

Is Family Care in the Community Sustainable?

Park, Keong-Suk (Department of Sociology, Seoul National University)

One main dimension for the great fear of old age in Korea is that of the situation that one can only depend on caring. The perceptions and interests of family, government, the market, and the community, as caring providers, are in severe conflicts in South Korea. Generation, gender, and class contradictions embedded in the modern family of Korean Society have made family care for the elderly weakened and in severe conflicts. The current family caring seems to be the situation that the confusion and conflict between normative belief, responsibility, and perception of burden are deepening in both provider and beneficiary of family care, while the myth of family caring as the core foundation of the home care system remains in public. This study aims to interpret the tension and conflict in family care for the elderly in South Korea. The contents of the study are as follows. First, generations, gender, class contradictions of modern Korean family life and their impacts on family care for the elderly are discussed. Second, the characteristics of family care in the changed long-term care system since the 2000s are summarized. third, the study interprets the attitudes of the elderly to family care and social care through questionnaires and interviews. fourth, the experience of family care is interpreted through the interview with the elderly and family. Finally, it discusses the implication of the sustainability of family care in the context of East Asian family changes.

Key words: family care, modern family, generation-gender-class contradiction,