Ming-Chang Tsai
Wan-chi Chen   *Editors*

Family, Work and Wellbeing in Asia

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Volume 9

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Family, Work and Wellbeing in Asia

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Preface

This project of an edited book focusing on the work–family relations and wellbeing in Asia attempts not only to highlight the wellbeing element in the conventional study of work–family research but also to place the whole enterprise in an explicit comparative context. The ways in which work–family tensions are derived and the extents of their impact on happiness or life satisfaction in Asia are different from those in Western societies. The two editors believe that looking at these variations from a cross-cultural angle is very much critical for a deeper understanding of contemporary Asian families.

We started to open call for submissions, rather than soliciting manuscripts through our personal network, in the spring of 2015. There were 25 proposals or so received in the autumn of 2015. Along manuscript preparation and review process that were accomplished in October 2016, we were able to publish nine papers, as well as our introductory chapter. We regret that some interesting works had to be excluded, although they could enrich the diversity of research topics and geography in this collection.

We like to especially thank Prof. Alex Michalos for his enthusiastic support for this project. He was more than positive when we approached him with an idea of this project. He has devoted his academic life to promote the study of quality of life. The now-established status of wellbeing study cannot be realized without his strong determination and persistent effort in mobilizing "new hands" into this field and convincing them of the great values wellbeing research can generate for human betterment. Ming-Chang Tsai particularly feels lucky to have been encouraged by his warm and wise advices. He is definitely a role model for academics. This edited book is dedicated to him.

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Contents

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Wan-chi Chen received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago and is currently a professor of sociology at National Taipei University. She also serves as the director of Research Center for Taiwan Development at National Taipei University. Her research interests range from education to family, with particular emphases on examination-oriented educational systems in East Asian countries and family changes in Taiwan. Her recent works appear in Social Science Research, Social Indicators Research, Population Research and Policy Review, Sociological Perspective, Marriage & Family Review, Taiwanese Journal of Sociology (in Chinese), and Taiwanese Sociology (in Chinese).

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1
The Family-Work Nexus and Wellbeing in Asia: An Introduction

Ming-Chang Tsai and Wan-chi Chen

Abstract This chapter is an introduction to the edited book of Family, Work and Wellbeing in Asia. It begins with a brief review of current research on family-work issues in this region, specifically focusing on four domains: the experiences of work and family lives; work organizations' response to employees' work-family concerns; the impact of the above two domains on family life, relationships and wellbeing; and public policy concerning work-family life. Then, each chapter is summarized before it concludes with suggestions for future researchers.

The intersection of work and family has long been a key issue in family study, because this sprawling domain of research, by unravelling the interplay between work and family, contributes to the understanding of modern family in the context of the expanding service economy, active female labor participation, and changing gender norms of division of household labor and care provision. Most research focuses on the experiences and consequences of the work-family relationship on the basis of wealthy countries (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Parcel 1999; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2000; Wharton 2012). There is a consensus that family-work tensions generate decisive influences on both psychological and physiological wellbeing. To cite an interesting finding from a study on parental time allocation for child care, Roeters and Gracia (2016) show that in a national sample of Americans, mothers experienced child care time as more stressful than fathers, while fathers experienced it as more "meaningful". Furthermore, paid work hours increased mothers' level of

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stress but it reduced that of fathers. It is understandable that even in a modernized society like the United States, child care remains a major responsibility of mothers. When they fail to allocate sufficient time for offspring due to work demands, stress can increase. This is where we often observe the gendered nature of parents' child care time and its influence on wellbeing.

