Migration Letters
November 2022
Volume: 19, No: 6, pp. 943 – 956
ISSN: 1741-8984 (Print) ISSN: 1741-8992 (Online)
journals.tplondon.com/ml

TRANSNATIONAL PRESS® LONDON

Received: 6 September 2021 Accepted: 22 October 2022
DOI: https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v19i6.1800

Social Ties and Stricter Immigration Enforcement Influencing Mexican Migrants' Remitting Behavior

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Abstract

This study examines whether Mexican migrants' remitting behavior during their last U.S. trip changed as policies restricting unauthorized immigration in the U.S. tightened. Using data from the Mexican Migration Project (MMP 150), this study addresses two research questions: 1) does Mexican migrants' social ties influence their remittance behavior? and 2) does social ties counteract immigrant restriction effects on Mexican migrants' remittance sending behavior? A Logistic regression model was used to estimate the likelihood that migrants send remittances during their last U.S. trip. An ordinary least squares regression was used to estimate the effect of social ties and immigrant enforcement periods on the logged amount of remittances sent monthly (2010 USD) by Mexican migrants during their last U.S. trip. Findings show that stricter immigration policies and social ties increased their likelihood in sending remittances and quantity sent.

Keywords: *Remittances; immigration policies; social ties; Mexican migrants*

Introduction

Mexicans migrate to the U.S. as part of an economic strategy to obtain higher wages than it is possible to obtain domestically (Durand et al., 1996; Massey & Parrado, 1994). Once in the U.S., labor migrants send sums of money—remittances—to their family or community members in Mexico. Their remittance behavior is motivated by their responsibility to provide for the family members that remain in their community of origin; to invest in property, land, or a business; to demonstrate membership in their origin community; and as insurance against the risk of being deported (Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2006; Carling, 2008). Remittance behavior is also affected by immigration policies that have decreased their earnings and chances of employment (Donato & Sisk 2012). Consequently, the flow of remittances from the U.S. to Mexico has diminished (Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2006; Vaira-Lucero et al., 2012). This study investigates whether the likelihood of remitting and the amount sent by Mexican migrants has diminished as policies restricting unauthorized immigration in the U.S. have tightened.

The study also investigates whether migrants' social ties, specifically transnational ties, affect migrants' remittance patterns. In this case, social ties are considered transnational when migrants maintain some form of connection with someone from their country of origin, such as community and family members, in the U.S. and Mexico (Sochl & Waldlinger, 2010). The migrants' social ties may serve as a form of social control over their actions, encouraging remittance behavior, because these connections may grant or restrict access to a broad range of resources, including material and social support (Portes, 1998: 9; Portes & Landolt, 2002).

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Also, the social ties may be useful to counter the effects of more restrictive immigration enforcement policies for undocumented individuals through the sharing of information about enforcement activities or jobs and communities that may be relatively less affected by these policies. This study addresses the following questions: 1) Does Mexican migrants' social ties influence their remittance behavior? and 2) Does social ties counteract immigration restriction effects on Mexican migrants' remittance sending behavior?

The following sections review the literature on remittance sending behavior and specify the study's hypotheses. The next section describes the research methods, data, and measures. The results section presents the statistical tests of the hypotheses, followed by a discussion of the results and suggestions for future research.

Motivations for Remitting

The new economics of labor migration (NELM) theory posits that households decide for whether one or more of its members are to migrate to diversify the family's income portfolio and protect against wage losses in the local economy and, if possible, to increase household earnings (Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1999). Migrants remit and invest in profitable activities, such as buying land, starting or expanding a business, and investing in more productive technology (Cohen, 2001) and contribute to the wellbeing of their home community (Conway & Cohen, 2008; Muñoz & Collazo, 2019; Sana, 2005). Indirectly, Migrants' remittances increase or smooth consumption in which increases the local production of goods and services, thereby creating jobs in the origin community economy (Haas, 2010; Itzigsohn, 1995). Even if all household members have migrated, permanent migrants may continue to remit to their sending communities out of altruism, obligation, or to maintain relationships within the community, all of which preserve migrants' social ties.

