Reproducing the Asian Family Across the Generations: "Tradition", Gender and Expectations in Singapore

In the context of constructions of the Asian family, relationships between the generations play a central part

By Elspeth Graham, Peggy Teo, Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Susan Levy*

"It would be the mother of all ironies if we succeeded in every endeavour but failed to reproduce ourselves and sustain our continuity",

(Straits Times, June 1999)

* Elspeth Graham, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom; Peggy Teo, National University of Singapore; Brenda S. A. Yeoh, National University of Singapore; Susan Levy, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom.

Throughout the developed world, with declining fertility and historically high divorce rates, the role of the family in society is changing (Sardon, 2000; Allan and others, *2001; Time International,* 2001). In Britain, for example, there is an ongoing debate about the future of the family and politicians periodically reaffirm the importance of a stable union between a man and a woman as the best setting for raising children. In Singapore, similar concerns are evident, despite lower rates of births outside marriage and apparently different conceptions of the nature of the family. With fertility now below replacement level among the majority Chinese population and lowest among university graduates, the Government is clearly worried about the implications of low fertility and its correlate,"the declining family". In particular, the family as a setting for the care of the elderly has become a major focus of concern. Moreover, for more than a decade, the Singapore Government has been proactive in its attempt to halt fertility decline by offering inducements, such as tax incentives, to have "three or more if you can afford it" (Drakakis-Smith and others, 1993; Graham, 1995). The introduction of the Baby Bonus Scheme in April 2001 is merely the latest in a series of measures designed to persuade Singaporean women to tailor their reproduction to the perceived needs of the State (Pyle, 1997).

What is particularly remarkable about these measures, however, is that their message has changed dramatically. Whereas in the 1970s the population was educated in a vigorous antinatalism by the political elite, by the 1990s, a clear, albeit qualified, pronatalism was in place. According to the People's Action Party (PAP), which has been in power for over four decades, the old policy had become a victim of its own success and new policies were needed to effect "population rejuvenation".Both of Singapore's major newspapers, *The Straits Times* and *The Business Times,* have been vehicles for communicating these messages to the wider populace and have run numerous stories over the past 15 years explaining the negative consequences of below replacement level fertility, an ageing population and, more controversially, a "lop-sided" pattern of procreation. Earlier headlines captured the thinking behind the Government's selective pronatalism:

"Fewer kids of graduate mums could lower society's IQ levels"

(Straits Times, September 1994)

These have been replaced by more inclusive laments to:

"Singapore's baby blues"

"...The stork hasn't been doing its job; the population isn't replacing itself".

(Business Times, October 1999)

Given the extensive press coverage of the new policies, there can be few Singapore residents today who are not aware of the pronatalist stance of the Government or who have not been exposed to the message that the Singapore 21 vision[1] of continued prosperity and economic growth is threatened by "unfavourable demographic trends". Yet, there is little evidence that the population is responding to the educational campaigns and inducements by increasing its fertility.

This paper examines the wider context of the Government's pronatalism to ascertain how ordinary Singaporean women are interpreting the Government's message. Many aspects of what the Government is now representing as its pro-family initiative are worthy of attention, not least the blurring of the distinction between public and private spheres (Teo and Yeoh, 1999) and the assumed need for the good of the community to prevail over individual choice. It is, however, another aspect of the PAP's interventionist population strategy that frames the analysis of this paper, namely the gendered nature of the policies. Throughout the post-independence era, the Government has sought to shape women's choices to fit national priorities. As Davidson (1999) points out, along with policy change, "identity and culture and the definitions of women as mothers, workers and citizens have been constantly (re)constructed in line with current economic and planning demands".

In 1983, when the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew addressed the nation in his National Day speech, he urged that steps be taken to refocus women on their "primary role as mothers". By doing so, he not only discursively positioned women as citizens with a special responsibility as "creators and protectors of the next generation" (Jose and Doran, 1997) but also placed a heavy burden on their shoulders in circumstances where fertility decline is seen as problematic. Such discourses have endured and the role of women in the family and in society are currently matters of some debate. Changing the attitudes and behaviour of women, it seems, is yet again seen as the key to realizing national economic goals.

The pronatalist policies of the 1990s appear as a radical break with past antinatalism but they also display a more profound continuity in ideas about women (PuruShatom, 1992). As Quah (1990) points out, using the family as an instrument of social change was as much a feature of the old population policy as it is of the new. Thus, the identification of women with family reproduction ensures that they remain the main targets of policy intervention. In this respect, Singaporean women are now receiving "mixed messages" from the Government (Goldberg, 1987). On the one hand, they are encouraged to pursue education and contribute to the growth of the national economy in the public sphere of paid employment. On the other, they are being urged not to

jeopardize the stability of the family but to stay at home and raise the next generation.

The obvious conflicts in fulfilling both roles are most often expressed in public debate in terms of the tensions created by the dual demands of caregiving and waged-work. Yet suggested solutions, such as more flexible working hours and paid maternity leave, fail to address wider issues of gender equality. As PuruShatom (1992) argues,"the concern of the government has never been with how the nation can save women from the fetters of social, cultural, political and economic discrimination and exploitation". Recent policy developments do little to empower women and look set to entrench the confusion around women's identities as good citizens.

The last decade or so, has seen attempts to redefine the family in line with so-called "Asian values" (Heng and Devan, 1995). The success of antinatalist measures in demographic terms is now represented as having been achieved at the cost of eroding traditional Asian thinking on the family (Kuo, 1987). Singapore's ambition to be the model for Asian development is, thus, thought to be threatened by "the cultural penetration of the hedonism and excessive individualism of the decadent West" (Jose and Doran, 1997). The family is to provide the bulwark against such damaging influences but, to do so, it must reassert its Asian identity. Vasil (1995), for example, notes the Government's determination "to Asianise Singapore and restore the Chineseness of the Chinese". The Government sees Confucian ideals - such as loyalty, obedience and collectivism - as fundamental to this project but maintains a certain generality in its pronouncements, mindful of the varied ethnic backgrounds of Singaporeans. The result has been a failure to articulate a comprehensive family policy reflecting clear and shared values on the type of family the nation wishes to promote (Quah, 1990). As another commentator puts it:

> "...when confronted by the politician's campaign against declining fertility, people have not asked which family these politicians are referring to" (Rajakru, 1996).