To what extent can the findings obtained by Roeters and Gracia (2016) possibly be generalized toward the Asian context? While more females and mothers in Asia? have opted to stay in a job or even pursue a career in the past decades (although their labor force participation rate has lagged behind that of the wealthy countries) (Brinton 2001; Chang and England 2011), the gendered distribution of household responsibility operates forcefully in their disfavor. The stress level of mothers might thus be much higher. In a patriarchal cultural environment, Asian fathers might feel proud of their willingness to allocate precious personal time to help with care of children or adolescents, and might feel it is meaningful. Usually, they are absolved of responsibility to care for infants and toddlers, a responsibility culturally assigned solely to mothers. When mothers' job duty has to be fulfilled in the first place, grandmothers often are called in as a substitute. The gendered difference in child care hence looms larger in Asia. Thus, cross-cultural comparison of how work demands devour family life, how family duties affect a career, and how all these conflicts and tensions get in the way of a better life quality, even more severely in some societies than others, is indeed a new urgency in work-family research (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2000).

Scholarship on the work-family intersection has expanded, with new findings being reported regularly and outmoded assumptions being replaced by innovative theorizing. Wharton (2012) provides a very useful schema to capture the nexus and flux of family, work and wellbeing, suggesting observation of four specific domains: (1) the experiences of work and family lives and the efforts to juggle both sets of responsibilities and commitments; (2) work organizations' response to employees' work-family concerns; (3) the impact of the above two domains on family life, relationships and wellbeing; and (4) public policy concerning work-family life. We adopt this useful framework to highlight the current research efforts and provide an overview of the field of work-family life in this region. A forewarning is given: Asia is an extremely broad term, covering more than 30 countries and populations totaling 4.4 billion, not to mention the numerous, diverse cultural legacies in this vast region. For practical reasons, we concentrate our attention on East Asia and Southeast Asia, which is in fact the geographical space this edited book is devoted to. Other scholars have proposed issue-specific approaches for understanding current efforts to untangle the complexity of work-family experiences. In particular, parents' paid work, multiple role constraints, and stress transmission have been highlighted (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2000). These important issues can be accommodated well in the four domains as proposed above.

1.1 The Experiences of Work-Family Life

The issue of role demands and pressures between family life and work is rooted in contemporary industrial capitalism. Even in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, a portrait of the "ideal woman" as such was popular: she was devoted fully to home responsibilities, while her husband could commit all his time and energy to work to be successful in his career and earn a decent wage to support an adequate standard of living. If she had to be a worker in an office or factory, she was only earning an income supplementary to her husband's and was expected not to pursue a career, because she had to be first of all an adequate wife and mother. The cultural belief that men should be good providers and women should be caretakers was derived from the experiences of a typical middle-class family in the American context (Wharton 2012). When economic growth became stagnant and increasing inflation damaged the purchasing power of a family with only one income, the conventional division of labor in the model of the male breadwinner was not sustainable. Married mothers' labor participation in the US as well as in Western Europe increased starting in the 1960s and reached a peak before entering the 21st century.

Looking from a historical comparative perspective, women's withdrawal from the labor force was rare. Cultural constraints on their participation in production tended to be overstated, either in Europe, China and Japan when trade for markets began to expand in the early phase of capitalist growth. Women always worked, either in paid jobs or in domestic production. Pomeranz (2003) contends that in China, female virtue in reality never meant abstaining from paid work, and was not associated with a prestigious way of life. Rather, women's employment was associated with the highly desired goal of modernity. This is even more apparent in the development model of post-Mao China: a large number of women migrated to the coastal cities to work in export-oriented assembly-line plants. Many township and village enterprises also utilized local female workers. Moreover, feminization of agriculture was also observed in many rural areas, as men became "migrant workers" and moved into better-paying industrial and service jobs (Pomeranz 2003).

Women in Asian countries are no less motivated to work in the market economy. However, a large number of working women quit their jobs at the time of marriage, and only reenter the labor market later when their children grow up and no longer need their care. As Lee and Hirata (2001) indicated for Taiwanese and Japanese women, their "job separation" has much to do with a lower wage compared to that of the husbands. This gendered wage gap (Chang and England 2011) and its impact on females' early departure from the labor market is in accord with a prediction from the "new home economics" perspective. Lee and Hirata also proposed that short job duration can especially be unfavorable to Korean and Japanese working women. Labor market constraints appear to operate as well against women's staying in jobs outside the home.

