# Family Dynamics of Child Care in Korea: Mother's Actual and Preferred Child Care Hours and the Gap

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# Introduction – Two different stories

- Becoming better society to raise children?

- Aiming for child friendly/family friendly society (expending policy/financial benefits)

- Social survey show the bond between parent-child ever so high than the past



Trends in the level of satisfaction with parent-child relationship by gender: 1998-2018
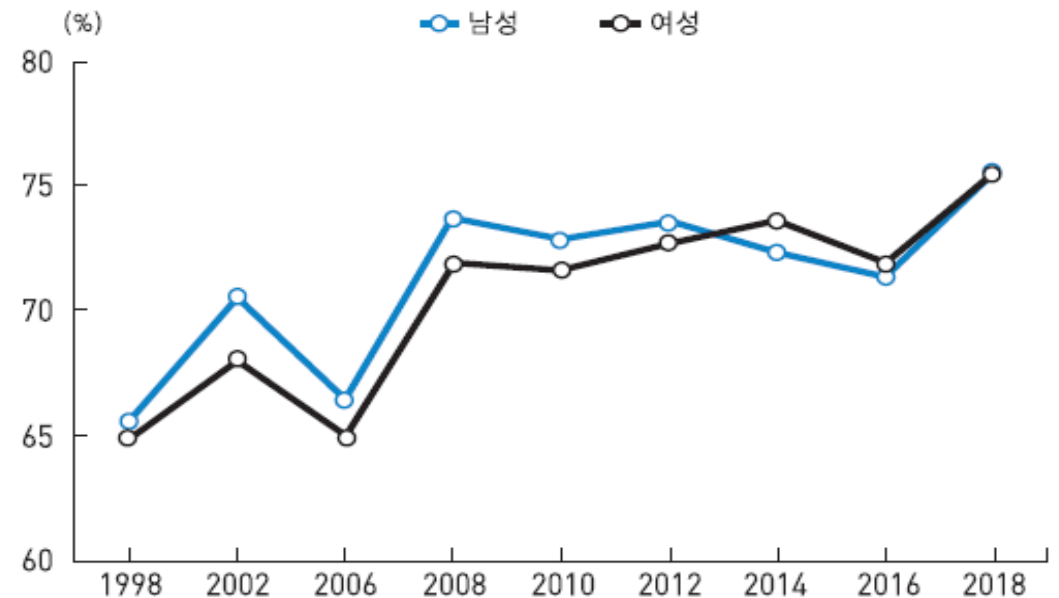
# Introduction – Two different stories

- Gender gap in child care time remain sharp.

  mothers> fathers

- Child care burden both in time use and responsibility pronounced: Concept of "*Sole Care*" (Caring Alone with less support), especially for mothers.

- Child, recognized as an obstacle for gaining life career for women

- Hit the "Below 1.0 Total Fertility Rate" (2019): delaying the marriage, the marriage become an option in one's lives, unwilling to have children



Movie, &lt;Kim Jiyoung, Born **1982**&gt;

# Introduction – Time use research contribution

- Experienced lives

  1) How much time parents dedicate to care work/care activities (24/7, decades trend/ across life course)

  2) Who spends more time in child care,

  3) When does care (by different types) mostly occur

  4) Who is helping/participating in the child care situation

  5) And discovered many more issues related with child care

# Introduction – Missing puzzles

- What is desired?

    1) Willingness vs. Availability

    2) Unmet needs

    3) Optimal life balance for parents with kid

    4) Strategy to scheduling a day/week

    5) How to share/make a deal within the family

# Literature review – labor hour mismatch

- Actual work hours, preferred work hours, and the gap

- Work hour mismatch: over-working or under-working

- Work hour mismatch and well-being
  - unmet needs in work hours
  - attitudes for paid work
  - finding the way to narrow down the gap

# Literature review – labor hour mismatch

- Actual work hours, preferred work hours, and the gap

- Work hour mismatch: overworking or underworking

- Work hour mismatch and well-being
  - unmet needs in work hours
  - attitudes for paid work
  - finding the way to narrow down the gap