The appeal to "Asian values" may be designed to counteract the perceived influences of Western decadence but, if it is also to further pronatalist aspirations, then we must ask which traditions PAP have in mind and how they are likely to affect the lives of women in Singapore.

The project of "Asianising" Singapore brings with it a further set of "mixed messages" for women. In a speech in 1989, President Wee Kim Wee declared that Singapore had been sustained and guided in the past by the "traditional Asian ideas of morality, duty and society" that were now

threatened by Westernization and a self-centred outlook on life (Wee, 1989). For him, as for others in the political elite, the project of Asianization meant returning to older "traditional" values in order to ensure the preservation of the family as the building block of society. Among many Chinese Singaporeans, this is interpreted as an appeal to Chinese or Confucian ideals (Vasil, 1995) characteristic of Chinese culture in the wider region and grounded in a patrilineal family system that undervalues daughters relative to sons.

Although Croll's (2000) extensive survey provides evidence that such attitudes persist across Asia, it is clear that global economic and demographic changes are reshaping the relations in the Chinese family in many countries, including China (Salaff, 2002). Salaff argues that a "dependency squeeze", resulting from the older population having fewer opportunities to work at the same time as fewer offspring to support them, has resulted in daughters playing an equal role in supporting their parents and hence has increased their value within the Chinese family. Indeed, in Singapore, the Government promotes such gender equality through its expectations that both daughters and sons will support their parents in older age, and through its housing policies which give priority to adult children (whether male or female) who wish to live with, or in close proximity to, their parents.

The messages about women's role in society enshrined in these policies appear to be at odds with a re-emphasis of their "primary" role as mothers or a return to older "traditional" values associated with the Chinese family. This is not to suggest that the PAP wishes to re-inscribe discrimination against girls as part of their promotion of a cultural heritage for there is evidence to the contrary[2]. However, the lack of clear articulation of what is meant by "traditional" values in relation to the family, leaves room for a variety of interpretations and an attendant confusion about women's position in an Asianized Singapore. The ideological contradictions in state policies are neatly summarized by Kong and Chan (2000):

> "The state, in its pragmatic emphasis on economic development, exhibits full concern for the importance of the family and the role of women in maintaining it as homemakers, childbearers and childminders because they serve to reproduce the labour force. The state is thus unequivocally patriarchal in this sense; yet patriarchy is sometimes handmaiden to pragmatism. At the same time, in what may seem paradoxical, the state in Singapore has set up some conditions that reconfigure gender roles and relations, for example by facilitating women's entry to the labour force in the education they receive, and in reconditioning household

> arrangements so that familial support assures the possibility of women's re-entry into the work force after child bearing. The state's role is thus indisputably pragmatic in this instance; patriarchy is occasionally sacrificed in favour of pragmatism".

Where messages are mixed, understanding how Singaporean women themselves view "tradition" and family values becomes an essential prerequisite to any assessment of the likely impact of the Government's current pro-family policies on fertility. Where "tradition" is constructed as "a past way of thinking", it may be dismissed as irrelevant to contemporary fertility choices. Further, where "tradition" is associated with negative consequences, such as the undervaluing of female offspring, discourses on the "traditional Asian family" may be resisted rather than embraced, thus undermining the Government's attempt to encourage child-bearing through a re-emphasis of the importance of the family.

Several questions arise: Have conceptions of "traditional" values in relation to the family changed across the generations? How are these conceptions influenced by intergenerational relationships? And how are they related to decisions about fertility? This paper addresses these questions through an analysis of the life stories of two groups of women. It focuses on how ideas about the family and the role of women have changed over time, and highlights the importance of women's agency, which has sometimes been obscured in more structural analyses of Asian women and the family (Ong, 1999). In particular, it attempts to move beyond cross-sectional comparisons by recognizing the interplay between the generations and examining the possibility that, paradoxically, attitudes redolent of the antinatalist years (when the emphasis was on smaller families) may be strengthened rather than weakened by attempts to reinscribe the ideal Singaporean family as "traditionally Asian". Before discussing attitudes and ideas, however, we place these women in context by outlining their own experiences of family reproduction.

Women of their time?

The data on which our analysis is based are all derived from in-depth interviews with eight Chinese Singaporean women in the reproductive age groups (the parent generation) and their own mothers (the grandparent generation), conducted towards the end of 2001.[3] The eight target women vary in age between 27 and 38 years, they all have tertiary education and their economic circumstances are such that they, arguably, can afford to have at least three children. They are thus, among those whose fertility behaviour the Government has been most anxious to influence. Their mothers range in age

Table 1. Mean age at first marriage of resident ever-married females by year of marriage

	1960 or earlier	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000
Chinese females	20.7	23.3	24.3	26.1	26.9
University graduates	24.5	25.3	25.2	26.3	26.9

Source: *Singapore Censu.s of Population, 2000*, Advanced Data Release No. 8, Marriage and Fertility.

from 49 to 70 years, although most are in their 50s or early 60s and were exposed to antinatalist campaigns during their reproductive years. Although it would be foolish to claim that these women are representative of their respective generations,[4] it is interesting to note the extent to which their reproductive behaviour conforms to the norms of the time.

Even in this small group of women, mean ages at marriage are indicative of a more general change over time. Whereas the older generation shows a mean age at marriage of 22.1 years, their daughters married, on average, more than three years later at 25.5 years. This mirrors a national trend which saw mean marriage ages for Chinese brides rise significantly from 20.7 years for those who married in 1960 or earlier to 26.9 years for those who married between 1991 and 2000 (see **table 1**).

For the Singapore population as a whole, the rise in female marriage age has been associated with fertility decline and the mean number of children born fell from 3.9 for the pre-1950 birth cohort of females, to 1.8 for the 1961-1970 birth cohort *(Singapore Census of Population,* 2000). Our eight interviewees from the grandparent generation were born between 1931 and 1952 and between them produced 29 children, or an average of just over 3.6 children per woman. Their reproductive behaviour was, therefore, fairly typical for women of their generation. In contrast, our group of interviewees from the parent generation have produced 9 children between them to date, or an average of around 1.1 children per woman. It seems that the reproductive behaviour of this small sample is also typical of their generation.

