

# ANALYSIS OF FAMILIAL INTERACTIONS AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS OF LIVING-NEAR FAMILIES

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## Abstract

“Living-near families” refers to parents and married-children’s families living in close geographical proximity. This study was conducted to analyse different types of familial interactions, the level of satisfaction, geographical spaces, and spatial characteristics of the living-near families in Seoul. Twenty-seven females who were living close to either their parents or their married-children participated in face-to-face interviews. The main findings were as follows: (1) Average travel time between parents and children was 10-15 minutes, regardless of transportation modes. The average housing and household sizes of children and parents’ families were 77 m<sup>2</sup> (3.79 persons) and 103 m<sup>2</sup> (2.62 persons), respectively, which showed that children’s families had a two times higher household density. (2) Both generations were satisfied with living near each other. In particular, children who lived close to their parents showed higher satisfaction compared to children who lived close to parents-in-laws. However, the proximity to their parents negatively affected the satisfaction with privacy. (3) Major factors that contributed to children moving further away from their parents were the education of the respondents’ children or spouse’s job-related relocation.

Keywords: Living-near Families, familiar interactions, sharing spaces, residential environment.

## INTRODUCTION

### Study Background

Human being faces a variety of risks by dispersing them into individual mutuality. A person, who builds our society, is being connected to other people in a random place and receive unexpected benefits. Families are still one of the main subject which

provides with the important housing functions. However, it is difficult for assuming the status of a family based on the past. Therefore, it is very important to form mutualism which shares a variety of social risks that corresponds with social change. This is very important as the low-birth and aging society are in progress.

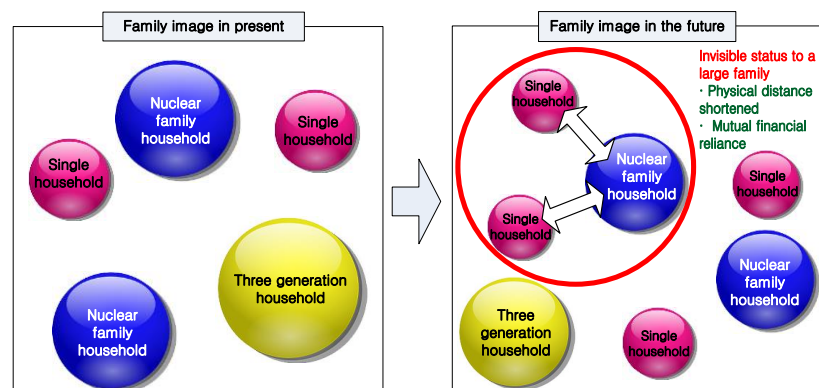


Fig 1. Invisible family concept chart (Source : Kawadu, 2008)

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Therefore this study focuses on the pattern of a divided family of married-children who are ‘living near’ with their parents and using the words ‘living-near’ to study the concept and characteristics as well as an in-depth study of ‘living-near’ interaction. The concept of ‘Living-near families’ is defined as “Parents and children, or people with familial relationship are living in a single residence but maintaining the familial interaction by living in close geographical proximity.”

### Study Methodology

Study methodology were conducted with looking into the concept and the characteristics of ‘living-near’ by literature review. Locations for study were focused at the centre of Myeonmok-dong, Jungrang-gu, Seoul and include the parts of Sangbong-dong as well. These areas are one of the typical residential areas and consist of a large distribution of multi-dwelling/multiplex houses instead of apartment complexes.

### THE CONCEPT OF ‘LIVING-NEAR FAMILIES’ AND LITERATURE REVIEW ASSOCIATED WITH STUDY ON ASSOCIATED SYSTEM

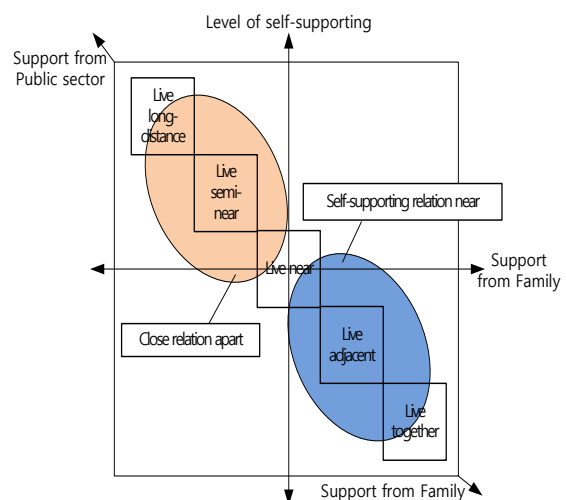
#### The concept of ‘living-near families’