Social Ties

Researchers (Duany, 2010; Muñoz & Collazo, 2014; Soehl & Waldinger, 2010) have addressed the significance of social networks for immigrants' adaptation and prosperity in their host country, wellbeing, and political empowerment and engagement. For this study, emphasis will be placed on the migrants' social ties, particularly their transnational connections, as these enhanced individuals' sense of community and belonging in the destination's environment and assist them in attaining prosperity in the new country (Mooney ,2003). Migrants who participate more in their transnational ties by having *fiestas*, fundraisers, or creating and participating in migrant organizations are more likely to send remittances (Marcelli & Lowell, 2005; Portes & Landolt, 2000; Sana, 2005; VanWey et al., 2005) to preserve the bonds with the community.

A strong transnational tie migrants have are family members left behind in the country of origin. Previous research shows that migrants are more likely to remit if they have children or a spouse in their home country (Dustmann & Mestres, 2010; Menjivar et al., 1998). Existing research suggests that children in transnational families may receive certain benefits from migration as compared to their counterparts in non-migrant households via remittances by the parents leading to improvement of economic stability (Cohen, 2001; Cooke, 2003). Conversely, some research has indicated that the parents sending remittances does not improve the lives of their children (Heymann et al., 2009; Hondagneu-Sotolo & Avila, 1997) because they want emotional support.

Studies have shown that migrants must meet the families' and communities' expectations by providing communal services, paying dues, or remitting to community projects or risk being sanctioned (Beard & Sarmiento, 2010; Kandel &Massey, 2002). The migrants' *paisanos* (compatriots), family members left behind, and organizations may influence them to remit or to remit higher amounts, by restricting access to resources for those who do not remit to community organizations. *Paisanos*, family members, and organizations may also positively reinforce immigrants' remittance behavior by requesting or reminding the migrant to remit. Based on this literature, the study tests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a. *Migrants with social ties during their last U.S. trip are more likely to send remittances than those without social ties.*

Hypothesis 1b. *Migrants with social ties during their last U.S. trip will send more remittance than those without social ties.*

Immigration Policy Period

While a stream of remittances to the home community may fortify bonds with family and friends, more restrictive immigration periods, in which enforcement activities limit access to employment and diminish earnings, may make it more difficult to remit. Both the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) (1986) and he Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) (1996) included employment-based policies limiting undocumented migrants access to employment. While these were weakly enforced in the IRCA period, IIRIRA improved enforcement capacity and threatened more migrants with the possibility of arrest and deportation (Massey et al., 2002). The Immigration Reform and Control Act, which gave a pathway to citizenship for many previously undocumented Mexican migrants, decreased Mexican migrants' likelihood of remitting and the quantity of remittances sent overall (Amuedo-Dorantes & Mazzolari, 2010). More restrictive immigration policies since IRCA have decreased the earnings of undocumented Mexican migrants relative to documented migrants (Donato & Sisk, 2012). Overall, more restrictive immigration policies have heightened migrants' insecurity, which has resulted in migrants remitting to prepare for their return, but simultaneously diminished their earnings and, thus, their potential to remit (Amuedo-Dorantes & Puttitanun, 2014; Vairira-Lucero et al., 2012).

