

Fresnoza-Flot A. and Nagasaka I. 2020. "Fluctuating social class mobility of Filipino migrant children in France and in Italy". In C. Baraldi and L. Rabello De Castro (eds.), *Global childhoods in international perspective: universality, diversity, migrations and inequalities*. Sage Studies in International Sociology Series: 6. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC and Melbourne: Sage, pp. 185-202.

---

## Fluctuating Social Class Mobility of Filipino Migrant Children in France and in Italy

Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot and Itaru Nagasaka

### **Introduction**

Studies on family reunification in the context of migration illuminate the various implications of this family event on the lives of migrant children. Previously 'left behind' in their country of origin, these young people later on become part of the '1.5 generation', the members of which immigrated to their receiving country at the age of 18 or below after spending part of their childhood or adolescence in their country of origin (Nagasaka and Fresnoza-Flot, 2015; Rumbaut and Ima, 1988). In recent years, these childhoods spent in two or more different societies have been the object of several analytical enquiries analysing the children's identity (re)construction, school incorporation and intergenerational relationships, among others

(Bartley and Spoonley, 2008; Danico, 2004; Harklau et al., 1999). However, one experiential dimension that remains understudied in the life of these young migrants is their social class mobility during the migration process. In what way do these migrants experience and confront their social class (im)mobilities accompanying the serial migration(s) in their transnational families? How different are their social and class experiences from those of their parents?

When addressing these questions, we need to take into account the fact that the members of the 1.5 generation are themselves migrants. Unlike the members of the second generation, these migrant children have undergone two or more different experiences of childhood in the course of their mobile lives. On the other hand, their lives in the place of origin were significantly affected by the transnational ties that their parents had constructed (Fouon and Glick-Schiller, 2002; Levitt and Waters, 2007; Nagasaka and Fresnoza-Flot, 2015). Put differently, in order to address the main questions of the present study, we need to be attentive to the complex and shifting relationships between their own spatial, social, and class mobilities and those of their families (Nagasaka and Fresnoza-Flot, 2015).

Social class encompasses here young migrants' economic, cultural, and symbolic capital in a Bourdieusian perspective, as well as their subjective views concerning the 'prestige' in a Weberian sense attached to their migration situation. We pay attention to their experiences of immobility and upward or downward mobility along social class lines, both before their migration in their societies of origin and after their immigration to their destination country. As a case study, we analyse the experiences of 1.5-generation children of Filipino migrants in France and in Italy. These migrants arrived in these countries before the age of 18 to reunite with their migrant parents and experienced two school systems. We argue that these migrant children experience social class (im)mobilities differently from their adult counterparts, who,

in many cases, undergo ‘contradictory class mobility’, meaning upward social mobility in one country and downward social mobility in another at the same time (Parreñas, 2001).

The empirical data we examine here originated from ethnographic fieldworks we separately conducted in the Île-de-France region in France and in Rome, Italy. In France, one of us (Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot, AFF), interviewed 21 children (10 male and 11 female) aged between 15 and 36 years old of Filipino migrants. Eighteen of them were single, two were married, and one was divorced. Eight respondents were employed full-time, five had part-time jobs, and the others were unemployed. Most interviewees (15 out of 21) lived with their parents. The six exceptions included three who already had children, one college graduate who worked full-time in a French company, and two women who lived with their boyfriends and worked in the service sector, one as a hotel receptionist and one as a nanny. In short, a majority of the respondents were not yet completely financially independent from their parents. Most of them had arrived in France at the beginning of the 2000s and had been residing in this country for an average of eight years.

For the cases in Italy, one of us (Itaru Nagasaka, IN) interviewed 22 children of Filipino migrants, aged 12 to 26, either in the Philippines or in Italy between 2010 and 2013. Almost all of them had their origins in rural Philippines. Fourteen of them had immigrated to Italy at age 17 or younger and experienced the two school systems of the Philippines and Italy. Half of these 1.5-generation interviewees had roots in the villages of the northern Philippines with a long history of overseas migration to the United States of America and Italy, where one of the authors (IN) has conducted fieldwork since the 1990s. Of the 14, 11 were single, two were married, and one was separated. Seven were students at the time of their first interviews, four had regular jobs (one as a babysitter, one as a salesperson, one as a cleaner of buildings, and the last one as a factory worker). One worked on an irregular basis and two had recently

stopped studying. While their living arrangements in Italy were characterized by the fluidity of having two dwelling spaces (one in their employer's house and another in their apartment, which is quite common among Filipino domestic workers), most of them (12 of 14) lived in the apartment rented by their parents. Two women lived with their partners and their partners' families. All of them had immigrated to Italy after 1999 to be reunified with their parents.

