



Title: Stalled Development of Immigrant Filipino Youths: Migration, Suspended Ambitions, and the ESL Classroom

Authors: May Farrales, MA, Geography, University of British Columbia; Geraldine Pratt, PhD, Geography, University of British Columbia

Contact: farrales@geog.ubc.ca; gpratt@geog.ubc.ca

WP Number: 12-10

Research Question:

This paper explores the educational experiences and issues of children of first-generation Filipino immigrants in Canada with the intent of making sense of the less-than-expected educational achievements and outcomes of these youths.

Importance:

Children of immigrants typically meet and exceed their parents' educational attainment; for Filipino families the situation is quite different. According to recent research, children of first-generation Filipino immigrants in Canada are neither meeting nor attaining a higher level of education than their first-generation immigrant parents who tend to be highly educated. Thus, the low level of post-secondary educational achievement among their Filipino youth is a surprising and disturbing outcome of immigration.

Research Findings:

There are three facets of research that we report on here. First, we extend and update earlier documentation of Filipino immigrant youths' relatively poor educational outcomes in Vancouver high schools. Second, we report on a survey done with 45 Filipino post-secondary students in Vancouver who have experienced educational success to better understand the factors that lead to this positive outcome. Third, in the bulk of the paper we introduce research with Filipino youths in two Vancouver public high schools to expand our understanding of the processes that lead to the observed patterns of poor educational outcomes, and to render more complex the questions that one might ask about educational success and failure.

Implications:

The youths' narratives of their migration stories and their experiences as Vancouver public high school students offer ways of approaching their issues with an eye to changing policies and practices. Our study clearly illustrates that poor educational outcomes are not a 'Filipino' problem. They are a problem for Filipino youths in particular circumstances: those who have experienced the stalled educational trajectories associated with temporary labour migration programs such as the LCP, and those in City of Vancouver (as compared to suburban) high schools seemingly trapped in English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classrooms. Youths' narratives urge the need to look at a plurality of policy arenas, including immigration and ESL policy.