

# **El efecto de las redes sociales sobre la interacción de los inmigrantes de México, Centroamérica y el Caribe con los nativos de los EE.UU\***

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Palabras-clave: Inmigrantes; Migración internacional; Redes sociales.

## **Resumen**

El análisis de redes sociales ha enriquecido la investigación sobre migración, al incorporar la importancia de las relaciones interpersonales en la toma de decisiones de los inmigrantes. Aportes recientes de la teoría de capital social dan cuenta de que estas redes sociales no siempre implican beneficios para los que las utilizan. El principal objetivo de este artículo es estudiar si los inmigrantes que aprovecharon el apoyo suministrado por familiares, amigos y “paisanos” tienen menos contacto con los nativos de la sociedad receptora, los EE.UU. Para ello, se emplean las bases de datos de las etnoencuestas de los proyectos MMP y LAMP, las cuales indagan sobre la experiencia migratoria de mexicanos, portorriqueños, costarricenses, nicaragüenses y dominicanos en los EE.UU. Se encontró que sí hay un efecto negativo en el uso de redes sobre la interacción con los nativos, particularmente entre las personas que vivieron con amigos y aquellas a quienes personas se les ofreció techo a su llegada al país. Además, el uso de múltiples mecanismos de apoyo está débilmente ligado a la interacción con “blancos” estadounidenses, pero está fuertemente asociado con no hablar inglés con amigos. Al analizar diferencias entre naciones de origen, se halla que el empleo de redes de apoyo disminuye las probabilidades de interacción con nativos y de hablar inglés entre los mexicanos, pero lo contrario sucede con los dominicanos; los portorriqueños que recibieron apoyo múltiple interactúan con nativos con menor frecuencia pero tienden a hablar inglés con sus amigos, mientras que entre nicaragüenses y costarricenses ocurre lo opuesto. En general, hay evidencia de que las redes sociales pueden tener un efecto de aislamiento sobre los inmigrantes de las nacionalidades analizadas.

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# **Effects of social support networks on the interaction of Mexican, Central American and Caribbean immigrants with USA natives\***

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## **Introduction**

Social research has pointed out the importance of networks in maintaining migration flows regardless of the macroeconomic context of the origin and destination countries. People in the origin communities that have ties with persons that are or have been in the destination country are more likely to migrate than those with no ties (Massey et al 1994). Networks help not only in the act of crossing international borders, but also in giving economical and social support to the newly-arrived. At the beginning of the process, networks are usually weak, but the increase of the flows makes networks to get stronger. Support mechanisms flourish in “daughter communities”, which grow because the people that arrived in them due to the networks are more likely to be from the same hometown as those that are already living in them: “daughter communities” are at the same time a product and an enhancer of immigrant networks.

The formation of “clusters” of immigrants permits the upkeep of cultural behaviors, which in turn allows them to reinforce their identity as a group of persons of a same origin. “Daughter communities” is a concept that is closely related to that of “ethnic enclave”: neighborhoods that are characterized by physical traits conditioned by their dweller’s economic resources, and by hosting newcomers that need affordable housing, cultural links, and help in finding jobs (Logan et al 2002). This clustering may not facilitate the interaction of immigrants with members of the host society, since the interaction may remain within the boundaries of the group that provided support. Does availing of this special kind of social capital may decrease the need of contact with Americans? The main goal of this paper is to study whether immigrants who benefit from mechanisms of support from relatives, friends or other people from their hometown (“paisanos”<sup>2</sup>) have less contact with Americans.

## **The “network theory” or “social capital” theory of migration**

The traditional economical theories have partially failed to account for the evolution of migration when there is a change in the initial conditions that favored it. New theoretical frameworks were forged to explain the “perpetuation of international migration”. One of

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<sup>2</sup> From now on, the paper contains the word “paisano” to refer to people from the same hometown as the immigrant. The term was widely used by Massey et al in “Return to Aztlán” (1987). The MMP and LAMP questionnaires also use the words “countryman” and “coethnic” to refer to these people.

them is the “network theory” (Massey et al 1994), also called the “social capital theory” (Massey 1999). A good and concise definition is provided by Massey et al (1994):

Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. The existence of these ties is hypothesized to increase the likelihood of emigration by lowering the costs, raising the benefits, and mitigating the risks of international movement (p.728).

As seen by its definition, social networks can not be regarded as the sole cause of migration flows, but a complementary mechanism that facilitate them, given the presence of factors explicated by other theories: supply and demand of labor in at least two different places, migrants’ expectations of increasing their own income in another setting, joint decisions within households as a survival strategy, or the macroeconomical constrains at the origin and destination countries that enhances or hinders the possibilities of a person that want to out-migrate (Massey et al 1994, Massey 1999). The “networks” perspective highlights the relevance of social structures that are intermediate between the individuals and households as decision makers on one side, and the macro-economic conditions that they have to face both in the origin and destination at the other side (Pessar 1999).

In the life cycle of a migration process, early migrants do not benefit from networks because networks are not yet well established. Nevertheless, when they are already well-established there are mechanisms at the origin and destination that working together facilitates moving. Besides, networks are not limited to informal ties. When the process has matured, formal organizations (both non-profit institutions as well as entrepreneurs) also arise in order to help immigrants to cross the border (Massey 1999). Nevertheless, ties based on kinship, friendship or “paisanaje” remain as a key resource.