It is surmised that working women with higher human capital have particularly experienced difficulty in balancing employment and motherhood in East Asia (Raymo et al. 2015). A number of studies in this line have conducted a close-up

observation of workers in top positions such as managers (Spector et al. 2004). Li and Leung (2001) reported a substantial trade-off between work success and family responsibility among female hotel managers in Singapore. Wang et al. (2010) found that married female employees in the banks in China and India reported higher interference of work with their family life, which led to dissatisfaction with work. Additionally, the overtime and irregular shifts of nurses, along with their loaded care responsibility and work-family life conflict have been documented (Fujimoto et al. 2008). In Taiwan and South Korea, a substantial proportion of women work in small—and medium-size family enterprises and are in substantial charge of production supervision or finance (Lu 2001; Kang 2014). How these female entrepreneurs adopted effective strategies to manage conflicting demands between business and home responsibility might also be worth exploring.

Given that working mothers and wives might have quit jobs to avoid acute work-family conflicts, those remaining in the labor market may report *less*, rather than more, conflicts as such. Table 1.1 shows an interesting outcome we obtained from the data collected by the International Social Survey Program in 2005 (ISSP Research Group 2013). Only those respondents who were married and had a job are analyzed. Compared to wealthy countries like the US, working women in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan indeed reported a considerably lower level of work interfering with family life (see the upper panel), as well as family life interfering with work (the lower panel). However, the respondents in the Philippines reported a higher level of both conflicts. Across genders, females experienced significantly more interference than males did. Working women in Japan experienced

Table 1.1 Perceived work-family conflict in selected societies (%)

	Age < 50		Age: 50–64		N[b]
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1. Work interferes with family life					
Japan	16.9[a]	41.5	10.6	22.6	240
South Korea	14.6	33.3	9.3	28.6	454
Taiwan	21.8	21.0	13.5	10.0	717
Philippines	45.1	55.9	60.0	53.8	298
United States	35.1	35.7	20.5	26.4	441
2. Family life interferes with work					
Japan	38.1	59.5	24.4	50.0	242
South Korea	36.4	45.2	21.2	35.7	453
Taiwan	37.8	31.9	26.0	23.5	718
Philippines	56.2	64.7	70.9	46.2	298
United States	69.0	49.2	51.1	51.9	440

Source International Social Survey Program (2005)

[a]The figures throughout the table refer to percentage of "always", "often" and "sometimes" in responding to the question: How often do you feel that the demands of your job (family life) interfere with your family life (job)?

[b]The sample is from only those who were married and had a job

particularly acute conflict, as 60% of Japanese working women reported that their work interfered with family life. This may be a consequence of a strong familialism which demands that females prioritize the needs of other family members even if they assume a job outside family. Across countries, those aged under 50 particularly felt stress from work-family conflict, because many working wives were also burdened with responsibility to care for both children and ageing parents.

A recent, distinctive approach to observing work-family conflict highlights "transnational families" in Asia. This new social morphology features a split-household across borders, due to an increase in migration over this region (Yeoh et al. 2005). Given the feminization of labor migration, many "absent" mothers, while working in another country to maximize income to sustain family needs, have adopted various strategies to keep intimate ties intact. One often-used technique is to use long-distance communication to perform care work across borders: by using internet tools (online phones, message texting, emails, etc.) to stay connected with children, to arrange care work, to negotiate a new system of household responsibilities, and so on. Sobritchea (2007) documented Filipino women's practices of "long-distance mothering" in Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong and revealed their narrative identity in which homesickness, guilt and fears intermingled with a determination to perform the role of homemaker and guide their children properly. Hilsdon (2007) interviewed a very special group of female Filipino mothers working in the entertainment industry in Babah, Malaysia. Most were married with children left in their homeland. They appeared "single, sexual and available" while performing on stage. Their glamorous bodies might encase a maternal identity that promised to take good care of the health and education needs of their children at home. Some had developed new de facto relationships and produced additional children, thus rejecting the conventional sexual norm. Rich in ethnographical details of working mothers overseas, these qualitative studies focused much on their stories of reasserting subjectivities. Unfortunately, how they managed families from a long distance and whether they really succeeded in overcoming tensions, difficulties or crisis in marriage relationships or in family caring is not well documented. Perhaps this is because the feminist studies center more on the construction of identity for females, than on subsequent sustainment of a conventional familial configuration, in which the husbands might have remained secure in a patriarchal familial system.