The concept of ‘Living-near families’ refers to a living pattern of married-children’s families living in close geographical proximity with the parents (or parents moving close to married-children’s residence). ‘Living-near’ can also be defined as “Parents and children, or people with familial relationship, are living in single residence but maintaining the familial interaction by living in close geographical proximity.”

Therefore, the concept of ‘living-near’ focuses on the cooperative form of living which comes from living in close proximity to each other, not only on connecting the living form based on the housing life of single residence.

One of the main issues under discussion is the spatial distance definition, on how to determine two random separated families are either adjacent or close, depending on the separated distance. Adjacent living is not so controversial based on the fact that is adjacent; however, some scholars have different opinions on the definition of close living.

Fig 2. Various living forms according to



independency and support (source : Kamiwada, 2011)

Table 1: Life characteristics by familial and spatial living forms in network living

Spatial diagnosis	Familial and spatial living forms	Characteristics	
Short-distance network (same city or district)	Satellite family	Near-Living	Frequent face to face interactions
		Close-Living	Countermeasure to low-birth, aging society and mutual cooperation possible
Mid-distance network (different city or district)	Weekend Couple	Semi- close-living	Transport expense reduced
			2~3 hours distance by car from central area (domestic)
			Face to face interaction directed
			Development of transport infrastructure is important

Long-distance network (different megapolis)	Weekend couple, long-distance family	Far-living	3~5 hours distance by car from central area (domestic) Face to face interaction reduced Development of transport infrastructure is important
Extra long-distance network (overseas)	Extra long-distance family	Extra far-living	Family divided by residing abroad (overseas) Limited face to face interaction Development of transport infrastructure is important

**The Advantage of ‘living-near families’**

A family divided by space has options to choose living adjacent or closed to other family member which can reduce the social costs by physical and mental interaction within the family. This is the fundamental foundation on which this study was conducted, which was a scholastic study based on developing the social welfare system from the space planning and design which corresponds with the right function of family.

The advantages from the parent generation’s point of view are, that the need for relationships with others increase gradually, and they can gain mental support from their children which cannot be obtained through the civic support, care or finance. As a result, daily support based on three generations living together in the past are decreased. Also, parents receive constant support from the “apart, but close relationships” with their children which has been increased on demand.

Another advantages from the children generation’s point of view are the cases of married-children living close to parents have been increasing as double-income couples increased because they can be helped with their own children or with the housework from the parents. Actually, the double-income couples these days with parents of baby-boomers, have tendency to live in close proximity with the retired

parents to be compensated for the lack of public infant care systems.

**ACTUAL CONDITION SURVEY AND SPACE ANALYSIS OF ‘LIVING-NEAR FAMILIES’**

**Introduction of Actual Condition Survey on ‘living-near families’**

The main transportation of the children’s generation to the parents’ residence was by walking and the mean time was 7.3 minutes. As for the public

transportation, bus was by 10 minutes and the total average was 15 minutes, and as for taxi, the average time was 5 minutes. Hence, just looking at the time taken, the spatial distance between living-near families of the research subjects was about 10~15 minutes apart.

By current conditions of the children’s generation has these characteristics; the monthly income average was 3~ 3.5 million won (25%), residential format order from the highest to the lowest was multiplex housing (38%), multi-dwelling housing (25%), row house (17%), apartment (13%). The lease was the half of the cases (50%), personally owned was 42% and monthly rent was very low percentage.

