

Care Across Distance: Ethnographic Explorations in Aging and Migration

Azra Hromadžić and Monika Palmberger (eds), Berghahn Publishing, New York, 2022, 183 pp., pbk £23.95, ISBN 13: 978-1-80073-439-5

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This edited volume of eight case studies considers how care with and for older adults is practised at a distance and shaped by migration. The editors and contributing authors are anthropologists, all of whom employed an ethnographic approach. Each chapter opens with a historical and socio-political summary, to contextualise the ethnographies presented.

Part One, 'Materialities and Technologies of Care Across Distance', includes Chapter One, 'Recalibrating Care: Newly Resettled Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees in Upstate New York', by Retika Desai, and Chapter Two, 'Healthy Aging, Middle-classness, and Transnational Care Between Tanzania and the United States', by Andrea Patricia Kaiser-Grolimund. Desai's chapter shows how humanitarian and state-sponsored care, while theoretically available to migrant families, is contingent upon them meeting certain criteria or expectations. Kaiser-Grolimund's chapter highlights how class shapes families' abilities to provide material care at a distance. Moving beyond the traditional care dyad of immediate family and older adult, Kaiser-Grolimund also introduces the notion of a care triangle, with the third point representing the 'observing eyes' (e.g. extended family, neighbours and friends) of others supporting care.

Part Two, 'Spirituality and Intergenerational Care across Distance', includes Chapter Three, 'Intergenerational Relationships and Emergent Notions of Reciprocity, Dependency, Caregiving, and Aging in Tuareg Migration', by Susan Rasmussen, and Chapter Four, "'Old People's Homes", Filial Piety, and Transnational Families: Change and Continuity in Elderly Care in the Tibetan Settlements in India', by Namgyal Choedup. Both chapters explore the tensions, particularly intergenerational tensions, that arise when cultural norms and expectations related to caring, and ageing, are challenged by external forces and influences (e.g. globalisation, forced migration).

Part Three, 'Communities of Care Across Distance', includes Chapter Five, 'Social Embeddedness and Care Among Turkish Labor Migrants in Vienna: The Role of Migrant Associations', by editor Monika Palmberger, and Chapter Six, 'Migrants of Privilege: American Retirees and the Imaginaries of Ecuadorian Care Work', by Ann Miles. While these chapters explore the spaces, places and ways in which older migrants make and find community overseas, they also both explore the ways in which race impacts care and access to care. It is striking to

read about a Turkish older woman being discriminated against when trying to access preventive supports and medical care, and pages later to read about Miles' 'migrants of privilege', where Whiteness equals social power and American dollars allow for the consumption of private health-care services.

Part Four, 'Failures of Care Across Distance' includes Chapter Seven, 'Some Limits of Caring at a Distance: Aging and Transnational Care Arrangements Between Suriname and the Netherlands', by Yvon van der Pijl, and Chapter Eight, "'Where Were They Until Now?'" Aging, Care, and Abandonment in a Bosnian Town', by editor Azra Hromadžić. In her examination of Surinamese-Dutch older adults, and the loneliness experiences by many, van der Pijl challenges the 'myth of (extended) family care' (p. 142) and the assumed presence and availability of family to care for older migrants. Hromadžić uses the powerful story of an older woman, Zemka, and her 'suffering, bruised, blood-stained and swollen' (p. 165) body as the embodiment of the crisis of care in the Balkans, and the consequences of a semi-absent state and semi-absent families.

Rather than a concluding and summative chapter, the volume finishes with a thoughtful epilogue from Sarah Lamb, which largely draws on her ethnographic work in India. While the epilogue is conceptually strong and beautifully written, it does leave the reader wondering about the overarching implications and future directions of the work presented.

The main strength of this volume is the authors' analysis of care, and the myriad ways in which care is constructed, and reconstructed, by migrant older adults, their families and other actors. The collective conceptualisation of care is robust, moving beyond direct and family-oriented care, to also consider virtual and long-distance care, anonymous and contingent care, material care, relational and multi-directional care, and poignant examples of failed care.

Given that this is a book on migration, ageing and care across distance, there were a few surprising omissions. For example, although briefly mentioned in the epilogue, there is no consideration of rural Chinese grandparents, a millions-large group that shoulders the childrearing of a generation. Readers will note that 'elderly' is used throughout, which is considered ageist language and typically avoided by gerontologists, and this journal, but may still be accepted in other fields. Those enthusiastic about qualitative methods may find the chapters lacking, given that virtually no methods, approaches to analysis or strategies for rigour are shared in most of the chapters (though some details are in footnotes). Notwithstanding, this clearly written and accessible book will be of interest to anthropologists, migration scholars, and those examining the intersection of ageing and migration (i.e. 'ethnogerontologists').

As Palmberger notes, 'care is a difficult concept to grasp' (p. 98). Drawing on rich stories from around the globe, this volume helps the reader 'grasp' the concept of care, specifically as it relates to ageing in the era of migration, and in doing so, makes a meaningful contribution to the literature.

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