

Panel 1

Child Care and Population Policy

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Dr. Mi Young AN is working at Kookmin University in South Korea as an Associate Professor in School of Public Administration and Public Policy. She finished her MSc in Gerontology at King's College London and received DPhil in Social Policy from University of Oxford. Her researches include gender and social policy, social care, work-life balance policies, social security policies, East Asian welfare state.



Title

Child Care Arrangements in Contemporary Korean Welfare State: Achievements and Limitations of Publicly Financed and Privately Provided Care Regime

Abstract

The family model with one strong male breadwinner was one of the founding institutional arrangements in the development of the Korean welfare regime. In this model, family members-particularly females-exclusively cared for young dependents in South Korean households. Yet this model has been challenged in recent decades by demographic and socioeconomic structural changes; thus, the Korean government opted to extensively intervene in area of child care. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's social expenditure data measured in terms of the proportion of GDP, social expenditures on families, including expenditures on child care services, care leave, and financial support for home care, increased from 0.1 per cent in 1995 to 1.2 per cent in 2012. Recent studies on Korean care regimes have noted that boundaries of child care responsibility mix have been rearranged. This paper first reviews the resulting policy changes in both familisation and defamilisation of care. It further questions the achievements and limitations of the rearranged care regime. The paper suggests that achievement may include empowering families to make choices in the care arrangements, reducing the family's financial burden on child care, and providing universal access to collective child care. However, the newly arranged care regime does not reduce gender inequalities in either paid or unpaid work, and it is uncertain whether it would make positive contributions to children's human capital development, particularly young children under three years of age.