

Profile of earners and remittances in Mexico: a relative deprivation approach¹

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Abstract

This research analyzes the individual qualities and microeconomic profiles from mexican workers in Mexico, which under relative deprivation conditions, take the choice to leave the country as an alternative way to improve their life expectations. It is found that mexican assistance programs encompass heterogeneous results and thus, are not a generalized signal of improvement for the families. Using a Multinomial Logit specification we found that public assistance programs reinforce relative deprivation of non-migrants families on those who have relatives who migrated. Human capital attributes present a direct relation with the process of migration not only for traditional exporting labor regions, but also for the north-border of the country. The south supports the relative deprivation hypothesis meanwhile, is not the case for the USA-mexican border States.

Keywords: migration, occupational choice, relative deprivation, remittances

Jel Clasification: C11, C35, J24, J39, J61, O15

El perfil de los asalariados y las remesas en México: un enfoque de privación relativa

Resumen

Esta investigación estudia las cualidades individuales y los perfiles microeconómicos de los trabajadores mexicanos, que bajo condiciones de privación relativa, toman la decisión de abandonar el país con vistas a mejorar sus condiciones de vida. Nuestro trabajo encuentra que los programas que impulsa el gobierno mexicano para combatir la pobreza no son muy eficientes. Usando un modelo Logit Multinomial encontramos que los programas de asistencia pública tienden a reforzar la privación relativa de las familias no migrantes frente a las familias que tienen algún familiar que ha emigrado.

Palabras clave: Migración, privación relativa, remesas y selección ocupacional
Categorización Jel: C11, C35, J24, J39, J61, O15

Introduction

Massive migration from Mexico to the United States of America (US) has been a recent common denominator of the Mexican economy. In 2000, Mexican illegal immigration represented about 60% of the total illegal workforce in USA (INS, 2002). From the main causes behind this situation, it can be found not only the economic asymmetries between both countries, but also, the lack of opportunities to become a regular wage-earner or working as self-employed.

This process has tended to strengthen a social network of migration in Mexico as well as in the USA, resulting from family relationships, reception of remittances and specific group of workers according to the American labor market demand. In Mexico, the social network has been the vehicle through remittances as a very important part of the low income families, increasing not just consumption, but also the entrepreneurial capacity of the rest of the members' network (Woodroff and Zenteno, 2001; Meza, 2006).

Thus, it is thought that the economic impact of remittances will tend to be greater for those regions with higher relative and absolute concentration of international migrants. Standard economic theory sees migration as a natural process where

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