Before examining the experiences of these young migrants, we briefly review the literature on migration to see how migrants experience mobility in terms of social class. We also take a look at the recent trends regarding child and youth migration from the Philippines. In the discussion section, we highlight the fluctuating social class mobility of 1.5-generation migrants in France and in Italy, as well as the strategies they used when confronting social class issues. We conclude by reflecting on the similarities and differences of their experiences and by proposing one possible research direction concerning the study of childhoods in migration.

## **Social class mobilities in the context of migration**

The question of mobility in terms of social class has been invoked in many studies of adult migratory movements. In this context, social class is more often associated with the economic resources of migrants (Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017): in many cases, resources accumulation means upward social class mobility. However, taking into account the 'transnational social spaces' of migrants (Faist, 2000), social class mobility appears more complex than some scholars of migration previously thought.

In the logic of the 'push-pull' framework, individuals migrate to escape their difficult life condition (push) and proceed to countries where they expect economic possibilities (pull) to improve their life. Their upward social class mobility appears to be the recompense for

their geographical movement: a mobility resulting from gaining access to economic resources. Through remittances, migrants of working-class origin are able to afford socially valued possessions in their countries of origin and to support their children's education (Aguilar, 2014; Oliveira, 2013). These facilitate the upward mobility not only of themselves but also of their whole family unit in the social class hierarchy of their societies of origin. In the case of individuals with privileged class background, their migration most often ensures their family's upper social class belonging. This is for example the case of 'parachute children' who are sent abroad to study, opening opportunities herein for social class mobility and for their parents' businesses (Zhou, 1998).

Nonetheless, not all migrants experience upward social class mobility – notably if we take into account their cultural capital that is usually not recognized in their countries of immigration (Erel, 2010). In many cases, migrants with tertiary-level education undergo downward social class mobility, as they engage in precarious and low-paid jobs. Guo (2013) attributes this to a 'glass gate' that keeps migrants away from professional communities, a 'glass door' that impedes their access to professional employment, and 'glass ceiling' that prevents them from moving to managerial positions. This may subsequently affect these migrants' health and wellbeing (Nicklett and Burgard, 2009). To make sense of their deskilling and to redefine themselves, many migrants focus on their countries of origin where they can experience upward mobility in the social class hierarchy there, thanks to their economic benefits obtained from migration.

In her study of Filipino women migrants working in the domestic service sector, Parreñas (2001) observes that these women experienced 'contradictory class mobility': a downward mobility in their country of immigration due to their deskilling and domestic work, at the same time as an upward mobility in their country of origin because of their elevated

economic status thanks to their earnings in their country of immigration. Some migrants resort to a ‘transnational expenditure cascade’ by sending remittance to their relatives (Thai, 2014), whereas others forge a successful image of themselves by offering gifts and wearing fashionable clothes during their visits in the country of origin (see Suksomboon, 2007).

To sum up, migrants’ social class position changes in space and time due to their geographical movement. As we can observe in the studies above, the experiences of adult migrants unveil the complexity of social class (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017b), which poses the question of how this can be applied to migrant children, whose experiences of social class mobility remain largely underexplored. Given that these young people’s socio-demographic characteristics (age, level of education at the time of migration, and so on) are distinct from those of adult migrants, their mobility in social class terms in their transnational social spaces is also probably different from that of the latter. To find out, we examine in the following sections the case of 1.5-generation children of Filipino migrants in France and in Italy.

## **Childhood migration from the Philippines: a brief overview**

Since the 1960s, the Philippines has been a major sending nation of international migrants. According to the Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos released by the Commission of Filipino Overseas (CFO, 2013), over 10 million Filipinos, approximately 10 percent of the total population of the Philippines, live and work in over 200 countries. One of the significant trends in Filipino migration is the increasing number of migrant children.

During the 36-year period from 1981 to 2016, over 700,000 emigrants, aged 19 or younger, left the Philippines. The number of these children has fluctuated, but since 2000, the number has increased steadily. Since the year 2005, over 20,000 emigrants of this age group left their home country every year, and this number reached 30,000 in 2015 (CFO, 2016). The

destinations of these migrant children have multiplied since 2000. During the 1980s and 1990s, the US and other ‘classical countries of immigration’, (Castles and Miller, 2009) such as Canada and Australia, were their main destinations. These children were either brought into these countries by their parents through family reunification programs or migrated together with their parents.