The concept of social networks is attached to that of “social capital”, since social capital can be understood as the use of resources that an individual or a group can get because of possessing relationships with other persons or groups (Massey 1999, Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Using immigrant communities as examples, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) discuss four sources of social capital: value introjection (people behave in certain form because the behavior is appropriate to the eyes of the collectivity to which they belong), reciprocity transactions of social intangibles, bounded solidarity (people’s collective behaviors come as reactions to common adversities), and enforceable trust (“social capital is generated by individual members’ disciplined compliance with group expectations” p.1325). These authors argue that the concept of social capital has been used to emphasize its positive effects. The above description of networks as facilitators of migration flows has a positive connotation. Among other positive outcomes, for example, Mooney (2003) finds that social ties increase the likelihood that a Mexican migrant in the US invests his/her savings and remittances on a productive activity or on acquiring assets in the hometown rather than in consumption; thus networks have an impact on economic growth of origin communities.

Nevertheless, based on their typology of social capital sources, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) suggest that social networks may also have negative effects. Community solidarity may have costs for providers, if new immigrants try to take advantage of these ties, without clear reciprocity. Another negative outcome is derived from the constrains to freedom that the community imposes to their members’ “individual action and receptivity to outside culture” (p.1340). The authors use as an example the case of second-generation Puerto Rican youngsters in the Bronx, who deride their peers that attempt to move

away from their economically deprived situation through a job and the adoption of behaviors typical of American mainstream culture, for they are seen as traitors to their own culture; the latter are called “turnovers” (p.1342-1343). Among immigrants that face common patterns of discrimination or deprivation, such as these Puerto Ricans, bounded solidarity that surge from immigrant networks may awake or strengthen a nationalist sentiment as well as the reproduction of practices and values from their origin community.

Pessar (1999) also contests the view of immigrant networks as an exercise of pure altruism among migrants of different generations. She points out that research has brought evidence of how some settled immigrants may exploit the newly-arrived cheap labor force, since social networks have also the role of favoring the success of the ethnic entrepreneurship, at the expense of other immigrants. From a gender perspective, she argues that social capital mechanisms may function different for men and for women, since migration networks reproduce social roles that originate in the patriarchal structure of the origin community (Pessar 1999).

As explained above, a product and at the same time a facilitator of migrant networks is the formation of “daughter communities”. These communities are composed by “settlers” that decide to stay in the US. Usually, they are married to American-born wives, and have kids. These links represent attachments to the destination country; there is a process of integration into mainstream society. Research on Mexican migrants has shown that people from the same town dwell in the same neighborhoods in the US, forming a community that is like a subset of the original town in Mexico. The ties that ease migration (kinship, friendship) are often characterized by this shared geographical origin (Massey et al 1987). However, the positive and negative effects of social capital may be underscored in settings such as these “daughter communities” or “ethnic enclaves”.

For an immigrant, an “ethnic enclave” (as used by Logan et al 2002) will give a more comfortable environment for the newcomer, providing him or her not only help in finding a job or a place to stay, but the reproduction of cultural practices and values -among which own language conservation is salient- that are characteristic of the origin community. My argument is that, in these areas that are a transplant or mirror of the hometown, the use of resources available through social networks may reduce the incentives to develop an interaction with the host society, i.e., with Americans, except the ones that are strictly necessary (e.g., employer-employee relationship). Moreover, a multiplicity of ties with relatives, friends and compatriots should diminish the likelihood of contacts with Americans, since the relationships are kept within the boundaries of a same group. This situation may resemble some of the London couples studied by Bott (1955). This author finds that couples in which the husband-wife role-relationship was highly segregated had also highly connected networks, in the sense that a large proportion of their friends, were also co-workers or kin, and were also neighbors; these couples had very little relations with other people outside their social circle, when compared to couples with less connected networks. To some extent, migrants that rely on networks for different purposes may also limit their contacts only to their social circle.

## **Data and methods.**

The Mexican Migration Project (MMP) and the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) have been providing valuable information to analyze migration processes from the subcontinent to the US. This paper is using a combination of different comparable datasets

provided by both of them. They are collaborative research projects based at Princeton University, the University of Guadalajara, and several other research centers in Latin America. Funding has been provided by institutions such as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Mellon Foundation (MMP 2004, LAMP 2004). The datasets used are MMP93, LAMP-PR5, LAMP-DR7, LAMP-CR4, and LAMP-NIC5. The data were collected using the technique of the “ethno-survey” (Massey et al 1987) in several communities of Mexico (93), Puerto Rico (5), Dominican Republic (7), Nicaragua (5), and Costa Rica (4). LAMP includes also datasets from Peru and Paraguay, but their utility for the present analysis was limited because there are slightly different questions in the corresponding questionnaires and some of the information is about migrants that do not go to the US, but to other countries in South America and Europe. The sampling procedure starts by selecting a community which is known to be the origin of numerous migratory flows to the US; after defining the community’s boundaries, the fieldworkers build a sampling frame of houses; a simple random sample of usually 200 households is selected; although fieldworkers ask questions about all household members, most of the migration questions refer to household heads. Additionally, in order to have information about migrants that haven’t returned to their countries of origin, the fieldworkers gather names and addresses of fellow migrants in the US at the time of the survey, using “snowball” sampling techniques. Then, a team of interviewers contact and conduct the ethno-survey to a sub-sample of them, with a modified version of the original ethno-survey questionnaire (LAMP 2004, Massey et al 1987, MMP 2004).

