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OLD BONDS | NEW TIES

Understanding Family Transitions in
Re-Partnerships, Remarriages and
Stepfamilies in Asia

19-20 NOVEMBER 2018

AS8 Level 4, Seminar Room 04-04

The challenges of sustaining an economically productive population amidst declining marriage and fertility rates and an ageing population has seen Asian societies bolstering the institutions of marriage and the family ideologically and nation-states concomitantly implementing a wide variety of family-oriented policies. The dominant emphasis on a decontextualized nuclear family, however, has distorted experiences of alternative family structures and understandings of them, particularly in the case of stepfamilies, which closely resemble conventional first-time families but deal with more complex family transitions such as a prior couple dissolution and re-partnership/remarriage. In public discourses in Asia, traditional values have reinforced the stigma around re-partnering and the dangers associated with it including the abuse of children in stepfamilies. Yet, in other instances, re-partnerships and remarriages are sought as a pragmatic option to overcome dire economic conditions and family instability, and reintegrating into mainstream society. Despite its increasing prevalence, particularly over the last two decades, scholarship on re-partnerships, remarriages and stepfamilies in Asia remains limited and underdeveloped.

Do re-partnerships and remarriages necessarily entail the creation of new kinship ties? Does divorce signal the rupture of family bonds or only the death of a legal relationship? How do the simultaneous existence of 'old' bonds and 'new' ties in blended families reshape the family? Insights into understanding re-partnerships, remarriages and stepfamilies could on one hand, empirically and conceptually account for shifts in family processes in terms of individual well-being outcomes, intra and extra-familial relationship dynamics as well as inform law, public policy, while on the other, illuminate the relevance of locating these changes within culturally specific contexts of collectivism, communitarianism and familism in Asia. In so doing, it challenges dominant notions of familial relationships as 'natural', 'private' or 'universal' and acknowledge the family as a site of social and political intervention and transformation that engenders social and economic inequality in society. Moreover, it also helps push theorizing beyond a simplistic binary view of family units as either valued resources or deficits. A cross-cultural or cross-national comparison would be vital in understanding differences in remarriage and stepfamily patterns and dynamics not just between Asian and Western contexts but also within Asia where broader social categories including class, race and gender, religion and historicity intersect and (re)produce differentially resourced families and individuals in various national contexts.

This two-day conference features work on re-partnership, remarriage and stepfamilies across societies in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia using quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches. The selected empirical papers will aim to conceptualize notions of family change through re-partnering and stepfamily formation within the Asian context by examining the following topics:

- Adult and children well-being outcomes (i.e. physical, cognitive, emotional, educational)
- Transitions in family processes – changes in familial relationships, caregiving, family roles and family boundaries
- Socio-cultural attitudes
- Social support amongst extra-familial institutions and actors
- Role of the state, laws and public policies
- Impact of demographic transitions including migration, declining marriage and fertility rates etc.

CONVENORS

Dr Lavanya Balachandran

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19 NOVEMBER 2018 • MONDAY

10:30 – 10:45	REGISTRATION	
10:45 – 11:00	WELCOME REMARKS	
10:45	JONATHAN RIGG , National University of Singapore YEUNG WEI-JUN JEAN , National University of Singapore LAVANYA BALACHANDRAN , National University of Singapore	
11:00 – 13:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESSES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	YEUNG WEI-JUN JEAN , National University of Singapore	
11:00	SUSAN D. STEWART Iowa State University, USA	Social and Policy Implications of Stepfamilies: Lessons from the United States
11:40	SHINJI NOZAWA Meiji Gakuin University, Japan	Similarities and Variations in Stepfamily Dynamics among Selected Asian Societies
12:20	Questions & Answers	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 1 • CHALLENGING NORMATIVE CONJUGALITY	
<i>Chairperson</i>	LAVANYA BALACHANDRAN , National University of Singapore	
14:00	PREMALATHA KARUPIAH Universiti Sains Malaysia	Widow Remarriage: Experiences of Malaysian Tamil Women
14:20	JAYAPRAKASH MISHRA Indian Institute of Technology	Understanding Re-partnership in Non-normative Conjugality: A Qualitative Study of Gay Men in Odisha, India
14:40	QUAH EE LING SHARON University of Wollongong, Australia	The Working of Heteronormativity: Transnational Remarriage as Pragmatic Strategy
15:00	Questions & Answers	
15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA	
16:00 – 17:30	PANEL 2 • REDRAWING FAMILY BOUNDARIES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	SOTHY ENG , University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA	
16:00	SHEELA PRASAD University of Hyderabad, India	‘Stepping into Step Families’: Narratives of ‘Second Marriage’ Families in Hyderabad, India
16:20	TANZINA CHOUDHURY SUMENA SULTANA Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh	Conjugal Relations and Children’s Well-being: Exploring the Experiences of Remarried Women in Sylhet, Bangladesh
16:40	NICOLAS LAINEZ Institute for Research and Development, France	<i>Ménage a Trois</i> in Laos: Vietnamese Men, Wives and Second Wives Reshaping Transnational Families
17:00	Questions & Answers	
17:30	END OF DAY 1	
17:45 – 20:00	CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)	

