Multigenerational Care and Sociological Ambivalence

Dr. Junko Yamashita, University of Bristol, UK.

Professor Naoko Soma, National Yokohama University, Japan

Outline

- Exploring conflicts, tensions and contradictions in norms, beliefs and social policy configurations when simultaneously providing elderly care and child care

- Examining them as sociological ambivalence resulted from these conflicts created by structured social relations

Multigenerational Caring

- An increasing population of those who simultaneously provide elderly care and child care (longer life-expectancy, childbirth in later life stages, population aging)

- Theory of intergenerational relations/ intergenerational caring → focusing on one type of intergenerational relationship; e.g., adult children and parents/ parents and children
  - Underlying assumptions that people engage in childcare and elderly care at different periods of their life course

    Child care: in 20s to 40s, work-life balance (employment), motherhood, parenting

    Elderly care: in 50s and 60s, informal carer, financial and health issues, family obligation

- Sandwich generation is a term that aims to incorporate multigenerational relations

Sandwich Generation and Care

- The literature on sandwich generation mainly covers topics, including the identification of a demographic size of sandwich generation, their well-being and work-life balance

- Among the existing literature, the definition of sandwich generation largely varies(Rubin &White-Means 2009), so does the size of population who can be defined as sandwich generation, and the understanding of how significant it is as a social phenomena

- According to studies that define sandwich generation as being in the middle of two generations regardless of their provision of care, this particular population do not differ from others in the same age cohort in terms of well-being and feeling burdened (Fingerman, 2011; Mitchell, 2014)

- Though having different definitions and findings, overall the existing literature implies that care is the key factor bringing dynamics in the multi-generational relationships.

Sandwich Care Giving

- A good body of studies focuses on those who provide both care to the parents and children (e.g., Cullen J. C. et. al 2009; Rubin & White Means, 2009; Suh, 2016). For these studies, role crashes, deterioration of well-being, challenging conditions for work-family balance become the main areas of findings.

- Among those studies that explore the sandwich care-giving, care is defined differently, which makes it difficult to compare findings (Wiemers et al 2015).

- Suh (2016) claims that when care is defined narrowly as engagement in providing child and adult care, relatively few adults provided both. However when care is defined broadly to include supervisory responsibilities and support care, then the rate goes much higher.

- Our project adopted a broad and subjective definition of care, including supervisory responsibilities, listening, shopping and managing care arrangement.

Theoretical framework : Sociological ambivalence

- A large body of literature confirms that the relationships between family members where support is provided and exchanged are the source of both solidarity and conflict. The concept of intergenerational ambivalence is sensitive to interactions of agency and social structure.

- Ambivalence has been conceptualized at two levels. At the social structural level, sociological ambivalence has been viewed as contradictory normative expectations that occur in institutional resources and requirements (status, roles and norms) . At the individual level, psychological ambivalence has been referred to as contradictions that are primarily subjective and evident in cognitions, emotions, and motivations (Liischer & Pillemer, 1998; Smelser, 1998).

- Sociological ambivalence arises when an actor is faced with a specific situation that simultaneously values opposing courses of action that are rooted within the social structure (Connidis and McMullin 2002:563)

Theoretical framework : Sociological ambivalence

- Through the examination of ambivalence as the opportunities and constraints embedded in social institutions, social structure, culture, and economic and political process made manifests in individual attempts to negotiate these social relations (Connidis and McMullin 2002; Conndis 2010)

- Thus, the ambivalence created by the interface between social structure and individual agency is the basis for social action, which may either reproduce the social order or introduce change to existing structural arrangements (Conndis 2002).

- The existing research explores the conflict rooted in social norms, beliefs and social status/divisions.

- Less focus on social policy configuration that shapes and being shaped by family relations.

- This paper incorporates social policy as a macro/institutional structure which 'contributes' to the construction of sociological ambivalence.

Social policy configuration in Japan

- Child care and elderly care policy have developed independently in Japan
    - Comprehensive regional care support centre (under the Long Term Care policy)
    - Comprehensive regional childcare support centre   (enacted June 2016, will be implemented by the end of 2020)
- Three patterns along familialism /de-familialisation continuum (Saraceno and Keck 2010)
    - Elderly care = de-familialisation by the introduction of Long-Term Care Insurance Act with universal access and a relatively wide coverage of public funded care provision without any cash for care sheme
    - Child care = supported familialism, relatively well paid post-natal leave policy, relatively low but with child care benefit
- This is not a rare case, as Saraceno and Keck (2010) point out that care policy frameworks based on familialisation/ are mostly mixed European countries too
- **Family responsibility (both financial and care means) towards children is inscribed in social policy than family responsibility towards elderly**

Changes in Caregiving Expectation for Elderly Care

- Norms of filial obligation emphasising the role of the eldest son (and his wife) who 'were' expected to provide care to aging parents are weakened

- The increasing preference of older people to be cared by their own daughter

- Daughters become the dominant informal carer after spouse, followed by daughter in law, professional care worker and son.

