

Gendered Remittance Patterns among Second-Generation Migrants

In 2014, international migrants remitted more than \$583 billion to their home countries. This in turn served to benefit migrants, their families, and the greater economies of both sending and receiving countries (World Bank 2015). In addition to its practical usage, research has shown that this money also has a social and cultural benefit that can differ along the lines of gender. However, much of research examining remittance patterns among migrants has overwhelmingly focused on first-generation migrants while ignoring the contributions of their children, i.e. second-generation migrants. As a result, explanations for why migrants remit has been relevant to first-generation men and women only.

Previous literature explains remittances among migrants as stemming from familial connections, identification with the sending country, and rational-choice economic reasons in case of return (Perlmann 2002). In addition, there also tends to be gender- and cultural-specific reasons for remittances. Men in Southeast Asia have been shown to remit as a way of boosting social status among peers in their home society, and achieving a higher sense of masculinity due to their role as provider (Thai 2006). In contrast, women's remittances often serve as a form of care and expression of familial obligation (Thai 2012). However, given that second-generation migrants have been shown to have only fleeting connections to those abroad, and they often have no plan on returning to their parents' home country, it is unknown whether these same gendered reasons will apply to second-generation migrants as well (Perlmann 2002). Finally, while literature has discussed a sense of familial obligation to parents, spouses, and children in the sending nation, these family members are typically present in the host nation with second-generation migrants. Due to this, one would assume that notions of familial obligation differ for second-generation migrants.

I propose a study to *examine the rate of remittances among Filipino second-generation*

migrant men and women; the factors that influence Filipino second-generation men and women to remit or to not remit, and how the decision to remit differs along the lines of gender. My study focuses on second-generation Filipino American migrants because they are more likely to remit than other migrant groups. 42% of second-generation Filipino-Americans remit, compared to only 16% of Chinese-Americans and 15% of Korean-Americans (Rumbaut et al. 2004). In the following proposal, I will first cover the gendered remittance patterns among first-generation migrant men and women, then I will move on to the theoretical gaps within current literature and discuss how research on second-generation migrant men and women can address these gaps. Second, I will explain why second-generation Filipino-American men and women make for a strategic population to study. Finally, I will discuss my plan to use interviews and survey data to illuminate the remittance patterns among second-generation Filipino American men and women.

Literature Review

As gender norms and relations vary across different contexts, I will focus the following section reviewing the past literature on remittances among first-generation migrant men and women from the Southeast Asia region. In the context of the Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia, overseas relatives are seen as the main way to procure large amounts of cash (Truitt 2006). As a result, both first-generation migrant men and women face pressure within their families to remit. In addition to fulfilling familial obligation, migrants tend to remit in the event that they return or make long visits to their home country (Thai 2006). While there are common themes for the reasons that men and women remit, social and cultural pressures shape the meaning of remittances so that there are many differences in the purpose of remitting along the lines of gender.

Prior research on remittances among migrant men in the context of the Philippines and greater Southeast Asia has alluded to money serving as a means of increasing social status. Steve

McKay's (2007) work on Filipino seafarers has demonstrated that the money seafarers send serves a social benefit as it allows them to fashion themselves as "exemplars of masculinity." This desire to increase social status serves two purposes. First, Filipino seafarers experience racial discrimination and subordinate masculinities in comparison to their predominantly white officers. By sending remittances to those in the Philippines, seafarers invert the exploitation they face on the job with those in their hometowns that they see as subordinate to themselves. Second, by sending remittances, seafarers demonstrate that they have a high income in relation to the people in their neighborhood. In doing this, they increase their prospects of finding a partner by demonstrating that they are achieving the ideals of what a father and husband should be. The desire to increase social status among migrant men is so strong that they will remit even if they themselves will face extreme economic hardships. Hung Cam Thai's (2006) work on low-wage Vietnamese immigrant men demonstrated that though they could barely afford to remit, they remitted to their communities of origin to restore a sense of self-worth that was lost in their economic subordination. These examples demonstrate that the purpose for remittances goes beyond its obvious practical usage and serves to bolster a sense of masculinity.

In contrast to men, prior research on remittances among migrant women tend to point to a stronger sense of familial care and nurturing. In Rhacel Parrenas' (2005) *Children of Global Migration*, she argues that despite the geographical separation, transnational mothers still take on the role of providing care to their children. There are two factors that influence why mothers feel the need to remit as a sense of caring for their children. First, despite being thousands of miles away, mothers still feel a need to perform normative gender behavior in which they are responsible for nurturing their children. Second, fathers and other men in the family perform normative gender behavior as well and continue to reject nurturing children. In order to make up for the lack of familial care by men, transnational mothers perform responsibilities of mothering.

