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Prospects of Family Changes and Policy Implications

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Prospects of Family Changes and Policy
Implications

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Necessity and Purpose of the Study
2. Content and Method of the Study



1. Necessity and Purpose of the Study

Outstanding changes in the Korean family are the trends toward small families and nuclear families. The average number of people per Korean household declined continuously due to the division of household by 1.93 people for the three-decade period from 4.62 people in 1980 to 2.69 people in 2010. In addition, the most common household type had been the four-person household since 1990, however, it was replaced by the two-person household in 2010 as the major household type.

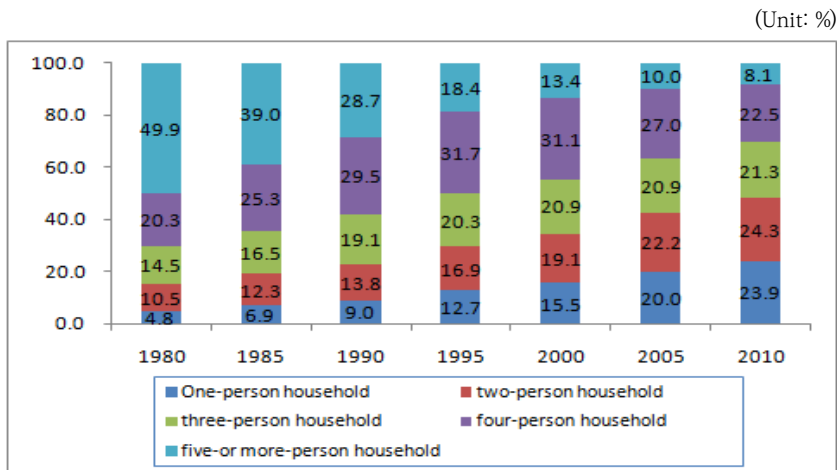
Meanwhile, the ratio of single person household increased five times for the three-decade period from 4.8% in 1980 to 23.9% in 2010 (see Figure 1-1). In particular, according to the age-based and sex-based proportions of single person households in 2010, a fifth of them, or 19.2% are the elderly who are 70 years or older and among them, females accounted for 53.5% and males for 46.5%. Also, males in their 30's and females in their 70's or older, respectively, have the greatest ratios of the single person households (Statistics Korea, 2010). In terms of local administrative division, the ratio of single person households in the eup and myoun is 27.1%, 4.0% higher than

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23.1% of dong and in terms of city and provincial area, the highest ratio of single person households was won by South Jeolla Province with 28.9% and the lowest by Gyeonggi Province with 20.3%(see Figure 1-2).

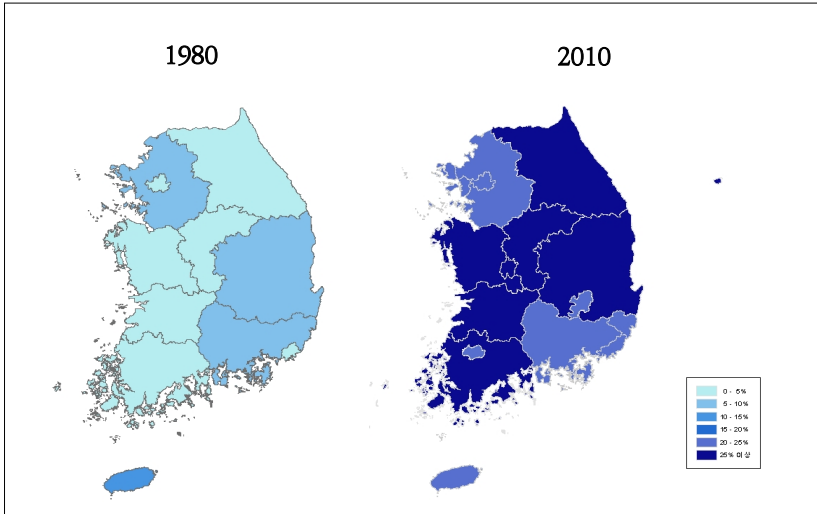
Another characteristic in the changes of Korean family is the simplification of the multi-generational households. One-generation households increased while two-or more-generation households decreased, showing continuous division of households. One-generation households doubled for the three-decade period from 8.3% in 1980 to 17.5% in 2010 and by contrast, two-generation households, the major household type, declined by 17.2% for the same period from 68.5% to 51.3%(Statistics Korea, 1980; Statistics Korea, 2010).

[Figure 1-1] Changes in Korean households ratios



Source: 1) Statistics Korea (1970~2000). Report on Population and Housing Census
 2) Statistics Korea (2005~2010). Population and Housing Census.

[Figure 1-2] Single person household ratio by region in Korea



Source: 1) Statistics Korea (1980). Report on Population and Housing Census
 2) Statistics Korea (2010). Population and Housing Census.

Regarding family types, the proportion of nuclear families centered around a husband, his wife and their children declined slightly by 6.7% for the three-decade period from 68.3% in 1980 to 61.6% in 2010 (Statistics Korea, 1980; Statistics Korea, 2010).

As shown above, although the household size and family structure swiftly changed toward small families and nuclear families primarily due to rapid industrialization and urbanization, most government policies, however, failed to reflect the characteristics of family changes, exposing limitations in pushing forward effective government policies.

Accordingly, it is necessary to provide basic materials to de-

velop proper national policies by identifying the changing phenomena of Korean family structure since the period of industrialization and analyzing the changes of family life therefrom.

This research study aims to analyze the changing phenomena of Korean families, predict changes and at the same time, draw a consensus on policies in order to provide basic materials for formulating national policies.

2. Contents and Method of the Study

This study consists of five chapters, namely, the four main chapters in addition to the introduction. The main concepts of those chapters can be outlined as follows: Chapter 2 describes theoretical background related to family changes. Chapter 3 analyzes the phenomena of family changes and draws policy implications. Chapter 4 provides a prospect of family changes and implications. Lastly, Chapter 5 draws a consensus on policies according to family changes centered around theories related to family changes, actualities of family changes, and prospects.

This study method contemplates various existing literature and references for analysis of the concepts related to household and family changes, causes thereof and study trends, and also analyzes the trends of household and family changes by

utilizing the population and housing census conducted by the Statistics Korea and other family-related statistics. In addition, this study analyzes the phenomena of household and family changes by utilizing the existing family-related research studies and conducting a phone survey of 2,000 people and also, provides a prospect of changes.





Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

- 1. Concept of Family Changes
- 2. Causes of Family Changes



2

Theoretical Background <<

1. Concept of Family Changes

1) Concept and Scope of Family

The dictionary definition of a family differs slightly by scholars, but can generally be defined as 'a group of blood related persons with husband and wife in the center, living together in one household.' A family includes a member of the family who lives separately from the family and in this sense, is distinctive from a concept of household, which is conditioned for its formation on a common dwelling residence and household. Families can be divided into a large family and a small family or alternatively, into a nuclear family, a couple family and an extended family (Naver Doosan Encyclopedia, June 10, 2013).

According to civil law, which prescribes a legal definition of a family, a family consists of a householder, the spouse of the householder, blood relatives and their spouses, and such other persons as are accepted to the family pursuant to the relevant provisions of the civil law. In other words, a family consists of those who are accepted to the family through the relationship of marriage, blood, and adoption. Single person households cannot be recognized as a family according to the above defi-

dition of a family, but can be identified as a household as a residence unit according to the definition by Statistics Korea.

In addition, as atypical households and families recently emerged with the rapid changes of households and families, the definition of household and family has been changed. Such changes of households and families are captured in such expressions as 'diversified family' and 'family diversity' and are used as a rationale for the need of exploring and expanding family policies and family support services (Family Policy Strategy Center at the Korean Women's Development Institute, 2012)

2) Concept and Scope of Family Changes

Family-related phenomena can be approached in three perspectives such as form, behavior, and value and as such, regarding family changes, it is imperative to consider the changes of type, behavior and value, mutual relationship among them and mutual relationship between the three factors, and other relevant variables(An, Ho-Young and Kim, Hyung-Ju, 2000).

Recently, the characteristic of Korean households is that a small family with one or two persons and a nuclear family with a couple and its unmarried children have high proportions primarily due to a trend of children moving out from parents' home according to individualization, increase of the elderly liv-

ing alone due to aging, a phenomenon of late marriage, increasing divorce rates, low birthrate, and a complex set of the above factors.

As such, household changes, namely the trends toward small families and nuclear families, curtailed the caring and support functions of Korean family; reduced reproductive function; weakened family relationship and family cohesiveness due to individual-centered values and loosened family bonding; accelerated family disorganization and family separation due to the increase in divorces and separations of husband and wife, which were driven by the expansion of norms tending to allow a divorce and improved gender equality. Such household changes triggered family changes such as changes of family life including family function and family relationship, and expanded various family types.

Accordingly, the concept of family changes in this study means a phenomenon of family-internal changes, triggered by structural and morphological changes of family, and also, the scope of family changes covers a family formation and disorganization changes due to household changes, and familial relationship and function changes.

2. Causes of Family Changes

According to the data of the Statistics Korea (2012), nowadays, 1,005 couples get married and 339 couples get divorced everyday in Korea. An increase in divorces brought about a rise of remarriages and in turn, the commonly seen divorce and remarriage means that a person's family may not be fixed. In addition, there are people who never get married or never produce a child or defer both. Also, there are people who got married but voluntarily choose not to have a baby. Such phenomena is interpreted that a marriage and a childbirth are now being accepted not as a mission to complete at an appropriate time, but as a matter of choice for one's own happiness. As such, to sum up, the background of various families emerging and the causes of family changes are grounded on economic environment and social structural changes, policy changes, demographic composition, and value changes.

