ABSTRACTS

Gina Lai and Odalia M.H. Wong, “Gender and Inequality in University Experience in China: Preliminary Findings from a Panel Study of High School Graduates in Urban Nanjing”

With the provision of mass education in the 1980s and expansion of higher education in the 1990s, there has seen a narrowing gender gap in educational achievement in China. Yet, studies conducted in the US found that in the era of mass education, educational inequality has been increasingly expressed in the form of horizontal (e.g., institutional prestige and school experiences) rather than vertical stratification (e.g., years of schooling). Qualitative differentiation in education would arguably effectively maintain social inequality. Horizontal stratification of education in China has received little research attention until recently.

Related research on gender inequality is even less. Thus the present paper examines gender differences in university experiences with a focus on participation in extra-curricular activities. Analyses are based on a subsample of a panel study of high school students in urban Nanjing who were receiving higher education in China in 2013. Findings show that while men and women have similar rates of participation in extra-curricular activities, they tend to participate in different types of activities. The gendered impacts of family and college types on activity participation will be explored and implications of findings for labor market outcomes will be discussed.

Wong, Yi-Lee, “Class, Affect, and Educational Setback: A Case of Shame, Guilt, and Anger”

Referring to in-depth interviews with fifty-two community-college students failing to get straight into a local publicly-funded university in Hong Kong, I seek to examine how the affect of shame, guilt, and anger accompanying this critical educational setback are mediated through class against an educational hierarchy. With parental expectation of them getting straight into university, respondents felt ashamed about failing to achieve this academic goal and guilty about letting their parents down. And yet, many of them also directed anger at their parents complaining that their parents had not done enough for them. This critical educational setback made some respondents feel ashamed about their academic ability and put the blame on themselves; some even saw themselves as ‘losers’ having a low self-esteem. Consistent with general statistical patterns suggesting a greater likelihood of the educational success for the middle class than the working class, many middle-class respondents somehow felt entitled to a place at university but none of working-class respondents did. This made middle-class respondents feel ashamed not simply about
their critical educational setback, but also about failing to materialize their entitlement. While many respondents felt rather ambivalent towards their parents, class differences were observed: those middle-class respondents felt more indignant than guilty, in that they somehow attributed their setback to not getting enough parental assistance; but, those working-class respondents were more guilty than indignant, in that they blamed themselves for wasting their parents’ resources to seek an expensive second chance. This demonstration – of how class is lived through rectifying a critical educational setback and how an educational failure is felt through class – suggests that class feelings could play roles in educational inequality.

Man Pui Kwan, “Negotiation in Cross-cultural Marriages: A Qualitative Study among Middle Class Professionals in Hong Kong”

Relatively little is known or studied about the negotiation process in cross-cultural married couples in Hong Kong, where such unions are quite common. The patterns of change in negotiation strategies as formulated in the dual concerns theory, also remains under-explored in the negotiation literature. This research hence aims to fill in these interrelated gaps, and investigate the dynamic pattern of negotiation strategies between husbands and wives in cross-cultural marriages of Hong Kong, especially regarding cases of familial conflict resolution, roles on household work and parenting style within the family. In terms of research methodology, a total of 14 cases of middle class cross-cultural married couples (aged 30 to 58) were interviewed. The research findings show that in familial situation of disagreements or conflicts, the patterns of change in negotiation strategies among women would be – in the language of the dual concerns theory – from collaborative to compromising/accommodating. On the other hand, men may change from collaborative to compromising, but were less likely to accommodate. In this vein, the F.A.M.I.L.Y negotiating approach was specifically developed in this study for interpreting the negotiation processes among the cross-cultural couples. Theoretically speaking, this study points out that these couples tend to adjust flexibly their negotiation strategies in real life situations, instead of complying rigidly with any perceived normative models of action. Practically, it is hoped that such strategies may be used for the field of social help, with direct relevance to the social stability of cross-cultural families in Hong Kong.

Keywords Negotiation; Dual Concerns Theory; Cross-cultural marriages; Middle-class; Household division of labor; Parenting style