1.2 Work Organizations' Response to Work-Family Concerns

Compared with the other three topics, research concerning work organizations' response to work-family concerns in Asian countries is relatively scarce. Very few studies have dealt directly with organizations' response to work-family concerns. A limited number of studies have focused on how corporate organizations put into practice government legislation and the impacts thereof, both intended and unintended.

Based on interviews with managers from multinational corporations which operate in East and Southeast Asia, De Cieri and Bardoel (2009) reported that most human resource (HR) managers acknowledged the importance of work-life policies. These multinational corporations regard work-life policies as a tool to attract and retain employees and are actively seeking to manage a range of work-life issues under the pressure of competing for talent in Asia. Practices include flexible work arrangements (e.g., schedule flexibility and location flexibility), providing child care centers, offering company support for transportation, etc. These practices vary from country to country, responding to diverse corporate norms and expectations.

Is enthusiasm of the human resource managers a sufficient factor in creating a family-friendly work environment? Brinton and Mun (2016) portrayed a more complicated picture by studying the case of Japan. They found that most HR managers express enthusiasm for the policies and considerable willingness to have career-track female employees utilize them. Nevertheless, their qualitative interview data also suggest that the managers' tacit assumption that it is women's responsibility to care for children reflects a deeply rooted cultural norm, which may account for the pattern of ever-lengthening parental leaves in Japan taken almost exclusively by female employees. The practice of generous parental leave has the unintended consequence of reinforcing the highly gendered division of labor in Japanese households and, in turn, the subsidiary workplace status of the majority of Japanese women.

What other factors affect how family-related benefits are utilized in a corporate organization? Some researchers hypothesized that a higher percentage of female managers can constitute a more family-friendly work environment. Mun and Brinton (2015) analyzed panel data on more than 500 large Japanese companies from 2001 to 2009 to seek empirical evidence. They found greater utilization of parental leave in firms which have a higher representation of women in managerial positions and have human resource executives on the corporate board. The gendered distribution of power in organizations seems to exert influence on maternity policy.

The next question comes to how effective these work organizations' support for work-family balance is. Foley et al. (2005) analyzed data from Hong Kong and found that employees' perceived organizational support also matters. The higher the level of perceived organizational support is, the less the frequency of work-family conflict reported. Moreover, perceived organizational support plays a buffer role mediating the association between work-stressors and work-family conflict. Hill et al. (2004) stressed the importance of organizational practice. On the basis of the surveys of IBM employees from 48 countries, this research team reported that job flexibility was related to reduced work-family and family-work conflict, as well as to enhanced work-family fit.

Mun and Brinton (2016) further argued that work-family policies can create incentives for employers to advance women into better paid jobs. Analyzing changes in women's promotion rates across 1000 large Japanese companies from 1987 to 2009, they found that "more women, not fewer, have been promoted into managerial jobs since the government pressured employers to provide more work-family benefits. Moreover, many employers have voluntarily increased their

provision of leave benefits beyond the legal requirement…" (p. 9). This sort of positive impact was more likely among high-skilled women. It is perhaps not an issue in firms where women disproportionately fill lower-skilled jobs.

