

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Intergenerational solidarity in a developing welfare state: The case of South Korea

Martin Gurín¹  | Martina Brandt² 

¹Department of Sociology and Economy of the Welfare State, Faculty of Human Sciences, University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany

²Chair for Social Structure and Sociology of Aging Societies, Faculty of Social Sciences, TU Dortmund University, Dortmund, Germany

Correspondence

Martin Gurín, Department of Sociology and Economy of the Welfare State, Faculty of Human Sciences, University of Kassel, Germany.

Email: martin.gurin@uni-kassel.de

Abstract

With our analysis of the Korean society we intend to make an innovative contribution to research on intergenerational solidarity by examining how the introduction of welfare policies has changed patterns of intergenerational solidarity. Using aggregated data from the Korean Longitudinal Study of Aging, the Korean General Social Survey, and the Korean Social Survey, we examine the changing character of intergenerational solidarity by focusing on national trends in both societal practice and intergenerational norms from 2002 to 2018. Our findings show that patterns of Korean intergenerational solidarity have modified in various respects. The normative dimension of the filial/filial contract has profoundly changed along with the developing welfare state, shifting from a dominantly filial piety-centric character to more complementarity contract-based norms in which children, welfare state and society are all assigned responsibility for the well-being of parents. Intergenerational “functional” solidarity, however, in terms of the exchange of money and practical support has not de-filialized.

KEYWORDS

intergenerational solidarity, population aging, societal change, South Korea, welfare state

INTRODUCTION

Demographic changes propelled by declining fertility and increasing numbers of older people are major public concerns in developed and developing societies as countries are challenged to determine an adequate mix of public and private resources to meet the growing support needs of aging societies. In recent decades a significant body of sociological and gerontological literature has attempted

to address this concern by analyzing patterns of intergenerational solidarity between family members across various types of support (e.g., Albertini & Kohli, 2013; Isengard et al., 2018). Older parents are strongly dependent on multifaceted support varying from financial and non-financial support from private resources, as well as occasional help with household chores, to often time-demanding physical nursing and care delivered by family members.

Recent developments in social welfare systems, alongside transformations in family size and structure, are calling the current societal organization of support into question. Rapid changes in social support systems are

Abbreviations: KGSS, Korean General Social Survey; KLoSA, Korean Longitudinal Study of Aging; KSS, Korean Social Survey; OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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especially relevant to rapidly aging countries with newly developing welfare states such as South Korea, which face the immense task of meeting the future needs of their older citizens. South Korea, the focus of the current study, has in recent decades introduced a variety of welfare policies to provide care (instrumental and medical), and income security to older people (Kim & Choi, 2013; Kim & Cook, 2011; Shin & Do, 2015). Although public forms of solidarity aim to ease the burden of families by taking over a certain amount of responsibility, this support is often inadequate (Chon, 2014; Gao et al., 2011; Kim & Choi, 2011; Shin & Do, 2015) therefore leaving the reliance on familial support intact. Yet, it remains unclear how the introduction of public support to older adults affects culturally based familial and filial contracts and intergenerational dependencies within families. Particular focus then is on adult children who are both culturally (in the form of filial piety) and institutionally (through taxes and social insurance contributions) obliged to support their older parents. Thus, the following question guides the present study: *(how and in how far) does the introduction of welfare policies go along with changed patterns of intergenerational solidarity in a traditional society?* We address this question by drawing on data from seven waves of KLoSA and KSS, and two waves of the KGSS, which collected information on transfers of help and money between adult children and their parents in both directions, as well as on South Koreans' perceptions of filial norms.

This article is structured as follows: In the next section, we present the state of research on the links between intergenerational solidarity and welfare states. Then we present an overview of the state of research on the evolving South Korean welfare state and intergenerational solidarity. The third part of the article presents the methodology of our analysis, which is followed by our empirical results. The article closes with a discussion of our findings and we conclude with an outlook on future research.

INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND THE WELFARE STATE

For the past four decades, intergenerational relationships have been an important focus of sociological analysis. With the ongoing crisis of the so-called “modern *nuclear* family,” researchers have moved their focus toward analysis of multigenerational bonds as the crucial pillar of family systems. The initial catalyst for this development was undoubtedly the work of Bengtson and colleagues, and in particular the *intergenerational solidarity model*, in which solidarity is defined as a multidimensional concept

(Bengtson, 2001). A large share of studies utilize this framework to examine the redistribution of income and services within families, with their focus on *functional* solidarity—the degree of mutual help and exchanges of financial and time resources (Saraceno, 2008). Other strands of literature focus on the normative dimension of intergenerational solidarity in the family, for example by measuring cross-national differences in expectations regarding filial obligations, and the development of those over time (Lowenstein & Daatland, 2006). Although they are frequently studied independently, the three closely-related elements of intergenerational solidarity are essential components for understanding the micro-social architecture of intergenerational contracts (Bengtson, 2001, p. 857).

Traditionally, intergenerational relations have played a central role in traditional European societies, where large families and support from adult children have represented a fundamental source of social and economic insurance for the older parents (Aassve et al., 2013). With economic development and associated structural (demographic) challenges, societies began to introduce welfare policies and institutionalize various forms of solidarity in order to address them. Welfare state policies, which have developed to different degrees and in distinctive ways in European welfare states, have influenced and framed intergenerational relations within families, that is, the “private generational contract” (Reher, 1998). This is not only reflected in assumptions about the family's welfare and care responsibilities but also by concrete regulations through which intergenerational support is enabled and/or enforced (Dykstra & Hagestad, 2016; Saraceno, 2008).

Although welfare state regulations form only one of the factors in the “cultural-contextual structures” that affect intergenerational relations (Szydlik, 2008), they play a pivotal role in sustaining or altering existing welfare and care arrangements in families. By what means and with what consequences welfare states influence societal practice, that is, intergenerational solidarity within families, is an ongoing subject of debate. In the “critical phase,” authors argued that strong welfare states reduce the willingness of family members to provide financial and care support to their aged parents. Thus they posited that an increased availability of public services for older adults “crowds out” family obligations and weakens intergenerational family ties. In other words, welfare systems substitute for family responsibilities (Glazer, 1988; Kreps, 1977). In conformity with this thesis, the more recent work of Van den Broek and Dykstra (2017) argues that adult children are less likely to provide care in countries with extensive residential care settings. This is because the opportunity to “rely on residential care undermines adult children's sense of urgency to step

in and provide care to their parents” (ibid. p. 1624). In strong contrast to that, however, Künemund and Rein (1999) provide evidence that welfare states do not pose a “moral risk,” but increase rather than undermine family solidarity. For instance, the introduction of pension systems did not crowd out family support, but changed the *direction* of financial resources that flow in the opposite direction to societal transfers (Kohli, 1993)—the “double circuit of transmissions” (Attias-Donfut, 1995). Alternatively, the “complementarity thesis” (Motel-Klingebiel et al., 2005) provides insights suggesting that the development of solidarity does not have to lead/or affect solidarity in one direction only (by increasing or decreasing), but that welfare state and family can take on different roles in solidarity provision, and maybe even “specialize” in different tasks (Brandt, 2013). Here, the healthcare and social services directed to people in need of such assistance potentially “crowd out” the technically or medically demanding and time consuming support provided by children, but they “crowd in” other forms of support, such as sporadic help (Brandt, 2013). Lastly, the welfare state may affect the family intergenerational solidarity not only by means of its increasing intervention, but also by its own retrenchment. This has been recently powerfully demonstrated in the work of Ulmanen and Szebehely (2015), who provide evidence that the decline in the provision of residential care services, without full substitution by other forms of formal arrangements, leads to a re-familization of family care.

