

Jolivet, Muriel (1997) *Japan: The Childless Society? The Crisis of Motherhood*. London: Routledge.

This book is an interesting examination of the phenomenon in Japan of a very low birthrate. The book gives various reasons for this but focuses on the fact that Japanese women seem to not desire, or are simply refusing to have children. It goes through the issues and problems of having children and childbirth that would make having children undesirable. It discusses that in Japanese society raising children may be more difficult than in the United States because of the commitment that women in Japan are expected to have to their children. Some studies of women who did have children showed that up to 75 percent of them either resented or actually hated their children. The book also discusses the fact of the emphasis Japanese society places on the education of children starting at an early age to be extremely competitive in order to find a good place in society. The time that mothers therefore must take in raising and educating the children is phenomenal not to mention the high cost of a good education. This is another fact that makes having children undesirable. The book goes through various examples to show that childrearing in Japan is different from the rest of the world - being more work oriented and obligatory rather than seen as an enjoyable experience. The book is a great case study of a society where children are viewed in a different way than other societies and brings into question whether having children is something that is desired in modern society.