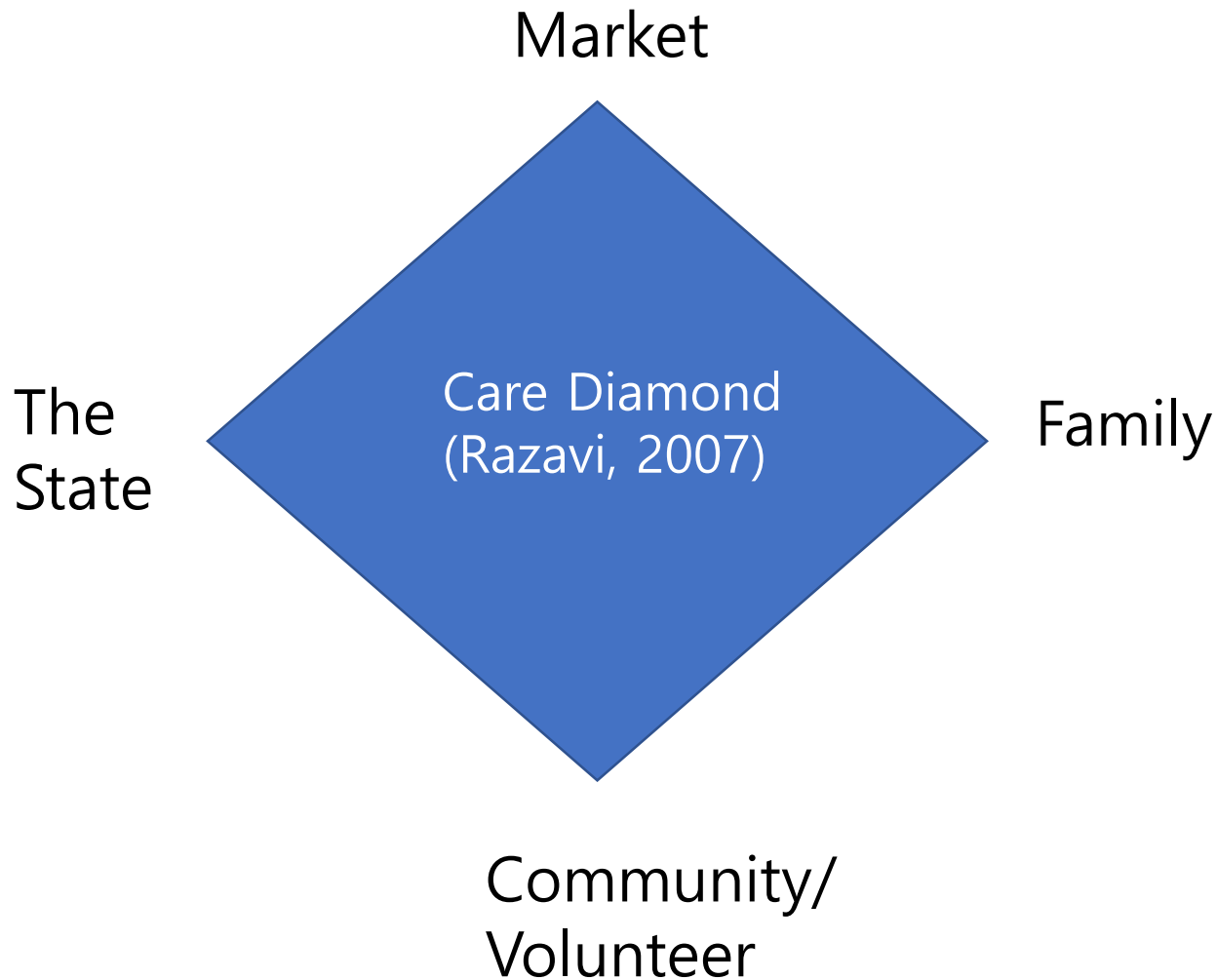**Can we apply this concept in child care situation?**

# Korean context – Recent move

- Expansion in ECEC coverage

- Market supporting domestic work also expanded

- Father participation emphasized

- Grandparent's support given

- Deep M curve remain

- Re-entering labor market for women encouraged

Market

The State

Care Diamond
(Razavi, 2007)

