

## THE STUDY

Economic globalization has put a squeeze on care and caring labour, including individuals' time available for care and the state's capacity to deliver care resources. For women who participate in the labour force and who are not provided with adequate child-care resources, their traditional care burden may be transferred onto the shoulders of their elderly family members (especially female elderly kin). Following the recent flow of mainland-Chinese skilled immigrants into Canada, some metropolitan cities such as Toronto have seen the increased immigration of mainland-Chinese seniors, who have worked as housework helpers or even primary caregivers in the homes of their immigrant children. Despite their "plights" occasionally publicized in the Chinese media, little is known about the transnational experiences of these elderly immigrants.

This SSHRC-funded study (2007-2010) aims to understand the dynamics, experiences and effects of mainland-Chinese seniors' transnational care-giving experiences in Canada. The study explores the policy connections between different welfare regimes (i.e., Canada and China) in this age of global interdependence through these experiences. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of Chinese skilled immigrant families' needs for care and of the effects of economic globalization, the shrinking of social welfare policies, and increased immigration on Chinese elderly caregivers. The knowledge will also be helpful to develop more responsive social and health services, settlement and immigrant support services and policies for these and other immigrant groups, whose lives have been profoundly affected by aforementioned multiple social and economic processes in this global era.

The data were collected through individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with 36 grandparents who had come from mainland China to care for their grandchildren in Canada, and with 34 mainland Chinese *skilled* immigrant women who had parents or parents-in-law assisting in childcare in Canada or who considered asking for their assistance. Participants in both groups were recruited through multiple social networks (e.g. Chinese websites and settlement services) and personal referral by research participants in three cities in Canada.



## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

**Zhou, Y. R. (2018).** "Transnational grandparenting: The intersection of transnationalism and translocality". In V. Timonen (Ed.), *Grandparenting practices around the world*. Bristol: Policy Press.

**Zhou, Y. R. (2017).** "The New Aging Trajectories of Chinese Grandparents in Canada". In P. Dossa & C. Coe (eds.), *Transnational Aging and Kin-Work* (pp.43-60). Rutgers University Press.

**Zhou, Y. R. (2015).** *Time, space and care: Rethinking transnational care from a temporal perspective.* *Time & Society*, 24(2), 163-182.

Against the background of unprecedented international migration, it is not clear how people's transnational mobility and ties have intersected with the temporalities associated with places or spaces. Drawing on the data from an empirical study of the caregiving experiences of Chinese grandparents in Canada, this case study reveals the simultaneous, yet uneven, temporal impacts of transnational care on individual, familial, and transnational levels. Although the coexistence of multiple temporalities enables Chinese skilled immigrant families to mobilize care resources across generations and nation-states, the dominance of the neoliberal temporal framework also means various consequences of such transnational 'flexibility'. I argue that rethinking transnational care from a temporal perspective helps us identify the linkages, discrepancies and contradictions between 'global time' and peripheral temporalities and between time and space, and thus makes visible the inequalities – in particular, the temporal inequalities – embedded in human migration and social relations on a transnational scale.

**Neysmith, S. M., & Zhou, Y. R. (2013).** *Mapping another dimension of a feminist ethics of care: Family-based transnational care.* *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, 6(2), 141-159.

A case study of Chinese grandparents' transnational caregiving experiences in Canada highlights two issues that have received limited attention in the broader feminist care literature: (1) elderly persons are usually positioned as receivers rather than providers of care; and (2) transnational care studies focus on women migrating as part of "global care chains," rather than on elderly family members migrating to meet the caring needs of adult kin who work in market economies that do not recognize caring responsibilities. The paper concludes by arguing that the distribution of care responsibilities needs to be one of the pillars in the pursuit of transnational social justice.

**Zhou, Y. R. (2013).** *Toward transnational care interdependence: Rethinking the relationships between care, immigration and social policy.* *Global Social Policy*, 13(3), 280-298.

The intersections of international migration, care and welfare states have attracted increasing attention from social policy scholars, yet the focus on the commodification of care has led them largely to ignore kin-based unpaid care. Based on a study of Chinese grandparents' caregiving experiences in Canada, this article shows how transnational families of Chinese skilled immigrants have participated in redistributing care resources, including emotion, time and cultural knowledge, across generations and countries. The article argues that states – in particular, the government of Canada as the host country – still have a crucial role to play in untangling the contradictions of immigration and care and addressing the inequalities embedded in transnational caregiving. To pursue global social justice, social policy makers need to take into account policy effects that go beyond the nation-state and its citizenry and intersect with such aspects of immigration as the spatial reconfiguration of the family, cultural change and ageing.

**Zhou, Y. R. (2013).** *Transnational aging: The impacts of adult children's immigration on their parents' later lives.* *Transnational Social Review*, 3(1), 49-64.

In an age of international migration, we do not yet well understand the impacts of adult children's immigration processes on their parents' later lives. Drawing on data from a larger study of Chinese grandparents' caregiving experiences in Canada, this article explores three interconnected aspects of aging in a context of transnational care—the intergenerational relationships, the cultural idea of filial piety, and elder care arrangements. The findings reveal that adult children's immigration has not only changed their parents' life trajectories, it has also confirmed the relevance of state borders and multi-stranded transnational connections (e.g. material, cognitive, emotional, and symbolic) to the parents' movement into older age. I argue that in a context of transnationalism, aging can no longer be understood as solely an age-based individual experience "in place," as it includes dynamic processes that are simultaneously shaped by various familial, social, cultural, economic, and political forces across countries.

**Zhou, Y. R. (2012).** *Space, time, and self: Rethinking aging in the contexts of immigration and transnationalism.* *Journal of Aging Studies*, 26(3), 232-242.

Critical gerontology views aging as a social construction that reflects the intersections of micro-processes with the macro-level forces of individual aging experiences. In the contexts of immigration and transnationalism, however, the macro-structural conditions, dynamics and experiences of aging have become further diversified and complicated. The dearth of empirical and explanatory knowledge in this area has inhibited us from comprehending aging in a changing world. Drawing on data from a study of Chinese grandparents' experiences of transnational caregiving in Canada, this article examines the impacts of such experiences on three interconnected dimensions – spatial, temporal and cognitive – of aging. Although the practice of transnational caregiving allows skilled immigrant families to mobilize care resources outside Canada, it has not only ruptured the traditional trajectories of aging for their elderly parents, but also complicated the inequalities that they have to bear on individual, familial and transnational levels. I argue that the critical examination of aging in the context of transnational caregiving helps us take into consideration those dimensions (such as place, space, time, and knowledge) that are changed by immigration processes, and rethink aging from a broader perspective that links seniors' experiences with their relationship with their adult immigrant children's families and macro-structures outside national borders.