As a start, let's look at economic environment and social structural changes. When women's participation in economic activities remained low, marriage provided economic stability to women. However, as women's participation in economic activities rose and men's job security diminished, the protective effect of a marriage lowered. Nonetheless, if the burden of housework and child care imposed on women remains unchanged greatly, women's tendency to defer or avoid a mar-

riage will expand inevitably. In case where job security lowers due to economic crisis or the impact from competitive capitalism, men also tend to defer an age for marriage or avoid marriage itself. In addition, as economic costs for childbirth and child care as well as social expectation and value for child care are rising, a tendency of deferring, avoiding or reducing childbirth increases. Industrialization and urbanization brought about simplification of generational structure while aging attributable to the extended average lifespan aggravated the family's burden of support. In addition, the integration of workplace and home, changes of everyday conversation styles, and loosened human relationship, all of which were driven by information age, brought about changes in family lifestyles and relationships. Also, information age and the advancement of communications and transportation enabled to maintain new family relationships such as weekend couples and goose fathers who are left behind in Korea to work while his wife and children live and study abroad (Koh, Seon-Ju, 2000).

System changes, for example, abolishing the patriarchal family system are brought about by reflecting various family changes and also can affect forthcoming changes. Also, a prospect was presented that as a result of abolishing the patriarchal family system, social prejudices against divorce and remarriage will dwindle and systematic discrimination against them will weaken, which will affect directly and indirectly a rise in di-

vorces and remarriages(Kim, Misook, 2008). Looking at the demographic composition perspective, a notion of preferring a son to a daughter resulted in a sex ratio imbalance at birth, which led to the imbalance between supply and demand in marriage market, consequently causing international marriages (Kim, Doo-Sup, 2006).

In addition, value changes such as the expansion of individualism and pluralistic values were attributable to the changes of family, which was pointed out as significant. Shim, Young-Hee (2011) classified the characteristics of family, which were shown in the 1st modernity¹⁾ and the 2nd modernity²⁾. The 2nd modernity, which appeared in the latter part of the 20th century, emphasizes a life for oneself rather than living for other people and is individualistic and independent rather than family-centered. In the past, heterosexual love and the union between persons with same ethnic group were a presumed fact and by contrast, the 2nd modernity does not discern heterosexuality from homosexuality and different ethnic groups.

1) Beck and Beck-Gernsheim pointed out that an individual should be responsible for oneself rather than depending on a family or a relative in consideration of instability, threats, and the characteristics of risk society, which appeared in the 1st modernity.

2) Anthony Giddens (1996) argued that the 2nd modernity disintegrated the family-oriented modern intimacy and brought about the intimacy based on an individual's autonomy and Zygmunt Bauman (2009) argued that almost all parts of life became fluid in the matter of time and space, and work and community, etc. and that marriage and family are also changing fluidly for an individual's self-realization and autonomy.

Among family functions, emotional relationship is valued as significant while the gender division of labor and inequality in the past is weakened. That is, a tendency toward individualism of the 2nd modernity affects the Korean society and triggers the appearance of various families and the changes of marriage and family.

Certainly, there are various ongoing discussions about values, which is one of the factors causing family changes. In particular, system changes and value changes do not necessarily coincide in the case of Korean families and as such, it was argued on one hand that “individualization without individualism occurs” (Chang and Song, 2010) and on the other hand, another argument was made that “familism-centered individualization” occurs (Kim, Hye-Kyung, 2013; Shim, Young-Hee, 2011). But a commonality is that a marriage and a family are still valued as important while familistic values weaken and individualistic values heighten. In the future, socio-economic structure, values, policies and demographic composition will continue to give or receive effects among themselves and trigger the changes of families and households.





Chapter 3

Actuality of Family Changes

1. Changes in Family Structure
2. Changes in Family Formation and Disorganization
Changes
3. Changes in Family Relationship and Function



3

Actuality of Family Changes <<

1. Changes in Family Structure

1) Changes in Household Size

The number of people per Korean household showed a continuously downward trend primarily due to children moving out from parents home according to individualism, increasing number of the elderly due to ageing, a phenomenon of late marriage, rising divorce rates and low fertility. In 1975, the number of households with five or more persons accounted for 58.4%, slightly above the majority, which is followed by four-person households, one- or two-person households, and three-person households. Households with four or more persons occupied 74.4%, hovering over two thirds of the total households. The number of people per household declined gradually and in 2010, two-person households has the biggest proportion of 24.3%, followed by single person households, four-person households, three-person households and five-person households. The proportion of households with one or two persons amounted to 48.2%, almost nearing a majority and that of households with four or more persons was merely at 30.6% (Statistics Korea, 1975; Statistics Korea, 1980;

Statistics Korea, 1985; Statistics Korea, 1990; Statistics Korea, 1995; Statistics Korea, 2000; Statistics Korea, 2005; Statistics Korea, 2010).

2) Changes in Generational Composition

Simplification of family generation, i.e., the transition from an extended family to a nuclear family, appeared due to the sharp increase of single-person or two-person households, which were created from individualism, low fertility, aging, late marriages and family disorganization; due to the expansion of one-generation households. In 1970, two-generation families accounted for 70.0%, hovering over two thirds of the entire families, which was followed by three-generation families with 22.1%. The proportions of single generation families and four- or more-generation families were insignificant. Since then, the composition of generational households showed a lot of changes due to a continuous trend toward nuclear families. In 2010, two-generation families accounted for 51.3%, slightly over a majority of total families, which was followed by one-generation families with 17.5%. The proportions of households with three- or four- or more- generation families were insignificant. Compared with the 1970's, the proportions of two-generation families and four- or more-generation families showed similar percentage numbers while those of single generation families rose and three-generation families fell

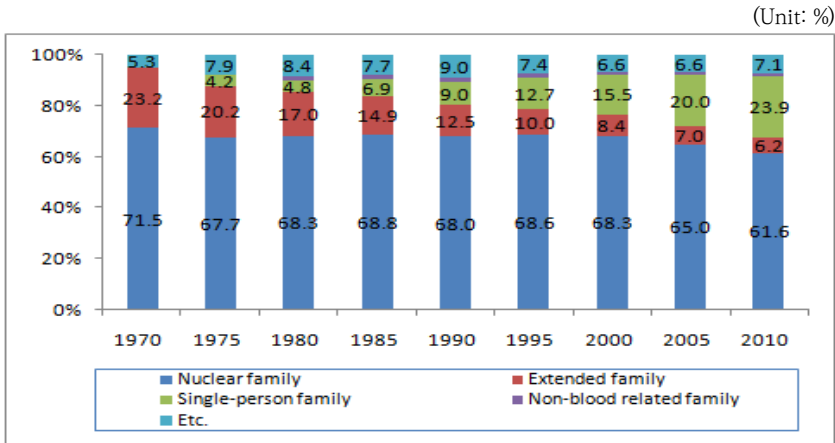
(Statistics Korea, 1975; Statistics Korea, 1980; Statistics Korea, 1985; Statistics Korea, 1990; Statistics Korea, 1995; Statistics Korea, 2000; Statistics Korea, 2005; Statistics Korea, 2010).

3) Changes in Family Types

Looking at the changes in Korean family types, in 1980, a nuclear family type with a couple only or with a couple and their unmarried children accounted for 68.3%, exceeding the majority of all families while an extended family type with at least three generations, that is, a couple, unmarried children and a couple's parent(s) occupied 17.0%, merely a fourth of nuclear families. In addition, single person households and households with persons unrelated by blood showed 4.8% and 1.5%, respectively. Family types went through changes due to a continues trend toward small families. In 2010, nuclear families accounted for 61.6%, a fall of 6.7% compared with that of 1980 and extended families occupied 6.2%, a fall of 10.8% compared with the same period. Single person households soared 5 times to 23.9% and households with unrelated persons remained at a similar level, compared with the same period.

As described above, the changes of household types were primarily concentrated to single person households and nuclear family types with persons with one or two generations due to the impacts from trends toward small families and nuclear families.

[Figure 3-1] Korean household type ratio by year



Source: 1) Statistics Korea (1970~2000). Report of Population and Household Census
 2) Statistics Korea(2005~2010). Population and household Census.

2. Changes in Family Formation and Disorganization Changes

1) Changes in Family Formation and Cycle

A tendency to defer or avoid the formation of a family continuously grows due to various socio-economic factors and an intent to get married is on a downward trend due to the expansion of individualistic value (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2011).

According to the result of social survey conducted by the Statistics Korea, looking at the values of a marriage and a re-marriage, the proportion of those saying that marriage is a

mission to complete continuously lowered from 33.6% in 1998 to 20.3% in 2012. Compared therewith, the proportion of those responding that 'it is better to get married' and that 'it is both good to get married and not to get married' rose to 63.7% and to 76.0%, respectively, indicating that an attitude toward marriage has changed from a marriage as mandatory value to a marriage as a matter of choice. In addition, looking at attitudes toward remarriages, the proportion of those answering that 'a remarriage should be done' was significantly low and the proportions of those saying that 'it is better to get remarried' and that 'it is both good to get remarried and not to get remarried' rose from 69.6% to 79.2% for the same period while a negative attitude toward remarriages continuously dropped from 19.2% to 13.2%. In short, negative attitudes toward remarriages decreased while positive or neutral attitudes increased, indicating that an acceptance of remarriages has improved.

Ages of marriage are significantly important in that child-bearing is mostly via marriage in the Korean society and are closely related to family cycles. According to the result of the population and household census conducted by the Statistics Korea, males' age at first marriage increased from 27.1 in 1970 to 31.8 in 2010 while that of females rose from 23.3 to 28.9 for the same period, showing that the ages at first marriage are rising sharply.

