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Professor Wing Kai CHIU, Stephen is currently Professor in the Sociology Department, and Co-Director, The Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is also the Director of the Public Policy Research Centre and the Co-Convenor of the Global China Studies Programme under the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.



His research interests include development studies, industrial relations, social movements, youth studies, and the comparative study of the East Asian region. His research also covered many different public policy issues under commission by various public and governmental bodies.

He is also active in the community through his public services. He is currently the Chair of the Curriculum Committee on Liberal Studies (Senior Secondary), and had served as the Part-time Member of the Central Policy Unit, HKSAR Government, and a member of the Strategic Development Commission, HKSAR Government.

Dr. Yuying TONG

Dr. Yuying TONG, born in Mainland China, received her PhD degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and currently is an Associate Professor in Department of Sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her main research interest areas include social demography, migration and immigration, family and life course, and children and youth. She has published in the mainstream sociology and population journals such as American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, Social Science Research and Demography. Her current on-going research topics include consequences of parental migration on children, social segmentation of labor migrants and urban residents in China, migration and the household dynamics, and family transition in both China and Hong Kong.



Title

Child Rearing in Hong Kong: The Root Cause of Low Fertility?

Abstract

Securing a school place at kindergarten is not an easy task in Hong Kong nowadays, and competition for primary school places is similarly fierce. The influx of "doubly non-permanent resident children" may partly explain the phenomena, but this seems to be contrary to the larger demographic trend of local fertility rate reaching new lows in recent years.

One of the reasons of the low fertility rate in Hong Kong is persistent economic growth in recent decades. With the rise of female labor force participation rate, who and how to care for the newborn child has become a major concern in family planning. In Hong Kong, as a result, the labor force participation rate of female having children is lower than those with no children. The difference is even more pronounced for families with lower socio-economic status.

To encourage births, it is important for population policies to alleviate the financial and time burden of parents in raising their children and to help parents balance work and family life.

Children in Hong Kong are generally raised at home by either foreign domestic helpers or their stay-at-home moms or their grandparents. In contrast, most governments in developed countries offer supports to parents by bearing a large proportion of child care costs, providing different types of child care services and offering subsidies for low-income families. The Hong Kong government and the business sector should take a broad view to create a family-friendly environment, so that parents could ease their worries over childbearing, and mothers can have real choices over whether to continue working or not.