

Medical Ethics and Therapeutic Knowledge from China as Contested Knowledge in Times of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Framing 'new ethics' within both Chinese and international characteristics has become a pressing issue, while China's research and innovation policy encourages a turn towards a knowledge economy and a number of international/Chinese corporates delocalize industrial production to poorer countries offering cheaper labor. Plural health ideas, practices, and medical sciences are developing within the broader framework of the social and economic transformation of the Chinese society. Voices from civil society wish also to participate in the debates going on in the official, academic, and media spheres. On one side, ethno-(medical) ethics may be contested by most international development actors who strongly support a universalistic view of ethics; on the other side, local/national knowledge through the voices of a number of lay people's groups, locally-based and trained experts, and official actors seek ground for recognition. Of course, positions taken by all these stakeholders in terms of knowledge production, decision-making, and policy implementation may diverge widely. This paper will unveil a number of issues discussed in the 2000s relative to medical ethics, bioethics, and the New Health Reform guidelines and implementation. Finally, this paper will approach 'localized' biomedicine as contested knowledge through a few examples. My study is based on data collected using anthropological methodology and archival research.

Keywords: Ethics, Knowledge, Localization, Globalization, Medicine, Anthropology, China