


Chapter 1

Digital Motherhood in Flux:

Skilled Immigrant Women's Narratives of Place, Resilience, and Advocacy in North America

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how skilled immigrant mothers from the Global South in North America utilise digital platforms to overcome systemic barriers, process trauma, and advocate for equity. An intersectional analysis reveals that their identities intensify challenges such as credential devaluation, underemployment, and cultural dissonance. Through case studies and digital ethnography, the chapter introduces the concept of narrative resilience, highlighting therapeutic storytelling via blogs, social media, and encrypted parenting forums that reshape fragmented migration experiences into cohesive survival narratives. The findings demonstrate algorithmic aikido, where mothers counteract platform biases through hashtag campaigns and hybrid professional-caregiving content. The analysis advances virtual place-making as a survival strategy, merging cultural preservation from their homelands with integration in their host countries. Policy recommendations include trauma-informed digital credentialing systems and AI hiring reforms.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-9979-8.ch001

INTRODUCTION

Contextualizing Digital Motherhood

In an increasingly “hyperconnected” world (Amugune, 2023), migration is a significant component of contemporary life, offering opportunities for upward mobility, especially for skilled individuals from the Global South who migrate to more developed countries primarily for professional and personal development. Migration often serves as a double-edged sword for many immigrants. On one hand, it presents opportunities for upward mobility; on the other, it poses challenges and barriers to integration, particularly affecting immigrant women who are caregivers. Among skilled immigrant mothers (defined in this chapter as women who have migrated internationally with professional qualifications or specialized training and simultaneously navigate parenting responsibilities), difficulties like the non-recognition of their foreign professional credentials, inaccessible or inadequate childcare support services, and underemployment can alter integration processes and compound emotional distress (Carranza, 2024). These barriers placed on the mothers’ integration can create a disconnect between their pre-migration aspirations and perceived spaces, as well as their post-migration lived experiences. Individual, structural, and community-level challenges can lead to difficult conditions that can take an emotional toll on skilled immigrant mothers and prompt them to innovate resilience mechanisms to navigate the barriers to integration.

In response to these challenges, many skilled immigrant mothers have increasingly turned to digital technologies and online communities—a phenomenon often referred to as “digital motherhood”—to find support and navigate their new environments. Skilled immigrant mothers maintain social connections with their families back home through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Skype (Gonzalez & Katz, 2016). For marginalized groups like skilled immigrant mothers from the Global South, these platforms are avenues for emotional support (through family ties and social networks), career advancement, and political participation in inclusive policymaking. These platforms are an essential tool for resilience among skilled immigrant mothers as they navigate systemic inequalities and improve their lived experiences. Digital platforms like social media have been employed to mitigate emotional distress. They help maintain communication and social closeness with home countries, which keeps transnational ties alive during periods of geographical separation. Thus, digital connections help bridge some of the barriers skilled immigrant mothers face in their daily lives (Pineros-Leano et al., 2021).

While research on the use of digital platforms by women refugees and asylum seekers to share their lived experiences of trauma is abundant, little research has focused on skilled immigrant mothers, especially those from the Global South. These

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