By the parents’ generation’s cases, row houses were 38%, apartment/ multiplex housing/ multi-dwelling housing were all 17% each. The average perimeter of the houses were 103m<sup>2</sup> which is 1.34 times bigger than the average perimeter of the children’s houses, 77m<sup>2</sup>. From the children generation’s point of view, they live in about 75% the size of house of their parents. Property form was mostly personally owned which was 83% but lease was only 13%.

By comparison of the average residence perimeter per person of the family, the children’s generation has 20.4m<sup>2</sup> per person but the parents have 39.3m<sup>2</sup> per person, which means that the parents have the twice bigger size of housing.

Also, the housing size of the children’s generation has a strong relationship with the current income, the parents’ generation remains in the house they purchased a long time ago or with income they saved up in the past, so they have less relationship with the current income.

Table 2: 'Living-near families' survey participants' general characteristics

Case	Occupation	Age	No. of child	Monthly Income (Ten-thousand won)	Subject	Distance (Min)	Residence format	Residential Area (Pyeong)	Property type	Type
C01	Homemaker	28	1	300~350	Wife	W : 10	Row house	79.2m <sup>2</sup> (24)	Own	LW
C02	Professional	33	1	200~250	Husband	T : 10	Multiplex	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Own	SH
C03	Professional	35	1	Over 500	Both	W : 15/ W : 5	Multi-dwelling	59.4m <sup>2</sup> (18)	Lease	LW/SH
C04	Homemaker	32	2	250~300	Both	W : 1/ W : 15	Multi-dwelling	42.9m <sup>2</sup> (13)	Lease	LH/SW
C05	Homemaker	31	2	200~250	Husband	W : 3	Multiplex	66.0m <sup>2</sup> (20)	Own	SH
C06	Homemaker	33	3	250~300	Husband	W : 10	Multiplex	108.9m <sup>2</sup> (33)	Own	LH
C07	Professional	30	2	300~350	Both	W : 3/ T : 15	Multi-dwelling	75.9m <sup>2</sup> (23)	Lease	SW/SH
C08	Homemaker	32	1	450~500	Wife	W : 1	Row house	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Lease	SW
C09	Salaryman	35	2	Over 500	Wife	W : 15	Apartment	69.3m <sup>2</sup> (21)	Lease	LW
C10	Homemaker	30	2	250~300	Both	W : 15/ W : 5	Multiplex	56.1m <sup>2</sup> (17)	Lease	LW/SH
C11	Homemaker	37	2	350~400	Wife	W : 5	Multiplex	59.4m <sup>2</sup> (18)	Lease	SW
C12	Service Industry	32	1	250~300	Wife	T : 30	Multiplex	66.0m <sup>2</sup> (20)	Own	LW
C13	Professional	36	2	400~450	Husband	T : 10	Multi-dwelling	92.4m <sup>2</sup> (28)	Own	SH
C14	Homemaker	35	2	350~400	Wife	W : 1	Multi-dwelling	99.0m <sup>2</sup> (30)	Own	SW
C15	Homemaker	34	2	350~400	Wife	W : 5	Multi-dwelling	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Own	SW

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C16	Homemaker	38	3	350~400	Wife	W : 1	Apartment	96.7m <sup>2</sup> (29)	Own	SW
C17	Homemaker	36	1	300~350	Both	W : 5/ W : 4	Row house	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Own	SW/SH
C18	Homemaker	29	2	400~450	Husband	W : 5	Multiplex	66.0m <sup>2</sup> (20)	Lease	SH
C19	Homemaker	30	1	300~350	Husband	W : 0.5	Row house	85.8m <sup>2</sup> (26)	Lease	SH
C20	Homemaker	33	2	200~250	Husband	W : 8	Multiplex	89.1m <sup>2</sup> (27)	Own	SH
C21	Salaryman	29	1	300~350	Both	W : 20/ W : 20	Multiplex	66.0m <sup>2</sup> (20)	Lease	LW/LH
C22	Homemaker	40	2	250~300	Wife	T : 25	Apartment	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Monthly rent	LW
C23	Homemaker	40	3	300~350	Husband	W : 15	Single	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Lease	LH
C24	Professional	35	1	200~250	Wife	W : 3	Apartment	82.5m <sup>2</sup> (25)	Lease	SW
P01	Homemaker	63	2	Under 100	Son	T : 30	Multi-dwelling	66.0m <sup>2</sup> (20)	Own	L / Son
P02	Homemaker	59	3	200~250	Daughter	W : 2	Apartment	99.0m <sup>2</sup> (30)	Own	S / Daughter
P03	Homemaker	68	2	100~150	Daughter	T : 10	Single	132.0m <sup>2</sup> (40)	Own	L / Daughter