Hung Cam Thai's (2012) work on transnational Vietnamese daughters demonstrates that familial obligation can also vary across different life stages. Before they find a partner, Vietnamese daughters feel that monetary transfers serve as a form of care that they must give regularly to their parents as an expression of filial piety. However, once married, women are much less obligated to provide monetary support for their parents and instead shift their obligation to their husbands and children. Previous research on remittances among women demonstrates that women often have to navigate patriarchal familial structures and fulfill gender norms even when not present in a home country.

While remittance rates among Filipino migrant men and women are similar, the net effect of gender on earnings shapes the differential amount that men and women are able to remit. On average, Filipino men remit over 60% of their earnings while women remit about 45% of their earnings (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005). In addition, among households that rely on women, women's remittances comprise 66% of the household income in the Philippines whereas remittances sent by men comprise more than 78% of household income (Perlmann 2002). These findings show that in order to fully understand how remittance patterns are shaped by gender, one must examine the gender differential in income and occupational status.

Previous research on financial remittances demonstrates the importance of using gender as a lens to understand why migrants engage in financial ties with those in a home country. However, many of the reasons that scholarship posits for why individuals remit are relevant to first-generation migrants only. Second-generation migrants' attachments are primarily to the host nation and they often have no plan of returning to their parents' home country (Perlmann 2002). While literature has discussed a sense of familial obligation to parents, spouses, and children in the sending nation, these family members are typically present in the host nation with second-generation migrants. Thus, one would assume that notions of filial piety differ for second-

generation migrants as these familial connections differ from the familial relations that the literature typically covers.

Currently, the literature provides no theory about what would lead children of migrants born in the U.S. to connect with those in their parental home country (Soehl and Waldinger 2012). By researching the transnational ties among Filipino-Americans and those abroad, my work will contribute to the theoretical understanding of why migrants maintain transnational ties, the social meaning of money, immigrant incorporation, and gender.

Data and Methods

Filipino-Americans maintain financial connections at a greater rate than most other second-generation migrants. Previous research found that 42% of second-generation Filipino-Americans were found to remit. In contrast, only 15% of Korean-Americans and 16% of Chinese-Americans (IIMMLA 2004). Because of this, second-generation Filipino-Americans are one of the best groups to study due to the community containing ample variation in second-generation remittance behavior, with large numbers of both remitters and non-remitters.

I will examine data from the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) study. The dataset comes from a cross-sectional survey of second-generation adults in the greater Los Angeles area. I specifically chose IIMMLA due to its alignment in analysis of second-generation migrants in the greater Los Angeles area; it being a dataset that disaggregates data on Asian-Americans; it having collected data on remittances; and its total sample of 401 second-generation Filipino-American men (n=197) and women (n=204).

My interview sample consists of second-generation Filipino-American men and women in the southern California region. Filipino-Americans are the largest Asian-American group in California and have their highest concentrations in southern California, providing strategic

locations to recruit respondents (U.S. Census 2010). For the purposes of my project, I will interview 60 second-generation Filipino-Americans: 30 men and 30 women. Within each sample of men and women, I will interview 15 that remit, and 15 that do not remit.

I will recruit through organizations to find respondents. I will separate my recruitment through organizations in two ways, by recruiting through organizations that work towards Philippines-specific issues and organizations that work on Filipino-American specific issues. I will recruit those that remit from Anakbayan and Filipino Migrant Center (FMC). Anakbayan works to address political issues in the Philippines, mainly targeting the corruption within the Philippine state and the state's campaign to confiscate the lands of indigenous peoples within the country. FMC works towards the issues of Filipino migrants broadly, with its latest campaign addressing human trafficking violations against Filipino migrant workers. The members in this organization are able to visit the Philippines through particular events and are more likely to maintain social connections as a result. To recruit from each organization, I will make contact with organization leaders and discuss my plans for interviewing. Since I am a designated general member of Anakbayan, I have an established connection to those within the organization. I already have confirmations from those within the group that they are open to being interviewed. FMC often collaborates with those in Anakbayan, and I have reached out and received confirmation from those in their executive board that they are open to being interviewed and will discuss with the other members of the organization about being interviewed.. In order to identify those that remit, I will ask those that I interview if they can refer me to those that also send money to the Philippines.