Research shows that intergenerational solidarity in the form of mutual support between family generations remains a prevailing component of European societies (e.g., Albertini et al., 2007; Deindl & Brandt, 2011). While welfare states have changed certain aspects of intergenerational solidarity in the form of directionality (pensions) or intensity (care arrangements), they have not fundamentally changed their traditional character. Thus it is observed that Northern and Southern European countries still highly differ in the actual societal practice of intergenerational solidarity (Deindl & Brandt, 2011).

And the picture of solidarity behavior would not be complete without an understanding of the norms of filial and parental responsibility that provide guidelines for family behavior (Finch & Mason, 1990). Specifically, solidarity behavior is guided by socially shared expectations regarding adult children’s responsibilities toward their older parents, as well as opinions about how responsibilities should be divided between the welfare state and adult children (or the family in general) (Daatland & Herlofson, 2003; Dykstra & Fokkema, 2007). Research shows that the norm of *shared* responsibility between the welfare state and the family is most prevalent in European societies, although there is considerable variation across countries in how responsibility should be

shared: In some countries there is an expectation of equal responsibility between the state and the family, in others the family is seen as primarily responsible and the welfare state is assumed a supportive role, and in others it is the other way around (Daatland & Herlofson, 2003; Floridi et al., 2022; Lowenstein & Daatland, 2006; Marckmann, 2017).

Historical accounts show that norms and perceived obligations are resistant to change and persist despite welfare state intervention (Daatland & Herlofson, 2003). Welfare state interventions, however, can potentially affect the share of responsibilities, for example, causing them to shift from one to the other (Haberker & Szydlik, 2010). As Daatland and Herlofson (2003, p. 538) argue, “we need to know more about what people would prefer if they had more choice.” This will require longitudinal observations, particularly those that cover periods when welfare state provisions have changed significantly.

Parallel to these debates, researchers have focused also on the association between welfare state policies and the gendered organization of intergenerational support to older parents. The patterns of support from adult children in Western societies have traditionally been (and still strongly are) gendered, where daughters take on different tasks than sons and are involved in the provision of welfare and care more often and at a higher intensity (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2006). This gender inequality in intergenerational support may be reduced or preserved by specific welfare policy arrangements (Plantenga et al., 2009). On the one hand, the legal obligations to provide or co-finance the care of parents and cash-for-care payments were shown to result in a more unequal distribution of involvement in intensive support at the expense of daughters (Schmid et al., 2012); social services on the other hand are accompanied by less involvement of daughters in intensive support (Haberker et al., 2015). In none of these cases do welfare state regulations affect the likelihood of sons providing either sporadic or intensive support (Floridi et al., 2022; Haberker et al., 2015; Herlofson & Brandt, 2020; Schmid et al., 2012).

Whereas most current research around the present issue focuses on the interplay of social behavior and welfare states in Western countries that are in later stages of development, a systematic investigation of how the *introduction* of institutionalized forms of solidarity influence family solidarity in welfare states’ early stages is lacking. This is highly relevant since both stages of development are connected with different assumptions. On the one hand, the longer functioning welfare states may generate social trust and greater confidence by substituting the family’s security and care with the support found in the wider community (Aassve et al., 2013). Societies, where the welfare state is just in the process of

institutionalization and its support is still potentially inadequate, could be less confident about shifting the responsibilities away from the family. Consequently, we expect the functional and normative solidarity here to change tardily and toward form of shared solidarity in which the family is primarily responsible and the welfare state supporting instead of its potentially prompting substitutive change. Additionally, little is known about the interplay on traditional and highly culturally-based societies with strong familial and filial contracts that are currently developing their welfare states, and which are de facto ideologically affected by those who already underwent this transition (but see Knodel, 2014, for the case of Thailand; Floridi, 2020, for the comparison of Italy and South Korea). Such constellation may alter the assumption mentioned above, with more profound changes in both normative and functional intergenerational solidarity to be expected. The question whether the introduction of the welfare state into societies with strong intergenerational filial contracts lead to substantial modifications of their solidarity patterns, or, leave the traditional direction and form of intergenerational solidarity rather intact, is still unclear. This paper will address this knowledge gap by examining *how and in how far the introduction of welfare policies went along changing patterns of intergenerational solidarity in a traditional society such as South Korea.*

THE SPECIAL CASE OF SOUTH KOREA: TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND DEVELOPING WELFARE STATE

South Korea is a country with a new but rapidly and profoundly developing welfare state. It has until recently been a traditional society with a unique cultural background based on Confucianism, the key factor differentiating East-Asian welfare states from Western societies (Jones, 1993). This places the family at the pivotal cornerstone of social organization, characterized by mutual obligations and support within the family, in which the duties of children toward their parents (*filial piety*) are of particular importance (Yao, 2000). Filial piety, with its strong adherence to the principle that the family is responsible for care of elderly parents, is a moral imperative in South Korea (Chan et al., 2011). Lin and Yi (2013) argue that the norm of filial piety not only constitutes the core element of intergenerational solidarity, it is also a *standard* of behavior for intergenerational interaction. Strongly prescriptive intergenerational norms explain the traditional upward directionality of solidarity: support to older people in the traditional definition involves the

uni-dimensional dependency of aged parents on adult children (ibid). Care for elder parents is considered the duty and unquestioned responsibility of their adult children. Thus, filial piety can be understood as the crucial engine of solidarity, the provision of protection and insurance against hardship, and as a cultural mechanism for the redistribution of resources and services.

In traditional Korean society, filial piety was often realized in co-residence with older parents in three-generation households (Kim, 2016). In the patrilineal/patriarchal family system, the oldest children and particularly sons traditionally had the primary responsibility to support frail parents (Skinner, 1997). Therefore the oldest children were more obliged and expected to support the parents as if there was intergenerational co-residence and functional exchanges, particularly involving the oldest sons (Lin & Yi, 2013). Spouses of these sons, who traditionally become part of the husband's family, have been mostly responsible for the provision of care and practical assistance to parents-in-law (Kim et al., 2015). Indeed, data from the beginning of the 21st century support the prevalence of this traditional and gender-based pattern of intergenerational contract as more than one third of those who provided personal care in the activities of daily living and one-fifth of those giving practical help in the instrumental activities of daily living were daughters-in-law (KIHASA, 2001).

Traditional forms of intergenerational solidarity have historically been a strong pillar of the Korean family-centric regime (Lee, 2018; Peng & Wong, 2010). Old-age oriented social policies are, however, today the subject of intensive reforms and among the fastest-growing areas of social expenditure in South Korea. To address rising levels of old-age poverty and following the example of Western societies, the evolving welfare state began taking partial responsibility for the welfare of older citizens by redistributing resources toward older people with the introduction of a National Pension Scheme in 1988, followed by the financial support of low-income individuals, first in 2008 with the Old-Age Pension Scheme that was later transformed in 2014 into a more generous Basic Pension Scheme. The previous conservative government had doubled the level of benefits of this age-related allowance and, notwithstanding the fact that the total coverage was still relatively low (Lee et al., 2019), there was a steady increase in beneficiaries since its introduction (from 2.9 million recipients in 2008 to 5.1 in 2018). A similar trend can be observed also for the national old-age pension which increased from 1.8 to approximately 3.2 million recipients in the same period.

Additionally, with the aim to allocate special financial benefits to low-income individuals and families, the Korean welfare state revised the basic social safety net,

enacting in 1999 the National Basic Livelihood Security Act. This non-contributory transfer in the form of cash and in-kind benefits targets the older population living in poverty; however, access to this is highly conditioned by the family support obligation rule (Gao et al., 2011). This regulation was reformed in 2015 and 2020 to eliminate welfare blind spots and more effectively reduce poverty (Nam & Park, 2020). The welfare state, in taking partial responsibility for the well-being of its older citizens, has thus been steadily departing from the policy path of a traditionally “developmental” character (Gough, 2004) or “productivist welfare capitalism” (Kwon & Holliday, 2007), as can also be observed in the continuously growing welfare state expenditures which have more than doubled since 2000 (see Figure 1).