The instrument contains several questions to measure social networks. A set of dichotomous variables were constructed in order to approach the use or availability of networks. The questions and answers used for this purpose are:

- “Who provided you with LODGING during your first trip?” Variable adopts the value of 1 if the answer is: Countryman (“paisano”), Friend, or Relative; and the value of 0 if the answer is: Employer, Bank, Did not need any help, or Other. An additional “dummy” variable was created if the answer was “Unknown”.
- “Were other RELATIVES living with you in the same house? (do not count own spouse and child)” Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Yes; and the value of 0 if the answer is: No or Unknown.
- “Were other COUNTRYMEN living with you in the same house? (do not count own spouse and child)” Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Yes; and the value of 0 if the answer is: No or Unknown.
- “Have you belonged to a RECREATIONAL/SPORTS CLUB?” Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Yes; and the value of 0 if the answer is: No or Unknown.
- “Have you belonged to any RELIGIOUS OR SOCIAL GROUP?” Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Yes; and the value of 0 if the answer is: No or Unknown.
- “How did you get the job?” Variable adopts the value of 1 if the answer is: Recommended by a relative, Recommended by a friend, or Recommended by a countryman (“paisano”); and the value of 0 if the answer is: Looked for it on your own, Through a smuggler or on of his associates, Had a pre-arranged labor contract,

Had to pay someone (friend or countryman), Employment bureau/agency, or On the corner. Additional “dummy” variables were created if the answer was “Unknown” or the respondent did not have a job in the US.

Another dichotomous variable was also created to measure whether the respondent used networks for finding a job and finding a house, and at the same time lived with relatives or with compatriots. This variable can be understood as a way to approach the concept of multiplexity: “...the tendency for two or more relations to occur together” (Wasserman and Faust 1994:422).

As stated above, the purpose of the present study is to observe whether the use of social networks by immigrants hampers integration, but an integration that implies the establishment of interaction with people of the host society. Three dichotomous outcome variables were built: relations with African-Americans, relations with Anglos, and speak English with friends. The questions from which the information was taken are:

- “What type of relation did you have with AFRICAN-AMERICANS?”. Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Friendship, Very close, or Other; and the value of 0 if the answer is: None (or causal) or Only at work.
- “What type of relation did you have with GRINGOS/ANGLOS?”. Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Friendship, Very close, or Other; and the value of 0 if the answer is: None (or causal) or Only at work..
- “How much English did you USE WITH YOUR FRIENDS?”. Variable adopts the value of 1 if answer is: Some, A lot, or Always; and the value of 0 if the answer is: Nothing.

The last question was not asked in the first 52 of the 93 Mexican communities in the sample. Therefore, all the analyses exclude the household heads from these 52 places.

Control variables introduced in the analysis are: a set of “dummies” for country of origin (the reference is Mexico), age at first migration, a dichotomous variable that is 1 if respondent has 9 years of schooling or more (0 otherwise), duration (in months) of the first trip, how much time has passed since first arrival in US, no use of English at work, no use of English in the neighborhood (this two can be considered as measures of exposure to the host society), and sex. Results can also be mediated by how exposed are migrants to the interaction with Anglos and African Americans. To control for this fact, I introduced a measure of residential segregation of Hispanics in the city where migrants arrived for the first time in the three models; the chosen index is the interaction index, which reflects the probability that a Hispanic shares the same census tract with a non-Hispanic (US Census Bureau 2004). The model for relations with Blacks has also the isolation index for African-Americans, so as to assess how limited may be the contact with this population. The isolation index is interpreted as the probability that an African-American shares the same census tract with another African-American. However, the residential segregation measures were only available for 1980, 1990, and 2000 (US Census Bureau 2004). If an immigrant arrived in a year different to this, but within the period, the value of the corresponding indexes were estimated by interpolation. If an immigrant arrived after 2000, the value for 2000 was

assigned to the variables. Given the constrain in the time period, analyses that incorporate these measures refer only to migrants that went to the US from 1980 on.