20 NOVEMBER 2018 • TUESDAY

09:15 – 09:30	REGISTRATION	
09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 3 • REMARRIAGE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY	
<i>Chairperson</i>	KO PEI-CHUN , National University of Singapore	
09:30	YIN SHUXI Hefei University of Technology, China	Housework for Re-marriage: Analyzing Factors behind the Re-marriage of Aged Women in China
09:50	LEE SANGSOO University of Pennsylvania, USA	Educational Patterns of Remarriage in South Korea: Are Remarriages More or Less Homogamous than First Marriages?
10:10	LAVANYA BALACHANDRAN YEUNG WEI-JUN JEAN National University of Singapore	Swimming Against the Tide: Remarriage and Social Mobility amongst Ethnic Minority Women in Singapore
10:30	Questions & Answers	
11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA	
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 4 • POST-DIVORCE FAMILY POLICY	
<i>Chairperson</i>	QUAH EE LING SHARON , University of Wollongong, Australia	
11:30	SHAHBAZ AHMAD CHEEMA University of the Punjab, Pakistan	Second Marriage as a Cause of Legal Disputes under Islamic Family Law in Pakistan
11:50	TAKESHI HAMONO University of Kitakyushu, Japan	Old Frames but New Bonds? Disjuncture between Legal and Actual Families in the Discourse about Stepfamilies in Japan
12:10	TRAN THI MINH THI Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences	Child Custody Arrangement and Social Integration after Divorce in Vietnam
12:30	Questions & Answers	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 5 • CHILDREN IN STEPFAMILIES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	GU XIAORONG , National University of Singapore	
14:00	HU YANG Lancaster University, UK	Marital Disruption, Remarriage and Child Well-being in China
14:20	NG SIANG KIAT VIVIENNE GOH CHOR LENG ESTHER National University of Singapore	Case Studies on the Care of Children Living in Low Income Stepfamilies
14:40	SOTHY ENG University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA	Parenting Practices and Child Well-Being in Remarried/Repartnered Families in Cambodia
15:00	Questions & Answers	
15:30 – 16:00	CLOSING REMARKS & PUBLICATION PLANS	
15:30	YEUNG WEI-JUN JEAN , National University of Singapore LAVANYA BALACHANDRAN , National University of Singapore	
16:00	END OF CONFERENCE	

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Social and Policy Implications of Stepfamilies:
Lessons from the United States**

Susan D. STEWART

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Stepfamilies are a common part of the family landscape in the United States. However, the term “stepfamily” masks incredible diversity within this family form. Historically, stepfamilies were formed mainly through widowhood. Today, most stepfamilies are formed as a result of divorce, nonmarital childbearing, and cohabitation. Twenty-five percent of marriages in the U.S. are remarriages and two-thirds of remarriages include children from previous relationships (stepchildren). Another 14% of *first* marriages include stepchildren. Two-thirds of stepfamilies begin with cohabitation and 12% of stepchildren live with their parent’s cohabiting partner. In sum, 40% of children in the U.S. will spend part of their childhood living in a stepfamily.

U.S. laws and policies have not kept pace with these trends. Stepparents do not have the same legal protections, privileges, and obligations as do biological parents. American children are not legally allowed to have more than two parents, leaving stepparents unable to make important decisions regarding their stepchildren’s welfare, even if they raised their stepchildren since birth. Nor are stepparents required to financially support their stepchildren. Globally, there is wide variation in laws and policies relating to stepfamilies. Where a stepfamily resides has become an important determinant of stepfamily relationships and well-being. Using visual mapping techniques, this paper compares United States’ laws and policies (marriage, divorce, child custody, etc.) with those of other countries, including Asia, Australia, Western Europe, and Central and South America. Because laws governing families are largely controlled by individual states, I provide comparisons between the 50 states of the U.S.

Susan D. Stewart is Professor of Sociology at Iowa State University. She received her Doctorate in Sociology in 2000 from Bowling Green State University. Dr Stewart is a family demographer whose research focuses on gender, structural diversity in families, family dynamics, and children and adults’ physical, social, and emotional health. She is the author of numerous journal articles and books including *Brave New Stepfamilies: Diverse Paths Toward Stepfamily Living; Marriages, Families, and Relationships* (with Lamanna and Riedmann); and *Co-Sleeping: Parents Children and Musical Beds*. Her research has been supported by grants from the NICHD, USDA, Joint Center for Poverty Research, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. She has published papers on a diverse array of topics including nonresident parent-child relationships, child support, childhood obesity, adoption, and women’s financial literacy.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Similarities and Variations in Stepfamily Dynamics among Selected Asian Societies

Shinji NOZAWA

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Stepfamilies in Asia are emerging as an important issue. With the rising divorce rate in many East Asian societies in the last couple of decades, the number of stepfamilies in East Asia has also been estimated to be growing. That is why more Asian family researchers and family professionals such as family therapists and social workers are in need of learning unique aspects of stepfamily dynamics in comparison not only to other types of families in Asia but also to stepfamilies in the Western world. There have been a growing number of stepfamily studies in Asian societies including Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea. However, it is a difficult task to get a whole picture of the state of stepfamily research in Asia, because many of the studies are in local languages such as Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Despite this linguistic limitation, the present study reviews findings from recent stepfamily studies in those selected Asian societies to update the speaker's attempts in the past (Nozawa 2008; 2015). Hypotheses regarding similarities among Asian stepfamilies include; (1) more interventions by extended family members and less interaction between custodial and non-custodial parents tend to be observed in stepfamily dynamics in Asia, (2) stepparents in Asian stepfamilies tend to follow replacing parent (new parent) model. Diversity in these tendencies among the selected Asian societies will be also discussed in relation to cultural and social contexts such as family policies and laws.

Shinji Nozawa is currently Professor of Sociology and a vice president of Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan. He has been studying stepfamilies in Japan, collaborating with Stepfamily Association of Japan since 2001. His publications on stepfamilies include Nozawa (2015) "Remarriage and stepfamilies," in Quah, S. ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Families in Asia* (London: Routledge), and Nozawa (2008) "The social context of emerging stepfamilies in Japan: Stress and support for parents and stepparents," in Pryor, J. ed., *The International Handbook of Stepfamilies*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons). He was a visiting scholar at the Department of Family and Child Sciences, Florida State University (2006-2007) and at the School of Psychology, University of Auckland (2013-2014). He has been organizing a number of international conferences on stepfamilies in Tokyo since 2011, inviting leading stepfamily scholars and clinicians from the United States and New Zealand.