※ Short Distance (S), Long Distance (L), Wife's family (W), Husband's family (H), Walking(W:), Transportation(T:)

### Satisfaction Research of ‘living-near families’

The categories with high satisfaction of the ‘living-near’ research were ‘convenient transportation for the return trip’ and ‘close family relationships.’ Satisfaction levels of ‘Stability and relief’, ‘financial

savings and benefit’ were 3.79~3.88, which close to ‘Satisfied (4.0)’, and these were slightly lower than the two categories above. About 80% of the respondents answered that they wished to keep living in close proximity with their family members.

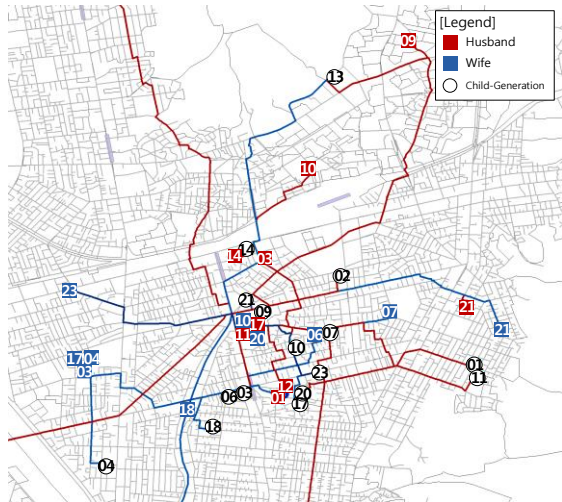


Fig 3. Spatial Distribution of the Interviewees

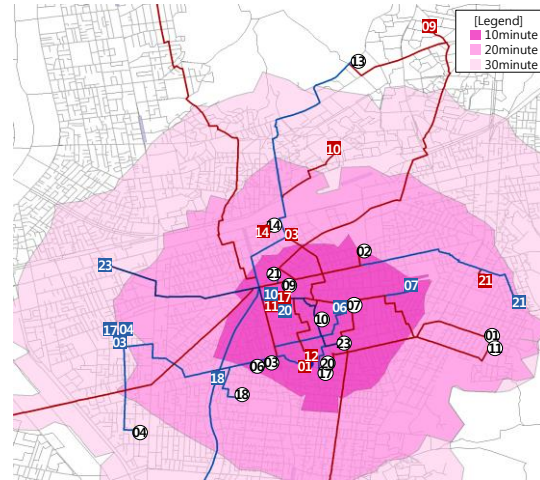


Fig 4. ‘Living near families’ Road-Network according to Time Taken

### ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

#### Classification of ‘Living-near’ according to the family relationship and spatial distance.

As shown in <Figure 5>, 24 children’s generations were categorized into 4 categories, by crossing the horizontal line which stands for short and long distance and the vertical line which stands for the family relationship whether or not it is on the wife’s or husband’s family side. Here, the standard of spatial distance was based on time taken, 7.3 minutes for walking was the mean time taken and transport was 15 minutes, to separate short and long distance.

#### Characteristic study of ‘living-near families’ by categories

In all the categories, the help with child care was not very comprehensive and temporary when it needed, and it has tendency to ask for help at the wife’s family rather than the husband’s. Overall, the expectation for child care through ‘living-near’ has very high expectation.