In addition, for those couples who got married before 1979,

the childless period of young couples was 1.06 years while for those couples who got married after 2000, the childless period was reduced to 1.03 years. By contrast, the period of old couples alone lengthened from 12.05 to 16.7 years for the same period. Also, the period of child care was slightly curtailed from 34.2 to 32.7 years. In other words, the following characteristics are shown: the period of newly weds alone and the period of childbirth and child care are shortened due to the rising ages of marriage, having fewer children and spacing them apart and extended life expectancy while 「the empty nest period」, i.e., the period of old couple alone or elderly female left alone, after making their children marry, lengthened (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 2012).

Changes in family cycles have implications: the vacuum of family support and care is expected according to the growing number of dual income couples thanks to the reduced child care period; the systematic mechanism is required to support healthy lifestyles of elderly people according to the sharp increase of elderly couples or elderly people living alone.

2) Family Disorganization and Appearance of Various Families

Nowadays, separation by death and divorces is rising sharply due to aging householders, weakening family values, and fami-

lial conflicts, facilitating family disorganization.

According to the result of the population and household census, among total households with married couples, the proportion of households that experienced separation by death slightly rose from 9.8% in 1975 to 13.6% in 2010. The proportion of households having males with separation by death was insignificant with less than 3% while that of females with separation by death declined from 67.3% to 48.5%, still reaching up to a majority of percentage numbers. In addition, according to the social index of the Statistics Korea, the total number of divorces increased 10 times from 116,000 in 1970 to 1,269,000 cases in 2010 and the ratio of divorces to total number of marriages grew 9 times from 3.9% to 35.8% for the same period, displaying a pace of sharp increase.

Looking at the changes of disorganization time via divorce according to the dynamic statistics of population by the Statistics Korea, the average age of divorce for males is 45.9 years old in 2012, up 5.8 years from 40.1 years old in 2000 and that for females increased by 5.5 years from 36.5 to 42.0 years old for the same period. Similarly, the average cohabitation period for divorced couples lengthened from 10.9 years in 2000 to 13.7 years in 2012, which was affected by rising divorce rates among the elderly, suggesting that couples showed a higher tendency to get divorced at the end of child care and in the stable family period.

Due to the increasing single households according to individualism, family separation, and family disorganization attributable to divorce and separation by death, various household types have appeared such as single households with single unmarried person or single married person, single households with single elderly person, single parent households, households with grandparent(s) and grandchild, etc.

Single person households increased 6 times for the period of 25 years from 6,609,000 in 1985 to 41,422,000 in 2010. Among them, unmarried single person households grew from 3,023,000 to 18,433,000 for the same period, showing a similar upward trend. Single person households generated due to divorce and separation by death increased 7 times from 2,571,000 to 17,649,000. Compared therewith, single elderly person households increased 9 times from 1,146,000 to 10,664,000, showing a significantly fast pace of rising (Statistics Korea, 1985; Statistics Korea, 2010).

Meanwhile, single parent households increased 2.7 times from 960,000 in 1995 to 1,594,000 in 2010 and for the same period, the number of single mother households outnumbered by 3.6~4.6 times that of single father households. In addition, the growing rate of single father households is 2 times, relatively faster than that of single mother households which is 1.6 times (Statistics Korea, 1970; Statistics Korea, 1995; Statistics Korea, 2010).

Households with grandparents and grandchildren living together increased 3.4 times from 352,000 in 1995 to 1,193,000 in 2010 and as of 2010, the number of grandmother (or grandfather) households exceeded that of grandparents households by 17,000 households.

3. Changes in Family Relationship and Function

1) Changes in Family Relationship

Husband and wife relationship lays the foundation for familial relationship. Let's look at the attitudes toward the division of roles between husband and wife showing structural aspect of marital relationship and actualities thereof.

Regarding attitudes toward the roles of husband and wife in a family, an opinion that 'a husband makes money and a wife does housekeeping and child care' showed similar percentage numbers at 38.6% in 2003 and 40.2% in 2009. An opinion that 'a wife of a double income couple is mainly responsible for child care and housework' remained at similar levels of 33.6% and 33.4% for the same period. In addition, an opinion that 'a wife should be mainly responsible for child care and housework regardless of whether the wife makes money' fell sharply from 18.4% to 10.8% and an opinion that 'anyone of husband or wife who is left behind at home should be mainly respon-

sible' rose from a meager 1% to 5.8%.

Overall, the traditional model that a husband is the bread winner and the wife is the housekeeper received a high rate of support. That is, regardless of double income couples or which spouse makes money, a tendency to adhere to the traditional model was high. As time passes by, nowadays, the opinion that regardless of the husband and the wife, any spouse who stays at home should take responsibility for child care and house-keeping gains a slight rise, signalling the changing roles between a husband and a wife in the future (Kim, Seung-Kwon et al., 2003; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2009; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2012).

Compared with the above-noted roles of a husband and a wife, looking at the actual pattern of housework division, the rate of wives who shouldered the burden of housework fell slightly from 88.9% in 2002 to 81.9% in 2012 and the rate of couples with equal sharing of housework grew two times from 8.1% to 15.5% for the same period. Also, the rate of husbands taking the burden of housework was insignificant from 3.0% to 2.6%. In other words, compared with the attitudes toward housework, actual burden of housework was mostly put on wives and the equal sharing of housework remained merely at a fifth of the proportion of wives bearing the burden of housework, although the proportion of equal sharing is growing (Statistics Korea, 2002; Statistics Korea, 2012).

Meanwhile, regarding the parent and child relationship, looking at the changes of parent's attitude toward the meaning of child and the responsibility of child care, the followings are found: Regarding the value of child, an opinion that 'looking at how child grows is a lifetime enjoyment' earned 4.1 points in 2005 and 4.0 points in 2010, maintaining a positive attitude. Compared therewith the opinion that 'a child is required for a person's later years received 3.5 and 3.7 points, respectively, for the same period, showing a bit upward trend. Also, the opinion that "a child's success is equivalent to my own" declined slightly at 3.9 and 3.7 points for the same years, implying that parent's attitude to achieve through child is dwindling (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2005; Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2010).

According to the result of 2003 survey related to the scope of child care responsibility, the graduation of university and the marriage of children accounted for the biggest rate of 40.2% and 32.1%, respectively and similar rates were shown in the 2006~2012 period. Changes in the period of the recent 9 years indicate that the parent's responsibility for child care showed consistent increases until the child graduated from high school or university or until a job for the child is found but, from then on, turned into a downward trend until the child's marriage, which can be understood as a result of reflecting recent trends of late marriages and avoiding marriage itself(Kim Seung-Kwon

et al., 2003; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2006; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2009; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2012).

In addition, the changes in the relationship between elderly parent and adult child can be described through the cohabitation types of elderly parent and the exchanges with child. Looking at the cohabitation types of Korean elderly parents, in 1991, cohabitation with child was at 49.2% and non-cohabitation with children at 50.8%, indicating similar levels. In 2011, the rate of elderly parents not living with their child grew two times, indicating on one hand that the elderly parents preferred the elderly couple-centered family type, no longer being dependent on child and on the other hand that the conception of child about supporting parents weakened (Chung, Kyunghee et al., 1988; Chung, Kyunghee et al., 2011).

Regarding the frequency of contacts with parents, the rates of almost everyday and one or two times per week increased from 74.5% in 1998 to 83.6% in 2011. Compared therewith, regarding the meeting with parents, the rate of almost everyday fell from 12.3% to 9.4% for the same period and the rates of one or two meetings per week or month rose sharply from 65.0% to 85.4%, indicating that the frequency of meetings dwindled (Chung, Kyunghee et al., 1988; Chung, Kyunghee et al., 2011).

2) Changes in Family Function

A. Reproduction Function

Reproduction function of family with a focus on the necessity level of child and the meaning of child care can be examined as follows: The rate of child necessity lowered from 58.1% in 2000 to 46.3% in 2012 while those responding that they do not care about having child slightly increased from 10.0% to 16.0% for the same period, indicating that the level of child necessity was significantly undermined due to various socio-economic factors (Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2000; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2012). In 1992, the biggest reason for child necessity is a customary universality with 63.2%, followed by carrying on a family line and keeping harmonious family with 13~14%. By contrast, in 2012, mental satisfaction such as psychological satisfaction and harmonious family was the biggest reason, occupying 55~93%, followed by support for one's declining years and carrying on a family line with meager 7~10%, indicating that the meaning of child has changed from universal values or dependence in one's later years to mental or psychological meanings (Gong Sae-Kwon et al., 1992; Kim Seung-Kwon et al., 2012).

B. Support Function

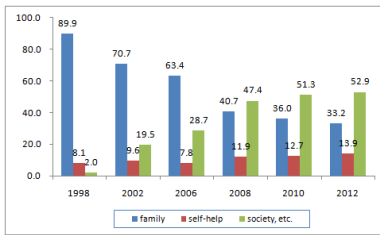
Family support function can be examined through attitudes toward the gender-based roles and support for parents as follows: In 2005, according to the result of the 2005 survey, regarding the gender-based roles toward family support, the opinion that 'a father should take care of child as a mother does' earned the highest 4.1 points, followed by the opinion that 'females are equally responsible for family support as males' with 3.8 points. Compared therewith, in 2010, both opinions lowered slightly to 3.7 points, indicating that a traditional notion of gender-based roles has not change significantly (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2005; Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2010).

