

Internal and International Mobility in New Migration Scenarios in South America: the Case of Colombia

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ABSTRACT

During the last decades, South America has emerged as a region with an increasing mobility and a large diversity of internal, intra-regional and international flows. Colombia illustrates well this new dynamic. It has seen a long-time migration to the US, a recent increase of migration to Spain and a particular pattern of internal mobility linked to the urbanization process and the political conflict in the country. In this paper, we explore the mobility patterns in Colombia during the past five decades based on retrospective information from the Latin American Migration Project. Using survival analysis techniques, we explore the changes in international and internal mobility. We estimate discrete time hazard models to analyze the differences in the sociodemographic profile and the influence of macroeconomic variables on the probabilities of migrating internally, to the US, Spain or within South America.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, South America has emerged as a region with an increasing mobility and a large diversity of flows. Different from the Mexican and Central American experiences, where more than 90% of the international moves go to United States, there has been an increase in South American migration to Europe and in the intra-regional flows. In addition, after a long period of rural-urban migration linked to the urbanization process of Latin American countries, we observe a change in the direction of internal migration--from a predominantly rural-urban to urban-urban (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2013). Considering the changes and possible continuities in the geographical mobility of Colombians, in this paper, we explore the mobility patterns of the last five decades. Colombia has a large tradition of migration to the US, it had a recent increase of migration to Spain, some exchange with other countries in South America and a particular pattern of internal mobility linked to the urbanization process and the political conflict in the country.

Using survival analysis techniques, we explore the changes in the international and internal mobility trends in Colombia based on the retrospective information provided by the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP). Second, we estimate discrete time hazard models to analyze the differences in the sociodemographic profile and the influence of macroeconomic variables on the probabilities of migrating internally, to the US, Spain or within South America. We expect to find that the preference for any kind of mobility (to the US, Spain, other South American country and internally) will vary in time, depending on the macroeconomic context in Colombia and in the receiving countries and that there

will be differences in the sociodemographic, educational and occupational profile of Colombians moving in one or other direction.

BACKGROUND

During the last two decades (1995-2015), the size of international flows originating in Colombia grew rapidly. In response, there has also been an increase in the number of publications that analyze the different types of mobility—internal, outmigration and return migration—among Colombians. The literature on internal migration has focused on the determinants and the characteristics of this kind of mobility (Galvis Aponte, 2002; Silva Arias & González Román, 2009), the consolidation of the four most important cities as destinations—Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla (Gouëset, 1998) and the importance of forced migration in the flows (Sánchez & Díaz, 2005; Albuja & Ceballos, 2010; Silva 2012), among others.

Similar to what has been observed for other Latin American countries, in the Colombian case there is a qualitative change in the direction of the internal flows from a predominant rural-urban migration to an urban-urban mobility (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2013). The urbanization process, characterized by a rural-urban migration took place mainly between 1951 and 1973. Afterwards, the new flows were comprised largely by movements between medium size cities and metropolitan areas (Silva Arias & González Román, 2009). There are two particular aspects different from the processes observed in most of the large Latin American countries in the case of the internal migration in Colombia: the concentration in four cities versus a single main destination receiving most of the flows; and the link between internal migration, the violence and the political conflict within the country. According to Albuja and Ceballos (2010), it is difficult to separate the economic causes of migration from other causes such as conflict, violence and the direct violation of

human rights.¹ Recent migration statistics for Colombia show that internal migration has a specific regional pattern linked to the prevalence of political conflict. It has also shown that it keeps a large rural component—also related to the forced migration, it may be more prevalent among women and it has a large family component as in many cases it is the whole family or the mother with the children who move (Silva, 2012).

Parallel to the research on internal geographical mobility, research focuses on international migration has also explored the main factors and the specific profile associated with this type of mobility (Cárdenas & Mejía, 2006; Khoudour-Castéras, 2007; Botón Gómez & González Román, 2010). During the last decades, the three most important destinations of Colombian outmigrants have been United States, Spain and Venezuela. The latter grew rapidly between 1971 and 1981. The US had remained as the main site of destination at least for the last fifty years and Spain has emerged as the favorite receiving country in the last migration waves (Mejía, 2012). The last migration large wave started in the mid-nineties and it was associated with an increasing heterogeneity in the chosen destinations.