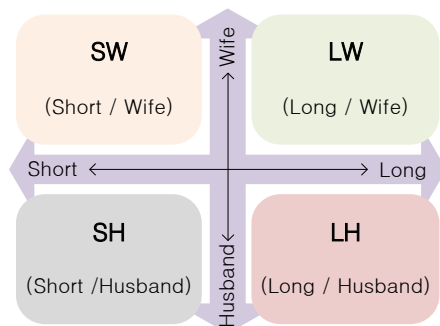


Fig 5. Category Classification

Children in short distance from either parents can ask for help easily more than long distanced children, which means that the effect of spatial distance is big on the routine housework exchange.

The average satisfaction level of people who are ‘living-near’ with the parents in a short distance, was 3.6 out of 5.0 point scale, whereas the average satisfaction level of people ‘living-near’ the parents from a long distance was 3.8 and higher than those in shorter distance. This is because when the spatial distance is short, it is easy getting helped with housework for the children; however, it also can be psychologically pressured from all the intervention.

‘Living-near’ with the wife’s parents’ satisfaction level was 4.2, whereas with the husband’s parents was 3.3. ‘Living-near’ with the wife’s side has much higher numbers than the husband’s. This is because it is easy to ask a help from the wife’s family than the husband’s.

In case of ‘help with food’, a lot of wives interviewed were receiving food and side-dishes from the parents, even though they were homemakers. Most of them were getting these dishes from the wife’s parents because wife’s parents want to help with their daughter’s marital independence, whereas the husband’s parents wanted to help their son directly in lieu of depending on their daughter-in-law.

Items not used frequently were leased from the parents and in some cases children would use empty spaces in the parents’ homes as storage. Children seemed to feel more relaxed and stable around the wife’s family because they kept a close relationship with them and even received financial help.

However, in case of the husband’s family, children often felt their privacy violated by the frequent visits and calls of their parents. This caused psychological pressure which led to negative reviews. Such pressure had bad effect on future hopes for ‘living-near’, because children generation feel appalled by the concept.

Most of the interviewees were positive towards ‘living-near’ the wife’s parents, especially the ones who ‘living near’ in a long distance answered that they wanted to remain in the ‘living-near’ relationship as long as possible.

**Use of Living Space during visiting terms**

When children visit their parents, the purpose of the visit is normally to ask their regards with their grandchildren or to leave the grandchildren in care of emergency. Other reasons would include visiting to have a meal with the parents.

Corresponding with this pattern, the parents’ living spaces are thoroughly exploited, which means that the children can use the kitchen, living room and even the bedroom freely. The grandchildren’s toys sometimes are left around the living room even after they are done with them, and even separate spaces for play

and education of the grandchildren are found. When the children generation’s life pattern is being developed dominantly at the parents’ house, the tendency to share with families are found.

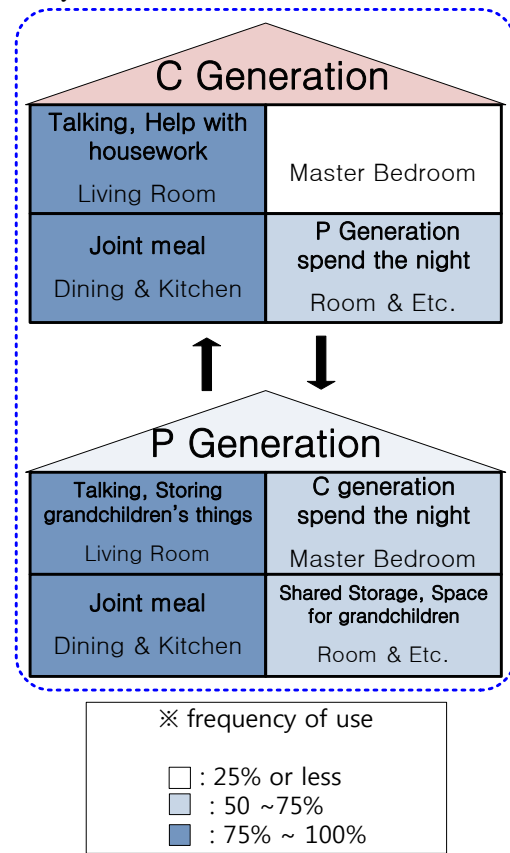


Fig 6. ‘Living-near families’ space usage

Hence, the need for the lack of space of the children’s generation and the shared space of the parents’ generation become a form of shared space. For example, extra space of the parents’ house , i.e. balcony, can be shared as a storage space for their children, or the married children’s shared room can be re-used as a grandchild’s nurture space.

