Organised by Asia Research Institute, NUS

FAMILY POLICIES IN ASIA 21-22 Nov 2019
AS8, Seminar Room 04-04

For information and registration: www.ari.nus.edu.sg
Family policies have been on the rise in Asia in order to respond to recent dramatic demographic and socioeconomic changes that challenge both families and states.

“Family policy” has long been seen as a “fuzzy concept”, as the government laws and regulations that are designed intentionally to support families, enhance family member’s well-being, and strengthen family relationships can all be regarded as family policies no matter whether they directly aim at families (Bogenschneider, 2006; Gauthier, 1998). Family policies are thus highly interrelated with and often overlap other policy fields, such as population, labour market, education, health, housing, gender equality, and sustainable development goals (Richardson, 2018).

Furthermore, the definition and practice of “family” change according to the socio-economic, political, religious and cultural framework of individual countries. Asian countries are characterised by a high degree of diversity in political, economic, and cultural terms as well as corresponding national and local family policies, in spite of the common practice that families are the main (sometimes solo) welfare provider (Yeung et al, 2018). Thus, the goals and outcomes of family policies differ from country to country and at times are controversial.

These sophisticated “Asian” contexts make the understanding and making of family policies difficult. However, such complexity brings great opportunities for scholars to enrich current knowledge, both academically and empirically, on family issues and public policies. What is lacking for now is the conceptual framework for comparative studies and the understanding of the relationship between family policies and the distinctive Asian cultural and social factors.

By bringing together scholars across the disciplines to interrogate Asian family policies, this conference aims to facilitate the making of a culturally-informed theory in family policies. Conceptual papers on family policies and empirical research using cross-sectional or longitudinal design, covering family characteristics and policy measures in Asian countries are welcome. Comparative studies in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia are preferred.

THEME ONE: THE DOMAIN OF FAMILY POLICIES

- What is the relationship between welfare regimes and family policies? Is there a specific “Asian” welfare regime or are the welfare regimes in Asian countries the variants of the existing models?
- How should we define family policies (in theoretical and empirical terms)? Is the definition of family policy contextual or universal? Which policy measures should be included in family policies? Are housing, education, and health policy measures also family policies and to what extent are they linked to “family” in different Asian societies?
- What is the relationship between family and population policies, particularly pro-natalist and anti-natalist ones, in Asia?
- What is the relationship between family and social protection policy? Are there cross-national differences in their relationship? What is the development of the relationship between these two policies over time?

THEME TWO: FAMILY POLICY MEASURES ALONG THE LIFE-COURSE

- What is the general picture of the family policy focusing on partnership formation, childbirth, childrearing, and the care for and well-being of elder people in individual Asian countries? What are the similarities and differences in the design, implementation and challenges of these national family policies? What are the trends of these policies in these Asian countries?
- Do these life event-oriented family policies focus on economic (e.g., child/family allowance, tax relief, and family credit) or ecological (e.g., provision for childcare service) measures? What are the similarities and differences in the preference for and implementation of these measures among these Asian countries? What are the trends of these measures in Asian countries?
- How do family policy measures influence the practice of parenthood?
THEME THREE: FAMILY POLICIES AND THE WIDER CONTEXTS

- To what extent do family policies in individual countries reflect the tension between rapid economic and social changes and the limited shift in kinship systems, family structures and obligations? To what extent do these family policies alleviate this tension?

- How universal or targeted are family policy measures in terms of social class as well as ethnic, religious, gender, citizenship divides? For instance, do the policy measures deepen gender division of labour or actively challenge traditional gender roles?

- What constraints and opportunities shape the options of individual actors by the existing policy profiles? E.g. there is an increasing inclusion of women in the logic of the market economy through their labour market participation but institutional structures and private living arrangements remain reigned by traditional social norms, gender ideologies and values.

- Among various family policy objectives, three in particular – work/family reconciliation, gender equality, and income protection – have emerged as crucial considerations for the formulation of family policy in Western industrialized countries (Kang, 2018). Which are the main objectives in Asian societies? Can distinct family policy regimes be identified?

- What is the level of familialism, which indicates to what extent the family contributes to welfare provision or, conversely, the level of defamilialization, meaning the extent to which welfare producing tasks are shifted from the family onto the market and the state in the Asian countries? How is familialism related to the multigenerational family structure?

- Has the diffusion of family policy measures (or the promotion of certain standards and programs) been affected by the activities of international organizations and/or internationally active non-governmental organizations?

- What is the role of family policies in supporting the needs of non-traditional families (e.g., cohabitation, same-sex partnership and LGBT families, single-parent families, and blended families)? What is the relationship between social policies and non-traditional family forms?

CONFERENCE CONVENORS

**Prof Wei-Jun Jean Yeung**
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**Dr Wei-Yun Chung**
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
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## 21 NOVEMBER 2019 (THURSDAY)

