

ESRC International Seminar Series:

Social Changes in East Asian and Developing Countries: Gender and Family Separation

Friday 27th June 2014, University of York

PAPER PRESENTERS

Qiong Xu (University of Worcester) (Attended ESRC 1 and 2)

Fatherhood in Shanghai: a comparison between intact and separated families

Intergenerational relationships and gender roles in China are in transition because of ideational and structural changes resulting from social movements and policies in the past half a century. In traditional Chinese families, the relationship between fathers and sons is most central as sons are expected to carry the family name to continue the family line. Daughters, on the other hand, are regarded as eventually belonging to their husbands' families after marriage. However, the One Child Policy was introduced in 1979 to control the size of the population. Since most families now have only one child, parents may devote a great deal of care to their only child, whatever its gender.

But beyond the rise of the standard nuclear family, the growing divorce rates in the last twenty years or so have resulted in more and more people living alone or as single parents ([Xu and Ye, 2002](#)). According to Xu and Ye's national study of the divorce rate between 1980 and 2000, Shanghai had the biggest increase of all, rising seven fold during that period from 0.29% in 1980 to 2.02 in 2000 (*ibid.*). This study aims to explore parent-child relationship by comparing adolescent girls living with both parents with those who don't. The data is drawn from my PhD thesis and a multi-method research design was employed. The main analysis is from a questionnaire survey which 773 girls and 598 of their fathers took part in. Overall, 86.1% children live with both parents, and 4.6% live with father, but not mother; 6.0% live with mother, but not father; 3.3 live with neither of the parents (n=733). The qualitative data from one pair of father and daughter who were interviewed separately will illuminate a fuller picture of people's experience of family separation in contemporary China.

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Has Childcare Become Less of a Burden in South Korea? Exploring the nature of pre and post reform childcare provision

The paper aims to explore whether any changes in institutional settings and in the conditions for care practice have occurred and the nature of any such developments in South Korea. Having undergone the partial breakdown of the traditional family structure and changes to the demographic profile as well as the reshaping of the labour market, the Korean family oriented welfare regime needed to be transformed in the early years of the new millennium. Regarding these changes, the noticeable policy response through welfare provision occurred during the two presidencies of Kim Dae-jung (1998-2002) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2007). These two governments have been identified as the transition phase in which the state actively intervened in the new social risks that were emerging as the consequences of the social changes of the late 1990s. Whilst the Kim government was the turning point regarding expanding welfare through there being wider provision, the Roh government deliberately attempted to develop specific coordinated policies to address the linked issues of care and gender. Therefore, this paper considers whether there have been any changes at the point when the childcare services are finally delivered in institutional settings and the actual conditions between the pre and post reform situations.

In order to assess the outcome changes, three dimensions are introduced: affordability, adequacy and autonomy. These three key dimensions will address an aspect of change in childcare services, firstly, how to afford the provision (affordability), to what extent is there satisfaction with the service quality (adequacy) and, finally, how much autonomy does there need to be regarding the choosing and accessing of the services (autonomy). Having set out these key elements, empirical evidence looking at what has transpired is discussed in the form of data taken from large scale national surveys and census reports e.g. Korean governmental sources such as the 'National Survey on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services' conducted in 2002 and 2009 and 'Statistics on childcare' published every year from 2002 to 2009. By comparing the changes in employing childcare services on a longitudinal basis for the time period from 2002 to 2009, the paper critically evaluates the limitations of the policy changes with respect to the three key dimensions. The comparison of the outcome changes between the institutional settings and conditions in care practice for each year will assist in evaluating where the policy changes have and have not altered the burden of childcare in South Korea.

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Laura Cuesta (University of Wisconsin in Madison, USA)

Family Change in Colombia: Current Issues and Future Challenges for the Child Maintenance System.

Vanessa Rios Salas (University of Wisconsin in Madison, USA)

Family Change in Peru: Single Mothers and Child Maintenance Receipt

POSTERS (5)

Hung-Ju Lai (University of Bath)

Adult Never-married Single Mothers and their Experience of Using State Welfare in Taiwan

As 6% of all single mothers in Taiwan ([Cheng, Wang, & Hsieh, 2008](#)), never-married single mothers (NMSMs) continue to be stigmatized in a society where marriage is still the predominant marital status. This often results in failure to obtain resources from family or friends. The situation may be worse when encountering the government assistance system (e.g. Assistance for Family in Hardship for single parents in Taiwan) where NMSMs risk being excluded or mistreated. Little research has focused on their situation and needs from their point of view. However, this research starts out from a gender perspective, building on theories of individualization ([Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002](#)) and stigmatization ([Goffman, 1963](#)), as the former discusses women's choices in the context of social change, and the latter highlights the sorts of difficulties these women face and how they might manage transgressions of existing norms. Also, the Taiwanese context is marked out by a tension between traditional Confucian values and rapid economic and social change. It is hoped that the theoretical framework of life choices and social stigma can be applied to understand to what extent the freedom of choices and stigma exert their influences in these mothers' lives and how they manage them in this setting.

