

Who Migrates, and with Whom? Coresidential Family Arrangements across Latin American Migration Corridors

Introduction

Over the last ten years, several changes have occurred in the migration dynamics of Latin America and the Caribbean, in terms of the migration routes, motivations of migration and the demographics characteristics of migrants. Migration routes within Latin America have become more diverse, with new important corridors, such as the Andean-North and Andean-South corridors (Álvarez Velasco & Cielo, 2023; Álvarez Velasco, Pedone & Miranda, 2021). Consequently, migratory profiles in Latin American countries have become more complex, with reception, expulsion and transit dynamics now coexisting (Gandini, Álvarez Velasco & Feldmann, 2024; Prieto Rosas & Bengochea, 2022). Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Mexico are clear examples of this transformation (Prieto Rosas & Bengochea, 2022; Sánchez-Montijano & Zedillo Ortega, 2022). Furthermore, displacement has been driven by several factors, such as widespread crisis, limited social inclusion, natural disasters and political issues (Gandini, Álvarez Velasco & Feldmann, 2024; Prieto Rosas & Zapata, 2023; Vera Espinoza, Gandini & Zapata, 2022). Moreover, the proportion of women (IOM, 2024; Giorguli & Angoa, 2016), children, and adolescents (Marcus et al., 2023) participating in Latin American migration corridors has steadily increased. However, research examining the impact of migration on Latin American family structures remains scarce (Cerruti & Parrado, 2015). Thus, this paper contributes to the study of family dynamics focusing on coresidential family arrangements among migrants in South-South corridors.

The literature has mainly focused on the family dynamics of immigrants from Africa and Latin America in destination countries in the Global North (Kraus & Milewski, 2025; McCarthy, 2020; Eremenko & González-Ferrer, 2018; Beauchemin et al., 2015; Baizán, Beauchemin & González-Ferrer, 2014). In terms of family migration patterns, the differences by gender, educational attainment and marital status are recognised. Women typically migrate with their families, whereas men tend to migrate alone (Bengochea et al., 2023) as well as people with higher levels of education (de Miguel-Luken & Recaño, 2025; Bengochea et al., 2023). Also, being in a union favours simultaneous migration of family members (de Miguel-Luken & Recaño, 2025). However, the literature has shown that individual characteristics alone cannot fully explain the family dynamics of migrant people, emphasising the importance of contextual factors, such as family norms (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018; Beauchemin et al., 2015; Baizán, Beauchemin & González-Ferrer, 2014).

We examine the coresidential family arrangements trajectories among intra-regional migrants in Latin America, according to individuals' origin, destination, gender, and educational attainment. The contribution of our study is threefold. Firstly, our analysis provides evidence relating to the specific family dynamics of South-South migration, with focus on Latin America. This allows us to understand the distinctive characteristics of this type of migration and its similarities with South-North migration. Secondly, it examines family dynamics from the perspective of both the country of origin and the country of destination. It enables us to examine family dynamics in depth by comparing destinations with different origins, and a specific origin (Venezuela) in different destination cities. Thirdly, given its longitudinal approach reveals how co(residential) family structures change before and after migration, helping understand the transformations over the life course.

Data and methods

Retrospective data of migration and family history, belonging to the Montevideo-Ethnosurvey on Recent Immigration (ENIR) 2018 and Latin American Migration Project (LAMP)-ENIR 2021

projects, were used. We worked with ten origin-destination city dyads: Venezuelans in Barranquilla, Cúcuta and Santa Marta (Colombia); Haitians and Venezuelans in Santiago (Chile); Nicaraguans and Venezuelans in San José (Costa Rica); and Dominicans, Peruvians and Venezuelans in Montevideo (Uruguay).

Individuals were included in the analysis if they met the following two criteria: had lived in the destination country for at least two years, and had migrated to that country between the ages of 20 and 45. The two-year period following migration was defined based on the median period of residence of the informants within each dyad. The selection of ages was based on exposure to childbirth, particularly among women. As a result, a total of 1,301 informants were included in the analytical sample. As shown in Table 1, the composition of the dyads varies according to gender, educational attainment, and year of arrival (Table 1). There are fewer differences in age at last migration between origins and destinations (Table 1).