Family

Community/
Volunteer
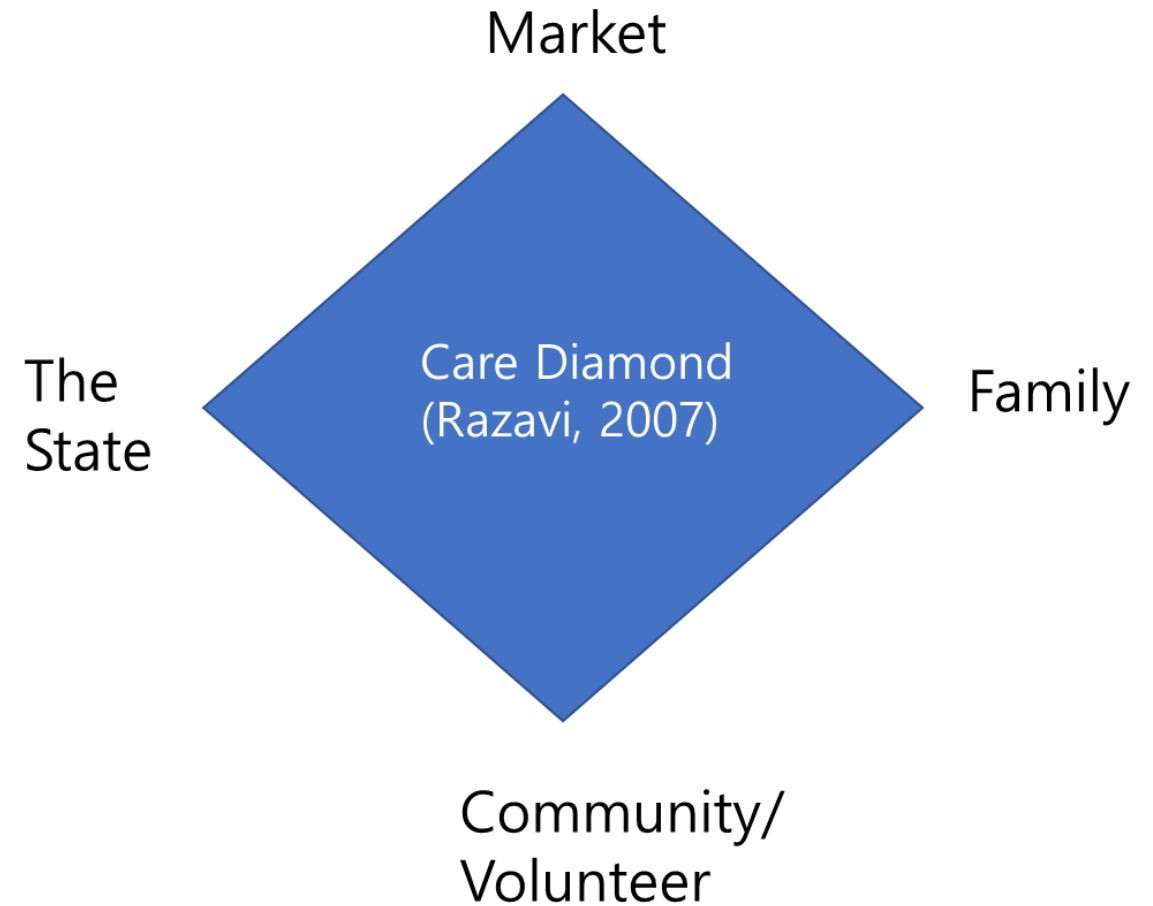
# Problem remains

## *Something not working properly*

Market

Care Diamond
(Razavi, 2007)

The
State

Family

Community/
Volunteer

Especially in family context,

- Family resources (father's participation, grandparent's contribution) are distributed unevenly.
- Mother's bargaining power is not strong enough to pool the resources.
- Family resources are not available at the right time.

# Assumptions

- Considering the long child care hours and the notion of the 'sole care' situation of Korean mothers,

   Actual child care time > Preferred child care time

- Three types of care condition may exist,
  - mothers may suffer from the **over-caring condition**, spending more care time than they prefer.
  - some mothers may experience the **under-caring condition**, when mothers want to spend more time with their children but currently can't.
  - we want to identify those who achieved the balance (**matched condition**).

# Research process

✓ First, we investigate the discrepancy between actual versus preferred child care time of mothers (we name this as 'the gap' from this point).

✓ Second, we test the association between the gap and outcomes of well-being mothers.

✓ Lastly, we identify the relevant factors that determine this gap.

