased to 68 percent. Much of this can be traced back to the post-war Japanese baby boom, as by 1965 they had become of working-age and part of the work force. This had many positive outcomes in terms of economic development. Among others, a large working force helped to lift some of the economic burdens correlated with childcare, opening up for an increase in investment and saving among the population. All of these factors were important steps in the country's journey towards a modern society (Atoh, 2008).

So, high national economic growth, combined with influences from globalization, helped mould Japan into an immensely urbanized and highly industrialized society. An ambitious

society with a great focus on higher education and learning, for both Japanese men and women. This led to a skyrocketing of the employment rate during this third stage of demographic history. Back in the mid-1950s, the employment rate was at 46 percent, but in 1975 it had increased to 69 percent, an astonishing increase during such a short time frame. After this, Japan was given the informal title as an 'employee-centred society' (Atoh, 2008, p. 15). These changes were of great significance in terms of fertility, which went through development in many areas due to the ongoing modernization process, and transitions in marital fertility were said to be the primary factor. According to Atoh (2008), it is a time where what he calls 'the modern family' arose with full speed (Atoh, 2008; Himeoka, 2008). The term refers to a family structure where the man occupies the role as the breadwinner, while the women has the role as the homemaker and housewife. The average number of children for married couples at that time stayed relatively low at 2.2 per couple. Furthermore, traditional and conservative attitudes towards premarital sex, extra-marital births, and cohabitation before marriage remained dominant. This helped to keep fertility in check at a relatively low and stable level (Atoh, 2008). Low fertility is also a trend observed in most Western European countries, but still they do not seem to face the same demographic challenges as Japan. Why is this?

Ron Lesthaeghe (2008) refers to what he describes a 'catch up' phenomena, which in some part can help to answer this question. This phenomenon he describes has helped to keep fertility rates of Western countries at a higher level than in Japan. He states that:

'...among those countries that have maintained relatively higher fertility today, cohabitation and extra-marital fertility have increased, which have compensated for the decline in marital fertility and have been conducive to the "catch-up" phenomena among women in their 30s' (Lesthaeghe, 2008).

In Japan such a catch up phenomena has been nearly non-existent. Even though there has been a disruption of social norms and attitudes, including a rise in premarital cohabitation and children born outside of marriage, these trends have not increased at the same rate as in most Western European countries (Atoh, 2008; Raymo & Iwasawa, 2008). Traditional values with regard to premarital cohabitation and extra-marital fertility are still dominant in a considerable part of the Japanese population. In general, a battle between traditional and modern values appears to exist within Japanese culture, also within the fourth demographic transition stage which Japan is currently in. Japanese women today are in many ways experiencing more freedom than ever before, especially economically, but traditional gender roles are in many ways still considered the norm inside the marriage. The double burden of combining domestic

chores with a full-time work is not tempting for many Japanese women, and this is also why many chose to withstand marriage all together (Raymo & Iwasawa, 2008).

Still, the maturing of the Japanese economy in the last decades, combined with low a fertility rate and a challenging of traditional norms are important factors to include to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary population dynamics in Japan (Atoh, 2008).

3.4. Masculinities Today and through History

'In human beings' pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found in either a psychological or a biological sense' (Sigmund Freud, 1962).

This quote on masculinities and femininities made by psychologist Sigmund Freud is originally from 1905, and were quite revolutionary at the time, given that traditionally 'manly' characteristics were mainly still regarded as attributes purely possessed by men, and female characteristics the other way around. However, the field of masculinities has grown to look beyond such simplistic views of gender identities (Freud, 1905; Bem 1974; Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Gough 2018). This section will provide a general overview of masculinities, before narrowing the field down to a Japanese context: What does it mean to be a man?

The question researchers conducting studies on men and masculinities have tried to provide an answer to for centuries, if not longer. Masculinity is the collective term used by researchers to describe the set of attributes which are perceived as typical or suitable for the male gender (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Even though these attributes vary over time and between cultures, some specific traits have become so associated with the male gender that they are recognized as norms. Traditionally, attributes like rationality, self-reliance and stoicism are examples of features perceived as particularly manly. For a long period of time, biological sex was regarded as an elemental component for gender identity (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Gough, 2018). The rationale behind this belief is the notion that certain personality traits are linked to biology. That there are biological differences predetermined by sex which are the dominant force in defining gender identities, not social and cultural norms or constructions. Therefore, 'only men could be masculine and women feminine' (Gough, 2018, p. 2). However, this so called 'trait' approach to gender eventually started to lose momentum, much due to the pioneering work of psychologist Sandra Bem (1974). Bem refuted the idea of femininity and masculinity as sex specific components with the production of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The BSRI showed that men and women could score high on both

feminine and masculine features regardless of sex, opening up for an androgynous view on gender identity. Scientists started to turn away from the idea of biological sex as the main determinant for gender identity, and instead moved their focus towards the social and cultural construction of gender norms and identities (Bem, 1974).

In relation to a growing focus on gender identities as social and cultural constructions, in 1976 psychologists Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon identified what they described as the four traditional masculine norms (Table 5).

Table 5: Four norms of masculinity.

Norm	Characteristics
No Sissy Stuff	Avoiding all feminine behaviour
Be a Big Wheel	Success, power, admiration
Be a Sturdy Oak	Rationality, toughness, self-reliance
Give'em Hell	Aggression, daring, risk-taking

Source: David & Brannon, 1976.