Logistic regressions were used to study the relationship between “network” and outcome variables. Each model was estimated twice: once with the whole sample and excluding residential segregation measures, and the other with migrants that traveled after 1979 but including the exposure indexes to the model. I do not use weights in the logistic regressions, although MMP and LAMP provide sampling weights, because otherwise immigrants from more populated countries (Mexico, mainly), will drive the results in a greater extent than what they actually did. The underlying assumption of this decision is that estimated coefficients are the same for all individuals in the sample, conditional on the characteristics introduced in the model.<sup>3</sup>

## Results

Before analyzing if there is an effect of mechanisms of support in the integration of immigrants, I will describe the main characteristics of the sample. Table 1 contains several distributions of variables that refer to these mechanisms, according to the immigrant’s country of origin, as well as the proportion of cases with missing values in each of these variables. Around half of the respondents lived with relatives or with hometown fellows (“paisanos”); the proportion that lived with relatives is approximately stable across countries, whereas the proportion that lived with “paisanos” is not. Three fourths of Costa Ricans and more than half of Mexicans lived with compatriots, but among Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Nicaraguans this proportion is much lower. Nicaraguans are less prone to participate in sports organizations, and Mexicans are less likely to be members of either sports or social groups. In terms of lodging when arrived in the US, most of the immigrants stayed at a relative’s house, although among Costa Ricans and Mexicans, friends were also important providers of a place to stay. Finally, most of the interviewees received help in finding a job from a relative, friend, or hometown fellow, and it is worth to notice that a relatively high proportion of Puerto Ricans (16%) did not have a job while in the US. In general, participation in sports and social clubs are not as frequent as the other characteristics reviewed in Table 1.

Table 2 has the proportion of immigrants that report to have contact with African Americans, Anglos (non-Hispanic whites), Asians, and other Latinos, as well as the proportion that speak English with friends. The only characteristics to be analyzed are the relations with Black population and with Anglos, and the likelihood to use English when talking to friends, because of three reasons: First, non-Hispanic whites and African-Americans account for most of the US population; second, their main language is English, thus a process of integration of a Spanish-speaking immigrant would require an increasing capacity to communicate and interact with them; and third, relations with Asian was discarded as a measure of integration because they are still a small proportion of the US population, so the likelihood of being in contact with them will also depend on the amount of exposure that an immigrant may have with these other ethnic groups. Table 2 is useful to illustrate the fact that Puerto Ricans are the group that establishes more contact not only with Anglos and African-Americans, but also with Asians and other Latinos, too. It also shows the

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<sup>3</sup> For further discussion on whether to include the MMP and LAMP sampling weights in an analysis, read the recommendations of MMP and LAMP in: <http://lamp.opr.princeton.edu/documents/MMP%20and%20LAMP%20Weights.pdf>.

problem of the missing values in one of the main outcome variables. Almost half of Mexicans does not have an answer to the question “How much English did you use with your friends?”. Apparently, this happens because the question was not asked in the first 52 communities where the ethnosurvey was conducted. Therefore, as explained above, the inferences about Mexicans only refer to the last 41 communities in the program.

As explained before, one important factor to control for is the probable exposure of immigrants to other groups. One way to address this concern is to look to two segregation indexes: for all the models, the interaction index of Hispanics<sup>4</sup>; and the isolation index of African-Americans, for the model that refers to having relations with persons of this group. Segregation indexes for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (which correspond in the datasets to the places where the immigrants lived) are available only for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Therefore, in the first stage of the analysis, two models were computed for each of the three integration indicators: one with all the set of immigrants, and the other with only those who traveled to the US in 1980 or later. These second models contain the interaction and the isolation indexes for the places where immigrants arrived in their first trip to the US.

The first pair of logistic regressions was estimated for the likelihood of having relations with African-Americans. Results are shown in Table 3. Among the variables that reflect social support mechanisms for migrants, having lived with relatives and being in a social organization significantly increases the probability of contact with Black population, while those whom a place to stay was provided by a relative, friend, or “paisano” are less likely to have contacts with them. Constraining the sample to those who arrived in the US after 1979 and adding the exposure variables at the place level (the segregation indexes) does not alter the results much; moreover, these new variables do not have a significant effect, neither do other variables related to exposure (like the “dummies” of not speaking English in neighborhood or at work). Regarding control variables, it is worth to note that Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Costa Ricans are more prone to interact with African-Americans than Mexicans and Nicaraguans. Besides, people with no job have also a strong positive coefficient in both regressions; as noted before, Puerto Ricans have the highest proportion of non-employed, therefore this result may be related to the dynamics of Puerto Ricans in the US.

Similar results are obtained when analyzing whether immigrants have relations with Anglos (Table 4). Living with relatives has a positive effect, and if lodging or a job were found due to relatives, friends or compatriots have negative effects. Additionally, living with friends and not using English in the neighborhood have both negative coefficients. Again, results do not change much when limiting the analysis to recent migrants. In terms of nations of origin, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Costa Ricans are significantly more likely to establish relations with Anglos than Mexicans (and to some extent than Nicaraguans, too). In general in this analysis it is more clear that, except for the effect of living with relatives, the use of support mechanisms are negatively related to the probability of interacting with Anglos.

The coefficients and odds ratios of the logistic regression for speaking English with friends are presented in Table 5. The effects of the variables related to immigrants support are not as clear as in the previous analyses. Living with friends and being recommended for a job

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<sup>4</sup> Ideally, it would be better to have indexes that refer only to immigrants, and not to all Hispanics, but this information can not be generated easily.



by an acquaintance have negative coefficients, but only the former is significantly different from zero. Lodging provided by a relative, a friend or a hometown person, and being in social organizations have very weak effects; on the other hand, participating in sports increases remarkably the likelihood of speaking English with friends. This last result was unexpected, since sport clubs have been considered as an important tool for maintaining migratory flows and for preserving the cultural identity of the immigrant community at the destination country (Massey et al 1987). Furthermore, the coefficients for the exposure index is significant (at the 0.10 level), but in the opposite direction: migrants that lived in less segregated localities in the US have a lower probability of speaking English with friends than migrants in more segregated places. On the contrary, an expected finding is that people that use English neither in the neighborhood nor at work are also less likely to use this same language with friends; the effects seem to be some of the strongest in this logistic regression.

