

Voices of the Grown-Ups: Transnational Rearing among Chinese Families

Authors : Laura Lamas Abaira

Abstract : Large-scale Chinese immigration in Spain emerged in the 80's. Engaged in their own businesses or working for other Chinese migrants with long schedules, young couples had to choose between contracting or transnationalising the care labour as they were unable to combine productive and reproductive tasks. In most cases, they decided to transnationalize the care labour embodied on grandparents or children migratory paths. Either the grandparents go to Spain to take care of their grandchildren or the kids were left behind or sent to China after being born in Spain in order to be raised with their extended family members. Very little is known about how the people who have been raised in a transnational context relates their own experience and agency as care managers within the family care cycle. In order to fill this gap, this paper aims to inquire into these transnationally-reared Chinese young adults' narratives about their own experience and expectations (past, present and future) by adopting care circulation and care cycle approach within life course framework. Drawing upon a qualitative study resulting from a multi-sited ethnography (Spain-China), we argue that young adults raised in transnational context build their narratives as a result of an otherness process related to their parents and an essentialization of their Chinese roots to use selectively among different contexts. In doing so, these family narratives constitute a part of their social identity that interact with other dimensions such as the ethnic one. We suggest when building their parent's otherness they also build their sameness among pairs, as members of the same club, marked by transnational care on a double time basis: the practices of their parents as wrong past, and their own as an amendable future.

Keywords : Chinese families, narratives, transnational care, young adults

Conference Title : ICCACSS 2017 : International Conference on Cultural Anthropology, Cultural and Social Studies

Conference Location : Osaka, Japan

Conference Dates : March 30-31, 2017