

Changes in Family Composition and The Modernisation of The Korean Economy

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I. Economic Development in Korea

The pace of the forced-draught development of the South Korean economy has been remarkable even by the standards of the East Asian newly industrialised countries. In the twenty years after 1970 Korean GNP

rose more than five-fold. Korea's share of the world's gross domestic product grew by 345 per cent between 1965 and 1986¹⁾ and, although there is some evidence that income inequalities widened after the 1970s, living standards rose very dramatically for the great majority of people as Table 2 shows.

Meanwhile the urban population increased

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Table 1. Economic Growth in the Republic of Korea 1970-90

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
GNP at current market prices (billion Won);	2,785	10,136	36,750	78,088	171,488
GNP at 1985 constant market prices (billion Won);	24,973	37,1543	52,261	78,088	130,685

source: The Bank of Korea, *National Accounts*.

Table 2. Per Capita GNP and Personal Disposable Income in Korea

	1962	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Per Capita GNP	82	252	594	1,592	1,910	4,007
Per Capita PDI	—	242	558	1,499	2,002	5,103

source: The Bank of Korea, *National Accounts*.

from 6.9 million or 28 per cent of the South Korean population in 1960 to 32.3 million or 74 per cent of the population in 1990. The rural population declined from 18 million to 11 million over the same period.²⁾ The rural depopulation and rapid urbanisation has created problems for national and local agencies, a severe urban housing shortage, major problems of adjustment for the growing population of the cities and for those left behind in the agricultural sector, living in dwindling communities in the rural areas. But though such a rapid rate of change is obviously not without its costs, the very speed of the changes appear to have mitigated to a certain extent the long drawn-out distress experienced by many generations of people in earlier and slower example of modernisation elsewhere. Rapid real economic growth and rapidly rising living standards do ameliorate

the stress of urban growth and migration. The widespread poverty frequently characteristic of the early stages of economic development has not been a major problem for the Korean people.

Still, the wider political, social-structural, demographic and cultural consequences of socio-economic development have been very great. Beside the adaptation of Korea's economic institutions including the finance and labour markets, the repercussions of modernisation on the lives of ordinary Koreans have been extensive in range and compressed into the experience of a single generation as against the four or five generations which spanned the comparable transformation of Western societies. The models of social change which we have become accustomed to using to understand the effects of the industrial revolution in the West, however, are put

to a severe test by the scale and rapidity of change which has characterised the newly industrialised countries of the Asian Pacific rim and the Republic of Korea in particular.

Two closely related and commonly held sociological assumptions about the results of modernisation will be briefly examined in this paper. Firstly modernisation is generally seen as the dynamic factor in population growth, bringing societies through the demographic transition from small, economically backward, stable populations with high birth and death rates, through rapid expansion to large, economically advanced, stable populations with low birth and death rates. Closely associated with the changes in mortality and fertility patterns which are involved in this transformation are, it is generally assumed, a series of changes in family patterns and household composition which sustain and reflect a changed set of attitudes and values about relationships between family members and a changing set of aspirations and identities on the part of individuals. In the discussion which follows we will examine recent changes in these areas of Korean society and attempt to evaluate how far they confirm or undermine the familiar sociological text-book theorisation.

II. Population Trends

The first Korean census in 1925 gave a total population of 19.5 million which grew to 25.1 million by the end of the Second World War and liberation from Japanese colonial rule. After the war between North and South

the population of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) stood at 21.5 million in 1955 and grew to 43.4 million by 1990.³⁾ It has been argued that in this period of about 65 years Korea has passed through the demographic transition which took twice as long in the countries of Western Europe.