These four masculinity gender norms display characteristics related to dominance and authority and fall under the umbrella of hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities are forms of male gender expressions that legitimize the dominant position of men in society (Gough, 2008). However, hegemonic masculinities are, as Gough (2008) explains, about more than just masculinities, as it also encompasses the gender order and its different identities, relations and conflicts. Such definitions of 'the currently most honoured way of being a man … required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832).

As other social and cultural constructions, hegemonic masculinities have not remained static, but gone through transformations through time. They describe general norms of that time, and within norms there will always be variations and also exceptions to them. Nonetheless, this research study will not analyse the history and development of masculinities and gender norms. Rather, David & Brannon's (1976) traditional masculinity norms provide some context for understanding masculinities in their current state.

Masculinities are social and cultural constructs that can have a variety of different expressions and forms of outlet (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Gough, 2018). However, some scientists argue that biological sex is a vital component in defining gender identities (Gough, 2018) and

that behaviours considered masculine are influenced by biology, such as aggression. Testosterone has commonly been thought of as a hormone linked to aggression, and since testosterone is the primary male sex hormone, men have gotten the reputation of being the aggressive gender. Batrinos (2012) argues that testosterone and the aggressive behaviour in men are correlated. The article brings up several field studies conducted on the subject, where three separate studies done on male prisoners show that the level of testosterone was higher in prisoners with a violent criminal history (Kreuz & Rose, 1972; Dabbs et.al., 1987; Chichinadze et.al., 2010). However, there are several limitations to these studies. Just take a look at the hypothesis made by Kreuz & Rose (1972). It states:

 '...within a population that is predisposed by virtue of social factors to develop antisocial behaviors, levels of testosterone may be an important additional factor in placing individuals at risk to commit more aggressive crimes in adolescence' (Kreuz & Rose, 1972, p. 321).

Notice the use of the phrase '*may* be an important *additional* factor'. The study cannot prove with a high level of certainty a correlation between high testosterone levels and aggressive behaviour, and especially not without bringing in social factors as a contributing element to support their hypothesis. Further, the study were conducted back in 1972, and the methods which they used in both clinical and psychological tests may be outdated. However, recent studies, like the one conducted by Chichinadze et al. in 2010 corroborate the findings as also there only a weak connection can be established. These studies represents only a small fraction of research on male aggression in relation to biology. Still any further examples will not be brought up for discussion, as the purpose of this research study has developed past the debate on whether masculinities should be regarded as a social or biological construct.

With that in mind, this research study works from the notion that 'femaleness does not automatically produce femininity and maleness does not automatically produce masculinity' (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011, p. 10). A man does not have to avoid all 'feminine' behaviour or be occupied with the search for success, power or admiration to be manly. However, these traditional masculine norms where men feel the pressure to conform to dominant masculine ideologies still hold value in many societies (Pleck, 1981; Gough, 2018). Many men feel they have to live up to certain definitions and expectations set by society of what a 'real' man should be, even if those stand in contrast with who they are and how they want to live their lives. For many it will be impossible and also undesirable to live up to the gender norms placed upon them, and this can have many unfortunate outcomes. For instance, the constant need to conform and undermine one's identity can lead to feelings of aggression,

misplacement and a loss of autonomy. This again can be linked to what academics refer to as toxic masculinities (Gough, 2018). There is no universal understanding on what to categorise as toxic expressions of masculinities, but it is usually a phrase referring to forms of hegemonic masculinities that are deemed socially destructive. (Kupers, 2005). What should define as socially destructive vary, but some social phenomena are commonly being debated in relation to this. Those include homophobia, male suicide and the rise of the 'Incel-movement' (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Charlebois, 2016; Gough, 2018).

Toxic expressions of masculinities are often linked to what some academics refer to as a 'crisis on masculinities' (Collier; 1995; Edwards, 2006; Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Gough, 2018). However, what this crisis entails is often unclear. Professor Tim Edwards (2006, p. 6) lists 'sheer profusion of uses and applications of the concept' as the main cause of confusion. He highlights the high diversity of factors and subjects which are brought into the debate on masculinities as a factor contributing to this confusion. To eliminate this diversity can be hard, and should arguably not be the goal. The argument is made that masculinities are a bit like air – one breathes it in constantly, but is not aware of it much of the time. It means that masculinities embody every aspect of life, are everywhere, and therefore will also have to be diverse (Edwards, 2006). However, the same argument can also be used when addressing the subject of femininities, so why are only masculinities considered to be in a stage of crisis?

One argument being made to explain why masculinities are in a stage of crisis is that neither men themselves nor scientists have been particularly curious about men as a gender. According to Judith Allen this is due to the position of men 'as the dominant sex in patriarchal culture, and historically the dominant practitioners of history' (Allen, 2002). With little curiosity, studies on masculinities have been neglected compared to studies on femininities, creating an unbalanced relationship between the two. Frühstück & Walthall (2011) make the argument that 'it appears to be far more difficult to pry apart maleness and masculinity than femininity and femaleness' (p. 11). Due to this, masculine norms and views have in many societies not evolved in correlation with the transformation and restructuring of feminine norms, where the rise of Second-Wave feminism often is mentioned as a contributing factor (Edwards, 2006). Second-Wave feminism is a term used to describe a period of high feminist activity beginning in the 1960s in the Western world, where the goal was to reduce female discrimination and to work for female equality (Evans, 1995). While the focus of First-Wave feminism revolved around the removal of legal obstacles to gender rights, Second-Wave feminism went further in its attempt to diminish the cultural and social divide between the

sexes. The movement critiqued the overwhelming existence of a patriarchal male culture, and aimed to reduce this culture by changing the role of women in areas like sexuality, family life and within the workplace. This focus on removal of a male patriarchal culture by restructuring female gender identities, are according to Edwards (2006), often used as one of the influential factors behind the crisis on masculinities. Female gender identities have been going through major social and cultural transformations in past decades, whilst male gender identities are lagging behind and not adjusting to these transformations.