While child and youth emigration from the Philippines to these countries has continued to be significant, the recent trend shows that newly emerging destinations of Filipino overseas migrants, notably Italy and Japan, have become the major destinations of young emigrants. From 2008 to 2012, the top four destination countries of emigrants aged 13 to 19 were the US, Canada, Italy, and Japan. The numbers of registered Filipino emigrants of this age group were 26,302, 17,603, 4,259 and 3,244 respectively (CFO, n.d.). The rise in the number of migrant children to Italy and Japan in this period can be explained by the increase of Filipino immigrants in these countries who are eligible to sponsor their minor children. While migratory patterns of children to these countries show a marked variety (Nagasaka, 2015c), they share the notable life experience being ‘left behind’ by their migrant parents for a prolonged period. Having said this, in what follows, we will start the illustration of migratory experiences of 1.5-generation Filipinos to these new destination countries from the time they were ‘left behind’ by their parents and taken care of by their close kin and others.

## **The 1.5-generation Filipinos in France**

### ***Background to their migration***

The migration to France of Filipino children has been happening since the early 1980s. It mainly results from family reunification, that is, children joining their migrant parent(s) in the receiving country. The French migration policies shape such migratory movement.

The 1980s witnessed many cases of family reunion between Filipino migrants and their children due to the regularization of undocumented migrant workers in the country between 1981 and 1982 (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017a). As the years passed, family reunification became harder and harder, as the French government tightened its control over migratory inflows in its territory. In fact, the last amnesty for irregular migrants took place between 1997 and 1998. Aside from this, conditions for family reunion became difficult to satisfy for many Filipinos who mainly work in the domestic sector (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017a). As a result, more and more Filipinos, regardless of migration status and economic condition, had their children come to France using unofficial channels of family reunion, which has resulted in intergenerational irregularity in Filipino migrant families (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017a).

Young Filipinos arrive therefore in France through *de jure* or *de facto* family reunion channels (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017a). In 2010, for instance, there were 595 Philippine-born immigrants who were aged between 0 and 17 years old (INSEE, 2010). Taking into account those who entered the country using a *de facto* family reunion channel, the number of Filipino migrant children is probably more than the French official statistics report. Since adult Filipino migrants earn modest income from their domestic work, providing a comfortable life in France for their children is particularly challenging. This has an important impact on their offspring, who have positive expectations of the life waiting for them in their new country.

### ***Changing class positions in space and through time***



The migration of the parents of the 21 respondents triggered a familial separation that ended when their parents managed to have them come to France. In this case, parental migration appears to be an important precursor of the migration of young Filipinos to this country. Successive geographical movements first by parents and then by their offspring engendered fluctuations in the latter's social class mobility during their childhood years.

Gino<sup>1</sup> was 6 years old when his parents decided to work in the Middle East.

Although his mother was a school teacher and his father was employed in a private company, their monthly income was not enough to support the needs and schooling of Gino and his four siblings. Gino described their life prior to migration as 'economically difficult' (*naghihikahos*) and remembered his challenging pre-school life: 'I was enrolled in a private [kindergarten].<sup>2</sup> It was private at that time. I remembered I had no packed meal [in a] private school of people with money. During break, recess time, the teacher circulated a basket in the class and those who would put money in it would go to the canteen. You know what I used to do? ... I would pretend that I was writing something, that I was busy. I would entertain myself. I would pretend not seeing anything, the basket would pass in front of me, then nothing anymore'.

Gino undeniably acquired at a young age an awareness of his social class belonging and what it meant. He demonstrated his agency by confronting the contradiction in his life at that time: economically deprived but enrolled in a private kindergarten. Unlike him, a few respondents had comfortable lives when they were very young, either because some family members (one or both of their parents, aunts, or grandmothers) were already working abroad prior to their birth or because their family had stable economic resources from the beginning.

Linda was born into a middle-class family in the Philippines: her mother was running a restaurant, whereas her father was managing his own car workshop. Her father worked in the Middle East when Linda was a baby, and when he returned he bought a big house for his family. When Linda was 6 years old, the income from her family's businesses was starting not to meet their needs. In 1986, her mother therefore decided to go and work in France in the domestic sector, and the year after, her father followed. Linda told me her parents' reason for leaving: 'My siblings and I were in a private [school], and then while growing up, with many expenses, my mother and father could not afford them anymore'.