The impact of national trends towards later marriage and lower fertility can be seen in another comparison between the two generations of our interviewees. By the time that the women of the grandparent generation were the same ages as their daughters were when interviewed, they had produced 27 children, whereas their daughters had produced only 9 offspring, or 2.25 fewer children on average. In every case, the women of the grandparent generation

Table 2. Percentage resident ever-married female university graduates by selected age group and number of children born

Age group (years)	Number of children born			
	None	1 child	2 children	3 children
25-29	65.1	28.0	6.0	0.3
35-39	14.1	25.6	43.5	13.8

Source: *Singapore Census of Population,* 2000, Demographic Characteristics.

had produced more children than their daughters at the same age. Moreover, a comparison with national figures from the 2000 census suggests that the pattern of reproduction of our sample group from the parent generation is not a typical of female university graduates of a similar age (see **tables 2 and 3**). Small numbers in the sample group make direct comparison impossible but, apart from the absence of an interviewee aged 35 to 39 years with only one child, the national pattern of a median of 2 children for the older age group in the table and the prominence of women with none or one child in the younger age group is echoed in our sample.

None of the parent generation interviewees currently have more than three children and, despite differences in fertility behaviour within our younger interviewee group, we have found little evidence that these well educated Chinese women have so far responded to the Government's inducements to increase the size of their families. The question then arises, "what factors are influencing their fertility decisions?"

The conflicting demands of work and parenthood undoubtedly have an important impact and have become a focus of recent debate. In April 2000, an article *in The Straits Times* based on responses from 300 readers declared that Singapore mothers are willing to have more children but also want more support in their work and child-care arrangements. The issues of flexi-hours and the time demands of childrearing also came up in our interviews. The

Table 3. Number of graduate interviewees of the parent generation by age group and number of children born

Age group (years)	Number of children born			
	None	1 child	2 children	3 children
25-29	2	2	0	0
35-39	1	0	2	1

Source: Interview data.

situation is not as simple as this particular newspaper's claim may be taken to imply, however, since demands on women in the current parent generation are multiple. They are known in Singapore as the "sandwich generation" and, as the same newspaper put it in an article the following year:

> 'Squeezed between the demands of children and ageing parents, and often holding down a job as well, life can be intolerable for the sandwich generation" *(Straits Times,* April 2001).

The article addresses the stress experienced by working women when trying to provide care to two generations at once by advocating a sharing of the burden with other family members. It is notable, however, that men are mentioned only to note that they are the traditional breadwinners and usually have less time for care-giving work, thus tacitly endorsing a whole suite of patriarchal attitudes that have long been associated with "traditional Asian values". If the Government's programme for redefining the family (re)emphasizes such attitudes, it surely runs the risk of undermining its fertility ambitions by placing too many demands on women.

Further, women of the grandparent generation, whose husbands most likely assumed the role of traditional breadwinner, may have been convinced by the benefits of smaller families in circumstances where male participation in caregiving was minimal. As a result, they may be reluctant to encourage their daughters to have more than two children. At the very least, it is unclear how enhancing the family's Asian identity will have the desired impact on fertility. A greater understanding is needed of how ordinary Singaporeans represent the intersections between "tradition" and "gender", how these have changed over time and how they influence fertility decisions. As a first step, we now turn to the voices of the 16 women we interviewed in order to gain some insight into these issues.

The grandparent generation

An understanding of what is meant by "traditional Asian values" and how they might impact on fertility behaviour seems to us to be lacking in current government policies towards the family. Tradition is socially constructed, an idealized or selective version of the past, sometimes even a fiction (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Yet, inscriptions of tradition can be powerful influences on individual behaviour as they seep into the collective consciousness of a population. By their very nature traditions are not fixed, however enduring they might seem (Toren, 1988). Thus any appeal to tradition, like any writing of history, tells as much about the present as it does about the

past. Families can play an important role as bearers of tradition by socializing their children in particular ways of thinking and acting, although discursive constructions of tradition as "old-fashioned", along with the power of individual human agency, leave open the possibilities for change.

The relationship between values, traditional or otherwise, and behaviour is not a deterministic one. Other studies point to the possibility of resistance to dominant cultural discourses on fertility and the family (Saavala 2001) and the variety of assumed values is often revealed in descriptions of experience or in judgements of behaviour as appropriate or inappropriate, good or bad. In the context of family reproduction, it is also clear that the details of particular circumstances impact on such judgements. However, the power of particular ways of thinking should not be underestimated, as they are embodied in social norms which set up expectations of "appropriate" behaviour. Take the Confucian ideal of obedience that the Singapore Government seems anxious to encourage; in the setting of the Asian family, this is often constructed as obedience to the older generation, or filial piety (Soin, 1996). It can thus inform judgements about what it is to be a "good son" or a "good daughter" and may serve to perpetuate a patriarchal structure within the family. A "good daughter" becomes one who lives up to the expectations of her parents or her parents-in-law and thus perpetuates their "traditional" values.

If filial piety is to be maintained, or even strengthened, in twenty-first century Singapore, then the values or ideals espoused by the current grandparent generation become a matter of some importance because they set up expectations that "obedient" daughters may try to live up to. And here, we meet a possible contradiction in the thinking of the policy-makers, for, while an emphasis on filial duty may contain the costs of elder care within the extended family, its impact on fertility must depend on what the relevant expectations and ideals of the older generation actually are.

Further, the experience of the grandparent generation during their own reproductive years has been one of rapid change. In their time, Singapore has been transformed both economically and socially. Smaller families became the norm under the "stop at two" policy, financial security was greatly enhanced for both individuals and families, and opportunities in education and employment - at least for their children - dramatically extended. These changes were associated with modernization inofficial rhetoricand counterposed to older ways of behaving which had resulted in large families and poverty. If Kuo (1987) is right and the transformations of the 1960s and 1970s have "debunked traditional values" - such as preference for large families and for sons, as well as perceptions of children as security in old age (cited

in Quah, 1990) — then we must ask what expectations this generation has for their adult children. We start by examining the understandings of "traditional values" among our older interviewees.

Zhong nan qing nu: son preference

A strong preference for sons over daughters has long been associated with Asian thinking on the family (Chen and others, 1982; Croll, 2000), as the narratives of many of our interviewees attest. Among the grandparent generation, Madam Siu.[5] (whose narrative is translated from Mandarin) says of her hopes before she had children:

> "My ideal was to have a boy as my first child. Later on, if I were to have girls, I didn't have to be bothered. I wouldn't have to be worried because during our time, for the older folks, they preferred the boys, particularly because . . [my husband] is a Hokkien. He likes boys".