This model of population growth has been widely applied to populations in the industrialised⁴⁾ and developing countries.⁵⁾ With much modification and adaptation to specific cases it has been extensively used as a general framework both for retrospective historical analysis and as a way of anticipating likely further population changes. Briefly the model identifies three phases of population growth. Firstly, before industrialisation, most national birth and death rates remained comparatively high everywhere with the result that populations remain fairly stable over long periods of time. In the second phase it appears that with the beginning of economic development death rates generally fall while fertility remains high or even increases, as a result bringing about rapid population growth. As living standards rise, it is argued, birth rates then also begin to decline until, in the third phase, the rate of natural increase is reduced to negligible proportions. Thus from the roughly balanced high fertility and mortality of the pre-industrial population, developing countries make a transition through a period of rapid population growth as mortality rates fall steeply while fertility remains high. Finally, when births and deaths are again in approximate equilibrium but at much lower levels, the population ceases to

grow or grows only very slowly.

While the idea of the demographic transition began as a descriptive generalisation, it has been theorised as the outcome of the socio-economic transformation of society resulting from industrialisation or, more generally, modernisation or, more specifically, rising living standards.⁶⁾ The operationalisation of these terms is both theoretically controversial and technically complex.⁷⁾ In very general terms evidence from developing countries is compatible with this framework.⁸⁾ There are exceptions however and the association between demographic trends and economic growth is not at all clear cut. The correlation between growth rates and living standards is poor.

Criticisms of the Demographic Transition both as an historical generalisation and an explanatory theory have been extensive.⁹⁾ Some of these at least suffer from the implicit assumptions that the correlation between economic growth and demographic trends should be linear and that the relationship should be one of monocausal determinism. Clearly the relationship may be more complicated, with economic factors having a greater or lesser impact on fertility at different stages of growth or different phases in the economic cycle on the one hand, or at different levels of fertility on the other. While this still requires research, neither should we assume that the causal relationship is consistently only in one direction nor that other variables do not intervene to add to the complexity of the relationship. However Wrong's view that the concept should be compared with Weber's

'ideal type' analysis rather than as a 'logically precise scientific generalisation'¹⁰⁾ perhaps explains the continuing heuristic value of Thompson's idea¹¹⁾ after all this time, even though in each historical instance we still need to investigate afresh the specific processes at work.

The Korean crude death rate had already fallen before the Second World War from an estimated 40 per thousand in the population in 1910 to 25 per thousand in 1930 and, in the Republic of Korea, was down to 13 per thousand in 1960 and more than halved again to 5.8 per thousand in 1990. This low rate reflects a young population with 26 per cent under 14 years of age in 1990 and only 4.7 per cent over 65. With the rapid fall in mortality rates at all ages the average expectation of life has dramatically extended from only 52.7 years for men and 57.7 years for women as recently as 1960 to 67.4 for men and 75.4 for women in 1990.

The crude birth rate remained high until the 1960s, at 42 per thousand in the South Korean population in 1960, but declined very rapidly thereafter to reach 15.5 per thousand in 1990 and apparently still falling. The rate of natural increase fell from 29.0 per thousand population in 1960 but was still as high as 9.5 per thousand in 1990. Clearly if the third phase of population stability has not yet been reached it would appear to be approaching rapidly. The total fertility rate fell steadily from 6.0 in 1960 to reach only 1.6, well below the replacement rate by 1991.¹²⁾ The speed of these changes means that it is still uncertain at what level Korean fertility will

eventually stabilise. It is likely however that the transition will be completed in the early years of the next century.

These demographic changes have been the result of a number of factors including the effective family planning programme linked with the Korean government's economic Five-Year Plans after 1961.¹³⁾ In as much as fertility has become a matter of deliberate choice for Korean women however we need to understand the factors which have influenced those choices so dramatically in the course of a single generation. Changes in attitudes and values relating to childbearing and family life have been important along with structural changes which have influenced the size and composition of the modern Korean family. The extent to which these changes have been brought about by wider social and economic developments or have themselves helped to shape the modernisation of Korean society needs to be explored.