To understand the effect of immigration policy periods more clearly on remittance behavior, the following hypotheses are tested:

Hypothesis 2a. *Migrants are more likely to send remittances during periods of greater immigration enforcement (IRCA: 1987–1996 and IIRIRA: 1997–2015) than during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986).*

Hypothesis 2b. *Migrants send more remittances during periods of greater immigration enforcement (IRCA: 1987–1996 and IIRIRA: 1997–2015) than during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986).*

Interactions

Social ties and more restrictive immigration enforcement are expected to increase Mexican migrants' likelihood of sending remittances and the sum sent. To date, there is no research that demonstrates how these two factors interact. This study posits that migrants' social ties, specifically living with a *paisano*, aids them in obtaining jobs with higher earnings and may protect them from deportation, allowing them to remit more. It also posits that more

restrictive immigration policies diminish earnings and, therefore, the likelihood of remitting. The following hypotheses are tested:

Hypothesis 3a. *Migrants living with a paisano during the IRCA period (1987–1996) or IIRIRA period (1997–2015) on their last U.S. trip are more likely to remit than those living with a paisano during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986).*

Hypothesis 3b. *Migrants living with a paisano during the IRCA period (1987–1996) or IIRIRA period (1997–2015) on their last U.S. trip sent more remittances than those living with a paisano during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986).*

Other Motivations for Remitting

There are other motivations for remitting than those discussed above. These are controlled in the regression models. Other motivators include gender, marital status, earnings, and community development. With women tending to send a higher proportion of their income than men. The higher the earnings the higher the remittances sent. Migrants who own a home, farm, or business may also intend to return and therefore be more likely to remit (Constant & Massey, 2002; Sana & Massey, 2005). However, the longer migrant stays in the U.S., especially if they are joined by family or have children who were born in the U.S., the probability of remitting decreases. Additionally, highly educated migrants may be more established in the U.S. and therefore less likely remit (Marcelli & Lowell, 2005; Niimi et al., 2010). Unemployment also decreases the remittances flow. More recently, the housing crisis between 2007 and 2009 decreased employment in the construction sector where many Mexican migrants, documented and undocumented, were employed (Wilson, 2009). This economic recession diminished the flow of remittances of Latin American migrants, particularly unauthorized Mexicans, from the top sending U.S. states, such as California (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2010). Basically, as the migrant becomes more established in the host country, the likelihood of remitting and its amount declining.

Methodology

To examine the hypotheses for two different outcomes, the likelihood of remitting and the quantity sent, two separate analyses were conducted using the same data and measures.

This study uses ethnosurvey data from 150 communities located in 24 Mexican states surveyed by the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) between 1982 and 2015 (Massey, 1987). Communities were selected based on population size, geographic location, and a history of migration to the U.S. Consequently, the MMP is not designed to be a representative sample of Mexican immigrants in the U.S., or of the Mexican population more broadly. Analyses of the MMP show similar results to those found in representative samples of the Mexican population such as Mexico's National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (Massey & Zenteno, 2000; Rendall et al., 2011).

The unit of analysis for the study was the household heads with migration experience (hereafter referred to as migrants). The last U.S. trip was the trip examined. The last U.S. trip is the most recent trip, which may be the first trip for new migrants or a higher order trip for more experienced migrants. Migrants who had incomplete information on their migration experience or their demographic, household, and community characteristics were excluded from the analysis. The final sample included 3,773 migrants ages 15 and older with migration

experience dating between 1965 and 2015. All observations are used to estimate the effects of social ties and immigration policy period on migrant remitting behavior.

Measures

Table 1 provides the description of the variables used to estimated regression equations for migrants' likelihood in remitting and the amount of sent during their last U.S. trip. For the sake of space, only the dependent and critical measures are explained.

Table 1. Description of Variables Used to Estimate Regression Equations for Migrant Remitting Behavior and the Amount of Remittances Sent During Their Last U.S. Trip