And, reflecting on her own mother's attitudes, she comments:

> "My mother favoured boys and not girls, but she still doted \on us. But she was still more open minded. She was not so traditional".

To Madam Siu, what is "traditional" is identified in terms of the views of an older generation who favoured boys over girls and which have been kept alive in the attitudes of her husband as part of his cultural heritage as a Hokkien. Despite distancing herself from these views, they clearly impacted on her own family life through her role as a wife in a patriarchal household. She describes her relief after her first child, a son, was born, adding: "I was not afraid. After that, it didn't matter whether I had girls or boys".

Differences in attitudes to boys and girls are highlighted in the narrative of Madam Sim (translated from Mandarin) and echoed in the life experiences of other women of the grandparent generation we interviewed. Madam Sim recalls her mother-m-law's reactions when she gave birth to a second daughter and the pressure she felt under to produce a son:

> "But because I gave birth to two daughters, my mother-in-law was not happy, so I tried for a third child, so finally gave birth to a son. So, I gave birth to the third child. If not, I would not have wanted a third child".

She describes herself as having "no choice" because she lived with her mother-in-law who would come to her everyday and nag her to give birth to another child, saying "there is no grandson, no grandson,. .". Yet on the birth

of the grandson, the grandmother's attitude to her daughter-in-law changed radically from having refused to speak to her after the birth of the second daughter to treating her very well:

> "She treated me very well. Waited on me like I was, an emperor. During the confinement, I did not have to do anythin She will bring everything into the room for me. When I gave birth to [my daughter], she did not even come into my room. She was from China, my mother-in-law came from China".

The special treatment and social esteem which Phua and Yeoh (2002) suggest pregnant Chinese women enjoy was apparently accorded to Madam Sim only on the birth of a son. The implicit equation of being from China with son preference is also evident in this passage. When asked if her own parents favoured boys over girls, Madam Sim replies:

> "My mum used to be like this but now she has changed. She used to dote on boys but now because my younger brother disappointed her . . . She said that daughters are still better. Her daughters give her allowance monthly. Her sons never give her any money. . . . That's why she changed her thinking. In the past, she loved sons more than daughters".

This recollection acts as a reminder that traditional ways of thinking can be changed or modified by experience, especially when expectations are "disappointed". But more than that, it also calls attention to the functional aspects of cultural values where preference for sons is repaid later in life in the form of financial support in older age. Daughters thus become "better" when they fulfil the functions previously expected of sons. Where the function itself becomes redundant, the basis of intergenerational relationships is likely to change leaving an opening for new attitudes to children to emerge. Perhaps this, in part, explains Madam Sim's own views on sons and daughters:

> "I prefer daughters. Because daughters get along better with us. When you talk to sons, they'll talk back to you in a loud voice. Not that he is naughty or bad but we cannot communicate".

Among her own siblings, it is the daughters and not the sons who have provided old-age support for their mother. That in itself marks a shift in attitudes, but a more profound change is inscribed in the reasons Madam Sim gives for preferring daughters. They have nothing to do with the economic functions of the family. Rather, they denote an orientation towards what Ogburn (1964) has called "affectional functions", where parent-child relations

are seen in emotive terms. For this mother, daughters are better companions. The temptation to see this as an irreversible consequence of changes in economic dependencies with the family must be resisted, however, since Madam Sim might be responding only to her current circumstances. At 50 years old, she is one of the younger interviewees in the grandparent group and may not yet have given serious consideration to support in older age.

Madam Tong, on the other hand, is the oldest of our interviewees and her health is not so good. She contrasts her own views on gender preference with those of her mother, which she also identifies as part of a cultural heritage. (Her narrative is translated from Mandarin.)

> "My mother preferred boys. She didn't like girls. . . . People from China are like that.. . .She came from China. That is the mentality of people from China".

> "I didn't think in that way. It is good to have boys and it is good to have girls. I don't think about it [preference for boys] ".

She herself has six children, two boys and four girls, the eldest of which is a daughter. Yet later in the interview, she reveals another aspect of son preference when talking about her decision on where to live after being widowed and giving up work.

> "I never thought about staying with the daughters. I wanted to stay with my son. . . .I wanted to stay with him so that I can look after the children. I need not live with the son who has a maid".

Although her stated reasons for choosing to live with her elder son rather than her younger son are linked to their respective financial circumstances (one can afford paid help and the other cannot), her preference for staying with a son was strong enough to preclude her entertaining the possibility of living with a daughter. Abandoning the favouritism shown by her mother towards boys during childhood, she nevertheless assumes a special relationship with her sons in older age. Madam Tong's narrative suggests that the values of an older generation may be selectively (re)constructed by the succeeding generation.

Madam Yuen, in contrast, whose only grandchild is a girl, shares her husband's much clearer preference for sons. (Her narrative is translated from Mandarin.)

> "In our way of thinking, it is still better to have a boy. No matter what, it is better to have a boy".

She has told her daughter that "the next one will be a boy" but also thinks that the younger generation "are able to be independent" and that parents of her generation "no longer have the right to interfere". What is interesting about this last comment is the underlying assumption that relations between the generations have changed and that the change is linked to a break from past dependencies.

Chu jiu: marrying out

Many of the older women in our sample, mention experiences of poverty during their own childhoods, and economic realities of the time clearly constrained possibilities for setting up independent households on marriage. However, such circumstances merely underpinned traditional and patriarchal thinking that saw a woman as "marrying out" of her birth family and into her husband's family, frequently living as her husband's wife in her parents-in law's house as Madam Sim did. Madam Yuen also moved in with her mother-in-law and father-in-law on marrying their only child and explains:

> "There were only my mother-in-law, my husband and myself. Three of us. That was why I had to stay with her".

It subsequently becomes clear that her father-in-law was also part of the household but it was her relationship with her mother-in-law that impacted most on Madam Yuen's early married life. She was 21 years old when she married, having given up her job as a sales assistant to do so, and had her first child soon after. "We did not know how to practise birth control". She represents her dependent position in the household in terms of the common experience of the time:

> "In the past, the husband would only give you money for the household expenses. If you need money for other purposes, you had to earn it yourself. . . . At home, your mother-in-law would be unwilling to look after the children for you. As a result, you could not go out and work. That was because my mother-in-law was more traditional. You could only work if you could take care of the needs of the family".