III. The Changing Korean Family

The demographic transition has been associated not only with the fall in fertility within families but also with the shift from the stem family of settled peasant societies to the more mobile and residentially separate nuclear family which is more responsive to the employment opportunities of an industrially developing and urbanising society. R. M. MacIver's classical statement of the loss of family functions and decline of the extended family as the dominant social institution with the emergence of modern society¹⁴⁾ was more

systematically developed by Parsons who stressed the functional adaptation of the nuclear family to modern industrial society.¹⁵⁾ Goode summarised evidence up to that date for the move toward more nucleated families in societies undergoing the early stages of industrialisation in his *World Revolution and Family Pattern*¹⁶⁾. W. E. Moore too identified the link between industrialisation and the emergence of the conjugal family unit as the functionally apposite form:

"Strong emphasis on the bonds of lineage, the consanguine principle of familial organisation, is clearly inconsistent with individual mobility or merit. The separation of small family units, and especially the probability that young adults will seek new employments in new locations as industrialisation proceeds, provide both a spatial and a social foundation for the appearance of the conjugal family with its emphasis on the marital unit and its immature children"¹⁷⁾

While for Moore the link between modernisation and the small family unit was one of functional convergence rather than a necessary one.¹⁸⁾ He clearly implies a degree of causality, as does Smelser, in accounting for the structural differentiation of the family unit in the wider process of modernisation.¹⁹⁾ And reviewing British trends in his excellent study *The Family and Industrial Society*, Harris concluded:

"The 'extended family' household as a national phenomenon (howev-

er important in certain localities), would appear to be virtually extinct; and the elementary family household now also appears to be shrinking to its nuclear core"²⁰⁾

Vogel, on the other hand, writing of Japan has argued that industrialisation tends to strengthen rather than weaken the links of solidarity in the extended family.²¹⁾ And, though he suggests it may be different in Korea, in his study of economic development and kinship links in Hong Kong families, Wong has concluded that in entrepreneurial familism' strong extended family connections may be highly adaptive in the process of industrial and commercial development.²²⁾

On the other hand Greenfield, Nimkoff and Middleton, Laslett and Macfarlane have all shown that the nuclear family unit is not uniquely a product of industrialisation but was found in many pre-industrial societies in many different parts of the world. Hunters and gatherers mostly have lived in elementary family groups.²³⁾ And in England and Northern Europe at least, there appears never to have been a pre-industrial predominance of stem-family households, while highly individuated nuclear families have always been the norm, statistically and culturally, for as far back as direct and indirect evidence will take us. Laslett, for example, found only ten per cent of households in England from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century contained kin outside the nuclear family.²⁴⁾

We should not exaggerate the changes con-

sequent on modernisation, firstly because the traditional household was on average not large, and secondly because, in spite of the vastly changed socio-economic and political circumstances of present-day Korea, many cultural assumptions relating to relationships within the family persist.

The traditional Korean family closely followed the rule of patrilineal primogeniture (*chongbop*). Eldest sons married and remained in their father's households (*chong-ga-chib*) while, on marriage, younger brothers established households of their own (*pun-ga*). While these formed the majority of family households, ideally each in turn would become the focus of a new stem family (*chong-ga-chib*). This ideal played a powerful role in the culture of Chosŏn society wider than its key place in the family value system. However as a majority of households at any one time had not reached this ideal state, even in the nineteenth century two-thirds of all households consisted of nuclear families only and less than 27 per cent contained stem families.²⁵⁾ Throughout the Chosŏn period, from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth, according to the Family Register (*hojŏk*) the average membership of ordinary households remained at about 4.3 persons. This furthermore included household slaves in more than a quarter of households in the seventeenth century and more than one in three in the later nineteenth century when early industrial and commercial developments improved the economic circumstances of some entrepreneurial families and the practice formerly limited to the landowning class

(*yangban*) spread more widely.²⁶⁾

In the period of Japanese rule, from the late nineteenth century to the end of WWII, there was some measure of modernisation mainly benefiting the colonial elite - educational, administrative, monetary and transport systems were established together with the introduction of some manufacturing industry. By the time of independence in 1945 around one in four of the population had some formal education²⁷⁾ and average household size rose to 5.3 persons per household. After the baby boom following the North-South War of 1950-53, household size increased to reach a peak of 5.7 persons per household in 1960 but then declined steeply to 3.65 in 1990. Some of this reflects the decline in fertility but this was augmented by migration, especially out of the rural areas and especially in the earlier part of the post-war period during the 1960s and early 1970s.