In 1998, regarding who should be responsible for supporting parents, most of respondents chose family with 89.9%, followed by other choices such as self-help, society, and so on with a scanty 2~8%. Among those who selected family for supporting parents, the most capable child accounted for 45.5%, followed by the eldest son and all sons with 29.4%. In 2012, compared with the 1998 survey, those who chose family lowered by a third to 33.2% while those who chose self-help, society, and so on accounted for 66.8%, hovering two-thirds of the entire proportion. Furthermore, among those choosing family, those who said that all children should be jointly responsible amount-

ed to 25.0%, the biggest proportion, followed with other insignificant choices, indicating that the eldest son-centered or son-centered patriarchal system for supporting parents significantly weakened.

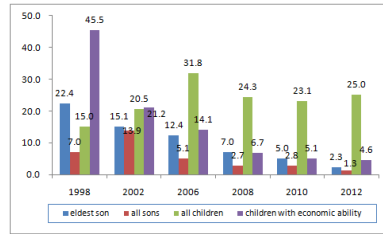
[Figure 3-2] Perception about supporting parents

(Unit: %)



[Figure 3-3] Primary care giver for parents

(Unit: %)



Source: Statistics Korea (1998~2012). Result of Social Study.

c. Economic Support Function

Economic support function of family intends to diagnose the changes of economic support function through economic activity, employment status, and changing patterns of household consumption, with a focus on householder primarily responsible for economic support for family.

According to the result of panel study conducted by the Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs, regarding the status of a householder's economic activity, employment slightly increased from 74.0% in 2008 to 76.3% in 2012 and non-em-

ployment declined from 26.0% to 23.7% for the same years. In 2008, among those householders who were employed, full-time workers accounted for 53.0%, slightly over a majority, followed by employers and self-employed combined with 27.8% and temporary workers and dayworkers combined with 17.8% in the order named. Compared therewith, in 2012, the rate of full-time workers and that of employers and self-employed slightly fell to 49.0% and 26.3%, respectively while the rates of temporary workers and daily workers combined rose to 23.4% (Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs, 2008; Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs, 2012). In short, employment status, that is, productive activities of householders somewhat increased while the proportion of temporary workers and daily workers combined somewhat rose, indicating the instability of employment status.

Looking at the changes of household consumption sizes and its composition, in 2008, household consumption was 2,856,000 won per month and among them, miscellaneous consumption expenses occupied the biggest rate of 26.1%, followed by grocery expenses with 20.7%, transportation and communication expenses with 13.7%, and tax and social security burden with 10.6%. In 2012, compared with 2008, household consumption increased by 22.2% to 3,490,000 won and the composition of expenses was similar to that of 2008 (Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs, 2008; Korea Institute of Health and

Social Affairs, 2012). For the recent four years, household expenditures increased. Specifically, looking at the consumption patterns, basic expenditures for grocery, rent, and utilities somewhat decreased while welfare and health expenditures, culture and entertainment expenses, and transportation and communication expenses increased, displaying changing trends in the consumption patterns of family.

4. Implications

Changes in Korean families showed characteristics of reduction of family size, i.e., the trend toward small families, and the simplification of familial generation, i.e., the transition from extended families to nuclear families and such characteristics were attributable to impacts from the sharply increasing single or two-person households due to children moving out from parents' home according to individualism, rising elderly population due to aging, late marriages, rising divorce rates, and low fertility; and due to the trend toward nuclear families primarily with single generation. Family cohesiveness weakened due to the trends toward small families and nuclear families, rising double-income families, increasing commuter families, divorces, and separation by death. Phenomena of family changes affect positively and negatively through various areas of family life from family formation to familial relationship to

family functions.

Marriage value, a critical factor relative to family formation, has changed from an absolute value to a relative value and people's conception about marriage is changing from a traditional mindset that everyone should get married upon reaching certain ages to another mindset that a marriage is a matter of choice, depending on individual needs. Ages of first marriage are on the upward trend due partly to the weakened perception about marriage necessity and partly to diversification of pre-marital gender-based roles such as higher education, joining mandatory military service, and employment. Such underlying causes greatly affect family cycles and so, a lot of changes are expected to occur throughout family life.

Nowadays, due to the unfolding changes of family cycle, the earlier phases of family cycle from family formation to the child rearing period to the period for making all children marry are curtailed whereas the later phases of family cycle are extended such as the period of the couple left alone upon completion of child's marriage and the period of only one spouse living alone due to the death of the other spouse. Accordingly, the implication is that different welfare policies should be developed according to the phases of family cycles.

Familial relationship, closely related to family changes, can be examined from husband and wife relationship and parent and child relationship perspectives. Patriarchal structure gov-

erns the husband and wife relationship in Korea and patriarchal values provide causes of conflict in the husband and wife relationship and the parent and child relationship. Although gender-based roles with 'the husband being the primary bread winner and the wife being the primary houseworker' greatly and actually undermined due to the increasing economic activities by married women, nonetheless traditional values still govern and as a result, it becomes difficult to flexibly respond to social changes.

In the meantime, family functions mean family behaviors, i.e., roles and behaviors displayed by family and are related to such matters as maintaining and continuing existence of society or satisfying family members' needs. Overall, family functions weakened from family care and support functions to reproduction to social security largely due to the trends toward small families and nuclear families and family disorganization. The implication is that the burden of social responsibility imposed on society, i.e., society instead of a family performs family care and support functions to some extent, is on the rise.





Chapter 4

Prospects of Family Changes

1. Prospects of Family Formation and Disorganization Changes
2. Prospects of Family Relationship and Function Changes
3. Implications



4

Prospects of Family Changes <<

1. Prospects of Family Formation and Disorganization Changes

1) Marriage and Cohabitation

A decrease in marriage rates and an increase in the ages of first marriages are observed in Korea as well as in many developed countries. Such phenomenon reflects that the value of marriage necessity weakened and that marriage is more readily accepted as a matter of choice. It was pointed out that those who lead a single life are still very few according to the data of religious bodies (Kim, Doo-Sup et al. 2005) but, noticeable are the overall trend of changes and the discrepancies in genders and ages about the value of marriage.

Looking at gender-based attitudes toward marriage in the result of the 2013 phone survey, 31.7% of males responded that marriage should be done while 19.4% of females gave the same response, indicating that more males than females are likely to think that marriage should be done. Although the gap by age is not distinctively visible, but observable by the age of 50 as a threshold.

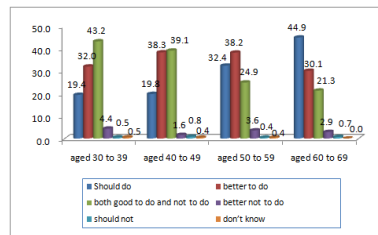
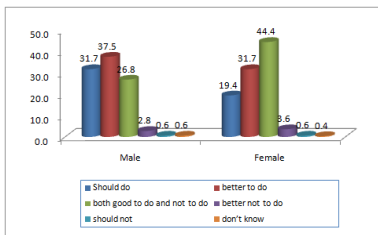
Different attitudes about marriage by gender, presumably, represents a reality that greater burden of marriage is put on women than men in Korean society. The future of marriage will differ, depending on how gender inequalities experienced in marriage life are resolved and addressed. In addition, considering gender-based gaps of value, which is observable at the age of 50 as a threshold, a possibility looms that the necessity of marriage will continue to diminish.

[Figure 4-1] Attitude by gender toward marriage

[Figure 4-2] Attitude by age toward marriage

(Unit: %)

(Unit: %)



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

But, the low attitude about the necessity of marriage does not necessarily lead to an objection to or a negative opinion about marriage. To further explain, a positive attitude that ‘it is better to get married’ and a neutral attitude that ‘it is both good to get married and not get married,’ which values an individual’s choice, both opinions accounted for a majority of answers re-

ardless of ages. Accordingly, there is a possibility that the weakened value about marriage necessity does not necessarily lead to the avoidance of marriage. That is, the increase in ages of first marriage and as a consequence, the increase in unmarried rates by age, which is observed in the Korean society, can be interpreted as a result of inevitable choice largely because the social condition and environment are not prepared for marriage, although marriage is still valued as significant. Accordingly, if the condition and environment are prepared for marriage in the future and if there is no significant gender-based discrimination in benefits to be enjoyed upon marriage, marriage will presumably continue to stay as a critical institution.

According to the book titled, "Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone" for which in-depth interview was conducted with single person households in America, it was argued that an increase of those who do not get married or lead a single life for various reasons does not necessarily mean an isolation in human relationship. That is, those who live single still maintain romantic relationship and friend relationship and maintain various networks and form communities via the SNS (Eric Klinenberg, 2013). It is a representation of human characteristics of forming relationship continuously, even if people live outside the marriage and family systems. Such human tendency can be partly explained in cohabitation

observed in Europe and the U.S.

Cohabitation is recognized as a legal union same as marriage in a lot of European countries and some states in the U.S. On the contrary, the institutional perspective of marriage is still emphasized in Korea and so no official statistics on cohabitation is made available. A rising trend of cohabitation is reported in mass media based on a small number of cases, but rarely confirmed through reference materials. According to a recent study on cohabitation conducted by Lee, Yean-Ju (2008), among respondents aged between 20 and 59 in the 2006 social study, only 1.4% said they are cohabitants. Such figure is pretty low, even if hypothesis is granted that some of those who cohabit did not answer as such. Certainly, cohabitation rates vary depending on marital status and as of the present, among those who remain single, cohabitation rate is 4% and goes up with a group of higher ages.