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<td>09:30 – 09:50</td>
<td><strong>OPENING &amp; WELCOME REMARKS</strong></td>
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| 09:30      | Wei-Jun Jean Yeung | National University of Singapore  
|            | Sonja Drobnič | University of Bremen, Germany  
|            | Wei-Yun Chung | National University of Singapore  |
| 09:50 – 11:00 | **PANEL 1 – A BIG PICTURE OF FAMILY POLICIES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA** |
| **Chairperson** | Wei-Jun Jean Yeung | National University of Singapore  |
| 09:50      | Population Regulation and Child-Related Policies in East and Southeast Asia  
|                | Johannes Huinink, Simone Tonelli and Sonja Drobnič | University of Bremen, Germany  |
| 10:10      | The “Family Turn” and China’s Post-Socialist Welfare Regime  
|                | Feng Wang | University of California - Irvine, USA, and Fudan University, China  
|                | Ke Shen | Fudan University, China  
|                | Zhan Hu | Fudan University, China  
|                | Yong Cai | Fudan University, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, USA  |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | **TEA BREAK**                                                           |
| 11:30 – 13:00 | **PANEL 2 – FAMILY PLANNING IN CHINA, SINGAPORE, AND INDONESIA**        |
| **Chairperson** | Sonja Drobnič | University of Bremen, Germany  |
| 11:30      | From “Two is Enough” to “Have Three or More if You Can Afford It” to “Making Singapore a Great Place for Families”  
|                | Mui Teng Yap and Fengqing Chao | National University of Singapore  |
| 11:50      | Family Policies, Social Norms and Fertility Decisions: A Survey Experiment  
|                | Lake Lui | Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
|                | Adam Cheung | Hong Kong Baptist University  |
| 12:10      | The Evolving Definition and Perception of the “Nuclear Family” in Southeast Asia: A Case of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century  
<p>|                | Akiko Sugiyama | University of Malaya  |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | <strong>LUNCH</strong>                                                               |</p>
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<td>14:00 – 15:30</td>
<td>PANEL 3 – CHILD REARING AND FAMILY POLICIES</td>
<td>Fair Parenting at Stake: Insights of Family Law Reform and its Challenge to the State Familialism in Japan</td>
<td>Takeshi Hamano</td>
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<td>14:20</td>
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<td>Legal Treatment of Children Out of Wedlock: A Comparative Study of Vietnam and China</td>
<td>Vu Hong Trang</td>
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<td>Gender Relations on Recipients of Family of Hope Program: Study on PKH Recipient of Migrant Workers Family in Banyumas Regency Indonesia</td>
<td>Tyas Retno Wulan</td>
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<td>Constraints and Opportunities Contributing to the Childcare Arrangements in Taiwan: Gender Ideology, Labor Market, and Family Policy</td>
<td>Shu-Yung Wang and You Syue Liu</td>
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<td>Work-Family Balance Policies and the Lived Experience of Employed Women with Caring Responsibilities in Iran</td>
<td>Ali Akbar Tajmazinani and Fatemeh Sadat Hosseini</td>
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<td>PANEL 5 – THE ROLE OF STATE AND FAMILY IN CAREGIVING</td>
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<td>Thang Leng Leng</td>
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<td>09:00</td>
<td>Systematic Development, New Challenges and Innovation Strategy of Aging Policy in China</td>
<td>Zhan Hu, Xizhe Peng, Xuehui Wang and Liangjun Song</td>
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<td>09:20</td>
<td>Indian Elderly and the ‘Familialist’ State Policies</td>
<td>Anuja Agrawal</td>
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<td>How Family Policies Redefine Families: The Case of Mainland China-Hong Kong Cross-Border Families</td>
<td>Wai-chi Chee</td>
<td>Hong Kong Baptist University</td>
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<td>PANEL 6 – CARING POLICIES FOR THE OLDER ADULTS</td>
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<td>Feng Qiushi</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>11:00</td>
<td>The Introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance in Korea: Changes in Familial Care and Policy Implication</td>
<td>Erin Hye-Won Kim</td>
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<td>Implications of Thailand’s Universal Social Pension for Intergenerational Support Exchanges: A Mixed-methods Approach</td>
<td>Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>Wiraporn Pothisiri</td>
<td>Chulalongkorn University, Thailand</td>
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<td>John Knoedel</td>
<td>University of Michigan, USA</td>
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<td>Lavanya Balachandran</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td>Inclusion of Same-Sex Union in Family Policies in Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore</td>
<td>Wei-Yun Chung, Wei-Jun Jean Yeung</td>
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<td>Wei-Yun Chung, Wei-Jun Jean Yeung</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td>Listening to Voices from Inside: State and Family-Policies on LGBTQI Landscape in Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Philippines</td>
<td>Jed B. Otano</td>
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<td>15:30 – 15:50</td>
<td>CLOSING REMARKS</td>
<td>Wei-Jun Jean Yeung</td>
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<td>Sonja Drobnič, Wei-Yun Chung</td>
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Population Regulation and Child-Related Policies in East and Southeast Asia

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Countries in East and Southeast Asia experienced dramatic shifts in population size and structure over the last five decades. Very high fertility rates in the 1960s declined dramatically as rapid socioeconomic transformations, such as increased educational and employment opportunities for women, delayed marriage, and higher rates of divorce came about. While most countries in the region by the 1970s had no intervention in place and the existing few aimed at reducing population growth, most of the interventions today are directed to maintaining or raising fertility rates. In our comparative paper, we ask whether and how population changes in these countries over the last decades may have triggered the implementation of child-related population-regulating family policy, and whether these policy measures have successfully mitigated the implications of demographic transformation. We investigate which kind of measures related to child birth (e.g. parental leave, child allowances, tax credit, childcare, etc.) have been introduced and when, and whether it is possible to identify patterns in the intra-regional variation in family policy models. Do the political and cultural legacy of countries, their variation in female employment levels, the levels economic growth and their regional and international interdependencies explain cross-country differences? To what extent the strategies adopted in the region differ from the experience of “Western” countries which experience similar population developments? In our paper, we attempt to answer such questions by analyzing an original dataset on social policies developed at the University of Bremen, as well as additional publicly available databases. Descriptive data and preliminary results of cluster analysis suggest that distinct family policy profiles can be found in the region and their existence can be at least partly accounted by economic, political, historical, and geographical parameters as well as path-dependent processes.

Simone Tonelli, M.A./M.Sc. in Social Policy and Labour Studies, is a Researcher at the University of Bremen, Germany, where he works in the research project “Formation and diffusion of family policy in a global perspective”. His research interests include family policy as well as broader comparative political economy, comparative politics, and network analysis.