The migration to France of Linda's parents was rooted in the desire of ensuring the continuity of the family's middle-class lifestyle that was attained through the initial migration of her father. When children are growing up, an economically challenging situation often prompts parents like those of Gino and Linda to migrate abroad, either to sustain or achieve a comfortable life for their offspring. This transforms children's lifeworld, not only emotionally due to separation from parents, but also in social class terms. The remittances of their parents allowed the respondents in the study to live an economically privileged childhood, including education in reputable institutions. When family reunification took place in France, these respondents experienced another change in their social class position, which in many cases was characterized by a downward mobility.

Tina grew up under the care of her maternal grandmother after her mother migrated to France when she was 5 years old, followed by her father three years later. Thanks to her parents' remittances, her family was able to buy a house in a middle-class area, to sustain Tina's private schooling and that of her sibling, as

well as to accumulate lands. When Tina moved to France when she was 15 years old, she needed to adjust to living in a small apartment and to doing household chores: ‘when I arrived here [France], I did not know how to cook rice, and I learned that here. I was lazy according to them [her parents]. This is because it was my grandmother who was doing all for me. We had also a house helper in the Philippines, and here no. I learned to work, to work at home here.’

Aside from learning to do things by themselves, the respondents in our study also adopted other strategies to confront their downward social class mobility. Some respondents, mostly male, decided to concentrate on their studies, whereas others focused on presenting themselves as successful and trendy in photos or during visits to the Philippines. Gino shared his strategy: ‘You pretend that you are very happy. Then you ask somebody to take a picture of you in a beautiful [place], and then in front of a car pretending that it is yours’. Image management could also be observed when some respondents returned for a visit to the Philippines. For instance, Harold remarked how his entourage in the Philippines was surprised to see the changes in him: ‘They seemed surprised. Before I was not neat, then now I am. I know now how to dress up. ... My cousins, my friends were also surprised. They looked at me differently, as if I had become superior [to them].’ Pursuing a socially valorizing job is another strategy that a few respondents adopted, like the case of Linda below.

Linda: I told to my friend to study. She studied [cooking]. She told me [that she spent] 22,000 [euros]. I told her, ‘Maria I would like to study pastry-making’. She said, ‘okay, I will inquire’. She inquired and she told me, ‘17,000 [euros]’. Oh my God.

[...]

AFF: After you obtain your diploma, you can apply then for a job in a bakery?

Linda: Yes, in a bakery. My friend [Maria] and I would like actually to open a restaurant after our studies.

[...]

AFF: You will save for it [the pastry-making course]?

Linda: Yes, I will save.

AFF: Do you think that next year you can start attending the course?

Linda: Yes, this September I can already go to the class.

Linda and other study respondents mainly focused their attention on their life in France, building their professional career, and forming their own family in the country while maintaining contacts within the Philippines. In contrast, their parents, in many cases, underwent ‘contradictory class mobility’ (Parreñas, 2001) and intended to spend their old age in their natal country.

At the time of their interviews, most of the respondents were over 18 years old and six of them had already completed tertiary or higher education. These six respondents had experienced in their transnational social spaces fluctuating mobility in social class terms: an upward mobility in the Philippines thanks to their parents’ remittances, a downward mobility in France at the beginning of their migration, and later on an upward mobility as they gained cultural and social capital in their country of settlement. Three respondents who decided not to pursue higher education but instead to work maintained their initial social class position. However, from their point of view, their life in France was much better than what they had experienced in the Philippines, both economically and socially. Their cases underline the

importance of the subjective, psychological perspectives of individuals on social class (Reay, 1998), which is central to comprehend the evolving meanings of it in time and space.

## **The 1.5-generation Filipinos in Italy**

### ***Background of their migration***

Filipino migration to Italy has been increasing since the 1970s. During this period and the following decade, most Filipinos entered the country (most often without proper documentation) and found jobs in the domestic service sector through their kin or friends who were already working in Italy. Since the 1980s, there has been a growing demand for foreign domestic workers in urban Italy (Andall, 2000; Zontini, 2010) due to the combination of several factors such as the decreased interest of rural Italian women to become domestic workers, the increasing labour participation of Italian middle-class women, the insufficient public support for care-related work, and the ageing of the population. Partly due to their high level of schooling, Filipinos have gained a reputation as capable and trustworthy workers in this sector (Nagasaka, 2015a).