- **Mother's bargaining power**: mother's income contribution, gender role attitude, autonomy over income

- **Father contribution**: characteristics of father (spouse)

- **Grandparent contribution**: instrumental support, financial support

# Methods

- **Data**

「2018 Family Survey for Child Care」for analysis (n=500).

Mothers in this sample came from a family member nationwide who takes care of their children under age 9 as the primary caregiver. We define "the main caregiver" as a person currently living with a child (age 0-9) and who takes full responsibility for the care situation.

- **Sample**

Within the child care data set, we selected married mothers those who are the primary caregiver to their children, living with a spouse but the family who live apart from kinship members (n=484).

# Methods

- **Measurements**

- Actual care time: "How often do you care for your child (who is age 0-9) on weekdays and weekends (number of days per week (weekday/weekend) and the average care hours on a caring day (weekday/weekend)?"

- Preferred care time: "If you could choose, how often would you care for your child, on weekdays and weekends (number of days per week (weekday/weekend) and the average care hours on a caring day (weekday/weekend)?'

- The gap: Actual care time - Preferred care time
   (+) over-caring,  (-) under-caring,  (0) matched

# Methods: Sample descriptive

Table 1-1. Sample Descriptive

| | Freq. | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Education level of mother | | |
| primary educa | 133 | 27.48 |
| secondary & above | 351 | 72.52 |
| Employment status of mother | | |
| working | 151 | 31.20 |
| not working | 333 | 68.80 |
| Age range of mother | | |
| 20's | 29 | 5.99 |
| 30's | 333 | 68.80 |
| 40's | 121 | 25.00 |
| 50's | 1 | 0.21 |
| Age of Child | | |
| 0-2 | 135 | 27.89 |
| 3-6 | 225 | 46.48 |
| 7-9 | 124 | 25.62 |

(continued)

| | Freq. | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Use of care service | | |
| none | 101 | 20.87 |
| one | 299 | 61.78 |
| two | 77 | 15.91 |
| three and more | 7 | 1.45 |
| Father education | | |
| primary educa | 80 | 16.52 |
| secondary & above | 404 | 83.48 |
| Seek_help | | |
| alone or spouse help | 228 | 47.11 |
| use kinship network | 206 | 42.56 |
| friends and others | 50 | 10.33 |
| Financial help from grandparents | | |
| receive_fsupport | 85 | 17.56 |
| not receive fsupport | 399 | 82.44 |

# Methods: Sample descriptive

Table 1-2. Sample Descriptive

| | mean |
|---|---|
| Household financial change (range 1-5) | 2.96 |
| Mother's health (range 1-5) | 2.36 |
| Care experience (fulfillment) (range 1-5) | 3.99 |
| Care experience(burnout) (range 1-5) | 2.89 |
| Satisfaction in care arrangement (range 1-5) | 2.55 |
| Overall stress (range 1-5) | 3.44 |
| Overall life satisfaction (range 1-5) | 2.54 |
| Mother's income level (man won) | 60.83 |
| Household income level (man won) | 409.76 |
| Mother's relative income contribution (%) | 11.99 |
| Mother's attitude on traditional gender role (range 1-4) | 2.29 |
| Mother's attitude on income autonomy (range 1-4) | 2.45 |
| Father childcare hours (per week) | 12.50 |
| Father's child care contribution (%) | 28.72 |
| Father's weekly working hours (hours) | 44.62 |

# Methods: Sample descriptive

Table 2. Living arrangements of respondents households

| Categories | | N |
|---|---|---|
| Total | | 484 |
| Recently moved the residence due to child care | No | 418 |
| | Yes | 66 |
| Those who moved | Near to grandparent house | 30 |
| | Near to good childcare facility | 2 |
| | Near to better school and education district | 34 |

# Actual vs. Preferred Hours of Child care and the Gap?

# Results

Table 3. Distribution of childcare time variables          (unit: hour)

| | Mean |
|---|---|
| Actual child care time (per week) | 56.79 |
| Actual child care time on caring day (per day ) | 8.71 |
| Actual child care time on weekdays (per day) | 7.32 |
| Actual child care time on weekends (per day) | 10.10 |
| | |
| Preferred child care time (per week) | 36.55 |
| Preferred child care time on caring day (per day) | 5.45 |
| Preferred child care time on weekdays (per day) | 4.90 |
| Preferred child care time on weekends (per day) | 6.02 |
| | |
| The gap between actual time and preferred time (weekly) | 20.24 |
| The gap on weekdays | 2.42 |
| The gap on weekends | 4.08 |

