

Intergenerational Support across the Life Course: Comparison of Mid to Late Life in Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan

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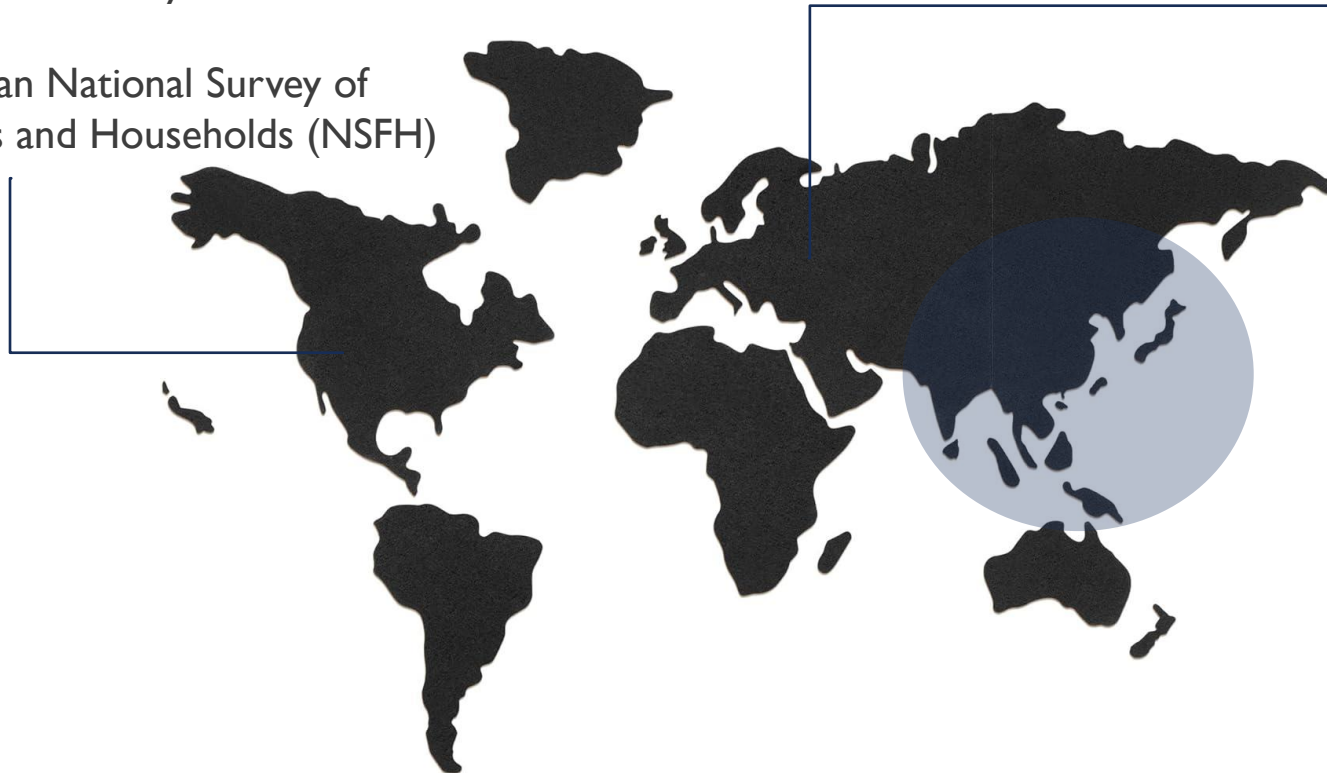
Introduction

Intergenerational relations across the life course are well-documented (Steinbach 2012).

The U.S.

Longitudinal Study of Generations
(LSOG)

American National Survey of
Families and Households (NSFH)



Europe

Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in
Europe (SHARE)

Germany

German Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP)

German Ageing Survey (DEAS)

Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family
Dynamics (pairfam)

Norway

Norwegian Life-Course Generations and
Gender Study (LOGG)

Netherlands

Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS)

Introduction

- Intergenerational relationships in East Asia?
- Commonalities:
 - **Patriarchal culture/ Confucian values/ familism:** Close parent-child co-residence; elderly care primarily provided by elderly-son (Yasuda et al., 2011).
 - **Insufficient public support:** Families are the primary support source; support flows from adult children to parents (Lin and Yi, 2013).
- Variations:
 - **Social changes:** In urban China, daughters provide material support and co-reside with parents as much as sons, signaling a shift toward bilateral family system (Xie and Zhu, 2009).
 - **Public support:** In South Korea and China, high upward transfers from adult children are driven by altruistic and non- altruistic motives, whereas in Japan, greater financial independence between parents and children is due to high public support (Park, 2014; Tsai and Wang, 2019).

