**TERM PROJECT**

**A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO WHO TAKES CARE OF THE OLD AND SICK FAMILY MEMBER: TURKEY AND SOUTH KOREA CONTEXT**

Rojda Özden KARASU

Advisor: Lecturer Wen Chi ÖLÇEL

29.01.2023

2596187

**Abstract:** According to Choi and Hwang, in Asian countries, particularly South Korea, there is a strong desire for having a son (Choi, Hwang, 2020:628). Turkey on the other hand is not different at all. Altındağ argues Turkey is also a son favoured country with a proverb that goes; “A manly man shall have a son”, the saying in Turkish is; "Erkek adamın erkek çocuğu olur” (Altındağ, 2016:2). Both having patriarchal societies, it is not surprising that the parents expect their son, especially their oldest son and his wife to take an active role in taking care of them when they get old and/or sick. This project examines who is expected to take care of the old and sick family members in South Korea and Turkey yet who actually takes care of them, comparing two films; Pandora's Box (2008) directed by Yeşim Ustaoğlu and Take Care of My Mom (2022) directed by Kyung-Mok Park.

Graphical user interface, text

Description automatically generated

**A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO WHO TAKES CARE OF THE OLD AND SICK FAMILY MEMBER: TURKEY AND SOUTH KOREA CONTEXT**

**Introduction**

“You are the oldest son, of course, it was your and your wife's duty to take care of your parents”, said a respected family member to my father. My father loved his parents. Even though I couldn't witness how he took care of them, my mother always talks about how proud she is to be with my father as, according to her, a good son who takes good care of his sick and old parents is also a good and trustworthy husband. Although these days things have started to change, my aunt thinks the reason why the oldest son is expected to take care of the parents is that the oldest son inherits most of the heritage. She argues that the situation allows the oldest son to have financial comfort which is a must if there will be an increase in one's expenses once the sick family member moves in with them.

A Korean unnie of mine, (unnie (언니) means older sister in the Korean language yet one does not necessarily need to be associated by kinship with the person they call unnie, you can be friends with that person and call her unnie), told me once that her paternal grandparents were too sick and old to live alone thus her aunt told her father that her neighbours know a good nursing home. My Korean friend thinks that if both children are not available to take care of the parents, it is not a bad idea to take them to a nursing home. However, her father was furious that the aunt even thought about sending them to a nursing home. Even though I am sure that my Korean friend was totally fine with her grandparents staying with them, she thinks it is not fair her father thought it was his duty to take care of the old family member as he was the oldest son.

I remember thinking about how similar the situations are between two countries that are geographically far from each other. I got my bachelor's degree in Korean Language and Literature at Ankara University. I remember my first day at the university, one of our professors said that at the end of the 4 years of education we will be able to use South Korea as a mirror of Turkey. He argued, both countries culturally had a lot in common. I have met many Korean friends during my studies, and I am still very close to some of them. At first, I thought it was interesting how much we had in common, culturally. For example, both in South Korea and Turkey some people would wait for the oldest person to start eating to eat the food. Moreover, it was even more interesting to see how Korean parents would show their affection by putting food on their children’s plates or buying their favourite snacks or even peeling the fruits for their children while they study. Even though I know South Korea and Turkey have a lot in common, not from my teachers but also through experience, I found myself wondering; if the approach towards the sick and/or old family members is also the same in both countries.

South Korea has 20th place on the list of countries that have the highest elderly population whereas Turkey is in 61st place (World Data.info, 2018,2020). We can put it this way; South Korea lives in the future of Turkey. As South Korea has already faced the problems of old countries before us, and our future is seemed to be like it, we can learn from them. Thus, the main purpose of this project is to explore caregivers, and nursing homes in both countries by comparing two films; Pandora's Box (2008) and Take Care of My Mom (2022).

**Nursing Home *(Huzurevi)* Concept in Turkey and Pandora’s Box**

Huzurevi is explained as the continuing; the huzurevi (meaning "house for peace of mind") has evolved as a realistic alternative for the fragile and vulnerable elderly people who have not to live with their families or alone. By elderly people, most arguments mean people who are older than 65. Moreover, Beyaztaş, Yüce, Kurt and Balayır argue that old age can be categorised as young-old (65-74), medium-old (75-84) and old-old (85 and over) (Beyaztas, Yücel, Kurt, Balayir, 2012:221). In the Huzurevi, elderly people are provided with food, and medical, physical care, and psychological care (Oğlak, Sema, 2017:8,9). Around 25% of patients in nursing homes over the age of 65 require the assistance of another person to meet their needs including bathing, dressing, eating and toileting. In Turkey, the handicap percentage in nursing homes was 31.1%. Long-term care facilities see internal consistency reliability measurement in the aged population as a basic necessity for planning social and healthcare activities (Lüleci, Hey, Subaşı, 2008:58) however Turkey's healthcare system includes basic, secondary, and tertiary care. The Turkish healthcare system is built on primary, outpatient care clinics. Ever since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the socialisation of healthcare in 1961, the healthcare system has changed (Oguz, Steven, Nuket, Murat, 2003: 279).

