

FERTILITY AND CHILDCARE IN EAST ASIA

**GENDER DYNAMICS AND INTERGENERATIONAL
SUPPORT**

Edited by
Xiaogang Wu, Muzhi Zhou and Man-Yee Kan



Fertility and Childcare in East Asia

This textbook explores recent research on the topics of gender inequalities, intergenerational support, and family in select East Asian societies, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan.

East Asian societies have been undergoing rapid economic development over the last three decades, whether gender (couple) relations and families in East Asian societies have also been undergoing transformations remain less clear. The chapters in this book uncover dynamic and evolving couple and intergenerational relationships within families in East Asia, together with the persistent impact on time use, housework, and childcare. They provide a rich source for understanding gender dynamics, intergenerational relations, and childbearing and rearing in East Asia, at a time when it is expected that families and gender relations in East Asia will continue to evolve with characteristics of both modern gender egalitarian values and traditional family obligations.

A rare and valuable resource, this textbook will be a key resource for researchers, scholars, and practitioners of Sociology, China Studies and East Asian Comparative Studies who wish to study gender and family relations in the region with a shared Confucian culture. The chapters in this volume were originally published in *Chinese Sociological Review*.

Xiaogang Wu is the Yufeng Global Professor of Social Science, the Professor of Sociology at New York University and NYU Shanghai, and the Founding Director of Center for Applied Social and Economic Research (CASER) at NYU Shanghai, China. Wu is a Leading Scholar in research on Chinese inequality and social stratification. He has published over 70 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and he has been serving as the Chief Editor of *the Chinese Sociological Review* since 2011, the Associate Editor (Social Stratification) of *Sociology Compass* (2023–2025), and a Global Scholar at Princeton University, USA (2020–2024).

Muzhi Zhou is an Assistant Professor at the Urban Governance and Design Thrust of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Guangzhou, China. Her research focuses on the role of marriage and parenthood in shaping people's attitudes, income, and time use, with a particular emphasis on cross-country comparisons. Additionally, she explores the intersection between the digital world and the physical world, examining how digital technology affects and is affected by our daily lives.

Man-Yee Kan is Professor of Sociology at the University of Oxford, UK. Her research interests include gender inequalities in the family and the labor market, time use research, ethnicity, and migration. She has been awarded a European Research Council Consolidator Grant (2018–2026) for the project GenTime, which investigates gender inequalities in time use in East Asian and Western societies. Her more recent research focuses on the migration of Hong Kong people.

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Gender Dynamics and Intergenerational Support

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Xiaogang Wu, Muzhi Zhou and Man-Yee Kan

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Notes on Contributors

Yung-Han Chang, Department of Healthcare Management, University of Kang Ning, Tainan, Taiwan.

Mengni Chen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Guangye He, Nanjing University, China.

Shu Hu, School of Humanities & Behavioural Sciences, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore.

Yongai Jin, Center for Population and Development Studies, Renmin University of China, Beijing, China.

Man-Yee Kan, University of Oxford, UK.

Yue Qian, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Leah Ruppner, University of Melbourne, Australia.

Jolene Tan, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

Xiao Tan, University of Melbourne, Australia

Meijiao Wang, Peking University, Beijing, China.

Xiaogang Wu, Center for Applied Social and Economic Research, NYU Shanghai, China.

Yu Xie, Center on Contemporary China, Princeton University, USA.

Hua Ye, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China.

Wei-Jun Jean Yeung, Sociology Department, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

Shohei Yoda, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Tokyo, Japan.

Jia Yu, Center for Social Research, Peking University, Beijing, China.

Muzhi Zhou, Urban Governance and Design Thrust, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Guangzhou, China.



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Introduction

Xiaogang Wu, Muzhi Zhou and Man-Yee Kan

East Asian societies have experienced rapid economic development over the past half a century, leading to transformations in gender relations and families. While public attitudes support women's participation in the labor market, traditional family obligations and gender expectations persist, largely due to Confucian culture and low public spending on family benefits (Gauthier 2016, Raymo et al. 2015). These factors, coupled with an aging population, pose challenges for fertility outcomes and women's participation in the labor force.

Gender gaps in paid and unpaid work remain prevalent in East Asian societies, as shown by time use research (Kan et al. 2021, 2022). This perpetuates gender inequalities and contributes to an aging population and low fertility rates. Gendered values and behaviors learned in childhood can also lead to gender segregation in education and occupations, which reinforces the gender pay gap (He and Zhou 2018). Additionally, the division of labor has implications for health and well-being, with studies showing that women's labor market participation improves their self-reported health (Chen 2018, Wu, Ye and He, in this volume, Zhou 2017). However, traditional gender expectations still prevail, leading to a decrease in women's subjective well-being when they earn more than their husbands (Chen 2018). This phenomenon may be linked to lower well-being among those with traditional gender attitudes than those with gender egalitarian beliefs (Zhang and Liu 2022).

China, in particular, has followed a unique path in gender relations and families, experiencing a decline in women's labor force participation rate from 72% in the 1990s to 62% in the 2020s (Ji et al. 2017, Ji and Wu 2018, National Bureau of Statistics of China 2022). The persistence of gender inequalities in the division of labor can exacerbate the problems associated with the aging population and low fertility rates in East Asian societies. Multigenerational or intergenerational families, where people of different generations live together, play an important role in supporting and caring for family members. Even when older parents and their adult children live separately, they often maintain close ties. Recent research has shown that married women's domestic and paid work time depends on whether they reside with older parents and whether old relatives have caring needs (Ji and

Wu 2018, Kan and Zhou 2022). Moreover, since the economic reform, the marketization of public services has led many women, especially those with young children, to exit the labor market (He and Wu 2017). Today, Chinese families embody a fusion of modern and traditional values (Xu, Li and Yu 2014).