One of the gaps on the current research on the geographical mobility of Colombians is that most of the moves are analyzed separately, as independent events. This limitation partially results from the lack of statistical sources that allow the linked analysis of different mobilities. In addition, regarding international migration, aside from the estimates on outmigration based on the National Administrative Department of Statistics (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística), there are few data sources that allow the study of the factors associated to the different types of mobilities disaggregated by country of destination (Khoudour-Castéras, 2007).

¹ The quote says: “*resulta difícil diferenciar las causas económicas de la migración de aquellas relacionadas directamente con el conflicto, la violencia y las violaciones de los derechos humanos.*” (Albuja & Ceballos, 2010, 10).

DATA AND METHODS

In this paper we use a longitudinal approach based on information from the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP).² The nature of the data from LAMP allows us to introduce individual level variables (age, sex, marital status, education) to the analysis of the different mobilities. In addition, it makes it simpler to add and test community and macro level variables in the analysis of the different types of mobilities for different years. As LAMP gathers in the same dataset the information on the first international move by country of origin, we can compare the sociodemographic profile and the changes in time. Among other factors, in this paper we will explore the selectivity of migrants to one or the other destination by looking at their educational attainment. We will also explore whether there are changes in time associated with the economic swings and the political environment in Colombia during the time period analyzed.

The LAMP gathers retrospective data in 14 Communities located in the departments of Atlántico, Cundinamarca, Caldas, Risaralda, Quindío, and Valle del Cauca. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the 14 communities. The analysis is organized in two stages. In a first part, we use the information for all household members and children of the head that is available in the household survey. That gives us a total of 14,311 individuals for whom we have basic information on a first trip and on their first internal migration. We know their sex, age, educational attainment, year when the migration occurred and destination. With this information, we conduct first a descriptive analysis of the changes in the international and internal mobility patterns in Colombia, and how they vary in time by direction (internal or international migration to different destinations).

² *"The Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) is a multidisciplinary research effort between investigators in various countries of Latin America and the United States. LAMP is currently based at Princeton University and the University of Guadalajara." "LAMP began operations in 1998 with a set of surveys conducted in Puerto Rico. It expanded later with fieldwork carried out in Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Haiti, Peru, and Guatemala. Ecuador is the most recent country in which we conducted fieldwork Spring 2012. In addition, a modified version of the LAMP survey was implemented in Paraguay to study migration from that country to Argentina". (LAMP Website, 2014).*

"The surveys in Colombia were made possible through an ongoing association between the LAMP and the Red de Universidades Públicas del Eje Cafetero- Alma Mater since 2008. During different periods, we have received support during fieldwork from Fundación Esperanza, the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Fundación Universidad del Norte, and Universidad del Valle (VRI)." (LAMP Colombia Website, 2014).

This first analysis will allow us to separate different migration stages in the history of Colombia. The data will cover migratory events occurring between 1960 and 2013—when the last communities were surveyed. Second, we use hazard and survival functions to describe the probabilities of either migration since age 15 separating the differences by age, sex, educational attainment and period. We use this time boundary to separate children's migration linked to other adult's decision at early ages from adult migration in a later stage of the life course.

In a second stage of our research, we use the life histories of the 4,702 heads of the household and their spouses to link the probabilities of migrating with different variables. We allow for four different possible events on their first trip (see Figure 1): moving internally, to the US, Spain or within South America. For the models, all the time-varying variables (age, age squared, education, marital status, occupation, cumulative migration experience, spouses migration experience, period and duration) were lagged one year. The independent variables include yearly Colombian macroeconomic indicators and indicators of the prevalence of violence in the region where the communities are located.

EXPECTED FINDINGS

A first look at the descriptive statistics presented in table 2 and in the graphs on the hazards of experimenting a first trip abroad or moving internally show that there are large variations in the sex and age composition of international and internal migration from and in Colombia.

As we move forward in the analysis, we will:

- (1) Separate and characterize different stages in the migration history of Colombia, which we expect will respond to economic changes and the political conflict prevalent in the country.
- (2) Look deeper into the sex differences in the mobility patterns of Colombians and whether they have changed in time, explaining the feminization of the flows in the

recent migration to Europe. We will also explore to what extent internal migration has kept the larger presence of women in the flows compared to men and whether husband and spouse's migratory experiences are linked.

- (3) Explore whether there is a link between internal and international migration experiences.
- (4) Analyze the selectivity by education and occupation of migrants moving to different destinations.