The article that is named End-of-life in Turkey, stated that for generations, Turkish people passed away at home, under the care of their families, with religious ceremonies done at the end of their life. In rural locations, death is still performed at home in the presence of family. One of the reasons that have shifted approximately 60% of fatalities to hospitals is urban migration. Another cause for the shift in death sites is the requirement for women relatives, who used to care for dying people at home, to work. Many people spend their final days going to faraway hospitals or waiting in quite long lines to see doctors. Furthermore, it is expressed that families frequently care for elderly, crippled, or chronically sick family members (Oguz, Steven, Nuket, Murat, 2003: 280). After women, who were responsible for taking care of the elderly family member until death, started to work outside of home so there is nobody to do the job. Family may not want to send their elderly relatives to a nursing home, or there might not be a facility near, but what about hiring a caregiver? Oguz, Steven, Nuket and Murat argue that most home care services are provided by private health clinics and are quite pricey. Private home care services are not funded by Turkish government insurance, which is the primary insurance system (Oguz, Steven, Nuket, Murat, 2003: 280). Thus, both because of the fact that home care services are not common it might be difficult for some to find someone trustworthy and another reason why Turkish people do not lean towards hiring a caregiver might be because of how costly it is. However, is it possible for an elderly family member to live alone? Would it still be hard for elderly people to live alone even if their children or relatives were to visit them frequently? Even though the answers to these questions may differ depending on the person and the situation, in the film, Pandora's box, it seems to be hard for some people.

At the beginning of the film, we were introduced to two mothers: Nusret and Nesrin. Nesrin seemed to be waiting for an important call, then we learn that she and her husband have difficulties in understanding and getting along with their son, Murat. Although Nesrin waits for a call from her son, she gets a call that informs her about her mother, Nusret has gotten lost. Cohen-Shalev and Marcus (2013) argue that the war is between the family and the main character, who is a patient of AD (Alzheimer’s Disease), rather than the disease itself (Cohen-Shalev, Marcus, 2013:103). Nusret is an old woman who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's after she was found and even though she has three children, we never know if she chose to live alone or if none of them wanted her to live with them, which caused her to get lost. Just like was mentioned above, as private home care services are not funded by the Turkish government, her children probably did not even consider hiring a caregiver to take care of their mother. In the next scene we see Nesrin, Güzin and Mehmet, three children of Nusret, take a car to visit the village where their mother lives. And with that, we, the audience, dive deep into each of their relationship not only with each other but also with their mother.

Although three of the siblings live in İstanbul, they seem to lose contact even though Nesrin does not know about her son, Murat, visiting her brother, Mehmet. Güzin, on the other hand, is portrayed as if she was so caught up in her personal love life and her lover that she misses many things in life including how badly her lover treats her. On the way to visit the hometown when they heard that their mother was lost, we witness they do not get along well either. Nesrin, the oldest sibling, has a husband and she admits that their relationship is not going well. They have a son, Murat, he is in bad odour with his parents. Güzin, the second oldest sibling, is either a reporter or an editor as she mentions working at a newspaper. Güzin seems to only care about her lover even in the scene she sits down to talk to her mother only when she broke up and talks about her heartbreak.

One another important matter to consider is life satisfaction for elderly people regardless of where and with whom they live. According to Beyaztas, Yücel, Kurt and Balayir, Life satisfaction is subjective well-being, and happiness can all be used to evaluate subjective life quality. Thus, it is stated that the loss of some societal norms and independence, retirement, the losses of friends and relatives, children leaving home, enhanced feelings of loneliness, financial troubles, and numerous illnesses that occur as a consequence of these changes all have an impact on an old person's life quality. In the questionnaire, old people were asked questions such as; "Do your children listen to you? Are you satisfied with the connection you have with your children? What brings you the most joy in life?" Hence, their answer respectively was, "sometimes" with a percentage of more than 60%, "pleased" with a percentage of 62.7%, and 39.8% of the people who interviewed answered the last question as, "children". It is clear from the questionnaire that almost 40% of the old people answered the question "What makes you the happiest in life?" answered "Children", however, many of the elderly people that were interviewed also state that they see their children and grandchildren only twice a year. Moreover, when they were asked if they wanted to go to a nursing house to be taken care of, 94% of the elderly people answered with "No". Thus, the question continued with "Why?", 37% answered that they like being with their family and the rest stated that their neighbours and friends would judge them and their family (Beyaztas, Yücel, Kurt, Balayir,2012:223). Based on this work, it can be concluded that Nusret, the mother in Pandora's Box, may not want to live with her children. After Nusret was found, her daughter Nesrin takes Nusret to her home. When she was brought to Nesrin’s home first, she examines her daughter Nesrin arguing with her husband and her son Mehmet picking his nose whereas her other daughter Güzin chatting with her lover on phone quietly. Nusret seems not to be quite comfortable at Nesrin’s house to the point where could not sleep on her first night there. When Nesrin leaves Nusret alone at home to find her son, Murat, we witness Nusret watching the view from the window and holding tightly to her handkerchief that she brought with her from her own home. Many elderly people find it quite hard to leave their own homes behind and start living with their children. Thus, sending them to nursing homes might and actually does cause depression. However, as previously mentioned hiring a caregiver to take care of our sick and/or old family member is quite costly and not common among Turkish people as the Turkish government does not cover the expenses.