➔ How do intergenerational relationships change *across life course* in East Asia.

Introduction

- **Why intergenerational relationships *across life course* in East Asia?**
 - *Populations aging and extended life expectancies* lead to increased support needs for the older population.
 - *Shrinking family sizes, unstable family formation, and increasing female labor participation*, reduce family support availability (Shishido, 2018; Raymo et al., 2015; Raymo et al., 2023; World Bank, 2024).
- **RQ:**
 - How dose the pattern of intergenerational support across the life course vary by *age* and *life events* (unemployment/ financial hardship/ bad health).
 - How dose the pattern of intergenerational support across the life course differ across societies with different *levels of public support*.

Intergenerational Relationships

- In a broad sense:
 - Six dimensions (Bengtson 2001):
 - Affectual = emotional bonds
 - Associational = frequency of interaction
 - Consensual = agreement on values
 - Functional = exchange of support
 - Normative = sense of obligation
 - Structural = family structure
 - Simpler definition (Swartz 2009):
 - Affective ties
 - Instrumental support
- Relatively narrow point of view (Albertini et al., 2007; Attias-Donfut et al., 2005):

Time transfer

Money transfer

From the life course perspective

- Flows of family transfers change according to individuals' *age* (Mudrazija 2014)

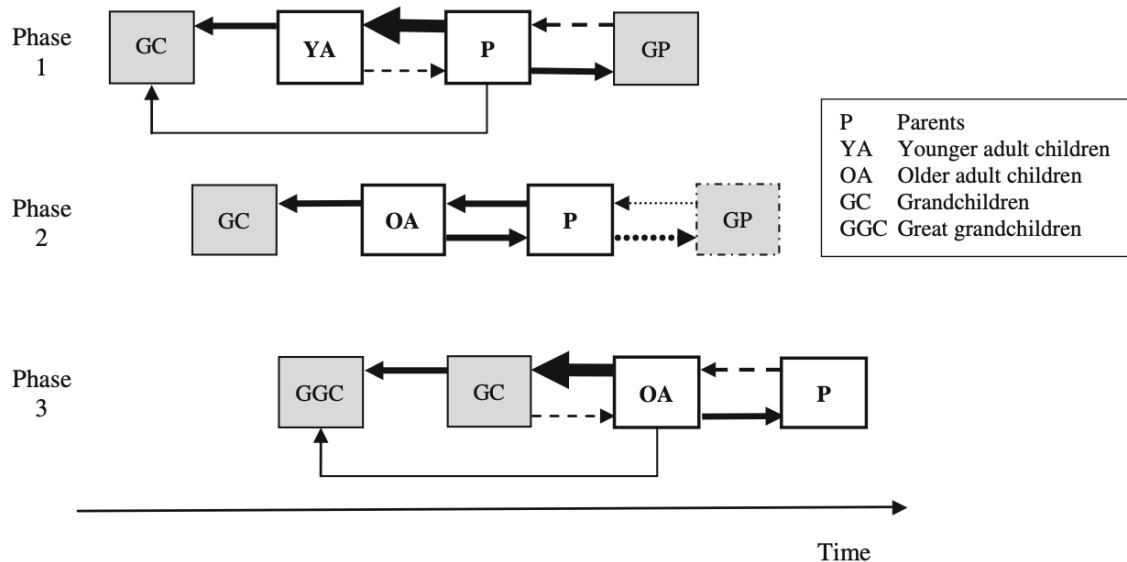


Fig. 1 life-cycle overlapping-generations (OLG) model
Source: Mudrazija (2014)

- Variations occur with the *social settings (levels of public support)* and the *timing of individual changes (life events)* (Elder et al., 2003; Putney and Bengtson, 2003).