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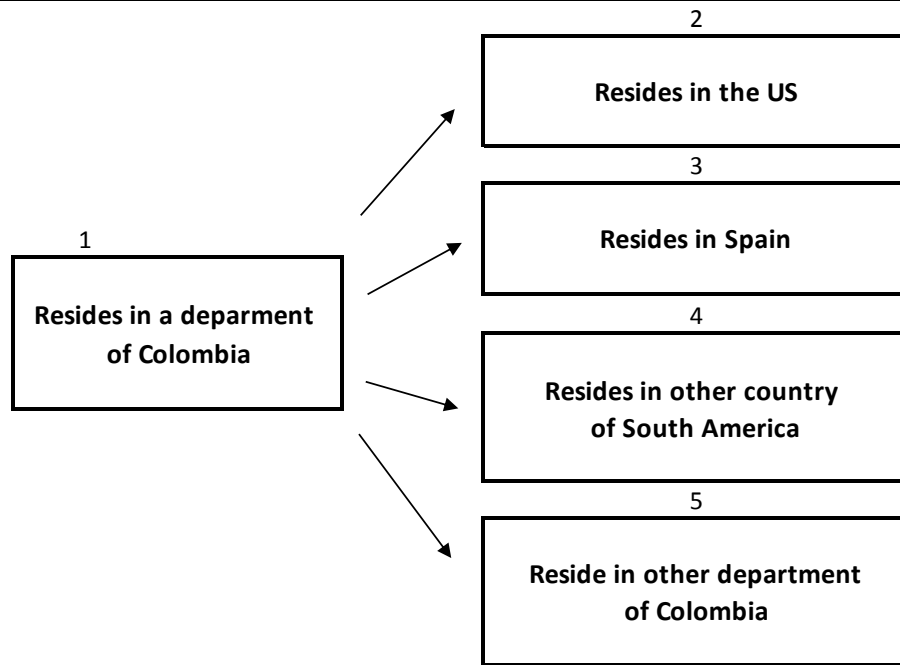
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TABLES AND GRAPHS

Figure 1. Possible events on their first trip



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 1. Information on the sample for Colombia and descriptive statistics on international migration at the community level.

Number of communities sampled	14
Size of the community (number of household)	200
Number of households interviewed	2.800
Number of household heads and spouses	4.702
Number of individuals in household questionnaires	14.311
<i>Migration information at the community level</i>	
Proportion of person in community with migration experience	
Mean	8,0%
Maximun	13,1%
Minimun	3,7%
Proportion of females in community with migration experience	
Mean	7,6%
Maximun	12,9%
Minimun	3,7%
Proportion of person in community with migration experience to US	
Mean	2,6%
Maximun	5,4%
Minimun	0,0%

Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

Note: the information on migration prevalence was estimated using the information from all individuals included in the household questionnaire

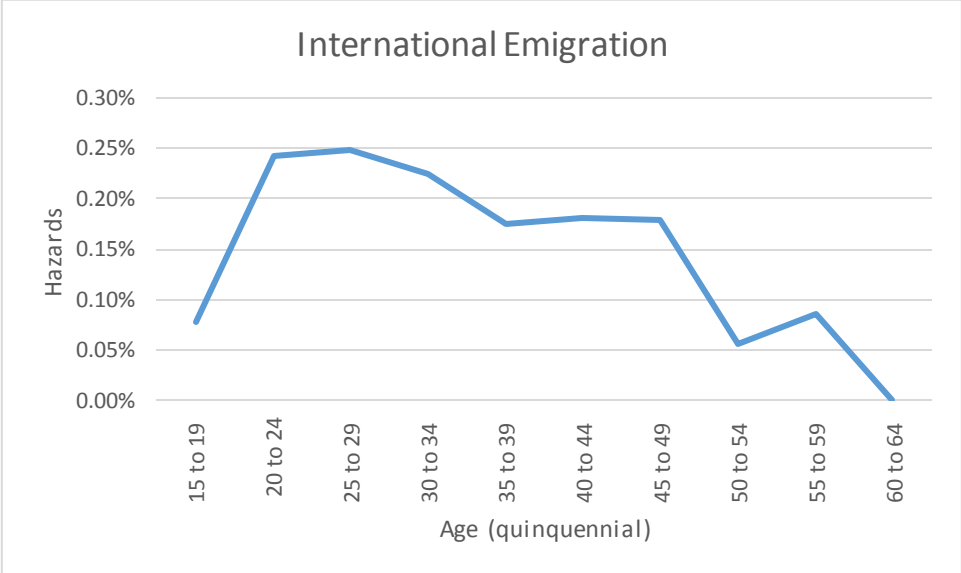
Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the participation in internal or international migration by sex. Information for all individuals in the household questionnaire.

