
Pillars of the Home there, Light of Hope here: Examining Flows of Filipino Migrant Mothers' Social Remittances

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Abstract (in French and English)

Filipino immigrant mothers comprise one of the four largest groups of migrants in Japan, whose temporary labor migration in the 1980s to Japan was largely to fill the demand in Japan's entertainment and sex industries. The last 30 years saw Filipinas' continuing struggle to expand their socio-economic participation by engaging in business/trade, services and educational sectors, while raising a Japanese-Filipino family in Japan. They are, in certain life stages, simultaneously leading their own family in Japan and natal family in the Philippines. This qualitative research mainly draws on (70) in-depth interviews with Filipino migrant women residing in Tokyo to map out flows of social remittances in the form of normative structures (Levitt 1998, 2007), that is, a set of beliefs and values on familial obligation and aspirations for social mobility. Through identifying Filipino mother's social remittances, this paper aims to explain to what degree the first generation's attainment of "better" status influences the second generation Japanese-Filipino Children's (JFC) aspirations for social mobility, which is a combination of and in constant negotiation for individual and familial goals between Japan and the Philippines. Moreover, the case of Filipino migrant mothers provides a micro-level, generational context for understanding how transnationalism reconfigures culturally-informed ways of what constitutes "success" and what a better social position means for themselves and their family in home and host societies. This process embedded in their family life underscores Filipinas' simultaneous fulfillment of roles as "pillars of strength" for their natal family and "light of hope" for the second generation JFC.

Keywords: Filipino, Migrant, Mothers, Remittances, flows

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