



Department of Psychology  
The University of Hong Kong

香港大學心理學系

## Departmental Seminar

# The Briefcase Saves the Day: Career Accomplishment as Redemption from Single-hood

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | April 5, 2016 (Tuesday)

CPD-2.58 | Central Podium Level | Centennial Campus | The University of Hong Kong



## Professor Ivy Lau

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### Abstract

Pioneer research by DePaulo and her colleagues on singlism (which refers to negative stereotypes of, and discrimination against, people who are single) in North America showed that people generally perceive single individuals in less positive terms than married (or coupled) individuals (DePaulo & Morris, 2006). In addition, the older the individuals (e.g., 45 vs. 25 years old), the worse off they are in the public's eyes. The current set of studies tackle the question of whether singles similarly prejudiced against in Asian cultures. We replicated the basic findings of singlism in an Asian context in Study 1: People feel more negative about singles than married or coupled people, and the older the individuals the more negatively people feel about them. To delineate some of the parameters and boundary conditions of singlism, we introduced the variable of career accomplishment and explored how career accomplishments may shape people's judgement of happiness and success of singles. Participants were presented with a series of target individuals whose profile is a combination of relationship status (single, coupled, married, divorced), career (clerk, middle management, upper management), age (25, 45), and gender (male, female). Participants rated how positive they feel about the target individuals (Study 2), and judged how happy (Study 3) and successful (Study 4) the targets are. To steer clear of possible confounds introduced by relationship success in judgement of happiness and success, participants in Study 5 were asked to provide judgments on adjectives that may be less closely linked to relationship status or career accomplishments (e.g., cultured, sophisticated, and well-travelled). Results of the five studies shed light on the nature of the prejudice against singles, and the redemptive quality of career accomplishment.

### About the Speaker

Ivy Lau is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University. She is a social psychologist by training. Her research interests are social identity, cultural psychology, and aging.

~All are Welcome~

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