In contrast to the case of Filipinos in France, a sizable number of Filipino workers during the 1980s through the 2000s had acquired a residence permit through legalization programmes of the Italian government. In 1986, a family reunification provision for documented foreigners was introduced in the country. While many Filipino workers with regular status brought in their spouses during the 1990s, they usually either left their children in the Philippines or sent them back to their homeland, due to the difficulty of working full-time with small children (Aguilar, 2009; Parreñas, 2001). These children of migrants were in many cases taken care of by their close relatives, such as grandparents and siblings of their

parents. According to the survey conducted by one of the authors (IN) in the villages of the northern Philippines in the late 1990s, 32 of the 39 couples who worked in Italy with their spouses and who had at least one child under the age of 18 years had left their children in the Philippines (Nagasaka, 2016).

After the 2000s, largely due to the improvement of their living conditions in Italy, many Filipino parents started to bring in their children through the family reunification programme. In 2011, 43,561 (32%) of 136,597 registered Filipinos in Italy were aged below 30 years (ISTAT, 2011). A significant proportion of these young Filipinos were thought to have spent part of their childhood in the Philippines. While the Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos by the Commission of Filipinos Overseas suggests the presence of undocumented Filipinos workers in Italy, the ratio is much lower than that in France: 20% and 79% respectively (CFO, 2013). Their relatively stable settlement has allowed them not only to keep their concrete ties with their family and kin in the homeland, but also to facilitate their children's migration to Italy.

### ***Different class belongings 'here' and 'there'***

When their children were taken care of in their homeland, Filipino migrant parents working in Italy had sent regular remittances to their children and their foster parents. Because all the respondents have rural origins in the Philippines, such regular remittances have in many cases dramatically elevated their family's class positions in the local community (see also Aguilar, 2014). As for their offspring, the regular remittances have allowed them to have a lifestyle closer to that of urban middle-class children than that of children from non-migrant households in rural and urban labour class communities (Nagasaka, 2015a). The life

experience of Jacky, a daughter of a female migrant who migrated to Italy in 1980 and was separated from Jacky's father, illustrates this well.

Jacky was born in Italy and lived there until she was 5 years old. Because it was difficult for her mother to care for an infant while working, she decided to send Jacky to the Philippines to be cared for by her grandparents. She lived with her brother and cousins in her grandparents' house that was newly constructed by her mother. When it was time to begin elementary school, her mother sent her to a prestigious private girls' school located in the provincial capital. Traditionally, only elite families in the province could send their daughters to the school. In the provincial capital, Jacky and her brother lived with a carer, usually a relative or co-villager, in rooms rented for them. She described her daily life at that time: 'every day, our *yaya* [hired carer] sent me to and picked me up from the school. She cooked for us'. With a good allowance given to her every week, she habitually went out for snacks and shopping in the provincial capital. While Jacky was in the Philippines, she recalled that her mother gave her 'everything' she wanted. She migrated to Italy when she was 13 years old.

As shown in her case, with regular remittances, these youngsters usually lived with their close relatives in a concrete-built house that was constructed by their parents. Many of them studied in a reputable private school in the cities. During their school days, with generous daily allowances, they often went out for snacks in the fast-food shops and shopping in business establishments in the cities. These experiences observed in their children's lives were not seen in the pre-migration lifestyles of the parental generation. The first-generation migrants with rural origins repeatedly mentioned a 'difficulty of life' in the Philippines as a

reason for their migration to Italy. In contrast, many of these migrants' children, particularly those whose parents were already working in Italy when they were infants, mentioned that they did not experience 'difficulty of life' when they were in the Philippines. However, it should be noted that one respondent did emphasize his 'difficulty of life' in the Philippines due to his foster parents' misuse of remittances.

After migrating to Italy, some children related their feeling of change in their social class position by saying 'we don't have a help here' as in the case of their counterparts in France. Some of them further elaborated on how they felt when they observed the lives of their parents and other Filipinos. A male migrant who came to Italy when he was 12 years old said, 'I urged my mother to buy things I wanted' when he was a small child. But after he came to Italy and observed his mother's job, he realized that 'her job here is like this. All [they did for me] came from their sacrifice'. Another male migrant, Brian, who came to Italy when he was 12, described his impression of the lives of Filipinos working in Italy as follows:

Because we had no class on Saturday, I went with my mother when she went to work. Then I saw many Filipinos here [in Italy] and looked at their faces ... I felt their faces are, somewhat like being tired out ... I did not have such image of life here. I then realized how difficult the life here is ... I realized how they [his parents] had built a large house in the Philippines... When I was in the Philippines, my mother bought things I wanted. Like toys, and they then sent a parcel to us ... Anything and everything ... When I wanted to go to Jollibee [fast-food chain], we went. Our life was like that. So when I was a small child, I wondered what my mother's job was. But when I came here, I came to know how she had worked. They have really sweated for us.