The second part of my recruitment plan will include recruiting within Filipino-American organizations in various college organizations. The make-up of these organizations tends to be predominantly second- and later-generation migrants so discourse and actions tend to be on

issues specifically in the U.S. These organizations work on American-specific issues such as college access and the inclusion of Filipino-American representation in American educational curriculums. I am a former president of an organization in Southern California, and will recruit through the extensive networks I have with its former and current members. By recruiting through organizations that specifically address affairs in the U.S., I anticipate there is a lesser chance they will have relationships with those in the Philippines, increasing the likelihood I would be able to recruit non-remitters.

The unique aspects of the second-generation Filipino-American community provide the ideal population to study. By sampling Filipino-Americans in southern California, I will be able to recruit respondents from the most heavily concentrated Filipino-American area in the country. Through my project on second-generation Filipino-Americans, I will expand on the theoretical understanding of why men and women migrants send remittances, and how gendered meanings of remittances transform among later generations of migrants. In sociological literature, there has been a presumption that these connections to a home country die out after the first generation of migrants. By researching the financial ties among Filipino-Americans and those abroad, my work provides insight into the connections among later generations to their parents' home countries.

In addition to interviews, I will use the IIMMLA survey. I will conduct a logistic regression analysis to investigate the remittance patterns and characteristics of Filipino-American men and women who remit. The dependent variable will be the decision to remit. The independent variables used in the models will include gender, personal income, education, age, membership in organizations related to their parents' home country, visits, language usage in the household, current-living arrangement, if one's parents are living in the household, the sense of feeling at home (in the Philippines), if one has any children under the age of 18 in the household,

parents' rate of visits to their ancestral homeland, parents' remittance rates, and the presence of relatives residing in one's ancestral homeland.

To date, there has been no study examining the rationale of why second-generation migrants send remittances. In order to address this gap in the literature, my study will include the usage of interviews to explore how second-generation migrants construct a rationale for sending remittances to those in their parents' home country. I will conduct in-depth, open-ended interviews with second-generation Filipino-American men and women. Questions will focus on neighborhood composition, understanding of life in the Philippines, familial relationships with those in the Philippines and in the U.S., and why they do or do not send remittances. Once finished with interviews, I will transcribe and code my transcripts. Using the coding software Dedoose, I will code for themes that are common throughout my transcripts. As of right now, prospective codes include themes such as "understanding of life in the Philippines," "reasons for sending remittances," and "quality of life of family in Philippines." In addition, I will use axial coding to see if there are any gender differences in why second-generation migrants choose to send money.

Hypotheses and Discussion

In particular, I hypothesize that there will be differences in the gendered meaning of remittances. I anticipate men will face greater pressures to remit due to gendered expectations of men being the economic breadwinners. However, I anticipate that both second-generation Filipino-American men and women will remit due to familial obligation to both their first-generation migrant parents and to those living in the Philippines. My preliminary findings as of date support these claims. Furthermore, I find that second-generation migrants remit mainly out of obligation to first-generation migrant parents. First-generation migrant parents encourage

respondents to remit by drawing on the economic divide between second-generation Filipino-Americans and those living in the Philippines. Due to living in relative privilege, second-generation Filipino-Americans feel pressure to send money to family members, even if they may lack an intimate relationship with them.

Through a mixed-methods study of second-generation Filipino-American men and women, I will be able to address the current gaps in transnational literature. My usage of interviews will effectively trace why migrants remit. While my usage of survey data will explore the factors that shape variation in remittance patterns, my interviews will also build on understanding how they go about the process of sending money and potentially why they send money that may be culturally specific to the Filipino community.

This research on second-generation migrant men and women will help to understand and rethink existing theory on transnational ties among migrants. My research will contribute to the theoretical understanding of why migrants engage in transnational ties, in particular through the act of remitting; the social meaning of money; immigrant incorporation; and discourse on gender. In addition, this study will provide insight into an industry that shapes the global economy. Of the total money sent, the Philippines received \$28 billion in remittances, the third most in the world (World Bank 2015). As migrants increasingly settle in new countries and are replaced by their children, both families and sending countries' economies face the threat of losing vital economic support if the children of these migrants do not remit. My usage of a mixed-methods study of second-generation Filipino-American remittance practices among men and women will not only address the current gaps in academic literature, but will also serve to bolster the understanding of the growing second-generation community and their connection to their parents' home country.

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