The study aims to understand the social-relational and economic experiences of NMSMs in Taiwanese society. Particular attention is placed on their economic circumstances, and their interactions with their social networks before and after the pregnancy, as well as access to formal resources under current policies. 30 NMSMs will be recruited as participants from three big cities in Taiwan. The study will be informed by grounded theory ([Glaser & Strauss, 1967](#)). An initial sample will be drawn as follows: participants should be over 18; not married at the time of the interview; and their eldest child must be under 6 years of age while they are the main guardians of their children. Due to the reason that they might be a relatively small group, there's no limitation on the grounds of their personal relationship (except marriage), class or employment situations. However, it is hoped that the diversity may enrich the analysis. Episodic narrative interviews ([Flick, 2002](#)) will be conducted from a Constructivist stance. Also, *sociograms* ([Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007](#)) may be used to visualize the change of NMSMs' networks and support. I expect this research to contribute not only to the knowledge of NMSMs' situation in East Asian context, but also to the improvement of policies and services provided by the state.

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Suzy Solley (Queen Mary University London) – (on Fieldwork in Nepal)

The ‘Widowisation of Agency’: An intersectional exploration into the well-being and agency of Nepali widows

In the Global North, the term ‘widow’ denotes the death of a spouse; in many countries within the Global South the term has historically deeper negative connotations. For example, widowhood may be associated with prostitution or witchcraft. In Nepal, widows who were once condemned to commit ‘Suttee’ now survive the death of their husbands and increasing gender equality has improved their social status but, to varying extents, they still suffer from multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination. The age difference between women and men upon marriage, precarious employment, lack of health awareness and increasing out-ward male migration in Nepal means men are likely to die younger, and many women are left widowed.

This presentation falls at the end of the research period; therefore the main focus will be on theorizations and general observations rather than conclusive findings. The lack of attention to the issue of widowhood is widely neglected within both academia and the development sector. The limited literature available predominantly focuses on ‘the elderly, impoverished and vulnerable widow’. This research attempts to deconstruct this myth by adopting an intersectional approach to investigate well-being and agency.

Until now there has not been any research that adopts an intersectional approach to understanding widowhood. It is evident that the experience of widowhood is different depending upon various intersectional dimensions including caste, age, age when widowed, martial experience, children, class, area of residence, and so on. In addition, this research strives to demonstrate the importance of the inclusion of martial status to feminist intersectional theory. The second oversight by current literature is that prevailing doctrines commonly portray widows as dispossessed, vulnerable, deprived and ostracised. Consequently, focus has been based on orthodox understandings of poverty. Thus, the more advanced and nuanced concept of well-being is proposed which more appropriately accounts for the multi-dimensionality of experiences. Finally, in relation to this there has been little attention paid to agency. Whilst many widows are arguably vulnerable and deprived they still have a degree of agency. It is evident that widows can assert agency in multi-scalar and multi-sectoral ways beyond mere acts of resistance. Agency will be discussed and explored in the context of Nepali traditions and located within the notions of fate and karma.

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Diego da Silva Rodrigues (University of Kent)

Mothers' employment and primary school education and childcare in Brazil

To enforce the increase and the improvement of the female participation in labour market is important economic, social and politically speaking. Taking it into account, the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) determined as the third of the Millennium Development Goals to "*Promote gender equality and empower women*", encouraging governments and civil society to design public policies to bring women into the social and economic lives. Therefore, the understanding and formulation of policies which incentive women to participate in labour markets appear as important topics of research, both because of its academic interest and for the design of policies.

Particularly in developing countries, the participation of women in labour markets is a key element for their economic and social improvement. In these countries, where the participation of women is even lower than when compared to the observed in the developed ones, the design of policies which contribute to their higher economic participation is important and urgent.

One of these policies is the provision of free childcare to mothers. It is known in the literature about female labour supply, both theoretical and empirical, the importance that free childcare provision has on the female participation in labour markets, providing to the mothers the possibility of leaving their children in a school and supplying labour.

