

Second Family Research Network (FRN) Forum: *“Empowering Vulnerable Families”*

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Seminar Room 2, Level 4, Civil Service College

Family
Research Network



IPS Institute of
Policy Studies

MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY CONFLICT IN ASIA

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Management of family conflict in Asia

1. Common policy positions regarding government intervention
2. Main components of the family conflict process.
3. Two main family conflict areas of high priority in Asia
4. Important requirements of family policy research

Note: The first 3 issues are based on my comparative study of ten Asian countries in S.R. Quah (2009) *Families in Asia – Home and Kin*. London: Routledge.

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1. Three different policy positions regarding government intervention

- “Legislation of any kind is detrimental to family life”.
- “Social policies provide the necessary conditions or ‘opportunity structure’ to ensure the well-being of families.”
- “Only the state is powerful enough to mobilize resources to solve serious problems affecting families”

1. Three different policy positions regarding government intervention

- “Legislation of any kind is a distortion of family life”.
- “Social policies provide the best conditions or ‘opportunities’ to ensure the well-being of families”.
- “Only the state is powerful enough to mobilize resources to solve serious problems affecting families”

Of these three positions, only the first one is inaccurate.

2. Main components of the family stress process

2.1 Dimensions of stress

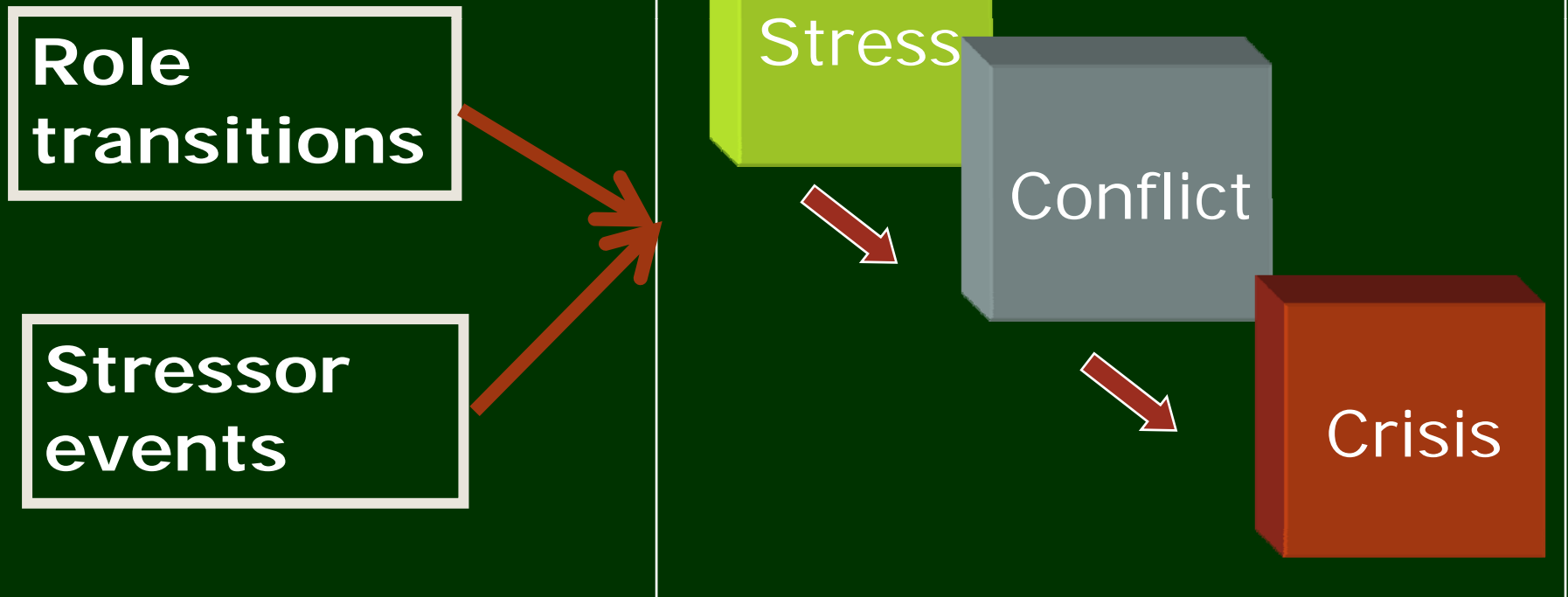
Stress produced by
role transitions

Stress produced by
stressful events

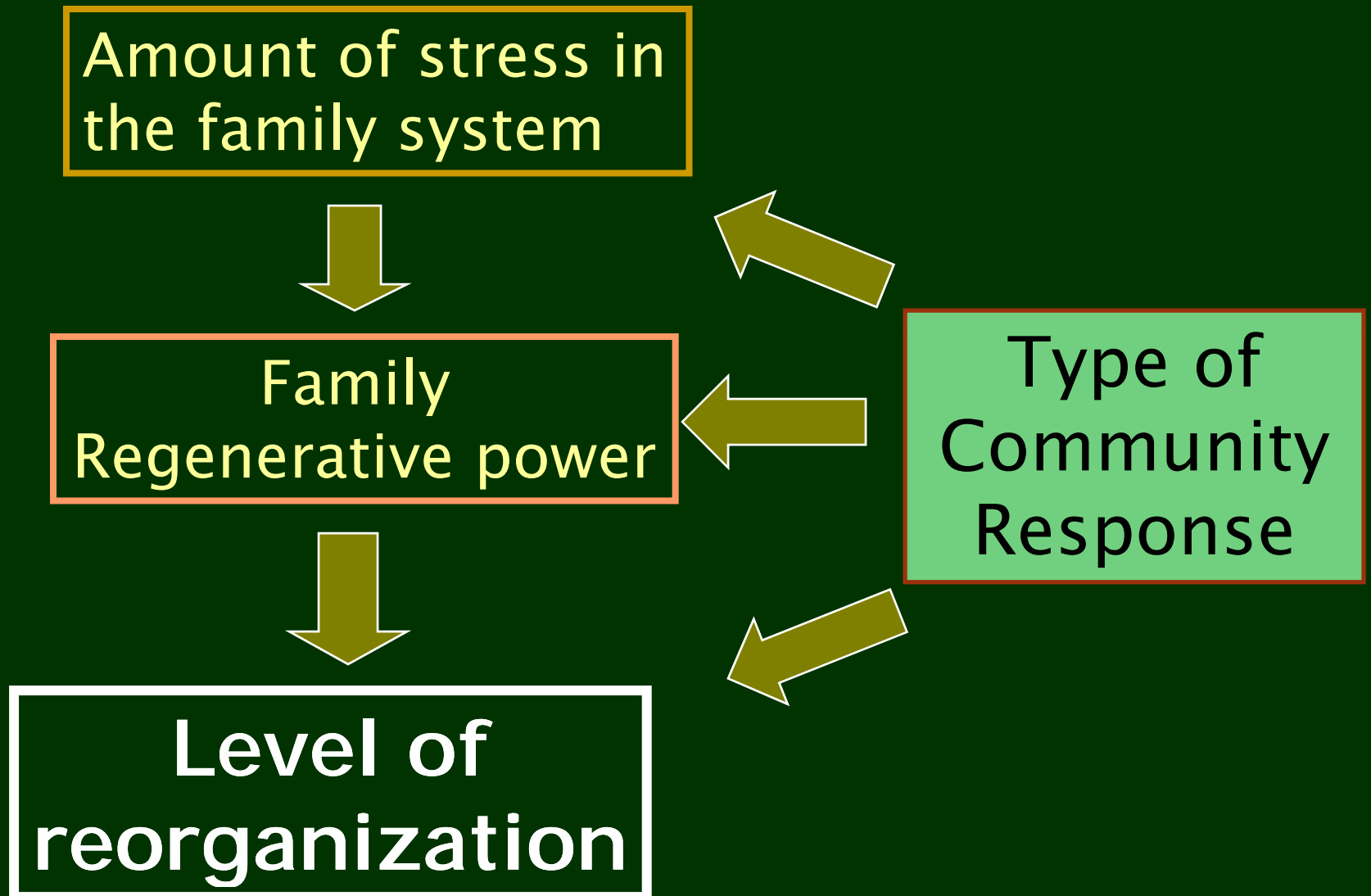
Important points:

- ❑ Stress is the disparity between needs and ability to satisfy those needs.
- ❑ Stress is a process.
- ❑ Stress could take two opposite forms:
 - disruptive crisis
 - creative reorganization or REGENESIS

Factors associated with stress, conflict, and crisis



2.2 Basic elements of family conflict process



Level of reorganization

The degree to which the family system resumes its typical, routine level of operation after having to cope with an unusual change or stressor.