However, the rise of feminism and gender equality are just one of the explanations which can be applied in relation to the debate on masculinity crisis (Collier; 1995; Edwards, 2006; Frühstück & Walthall, 2011; Gough, 2018). To just focus on feminism and equality as components behind current masculinity challenges are arguably masculinists and also fuels up under the notion that there is a battle between the sexes. That men have to become subordinate for women to gain equality. This can sometimes create what is commonly known as a backlash, where male chauvinistic values gain a stronger foothold. In the (2015) documentary "Men at War" we get deeper insight into this phenomena when TV presenter Reggie Yates meets with young British men who strongly believe that feminism has gone too far. These men struggle to cope and adjust to the new gender order, and express feeling overlooked and ignored as they experience that the issues of men are not being prioritised. That women now are seen as superior to men, and that the tables have turned in terms of who hold the power (Carr, 2015). Therefore, it is important that other components which also could shed a light on this 'crisis' are addressed. As said, masculinities embody every aspect of society, so the mechanism behind masculinity challenges will have to be complex and filled with nuances, and many of the components are also interconnected. This research study do not have the resources to examine thoroughly these mechanism, but a few examples which also can be related to demographic dynamics, will be briefly introduced (Section 3.4.1.).

Today, many scholars are talking about the rise of new and 'softer' forms of masculinities (Charlebois, 2016; Gough, 2018) These are expressions of masculinities that do not fit into the category of hegemonic masculinities. Eric Anderson (2014) addresses what he refers to as 'inclusive masculinity theory' as an example. Within inclusive masculinity theory, 'orthodox' masculine values have been replaced by more liberal views, especially among the younger generations. Anderson makes the argument that:

'*They are young men who have grown up with less interest in religion or soldiering. They have gay friends, and value solving problems through talking instead of fighting. They readily express what men*

of my generation would have considered highly feminized notion of masculinity…' (Anderson, 2014, p. 6;9).

To conclude, globally we see two seemingly contrasting expressions of masculinities growing side by side (Gough, 2018). On one hand, we see hegemonic expressions of masculinities where men still seek to maintain a traditional gender order in which men hold a dominant position in society. On the other, a reconstruction of masculinities in recent years have given opportunity for different expressions of masculinities to arise. These are often portrayed as being softer and more inclusive forms of masculinities, as they open up for more flexible and fluid gender expressions, where men can inhabit 'feminine' traits and characteristics (Gough, 2018). Those masculinities encourage men to be vulnerable, affectionate, show sensitivity and to have a metrosexual appearance. However, Charlebois (2016) argues that in reality it is not necessarily as black and white as first perceived, as within softer expressions of masculinities one can also find hegemonic views. He therefore argues that one should be careful with making clear-cut distinctions when addressing different masculine norms.

3.4.1. Masculinities through a Japanese Context

The above section has provided an general overview of masculinities from a global setting. However, according to Professor Kam Louie (2003), Asian masculinities perspectives, including Japanese, are often neglected and/or misinterpreted on the global arena. When Asian masculinities are addressed in international research its usually through a Western lens, and therefore tells us little about how Asians masculinities are understood by Asians themselves. This can often lead to the production of unfortunate stereotypes, as I experienced in the 2017 French documentary "Love and Sex in Japan", which reproduced unnuanced stereotypes of Japanese men by solely focusing on the quirky and eccentric aspects of Japanese masculinities, such as how some Japanese men seem to prefer the company of a digital anime women over the company of a real women (Lassaigne, 2016). It is important to not forget that even tough masculinities are culturally constructed, to not create certain masculine stereotypes solely based on ethnicity (Taga, 2008; Charlebois, 2016; Gough, 2018). Japanese men are, similar to other men across the globe, trying to cope with not only a relatively new gender order, but also with demographic changes brought on by the new demographic era.

3.4.2. Salaryman, Herbivores and Digital Masculinities

It is impossible to talk about Japanese masculinities without mentioning the 'salaryman'. The salaryman has for a long time been seen as a stereotype of the Japanese man (Louie, 2003; Charlebois, 2016; Gough, 2018). When Professor Romit Dasgupta (2003) asks students about their portrayal of the typical Japanese man, the Japanese salaryman is always mentioned. However, he argues that this notion of the salaryman as the archetypal Japanese man is not in line with the reality of how most contemporary young Japanese males are expressing their manhood. Among the older generations though, the salaryman is by many still considered to be the embodiment of Japanese masculinity, creating what is commonly known as a generation gap between young and older Japanese men (Dasgupta, 2003).

A number of different definitions have been developed over the years to describe the characteristics of a salaryman. However, they are all usually in line with one another, and they all describe a heterosexual, white collar and dominant male, who serves as the breadwinner and provider for his family. In other words, the embodiment of traditional hegemonic masculinities (Dasgupta, 2003; Louie, 2003; Taga, 2003; Charlebois 2016; Gough, 2018). The real upswing of the salaryman ideal occurred in the years and decades after the Second World War, and during a time when the Japanese economy was on the rise (Dasgupta, 2003; Louie, 2003; Taga, 2003). During that period, salarymen thrived, but are now by many considered victims of the same economy, which is now stagnating, partly due to demographic changes. This has left Japanese men in a position where they are restructuring and rediscovering their masculinities and self-image to adjust to the rapid changes in Japanese society (Louie, 2003). As Charlebois (2016) states: 'social changes, such as a stagnant economy and the uncertainty of securing stable employment, have altered the social landscape of contemporary Japan' (p. 165). There are particularly two forms of 'modern' Japanese masculine expressions I would like to mention in relation altering of the Japanese social landscape - herbivore men and digital masculinities.