Moreover, demographic challenges have led to explicit family policy reforms also in the provision of care (e.g., Kim & Cook, 2011; Kim & Kwon, 2021). The progressive government in 2006 proposed a basic plan for the low-fertility and aging society and developed social care policies accordingly. As a result of a rapid demographic transition, and with the aim to relieve the care burden on family members, South Korea introduced long-term care insurance in 2008 to cover in-home services, institutional services as well as cash benefits (however very restricted). This “socialization of care” has gained momentum with the rapid increase in for-profit providers (Baek et al., 2011; Choi, 2012). In parallel with the expansion of long-term care services offered by the market, there has been a steady increase in the number

of older people receiving long-term care services, rising from 38,000 in June 2008 to 520,043 (7.5% of older people) in December 2016 (Chon, 2019). However, it is important to note that a significant number of older people are also receiving other state and community-provided social services outside long-term care. In conclusion, with the aim to reduce intergenerational dependencies, policies introduced by the South Korean welfare state have not only started to regulate intergenerational obligations, but also to radically develop a new context in which intergenerational support and solidarity are embedded.

With the establishment of a welfare regime and the introduction of old-age social policies, there has been ongoing debate over the erosion of cultural norms of filial piety as the traditional intergenerational contract has started to “westernize” (Choi & Jang, 2010)—most dramatically in regard to levels of co-residence: while in 1980 only around 20 per cent of older Koreans lived independently of their adult children, this number gradually increased to almost 37 per cent by 1995 and reached almost 60 per cent by 2015 (Kim & Cook, 2011; Ku & Kim, 2020). The establishment and further development of public income support for older people makes older adults less reliant on the private incomes of adult children. At the beginning of the 1990s children represented the most important source of income for older Koreans (Choi, 1996)—72% of the total income of older parents. By 2003 income from children accounted for only one third of older adults’ total income (Moon et al., 2006).

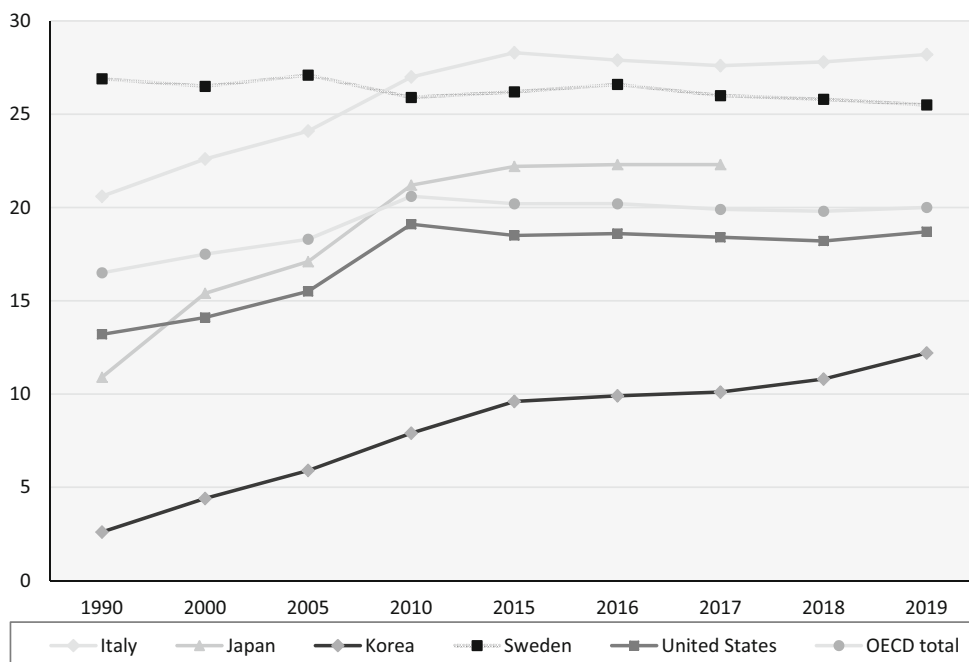


FIGURE 1 Development of public social expenditures in percentages of GDP (years 1980–2019). Source: OECD (2021).

Indeed, more recent data (Jung et al., 2016; Kang & Sawada, 2009; Ku & Kim, 2020; Lee, 2022) confirm the gradual substitution of children's sources of income by social transfers, which increased from 5% (in 1996) to 35% (2014). This has been not only the case of co-residing families, but in particular for those non-co-residing, which have traditionally been highly dependent on private sources of income. This literature hypothesizes that the welfare state has been crowding out intergenerational solidarity.

The newly institutionalized forms of solidarity therefore began to substantially affect the need-opportunity structures of Korean families. So far however there has been no systematic analysis of what link this has to the redistribution of income and services within families and to intergenerational norms. In the next sections, a conceptual framework will be introduced, followed by an analysis of patterns of functional solidarity and intergenerational norms in modern Korea. With this analysis we aim to contribute to the discussion of the establishment of a welfare state and its supposed effects on private intergenerational solidarity.

DATA AND METHODS

Starting point of our analysis is the analytical framework of intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson, 2001; Bengtson & Roberts, 1991) focusing on two of its core elements—normative and functional solidarity. In order to measure the intergenerational redistribution of both resources and services, we decomposed functional solidarity into two main forms of assistance: financial and practical help. To grasp potential modifications of intergenerational solidarity in systematic way, we additionally differentiated three dimensions (see also Albertini et al., 2007): *directionality*—refers to the direction of the solidarity transfer, which can take two forms: to parents (upward) or from parents (downward); *likelihood* (or prevalence)—indicates whether financial transfers were given/received or not; and lastly, *intensity*—which examines the extent of transfers provided, that is, whether regular or occasional, or in what amount. These are relevant in alternative perspectives on the extent to which intergenerational interdependencies have altered with the introduction of welfare policies in South Korea.

Data

In the absence of a comprehensive data set that would capture all three elements of intergenerational solidarity

simultaneously, we decided to use three separate data sets to examine these elements separately (see Tables A1–A3 in the Appendix for sample characteristics). With regard to *normative* solidarity, we used the biannual Korean Social Survey (KSS) (KNSO, 2008, 2012, 2018), which collects data from approximately 20,000 households, to identify intergenerational norms and detect changes in them over time. Aggregated data, which cover the years 2002 to 2018, were used for this purpose.¹ To measure *functional financial* solidarity instead, we used the seven waves of the Korean Longitudinal Study of Aging (KLoSA), which covers the years 2006 to 2018 and its baseline sample (2006) consisted of 10,248 respondents aged 45 years of older. To keep the sample representative of the older population, a refreshment sample of 920 individuals born between 1962 and 1963 was added in wave 5 (2014). While this data set provides a highly nuanced account of financial transfers and fits our conceptual model (directionality, prevalence, intensity), it lacks information on *functional practical* solidarity. For this purpose, we used the KGSS and its two waves from 2006 and 2016, numbering 1052 respondents. This time frame provided the opportunity to analyze patterns of intergenerational solidarity within families before and immediately after the introduction of welfare policies (2008 for the introduction of long-term care insurance and the Basic Pension Scheme). This allowed us to examine modifications in the degree and directions of parallel institutionalization of different forms of solidarity in their early stages.