According to the same study (Lee, Yean-Ju, 2008), the record of marriage filings in the period between 1997 and 2005 has been analyzed and the starting date of cohabitation has been determined, which showed that 2.1% of females aged between 25 and 29 and 14.1% of females aged between 35 and 39 experienced pre-marital cohabitation. However, the above-noted study result is exclusively limited to those who got married and thus only cohabitation cases actually resulted in marriage were covered in the study and moreover, presumably, many of them

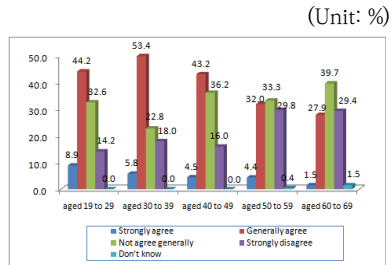
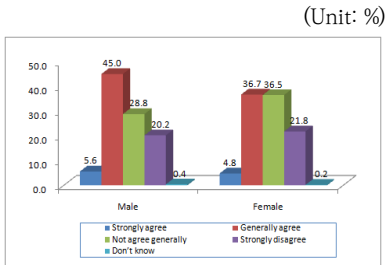
deferred the filing of marriage after marriage. Therefore, if cohabitation cases not leading to actual marriage are included in the study, the number of cohabitation cases may increase. Also, slightly different from the West is that cohabitation identifiable in marriage filings is limited to cohabitation cases which resulted in a marriage.

Now, let's look at how the values about cohabitation have changed. According to the 2013 phone survey, 54% of respondents said that they support cohabitation, which is a bit higher number than 46% of those who are against. Overall, males are more supportive of cohabitation than females and those who are aged below 40 are more supportive than those who are 40 years or older.

Until today, cohabitation does not socially achieve an official and legal standing and so no statistics on cohabitation is made available, but that the fact that the rate of those who are supportive of cohabitation reaches 40% and that the younger, the more likely to support presents a possibility of changes in the future.

[Figure 4-3] Attitude by gender toward 'pre-marital cohabitation'

[Figure 4-4] Attitude by age toward 'pre-marital cohabitation'



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.
 Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

2) Divorce and Remarriage

In 2012, the crude divorce rate (number of divorce cases per 1,000 persons) was 2.3 and the divorce rate for married persons (number of divorce cases for 1,000 married persons) was 4.7 in Korea (Statistics Korea, 2012). In the 1970s, the crude divorce rate was less than 0.5, but the figure made a sharp upward turn from the latter half of the 1990's, reaching a ceiling in early 2000 and since then has been on a downward trend. Among those who got divorced in 2012, the average years of marriage duration was 13.7 years and noticeable is that divorce rates of marriage duration of 20 years or longer and duration of 4 years or shorter occupied similar proportions. That is, divorces of elderly and divorces of childless couples in the early stage of

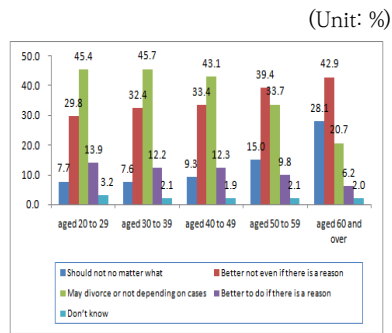
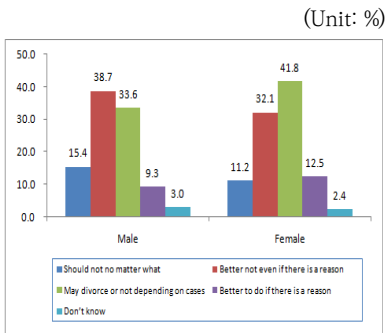
marriage accounted for a majority of divorces. Although the divorces of couples with children are on the downward trend, still, they accounted for a majority of divorces in 2012.

As divorces grow, remarriages mount up. Looking at the data of the 2000s, the proportion of remarriages accounted for 11% among the total marriage cases and if the cases wherein one of the spouses gets remarried are included, the proportion reaches 20%(Statistics Korea, 2012). An increase in divorces can lead to an increase of single parent families and according to the fact finding inquiry by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Women (2013), there exist about 570,000 single parent families with unmarried child across the country. A majority of them is single mother families with child, burdened with economic difficulties and child care. Another type of family that can emerge from divorces are a remarriage family, which means an extended scope of family and more complex definition of family.

According to the result of social study on divorce and remarriage, negative and positive attitudes about divorce accounted for similar proportions and more males than females tend to think negatively about divorce. The younger, the less negative about divorce but, such a trend makes a stark contrast in the age of 50 years as a threshold.

[Figure 4-5] Attitude by gender toward divorce

[Figure 4-6] Attitude by age toward divorce

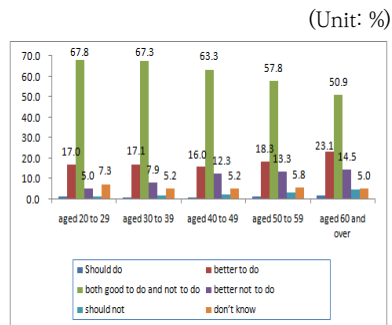
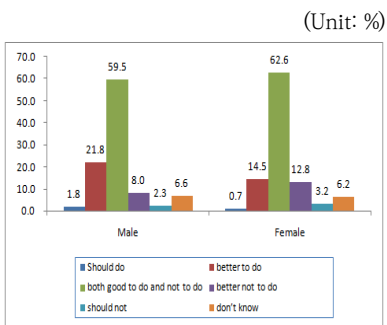


Reference: National Statistics (2012). Result of social study.

Neutral views about remarriage take up about 60% and positive views are shown relatively higher than negative views. 40 years or older have shown relatively higher percentage of negative views, with minor differences by age and by gender.

[Figure 4-7] Attitude by gender toward remarriage

[Figure 4-8] Attitude by age toward remarriage



Reference: National Statistics (2012). Result of social study.

Conclusively, the views about divorce and remarriage are generally positive regardless of insignificant differences by gender and age. Certainly, an opinion that 'divorce is possible even if there is a child between the couple' generally received a high rate of negative responses. But, the fact that those of young age groups are at a high rate of acceptance about divorce and remarriage, presents a possibility that divorces and remarriages are likely to rise in the future.

Beck-Gernsheim(2005) argued that as the acceptance level about divorce increases, the actual divorce rate is rising, which can lead to the formulation of relevant policies, facilitating divorces naturally and consequently, bringing about 'normalization of divorce.' He also argued that people have a desire to maintain relationship and the trend toward pre-marital cohabitation may increase.

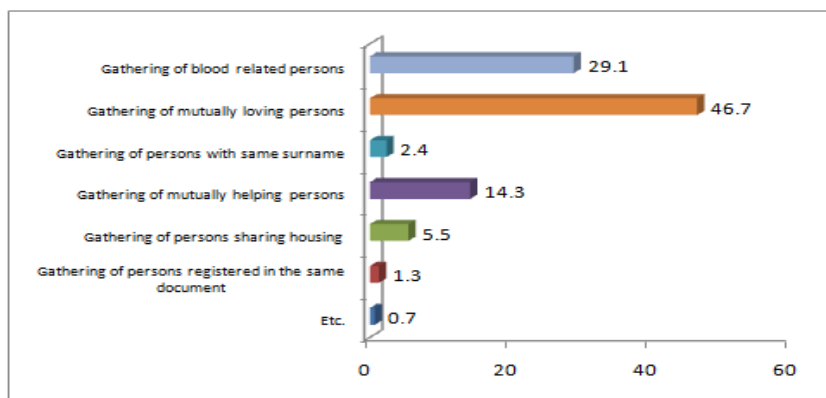
As divorce and remarriage rise in Korea too, values are changing in a way that accommodates such changes and policies and systems have been established to protect divorced families such as abolishing of patriarchal householder system and the legislation of the Single Parent Family Support Act. Value changes, and support through policies and systems eventually facilitated an escape from an unhappy marriage. Although the values about cohabitation has changed, cohabitation does not commonly occur in Korea, which makes a contrast with the West. Thus, presumably, a bit more time will be

taken before pre-marital cohabitation as a protection strategy against divorce occurs universally

The birth of a blended family grounded on a divorce and a remarriage provided an opportunity to reestablish the definition of family in the West. Affection and intimacy emerged as key factors for the definition of a family replacing the traditional definition of family in the past (Beck-Gernsheim, 2005). But, the emphasis on affection and intimacy rather than blood relationship, duty or responsibility as found in a traditional family does mean a possible break-up of family anytime according to the loosening of such affection and intimacy. That is, a harmful effect in the past was that an escape from an unhappy marriage was not easy due to duty and responsibility and by contrast, now, there exists a possibility of ending a marriage based on one's emotion without significant constraint. Accordingly, a pre-nuptial agreement is frequently executed and signed in preparation for a divorce among the upper class in the West. That is, the definition of a modern family grounded on affection and intimacy may develop into contractual relationship, which is a paradoxical side of a modern marriage.

According to the result of phone survey for this study, 46.7% of respondents said that a family is 'a gathering of mutually loving persons,' followed by the no. 2 answer of 'a gathering of blood related persons sharing same ancestry' with 29.1%.

[Figure 4-9] Perception about what 'family' is



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

It suggests that Korea is undergoing changes away from a traditional blood relation-centered system. That is, although blood relationship still remains valued, but the definition of family including the family relations outside blood relation is evolving flexibly. As various family types emerge in the future, the definition of family is expected to become more expandable and inclusive. But, as noted earlier, it is imperative to consider limitations to be triggered with the emergence of more inclusive and flexible definition of family.

