

FAMILY EXPERIENCES, HISTORIES AND INDIGENOUS TEENAGE MOTHERS (ITM) IN TAIWAN: A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE

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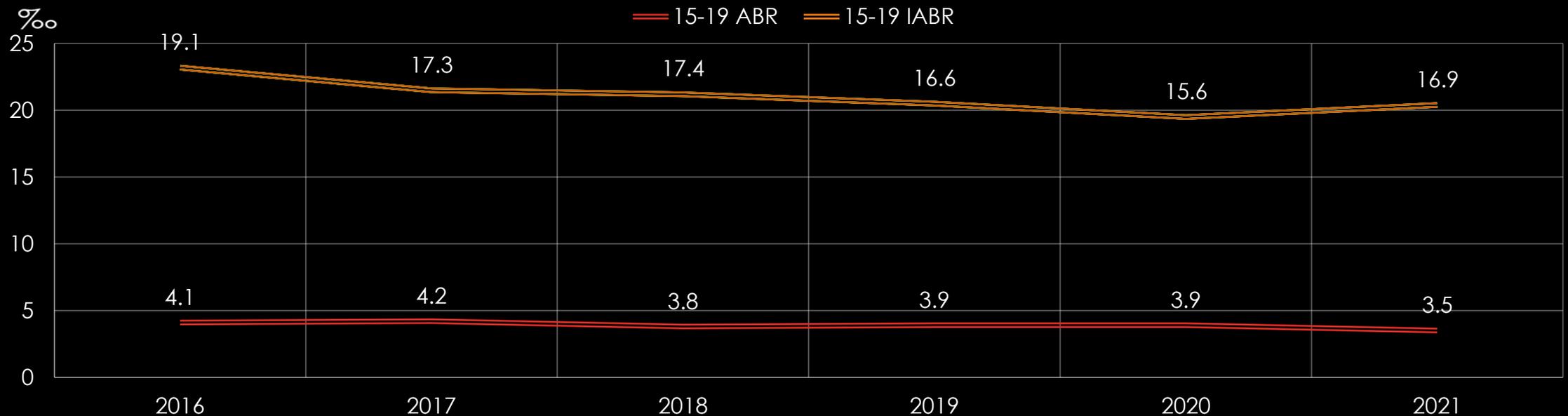
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The Context

- Indigenous peoples in Taiwan
- The fertility rate of Indigenous teenage girls (15-19 years old) is about 4 to 5 times higher than that of all Taiwanese teenage girls.

ADOLESCENT BIRTH RATE IN TAIWAN



Source: Department of Household Registration, M.O.I. (2022), Statistics, <https://www.ris.gov.tw/app/en/3910>

RESEARCH AIMS

- To gain a fuller understanding of Indigenous Teenage Mothers' life course, particularly in the family domain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Deconstructing teenage pregnancy
2. A life course perspective: Hutchison (2005; 2019)
 - Five basic concepts: cohorts, transitions, trajectories, life events and turning points
 - Six interrelated principles: interplay of human lives and historical time, timing of lives, linked lives, human agency, diversity in life course trajectories, and developmental risk and protection.
3. Critiques of a life course perspective.

RESEARCH METHODS

1. A part of a two-year research funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan (MOST 110-2420-H-259-017 & MOST 111-2420-H-028)
2. Research ethical approval
3. A semi-longitudinal study
4. Research site
5. Sampling
6. Narrative interviews:
 - Interviewees: Different generations of Indigenous females with early motherhood
 - Number of interviewees

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Indigenous diaspora and historical trauma

- Half interviewees (12) had experienced (parental) rural-urban migration or job-search in urban areas for a living.
- Different migration patterns amongst different generations, e.g. circular migration...
- Adverse impacts of migration on family structure and child care.

I grew up in city A, village A is my hometown, I was born in City B, I don't know why,... I am here(village B) is because of my husband (cohabiting partner). My parents divorced when I was really young, my father and my aunts (father's sisters) raised us. I missed my mom badly, she started her new family. I remembered When I was a little girl, I stayed with her all the time... My father worked all the time, he didn't want us to contact her (after she left). He would get mad at us if we talked to her on the phone, so we dared not to talk with her. ...I ran away from home to find my mom, it was a tough process, I had experienced a lot, was really tough...I was regretted after I found her, it was because she started her new family, she did not want to see me anymore... She has many boyfriends, so that's why she didn't want to stay with us, I realized this long after their divorce. (1020S-A02)

2. Accumulative advantages or disadvantages? families as sites of trauma

Of the 25 interviewees, 13 claimed from a family with domestic violence or experienced intimate partner violence; 10 were from a broken family and were raised by grandfather, grandmother, father and/or other relatives.

My mom was a good woman, I witnessed that my father hit her badly quite often. I don't know why my mom hated me so much, she liked my younger brother, she did not like me, so I was always the one to be beaten up. I don't know, she told me that she wished I was never born, she said: 'I should kill you, shouldn't give birth to you'. ...She left us for another man when I was in my grade 3, I asked her to take me together, but she refused.(2030N-T01)

My parents divorced in my grade 2, my father looked after me and my younger brother. I only remembered that my father beat my mom up often, then my mom ran away. But she sneaked back for me and my brother when my father was not at home. (4050N-T02)

3.Human agency: opportunities and resilience

3.1. Developing self-awareness towards interdependent lives, e.g. family dynamic

- Some interviewees observed negative impacts and intergenerational transmission of domestic violence.

She (grandmother) expressed her love to my father in the way of belittling him, so my father applied what he learned on me, and I myself on my daughter. My father was not expressive enough, he kept his stress to himself, he only relieved stress by drinking. Once he get drunk, he become talkative, his words hurt me badly...Recently, I went back home to visit them, I found that my daughter's behaviours are getting annoyed, she acted strangely to seek my attention. I feel that she can't feel love, it may be because she was insecure...So I need to change myself. (1020S-A01)

My children witnessed my self-harm behaviours, fights with my husband, they were scared, cried and begged me. 'No, no' they said. I realised my problem finally and changed my behaviours. If I committed suicide, my children may suffer from starving; if my husband married again, my children would be in a worse situation, so I decided not to harm myself. (3040N-T01/2030N-T04M)

3.2. Family capitals

- The importance of different forms of supports from original and/or marital families.

My parents did not ask for betrothal money or bride-dowry, coz they think that it doesn't matter as long as my husband and his family treat me well. They only asked them to pay for pig slaughter and banquet... My parents exhorted my husband to love and protect me, don't let me cry. My marriage is successful,...my husband protected me well. ...My mother-in-law helps to look after my son when I work, I know it is tiring as she has to look after my sister-in-law's children as well, I asked my mom to help out, ...my parents are happy to do so. (2030N-T04)

My mother's younger brother helped me to look after my son, my grandfather will help as well if he is off...My grandfather said: 'we can look after my child together, we don't need the biological father' ('s money)...He raised me up, he is important to me. (1020N-T06)

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

1. Shared historical trauma, teenage pregnancy and intergeneration transmission.
2. The importance of an intersectional analysis to address multiple oppressions, such as class, ethnicity, gender and historical trauma
3. Intimate relationship and pregnancy as ways of resistance and the strategy to change one's life trajectory.
4. Typical & universal lifecourse of young indigenous mothers?

SUGGESTIONS

1. Developing a culturally sensitive family-centered service by addressing social investment and strengthening young mother's support systems.
2. Alleviating conflicts between child-care, education and employment by providing high quality, safe and accessible child care service.
3. Early prevention and working together with family services and child protection services.



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The End
Thank you for listening