Gendered and stratified family formation trajectories in the context of Latin American migration, 1950 to 2000

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Abstract

The interdependence of migration and family formation has been studied extensively in scholarly research. Less common are studies that consider the embeddedness of this interdependence within gender and class relations. Most of this research includes gender and class separately as determinants of family events or transitions, instead of analyzing how the intersections of both shape full family formation trajectories. We overcome this gap using an intersectionality framework to analyze trajectories of family formation and migration collected by the Mexican and Latin American Migration projects (1988-2016). Using retrospective information, we reconstruct full family formation and dissolution trajectories for 16,000 individuals and apply sequence and cluster analysis to define a six-category typology of ideal family formation trajectories. Furthermore, we associate this typology with individuals’ sex, age at migration (internal, international), and educational attainment. Our results suggest that the relationship between migration and typical family trajectories depends mainly on class and gender, positioning migration as a secondary disruptive factor. Family trajectories among socially and economically privileged individuals do not seem to be affected by migration, and patterns by class are clearer for women than men, which signals that women’s trajectories are more rooted in their social class than those of their male counterparts.
Introduction

A key insight of family and stratification sociology is that the interdependence of life events (e.g., finishing school, entering a union, having a first child) contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities (Furstenberg 2008, 2010; McLanahan and Percheski 2008). In addition, scholarly migration literature has demonstrated that the migration experience is a fundamental part of these interdependent events. Decades of research on the US-Mexico migration system have underlined the fact that migration and family formation are interdependent and should be examined jointly (Coubes, Solis, and Zavala de Cosio 2016; Lindstrom and Giorguli Saucedo 2002; Parrado 2004; Sana and Massey 2005).

Researchers have also found evidence supporting the interdependence of these two demographic behaviors in migration flows linking African and European countries (Kulu and Milewski 2007). Less appreciated is the fact that the interdependence of migration and family formation is embedded in class and gender relations (Frank and Heuveline 2005; González-Ferrer et al. 2018; Parrado and Flippen 2005). The interaction of class and gender is a key point to understanding the overall relationship between migration and family as interdependent life course-defining processes.

Intersectionality theory offers a conceptual framework to explain how gender and class relations jointly shape the interdependence of family formation and migration trajectories. The need for an intersectionality lens to understand migration-related dynamics is especially true for countries where migration affects a significant share of the population and when the affected population comes from different class backgrounds (Portes 2010). In these circumstances, the unequal unfolding of family and migration trajectories (e.g., different ages and different marital status at migration) contributes to widening gender gaps and class distances. Individuals in privileged
positions — both as stayers and migrants — may benefit more from migration than those in less privileged situations (Alba and Nee 1997; Portes and Zhou 1993).

This is the case with Latin America and Caribbean (LACar) countries where domestic and international migration were part and parcel of multiple societal transformations that took place during the second half of the 20th century (Massey, Fischer, and Capoferro 2006; Portes 1989). Between 1950 and 2000, LACar countries shifted from being rural to urban nations and from receiving to sending countries of international migrants (Durand 2009; Organization of American States 2011). By 2000, the proportion of the LACar population living in urban areas was 70% (Guzmán et al. 2006), and Latin Americans living abroad represented the second largest diaspora worldwide (White 2016:390).

LACar international migrants moved mainly to two destinations, the United States and Spain (Alvarado and Massey 2010; Donato et al. 2010). Migration flows to the United States have mainly been driven by Mexican and Central American countries, while the flows to Spain consisted mainly of people from Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). As for internal migration, rural-to-urban migration brought a significant number of former agricultural workers to cities, significantly contributing to urbanization (Portes 1989; Rodríguez Vignoli 2004). In both cases, international and domestic, economic factors, such as wage differentials and better economic prospects at destination, were the main drivers of these flows (Clark, Hatton, and Williamson 2003; Durand and Massey 1992).

It is relatively well known how these flows changed the economic status of families (Coubes et al. 2016) and originated transformations in family structures, including family separation due to spouse migration (De Snyder 1993), mixed families through reunification (children born in two different countries and with a different authorized status) (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), as well as
new ways of performing parental roles, such as transnational parenthood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2012). In addition, migration has also been associated with increased family dissolution and remarriage and disruption in transition to childbearing (Frank and Wildsmith 2005; Raley, Durden, and Wildsmith 2004). Less advanced is scholars’ capacity to frame all these associations within a holistic theory on how family and migration relate in contexts of highly stratified and gendered societies (Kanaiaupuni 2000).

This paper sheds light on these issues by applying intersectionality theory to the study of family and migration trajectories in two ways, as suggested by Choo and Ferree (2010). First, we examine differences in family formation and dissolution trajectories over a period of 25 years in individuals’ life courses, i.e., we examine all unions, marriages, births, separations, and remarriages from ages 15 to 39 (we refer to these trajectories as family formation trajectories, or simply family trajectories). A concentration on processes (as opposed to single events) reflects a core idea of intersectionality theory: individuals’ lives are constituted by a multiplicity of events, such as childbearing, entering a union, marriage, union dissolution. The intensity and timing of these events combined matter for other processual socioeconomic outcomes and realizations (e.g., finishing school, migrating).

Second, we compare sub-population groups defined by multiple key socioeconomic and migration variables. We analyze men and women separately, and within each sex, we examine differences by age at migration (including a category for non-migrants), type of migration (domestic vs. international), and educational attainment. The interaction of these three variables allows us to study groups with different degrees of vulnerability, socioeconomically speaking. We include not only marginalized or minority groups, but also privileged individuals, another key point of intersectional thinking, according to Choo and Ferree (2010). For example, the most vulnerable
group in our analysis is that of low-educated women who migrated internationally before adulthood. Several studies have shown that this group of women faces multiple challenges to ensuring adequate socioeconomic conditions when they migrate (Bueno and Vidal-Coso 2019; Frank and Heuveline 2005; González-Ferrer et al. 2017). In contrast, the most advantaged group in our analysis is highly educated men who either stayed or migrated as young adults (Kanaiaupuni 2000) (the relative advantage of these groups will become clearer in the results section). This multiple-group approach reflects a core idea of intersectionality thinking; what matters the most in understanding the significance of a phenomenon within a socially vulnerable group (e.g., positive association between migration and marital stability) is how that very same phenomenon occurs in other groups, including those more privileged.

We pool all available waves of the Mexican and Latin American Migration projects (MMP and LAMP herein) with harmonized information on family and migration. These data are well suited to studying family and migration trajectories, as they provide rich retrospective information on family and migration for a relatively large number of men and women from diverse origins. The data cover eight countries, more than 200 local communities, and collect information on migrants in the United States, Spain, and Canada.¹

The contribution of this paper is threefold. First, we offer an in-depth description of typical family formation trajectories in LACar countries and examine the main gender and class differences in individuals’ propensity to follow these typical trajectories. Second, we provide an intersectionality-driven interpretation of the relationship between migration and family trajectories. Third, we use this interpretation to assess the scope of the four explanatory hypotheses

proposed by population scientists to explain the relationship between migration and family dynamics. These four hypotheses are broadly encompassed in the concepts of *selection*, *assimilation*, *disruption*, and *socialization* (Adserà and Ferrer 2015; Kulu 2005).