Johannes Huinink is a Research Professor at the SOCIUM – Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy, University of Bremen, Germany. His research interests include life course research, family science, social change and cultural evolution. Co-PI of the research project “Formation and diffusion of family policy in a global perspective” at the Collaborative Research Centre “Global Dynamics of Social Policy”.

Sonja Drobnič is the Professor of Sociology at the University of Bremen, Germany. Beside family policy, her research interests include social inequalities in the labor market and in the home, life course research, work-life balance, family and gender. Co-PI of the research project “Formation and diffusion of family policy in a global perspective” at the Collaborative Research Centre “Global Dynamics of Social Policy”.
Family policies in China are at a critical crossroads. Two profound changes, one at the societal level and another at the state, are ushering in a new era of changing family policies, which we call the “family turn.” The dismantling of the planned economy system has rendered the employment-based social benefits delivery system under socialism largely obsolete, while rising income and wealth has created a public expectation that the state needs to develop a new welfare regime that is commensurate with China’s upper-middle income society status and compatible with China’s new economic and social arrangements. In the last decade and half, we have observed indeed the emergence of a post-socialist welfare regime that is characterized by rapid expansion of welfare benefits coverage, fragmentation along the lines of social identity, and huge inequality in benefit levels. For nearly four decades, a strong anti-natal policy, trademarked by the one-child policy, dominated public discourse and policy making regarding the family. With the end of the one-child policy and escalating concerns of low birth rate, calls for new and pro-natal family policies are gaining new traction and popularity.

What have been the changes in family policies and in social behaviors associated with the family in China in the last few decades? What are the political, social, and economic logics behind such changes? In this paper, we intend to answer these two broad questions by using a historical-comparative approach to examine the evolution of China’s social welfare regime, from one that is embedded in the socialist planned economy and with family policies centered on birth control, to one that is increasingly individual- and family-based, and that is increasingly turning to pro-natal. We plan to document behavioral changes in marriage and family based on census and survey data, to carry out a text-based analysis of various dimensions of family policies in the official news outlet over time, and to offer an analysis of the coherences and contradictions of the recent development in family policies under China’s new and developing social welfare regime.

Feng Wang is professor of sociology at the University of California, Irvine and professor of sociology and demography at Fudan University in China. He has done extensive research on global social and demographic changes, comparative population and social history, and social inequality, with a focus on China. He is the author of multiple books, and his research articles have been published in venues including Population and Development Review, Demography, Science, The Journal of the Economics of Aging, and International Migration Review. His work and views have also been covered by many media outlets, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Financial Times, The Guardian, Economist, NPR, CNN, BBC, and others.
Shen Ke is associate professor of demography at Fudan University in China. Her research interests include population aging and intergenerational economics, family structure and familial transfers, and elderly health. Specifically, she has been studying changes in the inequalities in public transfers and the impact of population aging on public spending in the transitional Chinese society. Her research has appeared in *Population and Development Review, Social Science & Medicine, Demographic Research,* and *The Journal of the Economics of Aging.*


Yong Cai is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Yong Cai specializes in Chinese demography, especially China’s low fertility and population aging in a global context. His publications have appeared in *Demography, American Sociological Review, Population and Development Review,* and others.
From “Two is Enough” to “Have Three or More if You Can Afford It” to “Making Singapore a Great Place for Families”

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“Two is enough”, “Have three or more if you can afford it”, “Making Singapore a Great Place for Families” – these are three familiar taglines associated with the three main phases of Singapore’s national demographic development: anti-natalist, selectively pro-natalist, and pro-natalist, respectively. While fertility policies constitute one of the tools in the tool-kit used to influence the population’s size, structure and growth rates, and may therefore be considered population policies, it may be noted that the family has always been the lens through which these policies are viewed and operated. Thus, during the anti-natalist phase, the government evoked the welfare benefits of the small, then two-child family, which it complemented with policy measures/incentives to keep families small/disincentive for large families – ideally, no more than two children. In the selectively pro-natalist stage, pro-family incentives were offered to encourage larger families of three children or more though conditional on one’s ability to afford larger families. The numerical target was removed in the early 2000s and “Marriage and Parenthood” packages have been progressively enhanced in various stages to provide an “ideal”, even “great”, environment for Singaporeans to have children and bring up their families. This presentation provides a historical perspective on Singapore’s demographic development, particularly as regards fertility changes, and the policies and programmes used to address these changes.

Mui Teng Yap is Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. She is also an Associate of the Changing Asian Family cluster at the Asia Research Institute. She has written and published widely on fertility and family planning, migration and ageing in Singapore and the region.

Fengqing Chao is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. She has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Statistics from the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD from the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore. Her PhD dissertation is “Bayesian Methods for Estimating Global Health Indicators”.

11
Family Policies, Social Norms and Fertility Decisions: A Survey Experiment

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Numerous policies recommendations have been made to increase fertility in countries with ultra-low fertility rate, yet their effectiveness remains unevaluated. Using a multifactorial vignette design that creates hypothetical policy scenarios, this research determines the effect of family-friendly policies and social norms on the fertility decisions of Hong Kong people. Based on a territory-wide random sample (n=1,000), we find a big discrepancy between the ideal (1.7) and the actual number of children (0.84). While all family policy recommendations can raise fertility, leave policies that allow fathers’ involvement work better than policies that involve only mothers. Childcare support and housing policies have a positive multiplying effect on fertility. Family-friendly organizational norms strengthen the positive effect of workhour legislation and leave policies on fertility. Gender egalitarian organizational norm is essential for long unpaid leave to take effect. Overall, these policies have greater effect on couples with high socioeconomic status and negative childbearing attitudes.