Elderly people in Turkey see nursing homes as where they are being left to wait for death. Home caregiving services, on the other hand, are not common and are quite costly. Thus, if an old and sick family member needs to be taken care of, the duty is ours, the children. Therefore, I argue that to understand who should take care of them, one should understand the Turkish family structure well. According to Kale and Sığırmaç, the extended family is a feature of the traditional Turkish family system. Nonetheless, the Turkish family structure has lately changed due to causes such as evolving technology and consuming culture, changes in industrial activities, migration from rural to urban regions, divorces, societal changes, and family regulations. It is also uttered in the study that the elder siblings' duties and obligations in caring to practise for their family members with special needs include nourishment, hygiene, safety and supervision, playmate, and general treatment involvement. In comparison between Turkey and the USA, it is said that in the United States, siblings are not required to participate in caring activities as a duty. This, it is said, might be because of the difference between a collectivist and individualist society. In Turkey, though, regardless their siblings are disabled or not, elder siblings can participate in caring practices. In a collectivist society, the person isolates oneself from other people and his society and forms a link with the members of the community that involves duties. However, in individualist civilizations, the individual and egocentrism take precedence over communities (Kale, Sığırmaç, 2021:1393,1395,1397). Furthermore, Beyaztaş, Yücel, Kurt and Balayır state that according to studies conducted among the elderly, many do not want to go to a nursing home or hospice. Going to or “being forced” to go to a nursing home is an undesirable thing in Turkey; the same is true in Europe. According to German research, the people that the elderly anticipate aiding them with their care are their spouses, children, and relatives. Additionally, notwithstanding the regularity with which the elderly visits their children/grandchildren, the children's compliance, and the challenges in family connections, first-degree relatives and, among them, their children, make the elderly people who were interviewed pleased (Beyaztas, Yücel, Kurt, Balayir,2012:224).

Thus, according to all that has been said above, in Turkey, family members, especially the eldest sibling/child, are expected to take care of the old and/or sick family member. In Pandora's Box, we witness that, although the other two children seem to have more time and better space (house-wise) to have their mother over, Nesrin, as the eldest child, has many problems she needs to deal with, still, the eldest child, Nesrin, takes her mother to her house. On the other hand, Oğlak and Sema state in their essay that in emerging economies, it is assumed that the family would continue to care for its elderly members, fulfilling all of their economic, social, emotional, health, and nursing requirements. This premise, nevertheless, is no longer applicable, owing to social, economic, and demographic developments such as high birth rates, greater life expectancy, migration, women entering the market of labour field, higher ambitions for one's children, or generational conflict. Besides, it is expressed in the essay the family has always been and continues to be the primary source of personal, emotional, and financial support for the elderly. Sons are required to offer financial help to their parents and are legally liable for their care. Women are especially reliant on sons since they are the only source of support in widowhood. Yet not all elderly people have adult children or close family relationships. Many people believe that organised support structures are vital for survival in old age (Oğlak, Sema, 2017:6,7). From the work of Oğlak and Sema (2017), sons should be the ones to take care of the old and sick parent(s). In Pandora's Box, however, the son who is the youngest child is portrayed as a person who does not work does not care a lot about his responsibilities and lives in a relatively bad house. Thus, he does not seem to be the person who can offer let alone financial or any other type of help as he, himself needs help.

Thus, to conclude who should take care of the elderly and sick parent(s)? Son? Eldest child regardless of their gender? Should the elderly family member be sent to a nursing home, or someone should be hired to take care of the sick and old family member?

**Who takes care of the “Mom” in South Korea?**

In South Korea, the family is seen as the foundation of social life, and its preservation has been of crucial significance under patriarchal Confucianism. Confucianism, based on an agnation theory, made men the only fundamentally significant members of society while relegating women to social dependency (Kim,1993). Furthermore, Confucian familism aids in comprehending why Korean family strategy has been hidden, subservient, divided, and gendered for hundreds of years (Lee, 2018:46). In addition, in South Korea agnatic kin ties were stressed in old Korean culture since many elements of daily life were sustained by cooperation with the patrilineal kin. The patriarch's power had to be total in order for him to operate as the spokesperson of his family, linking them to those other families of the patrilineal bloodline and ensuring patriarchal family succession. Inequity in status caused discrimination in daily things inside the family, which has historically been regularly replicated in Korean culture through the male/patriarch-oriented mindset (Park, 2001:43).