[Figure 1] **Child care situation**: Distribution of the gap between actual time spent for care and preferred time (per week)
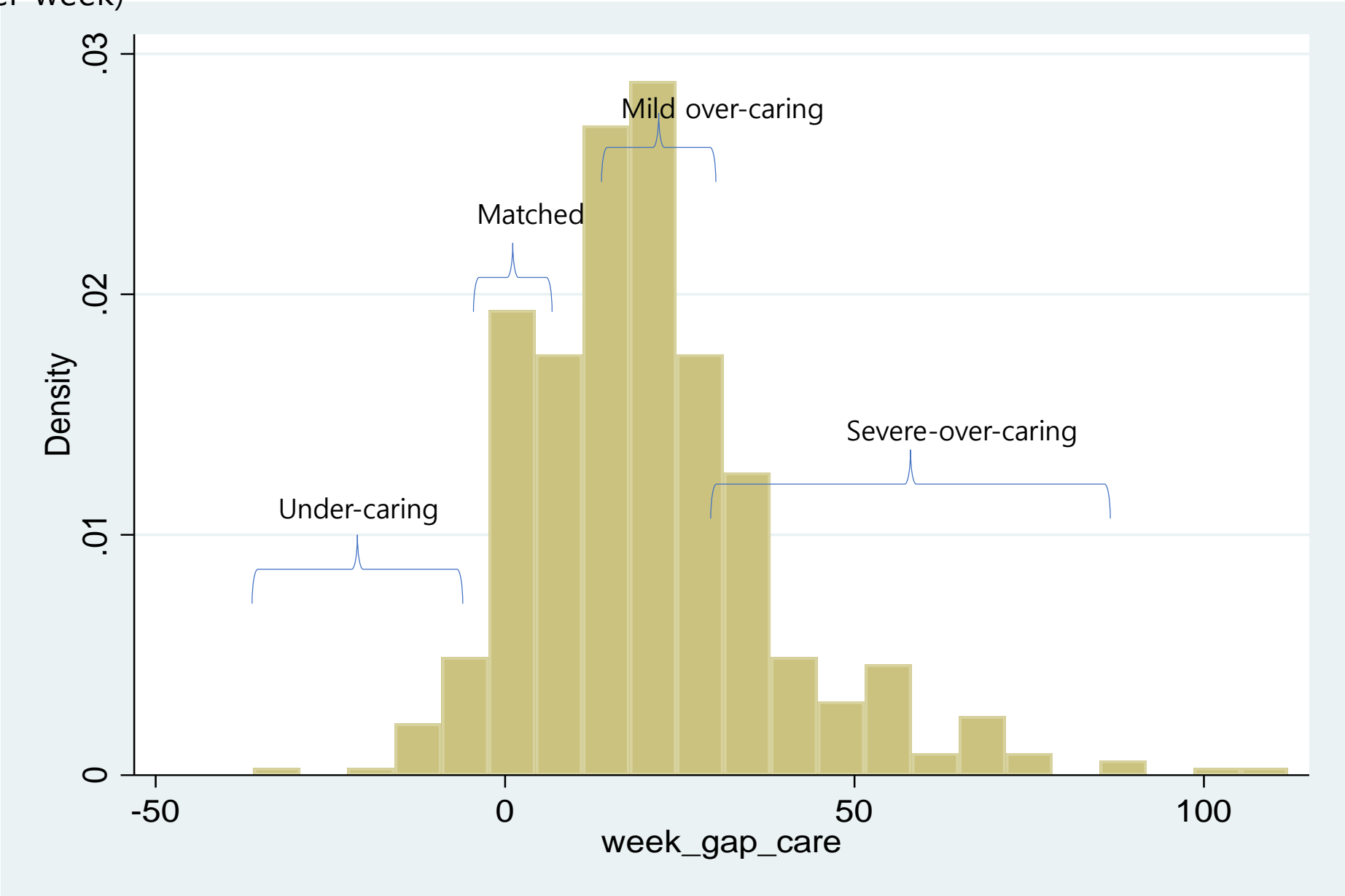
