

## **Social Discourses on Lone Motherhood in South Korea: Social Prejudice and Process of Resistance, Adaptation and Negotiation**

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**Abstract :** In South Korea, Confucianism has not only played a crucial position in Korean traditional culture but also deeply rooted in people's mind. Confucianism bears a special emphasis on the traditional family pattern characterized by paternalism. Therefore, non-paternity families are barely recognized and unwed mothers are faced with numerous prejudices in their life. Prejudice to unwed mothers in Korea is believed to stem from social discourses against lone motherhood which is the way how people look and talk about unwed mothers and from the early time these social discourses have big impacts on their daily lives. However, after the 1990s, along with the rapid transformation of family pattern and support from social welfare organizations, unwed mothers have gradually got to escape from the social prejudice then established themselves as a new family form. This study is aimed at researching social discourses on lone motherhood in Korea and the process of resistance, adaptation and negotiation of unwed mothers in three different stages: the antenatal, postnatal stages and social inclusion. The anthropological method is employed. Twenty single young mothers of the Korean Unwed Mothers Families' Association were engaged in the author's detailed interviews. The study's frame analysis is based on the theoretical framework on social discourses on lone motherhood by Simon Duncan and Rosalind Edwards (1999). This study is an effort to comprehend and investigate the difficulties experienced by unwed mothers living in negative social discourses and the way they overcome the difficulties.

**Keywords :** unwed mothers, gender, social discourses, social prejudice, Confucianism

**Conference Title :** ICA 2017 : International Conference on Anthropology

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** October 19-20, 2017