In this volume, we have compiled the latest publications from the *Chinese Sociological Review* to offer new evidence and enhance theoretical knowledge on changing gender inequalities in both the public and private spheres within East Asia in general and Chinese society in particular. We feature a series of articles that explore gender and family issues in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. Zhou, Kan, and He (in this volume) and Chen and Zhou (in this volume) examine how living with older parents impacts the time use of married couples in mainland China and Hong Kong, respectively. Chang (in this volume) examines the household composition when there is a very young child at home in Taiwan. Another article about Taiwan examines whether a more gender equal division of labor can promote fertility (Tan, in this volume). Yoda (in this volume) investigates the case of Japan. He asks whether living with elderly parents has any effect on fertility. The remaining articles in the collection focus on examining decision-making regarding fertility (Hu and Yeung, in this volume, Qian and Jin, in this volume), gendered patterns of children's household chores (Kan and He, in this volume, Tan, Ruppner and Wang, in this volume), the relationship between the number of children and women's well-being (Wu, Ye and He, in this volume), and whether women with more economic power perform more domestic chores than predicted by the resource bargaining perspective in order to display their gender identities (Yu and Xie, in this volume).

This edited volume pays special attention to the persistent significance of family obligations and intergenerational support in shaping gender inequality in East Asian societies. Studies show that living with elderly parents can alleviate domestic burdens and promote gender equality in time use for married couples. However, traditional gender expectations still underlie intergenerational exchange, with women being the primary care providers. The impact of patriarchal Confucianism and neoliberalism on the lives of women in post-reform China is evident. Findings from these studies highlight the intersection of women's work and family life, where women's career success can impact their well-being, marital power, and fertility decisions. Family background and class also play a role in shaping women's experiences. Many of the above studies reveal interesting patterns in gender relationship and family forms that differ from findings in Western societies (Yu and Xie, in this volume). Through this research, we hope to enrich our understanding of the complexities and dynamics of gender relations and families in East Asian societies.

As more women gain decision-making power through education and labor market income, we can anticipate ongoing transformations in families and gender relations in East Asia. Gender and family practices may vary across social identities and contexts; therefore, more research is needed to

comprehend the intersection of gender and other dimensions of social inequality. In conclusion, this edited volume on new gender dynamics in post-reform China and East Asia mirrors the fundamental social changes and the insights of generations of sociologists. By contributing to the research fields of gender and family, this volume aims to incorporate these topics into comparative social research, with China as a focal point, paving the way for further exploration and understanding of these critical issues.

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Education and Childrearing Decision-Making in East Asia

Shu Hu and Wei-Jun Jean Yeung

Introduction

In many countries across the globe, women have increased their involvement in paid work and become equally or even more educated than men. Despite these trends, women are still held primarily responsible for doing housework and taking care of children and the elderly (Fuwa and Cohen 2007). This gendered division of household labor is closely linked to the persisting normative ideas about gender roles and the gender gaps in economic and political power (Hochschild 1989). Previous research has mostly focused on the physical participation in household chores and care by husbands and wives (Kan and He 2018). We know relatively less about how couples divide the mental and managerial responsibilities of family maintenance. Existing studies on decision-making have treated childrearing decisions in the same way as budget management, major purchases, or weekend planning, and have not paid sufficient attention to the role of human capital in childrearing decision-making (Treas and Tai 2012; Xu and Lai 2002). The pattern of childrearing decision-making, embedded in the notions of motherhood and fatherhood, deserves further investigation because of the gendered implications of parenthood on labor force outcomes, family formation, and marital and parent-child relationships (Mu and Xie 2016).

Facilitated by the enforcement of compulsory schooling and child labor laws, the development of scientific childrearing techniques, and the promotion of children's rights, the modern Western view of childhood has been widely accepted in the twentieth century. Under this view, children are economically dependent and emotionally fragile, and their physical, psychological, and intellectual development requires consistent family nurture and investment (Fass 2013). This, in turn, underscores the importance of knowledge and expert guidance to parenting practices and childrearing decision-making.

This paper investigates the patterns, determinants, and trends of childrearing decision-making among couples in Japan, Taiwan, and urban China, using data from the 2006 East Asia Social Survey and the 2012 International Social Survey Program. These East Asian societies share a common Confucian patriarchal heritage, which emphasizes clear hierarchical relationships between men and women, and between the senior and junior in terms of age and generation (Rozman 1991). Despite their shared cultural traditions, Japan, Taiwan, and China have taken different developmental trajectories, which have generated uneven progress in terms of equality between men and women in the private and public spheres within and across societies (Brinton 2001; Brinton, Lee, and Parish 1995; Yu 2009). Amid the process of condensed modernity, following are our main research questions: How do the patterns of childrearing decision-making between the husband and wife differ in China, Taiwan, and Japan in recent times? How does education shape the gender division of childrearing decision-making in China, Taiwan, and Japan? These East Asian societies offer a valuable opportunity for comparative work that can provide insights into the key contextual factors that shape couples' childrearing behavior.

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, by examining the effect of relative education between fathers and mothers on childrearing decision-making, it enables us to expand the relative resources theory and highlight the increasingly important role of human capital in parenting behaviors and responsibilities. Second, by comparing the East Asian societies sharing a common cultural heritage, it helps us gain a better understanding of how labor market structure, state policy, and the notions of parenthood influence childrearing decision-making.

Theoretical Considerations

There are three major theoretical perspectives in the literature on division of household labor: the time availability theory, the gender ideology theory, and the relative resources theory. These perspectives have all made assumptions about housework, which do not necessarily apply to childrearing decision-making. This is corroborated by the empirical finding that time availability, relative income, and gender display are not as strong predictors of care work as of housework (Kan and He 2018). As we discuss below, childrearing decision-making is different from housework in various significant ways. These differences call for greater attention to the role of parental education rather than time availability or gender ideology in explaining childrearing decisions and practices.