Measures

Intergenerational norms

In traditional Confucian culture the provision of functional support is regarded as solely the responsibility of the family. This study operationalizes intergenerational norms as the societal perception of the obligation to support elderly (parents). There are two levels which are relevant in this regard (Daatland, 2009). First, regarding the *family*, we are interested by which family member or generation solidarity is expected. On the societal level we ask whether the state and society should contribute to the redistribution of resources and care from the respondents' view. The following question was used to measure intergenerational norms: *Who do you think should be held*

¹The microdata could not be used in the present analysis, as access to microdata is restricted to Korean residents only. We included also the data from the years 2002 and 2006, as these are also available in the Korean Social Survey (2008).

responsible for the support of elderly parents?² The family norm was measured on a five-item scale. The choices were, that the responsibility for the aged parent lies with: the oldest child (daughter-in-law), the son (daughter-in-law), the daughter (son-in-law), joint responsibility of all children, or the responsibility of the able-bodied child. The societal norm was measured on a four-item scale. The choices were, that the responsibility for the aged parent lies with: the individual (elderly parent); the family (defined as one's own children and spouses of those children); jointly the responsibility of the family, government and society; or the government and society.

Functional financial solidarity

The empirical analyses of prevalence, directionality, and intensity of financial transfers are based on seven waves of KLoSA which provide information about the living conditions of the older population (persons at least 45 years of age). We used all those respondents aged 45 and older with at least one adult child (of at least age 18) either living within or outside the parental home at the time of the interview. Respondents without children (alive) were excluded. Since traditionally the eldest (first) child has the primary responsibility to support aged parents, our analyses focus on the first child only.³ To measure financial resources, we analyzed data from the following questions. In ascending direction for non-co-residing dyads: “*In the last calendar year (...), while living separately, did you and your spouse receive from (child) any regular financial support/occasional financial support?*”; in descending direction for non-co-residing dyads: “*In the last calendar year (...) while living separately did you and your spouse give to (child) any regular financial support/occasional financial support?*” In case of co-residing dyads, we analyzed data from these questions from wave 2 (2008) to wave 7 (2018): “*In the last calendar year (...) did you and your spouse receive any financial support/give any financial support from/to (child) while living together?*” For all these monetary exchanges, we also measured total amounts and average amounts that child–parents dyads mutually provided.

²Translation by the authors. The word “부양” (buyang) means provision of support in general, that is, provision of both financial as well as practical (care and help) support.

³The obligation to look after the welfare of older parents has lain traditionally on the shoulders of the eldest sons. However, since the eldest daughters likewise represent an important source of welfare for their parents (and it may be the case that they are the only source of such support), we decided to include them in the analyses.

Functional practical solidarity

We additionally used data from KGSS as a complementary tool to measure transfers of practical support. KGSS enabled us to measure practical support between parents and their first adult children⁴ (children with the “closest contact”) aged 18 years and older. In the KGSS, practical support was defined as the provision of practical help or personal care based on the following questions: “*How frequently did adult child provide practical support to you for the last 12 months?/ How frequently did you provide practical support to this adult child for the last 12 months?*” As in the previous case, we included respondents aged 45 and older. As the relationship between parents-in-law and daughters/sons-in-law is of keen importance in the provision of practical support in Confucian South Korea, we additionally measured these support exchanges. For this purpose, we used these questions: “*(If currently married) How frequently did you do each of the following things to your parent(s)-in-law for the last 12 months?/(If currently married) How frequently did your parent(s)-in-law do each of the following things to you for the last 12 months?*” Here we included respondents aged 18 to 50 (the upper limit due to the lower response rate compared to adult child–parent dyads). Finally, to investigate the gendered organization of practical support, we used these questions: “*How frequently did you do provide practical support to your own parent(s) for the last 12 months?/How frequently did your own parent(s) provide practical support to you for the last 12 months?*” with respondents between 18 and 50 years old. For all six questions, respondents rated the provision of practical support on a five-point Likert-type scale with the choices: very often, often, sometimes, seldom and never. Accordingly, we were able to measure the prevalence and intensity of support provided where the values “very often” an “often” were defined as regularly provided support and “sometimes” and “seldom” as occasionally provided support. Unfortunately, restrictions related to the specific research design and sample size, prevented us from carrying out similar decomposition of categories as for transfers of practical support, which would have directly mirrored financial transfers (e.g., for dyads co-residing or not). Notwithstanding this limitation, we decided to use KGSS in this format as it provides a valuable information that is hardly reported by other surveys.

Analysis

Previous sociological literature has argued that it has been difficult, if not impossible, to draw causal

⁴We call them the “first child,” as most of these children are the oldest, that is, the oldest son or oldest daughter.

conclusions about the role of the welfare state on the intergenerational solidarity (Szydlik, 2008). With the data available, we were also unable to do so. Our ambition was thus to merely investigate the *link* between the two and this we do by testing the correlations between the welfare state and transfers on a macro level (see also Brandt, 2013). We employed a broad measure of the generosity of social welfare: Welfare state was measured here as social expenditure (in USD) per capita, consisting of both pension-based cash benefits and in-kind benefits. In Table 1, which summarizes the trend of social expenditures, we also included number of beds in residential long-term care facilities—a frequently used indicator linked to informal (intergenerational) care, and one of the only internationally comparable ones (Wagner & Brandt, 2017). Because for all the aforementioned indicators we observe an increasing tendency, we decided to include in the following figures and analyses data on social expenditures only to ensure readability (Figures 2–5).

RESULTS

In this section, we present a descriptive overview of trends in intergenerational norms and functional solidarity in South Korea to show if and how they have changed alongside the introduction of social policies developing

the role of the state in the support of older adults in South Korea. We present the results in the following order: first the patterns of intergenerational norms; financial transfers between non-co-residing adult child–parent dyads and between those co-residing; practical transfers between adult parents and both their own children and children-in-law, and lastly the gendered organization of these forms of support.

Normative solidarity

Figure 2 is an overview of solidarity norms in South Korea between 2002 and 2018, based on the percentage distribution of individuals' perceived source of responsibility to care for older Koreans. Overall, solidarity norms have changed fundamentally alongside the expansion of the welfare state. In 2002, 70% of individuals assigned the primary responsibility for assuring older adults' welfare to the family (especially to the children). In contrast, 18% viewed the combination of family, state and society as responsible for the well-being of parents, and merely 10% said this was the sole responsibility of parents themselves. To the welfare state (government) as the sole actor was attributed almost no responsibility. Since 2006, however, this “family-centric” pattern of solidarity norms has changed considerably.

TABLE 1 Social policy indicators (years 2005–2018).

Year	Social expenditure (US \$ per capita)	Pension-based cash benefits (Mill. KRW)	In-kind benefits (Mill. KRW)	Beds in residential LTC facilities
2005	1644	8,912,620	904,791	29,963
2006	1961	9,944,643	1,150,608	40,589
2007	2090	11,218,829	1,496,287	51,310
2008 ^a	2289	15,058,990	1,380,501	70,215
2009	2550	17,783,121	1,389,149	90,775
2010	2639	19,755,803	1,257,200	118,867
2011	2700	21,367,532	1,261,270	125,305
2012	2931	24,051,817	1,550,843	133,629
2013	3190	25,797,461	1,593,564	139,939
2014 ^b	3407	29,650,242	1,635,420	151,200
2015 ^c	3653	34,968,090	1,572,189	160,115
2016	3836	37,498,586	1,901,581	167,899
2017	4041	40,607,625	2,385,418	170,926
2018	4427	44,336,224	2,707,332	177,318

^aIntroduction of Old-Age Pension Scheme and Long-Term Care Insurance.

^bIntroduction of Basic Pension Scheme.

^cReform of National Basic Livelihood Security System.

Source: OECD (2021).