It is also stated in the paper Kim Myung-hye wrote in 1993 that according to the study's findings, the majority of the oldest sons break from Confucian traditions that highlight sons' responsibilities to help their parents by building a stem family with ageing parents. Yet, it is not always the son's choice whether he and his nuclear family members live with his parents; rather, it is his wife's choice. This is due in part to the wife having to deal with in-laws at home more than the son who works outside the home all day. However, Kim states that, of all the people with whom she interviewed, only 31% lived with their parents and the rest of the sons live alone. Kim also expresses that in the upper-middle class, the term "family" has at least two meanings. One is prevalent: the nuclear family that consists of a wife, husband and children. The alternative definition involves a more extensive network of kin relationships that people can deliberately activate. A person who lives separate from his parents does not always imply autonomy and independence for a married son and his family. He and his wife continue to feel responsible for their parents' well-being and offer them emotional and financial assistance. Moreover, it is said many times in the article that the children who will take care of the old and sick family member is chosen hierarchy based on birth order and the eldest son, for example, spends more money on the funeral or expenses of the older family member (Kim,1993).

It is stated that both the South Korean government and the people prefer children to take care of elderly family member who is sick. Mostly, however, by children, many people mean the eldest son and his wife. Thus, can it be stated that a son is more favourable than a daughter? Choi and Hwang declare that in an interview in 1996 some South Korean people were asked if they only had a chance to have one child would they want a son or a daughter. More than 40% said that they would want a son while 9% answered as a daughter while the rest replied they are fine with both. Although there were seen quite a lot of changes and the gap between people who would want a son and a daughter decreased from the interview that was made in 2003, people who replied as 'I would want a son' is still more than those who chose to have a daughter (Choi, Hwang, 2020:639,640). Thus, my question is, are sons the ones who take care of the sick and old family member?

The film, Take Care of My Mom (2022), illustrates a mother, Mal-Im played by actress Kim Young-Ok, who lives alone in a village. I argue, because of the satori (dialect) the mother had and from the first scene where the son has to take a long road to reach her mother, the mother probably does not live in Seoul instead she probably lives in the rural area of a smaller city. At the beginning of the film, the mother falls from the stairs while she gets ready for her son's visit. When the son hears what happened he visits the mother in the hospital, the mother does not seem to have a clear mind she forgot what happened and did not know where she was. Even though in the next scene, we understand the mother does not have any illness such as Alzheimer, the doctor warns the son about short memory loss after a such traumatic accident. Although, the son and his wife living with a single old parent is quite common and accepted naturally in South Korea, instead of taking the mother with him the son decides to hire a caregiver. The first reason for that is that the mother does not think it is necessary for her to leave the house as she can take care of herself well enough and the second reason is, though it was never openly mentioned in the film, I felt like the son's wife does not want to be involved. Although, Christensen and Pilling (2018) argue that caring labour has always been seen as a vital component of women's everyday duties in the household in South Korea. Trying to care for old parents, disabled family members, and children were considered a natural obligation of women, and aggressive caregiving activities were viewed as a merit of women. Also, taking good care of old and sick elderly family members is said to be one of the undeniable obligations and responsibilities of women in the family under the considerable influence of Confucianism (Christen, Pilling, 2018:219), the fact that the only, naturally the oldest, son's wife does not want him to visit her very often or does not want to have the mother in her house results in some problems in the film as well. However, as time passes and South Korea started to develop, it is mentioned by Christen and Pilling that, considerable changes in the structure and behaviour of the family were visible. Since many women worked to earn a livelihood, the double pattern replaced the men's paradigm in many metropolitan areas. Furthermore, Confucianism's profound culture of family loyalty has been undermined, and many people think that the responsibility of taking care of the elderly should be taken by the government instead of by family members (Christen, Pilling, 2018:219). Moreover, Kim, Cho and Kyung (2006), argue the things such as healthcare services such as nursing homes are available for any elderly person regardless of their background or financial status, is well known by many, however, they argue that the fact that home care companies are the main sources of care which have been offered to the elderly people who are severely sick and disabled, not the nursing homes, is something that many Korean people do not know (Kim, Cho, Kyung, 2006:516). Thus, people who can provide these facilities are quite a few.