As Dasgupta (2003) stated, it is not realistic to consider salaryman masculinities as the dominant form of masculine expressions today in Japan, and especially not among young Japanese males. According to Frühstück & Walthall (2011), a large proportion of Japanese men neither fulfil nor have the desire to fulfil the masculine ideals once were connected to the salaryman:

Today in Japan the nexus between mature manhood and a white-collar lifestyle, which had seemed naturalized and even institutionalized for decades, appears to have broken down for a large proportion of the younger generation. No day passes without social critics in Japan and elsewhere nothing what U.S. historian Gary Cross recently called "the making of modern immaturity", the strange phenomenon of boys no longer being eager, able, or willing to grow up'
(Frühstück & Walthall, 2011, p. 11).

What Frühstück & Walthall (2011) refer to as 'the making of modern immaturity' in the Japanese sense, is a social phenomenon of young Japanese men with no professional or personal desires nor prospects to establish a traditional 'modern' family. These men often continue to live in the family home and at their parents' expense. The authors further argue that an increasingly large part of young Japanese men seem to fall in this category, where social withdrawal from society is also a common feature. These characteristics seem to fit well into the category of herbivore masculinities. A concept first coined in a 2006 article by sociologist Maki Fukasawa, and presented as men who are more passive in their professional and personal life (Harney, 2009). According to Charlebois (2016) one can describe the herbivore metaphor in the following way:

'The herbivore metaphor conjures up an image of a grass-eating, non-aggressive, timid animal. Likewise, men who practice herbivore masculinity are passive and purportedly afraid of failure in the areas of school, work, and love' (Charlebois, 2016, p. 169).

However, due to this metaphor, herbivore men have commonly been regarded in media as men who have no interest in sex whatsoever, and this is often being debated a contributing factor for the development of contemporary demographic phenomena in Japan (Harney, 2009; Aoki, 2016; Jozuka & Ripley, 2016; Porter, 2016). Anyhow, according to a news article by Khan (2016), the term herbivore men are highly misinterpreted. He quotes Fukasawa, the women which originated the term, when she argues that the term is being 'misused by the press'. This critique comes after numerous Western media outlets have coined Japan as a 'sexless' society based upon the results of a 2015 survey regarding attitudes towards marriage and fertility among young Japanese singles (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2015). The results reveal among other that a large proportion of young Japanese singles are living in celibacy. However, the survey does not go into the reasons why this is, leading the media to make speculate and make their own simplified conclusions. It is simplistic to assume that a large group of Japanese men simply have lost all interest in sex,

and therefore more time should be served examining the mechanisms which lay behind such social responses.

Further, Japanese herbivore men are also often regarded as more prone to indulge and explore 'feminine' characteristics. In general, Japanese men have been feminized through centuries by Western sources, but it is also true that so called 'beautiful men' have been idolised through Japanese popular culture in the media and through the internet (Louie, 2003; Charlebois, 2016). In a digitalised world where internet is used by everyone, the rise of digital masculinities should not come as a surprise. Neither should it come as a surprise, as Japan is considered as one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, that many Japanese men use internet as a way to explore and expand their masculinities (Gough, 2018). As with most things, this has both positive and negative consequences. In the Western world many unfortunate stereotypes about Japanese men have been created, for example the way the documentary "Love and Sex in Japan" portrays Japanese men in stereotypical fashion as unable to communicate and establish relationships with women, and therefore preoccupied with virtual manga heroines (Lassaigne, 2016). However, the internet can also be used as a platform for Japanese men to explore new and different sides of their manhood in a safe and anonymous environment (Gough, 2018).

3.5. Sexualities

Sexuality is a word with many different meanings depending on the context and how it is interpreted individually. For some the word might be associated with human reproduction, while for others it is associated with sexual orientation. Neither is wrong, as human sexuality is a broad term which embodies all aspects of a human's sexuality, including biological, psychological, social and cultural (Greenberg et al., 2017). Therefore, the field of sexuality can be studied from many different angles, depending on the discipline and aim of the research. This makes sexuality a very broad field, which in turn opens up for many different interpretations. In this research study, sexuality is defined as 'a basis for personal and social identity that stems from sexual orientations, attitudes, desires and practices' (Greiner, 2014, p. 184). The definition chosen is purposely broad to make sure that no important aspects of sexuality is overlooked. Further, there is a need to emphasise that even though the word sexuality is singular, people's sexualities are not. Individuals can embody a number of different sexualities at once (Greenberg et al., 2017), therefore it is more appropriate to use the plural form, sexualities, when addressing the subject.

Not only are sexualities a broad topic but also a complex and highly sensitive topic, which has a tendency to provoke strong emotional reactions (Michaels, 2013). Strong emotional reactions may endanger the objectivity of a study, which in turn raises ethical concerns, since objectivity is commonly regarded as a key characteristic of research. However, one may ask whether it is sexualities that cause strong emotional reactions, or rather the social norms and values related to the subject?