As well as economic dependence on her husband, Madam Yuen's role in the household was also constrained by the strictures of her mother-in-law. She was expected to fulfil her duties as a filial daughter and wife but in circumstances where the bloodline was seen as predominant. As she notes:

> "She [her mother-in-law] felt closer to the grandchildren. The daughter-in-law was an outsider. That was the way she thought. She came from there [China]. The influence she got

> was also traditional. Her mother-in-law was also rather strict. That was why she was also rather strict with us. We had to submit to her just like the way it was in China. . . . Those were her ideas. That was why it was more difficult to get along unless you could tolerate. Then, things would be fine. That was the way things were".

"Marrying out" was a difficult experience for Madam Yuen who remains convinced that her mother-in-law did not like her. She also suggests that her own experiences were not unique but were simply what happened more generally "in the past". Interestingly, only two of our eight older interviewees lived with their mothers-in-law after marriage and other research has pointed out that multi-generational households were never typical in Singapore (AWARE, 1996). Nevertheless, the attitudes that Madam Yuen records are also evident in the narratives of others in the grandparent generation. Madam Tong, for example, who also came from a very poor family and describes herself as "illiterate", explains her own mother's preference for sons in the following terms:

> "She said that once a girl is married, she belongs to others. The sons are our own. That is what she thought. The people in the past think in that way".

Madam Tong's mother came to Singapore from China and viewed daughters as being "owned" by the husband's family after marriage, in contrast to sons who remained part of their birth family. Madam Tong, though, distances herself from her mother's views by describing them as "in the past". She also declares, "I did not pass these ideas down. I did not teach them [her children] such and such". This marks a break with the past where one generation comes to see the ideas of their parents as "old fashioned" and declines to reproduce them in the education of their own children. Madam Tong was born in the 1930s and raised her six children during the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps, this was the period when attitudes began to change. Madam Sim, herself born in 1951, provides further evidence when she records her father's thinking as more open than others of his generation:

> "When my father was alive, he loved all of us. Before he passed away, he gave money to all his children. Everyone had a share. He did not show favouritism. He does not have that thinking. Like when I got married, he was not like others that asked for a bride price and things like that. He said that if you like it then get married. He did not demand for this or that. My father was very open".

The purchase of brides through dowry arrangements was evidently not unknown in Singapore at the time Madam Sim was married, and that was as recently as 1970. In the mid-1970s, Chinese men and women in Singapore were found to have a strong preference for sons (Chen and others, 1982). However, attitudes already appear to have been changing, even among men. Without reading too much into Madam Sim's words, it is possible to discern a contrast between a way of thinking characterized by son preference and "marrying out" on the one hand and her father's "very open" way of thinking on the other. The former she sees as demanding, possibly constraining, and it may in part be a reaction to this, coupled with the possibilities opened up by her father's attitudes, that has encouraged her own conviction that having boys is not better than having girls.

"Marrying out" is part of a narrative which extends well beyond the economic expediency of living with in-laws and encompasses a sweep of patriarchal attitudes that the older women we interviewed variously characterized as "a past way of thinking", "coming from China" and "old fashioned". Such attitudes informed the early life experiences of all these women to a greater or lesser degree but "tradition" has been reinscribed selectively before being passed on to the current parent generation.

Madam Yuen's story is instructive. For her, "marrying out" meant learning to live in a household in which she occupied a subservient position, both as a wife and a daughter-in-law. Although she recognizes that her husband also had to submit to his mother, she adds "It was just harder for me". She reveals resignation to the circumstances of her early married life but also a recognition of the difficulties of "traditional" intergenerational relationships. It is hardly surprising that she feels that women of the current parent generation are more fortunate than she was, nor that, like Madam Tong, she is determined not to reproduce the "traditional" relationships she experienced when younger. Reflecting on her attitude to her own children, she says, "I did not expect and insist on certain things", although she has also told them, "You can do anything but you have to respect senior folk". In Madam Yuen's story we can see "traditional" Asian values being transformed by life experiences. Even if her son lives with her and her husband after he marries, it will be his choice and she will not assume the role of the "traditional" mother-in-law as she experienced it. At the same time she is anxious to instil in her children a respect for elders that has much older roots in narratives about the Asian family and society. As a bearer of tradition, then, Madam Yuen has socialized her children in particular ways of thinking but has played an active role in changing older narratives by selecting only those aspects of her own socialization which appear to have continued worth. Along with other women

of her generation, she has changed the construction of Asian values as they have passed on to the next generation. These changes are given voice in the stories of our younger interviewees from the parent generation.

The parent generation

Women in the current parent generation in Singapore differ from women in the grandparent generation in many ways. Not only have they tended to marry later but they are better educated and play an important role in the national economy as skilled and professional workers. Their fertility is also lower than that of their parents. Of our younger interviewees, two do not have children, one having failed to conceive and the other because she does not want children. Another is currently pregnant with her first child. In addition, all have tertiary education and a financial security less frequently experienced by women in their mother's generation. Their views on the family might be expected to show a similar contrast. Certainly they speak much less of "traditional" values than do those of the older generation among our interviewees. Some, however, do claim to be "traditional" in their thinking while others see "tradition" as irrelevant to their own choices and behaviour. Whatever their stance, the key question here is "how do they characterize tradition in the context of the family?".

Nei sun: grandchildren hearing the family name

For the grandmothers, economic dependencies within a patriarchal family structure went hand-in-hand with son preference and "marrying out". This is not the only context that provides a rationale for preferring sons over daughters, however, and the idea of continuing the family name is also linked to traditional values. May Ling (daughter of Madam Sim) talks of her preference for her own mother as caregiver to her only child, a daughter, and provides a fascinating example of how "traditional" relationships between the generations are being reconstructed in contemporary Singapore. Asked what she would do if her mother-in-law expressed a willingness to look after the granddaughter, she replies that she would "try it out":

> "… if my mother-in-law kind of like tell me that oh she doesn't mind [looking after the child], I guess I will try it out. That means the practical thing is I will probably try out with her first. . . . And if things really aren't too, looking too good, then I will change over to my mother. . . . But if not I will then er you know respect my mother-in-law's wish, since it is her, you know, direct grandchildren. My mother is the maternal side you see. [I am] still very traditional . . . ".