**Family change and migration in Latin America and the Caribbean**

During the second half of the 20th century, LACar countries experienced significant fertility decline and growing marital instability (Arriagada 2007; García and de Oliveira 2011; Guzmán et al. 2006). These changes were related to several factors, including the increasing participation of women in domestic and international migration flows (Donato 2010, 2016). Changes in fertility preferences, better access to information and contraceptive methods, and financial constraints contributed to depressing fertility among migrants (Adserà and Menendez 2011; Castro Martin and Juarez 1995; Montgomery et al. 2003:6). In addition, a higher participation of women in migration created complex gender relations, as women gained financial independence from men and were exposed to relatively more gender-egalitarian contexts (e.g., cities) compared to their places of origin. These changes permeated both the migration experience and the unfolding of family trajectories (Herrera 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Jelin 1977; Pedraza 1991).

Because the takeoff of domestic migration preceded that of international moves, theories and explanations of the relationship between family and mobility were developed for the former context first. In addition, the then present demand for understanding fertility differentials strongly shaped the questions that researchers examined in the context of migration and family.

During the 1960s and 1970s, rural to urban migration dominated domestic migration flows in LACar (Montgomery et al. 2003:Introduction; Rodríguez Vignoli and Busso 2009). Excluding Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Venezuela, the most urbanized countries of the region, the average
proportion of people living in urban areas by country increased from 36% in 1950 to 58% in 1990. This extensive urbanization was a primary factor in fertility decline (Cosio 1992; Guzmán 1996). Completed fertility among rural migrants was between that of rural and urban stayers. Scholars explained this result in terms of four hypotheses: selection, assimilation, disruption, and socialization (Hervitz 1985; Zárate and Unger De Zárate 1975).

The selection hypothesis posits that fertility is lower among migrants because they are a specific group whose fertility behavior and preferences resemble those of the destination population more than those of the origin. In the assimilation hypothesis, lower fertility among migrants is a result of the adaptation of fertility behavior and preferences. The lower opportunity cost of childbearing compared to the labor market and the higher cost of childbearing (often translated into actual financial constraints) contribute to lower fertility among rural migrants in cities (Chant and McIlwaine 2009). However, fertility among rural migrants is never as low as that of urban stayers. Hence, in the socialization hypothesis, the social environment that dictates fertility behavior is that of the origin. Finally, the disruption hypothesis suggests that migration interferes with the realization of fertility preferences due to (temporal) family separation, which in turns translates into lower completed fertility (Montgomery et al. 2003:6).

During the same period, international migration started to occur in the region, and, with the economic crisis of the 1970s, emigration rates from LACar countries to the United States, Canada, and some European countries experienced sustained growth. These migration flows were also fueled by internal armed/violent conflicts, such as the Colombian, Nicaraguan, and Mexican confrontations (Alvarado and Massey 2010; Castles, De Haas, and Miller 2014; Donato et al. 2010; Massey and Capoferro 2006). Persistent economic development gaps between origin and destination countries and international migration policies (e.g., the Bracero program) helped to
consolidate these migration streams (Fussell 2010; Garip 2012; Massey 1987; Massey, Durand, and Pren 2014). Initially, men outnumbered women in these migration flows, but the flows became diversified due to family reunification and the increasing economic empowerment of LACar women (Donato 2010).

Figure 1 displays the evolution of emigration rates and sex ratios in the migrant population of the eight Latin American countries of this study to their three primary destination countries: The United States, Spain, and Canada.

**Figure 1:** Time trends in emigration rates and emigration sex ratios to the United States, Spain, and Canada from eight Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Countries in: ***Central America and the Caribbean***  --- ***South America***  --- ***Mexico***

*Notes:* Migration data comes from the World Bank – Global Migration Database. Population data comes from the United Nations Population Prospects (2017). Countries are labeled as Colombia (COL), Dominican Republic (DOM), Ecuador (ECU), El Salvador (SLV), Guatemala (GTM), Mexico (MEX), and Peru (PER).
The growing numbers of LACar migrants in these destinations have attracted considerable attention, initially at the destination, and later from the origin perspective. This scholarly work has also documented the connection between migration and family. Despite some variations in the way hypotheses are stated in these studies, this research agrees with the findings of studies on internal migration: migration and family are connected, and the four explanatory hypotheses (*socialization*, *selection*, *disruption*, and *assimilation*) are sometimes mutually exclusive and sometimes complementary (Kulu 2005).

For example, Lindstrom and Giorguli-Saucedo (2002) have documented how the temporal separation of Mexican couples due to migration depresses fertility, meaning that international migration *disrupts* family formation schedules. Parrado (2011) shows that period fertility rates overestimate Hispanic fertility due to the significant share of migrants in this group and the connection between migration and the transition to first birth. However, he also shows that differences in completed fertility between foreign- and native-born women of Hispanic origin are negligible, meaning that there are indications of *assimilation/adaptation*. In Canada, Adserà and Ferrer (2014) demonstrate that fertility rates are low before migration and high one year after, signaling that migrants delay fertility according to their migration plans. Although all these studies find evidence of *disruption* and *adaptation*, differences across migrants’ origin have also led some authors to give validity to the *socialization* hypothesis. This is the case for African groups in Spain, but also for some LACar women in the United States (González-Ferrer et al. 2017; Kulu and González-Ferrer 2014; Parrado and Morgan 2008; Stephen and Bean 1992).

By stating their complementary nature, it is not hard to connect *socialization*, *selection*, *disruption*, and *adaptation* mechanisms in a unified narrative that helps explain the family formation paths of LACar migrants. For example, because migration entails substantial costs, migrants tend to be
positively selected in terms of socioeconomic status in almost all migration flows. The selectivity of migrants can explain differences in the family trajectories of migrants and non-migrants at origin. Additionally, as living and labor market conditions differ substantially between the origin and destination areas, the migration experience implies significant adaptation, in economic and financial terms. These adaptations can affect how family formation trajectories unfold. In the case of internal migrants, the separation of the productive and reproductive spaces, along with the devaluation of migrants’ skills upon arrival, could restrict family size, making migrant and non-migrant families at destination more alike. However, family formation trajectories among migrants are not identical to those of non-migrants, which implies that some elements of the socialization hypothesis are also in operation.