Widow Remarriage: Experiences of Malaysian Tamil Women

Premalatha KARUPIAH

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Traditionally widows are stigmatized in Tamil society. The traditional notion of femininity in Tamil society emphasizes on the devotion of a wife to her husband (in life and death). This study explores the challenges faced by Malaysian Tamil, Hindu women in the process of remarriage after the death of their husband. The data for this study was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with 13 women who have remarried. Interview transcripts were analyzed to identify common themes. The findings were categorized into three main themes: 'stigma of being a widow'; 'transgressing the traditional notion of femininity'; 'it is not about me'. Widows experienced social and self-stigma and were excluded in some cultural/religious rituals. Their involvement in courtship was seen as a transgression from the notions of a 'good' woman. Some felt they were seen as betraying their (dead) husband when choosing to remarry. Older participants with teenage or grown up children faced much more stigmatization in the process of remarriage compared to those who were young or do not have children. For participants with children, the act of remarriage was seen as an act of forgoing their responsibility towards their children and this was one of the biggest challenges they faced in deciding to remarry. The decision to remarry was difficult for them because they were not only criticized by others but felt conflicted due to the internalized stigma of widowhood and remarriage.

Premalatha Karupiah is Associate Professor of Sociology at the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. She teaches research methodology and statistics. Her research interests are in the areas of beauty culture, femininity, educational and occupational choices, and issues related to the Indian diaspora. Her articles have been published in leading journals.

Understanding Re-partnership in Non-normative Conjuality: A Qualitative Study of Gay Men in Odisha, India

Jayaprakash MISHRA

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Drawing on two case studies of gay men married to women who have each later gone on to re-partner with another gay man, this paper seeks to critique the inherent heteronormativity in the discussion around re-partnership. It further examines the consequential kinship dynamics among concerned social actors like gay men, straight women, and their biological children, and their ongoing negotiations with the larger social institutions of marriage and family. This paper also interrogates if the legal and social sanctioning is a precondition to establishing a partnership or if there is a possibility to establish a partnership in the absence of approval from such legal apparatus and social institutions. Further, the discussion around re-partnership between two gay men in a more Western context do not necessarily consider the alternative negotiations that happen in the South Asian context. In that case, this paper suggests a reading of re-partnership in non-normative conjuality using a non-western framework.

Jayaprakash Mishra is a PhD student in cultural studies at Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad where his work focuses on gay men married to women (cross-orientation marriage) in the semi-urban and rural pockets of Eastern Indian State of Odisha. His area of interests is LGBT studies, queer literature, popular culture, marriage, and kinship. He writes and speaks on queer issues on different academic and non-academic forums from time to time. He has presented his work at the University of Westminster, UK; Syracuse University, US and Delhi University, India.

The Working of Heteronormativity: Transnational Remarriage as Pragmatic Strategy

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The paper uses empirical findings derived from in-depth interviews with remarried individuals in Singapore to present a sociological analysis on remarriage. Adopting a transnational, intersectional feminist perspective, the paper analyses anecdotal accounts of remarried individuals to illustrate how the intersection of nationality, class and gender shapes the conditions under which transnational divorcees remarry and reconfigure the meanings of marriage. The narratives reveal how the remarried participants have veered off the normative pathway of heteronormative modern marriage where one would fall in love, marry and enjoy the companionship of a soul mate. Instead, the participants' motivations for remarriage run contrary to hegemonic discourse on modern marriage where romantic love, emotional intimacy and companionship are the foundation and prerequisites of a specific marital union. The empirical discoveries therefore prompt re-theorising of marriage as a pragmatic strategy for reproductive labour, family reunification and social recognition. In addition, the participants' narrative accounts on their motivations to remarry and meanings of marriage reveal the profound effects of heteronormativity in their personal lives and decisions. The paper thereby offers a critique of heteronormativity through a feminist gaze on remarriage.

Quah Ee Ling Sharon is Senior Lecturer in Sociology with the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong. After being conferred PhD in Sociology by The University of Sydney in 2013, Sharon was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship and a subsequent research fellowship by the National University of Singapore, Asia Research Institute. She is the author of *Perspectives on Marital Dissolution: Divorce Biographies in Singapore* (Springer, 2015). She has also recently completed a study on transnational divorces in Singapore as Chief Investigator with a research grant awarded by the Singapore Government. Her research interests include transnational, intersectional feminist perspectives, decoloniality, heteronormativity, non-normative families (divorced and queer families), genders, masculinities, sexualities, intimacies, emotions, social justice and social policy. She is currently writing her second book, *Transnational Divorce: Intimacies and Inequalities in Singapore* (under contract with Routledge).

'Stepping into Step Families': Narratives of 'Second Marriage' Families in Hyderabad, India

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While re-marriages are not unknown in India, they are largely seen as the prerogative of men. That a bias exists in favour of men re-marrying more easily is corroborated by the Census data and research. Feminist theory addresses these concerns from a western perspective that often fails to capture the experiences of Indian/Asian families. A key focus of this paper therefore, is on the intersectionalities that complicate the narratives of second marriage families in Hyderabad. How does class, gender, caste, region play out in the negotiations and mediations the 'new family' has to make? A second frame the paper engages with is the terrain of family. In both India and Asia, family often refers to not just the immediate family but also the extended family. Pressures and tensions in such situations call for adjustments from not just the couple, but their children, parents and other in-laws. The paper also draws attention to the process of remarriage that is currently facilitated by the mushrooming online matrimonial sites. The paper attempts to track the lives of six individuals in Hyderabad who re-married. Through intensive interviews with them and their families, the paper maps their experiences and perceptions about 'second' marriage to understand the transitions in family processes with remarriage. The study is informed by feminist perspectives and will draw on feminist research methodology.

