

Exploring the Dynamics of Transnational Families: Intimacy, Tensions, and Self-making

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Drawing on longitudinal research conducted over two decades, this paper presents an exploration of the evolution of transnational families formed by Japanese women and their Pakistani migrant husbands. International marriages of this type increased in Japan during the 1990s after a surge of Pakistani labor migrants who came to Japan. A type of transnationally split family emerged as children reached school age: Japanese wives and children relocated to Pakistan or other countries while the Pakistani husbands remained in Japan to continue their businesses. Results of longitudinal research reveal that this type of transnational family evolved through exchanges of goods, money, ideas, people, and emotions across national boundaries (Cole and Groes 2016). Family trajectories of respondents to the present study were diverse, reflecting the complex motives and shifting power dynamics of the couple, which were mediated by gender, nationality, and other factors. Furthermore, exchanges across national borders might in some cases be blocked because of conflicts and tensions arising among family members and extended kin, consequently affecting subsequent family trajectories. Finally, the dynamics of family-making intertwined with the young generations' processes of self-making as demonstrated through a story of a young woman whose parents were divorced.

References:

Cole, Jennifer and Christian Groes. 2016. "Introduction: Affective Circuits and Social Regeneration in African Migration." In *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*, ed. Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes, 1-26. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

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