The time availability theory argues that individuals who spend more time on paid work have less time available to spend on household labor (Shelton 1992). Although this perspective is well supported in the housework

literature (Coltrane 2000; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010), it fails to account for the rise in childcare investments (Claudia and Leah 2018; Sullivan 2013). Unlike the overall trend of declining time in housework, the amount of time spent by parents on childcare has risen dramatically in the past few decades (Bianchi et al. 2012). Moreover, the increase is greater among college-educated parents than among less educated parents (Guryan, Hurst, and Kearney 2008; Ramey and Ramey 2010). These patterns are inconsistent with the time availability theory, given that higher-educated parents also spend more time working outside the home. How a couple's time constraints may affect their childrearing decision-making behavior is unclear.

The gender ideology theory posits that the performance of household chores will be a reflection of the gender ideologies of both spouses (Greenstein 1996). Individuals holding an egalitarian gender ideology are less likely to subscribe to the traditional gender roles of male breadwinner and female homemaker. Researchers have generally found that egalitarian gender attitudes reduce housework time for wives and increase housework time for husbands, promoting a more equal division of housework (Coltrane 2000; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). However, the relationship between gender ideology and the pattern of childrearing decision-making is likely to differ. Some empirical studies have shown that egalitarian gender attitudes are associated with shared decision-making among couples rather than solo decision-making by one or the other partner (Treas and Tai 2012; Xu and Lai 2002).

Relative resources theory predicts that the partner who contributes relatively more resources to the marriage will tilt the balance of power toward himself or herself and reduce his or her share of housework (Blood and Wolfe 1960; Brines 1993). Though researchers have debated whether the relationship between earning differentials among partners and housework division is linear or curvilinear, or even whether relative earnings matter once absolute earnings are accounted for (Coltrane 2000; Cunningham 2007; Gupta 2007; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010), the message is clear: economic resources can be used to buy one's way out of housework. The underlying assumption is that household chores are perceived by couples as tedious, repetitive, isolated, and undesirable (Brines 1993). Differing from housework, however, childcare is perceived as more rewarding and enjoyable, in particular by men (Sullivan 2013). It may be that mothers and fathers will leverage their resources for the purpose of increasing rather than reducing their involvement in childrearing.

Moreover, unlike household chores, childrearing decision-making has become more challenging due to the development of science and technology and the growing competition in the education system and labor market. In our research, we extend the focus of relative resources theory to childrearing decision-making and draw inspirations from the literature on the educational

dimension of childrearing. In expanding relative resources theory, we pay attention to education as intangible resources, entailing skills and knowledge that are increasingly important to childrearing in contemporary societies. We argue that the relative education of parents is particularly important in influencing decisions on children's upbringing.

In the era of economic globalization and technological advancement, educational and occupational markets become increasingly competitive. Many parents believe that educational attainment as well as the accumulation of credentials, skills, and experiences are the key to their children's success in the social mobility contest. Some researchers have noted the role of college preparation as a motive for increased time in childcare by parents (Ramey and Ramey 2010). Driven by their ontological insecurity and anxieties about their children's future, growing segments of middle-class parents are taking a proactive interventionist approach toward childrearing (Katz 2008). In addition to the traditional nurturing roles, "good" parents are now also responsible for supporting and coaching children in their learning, engaging with educational agents, institutions, and processes to monitor and improve children's academic performance, scheduling private tuitions, enrichment classes, and other extracurricular activities for children.

The disposition and capacity of parents to engage in "parental involution" (Katz 2008) or "concerted cultivation" (Lareau 2003) and the effectiveness of such engagement vary across the socioeconomic spectrum. Parents invest in their children's education and development with different stocks of economic, social, and cultural capital (Becker and Tomes 1986; Bourdieu 1984; Coleman 1988; Lareau 2000; Lareau 2003). Working-class and poor parents tend to take a more *laissez-faire* approach to childrearing and allow children to grow and develop more spontaneously. Middle-class parents with more education and higher occupational status are better equipped with skills, knowledge, resources, and even a sense of entitlement to help their children navigate the complex educational system and achieve their potential (Lareau 2000, 2003). By micro-managing children's developmental and educational careers, these parents optimize their children's educational advantages and life opportunities (Barrett DeWiele and Edgerton 2016; Brown 1990). Through the intergenerational transmission of family advantages or disadvantages, social stratification is maintained.

The educational dimension of childrearing is twofold: parents increasingly emphasize the educational development of their children; parenting beliefs and practices differ across educational levels. Given the growing importance of education for one's economic prospects and quality of life, the rise of a child-centered culture, and the small number of children couples have in modern societies, there has been a significant rise in expectations of parenting and parents. This is evident in the ever-expanding market for knowledge, guidance, and expert advice on how to be a good or perfect parent to

one's child and to ensure the fullest development of the child's potential. A better-educated parent may feel more confident and qualified to make childrearing decisions and may also command more respect and trust from the other parent while doing so. Based on data from the 1994–1995 Taiwan Social Change Survey, Xu and Lai (2002) found that as the level of the wives' education increases, their power in making solo or joint decisions in career choice, children's education, family expenses, and estate purchase grows. Moreover, the greater the educational gaps between husbands and wives, the less likely is the possibility of egalitarian decisions (Xu and Lai 2002).

However, childrearing is not neutral, but is rooted in gender norms and notions of fatherhood and motherhood. As men and women are socialized into distinct sex categories, they tend to perform gender conforming to the social expectations of their respective sex category (West and Zimmerman 1987). How parents make decisions about raising their children is closely related to the notions of fatherhood and motherhood, which may vary across different sociocultural contexts. If the father and the mother are perceived to have equally important involvement in childrearing, they may be expected to make decisions about their children together. If, on the other hand, the cultural belief about a special relationship between mothers and children is strong, we may observe more sole decision-making by the mother. Moreover, the relative education and gender beliefs of the father and the mother are shaped by contextual factors such as educational opportunities, female employment levels, gender pay gaps, and norms about childrearing. These societal contexts may also moderate the association between relative education levels of the couple and their childrearing decision-making. In contexts where there is a lower level of role differentiation between women and men, relative education is more likely to shape childrearing decision-making. In contrast, when societal norms about women and men's roles are rigid, there is limited space for them to use their skills and knowledge to negotiate how to decide on childrearing matters.