Sheela Prasad is Professor and Head, Centre for Regional Studies, University of Hyderabad, India. A geographer by training, she has interdisciplinary interests that include: urban and regional geography; environment; women's health and demography. Most of her publications are in these broad areas. Dr Prasad has been Visiting Faculty in University of Pittsburgh, Dartmouth College (both in USA) and in NUS, Singapore. She has been Faculty/ Visiting Faculty in the semester at Sea Voyage of the Universities of Pittsburgh and Virginia. She has guided students for their M.Phil and PhD degrees in the University of Hyderabad. Dr Prasad is/was on the Board of NGOs in Hyderabad working in the environment and health sector and on women's empowerment (Anveshi, CPF, MAS, COVA).

Conjugal Relations and Children's Well-being: Exploring the Experiences of Remarried Women in Sylhet, Bangladesh

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This study explores the patterns of conjugal relations of remarried women who have children from previous marriage(s) and considers the potential impacts of remarriage for women and children's wellbeing. Regardless of gendered identity it continues to be the case that the majority of Bangladeshi people are married only once. However, remarriage and polygamy are not uncommon, and this tends to be particularly the case among people living in poverty. Over the past two decades Bangladeshi society has seen some major socioeconomic transformations, particularly as growing numbers of women are engaged in paid employment outside the home. The increased visibility of women as economic contributors has in some cases been linked, for a variety of reasons, to higher divorce, desertion and remarriage rates among Bangladeshi women. One consequence of this has been a concurrent increase in numbers of children who now live in step-families. This study is based on ethnographic observation and life history interviews with 12 remarried women from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds living in Sylhet, northern Bangladesh. Drawing on this data, we argue that remarriage can render custodian mothers' lives more difficult through the often tricky negotiation between the needs and desires of their new husbands versus the wellbeing of their children. The socio-cultural structure of Bangladesh continues to be framed by specifically located patriarchy. In this context women's remarriage challenges normative conjugal relations and the resulting intrafamilial negotiations can adversely affect both mothers' and children's wellbeing.

Tanzina Choudhury teaches in the Department of Sociology, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Sylhet. She earned her MA in Women's and Gender Studies from ISH, Slovenia and the University of Hull. In 2014 she completed PhD in Gender Studies at the University of Hull. Her doctoral research examined specifically located masculinities and femininities in the context of Bangladesh and resulted in her monograph *Masculinities, Femininities and Gender Relations in Contemporary Bangladesh*. Her areas of research interest include internal migration; gender and development; gender and class; women and poverty. Her most recent research 'Impact of Microcredit on Women' arises from a grant of SUST Research Centre. She is also the lead researcher for Bangladesh team for the RCUK GCRF GlobalGRACE Project (Goldsmiths, University of London, <https://www.globalgrace.net/>).

Sumena Sultana teaches sociology at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh. She earned her BSS (Sociology) and MSS in Sociology from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet. Her main research interests include gender and development, reproductive health and reproductive rights, social demography in Bangladesh, labour markets and livelihood, social inequality and climate change. She recently completed (2018) a project titled 'Impacts of Schooling Incentive Program on female education' funded by Shahjalal University Research Centre. Her current research project is 'Marriage Patterns, Conjugal Relations and Kinship Support: A Study on Slum Women in Sylhet city'.

***Ménage a Trois* in Laos: Vietnamese Men, Wives and Second Wives Reshaping Transnational Families**

Nicolas LAINEZ

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The recent industrialization and integration of Vietnam into regional and global chains of production have enhanced migration, translocality and dispersal, therefore stretching the nuclear family. Undocumented migration from Central Vietnam to Laos spreads Vietnamese families and generates new marital configurations, in particular quasi-marital relationships between male situational singles and “second wives” (*vợ hầu*), a term that encompasses mistresses and more stable partners. Based on an ethnographic study conducted in the Vietnamese migrant community in Savannakhet, Laos, this article argues that transnational families cope with dislocation by preserving family integrity, negotiating multiple household arrangements and accessorially retreating from marriage. These strategies are shaped by and constitutive of gender and sexual norms which migrants refer to and negotiate to make sense of the challenges caused by a transnational lifestyle. This argument resonates with broader discussions on the capacity of transnationalism to reassert or reconfigure patriarchal ideologies and gender identities.

Nicolas Lainez has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, and a Masters in Development Studies from Sorbonne University, France. His research is located in the field of economic anthropology, and his research areas include credit and informal finance, mobility and brokerage systems, family and care economies, gender and sexuality, and the commodification of intimacy in the neoliberal era. He has recently finished his research on migration, infidelity and second wives in the Vietnamese migrant community in Laos for the Institute for Research and Development, France. He is currently starting a new project on Vietnamese undocumented in Laos. He has published in *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *American Anthropologist* and *Time & Society*.

Housework for Re-marriage: Analyzing Factors behind the Re-marriage of Aged Women in China

YIN Shuxi

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As divorce rate soars, re-marriage has become popular in China today. Personal resources usually play a great role in re-marriage decision. Re-marriage can help improve the household's financial budget and expenditure. However, empirical research on the Chinese case is largely absent. I firmly believe that it is of great theoretical importance and practical value to study re-marriage decision and its related factors in China during the period of social transition and strive to fill in this research gap. Using the 1996-2014 CHNS (China Health and Nutrition Survey) data, this paper applies econometrics to empirically study the impacts of various factors on the re-marriage decision of women aged from 40 to 60 in China. I use instrument variable to address the endogeneity problem. I find that low-income, healthy women are more likely to re-marry. For comparison, I study the factors behind men's re-marriage decision and find that high-income males are more like to re-marry. I conclude that old women's re-marriage decision in China is largely driven by economic concerns. Lacking competitiveness at the labor market, low-income women trade their housework within family in exchange for material security. In this hidden contract, healthy women are more advantaged. In this re-marriage model, women assume more housework and risks within family, but get little rights protected, jeopardizing gender equality. Based on my analysis, I propose some policy recommendations for China to improve its social security system.