Another important matter to be spoken about is that in South Korea, the population of elderly people is rocketing. According to a survey that was made by Statistics Korea in October 2022, the elderly population, people who are or above the age of 65, made allowances for around 17.5 per cent of the overall population. Chang argues the ageing process produces social concerns, such as increasing healthcare demands and a rise. Thus, the Korean government has offered a Long-term Care Insurance System in 2008. Appropriately, the amount of nursing facilities and inhabitants has significantly expanded (Chang, 2011). These are what was mentioned by Christen and Pilling, in order to understand South Korea's Long-term Care System (LTC); three categories were provided by non-profit corporations. First, under the Older People Welfare Act, which was merged with the social welfare system, nursing facilities were generally allotted to the poorest and secondary poor individuals, as determined by local authorities depending on the family's wages. Second, a variety of home nursing personal care facilities were made available to the elderly people who need the most. And finally, the third category is that medical treatments were supplied to old people that are suffering from chronic conditions or those at the end of their lives, through the National Health Insurance system. It is also mentioned in the article that even though poor elderly people who are in the need of these supports were improvised, lower- or middle-class people who also need financial and residential care did not get any help (Christen, Pilling, 2018:220).

From the interview that was made by Chang, it can be seen how disappointed some Korean elder people are about being sent to a nursing home by their children. Participant C talks about how their children did not let them stay in their house and that they force that person there. They express the situation as it was not what they wanted or even imagined yet they suffer now in the nursing house waiting for death. Participant A confesses that after arriving at the nursing home, they started taking pills to sleep. They continue, "I tried to educate my children the way my parents educated me. I took good care of my parents, and I raised my children with hardship. But they chose to leave me here until I die. How can I sleep?" Chang argues even though some elderly people live in better conditions compared to their houses, they long for their families, neighbours and friends, to spend time with them, and communicate with them. Chang also illustrates that the elderly people appeared to give up on themselves when they initially joined the nursing home as most of them started not hearing from their families at all. Chang explains the situation regarding traditional Korean values. Chang argues, old Koreans have far deeper family-oriented understanding and relational self-concepts than elderly individuals in the West. Going to nursing houses meant leaving their families and relatives, both physically, emotionally and symbolically, creating an experience that very much challenged their way of life (Chang, 2011).

After the mother, Mal-Im, refuses to be taken care of by the caregiver and to be watched by a CCTV camera, the son takes her to a nursing home. Mother sees many elderly people learning the alphabet, spending time together, and even getting a massage there. However, the mother refuses to take any look at none of the rooms that were shown, it can clearly be seen from her face how uneasy she feels about the place. In the next scene mother and the son chat while having a meal together. The son asks his mother either to go to the care facility they visited earlier or to stay with him and his family then the mother refuses both offers again. Then the son says, then I should get divorced and live with you, would you like that? The mother looks puzzled, finally managing to say nobody asked him (her son) to care of her. And the scene ends with the son leaving the house. Although, she, the mother, also knows that at some points in her life, she might need help or someone to spend some time with, leaving her house, leaving the space where she has been living for as long as she can remember means leaving her own personality behind. In her case, a caregiver who visits her in her home frequently sounds like the best choice. However, the mother does not seem to be okay with that either.

***Working as a caregiver in South Korea***

In Take Care of My Mom (2022), the plot revolves around three main characters; one is the mother, the other one is the caregiver that the son hires to take care of the mom and to cook for her until at least she recovers and the final one is the son. Although, as mentioned above a caregiver visits the mother, Mal-Im’s home from time to time to cook for her and help her if needed, the audience witnesses the mother disliked the caregiver at first. I argue, the reason why is that she wanted to show her son that she can live alone and take care of herself to not leave her own house. In some scenes, the caregiver steals from Mal-Im and talks behind her back. Even though later on the viewers learn that she has a mother she needs to take care of so her actions can be seen as reasonable now, the caregiver indeed was villainized.

Chon argues that despite the fact that doing chores and offering care services is quite hard, caregivers in South Korea are paid relatively little. Let alone they are not well paid; the labour conditions and job status of the caregivers are likewise challenging. Many caregivers work two shifts violating Labour Standard Act. Moreover, Chon illustrates that in South Korea, the attrition and scarcity of caregivers have become critical issue that requires immediate answers. Because of poor earnings and tough working circumstances, around half of care workers change jobs often, and the attrition rate of care workers in South Korea is more than twice as large as in some other countries such as Japan, for example. Although three main hardships that caregivers face were mentioned above, finally Chon underlines the fact that poor social view of care givers is widespread, and demotivation and dissatisfaction among caregivers might increase. Furthermore, it is also uttered in the work that caregivers need to be educated in order to increase satisfaction among caretakers to help caregivers not only earn more money but also get the respect they deserve from the society (Christen, Pilling, 2018:224,225). The audience witness how badly the caregiver is being treated from time to time in the film. In one of the last scenes the family, the mother the son and his wife, get into an argument and even though the caregiver tries to protect the mother, the mother warns her violently about not rising her voice to her son. In the end, the caregiver who was always there for the mother and genuinely cared for her is found guilty and sent away while the son, his family and the mother find a common ground and make things up.