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of informants by dyads. Selected origins and destinations, 2018 (Montevideo) and 2021 (others cities)

	% of women	age at arrival (median)	cohort of arrival (median)	years of schooling (median)	N trajectories sample ¹	% of the full sample	
origin-destination dyads	HTI-SGO	32.9	29	2017	13	172 (83.5%)	83.5
	VEN-SGO	48.7	29	2018	16	131 (65.2%)	65.2
	VEN-BRQ	63.8	30	2018	11	141 (70.5%)	70.5
	VEN-CUC	51.4	31	2018	11	126 (63.0%)	63.0
	VEN-STM	57.6	30	2017	12	146 (73.0%)	73.0
	NIC-SNJ	83.6	29	2009	6	118 (59.0%)	59.0
	VEN-SNJ	65.0	32	2018	16	131 (65.5%)	65.5
	DOM-MVD	70.0	29	2014	12	122 (70.9%)	70.9
	PER-MVD	80.6	29	2006	13	88 (71.0%)	71.0
	VEN-MVD	53.7	29	2016	16	126 (40.0%)	40.0

Source: own elaboration based on ENIR-Montevideo 2018 and LAMP-ENIR 2021.

A sequence analysis was conducted to examine the changes in co(residential) family arrangements over time for the informants and their children. These sequences covered a period of eight years, from five years before the last migration to two years afterwards. The states were constructed based on whether or not the informants had children, where they and their children lived each year of the observation period, and where the children were born. There are seven types of coresidential arrangements of family members (Table 2). We refer to coresidence as occurring when an informant lives in the same country as their children in a given year, regardless of whether they live in the same household.

Table 2. Coresidential arrangements descriptions

States	Informant has children	Live in the same country as their children	Place of birth of the children	Description
Childless	No	-	-	Informant who is not parent at time of migration
Co-residence, children born in origin	Yes	Yes	Informants' country of origin	Informant lives with all their children, who were born in the informant's country of origin
Co-residence, children born in destination	Yes	Yes	Country of destination of the informants' migration	Informant lives with all their children, all of whom were born in the country to which the informant migrated
Co-residence, children born in origin and destination	Yes	Yes	Informants' country of origin + country of destination of the informant's migration	Informant lives with all their children, who were born in both the country of origin and the country to which the informant migrated
Living apart	Yes	No	Any country	Informant lives in a different country to all of their children
Partial co-residence, children born in origin	Yes	Only with some of the children	Informants' country of origin	Informant lives in the same country as some of their children, while living apart from others. All of the children were born in the informant's country of origin
Partial co-residence, children born in origin and destination	Yes	Only with some of the children	Informants' country of origin + country of destination of the informant's migration	Informant lives in the same country as some of their children, while living apart from others. Children were born in both the country of origin and the country to which the informant migrated

Source: own elaboration.

The individual trajectories were grouped using the Optimal Matching method to calculate the cost matrix (Abbott & Forrest, 1986) and then using Ward's method to cluster the sequences based on their similarities.

In addition, three multinomial models were estimated to predict the prevalence of each cluster category according to dyad, individuals' educational attainment, and gender, while controlling for age at last migration. The first model did not include interactions; the remaining two were estimated to assess interactions between dyads and individuals' gender, and between dyads and individuals' educational attainment.