Variables	Description	Coding
Dependent Variables		
Sent remittances	Remitted or returned with savings during their last U.S. trip	1=yes; 0=no
Amount of remittances sent (monthly, 2010 USD)	Total amount of remittances sent monthly in last U.S. trip	Continuous
Independent Variables		
Demographic Characteristics		
Age	Respondent's age	Continuous
Age2	Age squared	Continuous
Female	Respondent is female	1=yes; 0=no
Ever married	Was married during their last U.S. trip	1=yes; 0=no
Have minor children	Had children under 18 during their last U.S. trip	1=yes; 0=no
Legal Status		
Undocumented	Used no documents or false documents during their last U.S. trip	1=yes; 0=no
Human Capital		
Years of education	Respondents' years of school attendance	Continuous
Socioeconomic Characteristics		
Hourly earnings (ln)	Hourly earnings during their last U.S. trip (adjusted for inflation)	Continuous
Household's Ownership		
Owns land	Respondent owns land in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no
Owns property	Respondent owns property in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no
Owns business	Respondent owns business in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no
Migration Experience		
Duration of trip (years)	Length of stay in the United States in years during their last trip	Continuous
Community Characteristics		
Rural	Community of origin is rural	1=yes; 0=no
Community development index	Community development index	0 (less) to 1 (more)
Macro-Contexts		
U.S. unemployment rate	U.S. unemployment rate	Continuous
Social Ties		
Lived with a *paisano*	Migrant lived with a community member (*paisano*)	1=yes; 0=no
Lived with a relative	Migrant lived with a relative	1=yes; 0=no
Member of an organization	Migrant was in a sport or social organization	1=yes; 0=no
Family Ties		
Spouse is in Mexico	Spouse is in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no
Son is in Mexico	Son is in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no

Daughter is in Mexico	Daughter is in Mexico	1=yes; 0=no
Immigration Policies		
Pre-IRCA (1965–1986)[r]	The pre-IRCA period's years	1=yes; 0=no
IRCA (1987–1996)	The IRCA period's years	1=yes; 0=no
IIRIRA (1997–2015)	The IIRIRA period's years	1=yes; 0=no
Interactions		
Lived with *paisano* x pre-IRCA[r]	Lived with *paisano* during pre-IRCA period	1=yes; 0=no
Lived with *paisano* X IRCA	Lived with *paisano* during IRCA period	1=yes; 0=no
Lived with *paisano* X IIIRA	Lived with *paisano* during IIRIRA period	1=yes; 0=no
N=3,773		

Note: r=references

Dependent Variables

For this study, there are two dependent variables: 1) sent remittance and 2) the amount of remittances sent. The dependent variable, sent remittances, was coded "1" whether a migrant sent remittances to their household during their last U.S. trip and/or if they brought savings to Mexico and "0" if they did not. This measure has been used by other scholars estimating the migrant's likelihood in sending remittances (Durand et al., 1996; Garip, 2012; Vaira et al., 2012).

For this study, the dependent variable is measure by the total amount of remittances sent during the last U.S. trip. The total amount of remittances was calculated by multiplying the average monthly remittances sent and the duration in months of last U.S. trip. Then this total was added with the savings brought to Mexico by migrants (Garip, 2012). The total amount of remittances was divided by the duration of the last trip to acquire the monthly number of remittances sent. The amount of remittance sent (monthly) was adjusted for inflation (2010 USD) using STATA command *cpigen* and were transformed to a natural logarithm to meet regression assumptions.

Critical Variables

The study's critical variables are the migrants' social ties and the immigration policy periods. The social ties indicators are the migrant lived with a *paisano* (yes or no), the migrant lived with a relative (yes or no), the migrant is a member of an organization (yes or no), and the migrant has a spouse (yes or no), son (yes or no), and daughter (yes or no) who remained in Mexico, respectively. Another critical variable is the interaction term between the migrants' social ties, specifically if migrant lived with a *paisano* during last U.S. trip, and the immigration policy period. The immigration policy periods were not interacted with the other social ties' indicators because most studies have focused on how organizations and family influences migrants' remittances behavior (Sheehan & Riosmena, 2013).