While changes in household size and family life in general should not be exaggerated as far as most ordinary Korean families are concerned. There has been a very remarkable reduction in the proportion of large family households notably in the last fifteen years or

so after the mid 1970s.

The household is a residential unit and the decrease in its size is the outcome of a number of simultaneous trends which have reinforced one another. Overall there has been the decline in fertility which has reduced the average number of children per household. In the earlier part of the period covered by Table 3 especially, there were also the effects of migration with family members leaving home to find employment or pursue their education affecting rural households in particular. Thirdly, and with increasing effect in more recent years, family households have grown smaller as a result of the changing composition of their membership. We will consider each of these factors in turn.

The typical Korean household still contains 4-6 people, as it has done throughout the years since 1960. As Table 3 shows, however, in the later 1980s there were signs of a decline in its, till then, growing predominance as still smaller units became more widespread. The trend towards smaller households is very strong. One-person households increased almost fourfold in the thirty years after 1960 but still account for only eight

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Households by Size 1960 - 1990

persons per household	60	66	70	75	80	85	90
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1	2.3	3.6	3.7	4.2	4.8	7.0	8.4
2-3	18.9	19.2	22.1	20.6	25.0	28.9	36.4
4-6	45.9	44.5	48.3	51.0	55.0	56.7	51.5
7+	32.9	32.7	25.7	24.2	15.2	7.3	3.7

source: calculated from Census data.

and half per cent of the households distinguished in the census. At first, immigration from the rural areas increased one-person households in the cities as urban employment rapidly expanded. After 1980, however, the proportion of one-person households in the rural areas themselves overtook the proportion in the urban population. Unlike the urban immigrants who were mostly young unmarried adults, the majority of these rural cases were residual households left behind as younger family members left to find work in the cities, in many cases leaving behind a solitary parent, usually a widowed mother.²⁸⁾ The proportion of small households of two or three persons just about doubled in the last thirty years and in the 1990s represent well over one in three of all households. Larger households of seven or more persons, on the other hand, decreased from 33 per cent of all households in 1960 to less than 4 per cent in 1990. This decline has been accelerating since the later 1970s, with the proportion of households of this size halving in each five year period through the 1980s.

Trends in household size have been brought about, however, not only by the reduction in fertility rates and by migration to the cities. They are also the outcome, in part at least, of the changing composition of family co-residential groups. Changes in the co-residence of family members in turn reflect changes in the relationships amongst kin, especially across the adult generations, and in the values those relationships express. In the data produced by the Korean censuses from 1966 to 1990 we can distinguish those house

holds consisting of the members of families only. Table 4 re-presents data on these family households and indicates a number of significant changes in prevalent family patterns in Korea during the past 25 years. The predominance of nuclear family households has increased and in 1990 accounted for more than three out of every four Korean families. Extended family households, those which included other relatives in addition to members of a nuclear family, accounted for almost a third of all families in 1966 but represent less than a quarter now. Amongst these, those which might be categorised as stem family households (Types F, H, I and J in Table 4 q.v. for definitions) have proportionately declined by almost half since 1966 and now represent only one in seven Korean family households.