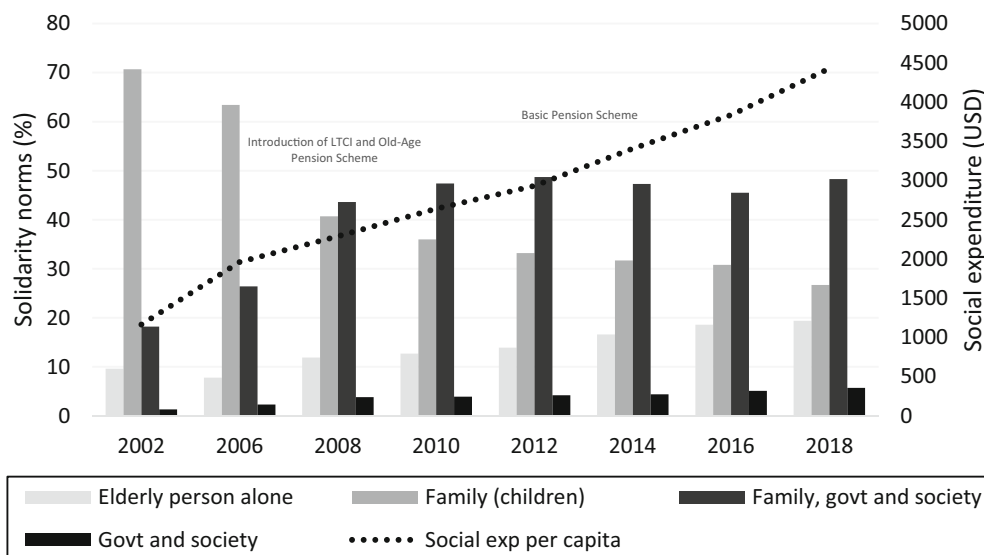


FIGURE 2 Intergenerational norms. Source: Social Survey (KNSO, 2008, 2018), OECD (2021).

From 2006 to 2018 there was a sharp decline in the perceived primary responsibility of children for the welfare and care of the parents more than two-fold. In fact, in 2018, fewer than 27% of respondents designated the family (children) as those primarily responsible for their parents' welfare. It is worth noting that the decline was most prominent between 2006 and 2008 (long-term care insurance and the Old-Age Pension Scheme were introduced in 2008), but has been gradual since then. The more the welfare state becomes involved, the more the prevailing norm of *pure* filial piety seems to be replaced by the norm of shared responsibility in which children, government and society should be involved. Indeed, such a redefined perception of responsibility has almost doubled between 2006 and 2018. On the one hand, the perception of the welfare state's role as the sole primary actor has increased, but remains at a low level. On the other hand, attitudes toward individual responsibility have increased considerably. Changes in social norms might also have practical implications for exchanges of support within families. In the next section, we present our findings on the development of family support patterns over a similar time span.

Functional solidarity: Financial and practical support

Figures 3 and 4 show trends in upward and downward flows of money and practical support, respectively, between parents and adult children at the dyadic level over the period 2006–2008 to 2016–2018. We also

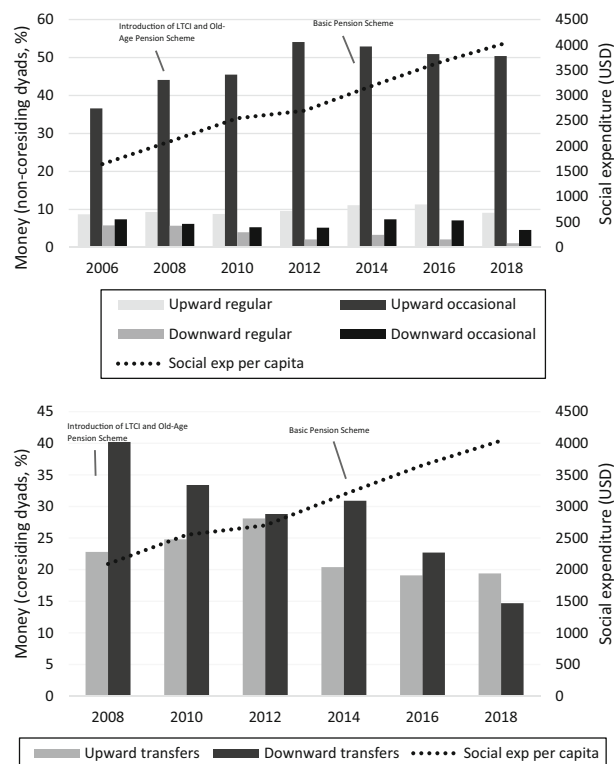


FIGURE 3 Transfers of money from and to children (percentage of dyads). Correlation results between social expenditure and outcomes (solidarity behavior): Non-co-residing: $r^2 = 0.38$ (regular, upward), $r^2 = -0.47^+$ (occasional, upward), $r^2 = -0.73^*$ (regular, downward), $r^2 = -0.28$ (occasional, downward); co-residing: $r^2 = 0.33$ (upward), $r^2 = -0.87^{**}$ (downward). Significance level: $^+p < 0.1$; $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$. Source: KIoSA, wave 1–7, OECD (2021) own calculations, weighted.