- Since the introduction of Long-Term Care Insurance Act (which only provides services in kinds, but not nay cash for care) have sifted the caring pattern, a larger part of elderly care are provided by qualified professional care worker.

- From the dominance of daughter in law to multiple models of elderly care.

Shifting, but Sustained Gendered Care Work

- Norms of filial obligation has been weakened, and norms of gendered care work are shifting

- The proportion of daughter in low as main carer has been decreased.

- The proportion of male informal carer, both spouse and son, has been increasing

- The daughter became the largest group of main carer (MHWL 2016)

Strong Motherhood and Intensive Mothering

- Sustained gendered norms and division of child care work: Intensive Mothering / Strong Maternalisam (Miura 2014)

- Even though the increase of female economic participation has occurred, the increase of male participation to care work is very slow in comparison to the European counterparts (Hook 2006).

Methodology: Mixed methods approach

Quantitative data : 4644 samples and Qualitative data: **49** semi-structured and **13** focus group.

- N= 2260: purposive sampling

1st Stage (n = 559): **questionnaire survey** at 3 childcare support centres in Yokohama, in Sep 2012.
2nd Stage (n = 933): **mobile survey** of childcare email magazine subscribers in Yokohama, Shizuoka, Kyoto, Kagawa and Fukuoka, bet. Dec 2012 and Jan 2013.
3rd Stage (n=402): **questionnaire survey** at daycare centres, after-school day-care centres, and childcare support centres in Yokohama, Kanagawa and Kyoto, from Nov 2013 to Feb2014.
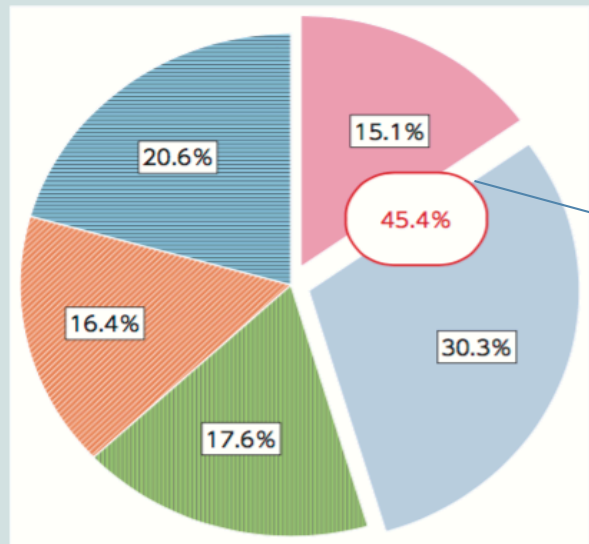4th Stage (n=375) : Web based survey via Double care project home page July 2015 – Sep2015

- N= 4375: random sampling and co-conducted
- Sony life insurance company's survey (n= 1000): questionnaire survey with mothers with child/ children under 18 years old. August 2015
- Workers collective organisations (n=***): questionnaire survey with care workers and care services users.
- 2nd Sony Life insurance company's survey (n=1000): questionnaire survey with mothers and fathers with child/children under 18 year old, November 2016 and 2018

Multigenerational Caring

Do you think 'Double Responsibility of care' is a familiar problem to you?

YES

Ministry of Welfare and Labour (2016) 'Opinion Survey on Aged Society'

Remaining norms of filial obligation

- Norms of filial obligation are weakened between daughters in law and parents relationships, but strengthened between daughters and parents.

- Most of the respondents' older parents use Long-Term Care services as their maximum eligibility

- As is shown in the next figure, the dual carer feel more 'guilty' about not sufficiently taking care of their parents/parents in law.

Intensive Parenting and Mothering

- 'I have been leaving it later than I want to take care of my son's mental status then. I feel difficult being sandwiched'

- 'I want to be with my children more as others mothers do. I wish they can do more extracurricular as their friends do. But with my work and caring my farther, I don't have much time for them. I need to save money for the time I need to drive up to my fathers more often in the future'.

- 'This situation (staying in her parents house for a couple of month with her 3 years old daughter to help when her mother was discharged from hospital , and finding an nursing home for her farther) is not good for my daughter. She misses her friends and nursery'.

Solo Provider of Multi-generational Care

- Sustained gendered division of care work makes women to be main carer for both child care and elderly care.

- These dual carer needs to simultaneously respond to different types of needs from children and frail elderly and make a priority between child care and elderly care

- 'It is like supporting my father not to fall with my one hand, and holding my son not to run away with my other hand'

- 'I make my child sleep, then my mother wakes up so I need to calm her down and take her to bed, then my child wakes up and needs to feed her….'

Sociological Ambivalence

- Multi-generational caring relationships in Japan are marked by ambivalence based on remaining norms of filial obligation, sustained gendered division of care work, intensive mothering (parenting), and being main provider for both child and elderly care.

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