Despite emphasizing that "emotionally" she would want her mother to do the childcare, she sees her mother-in-law as having a closer tie with the grandchild through the paternal line and equates this with being "very traditional". Yet there are limits to her "obedience" in this respect. Unlike some of the older generation, she is unwilling simply to go along with her mother-in-law's wishes and to "tolerate" the outcome if this means compromising the care of her child. She sees herself as having the final say in the matter of childcare for her daughter and "traditional" values associated with continuing the family line are only one element influencing that choice. Her stated reasons for saying that she would "try out" her mother-in-law first reveal a mix of traditional and much more pragmatic thinking. Her mother-in-law lives in the same block of flats as May Ling and her husband, while her own mother lives some distance away. Practical considerations associated with proximity and being able to see her baby every day clearly influence May Ling's reasoning but, most important, she is not economically dependent on either set of grandparents and sees herself as having a choice.

In fact, May Ling's mother-in-law has not expressed a desire to look after her granddaughter, so her own mother (Madam Sim) is providing the care during the week while May Ling is working. Madam Sim's own preferences, as we have seen, are for girls rather than boys and May Ling says of her mother ". . . she feels very proud when she brings [her granddaughter] down to the neighbours lah". May Ling, too, likes girls because, she says, she knows how to take care of girls being a girl herself. Nevertheless, her ideal would be to have a son as the second child, although she and her husband do not want to give themselves "a lot of pressure". She identities the paternal grandparents as a possible source of pressure. Her husband is the younger of two sons but his parents do not yet have a grandson and have conveyed their hope that the couple's next child will be a son. May Ling comments, if she does have a boy:

> "Ah then that will in a way, if I can lah. [laughs] It will neutralise some of the expectations, I guess. . . . Parental expectations. Ah then you can have the third one, then you can have a girl again".

May Ling is evidently aware of her in-laws' wish for a grandson and would like to fulfil their expectation *if she can*. At present, her own attitude seems fairly relaxed, however, and she appears to assume no responsibility for providing them with a male heir to continue the family line. Like her views on childcare, what she sees as "traditional" values influences her own thinking only to a limited extent and she certainly does not feel bound by them. Indeed her expressed preferences emphasize the maternal line, highlighting intergenerational relationships between grandmother, daughter and granddaughter.

Most of the other women in the parent generation whom we interviewed discussed their thinking about the gender composition of their family without reference to "traditional values", with some preferring girls and others a mix of boys and girls. Only one of these eight women situates her preference for a boy in a more patriarchal narrative about the role of women in the family but, even so, the need to continue the family line was not uppermost in her thinking.

Ling Hui (daughter of Madam Seow) is 38 years old and has been married for 10 years. She wants a child but has, in the past, failed to conceive despite undergoing fertility treatment. She is still hoping to become pregnant. Asked what sex she would like the child to be, if she had a choice, she replies:

> "Er, I would prefer a boy. . . The reason being because that's what my husband likes, prefers. . . . Personally I don't, I don't, I mean, I am really fine with either. I would be happy if I had a girl, you know. I have no preference for a guy. But, er, I want a boy because if that is the only time I am going to have a baby, I would like to have a baby that's what my husband wants. Yah. So a boy".

Her main motivation for wanting a boy is to please her husband and she distances herself from his "preference for a guy". Although she is willing to speculate on why her husband wants a boy, she has "never really asked him". She says:

> "Yah, so. Yah, maybe because he grew up in, he has no sister, you know. They are a very traditional family with boys. Because right now my brother-in-law has got kids now, so I guess the pressure on him is not so much anymore. Otherwise, you know, he being the eldest of the family will also think that, you know, should have a boy to carry the family line, carry on the family line. Yah".

Ling Hui describes her husband's family as "still pretty traditional people" to whom continuing the paternal line remains important. Her parents-in-law are apparently able to influence their sons' fertility behaviour through the pressure the sons feel to produce a male heir. At the same time, Ling Hui's own lack of preference for a baby of a particular gender may be influenced by her own circumstances in which any baby would be welcomed. She is well aware of the limits that biology places on her choices and, as a professional woman with an independent income, there is no way of knowing what these choices might have been if she had been able to conceive earlier in her marriage and how she might then have responded to pressure from her

parents-in-law. She understands "traditional" values to include continuing the bloodline but, for her, the emotive bond between husband and wife is the most important consideration.

The narratives of May Ling and Ling Hui both illustrate the complex ways in which different constructions of "tradition" are influencing thinking about fertility and the family in contemporary Singapore. These graduate women from the parent generation articulate their own views in a way which recognizes "traditional" Asian values but also reflects their limited influence. Ultimately, other considerations can and do outweigh the pressures of tradition. Emotive ties, between mother and daughter or husband and wife, override feelings of duty to reproduce the patriarchal family.

The narratives of the other six graduate interviewees show less sensitivity to any imperatives of tradition and their silences on motivations such as continuing the family line could be taken as an indication that, for them, traditional thinking on the family has no contemporary relevance. This, we think, would be to overstate the case, but these women do clearly relegate *some* aspects of what they perceive as traditional thinking to the past and are at pains to point out that they themselves think differently. For example, Shu Fen (daughter of Madam Yang) has two children, both girls. She is unlikely to try for a third but has not definitely decided. If she does have a third, however, she would like a boy. As she comments,

> "Er, I guess I would probably like to have at least one boy not because: you know, not because of the Chinese tradition but just experience of bringing up different kids. And especially, er, you know, I came from a family of all girls so it's quite nice to see what a boy is like but the two [her daughters] have been such a, you know, such a joy that girls are really fun to be with, yah".

In several ways, Shu Fen's narrative resonates with those of other younger women in our sample. Like the majority of her peers, she sees advantages in having a mix of boys and girls but does not want a large family. She clearly has strong emotional bonds with her daughters and the wish for a son has not (yet) persuaded her to try for another child. Further, she recognizes traditional Chinese thinking as encompassing son preference only to point out that this is not part of her own motivation. If she does increase the size of her family, then it will not be in response to "traditional" Asian values but rather to ideas of balance and gender mix that cannot be identified with distinctively Chinese ways of thinking.

