ABSTRACTS

Tang, Ling, “Gendered and Sexualised Guanxi: women employers in urban China”
This research discloses a gendered and sexualized dynamic in guanxi through an ethnography in Shenzhen, an urban city just to the border of Hong Kong. I study the women employers born after the economic reform, especially the ones who work as marketing executives. The paper unveils how women's guanxi strategy is different from men's and their strategy navigating male-centered guanxi, including how they cope with the extensive drinking culture and sex workers in guanxi establishment. Four different types of women are addressed in the paper, including 1) erotic gifts, 2) rational legal participants, 3) the unreachable desired, and 4) the unspoken rules followers. I discuss how the women themselves or others play or downplay their erotic capital, a multi-faced asset of attractions, in gaining or compromising in gaining guanxi. My paper also discusses the structural constraints that stem from gender norms and family expectations and how these relate to people using erotic capital in guanxi. My paper will not only contribute to the theoretical side of guanxi studies but also to erotic capital theory, explaining how erotic capital is inherently empowering and dis-empowering at the same time.

Yeung, Sin Sin, “It is a Blessing to have this Privileged Choice: A comparative case of Ordinary Mothers’ Work-Family Interactions in Singapore and Hong Kong”
This research study starts from looking into the mothering practices, ideologies and emotional landscapes of professional women in post-industrial cities of East Asia: Singapore and Hong Kong. In doing so, it is to “understand” (the idea of verstehen) the choices and constraints of Singapore and Hong Kong mothers with professional career to perform, negotiate and define work-family interactions. The central research question is about how women interpret their “women’s question” when intersecting with the social constraints. Setting Confucian ethnics as the practices of family and social ideal, what are the variations of agency practices in being a ‘good’ mother? It is a case of comparison between two globalized Chinese societies in Asia, with this idea, each individual case is situationally grounded but their life events, their issues concerned are not random instances of social activity. A purposive sampling of cases of highly educated mothers in Singapore and Hong Kong implies some sense of generality of a social category: mothers with high education and working qualification in the social context. The study contributes to the existing literature about work-family interfaces by substantiating and expanding the understanding to
non-western social context. A reassessment of women’s experiences in their work and family choices in relation to the cultural ideal of womanhood/motherhood in two bounded structure fixture (Singapore and Hong Kong) is pertinent to sociological/feminist discussions. By giving shape to the study and the issues involved, I am constructing a reflexive space for both myself and the informants. This process of research is a process of ‘knowing’. We know something more (as we assumed and believed) by developing the narratives to tell about our lives. This process of knowing is both producing and consuming knowledge.

Ji-Hye Oh, “The Prestige of Stability: How Women’s Status in Labor Market has Effect on Women’s Labor in Family”

Recently, women’s participation in the labor market has been increasing, while the polarization among women also has become prominent in South Korea. Under this contradictory circumstance, how would women’s status in the labor market have effect on women’s labor in the family?

Existing researches about housework have focused on 1) relative earnings (economic dependence, gender display), and 2) absolute earnings based on women’s income. But these explanations have limitations in that they ignore the possibility that different employment statuses might have differential effects on women’s housework; employment status is ignored or treated as a variable.

Unlike existing researches, this study focuses on employment status and lifestyle. That is, employment status is not merely a problem of income. It can be a mechanism that provides different exposures to market instability and lifestyles, and different social prestige for women. Consequently, housework can be struggled differently through these various lifestyles. Women mobilize different strategies, resources and social recognition for doing housework according to their lifestyles based on their employment statuses.

The effect of women’s status in the labor market on housework was analyzed by categorizing women into regular/non-regular workers, using the Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Family conducted in 2013.

Similar to existing researches, the statistical analysis of this study shows that ‘relative and absolute earnings’ are significantly associated with married women’s housework. When women are categorized into regular/non-regular workers, however, the results are different. While those women who are regular workers are free from any earnings effects except for outside helping (from family and housekeeper), women who are non-regular workers are influenced by total income, husbands’ income, age, and sex role. This means that housework can be differently operated in accordance with women’s status. Particularly, women who are regular workers can
easily get help from those other than their family members because they have more stable jobs. On the other hand, women who are non-regular workers can only decrease their housework with the help of their husbands or use other resources when they have higher income.