Immigration policy periods are indicated by the years they were in effect in the U.S. before being remediated. Migrants who took their last U.S. trip in the respective immigration policy period were assigned a "1" and "0" if they did not. The pre-IRCA period spans from the of the Bracero-Program (1964) and IRCA was signed into law. Migrants whose last U.S. trip was during the pre-IRCA period was assigned a value of "1" if the years were 1965–1986 and a value of "0" if otherwise. On November 6, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed IRCA into law (Massey et al., 2002), so to capture its effect the migrants whose last U.S. trip was during the IRCA period was assigned a value of "1" if the years were 1987–1996 and a value of "0" if otherwise. In 1996, IIRIRA was passed to remediate IRCA's flaws, but it did not go into

effect until April 1st, 1997 (Vaira et al., 2012). Migrants whose trip was during the IIRIRA period was assigned a value of "1" if the years were 1997–2015 and a value of "0" if otherwise.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations were computed across individual migrants during their last U.S. trip. Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics of Mexican migrants sending remittances to Mexico and the number of remittances sent during their last U.S. trip. Again, for sake of space, only the dependent and critical variables are described.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Mexican Migrants Sending Remittances and the amount sent (monthly) to Mexico During Their Last U.S. trip

Variables	Mean	S.D.
Dependent variable		
Sent remittances	.838	.369
Amount of remittances sent (ln, 2010 USD)	5.636	1.078
Demographic Characteristics		
Age	33.207	11.279
Age2	1229.859	860.814
Female	.035	.184
Ever married	.721	.449
Have minor children	.726	.446
Legal Status		
Undocumented	.709	.454
Human Capital		
Years of education	5.699	3.85
Socioeconomic Characteristics		
Hourly earnings (ln, 2010 USD)	1.552	.807
Ownership in Mexico		
Own land	.154	.361
Own property	.541	.498
Own business	.119	.324
Migration Experience		
Duration of trip (years)	2.729	4.709
Community Characteristics		
Rural	.609	.488
Community development index	.776	.270
Macroeconomic Context		
U.S. unemployment rate	.061	.013
Social Ties		
Lived with a *paisano*	.664	.472
Lived with a relative	.550	.498
Member of an organization	.138	.344
Family Ties		
Spouse in Mexico	.725	.446
Son in Mexico	.611	.487
Daughter in Mexico	.659	.474
Immigration Policy (period)		

Pre-IRCA (1965–1986)[r]	.393	.488
IRCA (1987–1996)	.433	.496
IIRIRA (1997–2015)	.174	.379
Interactions		
Lived with a paisano x pre-IRCA[r]	.266	.442
Lived with a paisano x IRCA	.283	.451
Lived with a paisano x IIRIRA	.115	.319
Observations	3,773	

Note: r=reference; S.D.=Standard Deviation

Eighty-four percent of migrants sent remittances during their last U.S. trip (see Table 2). The average monthly amount of remittances sent was $435. During their last U.S. trip, 66% of the migrants lived with a *paisano*. Fifty-five percent of migrants lived with a relative in the U.S. Fourteen percent of the migrants were a member of an organization during their last U.S. trip. Seventy-two percent of migrants had a spouse who remain in Mexico, 61% had a son in Mexico, and 66% had a daughter in Mexico. Forty percent, 43%, and 17% of the migrants were in the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), the IRCA period (1987–1996) and the IIRIRA period (1997–2015) during their last U.S. trip, respectively. Interactions between migrants' social ties, specifically lived with a *paisano*, and immigration policy period variables were entered last in the logistic regression model. During the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), 27% of the migrants lived with a paisano during their last U.S. trip. Twenty-eight percent of the migrants lived with a *paisano* during the IRCA period (1987–1996). In contrast, only 11% of migrants lived with a *paisano* during the IIRIRA period (1997–2015).

Logistic Regression Analysis of Remittances Sent

A logistic regression was run to estimate the effects of independent variables on a binary dependent variable. The results are reported as odds ratios, calculated using the "*listcoef*" STATA command which were converted to percentages (100*{exp(β*x*δ)–1}) to facilitate interpretation of the results (Long & Freese, 2006). All estimated models include individual, household, community, and national-context variables that influence migrants' decision to send remittances. Because individuals are observed within communities, the logistic regression model is adjusted for clustering using robust standard errors.