We aim to compare how the relative education of the parents shapes childrearing decision-making behavior in three societies. Situating the empirical work of this paper in urban China, Taiwan, and Japan, we investigate how the Confucian family tradition varies across these contexts and yields connecting yet subtly different gender dynamics regarding conjugal relationships, parenting and childrearing expectations and practices. Due to the urban–rural demarcation in China (Chan and Zhang 1999; Wu and Treiman 2004), only urban China has been included in this comparative study.

Varying Social Contexts within East Asia

The three East Asian societies share a common Confucian family tradition, which emphasizes gender hierarchy and gendered roles and favors collectivist

goals over individual autonomy (Slote and De Vos 1998). Historically, women's roles were restricted within the domestic sphere (housework and care work), and men enjoyed greater access to educational, economic, and political opportunities. However, the economic, political, and demographic transformations East Asian societies have undergone since the mid-twentieth century have drastically changed the social conditions in which women and men are embedded. Our discussion of societal contexts focuses on the gender roles in relation to paid and unpaid work, and the social norms about fatherhood and motherhood.

Gender Roles: Labor Force Participation and Division of Housework

In terms of economic participation and opportunity, China appears to have achieved a higher level of gender equality than Taiwan or Japan. Among the three, China has the highest female labor force participation rates and the smallest gender gap in estimated income (see Supplemental Table A1 in the Appendices). This is largely due to the legacy of communist China. As suggested by the famous slogan, "Women hold up half of the sky," popular during the Maoist period (1949 to 1978), the socialist government of China has explicitly advocated gender egalitarianism and promoted women's participation in paid work. Although Japanese women appear to have higher labor force participation rates than Taiwanese women, a significant proportion of them are in part-time employment. Furthermore, an examination of the female labor force participation rates by age reveals that Japanese women tend to drop out from the labor market upon marriage and motherhood and return to paid work only later in life. However, Taiwanese and Chinese women, on the other hand, continue to participate in the labor market across their lifecycle (Brinton 2001; Shen, Zhang, and Yan 2012).

These patterns may be attributed to a number of institutional factors shaping the various family demands on women's time (Brinton, Lee, and Parish 1995; Yu 2001, 2009). The ratio of wage level to household expenditure is higher in Japan than in Taiwan and China, which is why the demand for wives' earnings in addition to husbands' provision is smaller in Japan than in Taiwan and China (Yu 2001). The smaller gender gap in payment and less differential treatment between genders in career development in Taiwan and China provide greater incentives for women in these societies to pursue paid work, as compared to their counterparts in Japan (Chang and England 2011). Tax policies in Japan may also discourage married women's economic participation (Akabayashi 2006; Boling 2007). More dispersed industrialization and more balanced urbanization in Taiwan entail less time spent on commuting to work, as compared to working in major metropolitan areas like Tokyo, which requires long commuting time (Choe, Bumpass, and Noriko

2004). Thus, exceptionally long overwork time in Japan makes it difficult for married women with young children to maintain regular employment (Choe, Bumpass, and Noriko 2004; Lee 2004; Tompkins 2011). Relative to Japan, a greater prevalence of small-sized enterprises and larger size of the public sector in Taiwan translate into more flexible and family-friendly schedules and work environments for married women (Yu 2001, 2009).

Consistent with China's socialist legacy of having a very high female labor force participation rate, the gender gap in division of housework is likely to be smaller in urban China than in Taiwan or Japan. Previous studies using the 2006 family module of the East Asian Social Survey has found that Chinese and Taiwanese couples had more egalitarian divisions of housework than Japanese couples (Kan and Hertog 2017; Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013; Qian and Sayer 2016). Japanese married women's share of routine housework (preparing evening meals, doing laundry, and cleaning the house) was nearly 93 percent, higher than the share of Taiwanese women (81 percent) and urban Chinese women (77 percent) (Qian and Sayer 2016).

The societal differences in female labor force participation and division of housework suggest that urban China has less rigid gender roles, trailed by Taiwan and Japan. Extending the logic of gendered division of work from housework to childrearing responsibilities, we hypothesize that a more shared division of childrearing decision-making will be expected in China than in Taiwan or Japan, and the level of fathers' involvement in childrearing decision-making will be higher in China than in Taiwan or Japan. In general, we expect to observe a "co-pilot" model of childrearing decision-making in urban China where both fathers and mothers are involved, and a "separate sphere" model in Japan where fathers are least involved, with Taiwan in between.

Gender Roles: Motherhood and Fatherhood

Another dimension of gender roles relates to the social norms about the roles of mothers and fathers in childrearing. Confucianism places a high value on the educational attainment of children, which is perceived as crucial for maintaining or improving the collective socioeconomic status of the family. Within East Asia, however, the roles of fathers and mothers in caring for children and promoting children's education and development differ. We argue that how distinct fatherhood and motherhood are perceived to be will determine the extent to which the relative education of parents shapes the childrearing decision-making pattern.

During the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century, the ideal of educated motherhood, *rhosai kenbo* ("good wife, wise mother"), emerged as a result of Japanese efforts in transforming the feudal family, exalting the child and the childrearer in the family, and the latter's role in raising future

patriotic citizens, and building a modern nation-state (Jones 2010). The modern version of the “wise mother” notion was strengthened during the period of rapid economic growth in the late 1960s (Hirao 2001). It emphasizes the special, inseparable bond between mothers and children, and suggests that mothers are the best teachers for young children (Hirao 2001). Intensive mothering required for the development and success of children in the competitive education system makes it difficult for mothers to combine paid employment and family life.