In earlier times, of course, the high mortality rates meant relatively few parents, still less grandparents, survived long enough to sustain stem-family household membership along with their grown up sons and daughters-in-law.²⁹⁾ Now, although more survive into old age, still fewer young couples seem to wish to share their household with parents even in the case of eldest sons. The importance attached to the value of filial piety has declined.³⁰⁾ The growing independence of Korean women too, has made them less content to accept the traditional guidance of a mother-in-law in matters of household management and child care.³⁰⁾ Similarly, in a study in Japan, Kaneko and Yamada found that in this stem-family type of household after WW II the relative dominance of wife and mother

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Family Households in Korea 1966 – 1990

	1966	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Nuclear Family Households:						
total	67.7	71.2	70.7	72.9	75.2	76.2
A	4.7	4.4	5.0	6.4	7.8	9.3
B	54.8	56.1	55.6	56.6	57.7	58.2
C	8.2	10.7	10.1	9.9	9.7	8.7
Extended Family Households:						
total	32.2	28.7	29.2	27.2	24.7	23.8
D	1.1	1.3	1.8	2.5	2.7	1.7
E	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.5	1.9
F	1.5	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.7
G	2.0	0.6	3.6	3.5	2.5	4.5
H	20.1	17.6	11.0	10.5	9.9	9.4
I	4.2	4.7	9.2	7.2	5.9	4.3
J	1.3*	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.3
Stem Family Households included above(F, H, I, J):						
	27.1	24.8	21.6	18.7	17.0	14.7

abbreviation; A: couples, B: couples + children, C: one-parent families

D: couples + same generation relatives,

E: couples + same generation relatives + couple's children,

F: couples + parents, G: other two generation families,

H: couples + children + parents, I: other 3 generation families,

J: 4 & + generation families, *: estimated

source: calculated from Korean Census, percentage rounded.

-in-law have reversed with the latter now very much in the weaker position.³²⁾ In spite of the growing influence of the daughter-in-law in these households, however, their level of discontentment remains high and is a strong incentive for wanting a separate nuclear-family household.³³⁾

As Table 4 shows then, only a small mi-

nority of families live in extended family households and a growing proportion of these are not in stem-family households probably as a consequence of the persisting shortage of urban housing. Even then as a comparison with Table 3 will demonstrate, most of these extended family households are small in size, which no doubt helps to account for the in-

tensity of feelings which they generate. On the other hand it should be remembered that though the decline in large households and in the proportion of families living in extended family households is significant, with the high mortality rates prevailing in the past and the tradition of *pun-ga* whereby all but eldest sons were expected to establish their own separate establishments, the contrast with traditional pre-industrial Korean family households is less than it might at first sight seem.

Perhaps more significant than the size of the ordinary family household itself are the changes in the attitudes and aspirations of those they contain. Changes in the status of women in Korean society may partly be the result of the less subservient role wives play in the household. On the other hand the unwillingness of Korean women to continue to accept a subservient role within the household reflects the growing opportunities for women outside the family in the course of rapid economic change. The rising average age at marriage is one factor in the reduction in fertility since the 1960s but is in turn a consequence of the greater educational and occupational opportunities for women in the econo-

my.³⁴⁾The success of the National Family Planning policy in its turn bears witness to the readiness with which Korean women have adopted fertility control as a means of liberation from a purely domestic role. Changes in fertility aspirations have followed changes in behaviour rather than vice versa indicating that women have responded to a changing external opportunity structure rather than changes in familistic values being an autonomous process. Thus Table 5, based on the Korean Institute for Health and Social Affairs(KIHASA) surveys of married women shows that, though steadily falling, the total fertility rate exceeded the desired ideal number of children until the mid 1970s but thereafter has fallen short of it.