Due to its many dimensions, one can argue that sexualities are both biological, and in that sense natural, and at the same time constructed and influenced by our social environment. To conclude, one could say that humans are born as sexual beings with certain sexual instincts, but that our sexualities are caused by more than biological influences. Within studies of sexualities, two contrasting theoretical orientations are common, essentialism and social constructionism (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Essentialism views sexualities as primarily biological, that we as humans share a common nature in which unconscious sexual tendencies are controlled by genes, which in turn influence our actions (Fisher, 1992). The essentialist approach may recognize the influence culture, history and other social factors have in shaping human sexualities, but only as additional and secondary factors. Social constructionism, on the other hand, does not focus on biology as an important component in the shaping of sexualities, but rather sees sexual identities as a product of our social environment (Tiefer, 1995; Greenberg et al., 2017). A social constructionist would argue that 'people acquire and assemble meanings, skills and values from the people around them' (Greenberg et al., 2017, p. 6), which shape and influence sexualities through, for instance, politics, media, religion, socioeconomic status and history.

As said, essentialism and social constructionism are two theoretical orientations to sexualities that stand in contrast to one another, but are both part in highlighting the complexity of the issue. As in the case of masculinities, it is not easy to determine where different identities, expressions, values, norms and practices originates, since so many factors are involved in the shaping them. As stated, 'no single aspect of sexuality can be separated from the others, and no single aspect is more important than others' (Greenberg et al., 2017, p. xiii). This is also the stance this research study will take. It will neither diminish the existence of biological influences or the influences from our social environment on sexualities. However, the emphasis will be on the social aspects of sexualities, while acknowledging that biological components do exist.

3.5.1. Sexualities Today and throughout History

Traditionally, sexualities have been seen and studied through a heterosexual norm, described as 'a binary vision of the sexes based on clearly defined masculine and feminine gender roles' (Greiner, 2014, p. 184). This is also known as heteronormativity, and has been the predominant way of looking at sexualities for centuries, so that it is almost a belief indoctrinated into our society, even though it is a view faced with criticism for a number of years. This is problematic for a number of reasons. First and foremost, human sexualities, as with race, ethnicity and gender, should not be restricted to fit into separate categories (Greiner, 2014). So, when heterosexuality is treated as the norm it will put restraints on the sexualities of people. Individuals who feel that their sexualities do not comply with a heteronormative perspective will often, both indirectly and directly, feel the need to conform or conceal parts of their sexual identity. This can have many unfortunate social outcomes, also from a research perspective, as important aspects of sexualities which could be of great scientific and societal value will often go unnoticed. Further, the indoctrination of heteronormativity into our society increases the risk of biased assumptions with regard to sexualities. Many researchers who conduct studies on sexualities may have cultural biases they are unaware of, as the biases are an integrated part of their environment. There are many examples of this in both early and recent studies on sexualities, as for instance the 1966, 1970 and 1979 studies by Masters and Johnson, which were critiqued by Hite for their cultural biases (Hite, 1976; Hite, 1981). This only highlights why it is important to encourage and open up for new approaches and understandings of the field.

American biologist and sexologist Alfred Kinsey is one of the revolutionary researchers of modern sexualities in the Western world. With Wardell Pomeroy and Clyde Martin, he published two important studies, namely *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). Especially two of Kinsey's findings caused controversy at the time, but have remained relevant. Kinsey documented that homosexual orientations and tendencies were more widespread than commonly assumed, which helped to reduce the social stigma related to homosexuality (Kinsey et al., 1948). In terms of female sexual behaviour, Kinsey was one of the first to address women beyond just being passive contributors in sexual intercourse. He debunked the assumption that women achieved orgasm solely through vaginal intercourse, and in that way advocated for more liberal views on female sexual practices (Kinsey et al., 1953). Other influential work includes the studies by gynaecologist William H. Masters and sexologist Virginia E. Johnson who conducted

pioneering research on homosexuality, the autonomy and physiology of human sexual responses, as well as how to diagnose and treat sexual dysfunctions and disorders (Masters & Johnson, 1966; 1970; 1979).

The publications by both Kinsey and Masters & Johnson are regarded as biological studies. The work by sexologist Shere Hite – *The Hite Report: A National Study of Female Sexuality* (1976) and *The Hite Report on Men and Male Sexuality* (1981) – are influenced by them but also includes sources outside the biological realm and psychological and political perspectives. Instead of focusing on biological responses, Hite studied how people regard sexual experiences and the meaning these experiences hold to them, with a special interest into the sexual experiences of women. As Hite's studies were published during the period of second-wave feminism, this is not surprising. Still, her work holds relevancy to this day due to her work on female sexualities and her critique of past studies on sexualities. She critiqued previous studies for lacking awareness of their own cultural and social attitudes towards sexual behaviour, often creating unfortunate stereotypes and generalizations. This critique was especially aimed at researchers conducting purely biological studies on sexualities, like Masters & Johnson. She claimed a need for them to incorporate social and cultural dimensions into their research, as focusing on biology alone would not be enough to explain the drivers behind sexual behaviour and tendencies (Hite,1976; 1981). This was followed up in *The Social Organization of Sexuality* by Laumann et al. (1994), a revolutionary study with the main focus were directed at the social dimensions and implications of sexualities in the US. For instance, the study found that 75% percent of men reported always having an orgasm during sexual intercourse, while only 29% of the women reported the same. Still, almost the same number of women as men expressed feeling satisfied with their sexual experiences (Laumann et al., 1994). These findings were interesting from a social point of view and stimulated further interest into the examination of gender relations, femininities and masculinities on a social level. One started to question why almost the same amount of men and women felt satisfied with their sexual experiences, when the discrepancies in the percentage of orgasms between the genders was so profound? This demonstrates the complexity of the social aspects of sexualities, as so many different factors need to be taken into consideration.

