



# Women and gender ideology in aging Korea

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- Some facts about Korea as an aging society and senior citizens' issues
- What is it like being a woman aging in a family-oriented culture?
- Our future

# Population indicators and projections for South Korea

	Population (in millions)	Fertility rate	Life expectancy (gender gap) <sup>a</sup>	Median age <sup>b</sup>	Sex ratio <sup>b</sup> (65+)	Share of elderly (%) <sup>c</sup>	Old age dependency ratio <sup>d</sup>
1970	31.4	4.5	61.9 (6.9)	18.5	100.8 (54.5)	3.3	5.7
1980	37.4	2.7	65.7 (8.3)	21.8	100.5 (49.0)	3.9	6.1
1990	42.9	1.6	71.3 (8.3)	27.0	100.7 (50.3)	5.0	7.4
2000	47.0	1.5	76.0 (7.3)	32.0	100.7 (61.8)	7.3	10.1
2010	49.4	1.2	80.8 (6.9)	38.1	98.7 (68.1)	11.0	15.2
<b>2020</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>82.6 (6.4)</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>99.4 (74.5)</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>22.1</b>
2030	52.1	1.3	84.3 (5.5)	48.5	98.6 (81.1)	24.3	38.6
2040	51.1	1.3	86.0 (4.8)	52.6	97.8 (82.5)	32.3	57.2

Notes:

a. The number in parentheses refers to the gender gap (life expectancy of women minus that of men).