In order to refine the possible effect of network mechanisms, by approaching the concept of “multiplexity” (Wasserman and Faust 1994), a new dichotomous variable was created and called “network” effect. The variable adopts the value of one if the migrant has simultaneously lived with relatives or friends, been provided lodging by a relative, friend or “paisano”, and been recommended for a job by a relative, friend or “paisano”. Table 6 contains the coefficients and odds ratios of the effect of this variable only, on each of the three dependent variables that are analyzed, both for the whole sample, and for recent migrants. The new variable’s coefficient is positive and weak (not-significant) for the likelihood of having relations with African-Americans; it is negative and weak for interaction with Anglos (significant at  $\alpha=0.10$  only in the first model for the whole population of migrants); and it is negative, significant, and relatively strong for the likelihood of speaking English with friends. Given these results, there is evidence that an immigrant that uses all of these support mechanisms is less likely to establish relations with Anglos and to speak English with close peers. However, is this network effect similar across countries of origin, or are Mexicans (the majority in the sample) driving the results? Table 7 shows the coefficients and odds ratios of the “network” effect on the three dependent variables, for each national group; these were estimated by adding interactions to the model; the table only contains the results for the subsample of recent migrants<sup>5</sup>. Results show how different these subgroups are on to each other. Mexicans that availed of support mechanisms are less likely to interact with Blacks and with Anglos and to speak English with acquaintances. Among Dominicans, the effect has the opposite direction: the ones that used support mechanisms are more likely to interrelate with Blacks and Anglos and speak the language; however, none of their coefficients are statistically significant. Puerto Ricans are less likely to interact with these two groups of Americans, but are more likely to speak the language if they used networks (but again, none of the coefficients are significantly different from zero); and among Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans<sup>6</sup> the opposite happens: the ones that benefited from networks were more likely to establish relations with Blacks and non-Hispanic whites, but have lower probabilities of speaking English.

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<sup>5</sup> Results are similar for the whole sample.

<sup>6</sup> Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans were pooled together in a single category because of sample size reasons, and also because both are Central Americans.

## Discussion

The paper finds evidence of a “network effect”, in spite of some contradictory results. When analyzing separately the different mechanisms of immigrant support, having lived with friends and having been provided shelter by relatives, friends or “paisanos” produce negative effects on the likelihood of interrelations with Americans, although having lived with relatives shows the opposite effect. This may be due to the fact that the first two variables reflect more clearly network mechanisms, while “living with relatives” may also include migrants that came with other kin to the US and lived with them, but these relatives did not constitute a pre-existing informal network that helped them to move into the US. Being helped to find a job has also the expected direction, although the coefficient was not statistically significant in the logistic regression for interrelations with Blacks. The effects of all these variables on speaking English with friends are weaker than for the other models. However, this may happen because of differential exposure, since migrants that do not speak English at work or in the neighborhood are also the ones that are less likely to speak English with acquaintances.

The effects of networks are operationalized more precisely by constructing the variable of simultaneously taking advantage of all the different mechanisms indicated before. Moreover, the effects are different across countries of origin. The expected effect of networks on integration is more visible for Mexicans. Immigrants from this country are less likely to interact with African-Americans and Anglos and less likely to speak English, if they benefited from support mechanisms. Among Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, the use of networks enhances interaction with Anglos and Blacks, but diminishes the probability of speaking English with friends. These opposite results for Mexicans in one side and Central Americans in the other, may be a product of the relative sizes of these communities within the US. Mexicans are the largest immigrant population and migratory flows have existed for decades. Therefore, networks must be more developed, more organized, and much stronger. It is common to hear about “Mexican neighborhoods” in different large cities of the US (as well as Dominican or Puerto Rican neighborhoods in New York), but it is less likely to find a so-called “Costa Rican” or “Nicaraguan” neighborhood. For Mexican immigrants the use of social networks may help to integrate themselves into the Mexican immigrant community; for Costa Ricans or Nicaraguans<sup>7</sup>, instead, social networks may be used to facilitate the interaction with Americans, because this might still be a need for these immigrants, but in their closest circle -built by the network- to speak English will not be a need. In other words, for Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, interaction with Americans might have a more utilitarian role than for Mexicans. Another related explanation is more demographic. Since there are more Mexican immigrants than Central American immigrants, it is more likely that a Mexican will need to interact only with Mexicans, but a Central American will need to interact not only with the relatively smaller Central American population, but also with Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and other Latino migrants. Thus, a Costa Rican or a Nicaraguan is more likely to need the interaction with whites or African-Americans than a Mexican.

