CHAPTER 6

Care Diamonds and Welfare Regimes in East and Southeast Asian Societies

Ochiai Emiko*

1 Social Networks and Welfare Mix

Since the 1980s, researchers in the field of family sociology have recognized the need to go beyond the paradigm of seeing the family as a group or a closed system, which takes the modern family as an isolated entity (Parsons and Bales 1956). They have thus developed approaches such as life course analysis (Hareven 2000) and social network analysis (Bott 1957). In these frameworks, the individual is treated as a subject who creates his or her life course while selectively constructing social networks. Now the family represents a part of these networks, instead of a group.

Then, how are the options for constructing social networks provided to the individual? That social network analysis, in focusing mainly on the micro level, cannot answer this obvious question suggests that the only way to obtain fruitful, conclusive results is to combine the micro-level analyses with macro-level studies.

What type of macro-level research can be productively combined with social network analysis of family sociology? This chapter will suggest the idea of welfare mix (Rose and Shiratori 1986) or welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990), in the field of welfare sociology or social policy studies, as a suitable candidate. The idea of welfare mix, in considering the providers of “welfare,” does not limit its focus to the state, but looks at various other diverse entities that provide welfare to citizens. Social network analysis can be understood in this context as micro-level empirical research on the activity of a wide variety of welfare providers.

This chapter, focusing on “care” provision, will offer a new interpretation of the results of comparative research of social networks of the family in

* 落合恵美子, Kyoto University. Translated by Jeremy Phillipps

1 This paper is based on Ochiai (2008c, 2009) with considerable modification particularly in the last two sections.
contemporary East and Southeast Asian societies employing the idea of welfare mix, and based on this, will propose a framework to discuss the types of care regime in the Asian context.

2 Comparative Research on Asian Families

This chapter will offer a theoretical interpretation of the results of our research on Asian gender and families conducted since 2001, which has been published elsewhere by Ochiai et al. (2004), Ochiai and Ueno (2006), Ochiai et al. (2007), and Ochiai and Molony (2008). To avoid repetition of previous publications, I will give only a short summary of our study here, mainly based on Chapters 1 and 2 of Ochiai and Molony (2008).

The goal of our research was to elucidate the changes in the family and gender that are taking place in East Asia and Southeast Asia as these societies are rapidly being transformed by the economic development that has taken place since the 1980s. Our study dealt with the urban middle class in five societies in East and Southeast Asia: South Korea (Pusan and Taegu), China (Wuxi), Taiwan (Taipei), Thailand (the suburbs of Bangkok), and Singapore. We used semi-structured interviews to investigate performance of household tasks and care for children and the elderly, looking at issues such as the division of labor within the family, social networks that provide support, and notions and norms regarding these matters.

First, to consider the basic social conditions in the five societies under study, I will give a brief overview of only two points that will be important for the analysis that follows.

The first point to consider is the demographic conditions that make up the basis of the family and related phenomena. The development of society appears, in terms of demography, in a decline in mortality and in fertility. Viewed in terms of average life expectancy at birth (an indicator of mortality rates) and total fertility rate (TFR), all six societies, including Japan, have already experienced the decline in both areas. In particular, the four societies of South Korea (The lowest TFR of 1.05 in 2008), Taiwan (The lowest TFR of 1.03 in 2009), Singapore (The lowest TFR of 1.24 in 2004), and Japan (The lowest TFR of 1.26 in 2005) are "lowest low fertility" societies, while all societies under consideration, including China and Thailand are below replacement levels.

However, while this current condition is similar in all societies, the period of fertility decline differs. A comparison of the longitudinal changes in TFR