In this way, after migration, some of them realized how their middle-class lifestyle in the Philippines was made possible and reflected on their family's class positions 'there' and 'here'.

When they narrated their experiences after their migration, they emphasized their difficulty in adapting to their family and school in Italy. Largely due to their lack of proficiency in Italian, their perceived gap of school education and their occasional experiences of discrimination from their Italian classmates, only one of the 11 1.5-generation interviewees who had left secondary school was studying at university after finishing a technical school education and two had passed the national school-leaving examination (*esame di maturità*) (Nagasaka, 2015a). Responding to these difficulties, they have built their networks with their cousins and fellow young Filipino immigrants and created their own social spaces (Nagasaka, 2015a). Such networks were actively utilized when they searched for jobs after leaving school. A male migrant mentioned that his Filipino friend whom he came to know in a computer game arcade introduced him to the director of a restaurant. However, when they search for a job beyond the reach of their own networks and those of their parents, they usually face immense difficulties. A young female migrant, who graduated from the higher secondary school in Italy, related her employment experience as follows:

My parents' job is 'job of the house', right? I graduated here, so I wished to get a different job from theirs. But I fell to the job of the house. How many months I was stuck in my house when I submitted my resumé to many. Even a sales lady, a worker in the call centre, I wanted to be. But nothing ...

In addition to their scarcity of social capital outside their ethnic niche in the domestic sector, increasing employment insecurity notably among unskilled young workers since the

1980s (Bernardi and Nazio, 2005) as well as the fact that young people have been disproportionately affected by the recent economic crisis in Italy (Bonizzoni, 2017) has made it harder for these young Filipino immigrants to find employment outside their niche, even if they graduate from the upper secondary school in Italy. As a consequence, many of the 1.5 generation also started to work in the domestic sector.

Through their migratory experiences, they came to be well aware of the interrelation between their lifestyle in the Philippines and their parents' jobs in Italy, as shown in Brian's narrative. However, for those who have not experienced 'difficulty of life' and who hence did not feel a sense of economic and social marginalization in their homeland so much as their parents' generation with rural origins did, their feelings of social and economic marginalization in Italy are thought to be more intense than their parents' generations.

The question of how they have responded to such feelings of marginalization and lowered class positions after migration remains to be seen, partly due to the fact that many of them were still studying or had recently left school at the time of the interviews. But we may point out some emerging tendencies observed during the research period. One is to create and reaffirm their own transnational ties with their society of origin. They usually return to their communities of origin regularly, but some have started their own transnational engagement such as building a house, investing in retail business and sending remittances to their cousins to cover the cost of their children's education. Their regular returns to their original communities provide them with opportunities to reaffirm their ties with kin, neighbours, and friends there, and firmly place them into intimate circles that stretch across borders. These returns also make it possible for them to reconstruct their social identities as returnees, *balikbayan*, who are able to enjoy earning opportunities that are not available within or around the homeland communities. Although the nature of their transnational ties is varied

and may shift, for some of them, their places of origin seem to be emerging as an important 'point of social reference' (Kibria, 2009) as they have been for the first generations.

Another tendency is to utilize their existing social capital as well as skills acquired in the immigrant community to secure their employment and economic base. A young female migrant, who worked as a salesperson for a well-known brand, lost her job because of the sudden closure of the shop. She then acquired a babysitting job through her kin networks. She explained that having skills in doing domestic work is very important for their survival in the time of 'crisis'. She added that they could quit their jobs outside the domestic sector when the working conditions worsened, and if they have skills necessary for domestic work. We may say that, by making use of opportunities in the ethnic niche that the parental generations have constructed since the 1980s, she has secured her economic base and simultaneously explored job opportunities beyond this niche amid the increasing casualization of the labour market as well as the economic 'crisis' that has disproportionately affected youth employment in Italy.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The migration experiences of 1.5-generation Filipinos in France and in Italy indicate how children in transnational families undergo (im)mobilities not only in space and time, but also in social class terms. Their fluctuating social class mobilities are characterized by several upward/downward movements, and also include phases of immobility.

