

Transnational Twist: Pecuniary Remittances and the Socioeconomic Integration of Authorized and Unauthorized Mexican Immigrants in Los Angeles County¹

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Abstract

Annual U.S.-Mexico pecuniary remittances are estimated to have more than doubled recently to at least \$10 billion - augmenting interest among policymakers, financial institutions, and transnational migrant communities concerning how relatively poor expatriate Mexicans sustain such large transfers and the impact on immigrant integration in the United States. We employ the 2001 Los Angeles County Mexican Immigrant Residency Status Survey (LAC-MIRSS) to investigate how individual characteristics and social capital traditionally associated with integration, neighborhood context, and various investments in the United States influenced remitting in 2000. Remitting is estimated to have been inversely related to conventional integration metrics and influenced by community context in both sending and receiving areas. Contrary to straight-line assimilation theories and more consistent with a transnational or nonlinear perspective, however, remittances are also estimated to have been positively related to immigrant homeownership in Los Angeles County and negatively associated with having had public health insurance such as Medicaid.

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