3.5.2. Sexualities from a Japanese Perspective

The cultural aspects of sexualities are important but sometimes neglected. We can talk about sexualities in a Western setting (section 3.5.1.), but there is still a need for a more context-

specific understanding on Japanese sexualities. Unfortunately, much research conducted by foreign researchers on both Japanese masculinities and sexualities has had a tendency to create distorted and bewildering descriptions (Louie, 2003). In the 1990s, researchers started to become aware of this, but to this day much research on sexualities and masculinities tends to have a Western perspective (Brod & Kaufmann 1994; Baumle, 2013). For instance, according to Louie (2013), Asian men are often perceived by the West as being less sexual than Western and African–American men.

After Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research published its survey in 2015 (Section 3.4.2.), the notion of Japan as a sexless society got a lot of space in Western media. Headlines like "Could Japan's virgins kamikaze the nation's future?", "Why are almost half of the Japan's millennials still virgins" and "In sexless Japan, almost half of single young men and women are virgins" are just a few of the examples of Western news articles on the issue (Aoki, 2016; Jozuka & Ripley, 2016; Porter, 2016). According to the survey, 42% of the male respondents between the age of 18 to 34 had never had a sexual intercourse with a member of the opposite sex. For women within the same age group, the proportion was 44% (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2016). There are although several reasons to put the results of this survey into question. Firstly, the survey based its questions on a heteronormative worldview, as it is only addressed sexual experiences with the opposite gender, thereby excluding a large proportion of people. However, this lack of egalitarianism within national surveys regarding sexual behaviour still suggests that a heteronormative norm remains strong in Japanese society. Secondly, as most quantitative surveys this one fails to provide a deeper account as to why certain social phenomena are occurring. Simply put, it lacks an idiographic approach.

4. Reflections and Conclusions

This chapter sums up and discuss the findings, reflections and interpretations of chapter 3.

4.1. Discussion and Reflections

For me, it became in this research study logical to focus particularly on fertility decline and population ageing as they are regarded as the prominent demographic features of our current demographic era (World Bank Group, 2016). By conducting a quick Google search one can find numerous reports and studies in relation to these phenomena. However few focus on how they relate to sexualities and masculinities, especially from a social context. This I find both strange and unfortunate as sexualities and masculinities are so deeply ingrained into to every

aspect of society that it influence not only how we think, how we feel and how we act, but also our prospects in life . It is like Edwards (2006) describes the concepts to be a bit like air. Masculinities and sexualities have the power to influence population structures and compositions in a multitude of ways. For instance changes in sexual behaviours and of masculine norms have the power to strongly influence the fertility rate, as is one of the arguments being made in the case of Japan, where a growing social distancing between the genders is a prevalent social phenomena (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011).

However, it is not like there are only masculinities and sexualities which impact demographic phenomena like fertility decline and population ageing, it can also be the other way around. The relationship between the components must be said to be a reciprocal one, as with the relationship between population projections and new policies (Section 3.1.1.). The relationship can be explained like this: A demographic phenomena arises due to either a human-made or natural event. This phenomena influence some form of social change, which then also include the altering of social factors like masculinities and sexualities, or vice versa (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). This is an ongoing process and a process that in many ways highlight the vulnerability of demographic research and its often self-reinforcing mechanisms. This is however a simplified account which provide little context and subjective understanding.

Due to the complex nature of social phenomena (Kaneko, 2008), there are no bulletproof ways of determining a connection between certain demographic phenomena and masculinities and sexualities, as they are social and multidimensional concepts hard pinpoint. This means that there can be a million possible contributing factors behind a demographic phenomenon, as well as multiple dimensions to them. Still, some linkages will have more credibility than others. Chapter 3 provides some relevant theory and context both on demography and the concepts of sexualities and masculinities. This theory and context reveal that especially the socio-economic changes influenced by the Second World War has had a large impact on population processes of particularly Western countries (Kaneko, 2008). This again has had its impact on masculine norms and sexual identities and attitudes. For instance the rise of Second-Wave feminism is believed to have play a relevant role in the altering of new masculine norms as men try to adjust to the changes occurring within female gender norms (Evans, 1995). Changes of female gender norms have brough with it changes of family structures as women are moving away from the traditional role as homemaker and housewife, and are taking an active role in the public sphere. This has not only affected the birth rate as

women chose to have fewer children and postpone marriage to pursue professional and personal desires, but also lead to many men losing their role as the breadwinner of the household (Atoh, 2008; Himeoka, 2008). This had led many men on the search for new and different ways to express their identities, which have given rise to 'softer' masculine gender expressions (Anderson, 2014). However, as Charlebois (2016) within those norms, hegemonic views can still persist, so the rise of these masculine expressions are not necessarily a sign that the gender order is diminishing from society. Keep in mind that the rise of Second-Wave feminism is just used as one example here and should not be regarded as an ultimate component.

With this in mind Baumle (2013) makes the argument that our sexual identities influence us in more ways than we might imagine and impact both our actions and our prospects in life. She is one of the researchers arguing for a greater incorporation of sexualities into the field of demography and she highlights particularly why this is of importance. The argument is that: 'Sexuality results in differential outcomes on a number of issues that are fundamental to population study, including migration, fertility, morbidity, and other areas' (Baumle, 2013, p. 4). According to her a heterosexual man will on a general basis have different prospects in terms of life expectancy and family outcomes than a transgender man. A transgender man is less likely to marry and less likely to give birth to children. This can be for a number of different reasons, stretching from reproductive challenges to simply the personal choice of not wanting to bear children..

