



Rural Chinese Children's Experiences of Care When Fathers Migrate Internationally and Parents Migrate Internally

Professor Rachel Murphy
Professor of Chinese Development and Society
University of Oxford, UK

September 12, 2017 (Tuesday)
12:45 – 14:00

Room 205, Runme Shaw Building, HKU
Chair: Dr Dan Wang

Abstract:

This talk presents work-in-progress for a book project. It draws on longitudinal qualitative data from an interior agricultural county in China to examine children's experiences of growing up in families where fathers migrate internationally and where parents migrate within China. The analysis integrates two themes. The first theme looks at how multi-scalar factors influence adults' and children's ideas about optimal family arrangements for enabling children to succeed in life. This entails reflecting on how a localised gender culture, migration culture and school regime shape ideas about good childcare as well as the possibilities for providing this good childcare. The second theme explores how multi-local families' gendered and intergenerational arrangements intersect with social stratification to influence (1) the care and investment that children receive and (2) the children's interpretations of their families' efforts. Overall, the discussion highlights that children's experiences offer fresh insights into how migration and education drive agrarian change.

About the speaker:

Rachel Murphy has been Head of School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies (SIAS) since January 2015. She is a sociologist whose research examines transformations in China's interior occurring because of the inter-related processes of industrialization, urbanization, demographic transition, modernization (especially through state-endorsed projects such as education), marketisation and the expansion of communications technologies. Over the past sixteen years to understand these changes she has conducted in-depth longitudinal ethnography, extensive interviews, documentary research and small-scale surveys in villages, townships, counties and cities. Her monograph of 2002 offered one of the first analyses of return migration and returnee entrepreneurship in China's rural heartlands. She is presently writing a book about the children of rural-urban labour migrants in two rapidly-urbanizing interior provinces.

Rachel serves on the editorial board of the *China Quarterly* (executive committee) and she is a co-editor of the Routledge book series *Comparative Development and Policy in Asia*. She is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of Western Australia Business School.

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