After earning his BA degree from Peking University in China, **Yin Shuxi** obtained his Master degree from Harvard University in the USA and his PhD from the University of Tuebingen in Germany. Now he teaches at Hefei University of Technology in China.

Educational Patterns of Remarriage in South Korea: Are Remarriages More or Less Homogamous than First Marriages?

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Extensive research on educational homogamy has relatively paid little attention to how educational assortative mating patterns differ between first marriages and remarriages. Especially, studies rarely distinguish couples who are both remarried and their counterparts of which only one spouse is remarried. We address these gaps in the literature by investigating how the patterns of educational assortative mating vary across four types of marriages in Korea: 1) marriages between spouses who are both married for the first time; 2) marriages in which husbands are first-married but wives are remarried; 3) marriages in which husbands are remarried but wives are first-married; and 4) marriages between spouses who are both remarried. With all the marriages reported in marriage registers to have occurred in Korea during 2013-14, we use log-linear models to assess the association between husbands' and wives' education. The results show that the strength of educational homogamy differs across the marriages types. While marriages in which both spouses are remarried are as homogamous as first marriages, mixed-order marriages are more heterogamous than first marriages. We do not find strong evidence for status exchange between a first-married spouse and a remarried spouse which expects more education for the latter than the former.

Lee Sangsoo is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Demography Program at University of Pennsylvania. He received his BA and MA in Sociology from Korea University. His broad research interests include family demography, education, social stratification, and crossnational comparisons. Recently, he is interested in family formation behaviors in East Asian countries.

Park Hyunjoon is Korea Foundation Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Park is interested in educational stratification and family in cross-national comparative perspective, focusing on South Korea and other East Asian societies. Park published a single-authored book, *Re-Evaluating Education in Japan and Korea: De-mystifying Stereotypes*, and coedited a book, *Korean Education in Changing Economic and Demographic Contexts*. Park co-edited two special issues in peer-reviewed journals, *Growing Up in One-Parent Families in Asia* with Wei-Jun Jean Yeung; *Education as a Positional Good* with Yossi Shavit. Park is also the editor of another special issue, *Become an Adult in East Asia: Multidisciplinary and Comparative Approaches*.

Swimming Against the Tide: Remarriage and Social Mobility amongst Ethnic Minority Women in Singapore

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In Singapore, remarriages account for nearly a quarter of all civil marriages and thirty-percent of Muslim marriages, yet, sociological contributions towards understanding this contemporary family form have been virtually absent. An examination of non-normative family structures in the Asian context remains limited because of the stigma associated with divorce, remarriage and stepfamilies despite their increasing numbers. Using a qualitative life history approach, this paper offers to enhance an understanding of how remarriage impacts social mobility trajectories amongst ethnic minority women in Singapore. Though the accounts of men and children are important, the primary focus on women is because a large majority of stepfamily households are stepfather families, that is, families with a mother and her children, and a stepfather and/or cohabiting partner. The particular attention to ethnic minority women's biographies also reveals how the intersections of 'ethnicity' and 'class' heighten the moral stigma of being in blended families concealing the emotional and material struggles that women in these newly formed families continue to cope with. While the global literature suggests remarriage to be a pragmatic strategy to overcome economic vulnerability amongst poorly resourced single mothers, there are gaps in understanding how such newly formed unions actually translate into everyday processes of social mobility/immobility for women and their children. In comparing the lived experiences of remarried middle-class ethnic minority women with their working-class counterparts, this paper argues that stepfamily formation in fact tends to deepen rather than mitigate vulnerabilities, particularly for the latter, thus failing to live up to the lure of economic stability that re-partnerships are assumed to provide.

Lavanya Balachandran is a joint research fellow in the Asia Research Institute (ARI) and the Centre for Family and Population Research (CFPR) at the National University of Singapore. She received a PhD in Sociology from the National University of Singapore in April 2017. Her research interests include social mobility, family, education, social capital, race and ethnicity, and qualitative methods.

Yeung Wei-Jun Jean is Provost's Chair Professor of Sociology, Director of the Centre for Family and Population Research, and a Research Leader in the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (NUS). Before joining NUS in 2008, she taught at the University of Michigan and New York University. Prof Yeung is a member of the board of trustees of the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies and an international advisor to the Institute of Social Science Survey in Peking University. She was a co-principal investigator of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and has advised on many international panel surveys. Her current research focuses on American and Chinese family demographic changes and how they relate to children's and young adult's well-being. Her recent publications include edited volumes on *Asian Fatherhood*, *Transitioning to Adulthood in Asia*, *Marriage in Asia*, *One-Person Households in Asia*, *Economic Stress*, *Human Capital and Families in Asia*.