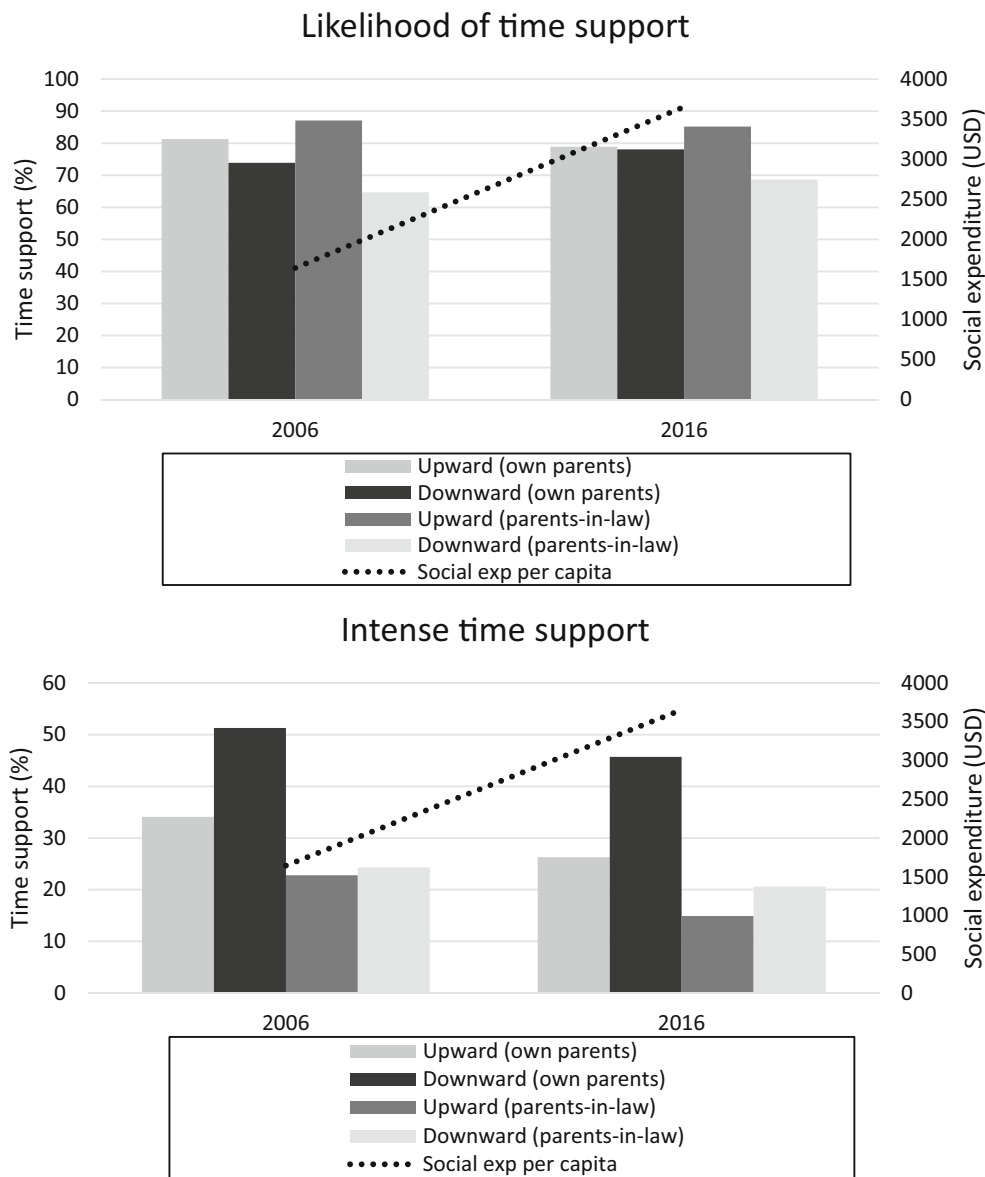


FIGURE 4 Practical support from and to children. Intense practical support is measured as a share of provided practical support (help and care) very often or often. Transfers of practical support between child–parent dyads are for first children only. Both married and unmarried children are considered here. *T*-test for mean differences between 2006 and 2016 (*t*-values, two-tailed) *likelihood*: -0.97 (upward, own children), 1.63^* (downward, own children), -0.74 (upward, in-law), -1.19^* (downward, in-law); *intense*: -2.49^{**} (upward, own children), 1.57 (downward, own children), -2.68^{**} (upward, in-law), -1.02^* (downward, in-law). *Significance level*: $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.001$. *Source*: KGSS wave 2006 and 2016, weighted.

examine how trends in support exchanges reflect the availability of public welfare benefits to older adults.

Prevalence of financial support

First, in examining the situation before the introduction of major policies, the data show that the transfer of financial resources between child–parent dyads not living in the same household reflected to a large extent the traditional “filial piety” pattern of intergenerational solidarity.

This is because nearly half of the non-co-residing adult children transferred money in the upward direction, while only about 14% of older parents did so in the opposite direction. However, financial transfers between co-residing dyads were quite different. Co-residing parents were more likely to provide financial support to adult children and 40% of them reported doing so. In contrast, less than a quarter of co-residing children provided financial support to their parents.

Looking at the role of social expenditure on older adults, we find mostly a negative (“crowding out”)

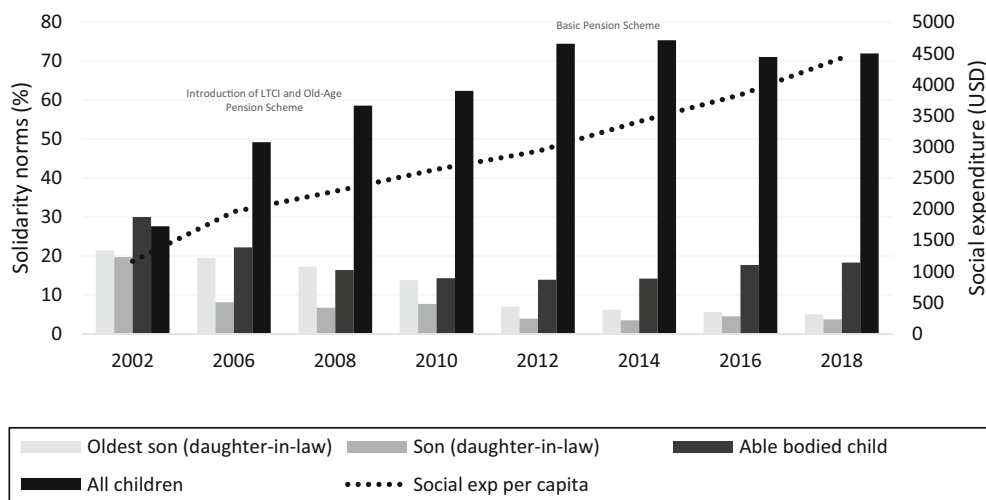


FIGURE 5 Changes in solidarity norms (responsibility assigned to children). *Source:* Korean Social Survey (KNSO, 2008, 2012, 2018).

relation between social expenditure and mutual financial support between children and parents (see Figure 3). Generally, increasing social expenditure went along a decreasing share of parents who supported their offspring financially. This link seems to be more prominent among co-residing rather than non-co-residing dyads. Financial support from adult children to co-residing parents also decreased, suggesting a crowding out of private upward transfers. This decline in upward financial transfers was, however, less steep than declines in downward financial support. By this metric, adult children became in 2018 net providers of financial transfers, reinforcing the traditional “filial piety” character of intergenerational solidarity in South Korea. Filial piety was maintained in the case of non-co-residing dyads where the greater the public support, the more non-co-residing parents aged 45 and older were financially supported by their offspring (“crowding in”). In summary, the link between the developing welfare state in South Korea and actual societal behavior does not reveal a clear trend toward the erosion of intergenerational solidarity in South Korea, even though social expenditures on pension-based cash benefits has increased four-fold (Table 1). As to upward financial transfers, intergenerational support may have strengthened rather than *de-filialized*. Nevertheless, reports of financial support are just one assessment of societal behavior. The intensity of support exchange provides an alternative perspective on how much intergenerational interdependencies have altered with the introduction of welfare policies in South Korea.

Intensity of financial support

The intensity (average amounts) of financial support has also modified over the course of 2006 to 2018. Despite a

declining trend in the prevalence of intergenerational financial support, both generations reported a higher intensity of exchange when such support was previously provided. In particular, among non-co-resident children, the average amount of occasional upward (from children to parents) flows of financial support increased from 522,000 to 756,000 Korean Won (KRW) ($r^2 = 0.46$, sig. = 0.091). This indicates increasing complementarity between public sources of income provided to older people and private exchange of financial resources with adult children. Among co-resident dyads, the intensity of upward financial transfers also increased from 2,918,000 to 3,638,000 KRW ($r^2 = 0.68$, sig. = 0.007). These findings point to the need for a multi-dimensional approach to the study of intergenerational solidarity that accounts for both the intensity and direction, as well as the living arrangements that structure support exchanges, because various facets of intergenerational solidarity may exhibit opposite developments, just as the complementarity and specialization hypotheses would predict (e.g., Brandt, 2013).

Practical support

Figure 4 shows the prevalence of practical support exchanges based on support provided/received for help and personal care. As for time support before the introduction of welfare state policies (2006), parents were more likely to receive help from their children than they were to provide help to them. In about 80% of the child-parent dyads, children supported their parents with help and care (upward). Practical support in the opposite direction, however, did not lag behind, as about 74% of parents provided such support to their adult children. Additionally, daughters-in-law were largely responsible for providing practical support to their in-laws. As our

data show, nearly 87% of children-in-law provided such support, while only 65% of parents-in-law did so in the opposite direction, indicating a much higher unidirectionality of support compared to child–parent dyads. Only minor modifications were found in the provision of practical support, but these were still consistent with the traditional filial contract. Specifically, we observe a relatively small decrease in the likelihood of upward transfers of practical support to both own parents and parents-in-law, while an increase is observed in the opposite direction. Despite that, however, adult children remained the net providers of practical support, even though in the case of adult child–parent dyads, this has been substantially narrowed.

The intensity of practical support, however, presents a different picture, both in terms of the character of the transfer and the intensity of the change (Figure 4). Similar to the pattern of financial transfers, there was high frequency of intergenerational exchange of practical support. Inversely to the likelihood, however, the intensity of practical support tended to be markedly higher in the downward direction. Considering the provision of practical support in 2016, changes have occurred in the intensity of practical support. Regularly provided practical support decreased for both dyads and in both directions, and particularly so from parents to their offspring. In other words, the introduction of social policies altered the provision of practical support which became more occasional.