Despite the overall consistency of these studies, what is misleading about this narrative is the disconnection of individuals from their gender and social class and the lack of attention to the intersection of these two structural factors. As noted by Hein de Hass (2014) and Garip (2012), hypothesis-driven accounts (i.e., deductive research strategies) about migrants tend to reconstruct the story of an “average” individual (the average migrant), paying little or no attention to the fundamental markers of their social position. Mean levels of fertility and the timing of family formation are likely to mask significant heterogeneity due to gender and socioeconomic status; that is where intersectionality theory is needed. By paying more attention to class and gender relations and how they shape migration and family formation trajectories, intersectionality theory helps us build a more nuanced narrative of how migration and family are related.

The intersection of class and gender in LACar societies

Class structures and social inequalities in LACar are historically rooted and pervasive (Portes and Hoffman 2003; Torche 2014). The strength of the relationship between social reproduction and
family trajectories is also significant (Juarez and Gayet 2014; Landale and Oropesa 2007). For example, recent studies have shown the emergence of a bimodal pattern in the age at first birth by educational attainment, meaning that low-educated women are accelerating the transition to childbearing, whereas the reverse is valid for highly educated women (Lima et al. 2018; Nathan 2015). These differences in timing may have implications for the educational attainment and economic prospects of mothers and their children. These dynamics are not new; on the contrary, they have been in place since the beginning of the fertility transition in virtually all LACar countries (Bongaarts, Mensch, and Blanc 2017; Chant and McIlwaine 2009:9; Urdinola and Ospino 2015).

The timing of family formation also shows important differences by gender in LACar countries. Fertility initiation and family formation do not start at the same age for men and women. Despite modest declines, the age difference within a couple continues to favor men. By starting families later, men have more time to accumulate assets, labor market experience, and educational degrees than women. Once part of a couple, women are expected to undertake most of the care work at home, and they are often underemployed; men are responsible for the financial support of the household and typically have better jobs (García and de Oliveira 2011; Urdinola and Tovar 2017). Moreover, women are subjected to a disproportionately high level of domestic violence (Friedemann-Sánchez and Lovatón 2012; United Nations 2017).

Furthermore, international mobility is more restricted for women than men. Women depend more on family and kinship networks when they want (or need) to migrate than men (Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003). For example, in her study on the development of “weak ties” among the Maya community in Houston, Hagan (1998) shows that the gendered nature of immigrant networks is detrimental to women’s long-term legal settlement in the United States. Residential isolation for
female domestic workers, along with other working conditions, prevents migrant women from developing horizontal relationships with non-Mayan people, which translates into less social and cultural capital to interact with US institutions. This is not the case for men, who are disproportionately employed in other occupational positions. These differences between men and women are not limited to the development of short- and long-term migration networks: they are also present in virtually all dimensions of the migration experience, including the timing of migration, the destination, and the decision-making and labor division within the household (Donato 2016; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Massey et al. 2006; Pedraza 1991).

All these gendered dynamics are not always detrimental to women: there are instances when migration favors women’s empowerment and financial independence, as they are more likely to join the labor market and become more aware of their potential (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Parrado and Flippen 2005). Nevertheless, aggregate trends at origin and destination suggest that negative consequences override positive ones, translating into worse socioeconomic and labor conditions for women. This situation is especially true for women in less privileged positions, socioeconomically speaking (Herrera 2013; Sassen-Koob 1984).

**Hypotheses, assumptions, and analytical approach**

Our primary assumption, derived from intersectionality theory, is that migration and family formation need to be studied as embedded in class and gender relations. Class-specific family trajectories may preclude or encourage migration, as much as class-specific migration opportunities limit the family trajectories of potential migrants. For example, among low socioeconomic status individuals, the transition to parenthood is positively associated with male migration and negatively with female migration (Kanaiaupuni 2000). This relation between family formation and migration can be positive for both sexes among high socioeconomic status couples.
because a larger pool of resources may facilitate joint migration. In other words, by changing their place of residence, migrants make investments and enter new social contexts that require them to adjust to new material and non-material conditions. Material conditions include the combined need of migrants to recover the investment they put into migration (if any), maintain themselves in the new setting, and, potentially, send remittances to those left behind (especially if they come from a lower-class background). Non-material factors consist of expectations, values, and norms at the destination, including those related to family. These two types of conditions may have different implications depending on migrants’ class and gender.

We also assume that, adaptation strategies to new material conditions are likely to include actions that help increase or preserve resources in ways that depend on class and gender. For example, in the case of Colombian and Ecuadorian migrants in Spain, lower fertility and higher marital stability have been associated with the migration experience, as they favor the increase and preservation of resources, especially financial resources (Castro-Martin and Rosero-Bixby 2011). The relatively unstable financial conditions of these migrant families make them more likely to reduce their fertility and more prone to remain in (cohabiting or marital) unions. This relationship can also go in the other direction. Parrado (2004) has shown that the transition to marriage accelerates, and marriage stability is boosted among Western Mexican migrants when they return to Mexico due to the savings they acquired during their time abroad.

The migration experience itself may imply delays in family formation, insofar as planning and moving consume time and resources that could otherwise have been used to form a family. It is also possible that family formation is a precondition or a trigger for migration due to the economic, social, and emotional support family members provide to each other, which may strengthen individuals’ intentions to migrate. In short, whether family formation occurs before or after
migration, and the way a family trajectory unfolds, varies across social classes because both processes are determined by individuals’ opportunity structures.

Even though internal migration is not a necessary precondition for international migration, we also assume a hierarchical relationship between the two. In general, international migration is riskier, requires more resources, and implies more contextual changes than internal. Therefore, the relationship between family and migration could vary according to the type of migration. International migration may imply more extended periods of separation from family members and more uncertainty within a couple. Formal marriage may facilitate migration or be a requirement for family reunification. Perhaps the only exceptions are specific migration flows of people of Mexican origin to the United States. Well-established migrant networks may decrease the cost and risk associated with migration and even facilitate circular migration (Fussell 2010; Massey 1990); however, this does not negate the difference between internal and international migration.

In contrast, domestic migration is less affected by high risks and costs to the extent that, in principle, distances are shorter, return migration more affordable, re-migration less risky, and family reunification subject to less or no legal constraints. In other words, the potential disruption associated with internal migration may be more temporary compared to disruptions associated with international moves (Macisco and Myers 1975).

Given the stratified nature of family formation and migration, it is also possible that their relationship varies by social class in ways that tend to reproduce social class differences (Landale and Oropesa 2007). For upper class individuals, migration could imply delayed transitions to family formation and less traditional family life paths, e.g., career-oriented individuals who migrate to pursue higher education from middle/upper classes in origin areas. In contrast, migrants who move to escape poverty (by themselves or as dependents) are more likely to stick to
traditional/normative family forms, i.e., early, stable, and unique marriages. For the lower classes, marriage is an asset that helps individuals cope with the financial and emotional costs associated with migration (Parrado and Flippen 2005).