Second Marriage as a Cause of Legal Disputes under Islamic Family Law in Pakistan

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Because of the permissibility of polygamous marriages and the second marriage of widows and divorcees, step relations are treated in detail under Muslim Personal Law (Islamic Family Law). Not only that consanguine and uterine relations form part of a family, they also enjoy maintenance and inheritance rights. These principles of Islamic family law, however, have drawn criticism not only from international human rights law perspective, but also from the perspective of local customary practices in South Asia. Though legally permissible, polygamous marriages are often frowned upon socially, especially among urban dwellers. Same is the case regarding marriages of widows and second marriages of divorcees. In South Asian context, the treatment of stepchildren by stepmothers is proverbial for cruelty and maltreatment. High educational achievements amongst females and their increased participation in the workforce along with the rise of nuclear families and divorce rates have put constraints over traditional sources of legality i.e., religion and custom. State regulation is used to reform traditional norms to bring them in conformity with international human rights law standards. This paper focuses on 'second marriage' as a source of familial disputes e.g., divorce, custody of children, and inheritance under Muslim Personal Law in South Asia. It explores legal techniques which are employed to resolve such disputes. The primary focus of such techniques is upon the protection of women and children's rights, which is also a subject of international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Muhammad Zubair Abbasi is Assistant Professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan. He did his doctorate at the University of Oxford. The focus of his doctoral thesis was on the formation of Anglo-Muhammadan Law (Muslim Personal Law) in British India. He has published several papers on Islamic family law and jurisprudence, and Islamic family law in South Asia. He is a co-author of a textbook on family laws in Pakistan. He is the Pakistan and South Asian Editor for the Harvard Law School led project SHARIAsource and in this capacity he has contributed on contemporary legal issues in South Asia. At LUMS, he teaches Islamic jurisprudence, Muslim personal law, contract law, and comparative corporate law and governance. He taught comparative law and Islamic law reform as a visiting assistant professor at the American University in Cairo during spring 2017.

Shahbaz Ahmad Cheema, after studying his Bachelors of Law and Masters of Law from International Islamic University, Islamabad and University of the Punjab, Lahore respectively, completed his doctoral studies at University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom. In addition to publishing some papers on Islamic law and law of evidence, he has authored a book titled *Islamic Law of Inheritance: Practices in Pakistan* (Shariah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad) and co-authored *Family Laws in Pakistan* (OUP, Karachi Pakistan) with Dr Zubair Abbasi. His main area of interest is to explore the role of Pakistani judiciary in formulation of Islamic law and its consequent impact on lives of Muslims.

Old Frames but New Bonds? Disjuncture between Legal and Actual Families in the Discourse about Stepfamilies in Japan

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In 2014, Japan became involved in global-local tension in post-divorce parenting as a result of its ratification of the *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*. While Japan's agreement to cooperate in international efforts dealing with cross-border parental child abduction was a breakthrough for individual family rights in the nation, ratification resulted in the idea of a double standard for stakeholders in domestic family disputes regarding joint parenting because Japanese Civil Code still grants sole custody after divorce, which often has deprived the child of the ties with the separated parent. It is particularly the case when the child is united with a new stepfamily. Exposed by questions as such, radical family law reform according to the best interest of the child is hardly driven by the state. Rather, Japan has long pursued modernization in Asia, an idea that is founded on peculiar ideological family apparatuses (e.g., the *koseki* (family registration system)). Exploring the extent to which new family norms are developing in Japan with regard to parenthood and *the rights of the child*, this paper will aim to conceptualize the transformation of family intimacy in late Asian modernity by describing the remaining issue of normative *child custody* in stepfamilies as it is combined with historical modern state apparatuses. Consequently, this investigation will be performed with the anticipation of sharing the debate with other issues regarding the recognition of equality in family diversity (e.g. same-sex marriage and non-juridical partnerships) in the nation and beyond.

Takeshi Hamano is currently Associate Professor in Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities of University of Kitakyushu, Japan since September 2013. He was received his PhD by the College of Arts of the University of Western Sydney, Australia in 2011. As a visiting scholar between September 2017 and August 2018, he affiliated to the Center for Japanese Studies of the University of Michigan. His current research topic concerns the reconstruction of perceptions about separate-family parenting in contemporary Japan from both empirical and theoretical perspectives. He also theorizes about the ways in which possible reforms of the nation's socio-legal structure develop. He has published several articles about cross-border marriage and international migration of Japanese women from their gender accounts and issues of international parental child abduction by Japanese nationals with regard to Japan's ratification of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in 2014.

Child Custody Arrangement and Social Integration after Divorce in Vietnam

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The ending of marriage disrupts relationships in almost all sectors of one's lives, which include social support/relationships, finances, child care, housework, and work demands, residence, and mostly changes in the ability for social integration and participation. Emotional attachments, fairness, and the economic consequences for children and parents among the issues are involved in arriving at a custody disposition. Children assigned to live with their mothers after divorce is the dominant trend in Vietnam. With whom the child lives is important because it is this person who provides the daily intimate interaction critical for the child's development and through the care provider the child has access to economic resources. When people divorce, they lose the social support previously offered by their former spouse. Custodial parents, mostly single mothers may suffer considerable decline in economic well-being, cope with constraints in social integration and remarriage because of child care and rearing burden. They also have to live with social stigma of divorce and gender inequality in marriage and family. In addition, children of re-partner household may experience changes and adaption in post-divorce situation with moved-away parent and two-sided family networks. Using statistics of more than 2000 divorce profiles available from the Vietnam Supreme Court in last ten years, a fresh new questionnaire survey among 120 single parents and re-partner households after divorces and case studies among divorces conducted in 2018, this paper attempts to examine effects of divorce on single parent and re-partnered households in terms of child custody arrangement, economic well-being, and social integration with ex-spouse and exspouse's networks, which varies with structural factors, such as gender, cultural and demographics (i.e. rural/urban residence), life course (i.e. presence of children, birth cohort, age at marriage, and age at divorce) and socioeconomic status (wealth rank) in the social and cultural context of Vietnam.

Tran Thi Minh Thi is Director General of the Institute for Family and Gender Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. She gained her Master degree of Sociology at the University of Washington, USA and PhD degree of Sociology at Kyoto University, Japan. She is interested in family, gender, value, welfare, care, and health issues. Her recent publications include: "Family Values in Contemporary Vietnam" (2017); "Elderly Care in Transforming Vietnam: Policy and Structural Perspectives" (2016); "Gender Equality in Politics from Institutional and Cultural Perspectives" (2016); "Divorce in Contemporary Viet Nam" (2014). She is a member of the Brill publication on *Weaving Women's Spheres in Vietnam: The Agency of Women in Family, Religion and Community* (Editor: Kato Atsufumi) and contributed a chapter entitled: "Divorce Prevalence under the Forces of Individualism and Collectivism in *Shortcut Modernity in Vietnam*."