	% with migration experience		Sex ratio
	Men	Women	
Any international migration	8,4%	7,6%	101,6
No international migration experience	91,6%	92,4%	112,3
Total	100,0%	100,0%	111,4
First international migration to:			
US	34,1%	31,5%	93,8
Spain	25,6%	32,5%	129,0
South America	18,0%	18,3%	102,9
Other country	22,3%	17,7%	81,0
Total	100,0%	100,0%	101,6
Internal migration experience	36,8%	39,3%	119,0
No internal migration experience	63,2%	60,7%	107,0
Total	100,0%	100,0%	111,4
Sample size	6.770	7.541	

Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

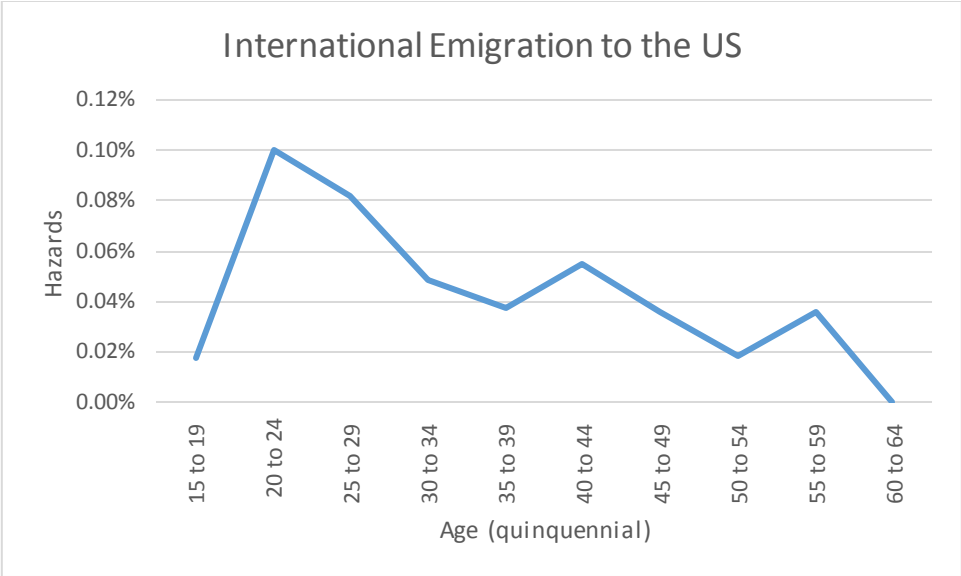
Note: Sex ratio = (number of women / number of men)*100

Graph 1. Hazards of the international outmigration in Colombia by age.



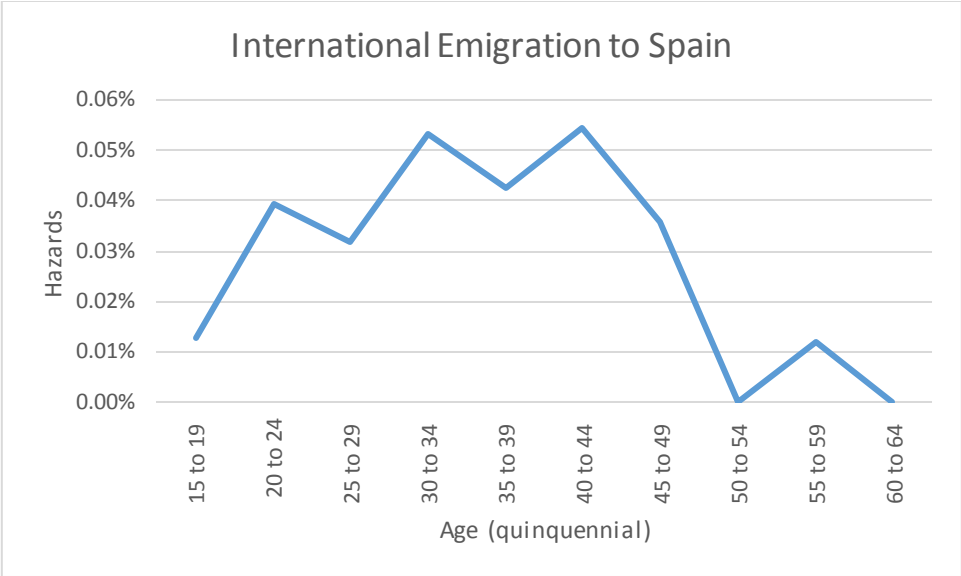
Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

Graph 2. Hazards of experiencing a first trip to US from Colombia by age.