[Figure 2] **Elder Care Situation:** Distribution of the gap between actual time spent for care and desired time (per week)
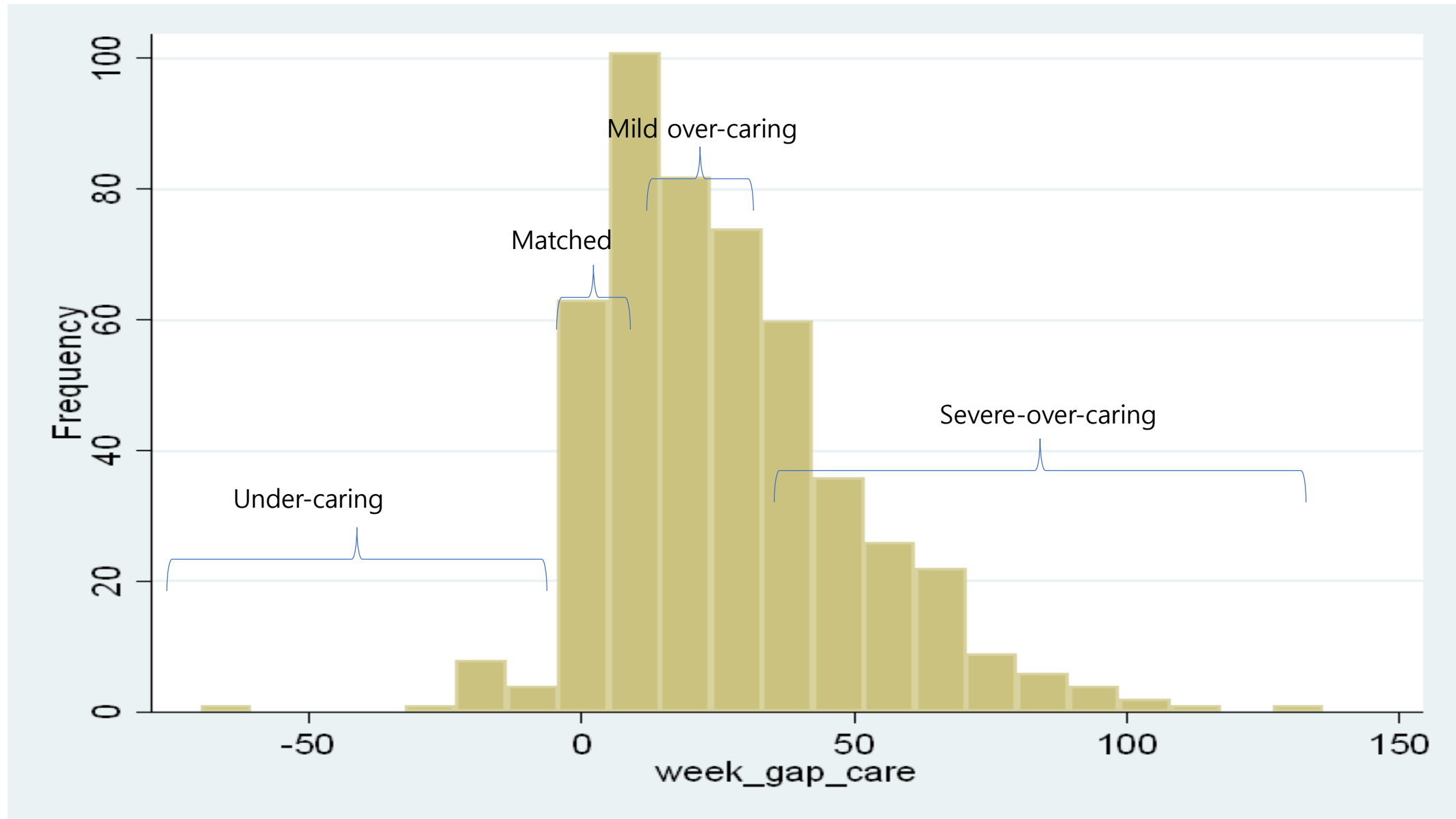
# Findings