First, they experience an elevated social class position when their parent(s) migrate and send remittances back home. Second, they move down on the social class ladder when they reunite with their parents in their receiving country, where their parents are mostly employed as domestic workers. And third, they move up again in the social class hierarchy when they

become incorporated in their new society through schooling and employment outside of the domestic work sector. They go down anew on the social ladder when they lose their job outside of the domestic work sector and subsequently engage in domestic work. This suggests that migrant children/youth's position in the social class hierarchy is unstable and not static at all during their childhood or young adulthood lives, due to their migration and that of their parents. Their social class mobilities also appear contingent on their parents' social class position and on the value of the monetary benefit of their domestic work in different countries. Remittances from migrant parents allow stay-behind children to live a comfortable life in the Philippines, but the same amount of money has a lower impact on the material aspects of their lives in their receiving countries, France and Italy, where the standard of living is higher than that in their country of origin.

To face their downward social class mobilities, migrant children often resort to varying strategies. In France, 1.5-generation respondents learn to be independent, concentrate on their studies, manage their self-presentations in photos or the virtual world as well as during visits to the Philippines, and try to pursue socially valorizing employment. They also maintain ties with their country of origin, but they tend to focus on their lives in France, which sets them apart from their migrant parents. On the contrary, 1.5-generation Filipinos in Italy follow their parents' example by reinforcing their transnational ties with the Philippines while living in Italy. Some of them attempt to find a job outside of the domestic work sector with their academic records and their proficiency in Italian. If they encounter difficulties to do so, they take refuge in the domestic work sector, ending up doing the same job their parents' generation has engaged in. In this case, they undergo social class immobility, a temporary condition partly dependent on Italian labour market forces after the economic crisis. These (im)mobilities in social class terms of 1.5-generation respondents point to the importance of

the influence of space on migrants' lives, as changes in spaces of living most often entail changes in spaces of being. This is important to take into account in rethinking the concept of social class and belonging.

## **Acknowledgements**

We extend our gratitude to all the migrants who agreed to be interviewed for these case studies. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science supported these studies under grants JP21402032 (2009-2012) and JP24401039 (2012-2015) to Itaru Nagasaka (Hiroshima University). The previous version of the French case study was presented by Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot during the 'Research Profile Seminar' of the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden, 20 March 2019).

## **Notes**

1. All names of the respondents are pseudonyms to protect their privacy.
2. Pre-schooling was not compulsory in the Philippines until recently, and kindergartens in Gino's time were privately run.

## **References**

- Aguilar, F.V. (2009) *Maalwang Buhay: Family, Overseas Migration, and Cultures of Relatedness in Barangay Paraiso*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Aguilar, F.V. (2014) *Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.

Andall, F.V. (2000) *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service: The Politics of Black Women in Italy*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Bartley, A. and Spoonley, P. (2008) 'Intergenerational transnationalism: 1.5 generation Asian migrants in New Zealand', *International Migration*, 46(4): 63–84.

Bernardi, F. and Nazio, T. (2005) 'Globalization and the transition to adulthood in Italy', in H. Blossfeld, E. Klijzing, M. Mills and K. Kurtz (eds), *Globalization, Uncertainty and Youth in Society*. London: Routledge. pp. 349–374.

Bonizzoni, P. (2017) 'Challenging the social reproduction crisis: young Italian middle-class families in London', *Journal of Family Studies*, 24(1): 25–40.

Castles, S. and Miller, M.J. (2009) *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (4th ed.). London: Macmillan.

CFO (Commission of Filipino Overseas) (2016) 'Number of registered Filipino emigrants by age group: 1981-2016', (Available at: <https://www.cfo.gov.ph/downloads/statistics/statistical-profile-of-registered-filipino-emigrants.html>)

CFO (2013) 'Stock estimates of overseas Filipinos as of December 2013'. Available at: [www.cfo.gov.ph/downloads/statistics/stock-estimates.html](http://www.cfo.gov.ph/downloads/statistics/stock-estimates.html)

CFO (n.d.) 'Number of registered Filipino emigrants by country of destination and age group (13-19).' (Unpublished Statistics).

