

Interaction between Public Policy and Social Capital: Child-care Policy and Birth Rate

Masayuki Kanai (Senshu University)

Keywords: public policy, support network, child care

This exploratory empirical study examines whether municipal policy for child care (i.e. institutional environment) enhances or counteracts the effect of its residents' support network size (i.e. social capital embedded in the social network) on the expected number of their children. Residents living in the purposive sampled two municipalities with advanced child-care policies (n=321) and those in the four random sampled standard municipalities (n=310) in Nagano prefecture completed the questionnaire survey about their support network size, and the number of their children. Descriptive statistics shows that there are significantly positive simple correlations between policy (i.e. advanced or standard municipalities) and the number of children, and between network size and children. The Poisson GLM regression of the number of children to advanced municipality dummy, support network size, and the interaction term of both of them controlled by age and household income shows that the interaction of municipality and network size has the significantly negative effect on the number of children. This means that institutional environment (public policy) could diminish the necessity of social capital embedded in the social network for people's life chance.