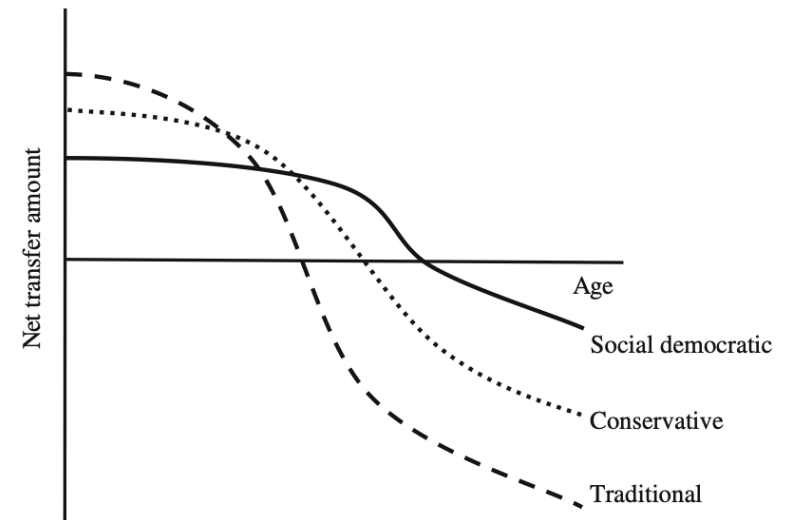


Fig. 2 Net family transfers across age and welfare regimes
Source: Mudrazija (2014)

Interaction with public support

- The nexus of state (public) and market (private) in the distribution system stems from Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (TWWC) framework (Buhr and Stoy, 2015; Esping-Andersen, 1990) suggests that:

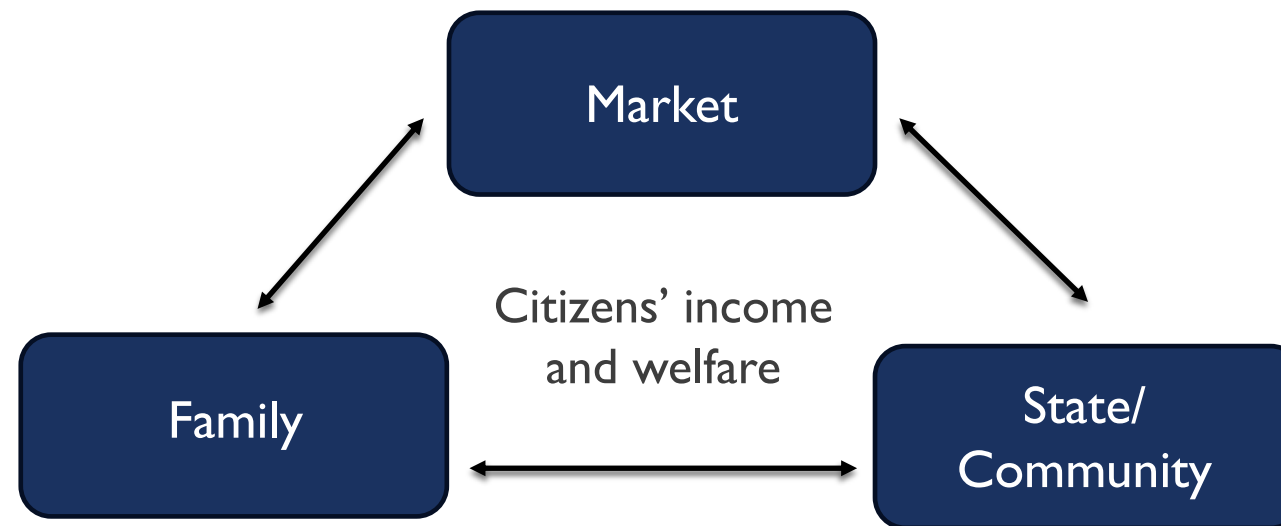


Fig. 3 Sources of citizens' income and welfare
Source: Created by authors based on Esping-Andersen (1990)

- *State and market can substitute family functions through transfers or services, influencing preferences for family roles and gender across welfare state typologies.*

Interaction with public support

■ At the policy level:

Table I Policies reducing social and economic dependencies in intergenerational relationships

		Intergenerational relationships	
		Adult children to older parents	Older parents to adult children
Dependence	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pension• Health insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education stipends• Housing subsidy
	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutional and home care services• Long-term care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Childcare services• Parental leave• Workplace policies

Notes: Created by authors inspired by Table I from Zagel and Lohmann (2021).