On the other hand, when the parents visit the children, the reasons for the visit include to help with the housework or child care, to give fresh made side dishes, or to visit their grandchildren.

Hence, children’s living space, which responds to these visits, are restricted only to the living room or the grandchildren’s bedroom because the master bedroom is avoided by the parents to respect the children’s privacy, unlike the parents’ living space. But sometimes they use the kitchen to cook meals for the children and when they sleep over at the

children's house, they usually use the grandchildren's room.

In term of the frequency of the visiting terms of both sides of the parents, there are a lot more cases of children visit the parents. So the 'living-near', based on the living space utilization, indicated the parent generation's residence has a bigger range and higher frequency of use than the children's residence. This means that parents' house need flexible space plan for the concept of 'living-near families'.

**Study of establishment requirements, interaction reality and demolition factors of 'living-near' through in-depth interviews**

The factor of 'living-near' is centred on children's and the parents' mutual, emotional and financial effects which are the positive effects on the 'living-near' concept. When these effects are supported by the family situation of both families, housing and living environment, the concept of 'living-near' can

be established in. General desire for housing environment to fulfil 'close-living' does not seem to be affected by location.

The dismantled factors of 'living-near' can be divided into the external and internal factors. The external factors were that when their children (grandchildren) are on the higher secondary schools such as middle/high schools, they wanted to move to areas where education environment well maintained. This kind of opinion also found in the parent generation's answers, saying that they wanted to move to a country house or a vacation home to live their own lives when the grandchildren grown up and no longer need their help.

As the internal factors, with various emotional conflicts, such as conflict between wife and mother-in-law or burden for child care in old age, can cause one of the families to move when they can no longer 'living near' the other.