The stories of these Chinese graduate women in the parent generation, compared with those of their mothers, suggest an increasing marginalization of the "traditional" values of son preference and having grandchildren bearing the family name. While the grandparent generation in our sample discursively reconstructed tradition in a selective manner, their daughters are more likely to see "traditional" thinking as irrelevant to their own fertility intentions and decisions. Changes in intergenerational relationships, though perhaps in more subtle ways, appear also to have largely dispelled "traditional" pressures to continue the family line. For the younger women we interviewed, intergenerational relationships and conceptions of the family are being reconstructed along less gendered lines. The valuing of female bonds among the generations suggests that "traditional" motivations for large families have been weakened, if not abandoned, and that the family is being reproduced by these women in a different form. Recognition of the value of daughters hints at a change in attitudes of and towards women in the family which may prove resistant to any reinscription of "traditional" social forms. This must throw in doubt the efficacy of any official policy designed to increase fertility among graduate women through a re-emphasis of Asian family values.

Conclusion

The narratives of our sample group of eight graduate women and their mothers reveal the variety and complexity of experiences of fertility and family. We have picked out only one element of this for discussion by looking at the intersection between "tradition" and gender. To some extent, the life stories of these women resist dissection in this way, for each has its own coherence and continuity. Yet, there is also a broader story being told as revealed in the comparison between the generations. Although inscriptions of the characteristics of the "traditional" Chinese family vary, son preference, marrying-out and grandchildren bearing the family name are enduring themes. This does not imply that "tradition" is fixed, nor that those who articulate these themes live by them. Rather, discursive reconstructions of what is "traditional" open possibilities for change, while the marginalization of "traditional" values in motivational discourses introduces other ways of thinking and behaving. In the context of constructions of the Asian family, relationships between the generations play a central part.

The older women we interviewed are aware of their role as bearers of tradition within the family and some have chosen not to reproduce the intergenerational relationships of the past. Experiences of "marrying out" and pressure from mothers-in-law to produce a son and heir are now recollected in terms of the constraints imposed on their own lives and not as ideal forms of family life. They see the younger generation of women as different, and as

having choices that they did not have. A recurring motif in their life stories is that young women of their generation did not have the time or opportunity to make choices as their energies were spent on ensuring that their families were supplied with the basic necessities of food and housing. Although not true of all our interviewees, this is a reminder that we have paid scant attention to the changes in economy and society more generally which have allowed or even encouraged women to make choices. Increasing prosperity and financial independence for married couples and for women may well be the driving forces of family change.

Graduate women of the parent generation among our interviewees feel different constraints to their mothers but they are also making different fertility choices. The conflicting demands of paid employment and looking after children figure highly in the life stories of this "sandwich generation", although none of our younger interviewees has yet been called upon to provide care for ailing parents. Indeed, it is the grandmothers who are often providing care for their grandchildren. The relationship between the generations is more than an instrumental one, however, and hints at a strengthening of emotive bonds within the extended family. These women do not see themselves as belonging to their husband's family in the way that narratives around "marrying out" imply. Even those who represent themselves as being "traditional" in certain respects, offer little evidence that ideas of son preference or ensuring the reproduction of the paternal line are influencing their fertility choices. On the contrary, several of the graduate women interviewed express a preference for daughters, reflecting perhaps their close relationship with their own mothers.

Another recent study of the Chinese middle class in Singapore (Koh and Tan, 2000) found a dramatic shift in parental attitudes within one generation, from open favouritism towards boys to espousing an ideology of fairness. The respondents in that study placed an emphasis on compatibility and companionship in their relationships with their children. Our respondents reveal another dimension of family change in the interactions between grandmothers and their adult daughters. Strong emotional ties have been maintained after marriage and they too are affecting family relationships, in this case through childcare arrangements. And these changes do not appear to have been contained within a single generation, as Koh and Tan claim, but to have evolved over a longer period of time as the grandparent generation selectively reconstructed "tradition" in the socialization of their children. As an element in the social reproduction of the family in Singapore, the selective re-inscribing of 'tradition' by these women provides further evidence of the vibrancy of human agency elucidated by Phua and Yeoh (2002) in their recent study of embodied reflexivity among pregnant Chinese Singaporean women.

The nature of changes in intergenerational relationships becomes a matter of particular importance in the light of attempts by the state to promote pronatalist attitudes through a wider rhetoric on the family that emphasises "Asian values". On the one hand, the fluidity of "tradition" inevitably clouds the message; on the other, the identification of "Asian values" with patriarchal family structures endangers the message. In any event, it is unclear how official reassertions of the Singaporean family as distinctively "Asian" will serve to encourage an increase in fertility. The most recent census *(Singapore Census of Population 2000)* shows a strong correlation between family size and the educational attainment of women, with graduate females having the fewest children. Over a decade of incentives would seem to have had little impact on their reproductive behaviour. None of our graduate interviewees thought the financial payouts had been a decisive influence in their fertility choices, and most considered them irrelevant. Perhaps it is in response to such a negligible impact that the Government is seeking additional ways to encourage child bearing.

Emphasizing community and the family, as well as highlighting the perceived dangers of individualism and consumerism, is part of the current strategy but its efficacy in increasing fertility is also uncertain. If the Government's aim is to persuade women to put family before career, for example, in the hope that they will consequently be persuaded to have more children, then this will be a difficult task. Several of our interviewees of both generations commented on the social benefits of working outside the home. Further, after investing so much in the education of their children, the expectations of the grandparent generation are that their daughters will work and reap some of the rewards.

Finally, there is an abundance of evidence in the narratives we analysed, that intergenerational relationships and the family remain central to the lives of graduate women in Singapore (Kau and others, 1998). It is just the nature of relationships within the family that has changed. If government policy on the family fails to acknowledge the complexities of this change, then, it stands little chance of developing a coherent and effective pronatalist strategy. As one of our grandmother interviewees remarks, "Every policy has to match the times".

Acknowledgements

The research reported in this paper is part of a larger research programme funded by the Academic Research Fund of the National University of Singapore and the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom [R000223830]. We are grateful to these funding bodies and to the

women who so generously allowed us an insight into their lives. Our thanks are also due to Natalie Yap who helped out at the interviews, translated from Mandarin and transcribed the texts; to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for funding an initial visit to set up the project; and to two anonymous referees for their suggestions.

Endnotes

1. Singapore 21, launched in 1997, "seeks to articulate a vision that Singaporeans can reach out for together" (http://www,singapore21.org.sg) and focuses on "strengthening the "heartware" of the people, on intangibles like social cohesion, political stability and the collective will, values and attitudes of Singaporeans" (http://www.gov.sg).

2. In addition to the gender equality apparent in policies related to housing and elder care, the Singapore Government was careful, during the antinatalist years, to emphasize the equal value of daughters. For example, a prominent poster used during the "stop at two" campaign represented the ideal Singaporean family as a mother, father and two daughters.