Lake Lui is Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research examines how global forces like economic restructuring, migration, and sociocultural changes interact with national policies in affecting gender relations and the family in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Her major publications appear in Sociology, Social Forces, Journal of Family Issues, Modern China, and Chinese Sociological Review.

Adam Ka-Lok Cheung is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Hong Kong Baptist University. His research interests include gender ideology, division of household labor, marital relations and domestic violence in Hong Kong and other Asian societies. His research has been published in Journal of Marriage and Family, Journal of Family Issues, Demographic Research, Violence against Women, Violence & Victims, Population Research & Policy Review, Current Sociology and other peer-reviewed journals.
The Evolving Definition and Perception of the “Nuclear Family” in Southeast Asia: A Case of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century

Akiko Sugiyama
Department of History, University of Malaya
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Family planning policies often posit the nuclear family as the ideal and target family type. Indonesia’s much discussed family planning under the New Order, to name one, championed the slogan, “two (children) is enough” (e.g. Niehof and Lubis, 2003). Yet in many languages in Southeast Asia the very notion of the family, let alone the fixed construct of the nuclear family, is often unfamiliar and even alien, as the family in the past and the present has often been understood as a fluid web of relatedness and bilateral kinship with wide-ranging residential patterns (e.g. Wolters, 1999; Day, 2002; Hayami et al, 2012). In the evolving lexicon of standard Indonesian it was not until the early 1950s when keluarga (family) took the dual meanings of the nuclear family and the household. Furthermore, it was only in the late 1980s when the word came to denote the nuclear family of mother, father and their children (Sugiyama, 2017).

This paper is set in the present-day Indonesia in the 1920s-40s, a time of linguistic fluidity and experiment, and studies the language and vocabulary of “women’s pages”, a section featuring homemaking advice and matters concerning women, in the selected governmental and non-governmental Malay periodicals (e.g. Pandji Poestaka, Pemandangan). Drawing from such observations, the paper examines how the discussion on prescribed gender roles in the women’s pages was instrumental in introducing the “nuclear family” as modern and ideal family type, which one might argue as an antecedent for the late twentieth-century family planning in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

Akiko Sugiyama is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Malaya. She obtained her PhD in History, majoring in Southeast Asia, from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Her current research interests are in the areas of family studies in Southeast Asia, history of gender roles, maritime history of Western opera in Asia, musical performance and imperial culture of European empires.
Fair Parenting at Stake: 
Insights of Family Law Reform and its Challenge to the State Familialism in Japan

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In 2019, Japan’s Ministry of Justice announced that it would consider a possible reform of the present family law, proposing that the divorcing couple either select solo or joint custody of the child after separation. The persistent solo custody principle has existed in the present family law since the foundation of state familialism in the nineteenth century. As a result of the changes in family values, such as parenting and the division of gender roles, it has now been challenged both publicly and intellectually. Recently, Japan’s ratification of the Hague Child Abduction Convention in 2014 have fuelled this question, as this international Convention would likely include fair parenting. Meanwhile, several activists and intellectuals in Japan have claimed that they are anxious about the legalisation of joint custody, pointing to the risk of possible violence against the parent (mother) and child. Considering those complicated debates, this paper aims to discuss the ways in which a new policy on children in separated families has barely developed through these family law reform debates. Methodologically, sources included the records of the legislative committee and the voices of policy makers and activists across the period of a decade, and Social Problem Work in social constructionist approach was conducted. This research examines how more progressive (and pragmatic) ideas of the family (the well-being of the child in particular) can be formulated in the course of depopulation, individualization, and globalization, generating critical inquiry about the ‘traditional’ Asian family values that are implemented in the state policy discourses.

Takeshi Hamano is Associate Professor of Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Kitakyushu, Japan. His research interest is the transformation of the perception of the contemporary family in Japan, in encounters with alternative family values through globalization. In several publications in both English and Japanese, he focuses on the ways in which this shift challenges normative values that are still predominant within the national structure, which has long been grounded as the fundamental state norm of modern Japan. He is currently planning to apply his research to a wider comparative research project in the inter-Asian context.
In both Vietnam and China, the two Asian countries that have Confucian values, wartorn history and Communist governments in common, marriage is an instrumental institution that authorize couples to share their lives together and their children to be legitimate. Nevertheless, the tradition of family formation prior to having children has been dwindling and ex-nuptial children are not uncommon. Little research has been done on the treatment of children of non-marital birth in law and in reality in the two countries. The study seeks to respond to one major question: What are there commonalities and differences in Vietnam and China in treating ex-nuptial children from legal perspectives? First, traditional views on children born outside of marriage in Vietnam (con ngoài giá thú) and China (未婚生子) are to be discussed. Attention is paid to the diversity of groups of children of unwed parents, including children of homosexual parents, of extra-marital affairs, of single or surrogate mothers, of cohabitating non-married couples or of abandoned pregnant women, etc. Second, a comparative dissection of pertinent laws and regulations, notably law on family and marriage, is meant to throw light upon how children born out of unmarried couples are legislatively treated in respective countries. Third, an intersectional analysis of socio-economic factors is made in order to examine how children out of unwed parents are treated in practice. The study concludes that children are supposed to have the same civil status regardless of whether their parents were married in both Vietnam and China yet the social practice and administrative system (prohibition of abortion, household registration, etc), particularly in China, still put them at a huge disadvantage.