- The discrepancies in care time experienced and preferred by mothers are significant.

    - Mothers tend to care for their young children for an average of 4 hours or more daily/ 20 hours more per week, than their desired care time.

    - The gap was more substantial on weekends compared to weekdays.

    - The result implies that weekend is a challenging day for mothers.

    - On weekends, the mothers may face the problem of limited use of care resources, such as the use of child care facilities or family support.

# Association between psychological measures?

# Results

Table 4. Association between the gap and well-being measures

| week_gap_care | Coef.(Std. Err.) | |
|---|---|---|
| Fulfillment | 2.59(1.24) | ** |
| Burn out | 0.30(0.76) | |
| Satisfaction on care arrangement | 2.66(1.22) | ** |
| Overall stress | 1.83(1.06) | ** |
| Overall life satisfaction | -1.91(1.25) | |
| _cons | 8.19(9.28) | |

**: p<.01, ***: p <.001

Note) Control variables were taken into account while analyzing the associations

# Findings

- Mixed feelings about the child care

- Evidences found that caring for a child for longer than the amount mothers preferred can lead to stress or psychological burden.

- Still, mothers who are willing to care for children with high responsibility and they also feel rewarded and fulfilling, even if they suffer from an exceptionally long caring time.

# What factors relate with the gap?

Table 5. OLS regression : dependent variable as weekly care hour gap between actual care hours and preferred care hours

| stage | week_gap_care | Model1 | | | | Model2 | | | | Model3 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta |
| Control | Age of child | -1.91 | (0.36) | *** | -0.26 | -1.88 | (0.37) | *** | -0.26 | -1.88 | (0.36) | *** | -0.26 |
| | Num_other_child in household | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | one | 6.60 | (1.66) | *** | 0.17 | 6.63 | (1.67) | *** | 0.17 | 6.33 | (1.66) | *** | 0.16 |
| | two and more | -4.95 | (4.52) | | -0.05 | -4.59 | (4.58) | | -0.04 | -6.53 | (4.53) | | -0.06 |
| | Mother edu | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | secondary & above | 2.51 | (1.67) | | 0.06 | 2.22 | (1.92) | | 0.05 | 2.32 | (1.67) | | 0.06 |
| | Mother emp | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | not working | -9.50 | (4.52) | ** | -0.24 | -9.17 | (4.55) | ** | -0.23 | -10.05 | (4.54) | ** | -0.26 |
| | Mother health | 0.95 | (1.15) | | 0.03 | 0.92 | (1.18) | | 0.03 | 1.06 | (1.15) | | 0.04 |
| | Financial change in hhld | -0.18 | (0.95) | | -0.01 | -0.05 | (0.98) | | 0.00 | -0.33 | (0.94) | | -0.01 |
| | Num of use of service | -3.69 | (1.33) | ** | -0.13 | -3.77 | (1.36) | ** | -0.14 | -4.00 | (1.33) | *** | -0.14 |
| | Total share in care task | -0.01 | (0.00) | ** | -0.08 | -0.01 | (0.01) | | -0.07 | -0.01 | (0.00) | | -0.06 |
| 1 | Mother income | 0.01 | (0.03) | | 0.04 | 0.01 | (0.03) | | 0.03 | 0.02 | (0.03) | | 0.08 |
| | Household income | -0.03 | (0.01) | ** | -0.19 | -0.03 | (0.01) | ** | -0.19 | -0.03 | (0.01) | *** | -0.20 |
| | Relative income contri | -0.28 | (0.19) | | -0.28 | -0.26 | (0.19) | | -0.26 | -0.34 | (0.19) | ** | -0.35 |
| | Attitude to income autonomy | -2.76 | (0.87) | ** | -0.13 | -2.84 | (0.88) | *** | -0.13 | -2.87 | (0.87) | *** | -0.13 |
| | Traditional gender role attitude | -0.37 | (0.84) | | -0.02 | -0.48 | (0.86) | | -0.02 | -0.47 | (0.84) | | -0.02 |
| 2 | Father eduation | | | | | 0.39 | (1.73) | | 0.01 | | | | |
| | Father contribution | | | | | -0.05 | (0.06) | | -0.03 | | | | |
| | Father weekly working hours | | | | | -0.03 | (0.11) | | -0.01 | | | | |
| 3 | Seek_help | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | use kinship network | | | | | | | | | 3.52 | (1.59) | ** | 0.10 |
| | firends and others | | | | | | | | | 2.07 | (2.56) | | 0.03 |
| | Grandparent financial support | | | | | | | | | -4.22 | (1.93) | *** | -0.09 |
| | _cons | 56.40 | (7.47) | 0.00 | . | 56.70 | (11.61) | 0.00 | . | 64.58 | (8.60) | 0.00 | . |
| | Number of obs | 484 | | | | 484 | | | | 484 | | | |
| | F(d=14) | 11.80 | | | | 9.71 | | | | 10.43 | | | |
| | Prob > F | *** | | | | *** | | | | *** | | | |
| | R-squared | 0.26 | | | | 0.26 | | | | 0.28 | | | |