3) Various Family Types

In modern society, a variety of family types have emerge

such as a single parent family due to cohabitation and divorce, a blended family due to remarriages and so on. Prime examples are commuter families wherein family members spatially live apart and community families wherein people unrelated by blood live together. In some European countries and in the U.S., same sex couples are legally recognized and able to form a family by producing a child through a sperm bank, an egg bank and a surrogate mother. Compared therewith, same sex couple or same sex family is not recognized in the Korean society and so, this Section will restrict its discussion to commuter families and community families.

Commuter families generally means cases where a married spouse or an unmarried child live separately. According to the social index press release by the Statistics Korea (2013), the rate of commuter families in 2012 is 19.26% of the entire households subject to social study, which is up 4% compared with 2010. Among commuter families, the rate of households with a married spouse living separately from the other spouse is 5.7% and that of households with an unmarried child living separately is 16.3%. Major reasons for commuter families are workplace and school. Specifically, 72.3% of responding married spouses said that they live separately for workplace reason and 53.5% and 38.2% of responding children living separately cited workplace and school reasons.

Commuter families lack a common residence, one of the fac-

tors required for the definition of a traditional family. Commuter families includes weekend couples, couples living apart within country for a temporary period and couples living apart internationally in the short-term and long-term basis. A classic example of commuter families is a goose father created due to high education enthusiasm in Korea. As for commuter families, the quality of relationship and the level of satisfaction among family members may vary depending on the time period of living apart, geographical distance, and the quality of original relationship. Yet, it is true that the advancement of transportation means, the internet, videotelephony, and other communication devices enabled people to maintain close relationship without severance and that such possibility is extended now than before.

An increase in unmarried children living separately is closely related to an increase of single person households. In the past, except for an inevitable reason, unmarried children lived with parents prior to marriage, which was accepted as custom. Now, sometimes an unmarried child lives alone even if workplace or school is located in the same area as the parents' residence. Such a phenomenon is taken as a result of the weakening concept of common residence.

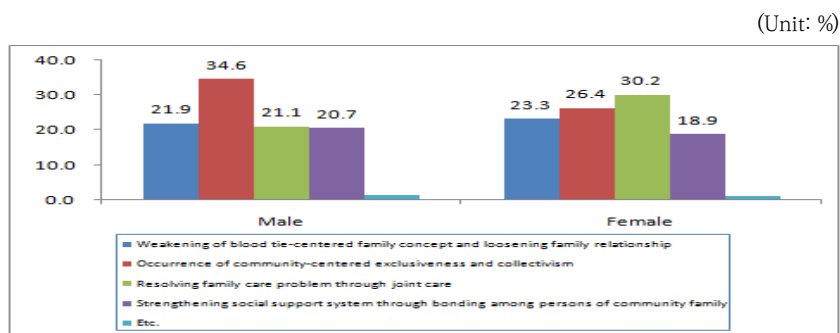
Community families, outside from marriage and blood relationship required for the definition of a conventional family, is a collective gathering of individuals or families, which is in-

tended to resolve problems that cannot be addressed by an individual family (Park, Min-Sun, 1995). Community families include, broadly, a gathering of individuals or families intended to collectively deal with child rearing and care and include, narrowly, a group of people unrelated through marriage or blood relations living together. Community families in a narrow sense is an alternative family type composed of people left out if an original family does not function or as a result of family disorganization so that the community families perform family functions. No official statistics on community families are computed or made available and very few cases of community families are reported in mass media.

[Figure 4-10] and [Figure 4-11] illustrate according to phone survey the changes to be made through an increase of community families. A concern that collectivism will arise with the increase of community families receiving the biggest rate of 30.5% and males are keener on this issue than females. Those who expect positive changes from community families accounted for about 46%. If an opinion that the increase in community families weakens the concept of blood-oriented family is viewed as a negative expectation, the overall opinions about community families can be deemed as negative. Also, consistency of differences is not visible by age groups. Thus, although community families are emerging as an alternative family type in the Korean society, more time will presumably be

taken until community families becomes or are accepted as a universal family type.

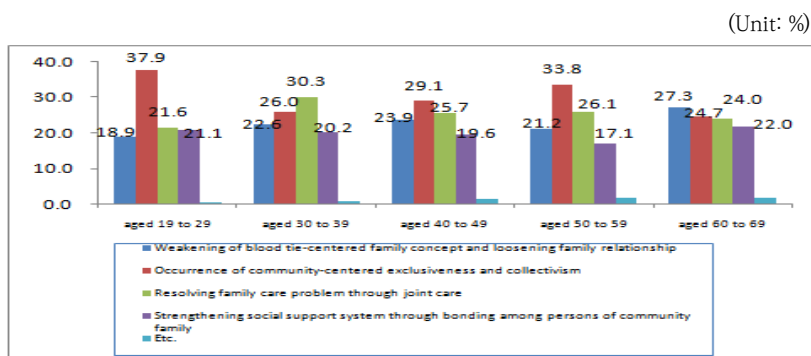
[Figure 4-10] Expected social changes by gender due to increasing community families



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

[Figure 4-11] Expected social changes by age due to increasing community families



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

2. Prospects of Family Relationship and Function Changes

1) Prospects of Family Relationship Changes

Nuclear family in the Korean society centered around the parent and child relationship, which is comparable to the couple-oriented nuclear family in the West. Such difference originated from unique Korean characteristic that marriage and family are centered around family rather than individuals. A marriage was a union of two families rather than two persons based on affection and intimacy and as such the husband and wife relationship was formed through marriage and husband and wife were supposed to maintain cooperative relationships functionally and instrumentally for the benefit of children and were accepted as such. It is presumably because carrying on a family line was taken as critical based on patriarchal familism. It is also because with the application of the wealth flow theory by Caldwell, it was ensured in the past that as much as parents invest in their children, parents can secure benefits like support in their later years to be received from children.

But, as the union of individuals grounded on affection and intimacy emerges and the expectation about support from child in one's later life cannot be secured, the transition toward the couple-centered marriage begins to appear. With the ex-

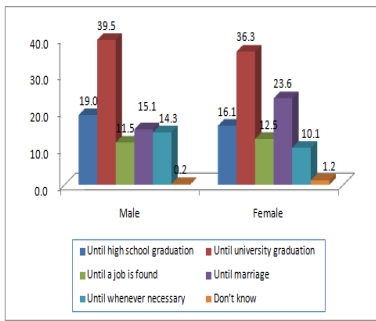
pansion of a perception that one should prepare for ones later years by oneself and share responsibility for later years socially rather than being dependent on children, unconditional investment in child has apparently weakened. As shown in a TV ad where parents set out a trip on their child's wedding day, there is a tendency to invest for their own later life and to cement the husband and wife relationship rather than depending on or investing in children.

[Figure 4-12] and [Figure 4-13] illustrate the result of phone survey about until when parents should perform parental responsibility. Considering differences by age groups, a prevailing perception in the past was that parents should be responsible for their child until the child gets married. But, now, younger people are more likely to think that parental responsibility ends with the child's graduation from high school or university. A prevailing view is that parents should be free from unlimited parental duty and that children, upon reaching certain ages, should become independent from parents. Such perception is similar to that of the West. Certainly, such view does not necessarily lead to an action. There are cases wherein some children, upon graduating from university and entering into adulthood, parasitically live with and economically depend on their parents. But, with the changes of perceptions, in the near future, parents will less depend on children and the husband-wife relationship will be more cherished than pa-

rent-child relationship

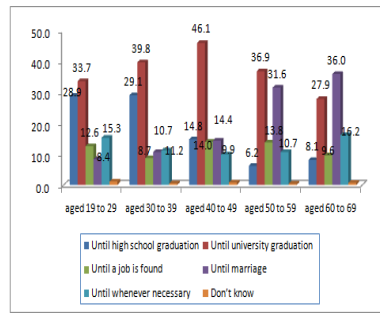
[Figure 4-12] Gender-based parental responsibility scope about children

(Unit: %)



[Figure 4-13] Age-based parental responsibility scope about children

(Unit: %)



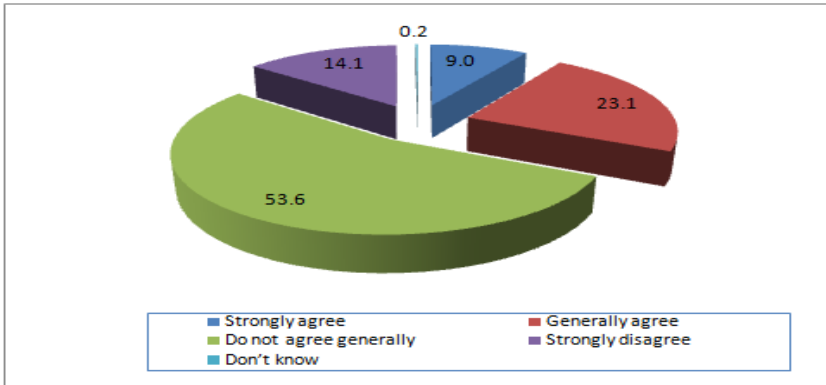
Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

The above description is supported by the result of another phone survey that deals with the attitudes toward an opinion that ‘the parent-child relationship is more important than the husband-wife relationship’. A majority of people in the survey responded negatively about that opinion. Also, a majority of respondents showed negative position about the view that ‘children takes the most priority in life,’ indicating that the husband-wife relationship instead of the parent-child relationship will presumably be at the center of the familial relationship.