Trang Vu Hong graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam in 2013 and went on to obtain Advanced Diploma on Italian culture from the University of Perugia, Italy. With Erasmus Mundus scholarship by the European Commission, she finished her MA degree on European studies in France, Germany and Sweden. Upon graduation, Trang worked for UNICEF projects on social integration in Germany. Trang was also involved in numerous campaigns against hate speech in Europe. She is now finishing her second MA thesis on Chinese law and society, and working as a teaching assistant of two MA-level courses at Yenching Academy of Peking University. Trang is also Board Member of Vietnam centre, a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote Vietnamese culture at home and abroad and also Director of Delegates of the 2019 Yenching Global Symposium in Beijing, one of the biggest and most competitive conferences on China-studies in the world.
Gender Relations on Recipients of Family of Hope Program (PKH): A Study on PKH Recipient of Migrant Workers Family in Banyumas Regency Indonesia

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The Family of Hope Program (PKH) was launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs Indonesia since 2007 in the context of alleviating poverty in Indonesia. This program is also very relevant to achieving the 5th goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely achieving gender equality. The interesting thing in the PKH program is that the conditions applied in the form of interventions to aim at issues of welfare and gender disparity in everyday life. So it is not surprising that in the design of the PKH program, PKH social assistance is given to mothers or adult women (grandmothers, aunts or sisters) who are usually called Family Managers. The provision of funds to family administrators is believed to be able to encourage the effectiveness of PKH in improving the quality of education and health. Unfortunately the results of research carried out, including Helena (2016) in Gedong Tengen Subdistrict, Yogyakarta showed that PKH assistance had little effect on the division of labor in the family and recommended the need for learning and equality training for wives and husbands. There is an impression that PKH has not really seriously emphasized the gender aspect. For this reason, it is urgent to conduct a comprehensive gender study of PKH recipients. For this reason, the specific purpose of this study was to know the gender relations of PKH recipient families, to know the decision-making process in PKH utilization and to see how far PKH was used to break gender-based poverty. This research uses qualitative research methods so that it can describe gender relations in PKH recipients in detail and comprehensively. The results of the interim research show that the PKH program was able to encourage equal gender relations in the families of PKH recipients.

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Work and Family Policies in Sri Lanka: Enabling Working Mothers?

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This paper aims to provide a case study of work-family policies in Sri Lanka to evaluate whether these policies meet their expected outcomes.

State policies in Sri Lanka in relation to family and employment can be categorised into three types: leave arrangements, transfer policies and working hours regulations. At present, public sector women employees in Sri Lanka (permanent, temporary or casual) are entitled to 84 days of maternity leave on full pay, 84 days on half pay and 84 days unpaid leave for each childbirth (Sri Lanka Government, 2005). Further, at the end of the 5th month of pregnancy, a female worker is allowed to report for work half an hour late and to leave her place of work half an hour before the normal time of departure (Sri Lanka Government, 1992). In addition, after the expiration of maternity leave she should be allowed to leave the office one hour before the normal time of departure – the so-called six months ‘baby feeding hour’ (Sri Lanka Government, 2004). In private sector women employees in Sri Lanka are entitled to only 84 days of maternity leave on full pay. This situation reflects that there is a strong coverage of maternity protection for working mothers in Sri Lanka. Public working hours are normally limited, formally, to eight hours work a day (Sri Lanka Government, 1992). However, a growing number of people work long hours in Sri Lanka (Government of Sri Lanka, 2013).

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews of around 1.5 hours with 30 women employees in the banking, education and health sectors. These women are divided into two groups: mothers aged 30-45 with children mainly under 15 years old and the mothers aged 46-60 with children over 15. They are working professionals in banking, education, and medicine. The researcher used a version of thematic analysis in undertaking the analysis of interview accounts and online available nationally representative large-scale survey data to support and extend the qualitative information.

The researcher finds that the only available state policy in relation to child birth, which is aimed at working mothers in Sri Lanka, is also a heavily gendered approach, positioning mothers as care-givers. The interviewees believe that a lengthy time taken from work can be harmful to women’s careers, even though the new maternity leave policy gives them a strong protection. Another limitation of the policy is that it focuses only on the importance of maternity leave and care for the newborn or very young (under one year), rather than considering caring work with children beyond that point (aged 1-15). In this context, working mothers are indirectly placed into childcaring duties where they are protected by the institution of marriage. Further, the policy has neglected fathering responsibilities towards small babies and the relationship between father and child, and thus there is no policy support for fathers or mothers in connection with childbirth, childcare or child sickness in Sri Lanka.

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How to increase the fertility rate and to facilitate female labor force participation at the same time is the contested debate in Taiwan recently. Also, due to changes in household economies, gender norms, and family composition, childcare arrangements raise concern. The evidences show that infant care responsibility is still highly familialized, and grandparents’ roles become vital. Understanding the patterns and reasons of childcare arrangements, as well as gender differences in labor market performance, prove to be important for addressing the policy debate.

Existing researches suggest that parents make infant care decisions based on preference/ ideology (childcare attitude and gender norm), social-economic and family considerations (parental education, family income, marital status, and family type), and institutional/policy factors (quality, affordability, and availability of family policy options, and working status, time, flexibility, and parental leaves). However, very few studies empirically analyze factors contributing childcare arrangements in Taiwan’s culture and labor market context.

This study therefore first aims to examine the distribution of childcare patterns. Secondly, it will briefly overview the recent childcare and labor market policies reforms. The third section will analyze the impacts of three sets of factors (ideology, resources, and policy) on childcare arrangement by using national representative data from “Survey of Child Living Condition” of 2018 (N=5,000). Multiple-nominal Logistic Model and Multiple-Level Regression are employed for empirical analysis.