***: p<.001, **: p<.01

Table 5. OLS regression: Dependent variable as weekly care hour gap between actual care hours and preferred care hours

| week_gap_care | | Model1 | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta |
| 1 | Mother income | 0.01 | (0.03) | | 0.04 |
| | **Household income** | **-0.03** | **(0.01)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.19** |
| | Relative income contribution | -0.28 | (0.19) | | -0.28 |
| | **Attitude to income autonomy** | **-2.76** | **(0.87)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.13** |
| | Traditional gender role attitude | -0.37 | (0.84) | | -0.02 |
| _cons | | 56.40 | (7.47) | \*\*\* | . |
| Number of obs | | 484 | | | |
| Prob > F | | \*\*\* | | | |
| R-squared | | 0.26 | | | |

\*\*\*: p<.001

Table 5. OLS regression : Dependent variable as weekly care hour gap between actual care hours and preferred care hours

| week_gap_care | | Model2 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta |
| 1 | Mother income | 0.01 | (0.03) | | 0.03 |
| | **Household income** | **-0.03** | **(0.01)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.19** |
| | Relative income contribution | -0.26 | (0.19) | | -0.26 |
| | **Attitude to income autonomy** | **-2.84** | **(0.88)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.13** |
| | Traditional gender role attitude | -0.48 | (0.86) | | -0.02 |
| 2 | Father education | 0.39 | (1.73) | | 0.01 |
| | Father contribution | -0.05 | (0.06) | | -0.03 |
| | Father weekly working hours | -0.03 | (0.11) | | -0.01 |
| | _cons | 56.70 | (11.61) | \*\*\* | . |
| | Number of obs | | | 484 | |
| | Prob > F | | | \*\*\* | |
| | R-squared | | | 0.26 | |

\*\*\*: p<.001

Table 5. OLS regression : Dependent variable as weekly care hour gap between actual care hours and preferred care hours

| week_gap_care | | Model3 | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>t | Beta |
| 1 | Mother income | 0.02 | (0.03) | | 0.08 |
| | **Household income** | **-0.03** | **(0.01)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.20** |
| | **Relative income contribution** | **-0.34** | **(0.19)** | **\*\*** | **-0.35** |
| | **Attitude to income autonomy** | **-2.87** | **(0.87)** | **\*\*\*** | **-0.13** |
| | Traditional gender role attitude | -0.47 | (0.84) | | -0.02 |
| 3 | **Seek help** | | | | |
| | **use kinship network** | **3.52** | **(1.59)** | **\*\*** | **0.10** |
| | firends and others | 2.07 | (2.56) | | 0.03 |
| | **Grandparent financial support** | **-4.22** | **(1.93)** | **\*\*** | **-0.09** |
| | _cons | 64.58 | (8.60) | 0.00 | . |
| | Number of obs | | 484 | | |
| | Prob > F | | 0.00 | | |
| | R-squared | | 0.28 | | |

\*\*\*: p<.001

# Findings

- We examined the relationship between mother's bargaining power, father's characteristics, grandparent's support

  - To narrow down the gap: essential factors turn out to be income-related characteristics (household income level, mother's autonomy of financial management, and grandparent's financial support, and mother's relative income)

  - When a child care time mismatch occurs, mothers tend to use the income to pool help from outside the household.

  - If such income power does not work, those mothers may be trapped in the situation of '***a very long child care hour***' in a daily basis.

# Conclusion

- The results of this study illustrate the situations in which mothers can rely only on *income* in a case when they are unable to derive help from their husbands, their friends, relatives, or grandparents.

    - Maybe it is true that child-rearing is an economic burden, not because parent's spend their money on child's education, but because they need to keep balance in their own life.

    - Maybe this is income issue is the main driving factor for the very-low-fertility rate in Korean society.