By the same token, between the years of 1945 and 1988, the South Korean administration offered only modest financial assistance to specific groups of people such as widowed mothers, families in social assistance institutes, families without earners, and families of fallen military and police officers. However, during these years the government did not offer any help or upright when it comes to elderly people and their caretaking needs. The Elderly Welfare Act (EWA) of 1981 offered elderly fringe benefits such as free elderly care facilities, and elderly community centres. In actuality, though, all these beneficial homes and centres that offered daily care were only accessible to old persons who did not have a family. Lee explains this as the South Korean government see family members, especially sons and daughters in laws, to take care of the elderly family member. Even the government has been giving awards to sons and their wives who take care of the old and/or sick members of the family, the awarding ceremonies have been going on since 1982 (Lee, 2018:4748). The South Korean government see children and their partners as the main responsible people for taking care of an elderly family member, it is unlikely to expect any support from caregiving services or nursing homes which, in my opinion, causing harsh situations between the caregiver and the family. One cannot expect the caregiver to genuinely care for their family member while they do not even treat the caregiver well or pay them enough.

Another crucial matter that needs to be discussed is how elderly people see nursing homes. Park and Ko (2020) mention the phrase "Aging in place". They argue that the phrase means elderly people having the capacity to stay freely and securely in their own homes for as long as needed. However, it is also discussed in the work that elderly people may feel lonely, and they might experience problems living alone. It is also conceivable to have problems with obtaining sources such as healthcare facilities. Although, there might be many difficulties living alone for an elderly person, in the work it was found that many elderly people think living in their homes and their neighbourhood that they have been living for years feels safer. Moreover, many of the senior people that were mentioned by Park and Ko, told anecdotes of other elderly people they knew or heard who passed away or were abused while living at a facility, or a nursing home. Although they admit that these may only be some gossip, they, naturally, were afraid to experience such things (Park, Ko, 2020:99,100,101).

Furthermore, their homes seem to have more meaning to the elderly people than one could imagine. For some, their homes become some sort of representation of their own identity. For some other elderly people, homes can be seen as places where you can reminisce about the person who used to live once they pass away. Moreover, it was mentioned in the study that many elderly people see their neighbours as their family as they have spent a lot of time together and they have spent good and bad days with those people. Park and Ko (2020) also mention that the researchers, who visited the village to interview the elderly people, witnessed many elderly people spend most of their time playing Korean traditional (mostly board) games with their neighbours (Park, Ko, 2020:101). As could clearly be seen from what was said above elderly people are most afraid of the possibility that they might not be treated well in nursing homes. They also seem to be quite used to spending time, eating, and playing with their neighbours that it is much likely an elderly person experiencing loneliness and depression in a nursing home. Thus, the mother in the film, Please Take Care of My Mom, might have this idea that she might never feel like home in a nursing home or even she might be mistreated.

**Comparison of the two films**

In the film, Pandora’s Box (2008), everything starts with children learning that their mother is lost. And in Please Take Care of My Mother (2022), storyline evolves around the first event which is when the mother fells down the stairs and being hospitalised. Viewers witness challenges between both among the children and between the son and his wife in tough situations such as, where to take their mother to, who should take care of the mother and such.

In Pandora’s Box (2008) we, the viewers, were introduced to the three children after their mother got lost. Three siblings seemed to have three quite different personalities and lifestyles. The oldest daughter, Nesrin, has a family and a son. Although, she utters frequently the difficulties that she faces with her husband and her son, she has a relatively stable and a good life. The second oldest daughter, Güzin on the other hand, has a job and she has an economic independence however, she seems to have big problems with her boyfriend. The youngest son, Mehmet is a man who does not work, nor does he want to work. He lives in a house that does not seem all together at all and in my humble opinion, he seems like a person who is not good for anything, mind you he never is portrayed as a poor man who needs help to survive. Thus, although not all of the three children are rich, they still seem to be able to afford to take care of their mother or to at least send her to a nursing home or can hire a caregiver.

When it comes to Please Take Care of My Mother (2022), the mother, Mal-Im, has only one child: a son. The son lives most probably in Seoul, the capital city. He has a wife and a daughter and both he and his wife have jobs. In one scene, when the wife comes back home after work and helps her daughter study English, and as the wife knows English, it can be concluded that they live in good conditions and that their status is indeed high. The son has a car and in one of the first scenes the audience witness son buying presents from a fancy store. And in another scene the son and his wife buy a fancy coat for the mother, Mal-Im. Thus, again just like the Pandora’s Box case, it is clear that the son that Mal-Im has, is financially able to send the mother to a good nursing home or hire a caregiver or even can live in clover.