Several interesting results include: first, there is a strong relationship between multigenerational support and familialism of childcare arrangements, and raise policy concerns. Second, policy measures actually reinforce the gender division of labor rather than challenge the traditional gender roles, which unfortunately have negative impact on fertility and gender equality. Third, economic circumstances prove to be the driving force behind parental choice, therefore, more advantaged families were more likely to use non-familial care while more disadvantaged families were relying more on relative care. This paper argues that de-familialization may not equal to socialization of care. The commodification of care has stratification effect, and therefore limits parental choice, especially that of mothers. The stratification effect has been clearly shown that the most educated group are those most likely to keep working. This, in part, is because this group is likely paid better than and can afford the high cost of private childcare. Consequently, the least educated married women are the ones with least income and would be forced to drop out of workplace in order to care. Finally, labor market, gender, and family policy implications will be discussed.

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Work-Family Balance Policies and the Lived Experience of Employed Women with Caring Responsibilities in Iran

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Balancing the responsibilities of employed women in the two worlds of family and work in a social welfare regime which gives priority to the family is a major challenge. This paper investigates the compatibility and responsiveness of existing policies to the circumstances of employed women by a) reviewing general and specific work-family balance policies through qualitative content analysis, and b) studying the lived experience of employed women with caring responsibilities through semi-structured interviews with 26 females who are employed or have quitted their job due to caring duties. General policies relevant to the work-family balance are 'Mega Population Policies' (2014), 'Mega Family Policies' (2016), 'Civil Service Management Act' (1992), 'Women Employment Policies' (1992), 'Women’s Rights and Responsibilities Charter' (2004), 'Policies for Promotion of Women's Participation in Higher Education' (2005), 'Policies for Promotion of Women's Health' (2006) and first to sixth 'National Five-Years Development Plans' (1989-2017). Specific work-family balance policies include parental leaves and breast feeding leave (1995, 2007), remote working (2010), reduction of working hours for women with special needs (2010), childcare benefit (2007) and part-time employment for women (1983). Maximum variation purposeful sampling method meant that the women interviewed consisted of various age groups between 20 to 65, both public and private sector employees, with various types of caring responsibilities for children, the elderly and disabled relatives, and with varying degrees of educational attainment from being illiterate to having a university qualification. Results show that 'flexible working for women with special circumstances', despite being compatible to the needs and circumstances of employed women in theory, brings about several consequences for them including negative impact on job promotion, additional workload, and job strains due to cultural stereotypes and employer's mindset. Moreover, child and elderly sick leaves for their caregivers are insufficiently incorporated into leave policies. Part-time employment arrangements are not compatible with real life circumstances of these women since it leads to significant reductions in their wages and benefits and makes them to face serious financial difficulties in the absence of an adequate social protection system. Cultural measures to alter gender attitudes and stereotypes, provision of more universal and inclusive child care arrangements, equalization of employment and caring positions for both sexes, enhancement of relationship and life skills according to various lifecycle phases and improving the quality of health and counseling services regarding caregivers of people with disabilities could have positive impacts on work-family balance.

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Systematic Development, New Challenges and Innovation Strategy of Aging Policy in China

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Population aging has become a universal phenomenon in China, and it has brought profound and arduous challenges to the formulation and implementation of public policies. Corresponding to the dynamic changes and complex structural characteristics of an aging society, aging policy system should also have the characteristics of timely adjustment, multi-integration and coordination. It is important to promote the scientific response to the aging population challenge and enhance the overall governance capacity of China. This study collects aging policies at the national level in 1980-2019, and conducts quantitative research on policy texts based on the LDA theme model. The paper analyzes the stage characteristics of national aging policy since the 1980s, including policy makers, policy content and policy tools. The study finds that aging policy system in China has undergone significant adjustments in terms of above three aspects, which is more coordinated and integrated, emphasizing the division of labor and cooperation between the government, society, market and family. With the rapid population aging and big changes in family structure, aging policy of China also faces a series of new challenges, such as lacking of relevant policies of various types of family support and services, re-employment and social participation, age-friendly living environment reconstruction. In view of this, the paper focuses on innovation strategies of future aging policies in key areas such as family capacity building, elderly social participation and age-friendly community construction.


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Xuehui Wang is a Post-doctoral Fellow of Public Management and Public Policy at Fudan University. She has published several articles in Chinese journals. Her current research focuses on exploring the trends and characteristics of health status of older population and their far-reaching impact on long-term care services in China.

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Indian Elderly and the ‘Familialist’ State Policies

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The proposed paper will focus upon the policies of the Indian state towards the elderly constituents of the family. This is an important discussion as although Indian population still remains structurally young, there is a substantial increase in the elderly population for well-known reasons. Changing family structures, most notably the decline in family size owing to declining total fertility rates and increase in work related migration practices also have a direct bearing on the problem of elderly care.

The paper will specifically focus upon two policy measures that have been undertaken over the last decade and a half. Firstly, the discontinuation of the old pension scheme and commencement of the National Pension scheme in January, 2004 and, secondly, the enactment of The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen’s Act, 2007. In the absence of a clearly formulated family policy in India, these two measures give us a very good idea about the attitude of the Indian state towards the elderly constituent of the family, as well as the family itself.

What is common to both these measures is an overt backtracking by the state from any form of direct and substantial commitment to the wellbeing of the elderly and, contrarily, a commitment to schemes and machineries which enforce the obligation of the children to look after the parents and other elderly relatives, in turn reinforcing the role of the family as the sole provider of social security to its dependents. Seen in light of a social-cultural order which is exceedingly patrilineal, this also reinforces son-preference and is in direct contradiction to the other aspects of Indian family policy measures.

The paper will consider the social and legal implications of these policies as well as spell out the underlying familialism, both material and ideological, of these measures. It will also situate these two measures against the backdrop of other failed attempts to bring about policy measures which have sought to impose greater responsibility on the state to provide for the elderly.