The coefficients for Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are not significantly different from zero. According to Tables 2 to 4, compared to Mexicans, immigrants of these origins are on average more likely to adopt the integration behaviors examined in this paper, and networks increase their likelihood of speaking English with friends. This may be due to the communities in US where these immigrants have resided. Most of Puerto Rican (60%) and

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<sup>7</sup> I might have said “for a Central American”, but the case of Salvadorans in LA might be more similar to the Mexican case.

Dominican (89%) respondents in the sample (60% and 89%, respectively) have lived in the New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania area. Although there are also “ethnic neighborhoods” in this area, there may be more pressures on using English in this kind of “megapolis”, than in typical Hispanic neighborhoods of the Southwest. Nevertheless, migration from the “Free Associate State” comprises one of the oldest and largest flows of Hispanics to mainland US; in this way, Puerto Ricans share with Mexicans the characteristic of belonging to a large migrant community within the US. As with Mexicans, the analysis shows that availing of networks diminishes contact with African-Americans and with Anglos. In this sense, negative effects of networks on establishing relations with the host society may arise in large communities that reinforce their own identities. But, among immigrants that belong to smaller communities (Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans, and somehow Dominicans), these effects are reversed or attenuated.

Besides dealing with possible networks effects, this paper incorporates the importance of comparisons across groups of immigrants. Nevertheless, it is worth to recall the limitations that the data sources and the analysis have. Inferences can only be made to persons that are heads of households in the communities selected in the countries of origin, and not to the whole migrant population that is or has been in the US. Moreover, since the dataset come from a project that started in Mexico, it has an overwhelming proportion of respondents from this country. The last table showed how results were partially driven by Mexican respondents, and that the size of the sub-samples that refer to the rest of the countries limits the power of some of the tests in the logistic regressions. Finally, the sets of variables chosen to operationalize interrelations and social networks are very rough measures of these two social constructs. Further research should be done to try to improve these measures.

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**Table 1.**  
**Indicators of support received by immigrants to US, by country. 1998-2004.**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>Domin. Rep.</b>	<b>Nicaragua</b>	<b>Costa Rica</b>
(Sample size)	<b>(2,560)</b>	(2,140)	(186)	(116)	(66)	(52)
% lived w/ relatives	<b>45.4</b>	43.6	45.7	66.4	57.6	53.8
% missing	<b>8.1</b>	9.4	-	1.7	3.0	-
% lived w/ paisanos	<b>54.7</b>	58.6	24.7	35.3	28.8	76.9
% missing	<b>3.9</b>	4.5	-	1.7	3.0	-
% in sports org.	<b>8.7</b>	6.9	23.1	22.4	1.5	9.6
% missing	<b>4.5</b>	4.8	0.0	6.0	4.6	5.8
% in social org.	<b>8.2</b>	4.7	23.1	44.0	13.6	11.5
% missing	<b>4.6</b>	4.9	0.5	5.2	4.6	3.8
Provider of lodging when arrived in US (% dist)	<b>100.0</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
-Paisano	<b>5.8</b>	6.2	1.1	6.9	3.0	7.7
-Friend	<b>19.3</b>	20.4	8.6	12.1	13.6	36.5
-Employer	<b>12.7</b>	14.6	4.8	0.0	1.5	3.9
-Relative	<b>45.7</b>	41.5	68.8	76.7	66.7	40.4
-Did not need / No one	<b>5.2</b>	5.3	7.5	0.0	7.6	3.9
-Other	<b>2.3</b>	1.9	5.4	0.9	7.6	3.9
-Missing	<b>8.9</b>	10.1	3.8	3.5	0.0	3.9
Help in finding job (% dist)	<b>100.0</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
-Recommended by relative, friend, or paisano	<b>53.5</b>	52.8	48.9	71.6	42.4	73.1
-Searched by oneself	<b>21.3</b>	20.8	24.2	18.1	34.9	19.2
-Other ways	<b>8.8</b>	9.4	10.2	1.7	3.0	5.8
-No job	<b>6.0</b>	5.6	15.6	2.6	1.5	1.9
-Missing	<b>10.5</b>	11.5	1.1	6.0	18.2	0.0

Source: MMP93, LAMP-PR5, LAMP-DR7, LAMP-CR4, and LAMP-NIC5. In: <http://lamp.opr.princeton.edu/>.

**Table 2.**  
**Indicators of social relationships, by country. 1998-2004. a/**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>Domin. Rep.</b>	<b>Nicaragua</b>	<b>Costa Rica</b>
(Sample size)	<b>(2,560)</b>	(2,140)	(186)	(116)	(66)	(52)
% relations w/ Blacks <sup>a/</sup>	<b>45.5</b>	48.0	48.4	25.9	9.1	21.2
% missing	<b>5.6</b>	5.5	-	9.5	13.6	11.5
% relations w/ Anglos <sup>a/</sup>	<b>40.6</b>	40.4	56.5	28.5	22.7	42.3
% missing	<b>5.4</b>	5.5	0.0	9.5	12.1	3.9
% relations w/ Asians <sup>a/</sup>	<b>6.0</b>	4.5	18.8	11.2	7.6	5.8
% missing	<b>50.3</b>	58.9	0.5	8.6	13.6	13.5
% relations w/ Other Latinos <sup>a/</sup>	<b>50.2</b>	46.6	81.2	61.2	50.0	65.4
% missing	<b>5.4</b>	5.4	0.0	7.8	12.1	9.6
% Speak English w/friends <sup>b/</sup>	<b>12.9</b>	7.2	51.6	41.4	27.3	28.9
% missing	<b>49.4</b>	58.7	0.0	5.2	1.5	1.9

Notes: a/ Relations is defined as answering: "Friendship, very close, others", to the question: "What type of relation did you have with:\_\_\_\_", and it is asked for the following groups: Nationals (paisanos), African Americans, Asians, Gringos/Anglos, Other Latinos

b/ Speak any English is defined as answering: "Some, a lot, always", to the question: "How much English did you use with your friends?"

