



“Betwixt and Between”: Transformations in Transnational Spaces

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Interdependency and the Transnational Making of Truth

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Most new immigrants to the United States are currently admitted through family reunification policies that provide preferential entry to family members of citizens and permanent legal residents. However, long backlogs for these visas can leave parents and children separated for years or even decades.

The transnational families created in this process navigate the opportunities and constraints they encounter in this liminal space, “betwixt and between” the lives of their past and the lives of their future.



Based on ethnographic research among Haitian immigrant families in Florida, this paper examines transnational and intergenerational strategies used to achieve socio-economic mobility.

These processes build upon Haitian practices of parent-child separation as a normative adaptive strategy within a cultural framework of familism.

While separations may be painful, they also provide transnational spaces in which some families benefit by selectively accessing the disparate social and economic opportunity structures available in each country of residence.



In these Haitian families parental labor migration to the U.S. funded the education of children left behind.

Higher levels of education achieved through remittances transformed the family's social status and economic potential.

In addition, students began to acculturate to their notion of American life as they anticipated their own futures in the U.S.

These practices challenge perspectives of immigrant incorporation as a process bounded by national borders and reveal the complexities of transnational family processes.