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How Family Policies Redefine Families:  
The Case of Mainland China-Hong Kong Cross-Border Families

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China’s one-child policy represents an unprecedented extreme state control on population, transforming China’s family structure. When the policy was in place, from 1979 to 2015, Chinese parents who desired more children used different ways to evade this policy. One such way was tourism birth in Hong Kong. From 2003 to 2012, about 200,000 babies were born in Hong Kong to Mainland Chinese parents until a ban was enforced to bar Mainland women from giving birth in Hong Kong. Through the experiences of pregnant Mainland Chinese women crossing the border to give birth in Hong Kong, this paper seeks to explore the impact of childbirth policy, migration regulations and welfare provision on family practices.

Data are drawn on ethnographic research between 2012 and 2018 with 45 low-income families wherein the mothers stay on temporary visas to take care of their Hong Kong-born children who go to school in Hong Kong. Findings reveal that the way that these parents come to terms with family-making is filled with contradictions between family-related policies and Asian traditional family values – one-child policy that disregards gender vs cultural preference to have sons to perpetuate the family line; migration regimes separating parents and child vs cultural ideal of an intact family; welfare policies that stigmatize the parents as irresponsible vs social practice of families as care provider. Building on theories of biopolitics and migration infrastructure, this paper discusses how these competing forces challenge the well-being of transnational families and how the families understand and address these challenges.

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The Introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance in Korea: Changes in Familial Care and Policy Implications

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In July 2008, the Korean government introduced the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI), a social insurance program for elderly people with functional limitations. By providing support for home-based care and nursing home use, the program aims to meet the increasing long-term care needs of elderly people and reduce the heavy care burden on their family members. Using the introduction as a case study, we examine how public provision of elder care affects private long-term care efforts in Korea, where traditional elder care system is heavily reliant on the family. We plan to examine various outcome variables, including elderly people’s coresidence with adult children and the actual and expected division of care labor between the government and family members.

Data for empirical analysis come from the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 waves of the Korean Longitudinal Study of Ageing, a longitudinal survey of nationally representative Koreans aged 45 or above. To answer the above questions, first, we describe the patterns in the outcome variables over time. Next, regression analyses will examine how elderly respondents’ functional limitations in 2006 (i.e., before the introduction of the LTCI), as an exogenous proxy for their LTCI eligibility, are associated with the outcome variables in the following waves. Policy implications will be drawn for governments in Korea and other rapidly aging Asian countries, which are expanding the public provision of long-term care.

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Implications of Thailand’s Universal Social Pension for Intergenerational Support Exchanges: A Mixed-methods Approach

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Thailand is the second-most aged society in Southeast Asia and one of a few Asian countries that provide universal social pension for older citizens. In 2009, the Thai government changed the Old-Age Allowance (OAA) scheme from a means-tested program to a universal social pension program for adults aged 60 and older who did not receive other government pension. Thailand’s OAA scheme has been heralded internationally as a role model for developing countries. Yet, the policy has also been criticized domestically for its fiscal sustainability, given that Thailand’s older people will exceed one third of the total population by mid-century. Furthermore, its critics also question whether the policy may have crowded out the long-held tradition of intergenerational support, particularly children’s material support for elderly parents.

This study examines the implications of Thailand’s universal social pension for support exchanges between aging parents and adult children. We focus on three types of support including financial provision, non-monetary material support, and social support. We utilize a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Sources of quantitative data are nationally-representative Surveys of Older Persons in Thailand in 2007, 2011, and 2017, thus covering the periods prior to and after the implementation of universal social pension. Taking advantage of the time-series data, we examine changes in intergenerational support over the last decade and compare the support patterns between elders reporting social pension as their main income source versus those who did not. The quantitative analyses are supplemented by qualitative data from in-depth interviews with elderly Thais and their adult children. The parent-child dyads will be recruited from different socio-economic strata.

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Wiraporn Pothisiri is Associate Professor at College of Population Studies (CPS) at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. Her research interests include health and social aspects of population aging, fertility and reproductive health, and population projection. She also serves as Member for the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Participants of Chulalongkorn University (Health Sciences) and Member for the National Aging Plan Monitoring Sub-committee. Her recent research focuses on the association between education and health status among Thai older population, roles of family and its support on older persons’ psychological well-being and health care utilization, and the development of community capacity in response to needs of older persons.

John Knodel is Research Professor Emeritus at University of Michigan and International Affiliate of the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University. He conducted collaborative research since 1971 on a wide range of social demographic topics in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand but also in Cambodia and Vietnam and most recently in Myanmar. During the last two decades his studies focused mainly on issues related to the older aged population including the AIDS epidemic impact on older persons, how migration of adult children affects older age parents, intergenerational family support exchanges, and broad assessments of the situation of older persons including comparative analyses involving Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. His research involves both quantitative and qualitative methods. Current research focuses on long term care of older persons, widowhood and grandparental care of children left behind by migrants from Myanmar to Thailand. Virtually all his work is done in collaboration with colleagues in the region.
Inclusion of Same-Sex Union in Family Policies in Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore

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Literature on family policies often discusses around heterosexual families, and studies on non-normative families of LGBT people are usually conducted in the Western context. Discussions about Asian LGBT families are particularly rare due to their low social visibility and lack of legal recognition. However, progress of legal recognition of same-sex union has been observed in some countries. For instance, in 2015 the Taiwanese government proclaimed that the social acceptance of non-normative families, including LGBT ones, is a national responsibility and started to work on the legislation of same-sex union. In Japan, via household registration same-sex couples can obtain the legal rights exclusively for family members.

By investigating the relationship between family policies, legal and administrative measures around same-sex union, and LGBT people's personal and familial well-being in Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore, this paper aims to expand the cultural scope of studies on LGBT families and demonstrate a possible path for the inclusion of LGBT people in the family policy making in East Asia.