On the other hand, the long hours spent by Japanese men on their work virtually prevent them from more active fatherhood. Japanese fathers are not only much less involved in childrearing than mothers, but also rarely exhibit a strong desire and determination to become more fully engaged as fathers (Holloway and Nagase 2014). Since 2010, the Japanese government has launched a campaign, the *Ikumen* (“Iku” means childrearing) project, to encourage a departure from the social norm of workaholic men and full-time mothers and advocate a more active role of Japanese men in parenting. The effect of this campaign on father’s involvement in childrearing remains to be seen.

In contrast, providing for the family and children is inherent in the role of mothers in China and Taiwan, where help from grandparents for childcare is common (Yu 2001, 2009). Also, there are fewer barriers to fathers’ involvement in children’s lives in China and Taiwan. Traditionally, one of the major responsibilities of a Chinese father is to be a teacher to his children, especially sons (Hsiung 2005). Fathers are held responsible if the children behave improperly. In accordance with the saying, “Strict father, kind mother,” Chinese fathers are expected to take charge of educating and disciplining their children, while mothers provide more emotional and physical care.

The role of the father in childrearing in urban China is likely to have been intensified by the “One Child Policy” implemented in 1979. The family planning policies in China were unprecedented and forcefully implemented; whereas Taiwanese and Japanese couples have always been allowed to decide how many children to have. Although the Chinese government ended the One Child Policy and started allowing two children for all couples in 2015, this cannot be factored into this paper, which is based on data between 2006 and 2012. Researchers have noted that many urban Chinese families have only one child in whom parents tend to invest all resources, and fathers are highly involved in many aspects of the lives of their only children (Abbott, Zheng Fu, and Meredith 1992; Fong 2002; Xu and Yeung 2013).

Studies based on in-depth interviews and popular publications suggest that the standards for childrearing are higher and the demands for intensive motherhood are stronger in Japan than in China and Taiwan (Hirao 2001; Yu 2001). A small survey of Chinese and Japanese fathers reveals that while Chinese fathers perceived educating their children to be very important,

Japanese fathers considered financially supporting children to be imperative (Ito, Satomi, and Nianli 2017). Using data from the SinoJapanese Working Women's Family Life Survey conducted in 1987, Stockman, Bonney, and Sheng (1995) found that joint decisions are more common in China than they are in Japan, and that the incidence of women alone making decisions about children's education is greater in Japan than it is in China. In a study based on data from the Taiwan Panel Study of Family Dynamics (PSFD) and the first China PSFD Survey conducted in 2004 in Southeast China, Chu and Yu (2010) found that disciplining children seems to be the responsibility of the mother in Taiwan, but that of the father in China. Albeit, this is putting aside the fact that most of the couples claim to jointly discipline children in both Southeast China and Taiwan.

These existing studies are based on nonrepresentative samples and none of them has systematically examined the determinants of childrearing decision-making in all the three societies. This study, however, shows that Chinese fathers can be expected to be the most involved in decision-making about bringing up children, followed by Taiwanese fathers, with Japanese fathers being the least involved. We hypothesize that the higher a partner's educational attainment, the greater say he or she has in childrearing decision-making in a context where fatherhood and motherhood are perceived to be more symmetrical. On the contrary, in a context where fatherhood and motherhood are specialized and different, the relative education of parents will matter much less in influencing how fathers and mothers make childrearing decisions. Therefore, we hypothesize that the relative education of the parents plays a larger role in shaping childrearing decision-making in China and Taiwan than in Japan.

Data and Methods

We use the Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese data from the 2006 Module on Families of the East Asian Social Survey (EASS), and the 2012 Module on Family and Changing Gender Roles of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). The topical modules of EASS and ISSP with the same content and format are integrated into a preexisting general social survey framework of each participating society, such as the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS), and the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS).

Both the 2006 EASS and 2012 ISSP include information on the relative roles of the respondents and their spouses in decision-making about childrearing, employment status and work hours, and the gender role attitude, and social and demographic characteristics of the respondents. We pooled both the surveys together. To study the pattern of childrearing decision-making between husbands and wives, we limited the sample to respondents

who were married at the time of the survey, since out-of-marriage childbearing is quite rare in East Asian societies (Raymo, Park, and Xie 2015). We further limited our sample to those wherein both spouses were in their prime working ages (between 22 and 59 years), and at least one spouse was in paid work. Additionally, we excluded respondents living in rural areas from the Chinese sample, leaving a sample of 6,123 observations. We did this for the same reasons specified by Qian and Sayer (2016): first, the information on weekly work hours is not available for a majority of the rural respondents of the Chinese sample; second, urban China is more comparable to Taiwan and Japan, which are highly industrialized and urbanized societies.

Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the relative role of the husband and wife in decision-making about childrearing. The EASS 2006 asked respondents who makes decisions on matters pertaining to the children's discipline and education. The ISSP 2012 asked respondents who makes decision about how to raise kids. The responses were recoded to "mostly mother," "mostly father," "shared," and "other" (see Table A2 in the Appendices). In both the EASS 2006 and ISSP 2012, less than 1 percent of the respondents indicated "other family members" or "someone else." Hence, we dropped the "other" category from the analyses, confident that it would not change the results in any significant way. In multivariate analyses, we used "shared" as the reference category.

Independent Variables

The main variable of interest is education. We recoded educational attainment into three categories: lower secondary or below, upper or post-secondary, and tertiary or above. We captured the relative education between the respondent and the spouse using three dummy variables: lower than spouse, the same, and higher than spouse.

