

Mapping the Family Issues in the Globalized World

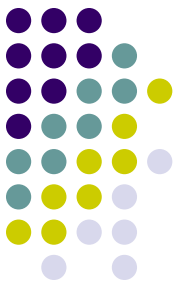
Anthony Wong
HKCSS



Family Practices



Marriage & Partnership	Parenting	Child care/ elder care	Parenthood: Fatherhood/ Motherhood	Reproduction
Inter-ethnic marriage	Mixed children	Left behind children	Delayed parenthood Late fertility and infertility	
Forced marriage in the West	International adoption		Work-life balance	
Singlehood	Grandparent's parenting and care		Conflict and violence	
Gay/Lesbian relationship & family designs	ICT: Living apart together		Ecology	
New Polygamy		Extra-familial care		



Marriage: How are you?

- Still not clear whether it's getting less attractive: It seems that it's getting attractive. Only that the divorce is getting prevalent.
- How do we understand the basis of its “attractiveness”?
- A study in UBC shows that societal-level pressure to marry is positively associated with dating violence.
- Retraditionalization of family life (Carter, UK). See other fleeting sexual relationships as “necessary distractions” on the path to commitment and marriage. Family as “a sort of refuge in the chilly environment of our affluent, impersonal, uncertain society (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 2)
- Trust: Challenges to marital trust



Inter-ethnic Marriage

- Transactional activities and the impact on on partnering and reproductive practices
- Inter-ethnic couples and their relationship issues
- Ethnically mixed children and their families in different regions or localities (e.g.: in Malaysia, mixed children performed better. What does it mean?)

Forced Marriage: Not so nice to see you again



- Forced marriage in the West: Majority in UK involved a young, female and South Asian victim. Transnational marriage, forced marriage, and violence
- Violence due to new combinations or designs or relationships (cultural or social parameters which were based on hostility)



New Form of Polygamy

- Polygamy in the transnational contexts
- Multiple relationships organized in terms of race, ethnicity and class

Singlehood



- Normal transitory phase of life cycle (as in UK)
- Pressure from society (as in Malaysia or Italy)
- Both not perceived as a matter of choice
- Weakening family tie, growing individualism, but importance of social network. What does this mean?
Individualistic while urge for social networks
(Individualistic in protection, network in aspiration)
- Missing the marriage transition: Prevalence of singlehood. Singlehood not just of the liberal, but the conservative discourse

Gay and Lesbian Relationships



- Lesbian mother relying on gay men as sperm donors
- Blurrier distinction between sperm donation and fatherhood => negotiating with lesbians for social contact with children
- Lesbian conceives together outside reproductive health clinics informally or self-arranged donation: (1) negotiation of parental status; (2) control of sexual health etc.. Risk and trust issues.
- Aging of gays and lesbians and elder end of life care: Reviving relationships with younger generation in the families
- New Family “Design”, new design of parenthood: co-parenting between gay and lesbian (Belgium). It fits well to the current constraints of society, answers some of the new family challenges (family-work balance, familial flexibility and mobility, joint custody, parental functions sharing)



Relationships on Sale

- Donor insemination or commercial surrogacy and biogenetic substance => Impact on care and nurturing
- Effects on purchased family relationships in UK
 - Families by gamete donation: Secrecy or disclosure
 - Challenge to basic value premise of the Western society
 - Impact on parents' psychological well-being
 - Impact on parent-child relationships

Transnational families and care giving



- The mobile and the immobile: In some migrant villages, almost all active members of the families are aboard, only caregivers, children, old people and the sick remaining at home.
- Conflict between the visibility of the highly skilled immigrants the host country desires to recruit and the invisibility of the family care-givers (elderly parents), whose immigration is a “byproduct”,
- Conflict between those economic mobile but culturally limited in mobility
- Impact on the care-givers themselves in the context of transnational care giving

Transnational families and care giving



- Transnational family strategies: transfer of care, mutual visits, transnational communication and ICT, remittances, flux of information and goods
- Multilocalities => multilocal family in Germany
- Imaginative geographies: Mismatch of new expectations and realities, resulting in issues of adjustment and adaptation (as real as everyday life and as symbolic as naming)



Children Left Behind

- Impact on the left-behind children
- Care by “other mothers”
- Masculinity and gender norms reworked and negotiated in the context of feminization of labour migration
- Re-configuring gender power relations within the household
- Gender power relations in the household and (as a result of) that in the societal/global contexts.

