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ABSTRACT

POSTER PRESENTATION

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CHILDCARE NETWORK AND URBANIZATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Family/Community Questions

Analyzing family/community questions involves organizing the allocation of network resources for individuals into the two analytical categories of “networks within the family” and “networks outside the family.” By dealing with these two kinds of networks, it becomes possible to discuss approaches to dealing with daily life problems from the perspective of family, and community issues.

In this report, I seek to address the following two questions in the context of the practice of childcare: 1) what types of resource mobilization take place from networks within the family, and 2) if there are shortcomings in these, what types of resources are supplemented from networks outside the family?

Urbanism and Personal Networks

Research on personal networks in urban studies has confirmed that the distribution patterns and quantity of personal network and urbanism are related. Many past studies have shown that, even excluding the influence of personal attributes, the quantity of relative/neighborhood networks tends to decrease as the degree of urbanism increases. (Fischer, 1982=2002: Tateyama, 1998: Matsumoto, 2004: 2005a: 2005b).

Furthermore, with respect to the spatial allocation of personal networks, it has been confirmed that urban residents tend to be dispersed over a broad area. (Wellman, 1979=2006)

In other words, differences in urbanism relate to the following two points in childcare networks outside the family: 1) quantity of networks and 2) spatial allocation of networks.

From these findings, we can hypothesize that urban residents possess childcare networks that are quantitatively limited and spatially dispersed compared with rural residents.
Household-Type Distribution Patterns

Meanwhile, household-type distribution patterns have been confirmed by research on urban spatial structures. According to this research, the ratio of nuclear family households in urban and suburban areas and the ratio of three or four-generation households in rural areas tends to increase compared with other regions. It has been confirmed that such household type distribution patterns are emerged in concentric circles in urban spaces. (Tateyama:2004)

From this, we can infer that nuclear family households comprise the overwhelming majority of families in the childcare stage in urban and suburban areas, and that childcare network resources within families consist solely of the wife and husband.

From the above, we can say that analysis concerning childcare networks should be discussed in relation to urbanism for both within the family and outside the family.

Method of Survey and Procedures for Analysis

The data employed in this report was derived from a survey carried out through a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C). The survey was conducted 2008 in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Kanagawa Prefecture, next of Tokyo. The survey targeted mothers with children aged 3–5 years old.

Then I seek to address those following research processes on the networks within the family.

● connections between with household type & degree of urbanism
● connections between support from the husband or within the household and the childcare isolation index

Above all, we find the background factor that has given rise to such structural differences is the existence of differences in networks outside the household.

This suggests the possibility of daily life problems, which cannot be solved within the family, being solved through other channels in the form of mobilization of resources outside the family.

The following is an analysis of childcare networks outside the family.

Spatial Distribution of Childcare Networks

Here, mothers were asked about the temporal distance of five intimate networks, including biological parents, parents-in-law, relatives, friends, and mama-friends who also are mothers.

The relationship between the spatial distribution of each network and urbanism was confirmed with a statistical significance of 0.1% in all cases.

The allocation of networks among mothers in urban, suburban areas is characterized by spatially dispersed personal communities. Particularly, in the case of suburban areas, the spatial distribution of even parents is distant. In contrast, the allocation of networks among mothers in rural areas could be termed “condensed personal communities.”

Who Supports Childcare?

How much childcare support do the networks surrounding mothers provide? Figure * shows a test of the differences in average values for childcare support scores by degree of urbanism.

The support score is highest for biological parents, followed by mama-friends and parents-in-law. However, in urban and suburban areas, childcare support from mama-friends exceeds that of parents-in-law. As confirmed previously, for mothers in urban and suburban areas in which the spatial distribution of parents-in-law is distant, mama-friends are the second-most important childcare support resource after their biological parents.

When viewed by degree of urbanism, significant differences were confirmed for all, except mama-friends.
Factors that Regulate Childcare Support

This section employs the childcare support scores from each network as dependent variables to carry out multi-way analysis of variance and multiple classification analysis that sequentially inputs urbanism, attributes, husband support, and place of residence of parents as variables.

Interpretability of urbanism was confirmed with respect to childcare support from the biological parents, relatives, neighbors, friends, and mama-friends.

In particular, even when controlling the variables, the childcare support that mothers in suburban areas receive is most scant in terms of support from biological parents, relatives, and friends. On the other hand, they received the most support from neighbors and mama-friends, showing that child support tends to be at both extremes.

Feelings of Childcare Isolation

Lastly, childcare support within the household and from outside the household were input simultaneously to see which forms of childcare support have the effect of reducing the feelings of childcare isolation of mothers. Significant effects were demonstrated for husband support and biological parent support.

We see the existence of a clear negative correlation between support from the husband and feelings of childcare isolation as shown in figure *. This greatly influences the feelings of childcare isolation among mothers in urban areas and suburban areas. It would seem that support from husbands is extremely significant for mothers in suburban areas, who receive the least childcare support from outside the household.

The existence of mama-friends

The survey asked mothers about their relationships with mama-friends. In all residential areas, the tendency to consider socializing with mama-friends as “necessary” was over 80%. Mothers are aware that mama-friends is an extremely important resource.

In the case of mothers in suburban areas, who receive very little support from their biological parents/parents-in-law, the relationship between mothers and mama-friends appears to be sharing the joys and sorrows of childcare while providing childcare information and childcare support. Thus, mama-friends do not have unified significance for mothers; comparatively, we see that their significance and roles are relative to change within different childcare network environments.

Findings

About childcare networks within the family.
1) There are many nuclear family households in urban and suburban areas, and three- or four-generation households in rural areas.
2) Working style of husbands, which differs according to the degree of urbanism, is strongly related to childcare support from husbands.

About childcare networks outside the family.

3) In the first place, there are differences in the distribution of networks possessed by mothers according to their residence in urban, suburban, or rural areas.
4) While mothers in rural areas tend to acquire the most prolific childcare networks outside the family, these networks tend to be the most meager among mothers in suburban areas.
5) Support from the husband and biological parents reduces feelings of childcare isolation among mothers, with the effect of this differing according to the degree of urbanity.
6) However, there is a strong tendency for mothers in suburban areas to make up for this by actively utilizing mama-friends.
Conclusions / discussion

We witness complementary support for shortcomings in childcare support within the family, through the development of childcare networks outside the family, relating to the degree of urbanism, which we could call a “network strategy” for childcare.

For discussion, we are able to say that family try to continue the life of family with their personal network, at the same time, it might be said that family can not continue to be family without their personal network outside of family. I would like to give the discussing point, family is the nominal group or functional group from the viewpoint of personal network.

References