According to these class-specific relationships between family formation trajectories and migration, our study assumes that there is a two-way relationship between family formation in the context of migration and resource accumulation. People with better access to material and cultural resources benefit more from migration and display family trajectories that favor resource preservation. On the contrary, groups with less favorable opportunity structures in terms of migration are more likely to experience family formation disruptions associated with negative family and socioeconomic outcomes (McLanahan 2009).

Finally, the intertwined nature of family formation and migration could have different implications for men and women. Because family formation occurs earlier among the latter, especially among those from lower classes, migration could further accentuate class differences among women. An important branch of the gender literature on migration in LACar has shown that lower class women migrate before age 18 without being fully supported by their parents, if they are married to an older male migrant (Herrera 2012). Their life experience and opportunities are substantially different from those of higher class women who migrate as dependents, i.e., as daughters within economically and socially advantaged families. Thanks to their families’ support, this latter group of women has better socioeconomic opportunities before, during, and after migration. This unequal distribution in opportunities is more valid in the context of international than internal moves.
because gender roles, labor market conditions, and migration policies have historically favored male migration (Garip 2017).²

**Data and methods**

We select data and methods that allow us to show the multiple ways in which family trajectories and migration relate to one another, i.e., how this relationship occurs across different societal groups. This is an appropriate approach to operationalizing intersectionality theory in a quantitative analysis. By pooling data from the Mexico-US migration stream (the most massive stream worldwide) with much smaller migration flows from other LACar countries, our analysis incorporates diverse migration experiences and heterogeneous family trajectories favoring the generalizability of the results. We analyze men and women separately because we consider gender to be a structural concept that interacts with all the other factors that explain family formation and migration trajectories. Although results for men and women are yielded separately, they are presented and interpreted jointly to illuminate gender differences.

The most substantial advantage of the MMP and LAMP projects is their ability to capture the history and heterogeneity of migration dynamics across LACar countries from a multisite perspective (Massey 1987; Massey and Riosmena 2010; Riosmena 2016). Whereas the MMP includes only the US and Canada as destination countries, the LAMP provides information on Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian migrants in the United States, Canada, and Spain.

Part of the households included in the MMP and LAMP are a random sample from local communities with high emigration rates in origin countries. To increase the probability of

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² The Dominican Republic constitutes an exception, given that women are more likely to have the role of providing financial support for the household. Consequently, they are more likely to be the leaders of the household’s migration strategy.
collecting information directly from migrants, the MMP and LAMP focus on local areas with a high prevalence of emigration. Moreover, data collection takes place during the end of the year, the time when migrants are likely to be visiting their families. The remaining households are incorporated into the data through a snow-bowling sampling strategy at destinations. Although this part of the sampling is not random, it allows the direct inclusion of households and family members living abroad. Hence, both datasets are locally representative within each country.

Due to these collection strategies, the MMP and LAMP data are biased towards returning migrants, migrants with stronger family ties, and presumably more stable family trajectories. Although there are positive assessments regarding the capacity of these data to capture national-level dynamics of emigration, a cautious interpretation of the results regarding family dynamics is necessary because they are only locally representative (Massey and Zenteno 2000). This cautious interpretation includes looking at family trends in representative national surveys in origin countries to verify consistency or assess the importance of the deviations. These issues are discussed in greater detail in the concluding section. Despite these limitations, the MMP and LAMP are unique sources for studying family and migration trajectories jointly in the Americas. Given their shared methodological and theoretical approach, the information they provide across countries is highly comparable.

We focus on eight countries with harmonized birth, marital, and migration histories for household heads: Mexico, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. Because we do not have the marital and birth histories of partners and spouses, we assume they have the same marital and birth history as the household head, only adjusting their age difference. For example, if a male household-head reported marrying for the first time at age 33
and he is three years older than his spouse, we assume she married for the first time at age 30; we follow the same logic for births, divorces, and separations.

This assumption is not problematic given the high level of marital stability among the cohorts of this study, which means that most of the household-heads and partners share the same marital and birth histories (Fussell and Palloni 2004). Moreover, adding spouses and partners increases the number of women in the sample significantly because women are less likely to be household-heads in most of these countries. This assumption is not necessary for migration histories because the MMP and LAMP collect migration histories for household-heads and partners independently. Hence, differences by sex regarding how migration trajectories relate to family trajectories will be biased towards more stable family trajectories (as some marital disruptions may be omitted) and more homogeneous relationships between migration and family. Because most of the household-heads are men, assuming shared family formation trajectories between household-heads and spouses may undermine gender differences. These two potential biases make our results a conservative estimate of the actual differences by sex.

Table 1 displays the total number of men and women for whom family trajectories are available by type of migration and age at migration. Using information from the life histories grids, we reconstruct all the family-related events (births, unions, marriages, separations, and divorces) of these men and women from age 15 to age 39. We use four categories to classify individuals’ marital status: never married, married, cohabiting, and separated or divorced. The last category also includes widows. However, because the proportion of widowers in this category is demographically unimportant, the category is referred to only as separated and divorce. Likewise, we use four categories to group individuals according to their number of children born at each age: zero, one, two, and three or more. Combining individuals’ marital status and children born at each
age produces a categorical variable with 16 categories, i.e., family statuses. Hence, the dependent variable of this paper consists of approximately 16,000 family trajectories (Table 1). Each family formation trajectory is a 25-year sequence representing individuals’ family status from age 15 to age 39.

Table 1: Analytical sample by sex, type of migration, and age at migration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at migration</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>5,265</td>
<td>3,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 18</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 24</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 30</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 30</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 18</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 24</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 30</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 30</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8,051</td>
<td>8,162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The analytical sample includes household-heads and partners that were born between 1940 and 1980 in eight Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The main explanatory variables are sex, type of migration, age at migration (including a non-migrant category for stayers), and educational attainment. These variables are defined as follows. Individuals are classified as non-migrants if they do not report any domestic or international moves. In accordance with the definitions of the MMP and LAMP, we classify international trips as migration moves if they meet two conditions: (1) the trip lasted at least three months, and (2) the trip involved work or an active job search.³ Domestic moves are identified using the same

³ This classification is appropriate for this study because it does not consider short trips and visits to family members as migration. Arguably, short trips and visits are less likely to modify family trajectories.
criteria. Individuals who report both international and domestic migration are classified as international migrants. Because the age at migration is not directly asked, we calculate it as the difference between the year of the first migration and the year of birth.

Educational attainment is separated into four categories: lowest, low, medium, and high. These categories correspond to the number of completed years of schooling: zero to four, five to eight, 9 to 12, and 13 or more, respectively. Despite national differences in the content of educational grades, these cutoff points are meaningful in distinguishing individuals’ social class. Less than four years of schooling only ensure basic literacy and numeracy skills, while five to eight years imply basic competence for unskilled jobs. Nine to 12 are equivalent to high school completion in the United States system, and more than 12 years indicate a college education (National Research Council 1999). Typically, individuals finish the 11th and 12th grades by age 18, which is also the legal age of majority in LACar countries.