3. Two main family conflict areas of high priority in Asia

3.1 The needs of dual-income couples

3.2 Families under stress

3.1 Main needs of dual-income couples

- Reliable and safe childcare
- Parental leave
- Flexible work schedules

3.2 Families under stress

3.2.1 Ideological questions

- a. To intervene or not to intervene?
- b. If stress/conflict is caused by an aggressor, when should therapy [rehabilitation] end and legal action [punishment] take over?

3.2.1 (b)

**When should therapy [rehabilitation] end?
Should the law [punishment] take over?**

- (i) If professionals attribute the offence to illness, they typically recommend *therapy and compassion only*.
- (ii) If professionals attribute full responsibility to the offender for his/her actions; AND if professionals assess rationally the risks to the victim, THEN they usually recommend a combination of *therapy and punishment (legal action)*.

3.2 Families under stress

3.2.1 Ideological questions

- a. To intervene or not to intervene?
- b. When should therapy [rehabilitation] end and legal action [punishment] take over?

3.2.2 Obstacles to prevention & management of crises

- a. Denial
- b. Concealing the problem
- c. Negative image of external help

Examples:

child abuse, drug addiction, mental illness

3.2. Prevention and management of crises in the family

3.2.3 Two important considerations

- (a) Prevention should be used whenever possible.
- (b) Punishment may be abused, thus safeguards are required.

3.2.4 Requirements to be met by support services

- (a) Follow a total family approach rather than focusing on the individual only.
- (b) Provide reliable support over time as far as possible.
- (c) Confidentiality must be guaranteed by service providers.
- (d) Cost of service must be affordable.
- (e) No ideological, religious, or political commitment should be required implicitly or explicitly from service users.
- (f) Services should be announced clearly and widely to the target population.
- (g) Target population for support services:
susceptible families

SUSCEPTIBLE FAMILIES:

Families whose problems (stressors) have exceeded the family's ability or resources to manage them (also known as "families under stress" or "dysfunctional families").

Four characteristics of susceptible families

- Family members are unable to perform their usual roles and tasks;
- The family is unable to make decisions or solve problems;
- Family members are unable to care for each other in the usual way;
- Family members cease to consider the family's welfare and become more concerned about individual survival.

4. IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

- 4.1 Evidence-based research
- 4.2 Representative samples
- 4.3 Clear and specific verification of data validity and reliability
- 4.4. Judicious selection of data collection methods.
- 4.5 Research ethics

4. IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

4.1 Evidence-based research: avoid speculation when findings will be used to formulate, change or terminate social policies.

4.2. Representative samples: studies intended to inform policy formulation, policy implementation or policy evaluation should be based on representative samples of the target population.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

4.3 Provide clear verification of the validity and reliability of your data measurements

Validity:

An indicator of a phenomenon is valid when it measures what you intend to measure and nothing else.

There are several types of validity.

Example of invalid measurement/indicator:
Hours per day a parent spent with his/her child as a measurement or indicator of **parental love**.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

4.3 Design the study to ensure the highest possible level of data validity and reliability

Reliability:

An indicator of a phenomenon is reliable when different researchers using it to study the same phenomenon obtain the same results.

- * There are several types of reliability.
- * A measurement may be reliable but not valid.

Example of unreliable measurement or indicator:
Using observation alone to ascertain a family's level of cohesiveness.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

4.4 Judicious selection of data collection methods.

Not all methods of data collection are suitable for all types of studies. Example: the focus group design might be useful in market research but it is not at all suitable for studies of attitudes and behaviour on personal and private matters such as dating patterns, spouse election, marital satisfaction, childbearing decisions, and parental problems, among other issues.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAMILY POLICY RESEARCH

4.5 Research ethics.

- ❑ Every study proposal involving human subjects should undergo ethics review.
- ❑ Funding should be allocated only to studies with clear objectives, sound methodology, and that have been approved by an ethics review board or ethics committee.

*THANK YOU
FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION*