

## Compressed Family Changes and Family Policy Restructuring: From a Comparative Analysis of Japan and South Korea

Naoko SOMA

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the characteristics of policy approaches and the logic of family policy in Japan and South Korea through a comparative analysis.

Korean society has been facing compressed family changes and an economic crisis earlier than Japan. The Korean welfare state has introduced an "explicit family policy," with strong recognition of childcare needs from a class-based perspective. Furthermore, the Korean welfare state has developed an approach that targets children of low-income families. On the other hand, the Japanese welfare state has implemented an "implicit and particularistic childcare policy," with a strong emphasis on easing mothers' childcare burdens or stress, especially for middle class mothers.

The factors which have led to the characteristics of Japan and South Korea can be explained by (1) the actors who have influenced processes of policy making, (2) the situation of the reform of family law, and (3) socio-economic situations. Furthermore, underlying these three factors, there is also a difference in the way in which childcare problems are recognized and resolved in the field of family and childcare matters. In South Korea, the way in which childcare problems are recognized and resolved tends to focus on the "family." On the other hand, in Japan, it tends to focus on "mothers" due to the particularistic policy approach. The future direction of welfare regime restructuring may well be influenced by the approach toward the welfare inclusion of women and children.