We follow a two-step analytical strategy to correlate individual family trajectories with explanatory variables; men and women are always analyzed separately. First, we rely on sequence and cluster analysis (SA and CA herein) techniques to create a family typology for the individual family trajectories (i.e., for the 25-year-long individual sequences of family statuses). This typology comprises six categories (family trajectory types). Individual family trajectories are similar within each category and very distinct across them. Second, we use multinomial regression models to estimate the conditional distribution of the family typology by migration type, age at migration, and educational attainment. We use the expression “family profiles” to refer to these conditional distributions. Differences across family profiles by sex, age at migration,
educational attainment reflect the complex ways in which gender, migration, social class, and family trajectories relate to one another.\textsuperscript{4}

At this point, it is necessary to discuss a caveat to our use of SA and CA. We do not use SA and CA to find pre-existing clusters, i.e., we do not assume that groups of women and men with similar family trajectories exist as self-recognized groups. Instead, we use SA and CA to construct our objects of study: ideal types of family trajectories, following the Weberian notion of ideal type, in a spirit similar as Garip’s (2012) approach to migration types. In other words, the family typology is the result of a recodification process that groups men and women with similar family experiences in terms of the order, timing, and type of births, unions, marriages, divorces and union dissolutions that occurred to them between ages 15 and 39.

Recodification into categories necessarily implies some loss of precision in the measurement of separated outcomes, particularly when categories include multiple dimensions (i.e., fertility and marital status). However, two arguments justify this trade-off between complexity and loss of accuracy. First, adopting an intersectionality perspective implies analyzing the full set of family events that occur to an individual over his/her life history. Second, the relative loss of accuracy due to the typology can be measured by the proportion of explained variance of the individual trajectories (see Studer et al. (2011) for a full description of this measure). This measure is analogous to an $R^2$ in a regression framework and can be read as the percentage of the variability in the individual family trajectories that is accounted for by the typology (approximately 80\% in our analysis, see details in the results section).

\textsuperscript{4} Throughout the analysis we use standardized weights at the country-wave-level so that each country-wave has the same total influence on the analysis. This is important given the overrepresentation of Mexican individuals in the sample.
Once the typology is built, we estimate family profiles interacting age at migration and educational attainment, while controlling for country of origin and birth cohort. This interaction model-specification yields a table with 36 family profiles per sex. We rely on a factorial representation of these tables to highlight the main patterns and facilitate interpretation.

**Results**

Sex differences in the prevalence of international and domestic migration reflect the gendered nature of mobility. Further nuances appear when we look at educational attainment and age at migration. However, sex-differences are the starting point of an intersectionality-based understanding of the relationship between migration and family trajectories.

As seen in Table 2 (Lower panel), only 12% of women migrated to another country (2.2+3.8+2.7+3.5=12.1%), whereas roughly one of each three men (5.8+10.4+7.2+7.9=31.3%) in the sample did so. This relationship holds across all age at migration groups. Instead, the prevalence of domestic migration is indistinguishable between the sexes (27.2% for women vs. 27.6% for men), with a slight negative gradient over age (upper panel in Table 2). Compared to women, men are more likely to migrate domestically after age 25, whereas women are more likely to migrate before age 18.

According to Table 2, migrants of both sexes are positively selected in terms of educational attainment in domestic and international streams. The flow selection favors men in domestic flows and women in international ones. As most of the domestic moves occur during schooling years for men and women (approximately 70% before age 25), mobility seems to be positively associated with better educational opportunities at destination, especially for women. However, this positive association does not negate sex differences. For example, among non-migrants, the sex ratio in the
A proportion of individuals with higher education is $15.0/9.8 = 1.53$ (men/women), meaning that men are 53% more likely to acquire higher education than women. This ratio favors men across all ages at migration in domestic moves: 1.28 (before age 18), 1.56 (ages 19 to 24), 1.37 (ages 25 to 30), and 1.16 (after 30).

**Table 2:** Migration prevalence and educational attainment by sex, type of migration, and age at migration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at migration</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Med.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migrant</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>(2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>(2.1)</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>(2.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Upper panel:** Internal migrants by age at migration

| <18              | 13.0  | (1.1)  | 58.4 | (1.0) | 10.9 | (1.3) | 13.8 | (1.5) | 16.9 | (2.1) | 100  |
|                 | 7.3   | (0.5)  | 50.7 | (3.8) | 11.4 | (1.5) | 17.6 | (2.3) | 20.3 | (2.5) | 100  |
| 19 to 24         | 3.3   | (0.3)  | 57.2 | (3.8) | 11.2 | (1.9) | 16.4 | (2.6) | 15.2 | (2.4) | 100  |
| > 30             | 3.6   | (0.4)  | 57.6 | (4.6) | 10.3 | (2.4) | 17.1 | (2.9) | 15.0 | (3.0) | 100  |

**Lower panel:** International migrants by age at migration

| <18              | 2.2   | (0.4)  | 41.3 | (10.3) | 23.2 | (6.4) | 27.9 | (7.8) | 7.5  | (4.8) | 100  |
|                 | 3.8   | (0.8)  | 47.3 | (8.0)  | 14.0 | (3.8) | 17.8 | (7.3) | 20.8 | (5.8) | 100  |
| 19 to 24         | 2.7   | (0.5)  | 35.6 | (5.8)  | 18.7 | (4.9) | 19.7 | (4.5) | 26.0 | (5.6) | 100  |
| > 30             | 3.5   | (0.5)  | 50.2 | (7.4)  | 10.5 | (2.8) | 15.7 | (2.9) | 23.7 | (7.0) | 100  |

|                  |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |
|                  | 100   |         | 100   |         | 100   |         |

**Note:** Educational attainment categories are based on completed years of schooling: 0 to 4 (Lowest), 5 to 8 (Low), 8 to 12 (Med.), and 13 or more (High). Standard errors, in parentheses, are clustered at the community level.

In sharp contrast, for international moves, sex differences in the flow selection favor women. Indeed, men are negatively selected. This different selectivity implies that migrant women are more likely to be from higher social classes, both compared to their counterparts who do not
migrate and compared to men. Using an intersectional lens implies a downplaying of the individualistic understanding of these negative and positive selections processes. These do not mean to suggest that men and women choose (select themselves) to be in low or high educational categories and are consequently more or less likely to migrate; rather, sex differences in the educational profile of migrants are the byproduct of sex gaps in accessing education and prevailing gender norms in LACar countries that make migration more restrictive for women than men. Gender norms in LACar countries associate women with family care and domestic work, for which neither higher education nor migration experience are necessary. In other words, the stronger positive selection of migrant women in terms of educational attainment shows that it is indeed more difficult for women to migrate internationally compared to men. Likewise, the negative selection of men is associated with recruitment policies that targeted unskilled men to work in agriculture during the 1960s and 1970s (Garip 2017; Kanaiaupuni 2000). Again, macro-level policies are factors that are far from being subject to individuals’ control or choice. In short, this reversed flow-selection by sex in international migration emerges from the higher constraints on women’s mobility and the more favorable migration channels offered to low-educated men.

