

Filial Piety From Afar: Migration, Gender and Elderly Care in China



by Professor Susanne Y P Choi, Department of Sociology,
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How has migration changed intergenerational dynamics in rural China and altered elderly care practices? Official figures suggest that there were 220 million rural-to-urban migrants in China in 2010. While rural men and women of working age have left the villages en masse to take jobs in the city, elderly people and children have remained behind. In this paper, I argue that rural to urban migration has created a paradoxical intergenerational dynamic; not only has it rendered it problematic for adult men to fulfill their obligations to their aging parents, it has also meant that aging parents are called on to fill the care gap experienced by the younger generation, acting as caregivers for their grandchildren, also left behind when their sons and daughters-in-law emigrate. Analyzing interview data with over one hundred male rural to urban migrant workers in South China, I delineate the multiple strategies migrant men develop to cope with this elderly care gap and the processes they use to rationalize the discrepancies between their beliefs about male filial piety and practices with respect to care for the elderly. The diverse strategies male migrant workers and their families use to bridge the elderly care gap represent an adaptive response to the challenge migration poses to traditional Chinese family values.

Seminar chaired by
Professor Catherine Tang,
Dept of Psychology, CFPR, NUS

Date: 9 October 2015, Friday

Time: 12nn - 1.30pm

Venue: Ventus - Evans

All are welcome!

Register at

<http://goo.gl/forms/uNyC2Vrj1r>
by 4 Oct 2015.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Susanne YP Choi (D.Phil. in Sociology, Nuffield College, University of Oxford), is Professor at the Department of Sociology. She was a Fulbright scholar at Harvard University in 2013. Her research interests include gender, family, health, migration, and transitional justice. She has written extensively on gender and family issues such as spousal violence, violence against female sex workers, domestic division of labour, cross-border marriages, and rural-to-urban migrant workers in Chinese societies. Her current project explores how men's rural to urban migration shapes gender and family dynamics in post-socialist China. This has resulted in a co-authored book monograph with Peng Yinni on migration, family and gender that is under contract with *University of California Press*. Her works were published in *American Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *International Migration Review*, *The China Quarterly*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Political Psychology*, *Violence against Women*, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Aids Care*, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, *Human Relations*, and *British Journal of Sociology*.