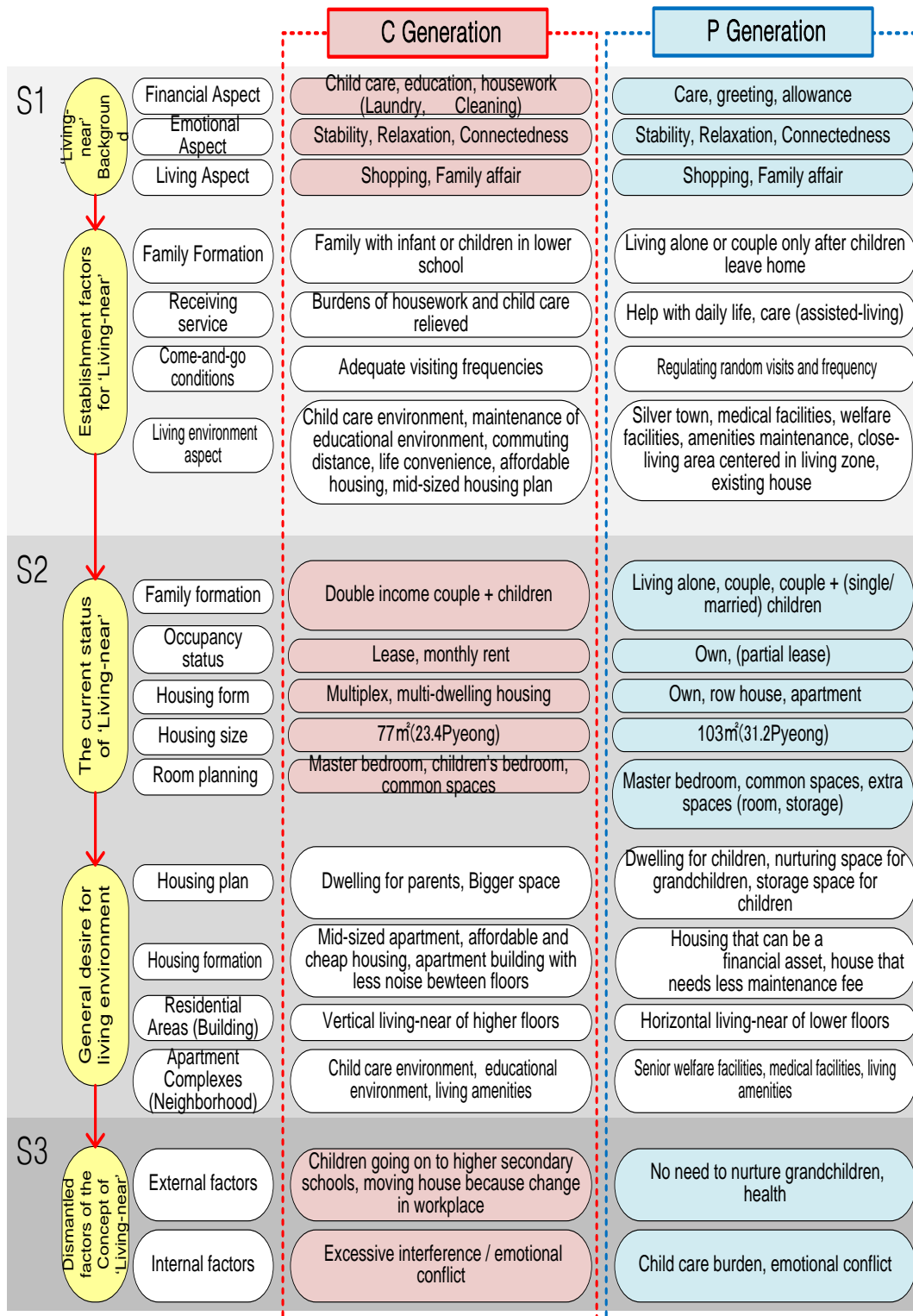


Fig 7. Process of Formation, Current state and Dismantle in Time Sequence

## **CONCLUSION**

This study, introduced the concept of 'living-near' as the parents and married-children live in close proximity, targeted the 27 households (24 children households, 3 parent households) which were actually practicing the concept of 'living-near'. Out of these 27 households, the study focused on the 24 children households to study the actual conditions. The main results of this study are as follows.

Firstly, Seoul's 'living-near' distance was 10 minutes by walking and including public transportation, and the most people lived in 10~15 minutes of each other. As for the living areas, the children generation's average house size was 77m<sup>2</sup> and the parent's average house size was 103m<sup>2</sup>. Children were living in 75% the size of the parents' residences and the average number of residents residing were 3.79 persons for the children and 2.62 persons for the parents. This means that the living area per person is bigger for the children as they used almost half the living area of the parents.

Secondly, the concept of 'living-near's total satisfaction levels of the study subjects by the in-depth interviews were generally high, especially psychological stability and relief was higher with the wife's family than the husband's. However, the privacy satisfaction levels were higher when they lived further away from the husband's parents. If the children were living-near with both sides of the parents, maintaining a balanced interaction between the wife's and husband's family became a burden.

Thirdly, the various reasons for not maintaining 'living-near' in the future resulted as follows; in case of children are living-near the wife's family they were mostly affected by external factors such as children's (grandchildren) education or the husband's change of workplace. On the other hand, in case of living near the husband's family, the reasons were mostly affected by internal factors connected to the family relationship such as conflicts between wife and mother- or sister-in-law or intervention in housework. As for visiting terms, children's

generation visiting their parents' house showed a much higher frequency than the parents visiting their children, and when the children's lives dominantly at the parent's living space, the concept of space sharing was found. Hence, the lack of living space of the children's generation and the shared space of the parent generation meet up partly and become a form of share. For example, extra space of the parents' house like a balcony can be shared as a storage space for the children, or the married children's room can be re-used as a grandchild's nurture space.

Limitations of this study resulted that there was no big difference in the space planning or living environment of four blocks in Junrang-gu of the study subject. Therefore a study comparing the interaction condition by 'living-near' categories and living environments of an area with disparate space plan and living environment characteristics with the original study analysis area would be recommended in the future areas of research.

## **. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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