



Doing Elderly Care in Multilocal Families

How do forms of mediated elderly care shape ways of doing family in Nepalese multilocal families in the 21st century?

"[My neighbor's] son is in Australia [...]. She [neighbor] doesn't want to go up to the kitchen alone, because she is frightened. But I am not like her. I am not afraid going up to the kitchen. But at night, I am little bit frightened to be alone. [...] I couldn't let him [her own son] go, but I had to." (Interviewee 2017a, ll. 114-124)



Nepalese elders at Patan Durbar Square

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With transformative mobility dynamics in migration, normative ideas on elderly care are (re-)negotiated in Nepal. Senior citizens are not only geographically dispatched from their immediate family members, but also emotionally separated. In addition to adapted social forms of old-age care, this also influences alternative practices and new ways of doing multilocal family. Ageing in multilocal families is a particularly important future issue for Nepal, as not only the younger population rate is increasing, but also the group of older people.



Practical Care © Lisa Neubert-Tamrakar, 2018
Younger sister is receiving blessings for Bhai Tika from her elder brother abroad via Skype. Manda-la and Tika powder are applied on the screen.

Elderly care has so far often only been studied locally under the aspect of geographical separation (Brosius 2018). To initiate regional debates, the under-explored and one-sided migration studies require a situational analysis. Gerontological research in Nepal mostly focuses on humanitarian and health issues of the elderlies (Chalise 2007). From a cultural gerontological perspective, my research will show that the Eurocentric normativity on family at a distance cannot be equated with a loss of making family life through geographical separation. It will analyze the family "micro-state" (Baldassar 2007) using the 5-dimensional care-model according to Finch and Mason (1993).

Research Question and Objectives

How do forms of mediated elderly care shape ways of doing family in Nepalese multilocal families in the 21st century?

By looking at aspects of financial, personal, practical, emotional and moral old-age care, national boundaries of doing family are overcome and ways of maintaining family identities despite physical distance are included.

- analyzing individual care patterns by Finch's and Mason's five-dimensional care-model
- situating multilocality in Nepalese families and understanding transforming elderly care patterns in Nepal
- types of physical proximity between care-takers and -givers
- contextualizing time, space and material resources as influences of elderly care



Personal Care © Lisa Neubert-Tamrakar, 2017
Negotiating presence by using Information Communication Technologies (ICT). A mother is talking to her son abroad on the phone.

Methodology

I use a methodological triangulation including semi-focused, guided, and biographical-narrative interviews. The deductively-sampled interviews include intergenerational families with diverse concepts of old-age care and family localization. The data are coded by the Grounded Theory approach, analyzed, and re-theorized in constant alternation.

References

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