3. The interviews selected for this analysis are part of a larger ongoing project examining intergenerational relationships, fertility and the family in Singapore that includes interviews with non-graduate women, with husbands and with mothers-in-law. We have chosen to concentrate on the majority Chinese population since the other main ethnic groups (the Malays and the Indians), with their differing cultural heritages, are likely to interpret "tradition" differently and hence demand a separate study.

4. The sample of 16 women is clearly too small to afford useful generalizations which could be applied to the whole population and is, in any event, highly selective with its focus on married female graduates. Nevertheless, it does provide an insight into the process of normative change by highlighting the substantial individual variation and ambiguity within it. The larger project, of which the 16 interviews considered here are only a part, will seek to extend that insight.

5. All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

References

Allan, G., S. Hawker and G. Crow (2001). "Family diversity and change in Britain and Western Europe", *Journal of Family Issues* 22(7):819.

AWARE *(1996). The Ties that Bind: In Search of the Modern Singapore* (Singapore, AWARE).

Business Times, The (1999). "Singapore's baby blues", 21 October.

Chen, P.S.J., E.C.Y. Kuo and B.J. Chung (1982). *The Dilemmnof Parenthood: A Study of the Value of Children in Singapore* (Singapore, Maruzen).

Crop, E. *(2000). Endangered Daughters: Discrimination and Development in Asia* (London, Routledge).

Davidson, G. (1999). "The gender inequalities in Singapore", in T. Femsten (ed.), *Gender, Planning and Human Rights* (London, Routledge). pp. 74-89.

Drakakis-Smith, D., E.F. Graham, P. Teo and G.L. Ooi (1993). "Singapore: reversing the demographic transition to meet labour needs", *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 109: 152-163.

Goldberg, S. (1987). "Mixed messages: public policy and women in Singapore", *Commentary* 7(2/3), December 1987, 25-37.

Graham, E. (1995). "Singapore in the 1990s: can population policies reverse the demographic transition?", *Applied Geography* 15(3):219-232.

Heng, G. and J. Devan (1995). "State fatherhood: the politics of nationalism, sexuality and race in Singapore", in A. Ong and M.G. Peletz (eds.), *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia* (Berkeley, University of California Press), pp. 195-205.

Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger (eds.) (1983). The *Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Jose, J. and C. Doran (1997). "Marriage and marginalisation in Singaporean politics", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 27(4):475-489.

Kau, K., S.J. Tan and J. Wirtz (1998). *Seven Faces of Singaporeans: Their Values, Aspirations and Lifestyles* (Singapore, Prentice Hall).

Koh, E.M.L. and J. Tan (2000). "Favouritism and the changing value of children: a note on the state Chinese middle class in Singapore", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 31(4):519-528.

Kong, L. and J. Chan (2000). "Patriarchy and pragmatism: ideological contradictions in state policies", *Asian Studies Review* 24(40):501-531.

Kuo, E.C.Y. (1987). "Confucianism and the Chinese family in Singapore: continuities and changes", *Sociology Working Paper,* 83, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. (Cited in Quah, S.R. (1990). "The family as an asset, an international perspective on marriage, parenthood and social policy" (Singapore, Times Academic Press).

Ogbum, W.F. (1964). "Why the family is changing", in W.F. Ogbum, *On Cultural and Social* Change (Chicago, Chicago University Press).

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible Citizenship: the Cultural Logics of Transnationality.* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press).

Phua, L. and B. Yeoh (2002). "Nine months: women's agency and the pregnant body in Singapore", in B. Yeoh, P. Teo and S. Huang (eds.) *Gender Politics in the Asia-Pacific Region* (London, Routledge), pp. 17-40.

PuruShatom, N. (1992). "Women and knowledge/power: notes on the Singaporean Dilemma", in K.C. Ban, A. Pakir and C.K. Tong (eds.), *Imagining Singapore* (Singapore, Times Academic Press), pp. 320-361.

Pyle, J.L. (1997). "Women, the family and economic restructuring: the Singapore model?", *Review of Social Economics* 55x215-223.

Quah, S.R. (1990). "The social significance of marriage and parenthood in Singapore: policy and trends", in S.R. Quah, *The Family as an Asset, An International Perspective on Marriage, Parenthood and Social Policy* (Singapore, Times Academic Press), pp. 247-289.

Rajakru, D. (1996). "The state, family and industrial development: the Singapore case", *Journal of Contemporary Asia 26(1):3-25.*

Saavala, M. (2001). "Fertility and familial power relations: procreation in South India", *Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series,* No. 87 (Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press).

Salaff, J.W. (2002). "Balanced relations or patriarchy? Daughters and sons in the modem Chinese family", paper delivered at *Conference on Families in the Global Age: New Challenges Facing Japan and Southeast Asia,* Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore, 4-6 October 2000 (revised version).

Sardon, J.P. (2000). "Recent changes in the demographic situation of the developed countries", *Population 55(4-5):729-764.*

Singapore Census of Population (2000). "Advance data release No. 8, marriage and fertility" (Singapore Department of Statistics).

_____ (2000). "Demographic Characteristics, Statistical Release l" (Singapore Department of Statistics).

Soin, K. (1996) "National policies: their impact on women and the family", in *The Ties that Bind: In Search of the Modem Singapore* (Singapore, AWARE), pp.190-208.

Straits Times, The (1994). "Fewer kids of graduate mums could lower society's IQ levels", 3 September.

_____ (1999). "Mother of all ironies", 19 June.

_____ (2001). "Bearing a burden too heavy", 24 April.

Teo, P. and B. Yeoh (1999). "Interweaving the public and the private: women's responses to population shifts in Singapore", *International Journal of Population Geography* 5:79-96.

Time International (2001). "All in the family . . or not: tradition is in retreat across Europe, where new and varied family structures are changing the way we live", 58(11):54-60.

Toren, C. (1988). "Making the present, revealing the past: the mutability and continuity of tradition as process", *Man,* New Series, 23(4):696-717.

Vasil, R (1995). "Management of ethnicity: since 1990", in R. Vasil, *Asianising Singapore: the PAP's Management of* Ethnicity (Singapore, Heinemann Asia), pp.99-157.

Wee, K.W. (1989) Speech by President Wee Kim Wee at the Opening of the sixth session of Parliament, 9 January 1989.