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Discerning Transnational Flows: The Formation and Development of Chinese Newcomers' Transnational Businesses in Japan

Bin Li

Summary

The success of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' transnational businesses has long been attributed to these immigrants' dual embeddedness between China and their countries of settlement in cultural, social capital, and institutional terms. However, the embeddedness approach focuses mainly on opportunity structures, and less so on resources and commodity flows in transnational businesses. This empirical study will hence turn to the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs who arrived and set up businesses in Japan from the 1990s, investigating how these immigrants' transnational enterprises developed step by step with different transnational flows. Based on my fieldwork in Tokyo in 2019 and digital interviews in 2020, the study shows that the development of Chinese newcomers' transnational businesses includes three phases characterized respectively by uni-/bidirectional transnational flows of financial support, social capital, and commodities. Moreover, it also illustrates that the various noncommercial factors emerging between China and Japan have the potential to cause instability in transnational businesses. The paper aims herewith to provide empirical data aiding our understanding of the establishment of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' transnational businesses.

Keywords: Chinese in Japan; transnational business; transnational flow; entrepreneurship

Bin Li is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at the Graduate School of East Asian Studies and Anthropology Faculty, Free University of Berlin, Germany. His doctoral research, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), investigates how the entrepreneurial motivations and strategies of Chinese newcomers in Japan developed in the course of their immigration experiences and social interactions within local society. He received his master's degree from the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Tohoku University, Japan, and a BA from the University of International Relations, China.

bin.li@fu-berlin.de