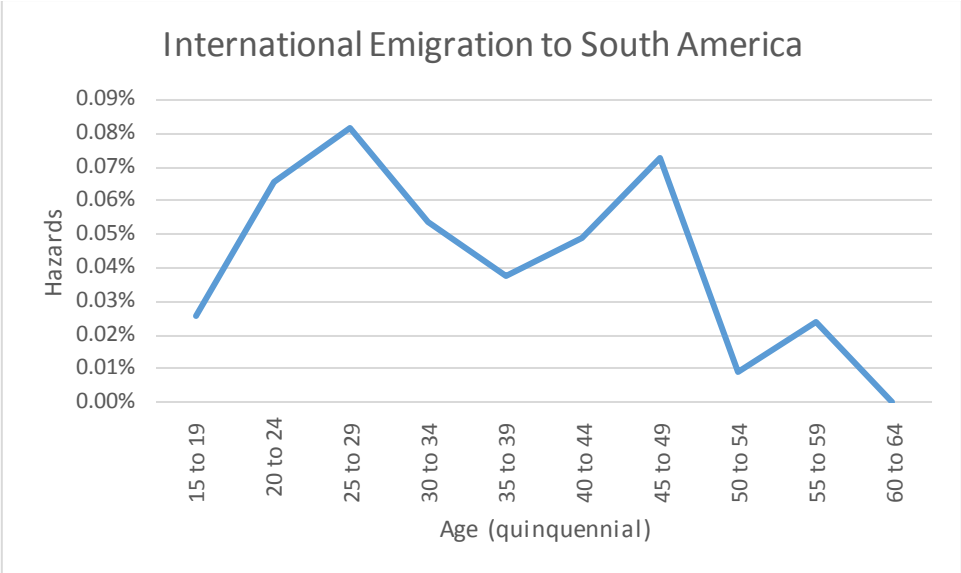
Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

Graph 3. Hazards of experiencing a first trip to Spain from Colombia by age.



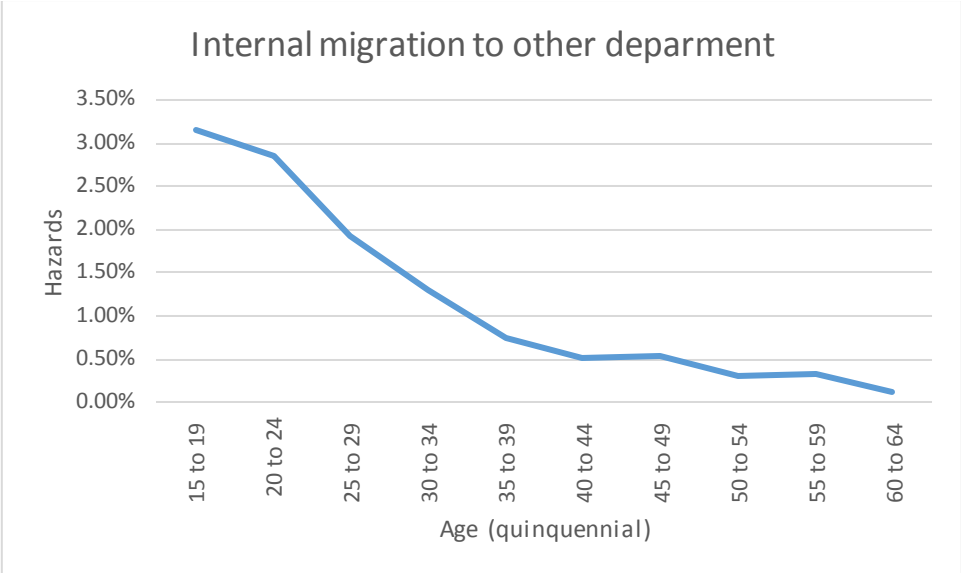
Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

Graph 4. Hazards of experiencing a first trip to a South American country from Colombia by age.



Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.

Graph 4. Hazards of the experiencing a first migration to another department in Colombia (internal migration) by age



Source: Authors' estimates based on data from the Latin America Migration Project.