We now move on to the analysis of family formation trajectories by age at migration. State-distribution plots over age display the aggregate-level associations between age at migration and family trajectories (Figures 2 and 3). These associations differ by sex, type of migration, and age at migration. In the case of women, as seen in Figure 2, migration before age 18 is associated with a faster transition to family formation, whereas migration after age 25 is associated with the opposite. Moreover, age at migration and completed fertility are negatively associated. By age 39, the proportion of women with three or more children is lower among those who migrate after age 25 compared to those who migrate before this age. In addition, this negative association is stronger...
among international than domestic migrants. Women who migrate internationally after age 30 display the lowest completed fertility and the highest proportion of childlessness compared to all other groups. Figure 2 also shows that the prevalence of cohabitation, separation, and divorce is higher among domestic migrants compared to non-migrants and international migrants.

**Figure 2:** State distribution plots of family statuses by age at migration – women.

*Internal migration*

*International migration*

*Note:* Figures account for sample weights. The plot for non-migrants is the same in the bottom and top panels.

State-distribution plots for men, displayed in Figure 3, differ from those of women mainly because of age gaps within couples. Men are on average 3.5 years older than their female partners, which implies, for instance, that the prevalence of divorce and separation is lower for men than women.
because it occurs later for the former. Moreover, Figure 3 also shows that the association between family trajectories and age at migration is similar for men and women, but weaker for the former. In other words, men’s family trajectories appear to be less affected by migration.

**Figure 3:** State distribution plots of family statuses by age at migration – men.

*Internal migration*

*International migration*

*Note:* Figures account for sample weights. The plot for non-migrants is the same in the bottom and top panels.

To understand individual-level heterogeneity, we create a family-trajectories typology. Our typology comprises six fairly distinct family formation experiences. These six types differ in terms of the number of family events (unions, births, separation/divorces), something we refer to as intensity, and in the degree of deviation from a family trajectory of early transition to a unique
(i.e., stable) marriage. We refer to this latter trajectory type as normative. Caution is required when using the term “normative.” By using this term, we do not want to imply that early transition to a stable and unique marriage is a desirable feature of a family trajectory. Instead, we want to emphasize the fact that there is a large group of individuals with family trajectories of unique and stable marriages, which makes it a tacit societal norm. These two features (stable and unique marriage) are common characteristics of unions in LACar, although transformations have started to take place since the latter 20th century (Fussell and Palloni 2004; Quilodrán 2011). We could have used the term “modal” instead of “normative,” but the word “modal” is misleading, as its neutrality erases the societal origin of norms regarding family formation in LACar. Moreover, the word “modal” does not account for the fact that normative family features are associated with better socioeconomic outcomes for children and parents. Similarly to our discussion regarding migrant selectivity, this is not about individual choices and the statistical operation of measuring the modal category, but about implicit societal norms affecting individuals’ decisions.

Figure 4 displays individual family trajectories for women (left) and men (right) along with a family typology for each sex. The distribution of men and women in this typology is the most general family profile, i.e., the family profile of men and women from high emigration communities in origin countries and migrant men and women living in the United States, Canada, and Spain, according to the sample design of the MMP and LAMP.

The bottom area of the plot contains the three trajectories types of low intensity family events and delayed transitions to union formation and childbearing, i.e., lower prevalence of marriage, union formation, and low fertility. The top area comprises the one family trajectory type of high intensity family events (multiple births, mostly, but also divorces and multiple marriages). The central area includes two “atypical” family trajectories (unstable and lifelong cohabitation).
**Figure 4:** Individual family trajectories and family typology by sex

*Note:* Individual trajectories are sorted by complete fertility within each family category. Even though figures account for sample weights, interpretations should be cautious due to overplotting.

This typology accounts for 83% and 84% of the total variance of the individual family trajectories of women and men, respectively. We use labels to name each trajectory type and to summarize the main aspects of this typology. Before examining associations between this typology and migration,
we provide a succinct description of each trajectory type from bottom to top, highlighting differences by sex.

With 7% of women in it, “Never married” is a category of singleness and single motherhood. Only a small number of women in this category enter unions. For all other categories, the transition to union formation is universal; this transition occurs later among the 12% of women in the second category (“Delayed”) and earlier among the 20% and 5% of women in the “Norm-late” and “Unstable” categories. Virtually all women in the “Unstable” category are separated or divorced by age 39. Women in the top two groups move to union formation very early and have the highest completed fertility of all categories. As all women in the fifth category cohabited for most of the observation time, we labelled this group “Cohabiters.” The last group is labeled “Norm-early” because it comprises 45% of women, and it is characterized by early, universal, and stable marriage.

Among men there is no category of unstable marriages; instead, an additional category of very delayed transitions to union formation and low fertility is added (“Latest”). The overall delayed schedule and the absence of the “Unstable” category among men reflect the gendered nature of the family formation and dissolution process and its potential role in the reproduction of gender inequalities. This result is in line with intersectionality theory, as it reflects gender gaps in individuals’ opportunity structure during their life course.

To the extent that early family formation has labor-market and educational penalties, especially among low socioeconomic status individuals (Organización Internacional del Trabajo 2019), women have substantially less time than men to accumulate cultural capital and valuable assets for the labor market. According to our data, men are single and without children during 37% of their lifetime, between ages 15 and 39, whereas women for only 25% (3.3-year average difference).
Likewise, the “Unstable” category only appears for women because by age 39 more women have experienced union dissolution than men. On average, women spend 3.7% of their lifetime between ages 15 and 39 separated or divorced, whereas this proportion among men is only 1.2%. To the extent that divorce/separation have negative consequences on socioeconomic status, women are exposed to these adverse consequences earlier.

**Intersectional heterogeneity: sex, age at migration, and educational attainment**

Exploring heterogeneity jointly by educational attainment (four groups) and age of migration (four groups) involves the comparison of 72 family profiles, 36 for each sex. A table with 72 family profiles is difficult to interpret, but this is necessary under an intersectionality approach. As argued above, displaying multiple relations matters, as they reflect how the intersection of sex, class, and age at migration plays out in the relationship between family trajectories and migration. We achieve this using factorial analysis techniques, as they allow us to identify two main differentiation axes among the 72 family profiles. These two axes are then plotted against each other to display the main associations across family profiles and educational attainment and age at migration groups.⁵

Hence, Figures 5 and 6 summarize the main patterns in the relationships across the family profiles of women and men of different socioeconomic and age at migration groups. We separate domestic (left) and international migrants (right) for clarity purposes. Both planes contain the non-migrant group and are interpretable jointly. In addition, white background lines are separated by one standard deviation to provide a sense of the statistical significance of distances among groups and

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⁵ In technical terms we construct these plots using the first two components of a Principal Component Analysis applied to the table of conditional distributions. Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix display all the 72 conditional distributions (i.e., family profiles).
family categories. Because this type of plots is not common in family and migration research, we deem it necessary to include some comments on how to interpret them.