The first model (see Table 3) shows the effect of the control variables without the social ties or immigration policy period measures. These results are consistent with other studies (Dustmann & Mestres, 2010; Sana, 2005). In model 3, the hypothesis that the effect of social ties on migrants' remitting behavior depends on the immigration policy period is not supported. Therefore, only Model 2 is discussed.

Model 2 adds migrants' social ties variables to the model to test the hypothesis (1a) that *migrants with social ties during their last U.S. trip were more likely to send remittances than those who did not*. Results from this model support only the social ties hypothesis for the paisano and having a spouse in Mexico variables. Specifically, the odds of remitting were roughly 50% greater for migrants who lived with a *paisano* than for migrants who did not, holding all other variables constant (p = 0.000). Also, the odds of remitting were about 136% greater for migrants who have a spouse living in Mexico than those who did not, holding all other variables constant (p = 0.000). There was no statistical difference between having or not having the other social ties. Therefore, migrants with social ties, either in the form of living with a *paisano* on their last

U.S. trip or having a spouse staying in Mexico, were more likely to remit than those lacking these types of social ties. This pattern held regardless of the immigration policy period.

Model 2 also tests the hypothesis (2a) that *more restrictive immigration policies increase the likelihood that migrants send remittances*. Results from this model supported the immigration policies hypothesis because both the IRCA and the IIRIRA period was statistically significant. The migrants' odds of remitting during the IIRIRA period (1997–2015) were about 333% greater than for migrants during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), holding all other variables constant (p = 0.000). The odds of remitting were 72% less for migrants during the IRCA period (1987–1996) than the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), holding all other variables constant (p = .000). This is not consistent with previous research because Mexican migrants were more likely to remit prior to IRCA's amnesty program (Amuedo-Dorantes & Mazzolari, 2010). Therefore, it is found that the odds of remitting increased in the IIRIRA period relative to the pre-IRCA period, suggesting that the very restrictive immigration policies were more effective in influencing migrants to remit.

Table 3. The Odds of Mexican Migrants Sending Remittances to Mexico During Their Last U.S. Trip

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Variables	Odds Ratio	R.S.	Odds Ratio	R.S.E.	Odds Ratio	R.S.E.
Demographic Characteristics						
Age	1.073**	.028	1.079**	.027	1.078	.027
Age2	.999**	.000	.999**	.000	.999	.000
Female	.518**	.117	.955	.233	.961	.233
Ever married	1.037	.14	1.06	.144	1.052	.144
Have minor children	1.638***	.196	1.35*	.182	1.352	.183
Legal Status						
Unauthorized	1.365*	.189	1.146	.136	1.144	.138
Human Capital						
Years of education	.974	.016	.957**	.016	.956	.016
Socioeconomic Characteristics						
Hourly earnings (ln, 2010 USD)	1.15	.100	1.135	.097	1.137	.098
Ownership in Mexico						
Own land	.860	.164	.954	.157	.954	.156
Own property	1.243*	.122	1.107	.11	1.107	.11
Own business	.815	.127	.826	.135	.825	.134
Migration Experience						
Duration of trip (years)	1.033*	.016	1.078***	.018	1.078	.018
Community Characteristics						
Rural	1.059	.133	1.026	.118	1.02	.118
Community development index	.598*	.140	1.01	.222	1.008	.223
Macroeconomic Context						
U.S. unemployment rate	.007	.032	6946.294	33220.153	7082.417	34051.979
Social Ties						
Lived with a *paisano*			1.496***	.168	1.611	.239
Lived with a relative			.846	.078	.841	.078
Member of an organization			1.132	.164	1.14	.165
Family Ties						
Spouse in Mexico			2.365***	.366	2.346	.361
Son in Mexico			1.095	.113	1.096	.113
Daughter in Mexico			1.035	.105	1.033	.105
Immigration Policy (period)						