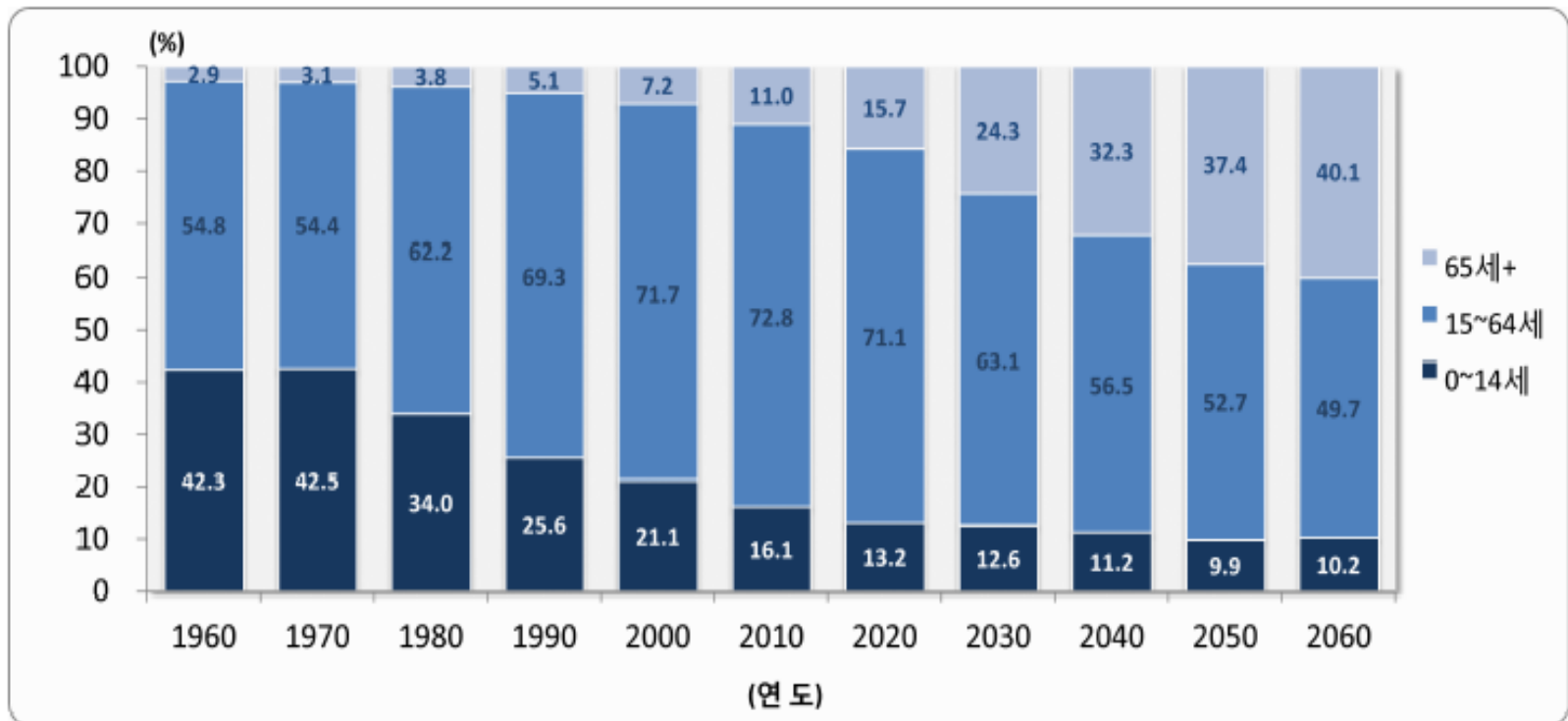
b. per 100 women

c. The number of persons age 65 or above as a percentage of the total population.

d. (population aged 65+/aged 15–64) x 100

Source: Data up to 2010 come from the Census, as applicable, and data after 2010 are based on Population Prospects, based on the medium variant from Statistics Korea (KOSIS), available at <http://kosis.kr/> accessed on 27 November 2015.

# Korean Population prospects by age group



Source: Statistics Korea (2012) *Population Projections for Korea: 2010~2060*, p.34 (Figure 21)

# Some facts about poverty, loneliness, and care in older ages in Korea in a comparative sense

- The latest Global AgeWatch Index 2015 places Korea at 82<sup>nd</sup> (value of 24.7) out of 96 countries in the world in terms of old age income security (HelpAge International, 2015); Japan at the 33<sup>rd</sup> (value of 75.1), followed by China at the 75<sup>th</sup> (39.2).
- Income of older people (65+) in Korea stays at about 60% of the whole population's incomes, which is the lowest among OECD countries (2014 OECD Pensions at a Glance dataset, extracted on 27 Jan 2016)
- (Aggregated) public social expenditure only about 10% of its GDP as of 2014, which is lower than a half of the OECD average of 21.6% (OECD Social expenditure data, extracted on 25 Oct 2015)
- the average life satisfaction among South Koreans is among the lowest in OECD member countries (OECD Better Life Index 2015)
- about a third of persons aged 65 and above has depression symptoms (2014 Survey on Actual Conditions of Older Persons in Korea)
- Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) was introduced in 2008, second after Japan in Asia.

# Poverty rate by HH type (2014)

		Household Head	
by household type	All	Working aged (18-65)	Aged 65 or over
Market income poverty	18.9	12.4	65.7
Market income + public transfer	17.1	11.8	55.3
Market income + public expenditures	18.6	12.2	64.7
Disposable income	16.4	11.3	53.1

*Source:* Annual survey on household finances and living conditions (2014), available from KOSIS (accessed 2 Nov 2015)

# Main ways to meet living expenses in old age (2013, %)

Sources	Men	Women
Self or spouse	54.5	40.6
Pension/severance payment	32.3	21.9
Savings/bonds	12.0	9.5
Assets/real estates	4.0	3.7
Paid work	6.2	5.5
Children or relatives	24.8	30.4
Public/social support	20.7	28.5
Others	0.2	0.5

Note:

- . Pension includes public (NP or other occupational pensions) and private (additional), either own or spouse's.
- . Multiple replies by those who define themselves as 'elderly'.

Sources: Korean Retirement & Income Study, available from KOSIS.

# Old age income sources (2014, 65+, %)

	Persons	Total	Men	Women
Aged pop (65+)	6,385,559	100.0	41.8	58.2
NP (old age)	1,981,184	30.9	50.9	<b>17.3</b>
BL	379,048	6.0	4.4	<b>7.1</b>
Paid work	2,045,000	31.9	43.0	23.9

Sources: UN World Population Prospects (2015); NP Statistics, Economically Active Population Survey, KOSIS, accessed November 27, 2015.