The contribution of this paper to this discussion is to measure the impact of a reform on the children's primary education system which took place in Brazil between 2004 and 2009 on the mothers' labour outcomes from that country. This reform, which made children enrol compulsorily primary schools one year younger, is here interpreted as a provision of free childcare and therefore supposed to have an impact on the labour supply of those mothers affected by the reform. This expectation is supported by the fact that only recently Brazil has achieved a high level of primary education covering, simultaneously achieving a higher level of female labour participation.

It is presented that the implementation format of this reform plays an important role on the way this question is addressed, self-selecting the mothers who are actually treated by it according to their labour supply outcomes, educational levels and number of individuals in their households. Using instrumental variable estimations, the results show that, if the reform was exogenously implemented over the population, the least educated and single mothers would be positively affected by it regarding their labour supply. However, differences are not found between states which had implemented the reform and those which had not implemented it yet, suggesting that the new primary education system has actually a limited influence on this process.

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Introducing the family education in rural-urban migrant families in China

During the last three decades the sweeping trend of globalisation and the 'Reform and Opening Up' policy (since 1978) has brought a significant development in economy and social progress, which has created a great amount of new employment opportunities in the urban China. Thus increasingly rural workers were encouraged to head into urban cities, seeking better employment and sources of income for their family (Ye and Murray, 2005; Rozelle et al., 1999). During the migrating process, increasingly migrant parents take their children with them to the urban cities and those children are generally recognised as migrant children and those migrant families are recognised as the new type of family as the result of the social change. According to the report of the 2010 China Population Census, there are approximately 260 million migrant workers and 35.81 million migrant children (0-17 years old) in China in 2010, which comprises a huge and significant group of people in some middle and large cities. However, as the explosion of the urban population and the restriction of *Hukou* policy, migrant children cannot receive proper public services as the local city children and they are confronting with a variety of difficulties in terms of family and school education, health and socialisation process.

Family is the start point for most of children and the early age family education always play a significant role on the children's later life (Chen and Pan, 2008). However, many researches find that the home learning environment in migrant families are not as good as local families (Wang, 2012; Yang et al, 2012; Chen and Pan, 2008; Wei et al., 2012). The migrant families have poor housing conditions, and parents have little involvement in family education and the parent-child relationships are not working well in migrant families. For instance, according to the research by Yang et al (2012) in Mengzi, nearly 84.6% migrant parents intend to apply 'control and punishment' when parenting and only 5.4% parents would like to adopt 'democratic way' to communicate with their children.

Many factors show significant related to the family education and parenting styles in migrant families, such as their financial situation, parents' educated level, marital conflict, jobs and even the gender differences between parents. All those factors and family educations also have great impacts on the psychological health of migrant children. Migrant children are more likely present anxiety disorder, loneliness, feel deprivation, and inferiority complex than urban children (Xiong & Ye, 2011; Yuan et al, 2009). In conclusion, the changing of family structures has great impact on the child adjustment to their urban life.

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Environmental Obligations to Chinese Children: Making Necessary Investments in Future Development

This study is concerned with changing attitudes towards environmental protection in China, and much of the data collected highlights that protecting the environment for future generations is a fundamental part of the ecological modernisation of the Chinese state. In the 12th Five-Year plan, the Chinese government committed to the theory of ecological modernisation as a goal for China's future. They returned to the idea of environmental and economic development coexisting in the 13th Five-Year plan. This has not translated to much changes on the ground, but environmental movements are gaining momentum in many parts of China.

Most Chinese parents are concerned with the financial well-being of their children and will go to great lengths to ensure their children's future wealth and security. Though China has made great improvements in standard of living, wealth and availability of education, the ecological damage to China's environment is catastrophic, and worsening. This negatively affects children in most urban areas and many less developed areas of the country.

During interviews conducted last year in Kunming, Yunnan Province, the ideas of environmental stewardship were mentioned as growing in importance, particularly when the interviewees were parents or grandparents. This is of interest because the concept of environmental stewardship and the perception of the environment as something within the control of the Chinese people, and their government, is considered to be a necessary component of ecological modernisation.

This study looks at the potential for China to become an ecologically modern state similar to the European models of Germany and the Netherlands, and acknowledges that China may reach an environmentally stable place in a different way. In either case, to become a state that values its environmental resources as more than something that can be exchanged for wealth, China will have to alter its development.

Looking at data collected and the existing literature, this study concludes that there is a nascent sense of the environment as something that must be protected as growth continues, especially as it relates to human health. Many of the concerns that came up during interviews were that children were less healthy and that more should be done to ensure their health was not sacrificed so that they could have more material goods.

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