Because we conceptualize education as embodied skills and knowledge that might facilitate childrearing decision-making, it is necessary to control for gender attitude, work status, and income that are closely associated with educational attainment. The gender role attitude variable reflects the response to the following statement: "A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family" in EASS 2006; or, "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family" in ISSP 2012. The response was measured on a seven-point scale in EASS 2006, and a five-point scale in ISSP 2012, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." We standardized the response within each survey year

and each society, and the standardized score was taken as a measure of the respondents' gender role attitudes toward the traditional division of labor between the two sexes. The higher the score, the more egalitarian the gender role attitude of the respondents is. We control for work status by using the number of hours spent by the respondent and their spouses in paid work every week. Given the lack of information about the spouses' incomes, we used the respondent's share of the total household income to measure the relative income. The CGSS provided actual values of income for both survey years, but the TSCS and JGSS provided actual values only for 2012. Thus, we took the median value of each income category for Japan and Taiwan in 2006 in calculating the ratio of the respondent's own income to the total household income. We then recoded the ratio into three categories: none (or 0 percent), below 50 percent, and 50 percent or above.

To check if there is any temporal change in the pattern of childrearing decision-making, we also included a survey year dummy and the 2006 EASS was used as the reference year. To further account for potential confounders associated with the pattern of childrearing decision-making, we controlled for age, the number of adults and children, and presence of any preschool child in the household, and household income. Age has been included to take into consideration the life course aspect of family life. Spousal interactions and resources involved in decision-making about children's upbringing may vary by the age of the parents and children. We included two continuous variables to measure the total number of coresiding adults and the total number of children under the age of 18, respectively, and a dummy variable to indicate the presence of any preschool child under the age of 6. These family structure variables will help in capturing household complexity and the demand for management and decision-making. For family socioeconomic status, we used the log form of household income.

Analytical Strategy

This comparative study covers three East Asian societies and follows the "small-country-sample approach" discussed by Yu (2015). Since the dependent variable is categorical, we used multinomial logistic regression models to predict how the respondent and the spouse make decisions about children's upbringing in each society. Previous research has shown a gendered pattern of childrearing decision-making in many countries including East Asian societies, and that the effect of education on childrearing decision-making differs by gender (Treas and Tai 2012; Xu and Lai 2002). As a result, we conducted all the analyses separately by gender for each society. To facilitate interpretation of the results of multinomial logistic regressions and comparison of the effect size of microlevel predictors across societies, we estimated and presented the average marginal effects.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the dependent variable and all independent variables by gender and society. We find that more than half the East Asian respondents stated that the father was either sharing the responsibilities with the mother or was mainly responsible for taking decisions on how to bring up children. It is worth noting that as compared with the countries in Europe, Oceania, and Latin America studied by Treas and Tai (2012), where on an average, about three-fourths of the respondents reported shared decision-making, the corresponding proportion of respondents is significantly lower in urban China, Taiwan, and Japan. The phenomenon of sole decision-making by either the mother or the father is relatively more prevalent in East Asian societies. This indicates that the traditional norms emphasizing the mother's role in childrearing and downplaying conjugal companionship and intimacy remain in East Asia due to the patriarchal Confucian heritage.

Within East Asia, Chinese fathers are relatively more involved in sole childrearing decisions, while Japanese fathers are the least involved. About 12 percent of Chinese mothers reported that their husbands did most of the decision-making on childrearing, as compared to corresponding figures of 9.6 percent of the Taiwanese and 3.1 percent of Japanese mothers. Urban Chinese fathers are also more involved in terms of shared decision-making: nearly 57 percent of Chinese mothers reported shared decision-making, compared with 48 percent of Taiwanese mothers and 51 percent of Japanese mothers. Taiwanese and Japanese mothers are much more involved in sole decision-making, as compared to their Chinese counterparts. While 42.8 percent of the Taiwanese and 45.7 percent of the Japanese mothers reported sole decision-making by them, only 31.9 percent of the Chinese mothers did so. These patterns have been confirmed overall by the responses of male respondents. However, men tend to report higher levels of joint decisions and women tend to emphasize their sole responsibility of childrearing decisions. Taken together, these descriptive patterns lend some support to our hypothesis of the Chinese "co-pilot" model with greater prevalence of shared decision-making and highest level of fathers' involvement, and the Japanese "separate sphere" model with lowest level of fathers' involvement.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the childrearing decision-making pattern by the survey year for each society. We find a significant increase in the shared decision-making and a significant decrease in the sole decision-making by the mother in Japan between 2006 and 2012. This increasing trend of joint decision-making in Japan is clear based on the reports from both the female and male samples. In urban China too, the prevalence of shared decision seems to be increasing over time, but not as remarkably so as in Japan. We attribute the rising prevalence of shared decision-making on

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Analytical Sample, by Gender and Society

	Women			Men		
	Urban China	Taiwan	Japan	Urban China	Taiwan	Japan
Childrearing decision-making (%)						
Mostly father	11.5	9.6	3.1	16.7	14.8	4.1
Shared	56.6	47.6	51.2	61.5	52.7	64.5
Mostly mother	31.9	42.8	45.7	21.8	32.5	31.3
Education (%)						
Lower secondary or below	51.3	28.8	3.3	42.6	28.0	7.0
Upper or post-secondary	33.4	52.9	83.1	37.3	52.4	54.9
Tertiary or above	15.3	18.4	13.6	20.1	19.6	38.1
Relative education (%)						
Lower than spouse	30.6	31.9	33.8	16.0	19.3	14.2
Same	52.1	51.2	51.2	46.3	48.6	52.6
Higher than spouse	17.2	17.0	14.9	37.6	32.1	33.2
Gender role attitude	0.00 (1.02)	0.14 (1.02)	0.12 (1.02)	0.01 (0.98)	-0.13 (0.98)	-0.14 (0.99)
Gender role attitude (1–7) (2006)	3.42 (1.37)	3.92 (1.79)	4.36 (1.32)	3.57 (1.27)	3.52 (1.67)	3.86 (1.25)
Gender role attitude (1–5) (2012)	3.02 (1.04)	3.31 (1.10)	3.87 (1.22)	2.94 (1.02)	2.96 (1.10)	3.82 (1.24)
Work hours	37.65 (25.04)	34.48 (24.24)	20.50 (18.03)	47.38 (20.63)	47.97 (17.54)	49.45 (14.68)
Spouse's work hours	44.31 (23.83)	48.75 (18.30)	51.67 (14.28)	29.91 (27.51)	31.28 (23.36)	19.99 (19.11)
Share of household income (%)						
None	16.7	24.7	28.8	2.5	3.7	0.5
Less than half	55.7	54.9	62.6	24.4	22.3	4.9
More than half	27.6	20.4	8.6	73.1	74.1	94.6
Survey year (%)						
2006	45.3	59.4	62.0	37.6	56.2	64.8
2012	54.7	40.6	38.0	62.4	43.8	35.2
Age	40.83 (8.89)	42.06 (7.88)	43.26 (8.12)	42.97 (8.76)	44.60 (8.32)	45.01 (8.98)
Number of adults in the household	2.93 (1.43)	3.50 (1.52)	3.04 (1.19)	2.81 (1.22)	3.65 (1.64)	3.10 (1.23)
Number of children in the household	0.76 (0.70)	1.40 (1.14)	1.31 (1.05)	0.72 (0.66)	1.33 (1.05)	1.26 (1.07)
Presence of children under age 6 (%)	23.4	26.4	25.5	23.7	30.0	32.1
Log of household income	10.37 (1.04)	11.16 (0.90)	15.63 (0.89)	10.48 (0.92)	11.19 (0.81)	15.70 (0.51)
Observations	1,293	643	455	1,260	683	386

