

**CALL FOR PAPERS (Deadline: 1 March 2016)**

# Children, Family and Migration in East Asia

*Date* 7-8 July 2016

*Venue* Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

*Keynote Speaker* Prof Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo

Professor of Sociology, University of Southern California, USA

***This international conference is jointly organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.***

Under conditions of economic globalization, migration across borders – whether international or internal – has become part of childhood experiences of many children in East Asia. While children are heavily involved in a wide range of migration streams in the region, they (with a few exceptions) continue to remain in the background of migration scholarship that is dominated by a focus on adult-centric labour migration concerns and processes. In this context, this conference sets out to examine the complex and multi-faceted ways in which East Asian children's lives – as they unfold in familial contexts – are intersected by migration processes and pressures. Children in migratory contexts are complex social actors who eschew easy classification into the binary states of 'agent' or 'victim'. They embody agency and resilience in situated practices, shape and are shaped by normative structures of familial and intergenerational relationships, and are deeply implicated in the negotiation of subjectivities folded into processes of development and change throughout the region.

In East Asia, the well-being of children (defined here broadly as those aged below 18) is often closely associated with family contexts and migration in at least four ways. First, in the developing economies in the region, when parents migrate to more affluent destinations in search of better work opportunities, children may be left behind and taken care of by other family members or substitute carers. For left-behind children, parents' migration may have multiple and sometimes contradictory effects, improving their well-being through remittances sent home, or affecting their lives adversely as a result of the absence of primary carers. Second, children may move and migrate with their family members. The well-being of migrant children in post-migration situations is often uncertain because they may lack access to needed education, health and other services due to their migration status. Third, some migrant workers bear children during their migration stints. This often creates a challenge for both parents and children, because migrant workers may face discrimination and marginalization in the host society. Children born of female migrant workers often do not have citizenship or residency rights in their birth place given their mothers' transient – often precarious – labour migrant status. Children born 'out of place' in host societies may also encounter stigmatization in returning to their parents' origin communities. Fourth, in more affluent societies in the region, middle class parents have increasingly used migration as a strategy to improve their children's future prospects. For example, in order to help their children obtain citizenship rights in more developed societies, pregnant women may migrate to give birth. In other instances, mothers from middle class families may migrate to accompany their children who pursue educational pathways overseas.

The above four strands linking children, family and migration illustrate the critical impact that family circumstances and migration contexts have on children's lives, regardless of whether the children move or stay. We are particularly interested in the way these strands develop in the context of intra-regional migrations in East Asia, primarily because the East Asian arena has been given less attention compared to the larger vein of work exploring issues related to children of Asian migrants in the global North. This conference takes children, family and migration in East Asia as its focus, and addresses the following key issues:

- How do children shape family migration decisions?
- How does migration impact the well-being, identity and subjectivity of children who move and children who stay?
- How do structural factors such as gender and class intersect with migration to shape children's lives?
- What strategies are mobilized to cope with the challenges stemming from migration that affect children's well-being?
- How do these strategies converge and diverge across different cultural and social contexts and among different groups of children bearing different gender, class and citizenship status?

We hope to bring together theoretically informed, empirically grounded papers which reflect the wide range of issues and experiences relating to children, family and migration in the context of East Asia. The conference is open to analyses using qualitative and/or quantitative methods. Papers focusing on Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Burma, and Cambodia are particularly welcome.

## ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION

Paper proposals should include a title, an abstract (300 words maximum) and a brief personal biography of 150 words. Please send all proposals in MS word document format to Ms Valerie Yeo at [valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg](mailto:valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg), no later than **1 March 2016**. Late submissions will not be considered.

The abstract should address one or more of the key issues listed above in an East Asian context. It should also clarify the substantive issues which the full paper will address and include information on objectives, methods, and findings. Please also explain the original contribution the research makes to the field of study. As selected papers (after the appropriate revision) will be included in a collective publication (such as a journal special issue), papers should be based on unpublished material and should not be already committed elsewhere.

Successful applicants will be notified by **end March 2016**. Those selected will have to submit full-length papers, of around 6,000 words in length, by **10 June 2016**.

Limited funding is available for a small number of presenters and will be awarded on a by-case basis.

## CONVENORS

### **Professor Brenda S.A. Yeoh**

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### *SECRETARIAT*

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