**Figure 5:** Disruption in *family profiles* by type of migration, age at migration, and educational attainment for women.

*Internal*  

*International*

![Graph showing family profiles by type of migration, age at migration, and educational attainment for women.]

**Notes:**

The mean *family profile* is Never married (9.9), Delayed (18.1), Norm-late (24.3), Unstable (5.3), Cohabiters (6.7), and Norm-early (35.7).

The center of the plot represents the mean *family profile*, i.e., the distribution of men and women displayed in Figure 4 (In technical terms, the marginal distribution of family categories). Furthermore, the *family profiles* of all socioeconomic and age at migration groups are represented as points in a way that reflects their main differences with respect to each other and to the overall
family profile. Proximity signals similarity and positive correlations, whereas distance indicates discrepancy and negative association.

Hence, the proximity between two (or more) family categories implies that, across the age at migration and educational attainment groups, the proportion of individuals in these categories is simultaneously high. For example, the two closest family categories in Figure 5 are “Norm-early” and “Unstable,” meaning that, among groups where the proportion of women in the “Norm-early” category is high (relative to the mean), the proportion of women in the “Unstable” category is also high. In contrast, a large distance between two (or more) categories implies negative association. For example, the two most distant family categories in Figure 5 are “Cohabiters” and “Norm-late,” meaning that these two categories comprise very distinct groups of women in terms of their age at migration and educational attainment.

Thus, the horizontal axis in Figure 5 separates high-intensity (left side: “Cohabiters,” “Unstable,” “Norm-early”) from low-intensity family trajectories (right side: “Never married,” “Delayed-stable,” and “Early-stable”). The vertical axis separates normative categories (bottom) from less/non-normative trajectories (top). It is important to emphasize that this distribution is the result of the correlations across family profiles, this is achieved thanks to the properties of factorial analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet 2004). Although the family categories and their distribution are not generalizable to other populations, they do reflect sociologically important aspects of how family and migration relate in the migration streams we are examining.

Family profiles by age at migration and educational attainment groups are also points in the plane. Colors and line types distinguish age at migration. Dot shapes differentiate educational attainment levels, and a line connects educational attainment categories for each age at migration group to better depict educational profiles. The proximity between a group and a family category implies
positive association; distance/separation implies the opposite. For example, non-migrant women display well-documented differences in their *family profiles* by educational attainment. Highly educated women are more likely to be in less intense family categories (right-hand side of the plot), whereas low-educated women are more likely to be in more intense family life paths (left-hand side of the plot). Also, non-migrant women are the closest to the center because they drive most of the distribution of the overall mean *family profile*.

Now that the way of interpreting these plots is clear, we begin by examining patterns among domestic migrants, and then we continue with international migrants. We do this first for women (Figure 5) and subsequently for men (Figure 6).

**Women.** Higher education among women is associated with low-intensity and non-normative family trajectories ("Never married," "Delayed," and to a lesser extent "Norm-late"). Low education is instead associated with the "Unstable," "Cohabitors," and "Norm-early" family trajectories. Importantly, these differences in *family profiles* across educational attainment groups are greater among domestic migrant women compared to non-migrants. The only exception is women who migrated between ages 25 to 30. For them, *family profiles* have higher proportions in the "Never married" and "Delayed" categories for all educational attainment groups (top-right quadrant of the plot). Domestic migration also separates the *family profiles* of young migrants (19 to 24) from those of adult migrants. The former group is strongly associated with more traditional family trajectories and the latter with less traditional ones. This pattern holds for all educational attainment groups.

*Family profiles* among international migrant women display more significant and less patterned deviations across educational categories than among domestic migrants, meaning that international mobility is more disruptive than domestic and that disruptions are more heterogeneous in the latter
case. Given that educational attainment is a strong predictor of family outcomes, the disruption of educational profiles among international migrant women signals the importance of the migration experience for family trajectories. For example, among women who migrate as adolescents (before age 18), the distance between the family profiles low- and highly educated is the largest. Consistent with the literature, this separation suggests the existence of two distinct family migration paths. On one side, lower educated women who do not finish high school, probably because they migrated independently, are associated with normative-early and unstable trajectories. On the other, women who also migrate as adolescents, but complete higher education at destination (the US, Canada, and Spain), are associated with the “Never married” and “Delayed” family trajectories, the two categories are at the frontline of family changes both in origin and destination countries. Given their higher educational achievement, women in this latter group are more likely to have had parental or family support, before, during, and after migration, i.e., they are more likely to have migrated as daughters in a middle/upper class family context.

Women who migrate between ages 19 to 24 are more likely to be in the “Norm-late” category. Among these women, union formation, union stability, and migration are strongly intertwined, potentially because marriage and migration occur very close to one another in individuals’ lifetimes. Because the MMP and LAMP samples include return migrants, this result is consistent with previous research that underscores the importance of family ties (partners and children left behind) in the probability of returning (Arenas et al. 2015; Baizán, Beauchemin, and González-Ferrer 2014). It is possible that obligations and rights derived from these kinship relations are unaltered by migration, or even reinforced by it, due to the investment family members must make during the processes of moving back and forth.
Family profiles for women who migrate between ages 25 and 30 are strongly disrupted. These women are more likely to follow low intensity and non-normative family paths, except for those with higher education. The last age at migration group displays more modest deviations compared to non-migrants. Women who migrate after age 30 display a higher propensity towards less traditional family forms (top-right and top-left quadrants).

Overall, international migration is negatively associated with cohabitation: only one out of the 16 family profiles of international migrants appears in the same quadrant as the “Cohabiteurs” category. This result reinforces the interpretation of formal unions (marriages) as an asset to women’s international mobility.

Men. As seen in Figure 6, factorial axes also differentiate low-intensity family trajectories (right) from high-intensity ones (left), and normative from less/non-normative trajectories along the vertical direction. The similarity of these distributions between men and women is expected given the strong degree of assortative mating by educational attainment in LACar societies (Torche 2010). However, the distribution of family profiles in the plot differs between the sexes. These discrepancies underline the significance of gender relations in determining the propensity to follow family trajectories in the context of migration. This is even more the case in our analysis because men’s and women’s family trajectories are not fully independent (refer to the Data and Methods section), and yet the results differ.

Family profiles in the context of domestic migration display less disruption among men than women, with three critical similarities. First, differences across educational attainment levels follow the same direction for men and women: higher education is accompanied by lower intensity and less normative trajectories. Second, late migration is associated with less intense and less
normative family trajectories. Third, migration between ages 19 to 24 is strongly associated with normative trajectories.

