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		Seoul, Korea
Title of Research	The Politics of Pension Reform, Pension Regime, and the Financialization of Old-Age Income Security Program	
【Home Organization】 Department of Sociology, Seoul National University (Ph.D. Candidate)		
【Invitation Period】 April 1, 2009 ~ October 30, 2009		
【Counterpart at Kyoto University】 Prof. Emiko Ochiai (Graduate School of Letters) Prof. Toshimitu Shinkawa (Graduate School of Law)		
<p>【Lectures/Seminars Attended】</p> <p>Seminar on Family Sociology by Prof. Emiko Ochiai</p> <p>Seminar on Welfare State by Prof. Toshimitu Shinkawa</p> <p>Seminar on Welfare & Labor Policy (opened at School of Government)</p>		
<p>【Results/Achievements】</p> <p>The purpose of my research was to analyze the welfare transformation in East Asian countries such as South Korea and Japan through pension related issues. The research focused on three aspects; (1) welfare regime issues related to class structure, labor market condition and the family form; (2) historical and institutional contexts of contemporary welfare transformations; and (3) neo-liberal aspects of welfare reform and its impact on state, market and family. What I did in the research period is mainly to explore Japanese situation while including the comparative perspectives with South Korean one.</p> <p>The position of family as one of the main actors in the above welfare triad is elusive to deal with and has been easily ignored by welfare researchers, especially by those of political economists. The same is true with the East Asian welfare case, although that is called ‘strong familial welfare regime’. It is relatively recent phenomenon that feminists and gender researchers begin to criticize and extend the scope of research into the gender relations and family forms. However, it seems that their concept of the ‘male breadwinner model’ also does not recognize the East Asian context of extended family which has been made possible mainly by the region’s specific demographic condition. I argue that the ‘timing’ of the ‘late’ development of welfare in East Asian countries is closely related to the condition that ‘population bonus’ was perfectly overlapped with industrialization so that many parts of welfare issues could be solved by the kinship and the extended form of family. And, this path-dependency formed in the early period had an effect on the reform of welfare policies. Therefore, I coin the term ‘male breadwinner extended family model’ in order to analyze the characteristics of East Asian welfare regime and welfare transformation, especially those of Japan.</p>		

The argument of 'Japanese-type Welfare Society' led by the government and the governing party in the 1980s is exactly the case of welfare reform based on 'male breadwinner extended family model'. It was already pointed out that there was an argument aimed for retrenching the level of state welfare and strengthening the patriarchal character of gender role in the family, labor market structure and so on. But it was almost overlooked that this argument also rested upon the extended family model. This policy orientation is very unique compared with other countries such as Anglo-Saxonian, continental European, and social democratic Scandinavian ones as they have implicitly presupposed the nuclear family model.

It is probable that the hybridization of Japanese welfare regime, that is low level of the decommodification and high familialism, is a result of the 'male breadwinner extended family model'. The core factor of being a welfare state in the 20th century was to socialize various kinds of risks that the nuclear family could not or might not address. And the index of decommodification shows degrees and ways of the socialization of such risks. On the other hand, when using the extended family model, social risks could be shared through kinship networks and intergenerational relations inside the family.

However, the extended family model is possible only when demographic conditions such as 'population bonus' is satisfied, and Japan by the 20th century had been already going through the population aging and the decrease of the number of extended family. Therefore, policy goal of 'male breadwinner extended family model' needed the financial incentives as a policy tool which could facilitate the formation of extended family and utilize households' savings and home ownership as economic back-up. The policy included various kinds of tax exemption or tax deduction for households' savings and home ownership.

As a result, since the 1980s, Japan has gone through the form of 'modified extended family' and households' high level of saving rate and home ownership rate while the level of public income maintenance has gradually been decreased. The important thing connecting this 'modified extended family' to high level of saving rate and home ownership is the reciprocal relationship between property inheritance and elderly support. In response to the disappearance of extended family, it became necessary to create economic rewards to ensure elderly support and care. The motives for saving and home ownership have been closely related to the motives for property inheritance and the inheritance was interwoven with support and care.

It has been pointed out that the current Japanese households struggle to keep saving and home ownership rate high even as the real income level has continuously decreased, and that it is because people feel insecure about their future and old age. On the other hand, no 'voice' is heard for reforming the weak welfare state. This is partly because the argument of 'Japanese-type Welfare Society' has impact on the nation's household structure in a specific way. Policy reform since the 1980s has segmented the society and strengthened the 'exit', or withdrawal from the state welfare, strategy of individual households such as resorting to saving and home ownership. And this 'exit' strategy seems to have become more serious under the neo-liberal trend of economy.