Transnational Adoption



- Parenting in transnational adoption. How adoptive parents in the North adopt children in the South, and how they try to construct their own identity and identification with the children for their children.



Grandparents Parenting

- Prevalence of grandparent care
- Impact of grandparent care
 - Impact on children: Positive family psychology (ESRC, England and Wales) but negative care quality
 - Impact on grandparents themselves

ICT Across Life Course and Across Space



- The concept of “Living apart together”
- Social geography of the family
- Re-configuring intergenerational relationship



Extra-familial Care

- While the East/developing countries aspire to childcare settings/child education settings which model the earlier Western welfare state
- The West now aspires to the natural.
- Increased stratified access to professional care services

Delayed Parenthood



- Pervasive practices of the West on family
 - Delayed parenthood in the East
- Employment insecurity delays parenthood, further generate insecurity
 - Children does not get grown up in parents' mid-old age
 - Incitement of anxiety for the parents
- Delayed parents = privileged parents
 - Socially/economic advantageous
 - Parentally/familial disadvantaged as they are perceived as “okay” (Economic relation is perceived as determinant) (not just families commodified, our thoughts are as well)
- Stratification in mothering
- Doing mothering, doing family: how to be a good mother in current context of economic competition and crisis. (Families in the New Millennium project, Canada and USA)



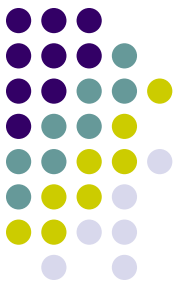
Work Life Balance

- Family and professional life balance in reproductive age
- Gendered pattern of work-life balance
- Active fatherhood is not directly connected with more equal division of labour



Conflict and Violence

- Long-term impacts on people suffering from violence
- Violence arising from care
- Language and power struggle in mixed culture household



Family and Environment

- Family ecology: Family serves to promote the essential task of ecology while instilling a sense of place, purpose and belonging for family members, providing a family home that educates and prepares members for participation in the larger community while simultaneously promoting family continuity and identify across generation. (Wimberly, Edward T., USA)
- How could that be possible?

Emerging New Ways of Looking at Families



- New normalization: All forms or practices of families are normal.
- As the family changes, perception of it also changes. Young people of separated parents in New Zealand, for example, do not see family composition as important as intrinsic qualities of families (Riggs, Andy)
- “the quality of relationships and families’ circumstances have a greater effect on outcomes than the legal structure of a family. Strong and healthy relationships are therefore paramount regardless of the structure” (Department for Children, School and Families, 2008, p. 8)

Emerging New Ways of Looking at Families: Implications to Support



- parental separation is not in itself causative of negative outcomes for children and young people. Rather it is the interaction between *risk and protective variables* which plays the key role in shaping children's individual wellbeing. (Management Issue?!)
- Helping professionals unwelcome. Internet becomes the source of support. (Riggs)
- Young people desire information about separation. (Riggs) (*Informed*)
<http://www.familieschange.ca>
- Children's *participation* in the separation.
- Children can cope. The question is how to manage the separation process and shorten it.
- Finally, children whose parents are separating may feel that they lack information from parents as to what is happening and why. (Transparency!?)

Some themes for further thoughts



- Globalism/ Transnationalism and the reconfiguration of social stratification in terms of mobility
- Commodification of relationships and care
- Intersectionality of intra-familial practices and extra-familial lives
- De-traditionalization and re-traditionalization:
 - Reflexive impact on gender role: gendered family => gendered occupation => re-gendered family

Some themes for further thoughts



- Importance of the social and the political over the biological
 - Intense competition, stratification, inequality delays parenthood until socially more secure or advantageous
 - Occupation structure impacts on people's patterns of family formation and fertility (Scotland Longitudinal Study)
 - Children born socially more advantageous but biologically less so, social advantage makes up for biological disadvantage (Growing Up in Scotland)
 - Children born socially disadvantaged have no access to adequate post-natal care even those biological well (England)
 - Changing priorities and identities