Selectivity of Latin American Emigration: What Drives Colombians' Intraregional and Extraregional Migration?

Abstract

This article analyzes the role of human and social capital as determinants of Colombian intraregional and extraregional migration, using data from the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP). The analysis is divided in two parts that consider a different specification of event history analysis models. The first part looks at the event of international migration as the outcome. In the second part, a set of three event history analysis is performed in order to look to the specific dynamics of intraregional and extraregional migration. Time varying independent variables are human and social capital. Human capital considers both educational and occupational attainment. Social capital is measured by variables of weak and close ties of people with migratory experience. Preliminary descriptive results indicate similar migration probabilities by sex for the first international migration. When distinguishing by intraregional and extraregional destinations, migration probabilities follow a different pattern over age. Extraregional migration seems to have a greater slope along the ages 20 and 30, while intraregional migration would have a more uniform pattern over the life course.

Introduction

One of the most sounded debates in the academic discussion refers to the selectivity of migrants, which stems from the finding that immigrants do not make up a random sample of the population from the countries of origin (Borjas, 1987). In terms of the study of Latin American migration, this requires disentangling whether intraregional and extraregional migrants constitute selected samples compared to non-migrants, but also in relation to one another.

So far, studies on the selectivity of Latin-American migrants have focused on extraregional migration (Borjas, 1985, 1987; Munshi, 2003; Silva & Massey, 2015; Takenaka & Pren, 2010), which is line with the fact that the great majority of Latin-American emigration is actually extraregional. Nevertheless, in terms of immigration dynamics, intraregional migration has been largely increasing in the last decades and currently constitutes more than 60% of the total stock. Colombian migration has been chosen because of its multiplicity of destinations, in which intraregional migration is one of the most important ones (Cerrutti & Parrado, 2015; Martinez & Orrego, 2016).

Drawing on existing literature on determinants of international migration to developed countries (Baizán & González-Ferrer, 2016; de Haas et al., 2018; Massey & Zenteno, 1999), as well as within Latin America (Cerrutti & Parrado, 2015; Durand & Massey, 2010), this paper analyzes the determinants of intraregional and extraregional migration of Colombians. A set of specific objectives stem from the latter, namely:

   i)   Analyze the role of human and social capital as determinants of Colombian international migration
   ii)   Analyze the role of human and social capital as determinants of Colombian intraregional and extraregional migration.

iii)   Analyze the role of the human and social capital as determinants of migration to the US vs to Spain.

Background

Processes and patterns of Latin American migration

According to (Durand & Massey, 2010), Latin American migration is constituted by three distinctive processes, namely: South-North migration to the United States, transoceanic migration to Europe, and intraregional migration. In turn, intraregional migration in Latin America is a process that is characterized by three patterns, namely: Border, ethnic, and city-directed migration. The pattern of border migration is characterized by temporary moves of short distance that are tied to seasonal harvests. The second pattern of intraregional movement is ethnic migration, which occurs when indigenous people have ancestral lands that straddle a national boundary that was imposed in the postcolonial era. Finally, the last kind of intraregional movement is city-directed migration, which is divided in professional and unskilled migrants (Cerrutti & Parrado, 2015).

(Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Takenaka & Pren, 2010), argue that regarding Latin American migration to the US, factors such as human and social capital should be taken into account as key factors explaining the "quality" of migration flows. Using data from the MMP and LAMP, (Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011) analysed the effect of different forms of capital (social, human, and physical) on the probability Latin American migration to the US. A special emphasis is put on the cost of migration (measured as distance) and its interaction with social capital. The selected countries are Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Peru. Separate analysis for the first and subsequent trips to the US are carried out, in order to see the how social capital affects differently these two events. The results show the "… ubiquity of migrant networks and the universality of social capital effects throughout Latin America. They also reveal how the sizes of these effects are not uniform across settings. Social capital operates more powerfully on first as opposed to later trips and interacts with the cost of migration.