This paper begins with the definition of family policy and the explanation of the relationship between family policies and national welfare regimes. It then briefly explains the social acceptance of LGBT people and policies that influence the well-being of LGBT people in Taiwan, Japan, and Singapore. Finally, it discusses how the change of family policies in these three countries affects LGBT people's well-being in terms of social protection within the national welfare regime.

Wei-Yun Chung is a postdoctoral fellow at Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. Her research interests include gender relations at work and at home, work-life balance, and family policies in East Asia. Before coming to ARI, she obtained a PhD degree at the University of Cambridge. Her PhD thesis looks at the gendered career trajectories and work-life arrangements of the civil servants in Taiwan.

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Despite the overall social concerns including sexual conservatism in cultures (Widmer & Newcomb, 1998), Philippines has been branded as one of the more LGBT- friendly countries in Southeast Asia. The traditional family structure in the Filipino context is largely based on the social formations that helps facilitate the influence of family relations, values, and expectations over individual behaviors (Cabegin et. al, 1993). However, public debates on legal policies are well influenced by moral standards and religious fundamentalism (Austria, 2004) especially on how should these compliments and reinforce the supposed family policies. Using theoretical analysis and thematic approach, this paper looks into the context of state-related family-policies through the lens of select informants from Mindanao, Southern Philippines specifically in Iligan City; by determining significant level of information on and implications of these supposed protective policies. Qualitatively, as reflected from their narratives, there is a considerable degree on the lack of awareness and knowledge amongst the informants brought by struggling issues of self-identification, level of acceptance and rejection from the immediate family coupled with self-imposed silence, lack of inclinations, changing behaviors, challenges to inclusion and hostile environment. Limitations to this study include an elaborated analysis breakdown on the correlation between variables (religion, work, educational attainment, etc.) and themes (gender identification, level of acceptance, awareness and knowledge in relation to family policies) identified, which will be a greater consideration for further research. Meanwhile, the target population (informants) of this study are neither the LGBT parents with non-traditional family set-up nor specific families and parents having LGBT children and relatives, but rather those LGBT individuals as family members.

Assistant Professor Jed B. Otano is currently a faculty member of the Department of History at MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Philippines. Serving the said institute for almost 6 years, he had done researches on local history, peace studies, gender and development, and indigenous peoples’ issues on inclusivity. He has done extension programs and activities to various grassroot communities in Southern Philippines in terms of peace education, peacebuilding initiatives and humanitarian actions.
Stay-at-home Fathers and their Families:
What Lessons for Policymakers?

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This Singapore-based qualitative study of 21 stay-at-home fathers (SAHFs) and 9 spouses of SAHFs seeks to clarify the policy environment surrounding modern fatherhood and parenting through examining the constraints facing SAHFs and their partners, particularly which constraints are an effect of existing policies and which offer new possibilities for meaningful policy intervention.

Major constraints facing SAHFs and their partners include dual-income pressures stemming from living costs and heavily gendered norms that are enshrined in policy and continue to govern parenting roles. Many interviewees noted that the emphasis on dual-income families and reliance on domestic helpers, grandparents and childcare centers as alternative modes of childcare impeded the building of healthy parent-child relationships. Government incentives for engaging alternative modes of childcare also risk reducing the status of fathers as caregivers for their children. Gender-based differences in eligibility for parental leave and other benefits impeded role flexibility in married couples, which was found to contribute to greater satisfaction in family life.

The researcher argues that incentivizing companies to implement flexible work arrangements and strengthen discrimination protection for fathers (and mothers) could normalize and elevate the status of working parents in our society. The strong professional identification that many SAHFs continue to retain further indicates the need for better transition support for male caregivers re-entering the workforce. Many SAHFs considered 2 weeks of paternity leave insufficient for fathers to invest meaningfully in childcare because of the deeply involved nature of childcare and the heavy reliance on alternative modes of childcare support. This could possibly contribute to the under-utilization of paternity leave. These are some of the policy implications will be addressed in the paper.

Yvonne Arivalagan is a Research Associate at the Institute of Policy Studies. She is interested in exploring how gender norms evolve under strict or prescriptive policy conditions and how policy can be a useful tool in shaping the choices of individual actors. Besides gender and family issues, she also researches on ageing and public health in Singapore. Yvonne holds a Master’s degree in Development Studies from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the National University of Singapore.
Whose Well-being?
Filipino Single Mothers’ Access to Child Care Provisions in the Philippines and Japan

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This study compares child care policies and programs in the Philippines and Japan. It examines how, through these policies, Japan and Philippine governments frame notions of “family” and “well-being”. This qualitative research builds on interviews with (40) Filipino single mothers living in Tokyo and focus group discussions with single mother returnees in the Philippines from 2010 to present. Most women participants belong to 40-60 age group, with some high school to university education, and have engaged in a range of occupations over the years while raising children. Constituting a new social risk (NSR) group, single mothers are regarded as the poorest and most economically marginalized in Japan and the Philippines. The current paper provides detailed discussion of welfare services that enable Filipino mothers to rear children, reconcile work and family life, and obtain sources of financial support.

Despite striking difference in demographic trends and economic status, both countries, in accordance to family codes and child-related policies, envision a gender-equal society that is vital to its productivity and future. An assessment of its existing programs and policies shows that in reality, however, single mothers in Japan and the Philippines face challenges attributed to the persistence of familism and patriarchy. Japan makes a distinct case of an industrialized power that reinforces imbalances in work and family life, making it hard for single mothers to be self-sufficient through work and obtain child support from former spouses. Meanwhile, child rearing provisions in the Philippines, despite improvements in gender gap indices, frame family as “heterogeneous, dual-earning household”, and inevitably sideline issues of single parents. By comparing the child care policies in the Philippines and Japan, this paper contributes to explaining the implications of the intersection between migration and family policies on the well-being of migrant women, their children and families as a whole.

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