

The Author



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Filipino Youth Success in Vancouver

In contrast to the significant body of research focusing on the challenges facing the Filipino community in Canada, Julia Mais' research sheds light on some of the achievements of Filipino-Canadians. Her study focuses on the adult children of Filipino immigrants who have met a certain level of "success" as it is conventionally, although perhaps problematically, defined. High powered Filipino-Canadian professionals such as IT managers, engineers, business owners, commercial actors and marketing executives are rarely visible in most academic literature. The study therefore sought out participants who were employed and who had completed some post-secondary education, with many holding Master's and Bachelor's degrees.

Mais argues that the educational and career pathways of Filipino-Canadian youth are largely influenced by their social context. Some of the common themes among those who experienced relative "success" were:

- High expectations from family. Many of the participants' parents were highly educated and were very insistent that their children attend post-secondary education. This expectation was so entrenched that several participants did not consider college or university to be a 'decision' but rather a 'non-decision'. For example, one participant explained: "We kinda knew that we had to go to university, after high school we had to go to university, get a degree and get a good job."
- Prestigious grade school attendance. Many of the participants had attended private schools or public schools in neighbourhoods with high socio-economic profiles. Attending these types of schools ensured that youth were surrounded by a predominantly university-bound peer group. It also meant that the school culture and resources facilitated post-secondary trajectories. It is interesting to note that many youth who attended prestigious private schools were not themselves from wealthy backgrounds and often struggled to pay for their post-secondary education.
- Positive peer pressure. Many participants explained that they felt pressure to keep up with their friends' educational and professional achievements. For example, one participant explained how the influence of her peers out-

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weighed the opinion of her parents:

"...One of the things that my dad said was you don't really need to go to university, you can just go and do a trade or something. And I was like, what? I have to go to university, all my friends are in university, I can't not go to university."

In addition, peers served as vital links to employment and many participants found jobs through networks of friends.

Overall, Mais found that the social surroundings of family, educational institutions and peers were key for youth when they made decisions regarding their careers and post-secondary education. Further, she determined that the resources, cultural capital, encouragement, and social connections provided by these contexts effectively facilitated positive pathways to employment and post-secondary education for young Filipino-Canadians.

Source

Julia Mais completed this research in 2012 as a Master's student in the Graduate Programme in Geography at York University. Her thesis was titled 'Behind the resume: influences on the educational and employment trajectories of 1.5 and second generation Filipino-Canadians in Vancouver'.

The full thesis is available here: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/theses-canada/vol2/002/MR91746.pdf>.