Gendered organization of intergenerational solidarity

Considerable changes occurred in the gendered organization of intergenerational support with the introduction of welfare state policies. The data indicate a further decline in perceived filial piety obligations of the (oldest) sons toward their elderly parents, moving the responsibility toward all children instead (see Figure 5). We should thus expect, first, greater gender-equal distribution of welfare and care between sons and daughters and therefore a lesser role of first sons in its provision. And second, we should assume the provision of care to be on the decline among daughters-in-law.

The data on the receipt of regular and occasional financial support between the non-co-residing dyads confirms the first hypothesis only partially (see Table 2). Thus we see that the gap between the sons and daughters in the provision of occasional financial support to parents has been closing, but in the opposite direction toward intergenerational norms, with first sons increasing their likelihood of providing support. Similarly, the differences

have diminished for regular support provided; it has remained however primarily in the realm of sons. The flow of financial solidarity in the opposite direction has continued to follow the traditional Confucian principles. Indeed, the sons were more likely to be offered financial support from parents in our study period.

Co-residence continues to be gendered in line with Confucianism, with the higher prevalence of sons co-residing with their parents. Indeed, one third of all first sons co-resided with their older parents in 2008, while only one fourth of first daughters did so. The prevalence of co-residence decreased in 2018 for both sons and daughters, yet the sons were still more likely to co-reside with their parents than were daughters. Interestingly, a higher number of daughters was financially supported by co-residing parents than was the case for sons in 2008. This situation, however, appears to have reversed by 2018. The sons continued to financially support their parents more than did the daughters, yet the difference decreased over the 10-year period.

Finally, regarding practical support, we find that daughters-in-law were more likely to provide practical support to their parents-in-law than sons-in-law, and this did not change over the 10 years. Similarly, daughters-in-law provided this support more regularly than sons-in-law (33% compared to only 9%). However, we observe a decline in the intensity of practical support provided by daughters-in-law, a development that seems consistent with changing norms. Interestingly, although sons-in-law were less likely than daughters-in-law to support their in-laws and with lower intensity, the data show that they were supported by their in-laws more often and with higher intensity than was the case for daughters-in-law. A different picture emerges for adult child–parent dyads. The likelihood of support toward own parents remained similar for sons and daughters, although support in the opposite direction increased for daughters and decreased for sons. Intensity remained constant among sons between 2006 and 2016 (around 30%), but increased among daughters—that is, daughters provided practical support to their own parents more regularly in 2016 (40% in 2016 vs. 29% in 2006). Regular downward support also increased for daughters and sons, but more so for daughters.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper is to investigate patterns of intergenerational solidarity in a newly developing welfare state. To do this we analyzed levels of functional solidarity and intergenerational norms in South Korea, a country

TABLE 2 Gendered organization of intergenerational solidarity (values in %).

		Frequency				Difference ^a (2018–2008)	t-value ^b
		2008		2018			
		Sons	Daughters	Sons	Daughters		
Financial support							
Co-residence levels		40.6	32.8	26.7	18.9	–13.9	–12,400**
Non-co-residing	Regularly offered to parents	12.2	6.3	11.0	7.0	–1.2	–0.760
	Occasionally offered to parents	39.9	48.4	48.3	52.5	8.4	6704**
	Regularly received from parents	6.5	5.0	2.0	0.4	–4.5	–6217**
	Occasionally received from parents	7.2	5.3	5.5	3.8	–1.7	–3781**
Co-residing	Offered to parents	21.2	20.3	20.5	17.6	–0.7	–1847
	Received from parents	44.5	45.1	16.2	13.5	–28.3	–12,422**
Practical support							
		2006		2016		Difference	t-value
		Sons	Daughters	Sons	Daughters		
Children to own parents	Provision of support	90.5	90.1	92.9	90.1	2.4	1206*
	Regularly ^c	29.4	28.8	29.8	39.5	0.4	0.074
	Occasionally	70.6	71.2	70.2	60.5	-	-
Children to parents-in-law	Provision of support	82.8	90.6	78.5	91.1	–4.3	–1048*
	Regularly ^c	8.9	33.2	7.5	20.4	–1.4	–0.441
	Occasionally	91.1	66.8	92.5	79.6	-	-

Note: Significance level: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$, t -test for mean differences, two-tailed.

^aMeasured as the difference in the respective solidarity transfer between 2018 and 2008 (financial transfers) or in 2016 and 2006 (practical support transfers) from the perspective of sons.

^bDifference in outcomes for sons across 2008 and 2018 is tested.

^cRegularly: calculated from all respondents that provided support and provide such support 'very often' or 'often'.

Source: KLoSA, wave 2 and 7, KGSS wave 2006 and 2016.

traditionally based on strong familial and filial norms but which has been rapidly introducing social welfare policies in recent years. We considered both financial and practical support exchanges in degrees of directionality, prevalence and intensity using KLoSA and KGSS, and data on intergenerational norms from the KSS.

In the last 20 years, South Korea has been profoundly developing its welfare state and done so not only by extensions in the income support by means of old-age pensions and social assistance schemes but also by the introduction of long-term care insurance (Choi, 2012; Lee et al., 2019). How the socialization of welfare and care of older people affect intergenerational solidarity has instantly come to the forefront of academic research. Previous research has argued that public sources of income have continuously replaced the private resources of children, which have traditionally been a major source of income for Korean older people (Jung et al., 2016;

Kang & Sawada, 2009; Ku & Kim, 2020; Lee, 2022). They have thus hypothesized a crowding out effect regarding financial transfers.

One might have expected that with such a profoundly developing welfare state, the traditional direction of intergenerational support would be gradually reversing (Caldwell, 1982). Our study, with its restricted time frame and available data, does not confirm this hypothesis. Parents are still net receivers of both monetary and practical support transfers, and the traditional pattern of the filial/familial contract has been instead intensified as indicated by monetary transfers in both co-residing and non-co-residing adult child–parent dyads. Our research shows that intergenerational solidarity in the form of financial support (and not considering changes in co-residence patterns) has not been *de-filialized* as there has been no substantial reduction in filial financial support. On the contrary, the data

show an increase of upwards financial support, particularly as transfers provided occasionally, which indicates a complementarity of financial transfers from the state and children. This may be related to the fact that more than 50% of all elderly citizens aged 65 and older still do not receive an old-age pension (Lee, 2022), nor do all those who do, receive adequate resources. However, it is likely that the number of adult children providing financial support is higher than indicated in KLoSA. This potential underreporting of intergenerational solidarity could be motivated by fears of losing social assistance entitlements, which were strictly conditioned by the absence of financial support from the family obligator—and that included the adult children. Children, whose position in the exchange pattern is largely unchanged, therefore remain a central source of security against social risks and a cornerstone of solidarity in Korean society. The South Korean pattern of intergenerational support contrasts with earlier findings of comparative European research, which postulate that inter vivos financial transfers flow downwards (Albertini et al., 2007; Kim & Choi, 2011).

As the KGSS data show, a large proportion of adult children continue to provide practical support to their elderly parents. This may be related both to the lack of providers in more remote areas (e.g., rural and fisher communities), and to the lower quality of care services provided, resulting from weak gatekeeping and insufficient training of health professionals for care of the older population (Chon, 2019; Theobald & Chon, 2020).

Nevertheless, the Korean intergenerational solidarity contract is undergoing a *modification* of its traditional patterns. As indicated by previous research, changes in solidarity patterns are observed with declining intergenerational co-residence (Park et al., 2005). The gendered organization of intergenerational solidarity seems to be partially altered, too, with narrowing differences between sons and daughters in terms of perceived obligations, on the one hand, but on the other, increasing intensity of practical support provided by daughters, while the opposite is true for daughters-in-law. Our findings also hint at changes in financial support based on mutual co-residence and, particularly, in normative solidarity as indicated by a shift away from the norms of a traditionally filial piety-centric character to one of shared responsibility among society, family and the state. Yet, this process is not unidirectional as traditional patterns of solidarity based on strong filial piety norms, such as practical and monetary exchanges, and the role of sons have been sustained if not reinforced. Despite some departures from traditional forms of filial piety such as multi-generation households, our findings

suggest this may be partially compensated for by other forms of solidarity.

