

A Comparative Analysis of the Labour Market Outcomes of Filipino Immigrants in the United States and Canada

Since the 1960s, international migration from the Philippines has demonstrated a propelled rise in global dispersion of overseas Filipinos in more than 200 countries. Indeed, the Philippines is now among the top sending source countries to traditional settlement countries, notably the United States and Canada. It represents the fourth largest immigrant group in the United States behind Mexico, China and India. In Canada, the Philippines was the leading country of birth among people who immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011. While Filipino immigration to Canada is relatively recent beginning in the 1960s, the growth of the Filipino community has largely been due to its recent arrivals with almost two thirds of Filipino immigrants arriving since the early 1990s (Kelly 2012). In contrast, Filipino immigration to the United States has a much longer history dating back to the beginning of the 20th century owing to US colonization of the Philippines (Rodriguez 2010). The main objective of this paper is to compare the economic integration of Filipino immigrants to the US and Canada. These two different migration histories present their own unique contexts of entries for this group, given their respective immigration policies and criteria for admissions. We make a case that the long standing colonial link between the US and the Philippines forged military, business and cultural ties that propelled the migration flows to the US (Espiritu 2003). The early migration movements which continued throughout the 20th century would have a significant impact on their economic social and political integration.

One of the diverging patterns of integration between these two countries is that compared to those who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, Filipino immigrants in Canada have become overrepresented in the caring industries, particularly those who work as nannies and care-workers for children and the elderly, a move triggered by the Foreign Domestic Movement in 1981-1992 and subsequently replaced by the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) in 1992. Indeed,

Filipinos constitute about 90% of those who arrived under the LCP. This phenomenon has raised important questions and implications for de-professionalization of Filipino immigrants as well as the increasing flow of Filipino migrant women to Canada. The majority of Filipino immigrants to the United States on the other hand have arrived through family reunification, mirroring the arrival patterns of the overall foreign born (Stoney and Batalova 2013).

These two countries provide very different migration entry points: one with long standing colonial ties and migration to the host country and hence a more established ethnic community; and the other a more recent immigration pattern with entries based on a point system along with a formal temporary entry class. The comparative approach of this paper will provide important insights into how the different migration patterns contribute to different occupational segmentation between these two countries and what the consequences are for their labour market trajectories. Moreover we can ascertain any similarities in immigrant incorporation that may arise between these two geographic settings. Finally, a comparative perspective will provide a better understanding on the role of the Philippine state as a labour broker in facilitating migration to Canada and the United States.

Using data from the 2011 National Household Survey of Canada and the 2009-2011 American Community Survey we compare the labour market outcomes of the US and Canada. Preliminary analysis show that Filipino immigrant women in the US are concentrated in health, nursing and nursing aide positions, while Filipino immigrant women in Canada are concentrated in home care, nursing aid and cleaning type positions. Filipino immigrant men in the US are concentrated in health, nursing aid positions although earn less than the native born in the US. Filipino immigrant men in Canada are concentrated in manufacturing and cleaning type jobs.