1.3 Work-Life Conflict and Impact on Wellbeing

How does work-life conflict affect individual wellbeing in the Asian contexts? Situated in the genre of cross-country study of work-life conflict (Bianchi and Milkie 2010), Wharton and Blair-Loy (2002, 2006) found that Hong Kong respondents are more likely than those in the United States and in England to worry about work-family conflict, holding constant their job and family characteristics. They attributed this disparity to the cultural aspects of family and societal expectations. For people in Hong Kong, emphasis of familial ties and obligations can be a key factor leading to the observed tensions. Nemoto (2013) described the details of how a culture of long working hours in Japan is disadvantageous for women workers.

From the perspective of personnel psychology, Spector et al. (2004) conducted a comparative study of work-family stressors and wellbeing across three culturally distinct regions (the Anglosphere, China, and Latin America). In all three regions, work-family stressors decreased psychological wellbeing as well as physical health. More specifically, Zhang et al. (2014) administered a three-wave questionnaire survey among married Chinese employees using a time lag of one month. Their study showed that work-to-family conflict at one time point predicted a lower score of psychological well-being at the next time point. Furthermore, both "work-to-family facilitation" (e.g., 'my work performance makes me feel good…') and "family-to-work facilitation" (e.g., 'family life makes me feel relaxed both mentally and physically…') help improve the respondent's psychological well-being. Cheung and Wong's (2013) study dealt with a different outcome— affective commitment (e.g., 'I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization') in Hong Kong. Their results indicate that negative effects of work-family conflict on affective commitment are stronger among employees with working spouses than among those with non-working spouses.

A few studies have focused on specific occupational groups. Takeuchi and Yamazaki (2010) collected survey data among Japanese registered nurses, reporting that work-family conflict was significantly related to the sense of coherence, and in turn, had a negative impact on their physical and mental health. Noor and Zainuddin (2011) observed female teachers in Malaysia with a family and at least one kid, and found that emotional labor (especially "surface acting") was positively associated with emotional exhaustion; also, work-family conflict mediated the relationship between emotional labor and burnout.

The impacts of work-life conflict usually are moderated, either negatively or positively, by other factors. Foley et al. (2005) have shown that, in Hong Kong, perceived organizational support reduces work-family conflict, whereas work

stressors (including role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload) increase work-family conflict. In contrast, Oishi et al. (2015) used a merged dataset from four East Asian societies (Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) and documented that living with a frail elderly person significantly increases work-to-family conflict as well as family-to-work conflict. Lim and Lee's (2011) study focused on a factor which has rarely been investigated—workplace incivility. In the context of Singapore, superior-initiated incivility was associated with increased work-to-family conflict.

While work-family conflict is expected to generate unfavorable influence in personal wellbeing, in the Asian context, this hypothesis can be further extended, to understand how it affects wellbeing in the family domain. Moreover, familism and gendered role responsibility seem to operate through influencing the work-family intersection in this region. Admittedly, the evidence is scattered, and is not yet as systematic as desired. How work and family combine in specific patterns in affecting quality of life in this region promises to be an interesting research issue.

1.4 State Policy Support for Working Parents

Only recently has family policy attracted considerable attention in Asian social science, while it had been an established field of research in the US or Europe (Bogenschneider and Corbett 2010; Lewis 2006). Indeed, in the past two decades, there has been an increase in policies promoting work-family reconciliation in Asia. First of all, most East Asian countries have implemented maternity leave to various extents. For instance, Japan's working mothers can have 14 weeks for leave and claim two-thirds of their regular wages during the leave. This benefit comes from social insurance, and is a secured entitlement which female employees in established enterprises are more likely to claim (see Table 1.2). When the fund is provided by employers, such as in Taiwan, the benefit frequently is merely "on paper" and is not offered to new mothers, especially when they work in private, small and medium-sized enterprises, not to mention those in informal sectors. In India, employers tend to consider balance of work and family life an issue only for top-skilled workers (Rajadhyaksha 2011).