However, there are only in the recent decades that demographic research on sexualities have become more commonplace and even when sexualities are included the demographic research still tends to revolve around the statistical and non-social aspects of sexualities, such as fertility, mortality and migration. Baumle (2013) argues that there is a need for studies that explain how demographic factors, characteristics and trends are related to sexualities on a more analytical level than what is being done today and that it is important to develop a broader and deeper understanding of sexual behaviours and identities to improve population planning. Demographers need to understand that the sexualities of citizens can greatly influence demographic outcomes, and vice versa (Baumle, 2013). For instance, health and fertility are two demographic components in which cultural and societal differences in sexualities can produce different demographic outcomes. A topic related to this which unfortunately has not been given attention in this research study is the invention of contraceptives and how women then started to gain more control over their reproductive

system, which has had an huge effect on fertility rates. I however want the main focus of this research study to remain on men and sexualities even though I am aware of how femininities and masculinities naturally intersect with one another.

I have purposely chosen to keep this part of on a more abstract and reflective level. I wanted to examine how demographic change towards declining fertility and an ageing population relate to sexualities and masculinities without the subject being put into a specific 'box' and being to context-specific. I have tried to avoid isolating the concepts into certain realms as I will now through a Japanese context.

In Japan big changes have happened geographically from the first stage of demographic transition, with its starting point in the 1870, to the fourth and for now final demographic stage, beginning in the mid-1970s (Atoh, 2008). These demographic changes have contributed to changes of masculine norms and sexual behaviours and identities within the country.

If we start with the first stage of demographic transition, it serves, according to Atoh (2008) as the starting point of the process of economic development and modernization. The process of modernization and economic development led to profound changes of the population structure in Japan, and when a population changes its composition, it will quite obviously bring with it some social impacts. These impacts will also usually include changes of masculine norms and sexual identities and behaviours of some sort. Japan during that stage went from a society with a high CBR and CDT, towards a society with a dramatically decreasing CDR, dramatically outweighing the downturn made of the CBR during the same period (Atoh. 2008). Atoh does however provide little social context to this but mentions the rise of marriage age as a social impact of that demographic period. A rising marriage age indicates a change of social structures where maybe family life is not regarded with the same urgency and level of importance as before. If we then include some further context by applying some relevant theory from the fields of masculinities and sexualities one can establish a logical connection between demographic changes and the two concepts. In that period, research on sexualities were mainly studied through a biological and heteronormative lens through the work of sexologists like Alfred Kinsey (Kinsey et al., 1948). Further a hegemonic masculine gender order were still ingrained into every level of society (Atoh, 2008). The fields of both masculinities and sexualities had not yet started to move in a more liberal direction, but with the demographic landscape vastly changing due to modernization and economic growth, the altering of new gender identities were on the rise. Traditional values on gender and sexual identities and expressions still remained strong throughout this

stage, but the postponement of marriages serve as an indicator that more modern values in terms of marriage patterns were one the rise.

The second stage of demographic transition in Japan consist of only a 15 year long period. However, since those years consist of the first 15 years following the Second World War, a lot where happening at every level of society. It is also the demographic stage which Atoh (2008) argues that has laid the foundation for the demographic transition we experience today. The economy were growing in a positive direction due to modernization and urbanization, and those processes brought with them both immense demographical and social changes. The population started to decline, as well as the standard of living improved and overall life increased. These among other changes led to the advancement of the salaryman and the modern family. Which leads us to the third stage of demographic transition in Japan.

As said, it is impossible to talk about masculinities in Japan without mentioning the salaryman, which can almost be considered to be embodiment of Japanese masculinities (Dasgupta, 2003). We see a rational correlation between the growth and expansion of salaryman masculinities and the expansion of the Japanese economy. As the economy of the country advanced, so did the masculine norm of the salaryman, and for a long period of time, the salaryman was regarded as the 'ideal man' in Japan. Within this masculine expression there exists a hegemonic gender order which influenced the Japanese family structures through the rise of 'the modern family'. In the modern family structure, men should be the providers, or the so called breadwinners of the family, while women should take on the role as the homemaker and housewife (Atoh, 2008; Himeoka, 2008). This view also fuelled upon the notion as heteronormativity as the norm in Japanese society.

In this third demographic stage, Japan also experienced a population bonus as a result of the post-war baby boom and periods of higher fertility rates in previous demographic stages (Atoh, 2008). Japan therefore experienced a large working-age population, and with the economy already on the rise, this only had positive outcomes for the Japanese economy. The living standard and life expectancy continued to rise, and a common response to increased living standard is a decline of the fertility rate (Atoh, 2008). This has led Japan into the fourth demographic stage – the era of declining fertility.

By a discussion of Japans demographic history we see that all of them have its own specific demographic characteristics which again has given rise to its unique social responses, like the masculine norm of the salaryman. We also see how these previous eras have led up to Japan's

current demographic position. That even though the salaryman is not the embodiment of the 'typical' Japanese man anymore, a traditional gender order is still prevalent in many aspects of Japanese societies. However, without going to deep into the subject, one must keep in mind that within Japan there exists cultural differences. It can be a cultural divide between different age groups, between rural or urban areas or between different ethnicities and religions. For practical reason I will have to address the issue from a national perspective, but always with the thought of cultural diversity in the back of my mind. But this mean that traditional and non-traditional values will coexist side by side.

As we already have been addressing, Japan's current demographic position has it roots way back, as it all can be described as a 'cause and effect relationship' where one event is the result of other(s). Today the Japanese youth is in a pressured situation due to the demographic reshaping of the country, and this has also had its response on sexualities and masculinities. A stagnating economy, combined with a large elderly population and a decreasing work force seem to have had a negative consequence on the relationship between men and women, as many seem to not prioritize love or family life like they did in previous demographic eras. The pressure on the Japanese youth to keep the economy going, provide services and care for a large elderly population, as well as to reach their own goals and aspirations for life within a vastly demographic changing environment, can be linked to some negative and somewhat destructive responses.