**Table 3.**  
**Results of logistic regression of having relations with African-Americans (Blacks).**

Variables	Whole sample			Migrants arrived after 1979				
	Coeff	(SE)	OR	Coeff	(SE)	OR		
Puerto Rico	1.736	0.249	***	<b>5.67</b>	1.598	0.362	***	<b>4.94</b>
Dominican Republic	0.891	0.303	***	<b>2.44</b>	0.663	0.402	*	<b>1.94</b>
Nicaragua	-0.660	0.501		<b>0.52</b>	-1.193	0.582	**	<b>0.30</b>
Costa Rica (Ref: Mexico)	1.189	0.397	***	<b>3.28</b>	1.334	0.443	***	<b>3.80</b>
Age at migration (in years)	-0.011	0.009		<b>0.99</b>	0.003	0.011		<b>1.00</b>
More than 9 years of schooling (Ref: 9 years of schooling or less)	0.066	0.082		<b>1.07</b>	0.732	0.244	***	<b>2.08</b>
Months in US	0.002	0.001	**	<b>1.00</b>	0.001	0.002		<b>1.00</b>
Years from 2004 since first migration	0.000	0.007		<b>1.00</b>	0.001	0.012		<b>1.00</b>
Lived w/ relatives (Ref: Did not)	0.393	0.186	**	<b>1.48</b>	0.216	0.233		<b>1.24</b>
Lived w/ friends (Ref: Did not)	-0.110	0.180		<b>0.90</b>	-0.239	0.226		<b>0.79</b>
In sports org. (Ref: Not)	-0.486	0.284	*	<b>0.62</b>	-0.423	0.356		<b>0.65</b>
In Social org (Ref: Not)	0.713	0.263	***	<b>2.04</b>	0.558	0.326	*	<b>1.75</b>
Relative, friend or paisano provided lodging	-0.906	0.240	***	<b>0.40</b>	-1.048	0.298	***	<b>0.35</b>
Missing in lodging (Ref: Other lodging provider)	-1.760	0.861	**	<b>0.17</b>	-1.835	1.162		<b>0.16</b>
Job found by relative, friend or paisano	-0.012	0.195		<b>0.99</b>	-0.060	0.246		<b>0.94</b>
No job	1.378	0.368	***	<b>3.97</b>	1.053	0.466	**	<b>2.87</b>
Missing in who help for job (Ref: Job by other means)	2.618	0.453	***	<b>13.70</b>	2.368	0.509	***	<b>10.67</b>
No use of English in neighborhood (Ref: Use)	-0.216	0.223		<b>0.81</b>	-0.064	0.282		<b>0.94</b>
No use of English at work (Ref: Use)	-0.235	0.236		<b>0.79</b>	-0.276	0.303		<b>0.76</b>
Males (Ref: Females)	0.032	0.222		<b>1.03</b>	0.124	0.287		<b>1.13</b>
Isolation index for Blacks					0.182	0.637		<b>1.20</b>
Exposure index for Hispanics					-1.057	0.673		<b>0.35</b>
Missing in values of resid. seg. indexes					-0.460	0.661		<b>0.63</b>
Constant	-1.381	0.449	***	<b>0.25</b>	-1.420	0.819	*	<b>0.24</b>
Log-likelihood	-478.71				-317.20			
Likelihood ratio test $\chi^2$ (df) (Sample size)	220.66 (1,250)	(20)	***		220.66 (903)	(23)	***	