The early 1960s norm of 'three boys and two girls' gave way to 'two boys and a girl' in the 1970s, and to 'a boy and a girl' by the middle 1980s. With the present ideal number of children standing below population replacement level, there has clearly been a change away from the perpetuation of the family as the dominant goal toward a more individualistic set of concerns.³⁵⁾ Education has played a role here. Between 1970 and 1990 the average number of completed years

Table 5. Desired Ideal Number of Children and TFR

	'58	'65	'71	'76	'81	'85	'89
ideal No of children	4.4	3.9	3.7	2.8	2.5	2.0	1.9
(ideal No of sons)	(—)	(2.4)	(2.2)	(1.7)	(1.5)	(1.0)	(—)
total fertility rate	6.0	4.6	4.3	3.1	2.5	1.7	—

source: 1958-85 :KIPH, *National Family Health and Family Survey*,
1989 :KIHASA, *Changing Family Function and Role Relations in Korea*.

of education for women in their twenties rose by 4.3 years from seven and half years of schooling to just under 12 years. They have not quite caught up with men, whose average number of years of education for those in their twenties increased to twelve and a quarter years in the same period,³⁶⁾ but clearly they are catching up rapidly. In a study of family structure and fertility in Taiwan, Hsiung found that the more educated women were, the lower their fertility and the less likely they were to participate in a more traditional patriarchal family structure.³⁷⁾ In Korea we find the increasing level of women's education likely to have a similar effect. Minho Kuk showed that, within the overall decline in fertility amongst Korean women between 1974 and 1985, those with more education have consistently had fewer children.³⁸⁾ In relation to family household composition, drawing on data from the large scale survey of Korean women carried out for KIHASA in 1989, Chang showed there is a strong negative correlation between the level of a woman's education and the likelihood of her sharing her household with her parents-in-law.³⁹⁾

The effect of education operates through their increased access to, and the growing demand for, female labour in the expanding Korean economy. Between 1985 and 1990 women's employment increased by 25.8 per cent to 41 per cent of the total labour force and 63 per cent of these women were married.⁴⁰⁾ Women with paid employment generally have lower fertility rates than non-working women. Easterlin, Freedman, Schultz and

Schultz have all drawn attention to the high costs of children where a wife has to leave paid employment at least for a time during pregnancy and/or while the children are small.⁴¹⁾ Stolnitz has shown that women's employment means their lost wages plus the cost of substitute child-care must be added to the direct economic cost of children in accounting for fertility trends.⁴²⁾ Similarly Coale, reviewing European trends since the eighteenth century, suggested that development may lead to a decline in fertility partly by raising the cost of, and partly by lowering the economic value of children for the majority of families.⁴³⁾

The rising level of employment amongst Korean women and the increasing proportion of married women in the labour force in particular could be expected to have a similar effect. Though the increase has been greatest in clerical work, as Table 6 shows, the effect would be amplified by the fact that women's employment has doubled as a proportion of the more highly paid and expanding professional and managerial sector.

At this point however the persistence of elements of traditional Korean family patterns may take the modernisation theorist by surprise. Kuk shows that while the fertility of currently employed women was lower than that of women who had never had employment outside their home until 1976, from the early 1980s at least currently employed women had more children on average than the never employed.⁴⁴⁾ In term of family household composition, in 1989 Chang found that amongst urban women those who were

Table 6. Rate of Female Employment by Occupation

(percentage female in each group)

	total	prof. tech admin. manag.	clerical	sales	service	agr. forest fishery	pro trans. labour
1970	36.5	18.4	13.4	42.6	56.7	42.3	23.3
1975	36.4	20.9	20.9	40.7	56.9	41.3	25.3
1980	38.2	25.4	32.7	43.7	58.1	43.8	27.6
1985	39.0	29.1	34.5	46.3	61.2	43.7	27.5
1990	40.7	36.0	40.1	47.5	60.9	45.7	30.2

source: National Statistical Office, *Economically Active Population Survey*.