Moreover, (Takenaka & Pren, 2010) showed that Peruvian migrants are more educated than Mexicans, although Peru is actually poorer than Mexico and characterized both by greater income inequality, as well as presenting higher poverty rates. In this sense, using data from the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) and the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), the article compares the migration selectivity of migration flows of Peruvians and Mexicans to the US, answering who emigrates and why. In order to study the selectivity of migrants, the authors carried out an event history analysis of the probability of migrating, with human and social capital as independent variables. The results indicate that education increases the likelihood of migration from Peru, regardless of demographic characteristics, physical capital, and social capital. In this sense, *I expect that although extraregional/intraregional migrants will be positively/negatively selected in terms of human capital, the presence of social networks will also explain patterns of positive/negative selection. In particular, when social networks develop among low/high skilled migrants, their effect will contribute explaining negative/positive selection effects in the destination.*

Data and Methods

Due to its suitability to study Latin American migration from a life course perspective that links migration to other demographic processes, the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) database will be used. The LAMP database is the result of a multidisciplinary research effort between investigators in various countries of Latin America and the United States. The LAMP was born as an extension of the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), which was created in 1982 by an interdisciplinary team of researchers to study migration to the United States from a longitudinal perspective. In this sense, LAMP's purpose is to extend this research to migration flows originating in other Latin American countries. LAMP began operations in 1998 with a set of surveys conducted in Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, Paraguay and Puerto Rico.

Units of analysis and sample

This article will analyze individuals from Colombia. The sample consists of 2,801 randomly selected households from 14 communities in Colombia surveyed between 2008 and 2013, yielding data on 14,958 individuals and 1,562 international migrants.

Note that the retrospective nature of the LAMP database has a panel structure, where individuals' trajectories in relation to a series of life course processes (e.g. labour histories, family, and migration) are reconstructed on a yearly basis. In this sense, the data is structured in panels of individuals with different observations for different years, allowing the analysis of changes within individuals over time.

Analysis and measures

The analysis is divided in two parts that consider a different specification of event history analysis models. The first part will look at the event of international migration as the outcome. In the second part, a set of three event history analysis will be performed in order to look to the specific dynamics of intraregional and extraregional migration and will therefore only select those individuals that migrated. Table 1 presents the distribution of the first international migration destinations grouped by the outcomes of interest.

Table 1.
First international trip: sample distribution of Colombian migrants, by destination.

	Number	% of total migration
Extraregional	**1250**	81%
Spain	717	46%
US	396	26%
Other extrarregional	137	9%
Intrarregional	**298**	19%
Border	218	14%
Beyond borders	80	5%
Total migration	**1548**	

Source: based on LAMP

Table 2 summarizes the different events to be analyzed, as well as the different variables to be considered. Time varying independent variables will be human and social

capital. Human capital will be educational and occupational attainment. Social capital will be variables of weak and close ties of people with migratory experience.

Table 2.
Operationalization

Variable	Definition
Dependent variable	
Outcome 1	
First international migration	1 if household member left on first international trip in year t+1
	0 otherwise
Outcome 2	
Type of first international migration	1 if household member left on first intraregional trip in year t+1
	2 if household member left on first extraregional trip in year t+1
	0 otherwise
Outcome 3	
Type of extraregional migration	1 if household member left to the United States in year t+1
	2 if household member left to Spain in year t+1
	0 otherwise
Explanatory variables	
Human capital	Educational attainment in person year t
	Occupational attainment year t: Measured as professional-managerial, skilled, services, and unskilled manual work
Social capital	Spouse, immediate family member, extended family, or a close friend with migratory experience; prevalence of migration in the community of origin
Control variables	
Age	Age in person year t
Female	1 if female, 0 if male
Marital or Consensual Union	1 if married or in union in person year t, 0 otherwise
Number of Minors	Number of minors in household in person year t
Physical capital	Property owned; Business owned
Community	Community where respondent was interviewed

Descriptive results

Figure 1 and 2 shows descriptive results of migration rates of Colombian migration for the first international trip. In figure 1, is shown that migration rates by gender would follow a similar pattern along different ages. The event history analysis to be conducted will allow disentangling the different mechanisms influencing these migration decisions. For instance, while men might be motivated by employment opportunities, women might migrated for family reasons, as it has been observed in other contexts (Baizán & González-Ferrer, 2016).