In Pandora’s Box (2008), when the mother was discharged from the hospital, the eldest daughter took the mother to her home. Whilst the second child has more space in her home and she, compared to her older sister’s problems with her son, had less problems yet the mother still stayed in the oldest child’s house. Even though the oldest daughter Nesrin was taking a good care of her mother, the mother, Nusret still does not seem to feel like home and tries to find ways to leave her daughter’s house. The reason why Nusret did not feel comfortable there could be Alzheimer, she could not remember where she was or who she was with. Yet, it is still undeniable that she missed her home as it could clearly be seen from the mother’s face her disappointment in that one scene when she looked out of the window and could not see what she was used to seeing; the forest and the path she has ran to. Although, in Please Take Care of My Mother (2022) Mal-Im, the mother, was not taken to her child’s house after she was discharged from the hospital unlike what happened in Pandora’s Box, a caregiver was hired to take care of Mal-Im. In spite of the fact that she did not change her own environment, she still stayed at her own home, it was clear that she could not get used to spending most of her time with a stranger.

The film Pandora’s Box ends with mother Nusret running into the forest while her grandson watching her disappearing slowly and becoming a small dot in distance. When I saw the scene where grandson, Murat was watching his grandmother from distance I thought he had two choices. One is he could let her get lost again in the forest which would let Nusret find herself. Second choice he had was not letting her go and put her in another never-ending life circle, trying to find herself and her home with getting lost and running away. Getting closer to the end of Please Take Care of My Mother, the family of Mal-Im and the caregiver get into a fight which causing caregiver to leave the house for good. In the last scene however, we see caregiver and Mal-Im meeting by coincidence and the caregiver helps Mal-Im take a taxi to go back to her home again. I believe the two films are quite similar in terms of ending scenes as both mothers’ lives were in hands of two people who are not their children. Throughout both films both grandson and caregiver were portrayed irresponsible. Yet at the end of the both Pandora’s Box and Please Take Care of My Mother, the grandson and the caregiver were the ones who were there for Nusret and Mal-Im. Thus, who is expected to take care of the old and sick mother and who actually takes care of them?

**Conclusion**

Both Turkey and South Korea are patriarchal societies where mostly son inherit the family fortune. Bozok argues that the term patriarchy derives from Ancient Greek (patriarchs), which means head of family or earnings. In so many agriculture civilizations throughout the following era, the father not only served as the leader of the line, but was also a religious and ecclesiastical authority, as well as a landlord (Bozok, 2018:32). It is argued by Koh that once the parents pass away, the eldest son inherits the family belongings and as daughters usually become parts of their spouses' families once they get married, they do not inherit much (Koh, 2008:346). Bozok also declares that the socioeconomic imbalance among men, women, and hierarchy in Turkey are major evidence of male supremacy which is basically patriarchy (Bozok, 2018:36). Although it is not right to generalise a whole country of people in Turkey, just like in South Korea, usually the eldest sons are the ones who inherit the fortune.

If the oldest son usually inherits the family fortune, should he be the one who needs to take care of the old and sick parent? If not, then who should and/or in fact takes care of them? This question is what encouraged me to write this paper. In spite of the fact that, there are two other options like; nursing homes and hiring caregivers, many people either cannot afford them or simply believe it is the child’s or relatives’ duty to look after the old parent. In Turkey, for instance, the root family consists of a mother, father, children. The father is the leader of the root family, but when he passes, his eldest son takes his position, and the eldest son is obliged to care for both parents and his siblings (Yadigar, 2015:16). Thus, again does this mean that in a situation where the children do not want to send their parents to a nursing home, the eldest son is the one who is expected to look after to his parents? The answer to this question is yes and no.

In Pandora’s Box, the eldest daughter was the one who took her mother to her home and take care of her. Although, the mother had a son, the son was the youngest child. Could it be the reason he did not look after to his mother but her older sister did? In Please Take Care of My Mother, on the other hand, Mal-Im, the mother, had an only child. Her son was the one who took her out of the hospital and hire a caregiver for her. If Mal-Im had an older daughter would his son still do it all? How about if Mal-Im had an older son? Even though, a certain answer can be given for none of those questions as these all changes depending on people, I believe the one who looks after the parent is the oldest child regardless of their gender.

Furthermore, many scholars and writers argue that usually the old and sick parent is sent to a nursing home if the family can afford to it and the eldest son, and his wife are the ones who are anticipated to take charge of their parents or relatives in case of need. Besides, the two films, Pandora’s Box and Please Take Care of My Mother, support the thesis. The only child had to look after his mother when she was injured, in Pandora’s Box case, the eldest daughter was willing to keep an eye on her mother even though her life was not going well at all.

To conclude, although not yet certain, one can answer the question of who is responsible to take care of the old and/or sick family member or relative as “person who has time and a better income”. Although, it was mentioned many times above that children, sons and their wives mostly, were expected to take care of the sick family member, the world is changing dramatically and with-it people’s values and judgements, too. What happened at the end of both of the films was both of the mothers, Nusret and Mal-Im, found their own ways to age in their own places. Nusret came together with the forest while Mal-Im found the peace of living with a ‘stranger’. Thus, there is not only one answer to none of the questions that have been asked in this paper as our answers will be just like our fingertips, different and unique.