Although South Korea has adopted welfare policies following the example of already developed European welfare states, societal practice of modified intergenerational solidarity still to a high degree reflects traditional Korean patterns and there has been no clear “westernization.” Our analysis of functional solidarity shows a strong path-dependency of solidary behavior in a traditional society. This may partially reflect the intention behind the introduction of welfare policies, which were introduced to address the structural challenges of the aging population while still latently relying on informal support networks based on filial piety, thereby maintaining cultural norms of intergenerational solidarity (Park, 2015).

Taken together, while the societal practice of intergenerational “functional” solidarity does not show any evidence of de-filialization in welfare state’s early stages, but rather only modest modifications, intergenerational norms have been undergoing a substantial change. The traditionally defined filial and family contract has been to a high degree replaced by the shared contract in which family (children), government and society are now viewed as primarily responsible for the welfare and care of parents. This departure from the traditional understanding of the well-being of elderly parents as a private issue and as the sole responsibility of the children, seems to have been highly fostered by the increasing involvement of the South Korean welfare state. Since these attitudes are strongly shifting in the direction of de-familization and de-filialization, future research should pay more attention to this issue, and particularly to the consequences of this change for the assurance of maintenance of intergenerational solidarity within families in later stages of welfare state development.

The present research has important theoretical and practical implications. It shows that intergenerational contracts within families—not only in South Korea, but also globally—may stand at an important turning point because normative intergenerational solidarity may be more prone than expected to undergo substantial changes during the introduction of welfare state policies, and to experience increasing social trust in the institutions of the welfare state and thus expect more from them. Thus the continuously more generous involvement of the welfare state is crucial, for example, by facilitating the reconciliation of individual and familial resources in an aging society. On the other hand, a continuously insufficient level of support of welfare state institutions or even its retrenchment may be detrimental to the well-being of vulnerable family members and cause potential tensions and conflicts between the generations. Therefore, welfare

states should adopt policies that are responsive to the (care) preferences of their citizens.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even if this study provides new evidence, it serves as just a start to closing a research gap, having several limitations. First, as our focus has been on the analysis of changing forms of intergenerational solidarity during the introduction and in the early stages of welfare state development, we were restricted to the study of a short period of time and were unable to observe and analyze further modifications or fundamental path-departures from traditional patterns of intergenerational solidarity which may still lie in the future. Second, although the KLoSA data provide us with detailed information on various facets of financial transfers between aging Koreans and their adult children, information on exchanges of practical support is lacking. For this reason, we used another source (KGSS) to examine this element of intergenerational solidarity. While both data sets give a more comprehensive picture of solidarity exchanges in South Korea, we are aware of issues with regard to data comparability. The KLoSA survey also does not distinguish the type of financial support provided, thus disabling its potential to track possible substitution effects. Lastly, data constraints allowed us to examine only aggregated measures on the micro level and connected them with rough welfare state indicators over time. As intergenerational solidarity within families is conditioned by many factors on different levels (see Szydlik, 2008), our analysis would need considerable extensions in order to disentangle any *causal* relationships of intergenerational solidarity with the developing welfare state policies – if that were even empirically possible given the complexity and the role of other links, such as individual behaviors, political history, and global trends such as individualization, or culture (cf. van Oorschot et al., 2008). Our analysis thus can only provide first insights into the association between the (introduction of) welfare state (policies) and intergenerational solidarity in a non-European/Western context. Still, the link between the introduction of welfare state measures and forms of intergenerational solidarity seems quite clear: the increasing involvement of the welfare state goes hand-in-hand with changes in normative intergenerational solidarity. Simultaneously, actual societal practice in terms of functional exchanges seems to be more inert, and we find no trend toward an actual de-familization of the traditional Korean society.

We thus believe that our unique explorative analysis delivers first insights into the empirical association

between the welfare state and intergenerational support in East Asia which may serve as a starting point for many fruitful research ideas and hypotheses. The theoretical and empirical foundations of our study thus invite further studies to focus on more in-depth investigations of mechanisms and predictive changes related to the role of welfare state and normative/functional intergenerational solidarity. Such studies could shed light on the association between social policies and intergenerational transfers such as with the occurrence of age-related changes in parent's needs (e.g., with disability). One of the most interesting questions is whether the erosion of intergenerational solidarity can prompt the introduction of welfare policies to meet people's needs. Such a question promises to be consequential for social policy, so that further investigation of the mutual influence of (developing) welfare states and (traditional) intergenerational family relations will be highly relevant.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ORCID

Martin Gurin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1911-9362>

Martina Brandt  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9350-845X>

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 Sample characteristics financial help to (non-co-residing and co-residing) parent (KloSA).

	Non-co-residing		Co-residing	
	Wave 1 (2006)	Wave 7 (2018)	Wave 2 (2008)	Wave 7 (2018)
Age	64.8	71.0	58.1	65.0
Gender				
Male	41.9	40.7	45.9	45.6
Female	58.1	59.3	54.1	54.4
Marital status				
Married/living with a partner	76.8	74.1	81.1	77.1
Separated	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.5
Divorced	1.4	2.1	1.8	3.0
Widowed	21.0	23.1	16.6	19.4
Never married	0	0.1	0	0
Educational background				
No formal education until elementary	54.3	42.8	29.7	23.8
Middle school	17.5	17.8	15.2	11.9
High school	20.2	28.6	39.2	42.5
College/University	8.0	10.8	15.9	21.7
Health				
Very good	1.9	0.6	2.7	0.6
Good	7.8	4.3	12.6	8.5
Fair	31.4	36.1	45.1	40.8
Bad	28.8	36.4	24.5	35.3
Very bad	30.1	22.7	15.2	14.8
Living distance				
Within 30 min	19.1	16.9		
Within 1 h	24.9	26.8		
Within 2 h	16.7	23.1		
More than 2 h	39.0	33.1		
<i>n</i> persons	6657	5145	2435	1147

Note: Own calculations, unweighted percentages, and means.

TABLE A2 Sample characteristics time support to parent (KGSS).

	2006	2016
Age	58.3	62.7
Gender		
Male	45.4	41.8
Female	54.6	58.2
Marital status		
Married/living with a partner	78.2	70.9
Separated	0.8	1.3
Divorced	3.3	4.2
Widowed	17.6	19.8
Never married	2.0	3.8
Educational background		
No formal education until elementary	29.4	29.7
Middle school	16.1	11.4
High school	28.2	29.7
College/University	25.3	29.0
Health		
Very good	16.3	15.8
Good	27.9	29.0
Fair	24.9	24.3
Bad	17.6	17.3
Very bad	13.3	13.5
Employed	55.5	52.0
<i>n</i> persons	663	613

Note: Own calculations, unweighted percentages, and means.

TABLE A3 Sample characteristics intergenerational norms (KSS).

	2008	2018
Age	37.2	43.2
Gender		
Male	48.5	48.4
Female	51.5	51.6
Marital status		
Married/living with a partner	66	60.6
Divorced	3.2	4.7
Widowed	8	8.7
Never married	22.8	25.2
Educational background		
No formal education until elementary	17.2	14.9
Middle school	10.7	11.9
High school	36.9	31.7
College/University	35.3	41.4
Health		
Very good	9.6	8.7
Good	40.1	37.9
Fair	34.8	35.7
Bad	13.4	15
Very bad	2.1	2.8
<i>n</i> persons	52,940	42,550

Note: Own calculations, unweighted percentages, and means.