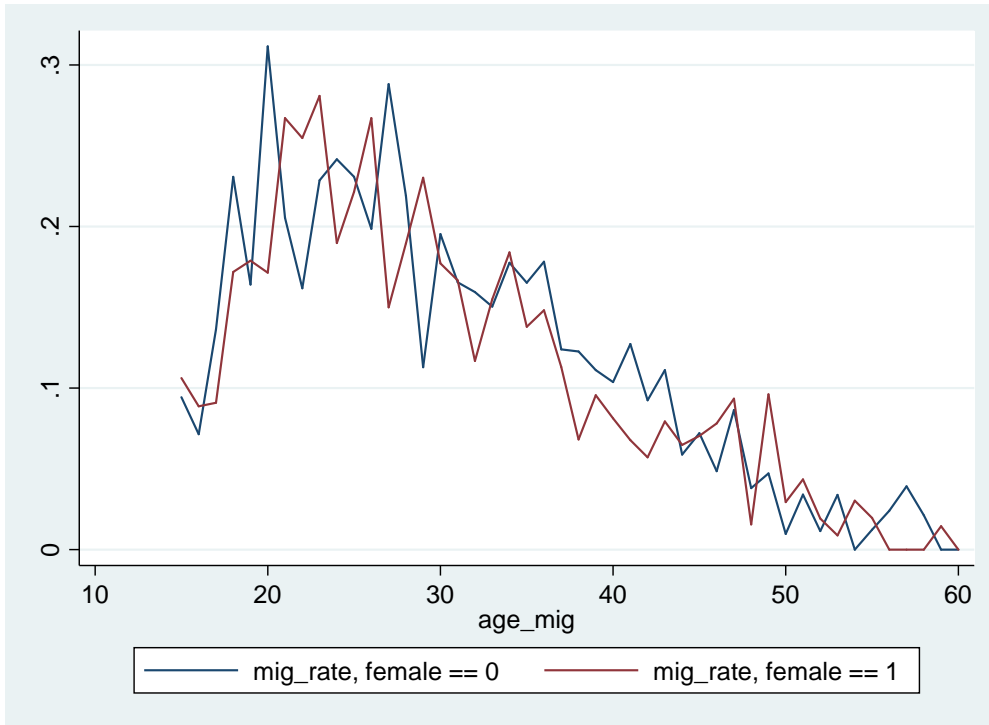*Figure 1: Migration rates of first international migration from Colombia, by sex.*

Figure 2 shows that migration rates of first international trip by destination are quite different also over age, at least at the descriptive level. Also, extraregional migration seems to have a greater slope along the ages 20 and 30, while intraregional migration would have a more uniform pattern over the life course. Whether these differences hold once controlling for sociodemographic variables, as well as human and social capital is part of the ongoing research.

Figure 2: Migration rates, of first international migration from Colombia, by destination type
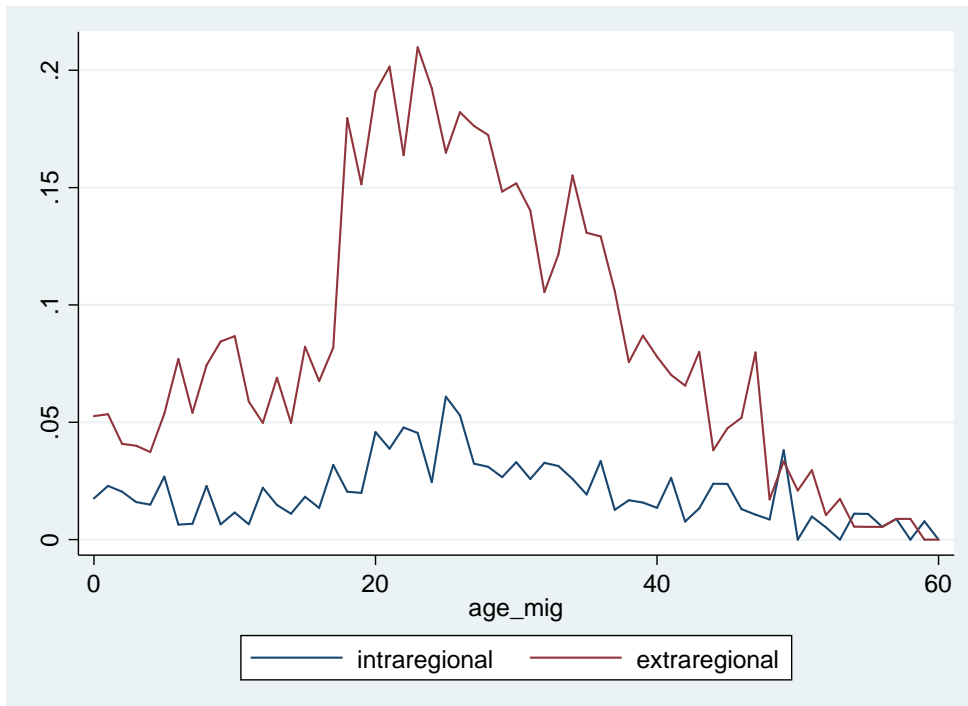
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