Another social policy that should also be considered as a basic element in the work-family conflict issue is childcare. Until recently, this policy domain has been deliberately overlooked in Asia (Lin and Rantalaiho 2003). The Taiwan government nowadays gives cash to parents of newborn babies to boost the birth rate, along with a tax deduction. However, child care in the market is expensive because public day care centers are in very short supply. As a result, many new mothers remain at home as caretakers until their children reach age 5, when they qualify for subsidies for preschool education (a universal entitlement implemented in 2011). Feminists have criticized that conventional family policies (Devasahayam and Yeoh 2007:7) have failed to effectively "accommodate both mothering and women's

Table 1.2 Maternity leave policy in Asia as of 2012

Country	Duration (weeks)	Amount of benefits	Source of benefits
Japan	14 weeks	66.67%	Social insurance (state also contributes)
Republic of Korea	13 weeks	100%	Social insurance and Employer
Taiwan	8 weeks	100%[a]	Employer
China	14 weeks	100%	Social insurance
Philippines	9 weeks	100%	Social insurance
Singapore	16 weeks	100%	Employer[b]
India	12 weeks	100%	Social insurance
Australia	12 months[c]	18 weeks paid federal minimum wage level	Social insurance

Source International Labour Organization (2013); Ministry of Labor, Taiwan (http://www.mol.gov.tw)
[a]Workers hired for less than 6 months are given 50% of wage during maternity leave
[b]May claim reimbursement up to a ceiling from the government for the last eight weeks (first and second child), 16 weeks for third and subsequent child
[c]The duration can be shared between parents

freedom and equal opportunity…in the wage economy". The Taiwan case might not be atypical of this region.

This chapter is not the place to go into policy details of specific Asian countries. Yet, Lin and Rantalaiho (2003) and Sung (2003) convincingly argued that the "family-friendly" employment policies in this region are intended as responses to pressing demographic changes: an increasing female working population, super-low fertility, and lack of household care for the rapidly aging population. Work-family reconciliation policy has thus come about with the purpose of reaching a new equilibrium between the family and a fast-growing market-oriented economy. This functional model has been contrasted with a universal right model as exemplified by the Nordic welfare states. As Lin and Rantalaiho (2003: 11) summarized, "redistributing family income is explicitly expressed as the policy goal in Scandinavian family policies, but the Confucian Asian cases emphasize the population policy…and endorse the principle of family dependency and support the families with children mostly in an indirect way". The family policies in the former are established on a cross-class consensus of sharing the costs of care of children and elderly people, whereas in Asia care is understood as a private affair, a responsibility of the family members rather than of the state. Family support policies in Asia have appeared as a patchwork of scattered government responses, lacking a coherent system aiming at promoting working mothers' rights on the basis of a philosophy of gender equality. What has made the working mothers' situation more difficult in the Confucian Asia is an enduring patriarchal ideology (Sung 2003). For an instance, South Korea's welfare policy has been criticized for lack of sufficient state provision of care because the government placed an emphasis on the

virtue of "filial piety", which ascribed responsibility to the family and in the end, to the women. Along with their paid work, working women also have to perform as filial daughters-in-law in a cultural context in which men are not responsible for most household work, and are comfortably privileged in a strong "male bread-winner" culture.

The above criticism of a Confucian welfare regime should not prevent us from recognizing a welfare expansion since the 21st century in the higher-income countries of Asia. In South Korea and Taiwan (Fleckenstein and Lee 2014; Huang 2012), child care benefits (to cover private child care costs) were offered that also included middle-class families for the first time. Parental leave was granted and made more flexible (although mandatory corporate nurseries were implemented only recently in some larger firms). These progressive moves were taken under governments with very different political ideologies. That is, both conservative and center-left governments pursued similar pro-family policy in the past two decades, with South Korea taking even larger strides forward than Taiwan. Fleckenstein and Lee (2014) contended that this was a result of party competition. The provisions became more inclusive to especially mobilize votes of women and young urban members of the middle class. Democratization in Asia might have pushed the political parties to behave as vote and office seekers, and therefore to pursue modernization of family policy.