Figure 6: Disruption in *family profiles* by type of migration, age at migration, and educational attainment for men.

*Internal*  

*International*

![Diagram showing family profiles](image)

**Years of schooling**  
- ○ 0-4  
- ▲ 5-8  
- ■ 9-12  
- ● 13+

**Age at migration**  
- ■ Non-migrant  
- ··· Before age 18  
- 19-24  
- ··· 25-30  
- — After age 30

*Notes:* The mean profile is Never married (7.6), Latest (8.9), Delayed (17.6), Norm-late (26.7), Cohabiters (5.1), and Norm-early (34.2).

Men’s *family profiles* in the international migration context are strongly disrupted and less patterned than among women. There are, however, three distinguishable patterns regarding the last three age at migration groups. International migration among young adult migrants (19 to 24) from lower classes is associated with a higher propensity to be in the “*Norm-late*” category, located at
the bottom right area of the plot. Although this displacement towards the right occurs among other age at migration groups, it is strongly marked for lower class young adult migrants, especially when compared to their higher class counterparts, who migrated internally. This result is consistent with Parrado’s (2004) conclusion on the role of international migration in delaying the transition to marriage while simultaneously facilitating marriage after the return due to its positive impact on wealth and asset accumulation. If we compare this result to that for young adult migrant women from lower classes (presented in Figure 5), we see that the association between this group and the “Norm-late” category is not as strong as it is for men. Indeed, young adult migrant women with the lowest educational attainment are associated with “Norm-early” and “Unstable” family categories, once again underscoring that similar social class backgrounds and age at migration may have different implications for men and women’s family trajectories.

Migration between ages 25 and 30 is associated with the most considerable class differences, separating highly educated men in “Delayed” categories from lower educated men, who tend to follow the “Norm-early” and “Cohabitors” trajectories. Finally, lower class men who migrate after age 30 display almost identical family profiles as those who did not migrate. Instead, highly educated men who migrated late are substantially more likely to be in the “Latest” and “Never married” categories compared to their non-migrant class counterparts.

**Conclusions and discussion**

The development of international and internal migration streams during the post-war period in LACar countries was part and parcel of the major societal transformations of the region. These migration flows were strongly associated with family profiles that deviated from those of non-migrants. At the same time, secular family change in these countries opened the possibility for
migration flows to become more diverse, especially as women started to migrate more or as much as men.

The LACar experience is an illustrative example of the necessity to look at how the relationship between migration and family formation trajectories varies by migration flow, in terms of gender, and across social classes. We explore this variation using the family formation and dissolution trajectories of 16,000 men and women from eight LACar countries; approximately 6,000 of them had some migration experience. We present and interpret our results using an intersectionality perspective, i.e., by focusing on configurations of socioeconomic and migration markers and the main similarities and differences in the processes of family formation across the groups defined by these configurations.

Our main result is very straightforward: migration is not associated with a unique family trajectory or with changes in a specific direction (e.g., toward more modern family formation trajectories). Narratives based on the experiences of the “average” internal and international migrant have erroneously neglected the heterogeneity of this association. In general, family trajectories among socially and economically privileged individuals do not seem to be affected by migration. It is among disadvantaged populations that the migration experience is associated with significant disruptions in the propensity to follow certain family paths. Moreover, clearer migration-related disruption patterns in family trajectories appear among women compared to men, although the individual family histories of men and women in our sample are not independent. These two overall conclusions confirm that class and gender relations are strongly rooted structural factors that shape individuals’ propensity to follow certain family trajectories; migration can disrupt these factors without erasing them. In their study of families among migrants in the United States, Frank and Heuveline (2005) have reached a similar conclusion. These two authors call attention to the
necessity to frame studies on fertility behavior within a racial stratification perspective. Our results support their call and highlight the necessity to include a gender perspective.

Men and women do not have the same opportunity structure, neither when it comes to forming families or undertaking international migration. On the contrary, domestic migration is similar in intensity for both. Family formation starts considerably earlier for women than men, and women need a more substantial capital to be able to undertake international migration (e.g., cultural or social). These differences have an impact on the reproduction of gender gaps in socioeconomic outcomes. Women have considerably less time available for the accumulation of educational degrees and valuable assets for the labor market, a difference that is further increased by the disparities in the distribution of care work, which is largely the responsibility of women. To the extent that migration is also a time- and resource-consuming process, women may face twofold disadvantages, as migration-related disruptions affect a smaller baseline of time and resources compared to men. The implications of these differences can be sharper for low and middle-low class women because the timing of family formation among these two groups is the earliest.

Sex and class differences are also evident in the way migration and family relate to one another. For women, domestic migration is associated with less normative family trajectories if migration occurs after age 25 (especially for women who migrate between ages 25 to 30), meaning that it is the delay in family formation that potentially fosters migration. Among men, instead, the positive association between migration and less normative trajectories only holds among those who migrate after age 30. For both sexes, migration between ages 19 and 24 correlates with more normative family paths.

Domestic migration appears to be a factor capable of both triggering social change towards less traditional family profiles (late migration relative to each sex) and contributing to social stability
(early migration relative to each sex). These two associations are independent (perpendicular) in terms of social class differences. In other words, despite its disruptive nature for family profiles, domestic migration does not erase class differences; if anything, domestic migration accentuates them among young migrants.

This last conclusion does not hold for international migration. Class differences in family profiles among international migrants are disrupted and display a significant qualitative difference by sex. For women, class differences are heightened if migration takes place before age 18 — the group for which educational attainment is a very good indicator of social class background — and diminished when migration occurs between ages 19 to 24 and 25 to 30. This finding supports the fact that, for women, social class, and mostly cultural capital, determines their migration opportunities and shapes their family trajectories. However, the presence of disruptions for women from all social classes arise from the fact that transnational samples include very diverse migration histories. These migration histories include multiple trips, return migration, and periods of unauthorized stay at the destination, all conditions that can exacerbate the disruptive elements of the migration experience.

For men, patterns across ages at migration and educational attainment are more erratic. These less patterned associations and the low explanatory power of social class and age at migration reflect men’s privileged position in the realm of family and migration. Men’s family trajectories are less affected by their social class and migration history than women’s. At the very least, this result reflects scholarly incapacity to establish the appropriate socioeconomic and demographic variables (i.e., variables across which family patterns would appear) to explain men’s family profiles.

Moreover, the fact that social class patterns appear even though the data conflates diverse migration streams and countries (e.g., Mexico-US, Dominican Republic-US, Colombia-Spain)
indicates the strength of social stratification systems in LACar societies and the usefulness of the concept of social class. This result is further confirmed by the fact that patterns are more marked among women, for whom the sample of international migrants is both smaller and more diverse in terms of countries of origin.
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