Notes: \*: p<0.1, \*\*: p<0.05, \*\*\*: p<0.01

**Table 4.**  
**Results of logistic regression of having relations with Anglos**

Variables	Whole sample			Migrants arrived after 1979				
	Coeff	(SE)	OR	Coeff	(SE)	OR		
Puerto Rico	1.108	0.233	***	<b>3.03</b>	1.199	0.334	***	<b>3.32</b>
Dominican Republic	0.521	0.289	*	<b>1.68</b>	0.506	0.367		<b>1.66</b>
Nicaragua	0.201	0.365		<b>1.22</b>	0.169	0.413		<b>1.18</b>
Costa Rica (Ref: Mexico)	1.619	0.352	***	<b>5.05</b>	1.735	0.385	***	<b>5.67</b>
Age at migration (in years)	-0.016	0.008	*	<b>0.98</b>	-0.015	0.010		<b>0.98</b>
More than 9 years of schooling (Ref: 9 years of schooling or less)	-0.044	0.087		<b>0.96</b>	-0.022	0.218		<b>0.98</b>
Months in US	0.003	0.001	***	<b>1.00</b>	0.001	0.002		<b>1.00</b>
Years from 2004 since first migration	-0.002	0.006		<b>1.00</b>	0.002	0.011		<b>1.00</b>
Lived w/ relatives (Ref: Did not)	0.282	0.166	*	<b>1.33</b>	0.298	0.205		<b>1.35</b>
Lived w/ friends (Ref: Did not)	-0.466	0.159	***	<b>0.63</b>	-0.475	0.195	**	<b>0.62</b>
In sports org. (Ref: Not)	-0.291	0.263		<b>0.75</b>	-0.224	0.322		<b>0.80</b>
In Social org (Ref: Not)	0.213	0.251		<b>1.24</b>	0.008	0.311		<b>1.01</b>
Relative, friend or paisano provided lodging	-0.944	0.217	***	<b>0.39</b>	-1.077	0.265	***	<b>0.34</b>
Missing in lodging (Ref: Other lodging provider)	-0.436	0.717		<b>0.65</b>	-0.093	0.860		<b>0.91</b>
Job found by relative, friend or paisano	-0.282	0.171	*	<b>0.75</b>	-0.418	0.208	**	<b>0.66</b>
No job	1.633	0.353	***	<b>5.12</b>	1.540	0.438	***	<b>4.67</b>
Missing in who help for job (Ref: Job by other means)	1.783	0.429	***	<b>5.95</b>	1.555	0.462	***	<b>4.74</b>
No use of English in neighborhood (Ref: Use)	-0.792	0.197	***	<b>0.45</b>	-0.773	0.244	***	<b>0.46</b>
No use of English at work (Ref: Use)	-0.339	0.210		<b>0.71</b>	-0.330	0.263		<b>0.72</b>
Males (Ref: Females)	0.166	0.207		<b>1.18</b>	0.287	0.260		<b>1.33</b>
Exposure index for Hispanics Missing in values of resid. seg. indexes					-0.575	0.548		<b>0.56</b>
					-0.501	0.387		<b>0.61</b>
Constant	0.094	0.404		<b>1.10</b>	0.475	0.587		<b>1.61</b>
Log-likelihood	-572.74				-395.72			
Likelihood ratio test $\chi^2$ (df) (Sample size)	271.33 (1,250)	(20)	***		175.53 (903)	(22)	***	

Notes: \*: p<0.1, \*\*: p<0.05, \*\*\*: p<0.01



**Table 5.**  
**Results of logistic regression of speaking any English with friends.**

Variables	Whole sample			Migrants arrived after 1979		
	Coeff	(SE)	OR	Coeff	(SE)	OR
Puerto Rico	0.127	0.299	<b>1.14</b>	0.699	0.434	<b>2.01</b>
Dominican Republic	0.602	0.351	*	<b>1.83</b>	0.531	0.413
Nicaragua	1.408	0.468	***	<b>4.09</b>	1.142	0.521
Costa Rica (Ref: Mexico)	-0.454	0.424		<b>0.63</b>	-0.395	0.468
Age at migration (in years)	-0.031	0.011	***	<b>0.97</b>	-0.025	0.013
More than 9 years of schooling (Ref: 9 years of schooling or less)	0.405	0.206	**	<b>1.50</b>	0.315	0.243
Months in US	0.002	0.001	**	<b>1.00</b>	0.004	0.002
Years from 2004 since first migration	-0.008	0.009		<b>0.99</b>	-0.024	0.015
Lived w/ relatives (Ref: Did not)	0.057	0.200		<b>1.06</b>	-0.048	0.245
Lived w/ friends (Ref: Did not)	-0.355	0.192	*	<b>0.70</b>	-0.480	0.233
In sports org. (Ref: Not)	1.012	0.306	***	<b>2.75</b>	1.040	0.363
In Social org (Ref: Not)	0.032	0.302		<b>1.03</b>	-0.251	0.365
Relative, friend or paisano provided lodging	0.106	0.297		<b>1.11</b>	0.209	0.382
Missing in lodging (Ref: Other lodging provider)	1.011	0.849		<b>2.75</b>	1.416	1.030
Job found by relative, friend or paisano	-0.181	0.209		<b>0.83</b>	-0.398	0.256
No job	2.069	0.550	***	<b>7.91</b>	1.383	0.712
Missing in who help for job (Ref: Job by other means)	-0.782	1.094		<b>0.46</b>	-2.062	1.565
No use of English in neighborhood (Ref: Use)	-2.403	0.214	***	<b>0.09</b>	-2.488	0.262
No use of English at work (Ref: Use)	-2.506	0.337	***	<b>0.08</b>	-2.454	0.418
Males (Ref: Females)	0.267	0.282		<b>1.31</b>	0.513	0.377
Exposure index for Hispanics Missing in values of resid. seg. indexes					-1.273	0.689
					-0.860	0.475
Constant	0.943	0.556	*	<b>2.57</b>	1.497	0.779
Log-likelihood	-380.89				-262.91	
Likelihood ratio test $\chi^2$ (df) (Sample size)	679.57 (1,250)	(20)	***		477.85 (903)	(22)

Notes: \*: p<0.1, \*\*: p<0.05, \*\*\*: p<0.01