



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

and

PCED | Philippine Center for
Economic Development

present a seminar on

Taken by Storm: Hurricanes, Migrant Networks, and U.S. Immigration

by

Dean Yang

University of Michigan, NBER and BREAD

06 July 2017, Thursday

10:30-11:30 a.m. – Rm 303

Abstract:

How readily do potential migrants respond to changes in the returns to migration? When there are fixed migration costs, potential migrants can fail to respond to increased migration returns. We explore these issues in the context of migration to the U.S., the world's largest migration destination. We exploit exogenous variation in the returns to migration due to natural disasters (in particular, hurricanes), which reduce the attractiveness of origin locations. We examine heterogeneity in the response to hurricanes with respect to the size of previous U.S. migrant stocks from the same country. Our analysis uses restricted-access U.S. Census data, allowing improved migration stock and flow estimates and inclusion of small hurricane-prone countries. Our results suggest that networks of prior migrants help reduce immigration barriers, making migration more responsive to the returns to migration. Hurricanes cause immediate increases in U.S. immigration, with the effect concentrated among countries with larger pre-existing stocks of U.S. immigrants. Analysis of administrative immigration data reveals that a key role played by migrant networks is formally sponsoring relatives for legal, permanent immigration.

About the speaker:

Dean Yang is a Professor in the Department of Economics and the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. His current research is primarily on microfinance, international migration, and areas at the intersection of these topics. Other past and current topics of interest include health, disasters, international trade, and political economy. Methodologically, much of his work involves randomized controlled trials in field settings, while other work involves analysis of novel data sources. He is currently running survey work and field experiments on microlending in Malawi and on HIV/AIDS interventions in central Mozambique. His past and current field research locations include El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, and the Philippines, as well as migrant populations of Filipinos in Italy, Indians in Qatar, and Salvadorans and Kenyans in the U.S. He teaches courses in development economics and microeconomics at the undergraduate, master, and Ph.D. levels. A native of the Philippines, he received his undergraduate and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Harvard University.



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