[Figure 4-14] Opinion on 'the parent-child relationship is more important than the husband-wife relationship'

(Unit: %)

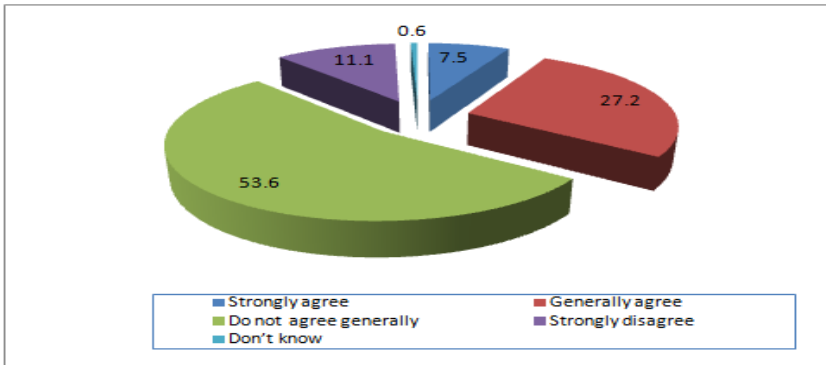


Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

[Figure 4-15] Opinion on 'children takes the most priority in life'

(Unit: %)



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

It is partly related to the advancement of aging and the lack of social policies. Although the average lifespan has lengthened, social and institutional underpinnings are still fragile and the dependence on child is not so strong as in the past and consequently, the husband-wife relationship in one's later years is emphasized as critical. The importance of preparing for one's later years by oneself is emphasized as well. Included in the preparation for one's later years are economic capability, health and hobbies that a couple can spend time together for enjoyment.

Despite of marriage deferment, rising divorces, increasing cohabitation and childbirth avoidance, the importance of marriage and children still remains in the Korean society. But, from now on, with the rising individualism, marriage and childbirth will be performed in a way that values an individual's happiness and satisfaction rather than emphasizing duty and responsibility. In addition, the bonding and intimacy between husband and wife will presumably be regarded more highly than the parent-child relationship.

2) Prospect of Family Function Changes

A. Childbirth

Traditionally, one of the key functions of family is to produce

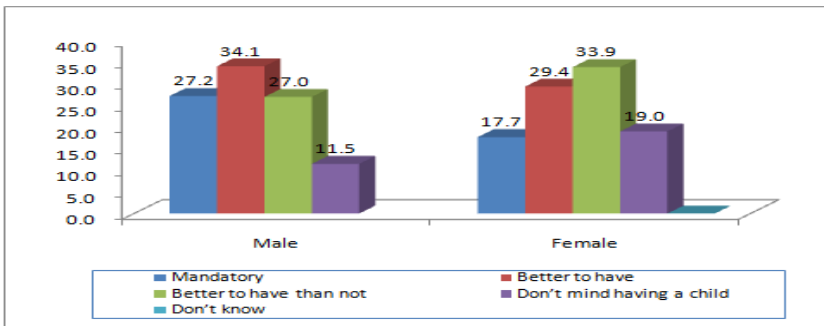
a child to carry on the family line. In Korea, there was a prevailing mindset of preferring sons over daughters largely due to patriarchal familism. But, with the changes of family definition, the childbirth function of family has weakened. Certainly, the low fertility rates do not necessarily lead to the lowering importance of children or to the absolute denial of childbirth. Childbirth through marriage only is legally recognized and so, childbirth remains as one of critical functions of family. Chang, Kyung-Sup (2011) argued that the low fertility rate in Korea is triggered not from the rise of individualism but as a paradoxical result of strong familism. Children are still cherished in the Korean society and parents are highly likely to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of children and tend to equate the child's success as their own or family's success. The argument goes that such trends toward familism become a burden, consequently undermining fertility rates.

According to the phone survey about the necessity of children, positive responses including an opinion that it is better to have a child than not amounted to 85%. Males showed higher rates of positive attitude about the necessity of children than females and there were insignificant differences of responses by age groups. But, the fact that overall responses in the survey were positive indicates that still, children carries an important meaning in the Korean society. Similar results came out in the 2012 survey on marriage and childbirth trends across the coun-

try (2012), showing that both married women, and unmarried men and women displayed about 80% of positive responses about the necessity of children.

[Figure 4-16] Attitude by gender toward child necessity

(Unit: %)

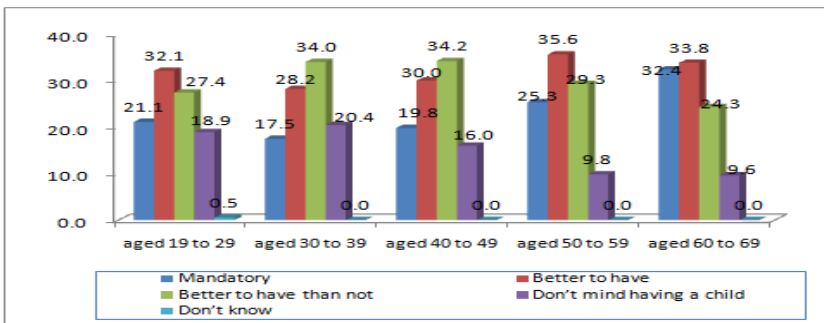


Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

[Figure 4-17] Attitude by age toward child necessity

(Unit: %)



Note: 1,000 people was surveyed for analysis.

Source: Kim, Yukyung, et al.,(2013). The Changes in the Family and Household Structures and Social Welfare Policies. Korea Institute for Health and social Affairs.

According to the result of phone survey on the meaning of child care or the necessity of children, 'strengthening of family bonding' ranked first with 42%, followed by 'enjoyment of child rearing' with 37.5%. As compared therewith, carrying on the family line, which is the traditionally held position, remained merely at 6.7%. Similarly, according to the 2012 marriage and childbirth trends survey across the country (2012), when people were asked about the reasons for child necessity, psychological satisfaction or family happiness and harmony was pointed out as critical and carrying on a family line has been taken as insignificant. That is, still, a child is cherished as important in the Korean society, but the childbirth is not for carrying on a family line but for promoting an individual's and family's happiness and satisfaction, which is a transitional change. Accordingly, whether or not having children, how many children will be produced, and when will be produced can be determined considering the impacts on an individual's and family's happiness and satisfaction. If childbirth can impose a bigger burden on an individual and a family and threaten an individual's and the family's happiness, it may lead to avoidance of childbirth. Chang, Kyung-Sup (2011) called it 'risk aversion.'

Then, how will the childbirth function of family evolve in the future? As examined earlier, considering that the importance of marriage and children are firmly established in the Korean society, out-of-wedlock childbearing will not easily be accepted

for the time being. Low fertility rates, despite the perception of cherishing children as important, can be interpreted that the conditions for childbirth and child rearing have problems. That is, if we create social and policy environments that childbirth and child rearing become not a burden but a prerequisite for happiness, eventually, childbirth rates will rise. To this end, it is imperative to escape from a structure that imposes the whole burden of childbirth and child care on women and to bring about transformational changes to care policy that transfers the burden from women to the joint social responsibility. Also, it is necessary to develop measures to alleviate overly competitive investment in education, excessive preoccupation with children, and parents' equating themselves with children. Also, it is critical to execute consistent policies with vision in the long-term perspective rather than short-term programs. Accordingly, it is advised to move away from supply-centered policy in the family planning program in the past, which largely appealed on patriotism to promote or reduce childbirth for the interests of the country and move toward consumer-centered policy, i.e., creating and emphasizing social environments wherein both an individual and a family are happy by having and raising children.

B. Care Function

Caring for children and elderly parents is one of the critical functions of family. In particular, social care function is weak in the Korean society and so, the responsibility of caring for children and elderly parents squarely falls on the family, in particular, women. Among the care of children and elderly parents, which are the two pillars of family care function, the changes made to child care have been relatively slow compared with those of the care of elderly parents.

As women's participation in economic activities grow, various child care policies were vigorously formulated and presented to enable the compatibility of work and family as an attempt to address the low fertility rate problem. But, looking at the recently held discussions around gratuitous child care, it is still emphasized that mother's care of toddlers less than 3 years old is critical and the stable attachment relationship between toddler and mother greatly affects the later development of child. According to the result of the living time analysis, it was found that males, regardless of double-income families, spent about 10 minutes in care, which can naturally lead to the conclusion that burden is squarely put on females (Statistics Research Institute, 2012). Such burden can lead to avoidance of childbearing as pointed out earlier.

Although the traditional dichotomous sharing of 'family sup-

port for males and housekeeping and care for females' has weakened, it was found through the phone survey that when people were asked about the roles of males and females separately, most of them said that males should support the family and females should be responsible for child care. Accordingly, although child care function is better shared socially now through various child care policies than the past, family remains as a main pillar for child care function and will presumably continue to be so.

By contrast, elderly parent care function is significantly evolving more now than ever before. According to the result of a 2012 social study, merely 5% of respondents said that both parents of the householder are alive and live together with the householder while 11.5% of them said that only father of the householder is alive and live together with the householder and 17.1% of them said so in case of mother surviving and living together with the householder. By contrast, looking at cohabitation of parents of the householder's spouse, the cohabitation rates sharply declined. That is, it is evident that still, elderly parents care is centered primarily around sons.

According to the statistics on the elderly (2012), elderly people of 65 years or older who live alone accounted for 6.6% of the total households as of 2012, indicating gradual increases compared with 3.3% in 2000. If the trend persists, the rate of single elderly households is expected to rise to 15% of the total

households in 2035. That is, as people are less likely to live together with elderly parents, the number of cases wherein a child does not live with his or her single elderly parent even if the parent is left alone due to separation by death of other spouse will be increasing.

Certainly, living separately with parents does not mean the severance in relationship. There are a lot of cases wherein children live separately but close to parents and make frequent contacts and mutual visits and there are cases wherein children live far apart from parents but still make frequent contacts and mutual visits. According to the result of the social study (2012), more than a majority of respondents said that they live separately but meet parents at least once or twice a month. Contacts via phone are more frequent and 90% of respondents said they make phone calls at least once or twice a month.