Marital Disruption, Remarriage and Child Well-being in China

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Demographic and family changes in contemporary China are characterised by a dual rise in marital disruption and remarriage. I analyse data from the 2015 China Education Panel Survey ($N = 8,933$) to profile and explain well-being disparities between children in intact, disrupted and remarried families. The results show that child well-being is poorer in disrupted than in intact families. Remarriage, particularly that of both parents, is associated with harm to children's well-being over and above that associated with marital disruption. There is also considerable gender asymmetry in the well-being implications of mothers' and fathers' remarriage – the former is associated with a broader range and greater extent of damage to children's well-being than the latter. Neither social selection nor economic and non-pecuniary resources explain the poorer well-being of children in disrupted families and stepfamilies compared with those in intact families. Whilst family structure mediates disparities in child well-being between disrupted and intact families, it does not explain why children in stepfamilies fare less well than those in intact families. Variations in child well-being with parents' marital status are most consistently explained by poor parent-child relations and parental conflict. Comparative assessment of marital disruption and remarriage shows that remarriage is not just another 'marital change' for children. Rather, the two are qualitatively distinct. Reflecting critically on the theories of selectivity, resource deprivation and structural instability, the findings highlight the need to consider China's distinctive sociocultural and institutional settings in configuring the implications of ongoing demographic transitions for child well-being.

Hu Yang is Assistant Professor in Sociology at Lancaster University, UK. He is also an early career fellow at the Work Family Researchers Network, USA. His research focuses on the sociology of families and intimate relationships, race/ethnicity and migration, and East Asian societies. He is the author of *Chinese–British Intermarriage: Disentangling Gender and Ethnicity* (2016). He has published in *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *European Sociological Review*, *Journal of Sex Research*, *Demographic Research*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Chinese Sociological Review*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Contemporary Social Science*, and *British Journal of Sociology of Education*.

Case Studies on the Care of Children Living in Low Income Stepfamilies

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With the increase in stepfamilies globally including Asian countries like Japan and Singapore (Nozawa, 2015), the concern on the well-being of children and adolescents living in stepfamilies undoubtedly demands corresponding attention (Moorefield & Pasley, 2013). Although the “single most studied issue involving stepfamilies has been the effect of living in a stepparent household on stepchildren” (Ganong & Coleman, 2017, p. 174), previous research on childcare practices—how children are cared for on a daily basis—the everyday care arrangements, activities and behaviours for children living in stepfamilies, has been sporadic. Studies that zoomed in on care practices were targeted for policy planning or considered mainly adult perspectives, publications on childcare practice in stepfamilies were rarely found after 2010. This paper presents an update and in-depth qualitative investigation of the childcare practices in low-income stepfamilies. It utilizes the novel lens of a bidirectional framework to explore the underlying motivations and dynamics driving childcare arrangements, parents, caregivers, children and stepchildren’s behaviours and activities. The results revealed that childcare practices within stepfamilies are complex and could profit from analysis through the bidirectional instead of unidirectional perspectives between the different players. Biological mothers in these families seemed to have low sense of agency, yet they are not powerless. The study adds currency to extant research on childcare practice in stepfamilies and shed light on how those childcare practices are derived through the utilization of a dynamic bidirectional lens. The in-depth findings are relevant for service provision for the care and well-being of children living in stepfamilies.

Ng Siang Kiat Vivienne is a PhD candidate in Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore (NUS). Her passion lies in researching the well-being of children, their adjustment to and challenges faced in living in stepfamilies in Singapore. She interviews stepfamilies from the Malay community to explore the dynamics of their relationships and communications. The aim is to identify important concepts that may contribute to supporting stepfamilies in Singapore.

Goh Chor Leng Esther is Associate Professor and Head of Department of Social Work, NUS. Her research centres on championing the need to utilize a more dynamic theory to examine childrearing and parent-child relationship. Adopting a bilateral lens that conceptualizes both children and parents (including adult caregivers) as *agentic beings* influencing each other, this line of research diverges from the conventional unilateral model which sees influence as only from parents (antecedents) to children (outcomes). Together with her students, she has expanded these key lenses of *agency* and *bilaterality of influence* from studying family dynamics to examining how clients (service users) are active agents of their own change process in relation to their social workers, and have empirically illustrated children and young persons, even those living in vulnerable conditions, as capable agents, who contribute to solutions of problems.

Parenting Practices and Child Well-Being in Remarried/Repartnered Families in Cambodia

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The divorce rate in Cambodia remains low—around 5% including separation and widowhood. Social stigma associated with divorce creates pressure for women to enter into a new relationship, and when they do, they tend to be emotionally and physically abused by their husbands. With added stressors stemming from stigma, financial problems, children from previous relationships, and complications with a previous spouse, remarried women may enter into a new relationship with significant compromises. While there is evidence showing that remarried women are at increased risk of domestic violence, little is known about whether remarriages or repartnerings among Cambodian women impact parenting practices and children's well-being—reported number of dead sons and daughters. Using the 2014 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey consisting of 7,165 ever-married women (M=28.70 years old), the results showed that mothers' and fathers' involvement and nutritional feeding scored lower among remarried/repartnered households compared to their first-time married and divorced counterparts. Remarried/repartnered families reported higher number of dead sons and daughters compared to their first-time married and divorced counterparts. Hierarchical linear regression analyses controlling for demographic variables showed that remarried/repartnered families predicted higher number of dead sons but not daughters'. Interaction effects were found between marital status and father involvement, indicating that highest number of sons' death was reported in remarried/repartnered households with the lowest level of father involvement. This study contributes to our understanding of the challenges that remarried/repartnered women and their children in Cambodia have faced where traditional patriarchal gender role are enforced.

