

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research project focuses on Filipina informal settlers (women squatters) who live in the Manila megalopolis, and asks *How have the Lifestyle Aspirations of Filipina Informal Settlers changed over Space and Time?* It is assumed the Filipina have migrated from the provinces, to benefit from the wealth and burgeoning prosperity that the capital is experiencing.

The research looks at the factors involved in the migration, including classic 'push:pull' factors, the place of human agency in motivating the initial decision to migrate, as well as the timing of relocation and choice of destination. Frequently, what awaits such Filipina is poverty, homelessness, and with no social welfare system (Hardoy, Satterthwaite & Cairncross, 1990) the predicament is dire. If abandoned by her spouse, she has few options; prostitution, prostitute one (or more) of her children, beg, steal, or somehow, exercise entrepreneurship.

This research investigates the aspirations of six Filipinas in the Kamuning Community, before and since their migration to Manila. The research is conducted within the context of the participants' involvement in a personal development program, and mentor supported livelihood projects (i.e., micro-businesses).

The research is a feminist ethnography, requiring the researcher's involvement in intersubjective knowledge production, occurring contemporaneously with the second critical application of ethnographic methods to obtain the perceptions of the mentors. The third, and most important component, is the capturing of each Filipina's narrative, as she articulates her perceptions of her own aspirations and any changes she may have experienced in self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent (aspiration) at different times, and in different places.

The methods of data collection include structured interviews, a 'Draw and Tell' session, semistructured group discussions based around the content of the personal development

program and the use of a customised tool for identifying and valuing aspirations and the object of aspiration; all of which provide rich material for an interpretive thematic analysis. The key question *How have the Lifestyle Aspirations of Filipina Informal Settlers changed over Space and Time?* stimulates and evokes further questions, including:

What had the Filipina hoped for prior to migration? How was human agency involved in the migration and choice of destination? What residual aspirations remain? For whom were, and are those aspirations held?

Was self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent operational? If lost, could aspirations be renewed or reinvigorated by undertaking a personal development program and/or being mentored in the art of becoming a 'nano business' operator?

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life

Proverbs 13:12