Now, let's look at how the perception about supporting parents has evolved. According to the result of a social study, the opinion that the primary care giver of elderly parents is family declined from 70% in 2002 to 33.2% in 2012. By contrast, the opinion that family, government, and society should jointly share the burden of caring for elderly parents increased from 18.2% in 2002 to 48.7% in 2012. In addition, the opinion that one should be responsible for oneself rose from 9.6% in 2002 to 13.9% in 2012. In the past, in particular, the eldest son among family members was the primary care giver of elderly parents.

In 2012, an opinion that all children, regardless of sons or daughters, should jointly bear the burden accounted for 74.5%. Similar trends are shown in the result of phone survey. Although family is recognized as the primary care giver of elderly parents, there exists heightened awareness that the eldest son or sons are not the primary care giver but all children should jointly share the burden of care. In addition the awareness that one should be responsible for oneself or that government and society should jointly bear the burden was found as well. Moving away from imposing the entire burden of elderly parent care on family and children is also related to the evolving changes of the parent-child relationship as described earlier.

But, now although we got out from the tend of imposing major burden on family, nonetheless, the family function of caring for elderly parents is recognized as critical. According to the result of phone survey, when people were asked to what extent adult children should take responsibility for elderly parents care, 31.9% of them said that 'they should take responsibility whenever the elderly parents wish so,' which is the highest rate. Other answers: 27.0% of them said when the elderly parents are no longer healthy; 21.9% said when the elderly parents' economic capability runs out; 16.8% said that children should take whatever responsibility regardless of parents' economic capability.

Conclusively, care function by family weakened compared with the past. But the level of changes is more noticeable in the care of elderly parents rather than child care. Thus, however child care is socialized and jointly shared, the family's function as a primary care giver of children will not be easily taken from family. Compared therewith, presumably, the pattern of caring for elderly parents while living with them will diminish further while the pattern of jointly sharing the burden of elderly parents care by family, society, and the government will be increasing.

c. Economic and Emotional Functions

Other family functions are economic and emotional functions. In an agricultural society wherein home and workplace were not separable, family performed the major economic function as a primary player for production and consumption. Home and workplace were separated through Industrialization. With the introduction of the market economy, in the modern society, the production function by family weakened and consumption function remained as critical. Nowadays, sometimes family's production function is revived to secure safe food or due to the return to farming, but such function, generally, weakened.

Emotional function is one of the most critical functions and

will continue to have great implications. It was mentioned earlier that although the perception about care function diminished due to the rising divorce rates, the lowering birthrates and the increasing rates of single person households, it does not necessarily mean the weakening of people's desire to form relationship or people's emotional needs. It is even more so in the Korean society where marriage, children, and family are recognized as critical and care function still remains relatively strong. As shown in the result of phone survey, more than a majority of respondents defined family as 'a gathering of mutually loving people' and family evoked affection, shelter, warmth, and other emotional aspects, indicating that family's emotional function is recognized as more critical than any other functions. Therefore, a family's emotional function is emphasized and will continue to be so as ever more critical function in the future.

3. Implications

Korean families are expected to undergo a lot of changes in the future. If the current trends continue, marriage deferment and avoidance and low fertility will persist, although things may change depending on changing social conditions.

Deferring and avoiding marriage and childbearing are partly attributable to the expansion of individualistic values and part-

ly to the paradoxical result of Korea's family characteristics. Excessive burden on family, social ambience of equating a child's success with parent's own, child care and elderly parents care primarily imposed on family can lead to deferring and avoiding marriage and childbearing (Chang, Kyung-Sup, 2011).

Also, cohabitation and childless couples are expected to increase, which can be interpreted in the same context. Excessive responsibility and burden on family can cause the emergence of new family types free from the traditionally existing family types. Cohabitation does not occur openly up until now and more time will come to pass until cohabitation is recognized as equally as marriage as a formal institution as is in Europe. Nonetheless, cohabitation may increase and the acceptance level toward cohabitation is expected to rise.

Childless couples are only a few cases but are reportedly consistently rising. Considering that most people, when asked about the necessity of children in the survey on perception, showed positive responses, it is presumed that childless couples came to be due to sterility rather than not producing offspring voluntarily. As the trends of deferring marriage and childbearing rise, childless couples due to sterility are expected to increase. In addition, the advancement of transportation and communication enabled one to travel from one side of the country to another within the same day and as such, the num-

ber of commuter families is expected to rise.

The numbers of single parent families and blended families, respectively, continue to rise due to divorces and remarriages and are expected to rise in the future. Acceptance level toward divorces and remarriages are gradually increasing compared with the past, and for this reason, the number of blended families, created for that reason, is forecast to rise.

Among family functions, a large part of elderly parent care and child care functions will be transferred to society and in particular, the elderly with chronic diseases will be admitted to a sanitarium, which will become a universal phenomenon. Familial conditions for taking care of the elderly with chronic diseases will aggravate due to low fertility rates and increasing number of double-income couples. Furthermore, if social care mechanism is better prepared systematically, a large portion of the elderly care function will inevitably be borne by society.

By contrast, child care function, although partially borne by society, will remain strongly within family functions. Noticeably, a perception that parents should take full responsibility until child gets married weakened and a phenomenon that children, upon reaching a certain age, i.e. being a university student, becomes independent emotionally and economically is expected to be common. It also represent a reality that parents have to reduce the period of child care responsibility because parents get prepared for their later life with the

advancement of aging. As the perception about child care changes, there is a possibility that child-oriented family relationships will transition to the husband and wife-centered family relationship just like in the West. A recent trend emphasizing the extended period of empty nest and the importance of marital relationship after retirement will also affect the emergence of the couple-centered relationship.

Considering the changing perception about child care and the elderly parents care, the number of single person households are expected to rise further. The number of elderly people, upon separation by death, living alone rather than with child is expected to rise. There will be an increase of cases wherein those in their 20's and 30's will form single-person households and become independent from parents economically and emotionally. Also, there will be cases where the elderly left alone may form a community family.





Chapter 5

Conclusion and Policy Implications

1. Conclusion
2. Policy Implications



5

Conclusion and Policy Implications <<

1. Conclusion

Nowadays, the Korean society has gone through significant changes through the implementation processes of the Industrialization and the entry into the post-industrial society. A future prospect is that scaling back of family size and the simplification of generational composition, which are major change patterns, will persist. In particular, the increase in single person households is expected to weaken the family function of reproducing society members and another family function of care.

In the meantime, the transition to the double-income family has intensified due to structural factors such as women's growing desire for social participation, deepening job instability, and labor shortage due to aging. In addition, social risks such as the loosening of familial relationship and the vacuum of family care have appeared due to the sharply increasing number of divorces and remarriages according to weakening family values, and the appearance of various family types including the increasing single person households.

It is imperative to endeavor on a policy level of several respects to promote family health and to secure the quality of life in response to the diversifying and complex family changes. Above all, family-friendly approaches are essential based on the principle of welfare state that maintaining healthy family and family welfare should be ensured through the engagement of government policies. In addition, comprehensive systematic mechanism should be developed to address diversifying and complex needs of family welfare. Also, policy-level framework should be prepared multi-laterally to promote futuristic familial relationship and to strengthen family functions for healthy development various family types and maintenance thereof.

2. Policy Implications

In relation to future family changes, the factors affecting family formation and cycle changes occur voluntarily and involuntarily and thus, depending on whether a choice is made or not, policy responses will vary. Accordingly, in order to respond to the voluntary deferment and avoidance of marriage and childbearing, it is necessary to formulate measures that protect and accomodate the result of an individual's choice and in order to respond to involuntary deferment and avoidance cases, it is necessary to create an environment that enables marriage and childbearing. From the same framework as

noted above, policy-level approaches should be made toward cohabitation, commuter families, childless families, single person households, etc. Also, regarding divorces, remarriages, and consistent increases in blended families and single parent families, it is imperative to provide policy-and system-level supports that can accommodate such families without discrimination.

Furthermore, it is necessary to open up and diversify the definition and perspectives of family in order to face up with the changes in family and to accommodate positive sides thereof. There have been consistent discussions in Korea and the West on the appearance of various family types and family changes, i.e., whether they mean 'the direction loss of society' (Chang, Hyun-Seob, 1994) or otherwise, the result of the expansion of new values such as pluralism and diversification. How family changes can be understood may vary depending on perspectives, but, generally are accepted in pluralism and diversification perspectives. In the West, an expression of 'family diversity as the norm' is used and a family is redefined flexibly rather than the traditional definition based on blood relation and marriage (Kim, Doo-Sup, 2005).

Ostner(2001) defined a family as all relationships grounded on intimacy, confidence, mutual obligation, and durability beyond a certain time period. It is not a rejection of a family but rather it is because although seeking emotional intimacy and

stability through relationship with other persons is a common human desire, there is no family type that can provide universally proper and gratifying family life.

Values, norms and goods incorporated into 'family' that individuals agree and share can be different and a family can be created through a 'choice' by individuals who share a particular type of commitments and roles. If a particular type of family is socially recognized and preferred by ignoring diversification of a reality, diversification of an individual's desires and situations, and diversification of seeking happiness, it then will lead to the social suppression and discrimination against families different from the particular type and individuals comprising such families.

Accordingly, various family types, currently existing, should be recognized as 'families' of equal standing and system-level mechanisms should be prepared to provide assistance resolving problems, in particular insurmountable problems that each family is facing but incapable of resolving through self-help. In addition, the flexible redefinition of family should be performed not only through discussions but on system and legal levels.

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