ABSTRACT. The rapid societal and demographic transformations across Asia have had a profound effect on family life and intergenerational relations. In this context, it is important to ask in what ways intergenerational obligations are interpreted and renegotiated, how norms and ideals about parenthood are changing, and in which ways material and emotional investments in childrearing are rendered culturally meaningful. But what theoretical concepts and methodological approaches may we use in studying these processes? Particular attention will be given to the concept of an intergenerational contract. Due to its various and/or imprecise definitions, the intergenerational contract seems a vague and descriptive notion with limited analytical relevance. Is it a contract based on kinship or a contract between age groups? Does it refer to implicit and informal obligations, or explicit and formal ones as well? The presentation will also address the challenges and opportunities on the use of ethnographic methods in the field of family and population studies.

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