## Changes in living arrangements in later life

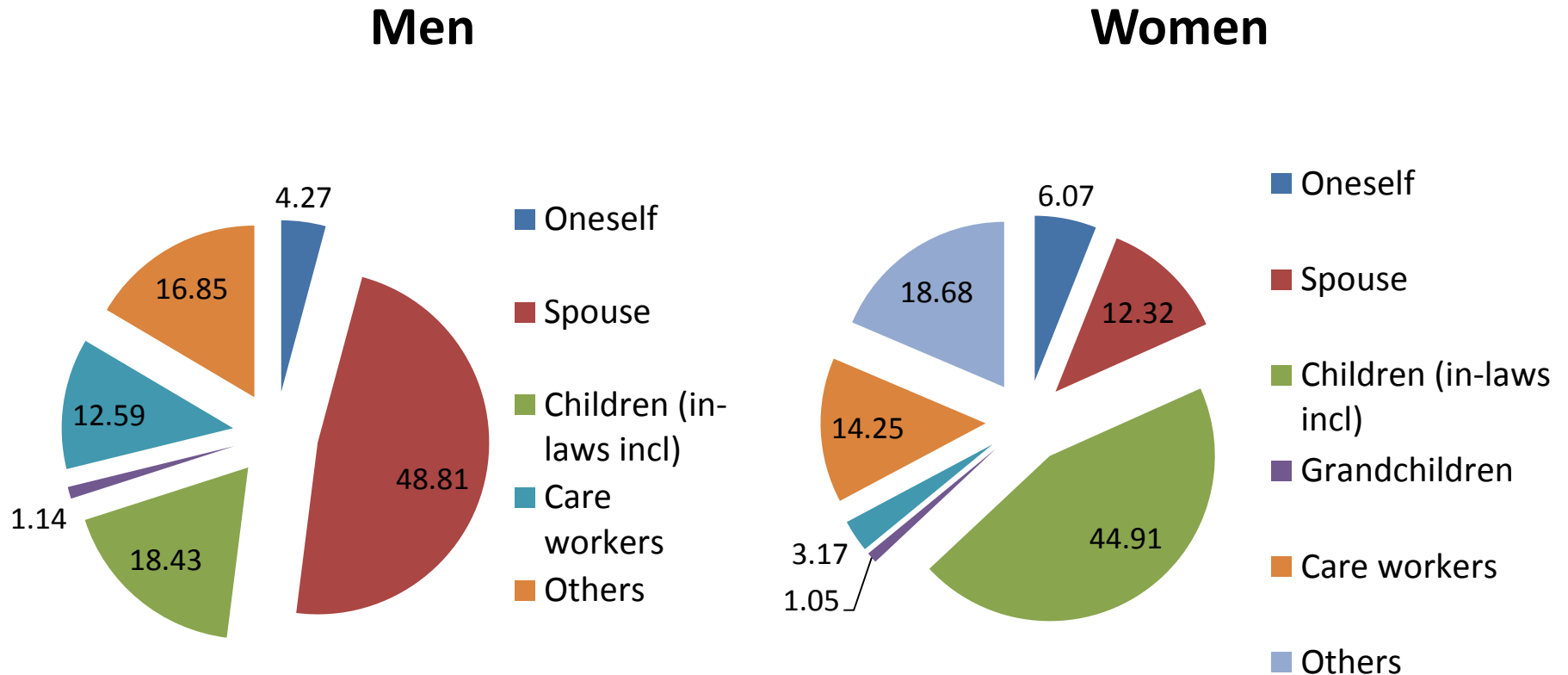
Type	1994	2004	2014
with adult children	54.7	38.6	28.4
in a couple only	26.8	34.4	44.5
Living alone	13.6	20.6	23.0
others	4.9	6.4	4.0

*Source:* Surveys on Actual Conditions of Older Persons in Korea, as quoted in MoHW (2015: 9)

