

Lunchtime Seminar Series 2018

Protecting and Perfecting the Muslim Family: Marriage and Parenthood Programmes in Malaysia and Singapore

In Malaysia and Singapore the marriage education movement among Muslims is a recent phenomenon which saw its beginnings from the 1980s onwards. Shades of moral crisis involving the family, and changing demographic contexts, underpins the ideological and pragmatic basis for marriage education. In our study of these courses in Malaysia and Singapore it was found that this movement of pre-marital education is a means of managing marital and parental crises facing Muslims in the two countries. These include incidences of underage and early marriages, high divorce rates and 'religiously improper' marital and sexual relations between the sexes. Underpinning all of these concerns is an agenda of fashioning Muslim sexuality, marriage and parenting as one that could fit in with modernity but yet dissimilar from 'Others', and hence forming a distinct basis of identity of the modern Muslim family, community and state. A reframing of gender relations is one area that has also been a main feature of these courses and one that may be at odds with demographic changes involving rising participation of Muslim females in education and the labour force.

Maznah MOHAMAD is Associate Professor with the Department of Malay Studies and the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. Her areas of teaching and research include Gender Studies, Religion in Southeast Asia, Malaysian Politics, Islam and the Family. Her published books include *Muslim-non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia* (co-edited, 2009), *Changing Marriage Patterns in Southeast Asia: Economic and Socio-Cultural Dimension* (co-edited, 2011), and *Family Ambiguity and Domestic Violence in Asia* (co-edited, 2013).



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Suriani Suratman, a social anthropologist, is Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore, Department of Malay Studies. Her teaching covers areas on Malay culture and society, Malay ethnicity and identity and Malay families and households. Her research focuses on Malay ethnic identity and the (re)production of portrayals of Malays and gender relations and inequalities in Malay families and households. Her publications include a book chapter, "*Tudung Girls: Unveiling Muslim Women's identity in Singapore*" (2011), a journal article "Gender Relations in Singapore Malay Dual-Income Households: (Un)Changing Views and Practices" (2011) and "Problematic Singapore Malays": Sustaining a Portrayal (2010).

Chaired by : Dr **Lavanya Balachandran**

Postdoctoral Fellow, joint appointment with Asia Research Institute (ARI) and Centre for Family and Population Research (CFPR), NUS

Date: **6 April 2018** | Time: **12.00nn - 1.30pm**

Venue: **Ventus Evans Room, VT-02-01C**

All are welcome! Refreshments will be served. Registration is required.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/yaxlr8jz>