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

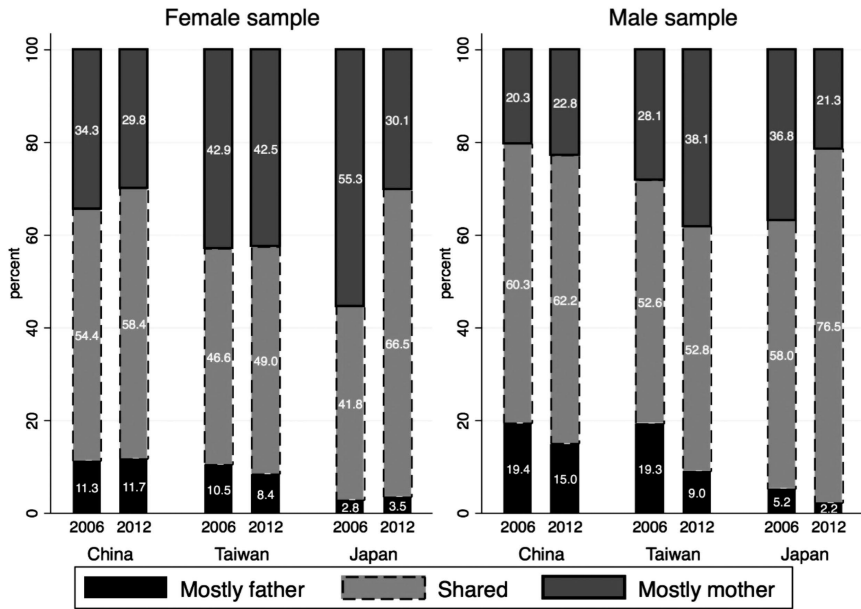


Figure 1. Distribution of childrearing decision-making: Mothers and fathers, 22 to 59 years of age, in urban China, Taiwan, and Japan, 2006 and 2012.

children’s upbringing in Japan to its government’s efforts to encourage Japanese fathers to take a more active role in parenting.

On average, Japanese parents had the highest level of educational attainment, followed by Taiwanese parents, and then Chinese parents (see Table 1). The gender differences in educational attainment are, however, smaller in Taiwan than in urban China and Japan. In respect of the relative education levels of the respondent and the spouse, there seem to be similar patterns across the three societies. There are about half of the couples with the same level of educational attainment and one-third of the couples in which the husband had higher education levels. These patterns suggest that educational homogamy and female educational hypergamy are similarly prevalent in urban China, Taiwan, and Japan.

The patterns of gender role attitude in urban China, Taiwan, and Japan are overall in accordance with the societal differences in educational attainment. Japanese fathers and mothers, being the most educated among the three, also exhibit the most egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles, as compared with their urban Chinese and Taiwanese counterparts. In Taiwan and Japan, mothers are clearly more egalitarian than fathers regarding the gender role attitude, but this egalitarianism has not yet been observed in urban China. Though Japanese parents reported a more egalitarian outlook on gender role than Taiwanese and Chinese parents, they were nonetheless less egalitarian in terms of childrearing decision-making.

Consistent with what we discussed earlier about female labor force participation rates, Chinese mothers spent the longest hours in paid work every week (37.65), followed by their counterparts in Taiwan (34.48), and Japan (20.50), respectively. In all the three societies, fathers spent longer hours in paid work than mothers. The societal differences in the weekly work hours of fathers are smaller, with Japanese fathers spending the longest hours in paid work.

A majority of the East Asian mothers contributed less than half of the household income, while a majority of the East Asian fathers claimed more than half of the household income. However, reflecting the societal differences in female labor force participation rates and gender payment gaps as discussed earlier, Table 1 indicates that while 27.6 percent of the Chinese mothers contributed more than half of the household income, 20.4 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively, of their Taiwanese and Japanese counterparts did so. Relatively fewer (16.7 percent) of the Chinese mothers were not contributing to household income, in comparison with more than 25 percent of the Taiwanese and Japanese mothers, who were not doing so. It is extremely rare (an incidence of less than 1 percent) for a father not to contribute to the household income in Japan, and rare in Taiwan (less than 4 percent) and urban China (less than 3 percent). Hence, in the multivariate analyses on the male sample, we grouped the two categories—“none” and “less than half”—into one.