# Loneliness and lack of activities

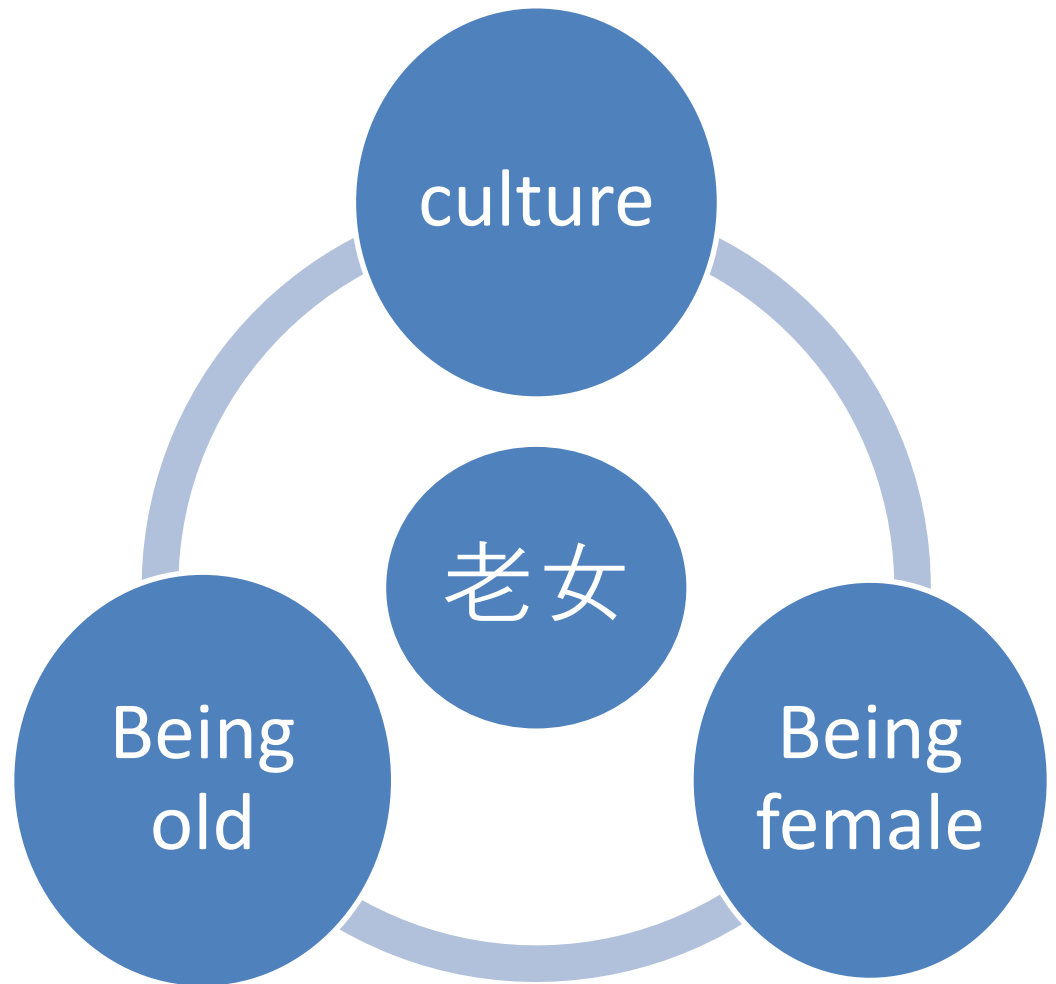
- More than 60% of those living apart from their adult children do not receive regular visits (i.e. more than once a week);
- The use of public seniors' welfare centers (344 老人福祉館 in total across the nation) for leisure, exercising and various educational and activity programs stands at lower than 9% among older persons, mainly due to accessibility issues (mostly located more than 30 min-walking distance away).
- Senior citizens' halls (老人亭) in almost every neighborhood are also under-used; frequented by only 26% of senior citizens aged 65 or above.
- The older, the less educated, the more unemployed, and the less wealthy someone is, the higher is the likelihood of living alone. In sum, the most vulnerable turn out to be the most marginalised (Chung et al., 2014: 107–8).

# Care – women being the main provider (LTCI)



Source: LTCI Statistics 2010, Main care-provider for LTCI beneficiaries

**What is a  
'good life in old  
age' for  
women in a  
family-centred  
culture?**



# Successful aging: cross-cultural distinctiveness

## Western

‘Activity’,  
‘Productivity’,  
‘Participation’  
(economic and  
social participation)

## Asian (family-centred)

‘Relational’,  
‘Balanced’  
‘Harmonious’  
- securing social  
support  
- close **family**  
relations  
- positive relations  
with others

e.g.  
*becoming no burden  
to others,  
(particularly to **adult  
children**);  
completing  
[parents’/adults’]  
roles;  
self-control, etc.*

# Successful aging/happiness: gender differences

## Men

- ‘children’s education and career advancement

An old man would feel proud and “successfully ageing” if he could keep supporting, particularly financially, his adult children.