Main results

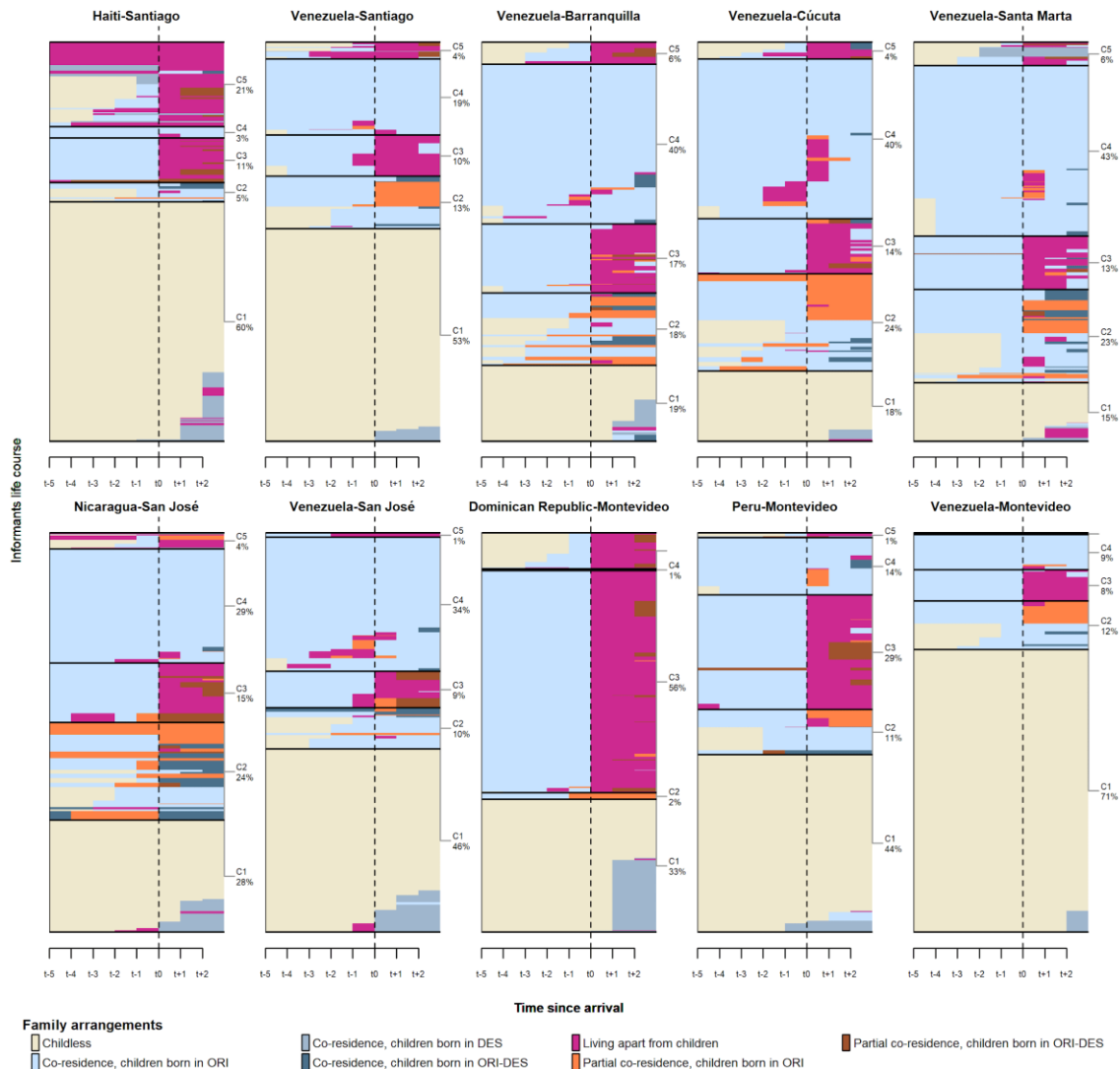
Figure 1 shows individual co-residence sequences with children, grouped by trajectory similarity. The colours represent the co-residence states described in Table 2 for each year of observation, ranging from five years before migration to two years after arrival at the destination country. The percentage distribution of clusters for each dyad is shown to the right of each plot.

Sequence Analysis shows that the family trajectories of intra-regional Latin American migrants are characterised by (i) complexity and (ii) frequent changes in co-residence with children over a relatively short period of time (Figure 1). Furthermore, (iii) the main changes are due to the birth of children in the destination country or partial or complete reunification processes (Figure 1). However, (iv) there is also evidence of transnational families being formed with children born in the destination country (Figure 1).

Of the five groups, trajectories showing the greatest stability during the observation period were migration without children (Cluster 1) and joint migration with children (Cluster 4). Cluster 1 is particularly relevant to non-border skilled migration, while Cluster 4 is relevant to border migration. Additionally, border migration corridors are characterised by mixed arrangements with multiple changes over time (Cluster 2). Also, migration can be disruptive when co-residing with

children, resulting in transnational families (Clusters 3 and 5). This type of family is usually more prevalent when children are at least five years old (Cluster 3).

Figure 1. Trajectories of coresidential family arrangements of informants by dyads. Selected origins and destinations, 2018 (Montevideo) and 2021 (others cities)



Source: own elaboration based on ENIR-Montevideo 2018 and LAMP-ENIR 2021.

The results of the multivariate analysis (not shown here) suggest that the main factor determining the probability of each cluster is the combination of origin and destination. While the results for gender and educational attainment are consistent with previous analysis (de Miguel-Luken & Recaño, 2025; Bengochea et al., 2023), the interactions between dyads and gender, and between dyads and educational attainment have not shown significant results. This result highlights the importance of demographic and socioeconomic factors in the country of origin for understanding family organisation at the time of migration. Therefore, attributes prior to migration largely determine the choice of destination, which consequently affects subsequent family reunification, childbirth and the emigration of second-generation children.

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