Danico, M.Y. (2004) *The 1.5 Generation: Becoming Korean American in Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Erel, U. (2010) 'Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies', *Sociology Compass*, 44(4): 642–660.
- Faist, T. (2000) *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fouron, G.E. and Glick Schiller, N. (2005) 'The generation of identity: redefining the second generation within a transnational social field', in P. Levitt and M.C. Waters (eds), *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. pp. 168–208.
- Fresnoza-Flot, A. (2017a) 'Beyond migration patterns: understanding family reunion decisions of Filipino labour and Thai marriage migrants in global reproductive systems', *Migration Studies*, 6(2): 205–224.
- Fresnoza-Flot, A. (2017b) 'Gender- and social class-based transnationalism of migrant Filipinas in binational unions', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(6): 885–901.
- Fresnoza-Flot, A. and Shinozaki, K. (2017) 'Transnational perspectives on intersecting experiences: gender, social class and generation among Southeast Asian migrants and their families', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(6): 867–884.
- Guo, S. (2013) 'Economic integration of recent Chinese immigrants in Canada's second-tier cities: the triple glass effect and immigrants' downward social mobility', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 45(3): 95–115.

Harklau, L., Losey, K. and Siegal, M. (eds) (1999) *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to US-educated Learners of ESL (English as Second Language)*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques) (2010) 'Répartition des immigrés par pays de naissance'. Available at: [www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?ref\\_id=immigrespaysnais](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?ref_id=immigrespaysnais)

ISTAT (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica) (2011) 'Cittadini non comunitari regolarmente presenti per classe di età, area geografica e principali paesi di cittadinanza, per sesso, al 1 gennaio 2011'. Available at: <http://demo.istat.it/altridati/noncomunitari/index.html>

Kibria, N. (2009) '“Marry into a good family”': transnational reproduction and intergenerational relations in Bangladeshi American families', in N. Foner (ed.), *Across Generations: Immigrant Families in America*. New York and London: New York University Press. pp. 98–113.

Levitt, P. and Waters, M.C. (2007) 'Transnational migration studies: past developments and future trends', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33: 129–156.

Nagasaka, I. (2016) 'Growing up in a transnational family: experiences of family separation and reunification of Filipino migrants' children in Italy', in K. Um and S. Gaspar (eds), *Southeast Asian Migration: People on the Move*. Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press. pp. 8–39.

Nagasaka, I. (2015a) 'Immigrating into a segregated social space: the case of 1.5-generation Filipinos in Italy', in I. Nagasaka and A. Fresnoza-Flot (eds), *Mobile Childhoods in Filipino*



*Transnational Families: Migrant Children with Similar Roots in Different Routes.*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 87–116.

Nagasaka, I. (2015b) ‘Migration trends of Filipino children’, in I. Nagasaka and A. Fresnoza-Flot (eds.), *Mobile Childhoods in Filipino Transnational Families: Migrant Children with Similar Roots in Different Routes.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 87-116.

Nagasaka, I. and Fresnoza-Flot, A. (eds) (2015) *Mobile Childhoods in Filipino Transnational Families: Children of Immigrants with Similar Roots in Different Routes.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nicklett, E.J. and Burgard, S.A. (2009) ‘Downward social mobility and major depressive episodes among Latino and Asian-American immigrants to the United States’, *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 170(6): 793–801.

Oliveira, G. (2013) ‘The consequences of maternal migration on education aspirations of Mexican children left behind’, in L. Bartlett and A. Ghaffar-Kucher (eds), *Refugees, Immigrants, and Education in the Global South: Lives in Motion.* New York and Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 226–239.

Parreñas, R.S. (2001) *Servants of Globalisation: Women, Migration and Domestic Work.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Reay, D. (1998) ‘Rethinking social class: qualitative perspectives on class and gender’, *Sociology*, 32(2): 259–275.

Rumbaut, R.G. and Ima, K. (1988) *The Adaptation of Southeast Asian Refugee Youth: A Comparative Study.* Washington, DC: US Office Refugee Resettlement.

Suksomboon, P. (2007) 'Remittances and "social remittances": their impact on cross-cultural marriage and social transformation', *IIAS Newsletter*, 45: 6.

Thai, H.C. (2014) *Insufficient Funds: The Culture of Money in Low-wage Transnational Families*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Zhou, M. (1998) ' "Parachute kids" in Southern California: the educational experience of Chinese children in transnational families', *Educational Policy*, 12(6): 682–704.

Zontini, E. (2010) *Transnational Families, Migration and Gender: Moroccan and Filipino Women in Bologna and Barcelona*. New York: Berghahn Books.