The party competition approach should be used with caution. It assumes that the mass public has a clear idea of party platforms, in particular the intentions and plans for better resolution of tensions between work and family responsibilities. Sagi and Bolzendahl (2015) recently pinpointed the phenomenon of low political salience of family issues. They gathered evidence in the American context and showed that the stress on family *values* was in accordance with an individualistic and privatized view of family policy. When it came to the specific family *issues* or *policies*, people were very much "candidate-centered", using political elites as a convenient short-cut in forming opinions. The mass public have only a vague concept of family issues, and they lack prioritization and clarity when it comes to lobbying the legislature or advocating specific laws. It is hard to speculate on whether this public opinion perspective can equally well explain family policy making in Asia. This can be an interesting topic in the research agenda to come.

1.5   The Intersection of Family, Work and Wellbeing: A Summary of Chapters

The authors in this book represent the current realities of family-work life in Asia from an interdisciplinary perspective, and together provide both quantitative and qualitative evidence to test various theories as well as highlight distinctive family-work intersections in this region. Some chapters concentrate on in-depth description of how male members of the urban middle class started to manage

family life when their wives increasingly were involved in the labor market, or how lower-income rural females worked long hours in the field while also taking the major responsibilities of family care. Some chapters are able to provide observation of nuances in gender ideology, household division of labor, or interactions between generations across countries. Through this collective effort, we hope to offer timely, innovative research and solid evidence on Asian families. Of course, Asia is a large continent with 4.4 billion people, accounting for 60% of the world population. This book should be considered a humble contribution to understanding family and work life in this vast, culturally diverse region.

The first two chapters in the next session provide a refreshing observation into exchanges between family members in East Asia. Ming-Chang Tsai and Wen-Shan Yang highlight the phenomenon of reciprocation of financial support and housework between adult children and their parents in four East Asian societies across generations. Contact activities, though appearing as casual, informal interactions, often imply an expression of attention and intimacy. Tsai and Yang find that grown-up children provide financial support to parents in exchange for their assistance with housework, which as a result increases their daily contacts with parents on other matters. They also document the difference with Japan, where intergenerational exchanges of this sort happen less frequently than in South Korea, Taiwan and China.

Minzhi Ye, Yiwei Chen and Yisheng Peng focus on the residence of elderly people in China, through which they address the urgent issue of family care in a rapidly aging society. Filial piety has long been stressed as a focal familial value in Confucian Asia. This value system prescribes that adult children should reside with and take care of parents when they become old. This is in contrast to the independence model adopted in western societies where the elderly tend to live separately from their children. Their study of a national sample of old people suggests that those living alone tend to be less financially secure and healthy than those living with their spouse or with children. The former's quality of life also deteriorates. It seems that filial values are particularly important in a policy environment where pensions and care facilities for the elderly are insufficient.

The four articles in the third section examine the primary ways in which gender and work interact. Yean-Ju Lee notes that while traditionally attitudes towards gender and work are analyzed on a liberal-conservative spectrum, this axis does not necessarily exhaust all the possibilities. She introduces an alternative method which categorizes gender expectations into four categories: male breadwinner, female income earner, male homemaker, and female homemaker roles. In a comparative perspective, her chapter find that this combination of presence or absence of these expectations paints a more interesting picture than can the traditional spectrum.

In a similar vein, Thijs van den Broek and Makiko Morita focus their attention on gender-role expectations with regards to filial support in Japan. They discovered that such expectations can also be roughly categorized in a dichotomy that is based on economic roles—those who expect women to perform caretaking for their elders ("the patriarchal high family responsibility ideal"), those who merely expect financial aid from children regardless of gender or seniority ("the gender egalitarian low family responsibility ideal"), and those who are neutral. It is suggested that class