in employment outside their home were significantly more likely to be living with their parents-in-law than were women who were full-time housewives⁴⁵⁾ This persistence of the traditional Korean patrilineal stem-family pattern should not be interpreted as an example of cultural nostalgia amongst the more highly educated urban middle-class, though examples of that certainly occur.⁴⁶⁾ As we have seen, it is not amongst the more highly educated that the pattern persists. It is amongst the less educated married women employees, that is amongst those generally with lower incomes and least resources that the stem-family household is most likely to be found. Rather than nostalgia then a more likely explanation is simply that the pressures of two roles, housewife-mother and working income-earner, encourage the instrumental adaptation of a traditional obligation to the new demands of modern urban life.⁴⁷⁾

IV. Conclusions

The very rapid reduction in fertility in the Republic of Korea in response to the equally dramatic economic development and modernisation of Korean society has been so far consistent with the pattern outlined in Demographic Transition theory. While issues of the direction of causal links between economic, social and demographic variables may be hard to disentangle, there are no obvious reasons in the case of Korea for doubting the intimacy of the relationship between them. In terms of the changes in the pattern of family life the picture is not so straight-forward. Such changes as have occurred, firstly have been very recent and, although sometimes striking, need to endure for a longer time before we can be fully confident of their permanence. Secondly some changes have been relatively slight. Larger households have almost vanished while there has been a small but significant increase in one-person house-

holds. The average size of households, to which the great majority approximate, has changed relatively little since pre-industrial times, however. Similarly stem-family households accounted for the same proportion of households in 1966 as they did in the mid nineteenth century and have only declined proportionately since the later 1980s. Furthermore they show some signs of adapting to

the household need of working wives for help with household management and child care in the newly emerged urbanised society of the 1990s.

Thus generalisations about the impact of modernisation on family patterns may need some modification in the light of local social needs and the continuing influence of local cultural traditions.

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The correlation coefficient between the urban women respondent's employment and co-residence with her parents-in-law was 0.239 ($P > 0.001$). For rural women the correlation was only 0.017.

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<國文要約>

한국 가족구조의 변동과 근대화

트레버·노블*

장 현 섭**

이 글은 1993년 4월 5일에서 8일 사이 영국의 에섹스 대학교 (Univ. of Essex) 에서 열렸던 연례 영국 사회학회에서 발표되었던 글을 줄이고 다시 다듬은 것이다. 따라서 최초의 내용과는 꽤 차이가 있다.

지난 반세기 동안 이 땅에 밀어 닦았던 산업화, 도시화를 비롯한 이른바 근대화에 의하여 엄청난 사회변동을 겪었다. 인구학적으로든, 문화적으로든, 그리고 경제 성장면에서나 사회적으로도 변화의 폭과 속도는 다른 어느 나라와도 비길 수 없는 거대한 것이었다. 이런 변화의 물결 속에서 한국 가족은 스스로 많은 변신을 하여야 했다. 그리고 그 변화는 그 자체가 또 하나의 사회적 힘으로 등장하여 제2, 제3의 영향력을 현대 한국인의 일상생활에 연속적으로 끼쳤다. 그럼에도 불구하고 전통적 가치관은 사회구조의 중요한 부분들을 차지하고 여전히 한국인의 삶을 조정하고 있다.

이 논문은 위와 같은 맥락에서 가족구조의 변동을 분석하고 있다. 우선, 한국의 가족크기는 어떻게 바뀌었는가 현대 한국인들 사이에 가장 자주 관찰되는 가족유형은 어떤 것이 있는가 또한 일반적 유형으로부터 벗어나 버린 가족형태에는 어떤 것들이 있으며 그런 것들은 어느만큼 뚜렷한 존재로 증가하였는가 등을 따져 보았다.

지난 4반세기 동안 일어났던 가족분야의 변동은, 전통적 가족주의의 원리가 전반적으로 약화하였다는 점에서 기존의 근대화 이론의 논의와 일치하고 있다. 하지만 전통적 원리가 비록 미약하나마 여전히 존재하며, 생각지도 못하였던 가족 형태가 증가하기 시작하였다는 점에서 근대화 이론의 타당성은 재음미되어야 하리라 본다.

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