**References**

Alpert, Jordan M., and Frances E. Womble. "Coping as a caregiver for an elderly family member." Health Communication 30, no. 7 (2015): 714-721.

Altindag, Onur. "Son preference, fertility decline, and the nonmissing girls of Turkey." Demography 53, no. 2 (2016): 541-566.

Beyaztas, Fatma Yücel, Gökhan Kurt, and Ertugrul Bolayir. "Life satisfaction level of elderly people: a field study in Sivas, Turkey." JPMA-Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association 62, no. 3 (2012): 221.

Bozok, Mehmet. "Türkiye’de ataerkillik, kapitalizm ve erkeklik ilişkilerinde biçimlenen babalık." Fe Dergi 10, no. 2 (2018): 30-42.

Chang, Soo Jung. "Lived experiences of nursing home residents in Korea." Asian nursing research 7, no. 2 (2013): 83-90.

Choi, Eleanor Jawon, and Jisoo Hwang. "Transition of son preference: evidence from South Korea." Demography 57, no. 2 (2020): 627-652.

Christensen, Karen, and Doria Pilling, eds. The Routledge handbook of social care work around the world. London, UK:: Routledge, 2018.

Cohen-Shalev, Amir, and Esther-Lee Marcus. "Lifting the Lid of Pandora’s Box: Alzheimer’s Disease in the Movies." In Chronicity enquiries: Making sense of chronic illness, pp. 103-110. Brill, 2013.

Heisel, Marsel A. "Long-term care in Turkey." Ageing International 20, no. 2 (1993):6-12.

Kale, Mustafa, and Ayperi Dikici Siğirtmaç. "The participation of children in caregiving of their siblings with special needs and peer relationship in rural Turkey." Early Child Development and Care 191, no. 9 (2021): 1392-1400.

Kim, Eun‐Young, Eunhee Cho, and Kyung Ja June. "Factors influencing use of home care and nursing homes." Journal of Advanced Nursing 54, no. 4 (2006): 511-517.

Kim, Myung-hye. "Transformation of family ideology in upper-middle-class families in urban South Korea." Ethnology 32, no. 1 (1993): 69-85.

Koh, Eunkang. "Gender issues and Confucian scriptures: Is Confucianism incompatible with gender equality in South Korea?." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 71, no. 2 (2008): 345-362.

Lee, Dayoon. "The evolution of family policy in South Korea: From Confucian familism to Neo‐familism." Asian Social Work and Policy Review 12, no. 1 (2018): 46-53.

Luleci, Emel, William Hey, and Feryal Subasi. "Assessing selected quality of life factors of nursing home residents in Turkey." Archives of gerontology and geriatrics 46, no. 1 (2008): 57-66.

Oglak, Sema. "Long-term care in Turkey: Challenges and opportunities." The Routledge handbook of social care work around the world (2017): 187-200.

Oguz, N. Yasemin, Steven H. Miles, Nuket Buken, and Murat Civaner. "End-of-life care in Turkey." Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics 12, no. 3 (2003): 279-284.

Oh, Seieun, Mi Yu, Young Mi Ryu, Haejin Kim, and Haeyoung Lee. "Changes in family dynamics in caregiving for people with dementia in South Korea: A qualitative meta-synthesis study." Qualitative health research 30, no. 1 (2020): 60-72.

Park, Boo Jin. "Patriarchy in Korean society: substance and appearance of power." Korea Journal 41, no. 4 (2001): 48-73.

Park, Myonghwa, Howard Karl Butcher, and Meridean L. Maas. "A thematic analysis of Korean family caregivers' experiences in making the decision to place a family member with dementia in a long‐term care facility." Research in nursing & health 27, no. 5 (2004): 345-356.

Park, Sihyun, and Yejung Ko. "The Sociocultural Meaning of “My Place”: Rural Korean Elderly People's Perspective of Aging in Place." Asian Nursing Research 14, no. 2 (2020): 97-104.

WorldData.info, 2018,2020, accessed 15.12.2022,

Yadigar, A. L. U. Ş. "Kültürel ve toplumsal gerçekliğimiz açısından aile anlayışlarının ve Türk ailesinin değerlendirmesi." PESA Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi 1, no. 1 (2015): 15-24.

Yeşildal Şen, Hatice. "Patriarchal structures and practices in Turkey: the case of social realist and national films of 1960s." (2005).

Yoon, Ju Young, Hongsoo Kim, Young-Il Jung, and Jung-Hwa Ha. "Impact of the nursing home scale on residents’ social engagement in South Korea." International psychogeriatrics 28, no. 12 (2016): 1965-1973.

< https://www.worlddata.info/average-age.php >