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results

As mentioned earlier, “shared” decision-making is used as the reference category in the multinomial logistic regression models. To facilitate the interpretation of the regression results, we estimated and presented the average marginal effects of the key variables on the childrearing decision-making pattern based on the multinomial logistic regression models for the female (Table 2) and male (Table 3) samples. The results for each society are presented in three columns, corresponding to the three types (including the reference category) of childrearing decision-making. For each variable, the average marginal effects across the three types of decision-making add up to 0. Not all control variables are shown in the tables and the full results will be available upon request.

Based on the results in Table 2, all else being equal, with an increase in the mother’s educational level, the probability of sole decision by the father will decrease in urban China and Taiwan. The mother’s educational level has no impact on the pattern of childrearing decision-making in Japan. Table 3 shows that overall, the father’s educational attainment has little impact on the couple’s decision on childrearing matters.

Table 2. Average Marginal Effects of Key Variables on Childrearing Decision-Making, Female Sample

	Urban China			Taiwan			Japan		
	Mostly father	shared	Mostly mother	Mostly father	shared	Mostly mother	Mostly father	Shared	Mostly mother
Education (Ref.=lower secondary or below)									
Upper or post-secondary	-0.042* (0.023)	0.006 (0.034)	0.036 (0.032)	-0.000 (0.032)	-0.021 (0.051)	0.022 (0.051)	-0.064 (0.068)	-0.078 (0.128)	0.141 (0.117)
Tertiary or above	-0.092*** (0.024)	0.044 (0.048)	0.049 (0.046)	-0.064* (0.036)	0.090 (0.073)	-0.026 (0.072)	-0.052 (0.075)	-0.073 (0.147)	0.125 (0.136)
Relative education (Ref.=same)									
Lower than spouse	0.034 (0.021)	0.014 (0.033)	-0.048 (0.030)	0.023 (0.029)	0.064 (0.048)	-0.087* (0.047)	-0.006 (0.016)	0.015 (0.054)	-0.009 (0.053)
Higher than spouse	0.005 (0.026)	-0.079** (0.040)	0.074* (0.039)	-0.031 (0.029)	-0.101* (0.054)	0.132** (0.055)	0.042 (0.035)	-0.084 (0.066)	0.042 (0.067)
Gender role attitude	-0.006 (0.009)	0.030** (0.014)	-0.025* (0.013)	-0.008 (0.012)	0.007 (0.021)	0.002 (0.020)	-0.007 (0.009)	0.001 (0.023)	0.007 (0.023)
Work hours	0.001* (0.000)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)
Spouse's work hours	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)	-0.001* (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003** (0.002)
Share of household income (Ref.=0%)									
Less than half	-0.029 (0.030)	-0.049 (0.042)	0.078** (0.037)	-0.047 (0.043)	0.071 (0.059)	-0.023 (0.060)	-0.016 (0.028)	-0.118* (0.064)	0.134** (0.061)
More than half	-0.043 (0.033)	-0.028 (0.047)	0.071* (0.042)	-0.049 (0.049)	0.085 (0.071)	-0.036 (0.071)	0.010 (0.042)	-0.140 (0.107)	0.130 (0.105)
Survey Year 2012 (Ref.=2006)	0.036 (0.023)	0.027 (0.036)	-0.064* (0.033)	-0.008 (0.024)	0.028 (0.041)	-0.020 (0.041)	0.008 (0.018)	0.277*** (0.047)	-0.285*** (0.046)
Observations			1,293			643			455

Note: Base category of dependent variable is “Shared.” Other controls: respondent’s age, log of household income, the number of adults and children in the household, and presence of any child below age 6 in the household.
 Standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 3. Average Marginal Effects of Key Variables on Childrearing Decision-Making, Male Sample

	Urban China			Taiwan			Japan		
	Mostly father	shared	Mostly mother	Mostly father	shared	Mostly mother	Mostly father	shared	Mostly mother
Education (Ref.=lower secondary or below)									
Upper or post-secondary	-0.027 (0.026)	0.004 (0.034)	0.023 (0.029)	0.004 (0.037)	0.003 (0.053)	-0.007 (0.048)	-0.095 (0.119)	0.075 (0.121)	0.021 (0.107)
Tertiary or above	-0.019 (0.035)	0.070 (0.044)	-0.051 (0.035)	-0.040 (0.046)	-0.106 (0.072)	0.146** (0.070)	-0.065 (0.128)	0.139 (0.140)	-0.074 (0.125)
Relative education (Ref.=same)									
Lower than spouse	-0.022 (0.027)	-0.070* (0.041)	0.092** (0.038)	-0.011 (0.037)	-0.089 (0.056)	0.099* (0.056)	-0.055*** (0.019)	-0.074 (0.082)	0.128 (0.081)
Higher than spouse	0.093*** (0.026)	-0.030 (0.032)	-0.063** (0.025)	0.026 (0.031)	0.070 (0.044)	-0.096** (0.039)	-0.007 (0.031)	-0.051 (0.068)	0.059 (0.066)
Gender role attitude	0.002 (0.011)	0.025* (0.014)	-0.027** (0.012)	0.013 (0.015)	0.019 (0.021)	-0.032 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.011)	0.041 (0.025)	-0.026 (0.024)
Work hours	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Spouse's work hours	0.001* (0.000)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.001** (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Share of household income (Ref.=less than half)									
More than half	0.028 (0.025)	-0.057* (0.033)	0.029 (0.028)	0.059* (0.033)	-0.048 (0.047)	-0.012 (0.044)	-0.043 (0.051)	-0.005 (0.117)	0.048 (0.114)
Survey Year 2012 (Ref.¼2006)	-0.047* (0.028)	0.012 (0.036)	0.035 (0.029)	-0.101*** (0.027)	0.009 (0.040)	0.092** (0.037)	-0.025 (0.019)	0.176*** (0.049)	-0.151*** (0.047)
Observations			1,260			683			386

Note: Base category of dependent variable is "Shared." Other controls: respondent's age, log of household income, the number of adults and children in the household, and presence of any child below age 6 in the household.

Standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.