Frühstück & Walthall (2011) mentions among other to 'the making of modern immaturity', is a social phenomenon where men show no to little professional or personal desires, and often continue to live in the family home for free, way past the age of 18. They also tend to distance themselves from professional and academic life, as well as romantic life. According to the authors a continuously larger part of young Japanese men fall under this category (Frühstück & Walthall, 2011). Responses like these further fuels the notion which many Western media sources have created of Japan as a so called 'sexless society' (Carr, 2015; Aoki, 2016; Jozuka & Ripley; Lassaigne, 2016; Porter, 2016;). However, those sources often fail to include other social and or cultural components which could provide a logical explanation for the mechanism which lay certain social phenomena, like for instance immense pressure which the young Japanese population are living under due to a challenging demographic position. In that way, Western media plays a big role in fuelling and developing false notions of Japanese masculinities and sexualities.

4.3. Key Findings and Reflections

By examining demographic change with a focus on the demographic phenomena of population ageing and fertility decline, this research study has tried to develop an improved understanding on how these phenomena relate to sexualities and masculinities. By reviewing demographic theory, as well as discussing and refining the interpretation through the use of information and accounts of demographic change in contemporary Japan, the study has concluded with the following:

Demographic change towards declining fertility and an ageing population relate to sexualities and masculinities as both concepts are deeply rooted into every aspect of society, and they therefore also play an important role in the development and preservation of demographic phenomena. Demographic phenomena like declining fertility and population ageing have the power to influence changes in sexual behaviours and identities and to transform masculine norms, and vice versa. Simply put, the concepts relate to the demographic phenomena through a rather complex give-and-take relationship where a multitude of factors and dimensions are at play simultaneously.

In the context of Japan, the young Japanese generation are feeling the pressure of trying to navigate through a demographic landscape in vast change. The 'glory days' of Japan's growing economy is over, and the Japanese youth are left to deal the repercussions in form of a declining fertility and an continuously growing ageing population. This has had its impact on Japanese masculine norms and expressions, as well as sexual behaviours through the rise of masculine identities like herbivore men, and the social phenomenon of modern maturity as explained by Frühstück & Walthall (2011).

Here are the key findings and reflections to take away from this research study:

- Masculinities and sexualities intersect with the demographic phenomena of fertility decline and population ageing as the concepts converge with basically all aspects of human life.
- The many socio-economic changes influenced by the Second World War which many countries encountered have been a fundamental factor for the development of contemporary demographic phenomena like fertility decline and population ageing in the Western world.

- Japan serve as an great indicator for other countries on the rise of new demographic phenomena and responses to it, but the country also has its own very unique demographic makeup.

- For the reasons mentioned above, it is highly important to consider social and cultural aspects like sexualities and masculinities when examining population dynamics, and there is a need to do this through a holistic approach.

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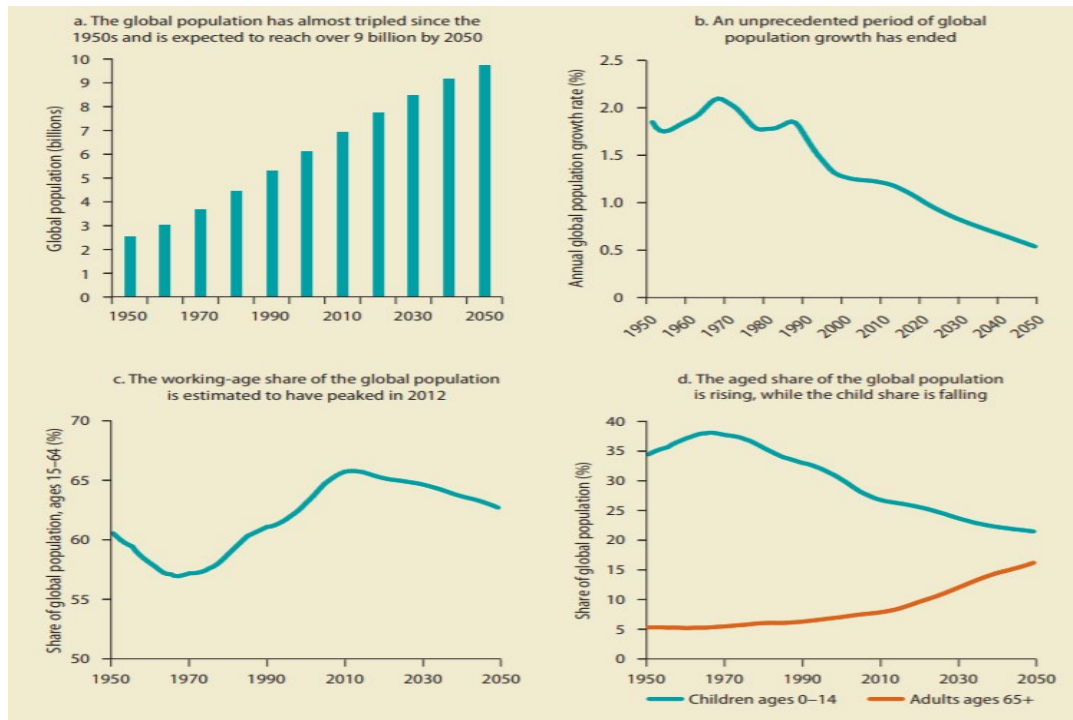
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Presented as Figure 1 (Section 3.2.). Source: World Bank Group, 2016.