Conceptual frameworks

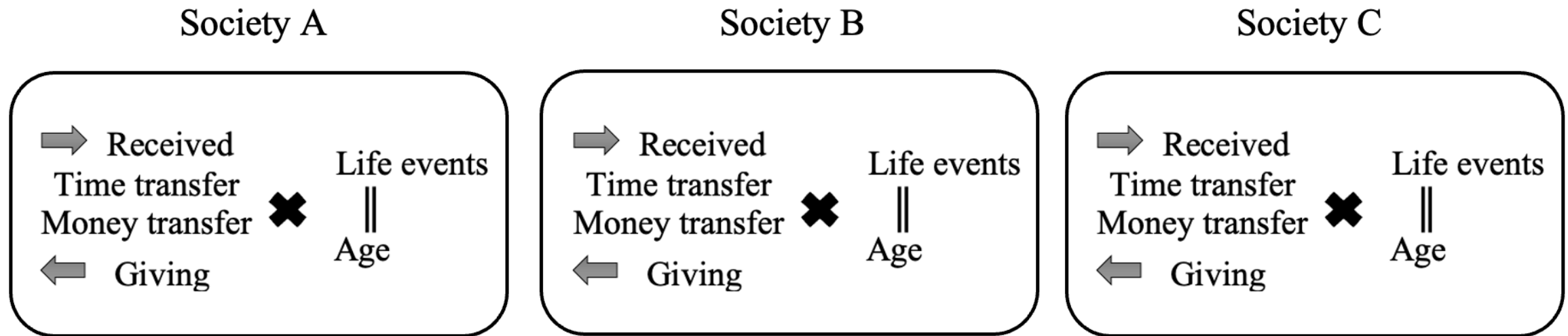


Fig. 3 Conceptual frameworks
Source: Created by authors.

Hypotheses

- **Substitution Hypothesis**
 - Parent-child transfers are less likely to occur in societies with high public support.
- **Age Effect Hypothesis**
 - As parents age, the support they receive increases while the support they provide decreases;
 - Age-related changes are less pronounced in societies with high public support.
- **Life Events Hypothesis**
 - Parents who experience life events (such financial hardship, poor health, or unemployment) are more likely to receive transfers;
 - The effects of life events are less pronounced in societies with high public support.

Data and Method



- **Data:** The East Asian Social Survey (EASS) 2016 *
 - the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS)
 - the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS)
 - the Korean General Social Survey (KGSS)
 - the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS)
- **Sample:** Age \in [45, 90], N=6,127 (China=2,660, Japan=1,826, Korea=611, Taiwan=1,030).
- **Variables:**
 - Dependent variables: Time/ Money transfers
 - Independent variables: Age groups/ Life events (Financial hardship/ Bad health/ Unemployed)
 - Control variables: Demographic characteristics and Transfers from own or spouse's parents
- **Method:**
 - Step 1: Descriptive statistics
 - Step 2: OLS

* EASS is a biennial social survey project that serves as a cross-national network of the following four General Social Survey type surveys in East Asia. Survey information in this module is the same topic as the first module of the EASS 2006, and it focuses on family dynamics and relations.

Results and Conclusion



- **Substitution Effect**

- In Japan, parents tend to give both time and money to their adult children. However, in China and Taiwan, adult children are the ones providing support to parents, at an early stage.

- **Age Effect**

- In Japan, age affects how much money parents give but has less impact on the time they offer.
- In Korea, the impact of age on money transfers (both giving and receiving) is stronger, especially for those aged 75 and older.
- In China and Taiwan, age-related changes in financial support are more noticeable in younger people.

- **Life Events Effect**

- Financial difficulties and unemployment in later life affect family support exchanges.
- In Japan, parents facing financial hardship may give more time to their children, but this pattern reverses as they age.
- In China, Korea, and Taiwan, unemployment in later life reduces parents' ability to give money, but they receive more financial help from their children.

Discussion

- **Limitations**

- No dyadic data; adult children's characteristics not controlled.
- Lacks detailed discussion on social policy variations.
- Evidence based on longitudinal data.
- Excludes market-based transfers and support from other relatives.

- **Implications**

- Intergenerational support in East Asia (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan)
- Investigating intergenerational transfers from a life course perspective (Age, life events, and their interactions).
- Discussed interaction with public support provided in the societies.

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- Declaration of Interest Statement:
- We declare that we have no conflict of interest.