Pre-IRCA (1965–1986)[r]					
IRCA (1987–1996)		1.72***	.223	1.761	.298
IIRIRA (1997–2015)		4.332***	1.008	6.95	2.2
Interactions					
Lived with paisano x pre-IRCA[r]					
Lived with paisano x IRCA				.966	.207
Lived with paisano x IIRIRA				.486	.186
Log pseudolikelihood	-1608.7415	-1533.0146		-1531.0541	
Wald Chi2	180.733***	377.314***		434.767***	
Observations	3,773	3,773		3,773	
Pseudo R2	0.038	0.083		0.085	

Note: r=reference; R.S.E. =robust standard errors
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

OLS Regression Analysis of Amount of Remittances Sent

The model assesses the effect of social ties and immigration enforcement factors on the logged remittances sent monthly (2010 USD) by Mexican migrants during their last U.S. trip, while controlling for individual and contextual variables. The amount of remittances sent (monthly) on the last U.S. trip is logged to minimize the effect of extremely high values (Allison, 1999). The unstandardized coefficients were standardized to compare coefficients. Also, for interpretation of results, the standardized coefficients were converted to percentages: $100(e^b - 1)$.

The first model in Table 5 shows the effect of the control variables with the social ties or immigration policy period measures. Hypothesis 3, testing the interaction, is not supported.

The first model in Table 5 shows the effect of the control variables with the social ties and immigration policy period measures. Model one tested hypothesis 1b that *migrants with social ties during their last U.S. trip send more remittances than those without social ties*. The number of remittances sent is 10% greater for migrants who lived with a *paisano* than for migrants who did not live with a *paisano*, holding all other variables constant (p = 0.017). Likewise, migrants who their spouse stay in their home country sent 38% more remittances than migrants whose spouse took a trip to the U.S., holding all other variables (p = .000). Having a child, son or daughter, in Mexico does not make a difference in the quantity of remittances sent. Also, neither does living with a relative during last U.S. trip.

Furthermore, model 1 test the hypothesis (2b) that periods of immigration enforcement increase the amount of remittances migrants sent compared to the pre-immigration enforcement period (pre-IRCA), is supported. During the IIRIRA period (1997–2015), migrants sent 57% more remittances than migrants during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), holding all other variables constant (p = 0.000). During the IRCA period (1987–1996), migrants sent 34% more remittances than migrants during the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986), holding all other variables constant (p = 0.000). Thus, in periods of stricter immigration enforcement the migrants tend to a higher amount of remittances than in the pre-IRCA levels.

Table 5. The Monthly Amount of Remittances Sent to Mexico During Their Last U.S. trip by Migrants

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variables	b	R.S.E.	B	b	R.S.E.	B
Demographic Characteristics						
Age	.021	.011	0.218	.021	.011	0.215
Age2	.000	.000	-0.205	.000	.000	-0.202
Female	-.140	.110	-0.023	-.140	.110	-0.024
Ever married	.006	.049	0.002	.004	.049	0.002
Have minor children	.023	.052	0.009	.025	.052	0.010
Legal Status						
Undocumented	-.194***	.049	-0.081	-.193***	.049	-0.081
Human Capital						
Years of education	.014*	.006	0.048	.014*	.006	0.048
Socioeconomic Characteristics						
Hourly earnings (ln, 2010 USD)	.201***	.025	0.150	.201***	.025	0.150
Ownership in Mexico						
Own land	.154*	.063	0.051	.153*	.063	0.051
Own property	.197***	.041	0.091	.198	.041	0.092
Own business	.060	.053	0.018	.059	.053	0.017
Migration Experience						
Duration of trip (years)	-.022***	.006	-0.095	-.022***	.006	-0.096
Community Characteristics						
Rural	.085	.050	0.038	.084	.050	0.037
Community development	.003	.095	0.007	.004	.095	0.009
Macroeconomic Context						
U.S. unemployment rate	5.255	1.863	0.063	5.262	1.867	0.063
Social Ties						
Lived with a *paisano*	.102*	.043	0.044	.058	.064	0.025
Lived with relative	.026	.031	0.011	.025	.031	0.011
Member of an organization	.061	.044	0.019	.061	.044	0.019
Family Ties						
Spouse in Mexico	.378***	.048	.156	.376***	.048	.155
Son in Mexico	.064	.037	.028	.063	.037	.028
Daughter in Mexico	.024	.037	.010	.024	.037	.010
Immigration Policy (period)						
Pre-IRCA (<1987)[r]			-			-
IRCA (1987–1996)	.34***	.048	0.156	.28***	.071	0.128
IIRIRA (>1996)	.573***	.072	0.201	.558***	.086	0.196
Interactions						
Lived with paisano x Pre-IRCA[r]						
Lived with paisano x IRCA				.091	.081	0.037
Lived with paisano x IIRIRA				.022	.084	-0.006
Constant	3.867***	.266	3.867***	3.906***	.267	3.906***
F-Test	24.60***		33.58***	23.72***		30.95***
Observations	3,773		3,773	3,773		3,773
R-squared	0.171		0.170	0.171		0.171