## Women

- securing social support (from adult children)

children symbolize their accomplishment of “parents’ duties” and thereby mean that children need to show that they require no more help from “mum”.

# Care and women of the older generation in the Korean context

- ‘Ideally’ male breadwinner model...  
*Men have to go out and earn money, not women.*
- Old women continue to be the main sources of care provision until their later life, not only for spouses, but also for adult children and grandchildren, and that this care requirements usually cause a physical and psychological burden to older women and sometimes family conflicts. (Choi et al. 2012)
- Do, or should, ageing women accept this “endless care burden” because it is culturally recommended/acknowledged for older women? Or is this changing (notably by an increasing number of women in paid work)?

## Gender inequality in selected countries in terms of time-use for care

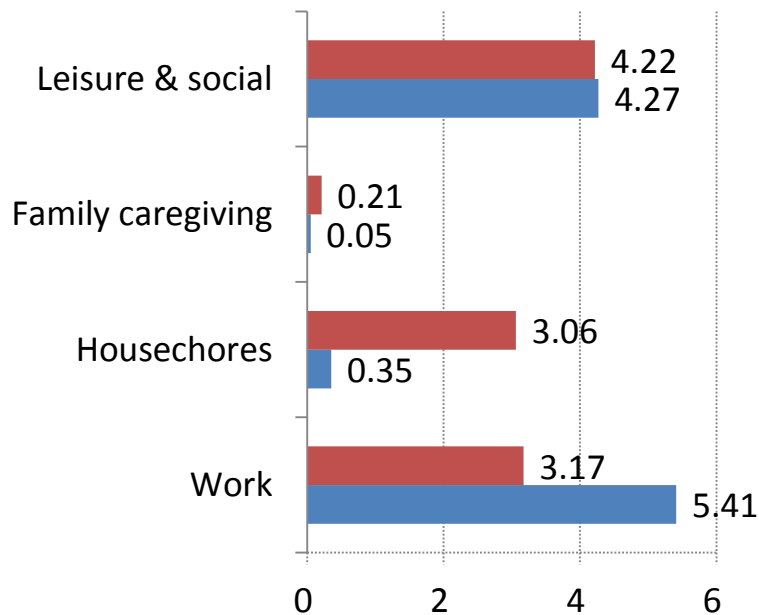
Variables	Korea	Japan	China	Sweden	US	India
Female to male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care work	5.28	4.83	2.57	1.49	1.61	9.83