Sothy Eng is Assistant Professor of Healthy Families and Resilient Communities at the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Dr Eng's areas of interest include K-12 education access/equity in Cambodia, program development and evaluation, child and adolescent learning and achievement, family and community development, social capital, remarried families, gender-based violence, and international development. Between 2011-2018, Dr Eng held a Professor of Practice position at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA, teaching graduate courses in Comparative and International Education and leading an international partnership program between Lehigh and Caring for Cambodia NGO based in Siem Reap Cambodia. Dr Eng was born and raised in Cambodia. After completing his BA in Psychology in 2002 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, he completed his MS (2005) and PhD (2009) in Human Development and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. In 2010, Dr Eng completed on a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) at California Center for Population Research.

Kelly Grace is a PhD candidate in Comparative and International Education at Lehigh University. Her research interests include K-12 education in Cambodia, with a focus on early childhood education and gender equity, mothers' involvement and child protection. With an interest in feminist perspectives and theory, her research seeks to consider gender issues within international development education using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS & ORGANISERS

Lavanya BALACHANDRAN is a joint research fellow in Asia Research Institute (ARI) and Centre for Family and Population Research (CFPR) at National University of Singapore. She received a PhD in Sociology from National University of Singapore in April 2017. Her dissertation titled “Labouring to Learn: A Sociological Assessment of Educational Underachievement amongst Tamil Youths in Singapore” uses a qualitative approach to examine how social capital mediates the interactive effects of ‘race and class’ on educational performance amongst Singaporean ethnic Tamil youths. Lavanya’s current fieldwork project focuses on how family practices and values are reconfigured in stepfamilies in Singapore in ways that impact social mobility and how children in these families adapt and cope with the struggles of a changing family structure. Her broader research interests include social mobility, family, education, social capital, race and ethnicity, and qualitative methods.

Sothy ENG is Assistant Professor of Healthy Families and Resilient Communities at the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Dr Eng's areas of interest include K-12 education access/equity in Cambodia, program development and evaluation, child and adolescent learning and achievement, family and community development, social capital, remarried families, gender-based violence, and international development. Between 2011-2018, Dr Eng held a Professor of Practice position at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA, teaching graduate courses in Comparative and International Education and leading an international partnership program between Lehigh and Caring for Cambodia NGO based in Siem Reap Cambodia. Dr Eng was born and raised in Cambodia. After completing his BA in Psychology in 2002 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, he completed his MS (2005) and PhD (2009) in Human Development and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. In 2010, Dr Eng completed on a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) at California Center for Population Research.

GU Xiaorong is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (NUS). She is a sociologist who shows great passions in 1) understanding how broader social and economic systems shape the development and well-being of young populations, and 2) in exploring the social consequences of China’s economic reform for its social stratification patterns and for everyday life of ordinary people. Her wider research interests include child and youth development, migration, family, education, social stratification, China’s political economy and mixed-methods research. Prior to her career as a sociologist, she worked as a lecturer of English literature and English-Chinese translation studies in Sun Yat-sen University, China.

KO Pei-Chun is Research Fellow in the Asia Research Institute and the Centre for Family and Population Research at the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD from University of Cologne. Her research interests include productive aging, intergenerational relationships, later life health, and social networks. She is currently working on topics related to productive aging, spousal influence on wellbeing in later life, older learners’ social networks and contextual factors of cognitive functioning. She is a guest editor (in collaboration with Wei-Jun Jean Yeung) of the special issue – Contextualizing Productive Aging in Asia in *Social Science & Medicine*.

QUAH Ee Ling Sharon is Lecturer in Sociology with the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong. After being conferred PhD in Sociology by The University of Sydney in 2013, Dr Quah was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship and a subsequent research fellowship by the National University of Singapore, Asia Research Institute. She is the author of *Perspectives on Marital Dissolution: Divorce Biographies in Singapore* (Springer, 2015). She has also recently completed a study on transnational divorces in Singapore as the Chief Investigator with a research grant awarded by the Singapore Government. Her research interests include transnational, intersectional feminist perspectives, heteronormativity, non-normative families (divorced and queer families), genders, masculinities, sexualities, intimacies, emotions, social justice and social policy. She is currently writing her second book, *Transnational Divorce: Intimacies and Inequalities in Singapore* (under contract with Routledge).

Jonathan RIGG is Director of the Asia Research Institute and Professor of Geography at the National University of Singapore. He works on issues of agrarian transformation, poverty, vulnerability, migration, disaster and livelihoods in the Asian region, and has undertaken fieldwork in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. His book *Challenging Southeast Asian Development: The Shadows of Success* was published by Routledge in 2015 and explores the underside of rapid economic growth and structural change. His latest book, *More than Rural: Textures of Thailand's Agrarian Transformation*, will shortly be published by Hawaii University Press and draws on three decades of field-based research in Thailand.

YEUNG Wei-Jun Jean is Provost's Chair Professor of Sociology, Director of the Centre for Family and Population Research, and a Research Leader in the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (NUS). Before joining NUS in 2008, she taught at the University of Michigan and New York University. Prof Yeung is a member of the board of trustees of the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies and an international advisor to the Institute of Social Science Survey in Peking University. She was a co-principal investigator of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and has advised on many international panel surveys. Her current research focuses on American and Chinese family demographic changes and how they relate to children's and young adult's well-being. Her recent publications include edited volumes on *Asian Fatherhood*, *Transitioning to Adulthood in Asia*, *Marriage in Asia*, *One-Person Households in Asia*, *Economic Stress*, *Human Capital and Families in Asia*.