

Postgraduate Student Forum
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THE FAMILY IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

DANE COSKUN Zeliha Muge (Waseda University)

Negotiation of Love and Marriage between Turkish-Japanese Couples

The increasing impact of globalization has led to a high level of interaction between transnational communities by facilitating movement of people across borders and has resulted in the increase of transnational marriages. This research elaborates on transnational marriages in Japan with emphasis on the diversity among Muslim immigrants, that is often overlooked, and presents an ethnography of Turkish – Japanese couples. The aim of the research is to shed light on how these couples negotiate and balance their cultural and religious differences in their everyday life, to what extent external actors such as in-laws and society at large influences their relationship and whether or not they feel as they have made concessions on their cultural or religious identities as a result of their transnational marriage. This research combines statistics on transnational marriages with qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews conducted with; Turkish – Japanese couples, Turkish and Japanese Embassies and civil society organizations. The qualitative data is enriched by participant observation data gathered through monthly meetings of various Turkish communities in Tokyo, the targeted sample size is 60.

LU Ming (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Wives as Breadwinners: A Study of Spousal Relations in Urban Northeast China

Many state-owned factories in urban Northeast China have become privatized in the past twenty years of the Market Reform. As a result, in many families, both husbands and wives working in these factories lost their jobs. Majority of the women are able to find new jobs in the rising service industry and small-scale private businesses, while their husbands often have difficulties finding satisfactory positions. Therefore, wives become breadwinners of such families. This study explores the changes in spousal relations by examining household finance, domestic divisions of labor, and emotional life when men fail to bring income to the family. By depicting people's responses to this situation and analyzing the conflicts and compromises, this study argues that economic positions only influence spousal relations to a certain extent. The economic, political and emotional aspects of marriages are interconnected and interactional. They collectively affect the couple's relations. Based on three months of field work in an urban location in Northeast China, I also argue that the stereotypical gender roles assumed in a patriarchal society are not useful in analyzing gender relations in urban China today.

Avital BINAH POLLAK (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

New Discourse, Mixed Practices: Parenthood in Contemporary Urban China

My study juxtaposes dominant discourses about proper childrearing in contemporary China with daily practices of childrearing as I observed them during fieldwork in Beijing. In contemporary urban China, young parents are exposed to a flow of new ideas and products, the new discourses concerning childhood, and the traditional values that are deeply rooted in everyday life. When these new ideas contradict the traditional values and norms, the result is inner conflict and tension among parents concerning their caretaking style. On the one hand, parents try to provide their child with more freedom and consider the child's thoughts and will. But at the same time, they still tend to demand complete obedience. The dilemmas are also rooted in the fact that these are young parents who, as any other "new parent," face challenges in achieving a style of parenthood. However, since the Family Planning Policy was implemented in China, parents have only one opportunity to succeed with a single child, which probably increases the pressure even further. How do young Chinese urban parents translate all these ideas into their everyday interactions with their child? And how do they "digest" all the information, while trying to both absorb and push away the variety of the "new" and "old" ideas they encounter?

Christopher CHENG (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Marginalised Parents: A Study of Child-Rearing Strategies in Urban Hong Kong

My field-site, Sham Shui Po (深水埗), is an unusual case of a marginal environment in the heart of urban Hong Kong. Its residents are the city's most stigmatised, and they live in the oldest and poorest housing conditions that the city has to offer. My study explores how socially and materially marginalised parents harness resources and looks at the myriad of strategies they employ to raise children in a working class neighbourhood. Finally, my research indicates how the community of Sham Shui Po, lying in the heart of post-industrial urban Hong Kong, presents itself as an unusual case of a self-sustaining marginal environment.