*Source:* OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2014

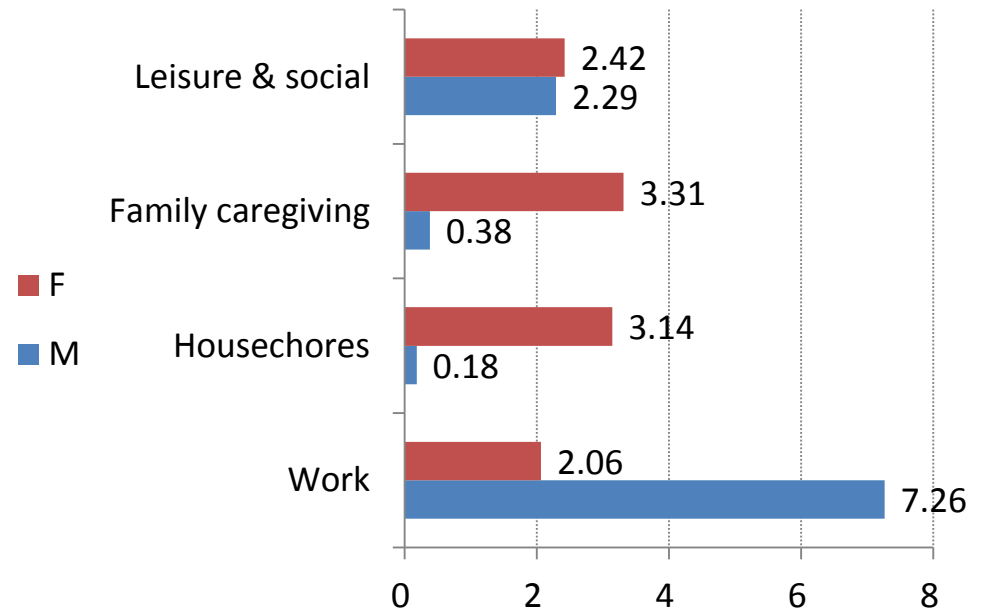


# The case of Korea

## Without young children



## With young children (<8)

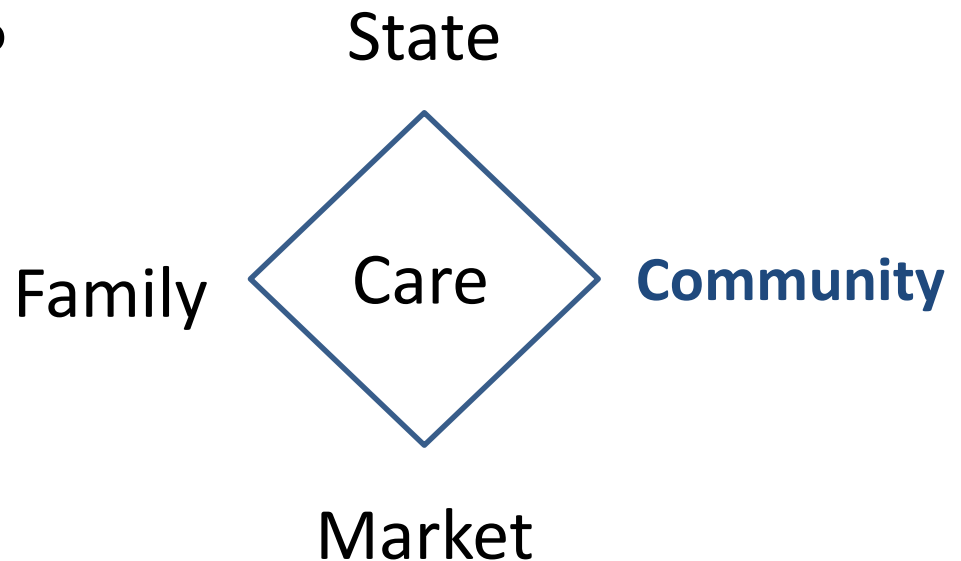


Source: Time Use Survey (Weekdays, 2014), Statistics Korea (KOSIS), accessed 1 April 2016

# A big Question is...

*Who is going to support this increasing number of older persons (financially/emotionally/caring)?*

- Older persons themselves(ourselves)?
- Adult children?
- State?



# OPSHGs' snap shots



Photos taken during my field research on HAK-OPSHG initiative and ageing in communities –  
Bucheon/Gwanak cases  
(Dec 2015-Jan 2016)

# Towards 'aging in community'

- it is acknowledged as having contributed to and brought about the changes to our understanding and approach regarding older persons as fair and contributing community members, rather than simply clients or beneficiaries (Greenfield et al., 2015).
  - The recently highlighted approach of 'ageing in communities' in the West signifies a shift in 'the emphasis away from dwellings and towards relationships' (Thomas and Blanchard, 2009: 17).
  - interdependency, or 'reciprocity and mutual support among neighbours and across generations' comes as one of the qualities of ageing in community.
  - the goal of an age-friendly community initiative is 'to enhance older adults' health and well-being; to strengthen their capacity to live in their own homes or communities safely and comfortably; and to facilitate their engagement in meaningful community roles' (Greenfield et al., 2015: 193).
- *Participation & integration & generativity*

# Being continued...

- A **paradigm shift** required to answer such questions as:
  - *which combination of work and care arrangements do we want?*
  - *who do we want to take care of us?*
- What are the (physical/social/political) conditions that create the environment for older persons to actively participate in community activities and in turn to contribute to building an aging-friendly community? What is the optimal partnership pattern, if any (central and local governments, NGOs, community members, and others)?
- Would a space among [low-income] senior members only, serve for the ultimate objective of aging in community, or, creating an 'age-friendly community'?

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