Note: r=references; b=unstandardized coefficient; R.S.E.=robust standard errors; B=standardized coefficient
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Conclusion

The motivators influencing migrants' remitting behavior, namely, their social ties and periods of immigration enforcement, are presented. Migrants' social ties increases the migrants' likelihood of remitting and the amount sent, specifically living with a *paisano* and having a spouse living in Mexico. The reason Mexican migrants might be more likely to remit, and their amount is because they want to reciprocate the *paisano*'s good-will and to maintain access to a broad range of resources, such as information on migrating successfully and employment opportunities in the area. Also, the *paisano* and the spouse helps the migrant maintain ties with their community of origin. In addition, *paisanos* and spouse may closely monitor and control the migrant's behavior, such as sending remittances. They, family members, may feel obligated to send remittances back to home country (Suksomboon, 2008). The weakening of connections with *paisanos*, including family members, and the norm of reciprocity decreases migrants' remittance sending behavior (Duany, 2010).

The immigration policy periods affected the migrants' likelihood of remitting and the number of remittances sent. During the IRCA and IIRIRA period, migrants were more likely to send remittances, and their quantity sent increased. This finding may indicate that immigration enforcement creates a volatile and insecure situation for migrants, encouraging them to send remittances in preparation for a forced or volunteer return to their home country. When comparing the standardize coefficients, the severity was more evident during the IIRIRA period, because migrants were more likely a higher quantity. During the IRCA period, migrants may have remitted less to save for the legalization process or family reunification. Unfortunately, increasing anti-immigrant sentiment has led to national and state policies further restricting immigration.

I propose that living with a *paisano* increases the likelihood of sending remittances as well as the amount during the IRCA period and the IIRIRA period) compared to the pre-IRCA period (1965–1986). However, this was not the case for either outcome of odds of remitting and quantity of remittances sent monthly (hypothesis 3a and 3b) which were statistically insignificant. Although not significant, according to Amuedo-Dorantes and Puttitanun (2014), the fear of deportation, specifically for the undocumented migrants, has decreased the amount of remittances sent more than the threat of employment insecurity. The migrant may opt to sending more remittances because of fear of deportation, but the *paisano* may mitigate the loss of job by helping migrants obtain another job quickly. There is a need to investigate the ways in which a *paisano* helps a migrant, such as providing financial help and helping obtain a job. In addition, Mexican migrants need to be compared in future studies with other Latin American migrants, such as migrants from Colombia and El Salvador.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this article was made possible by the financial support of the Wardwell Alumni Scholarship. I would like to thank the Migration Letters for their comments. Many thanks to all my friends and colleagues for their feedback to improve the paper. A special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Fussell and Dr. Veronica Terriquez for their guidance.

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