

Gender Differences Between Mexican Migration to the US and Paraguayan Migration to Argentina

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Purpose: Contribute to international debate on gender and migration

- Examining sex differences in patterns of migration in two migration systems.
 - Sex composition of stock and flows.
 - Differential migration probabilities.
 - Independent or associational character.
- Discussing if the factors that explain sex biases in Mexican migration to the US are also useful to explain sex biases in Paraguayan migration to Argentina.

Mexican-US vs. Paraguayan Argentina migration

Common features:

- Long standing (several decades).
- Continuous flows and strong linkages.
- Neighboring countries.
- US for Mexicans and Argentina for Paraguayan are the exclusive countries of destination.
- Predominately labor migration.

Mexican-US vs. Paraguayan Argentina migration

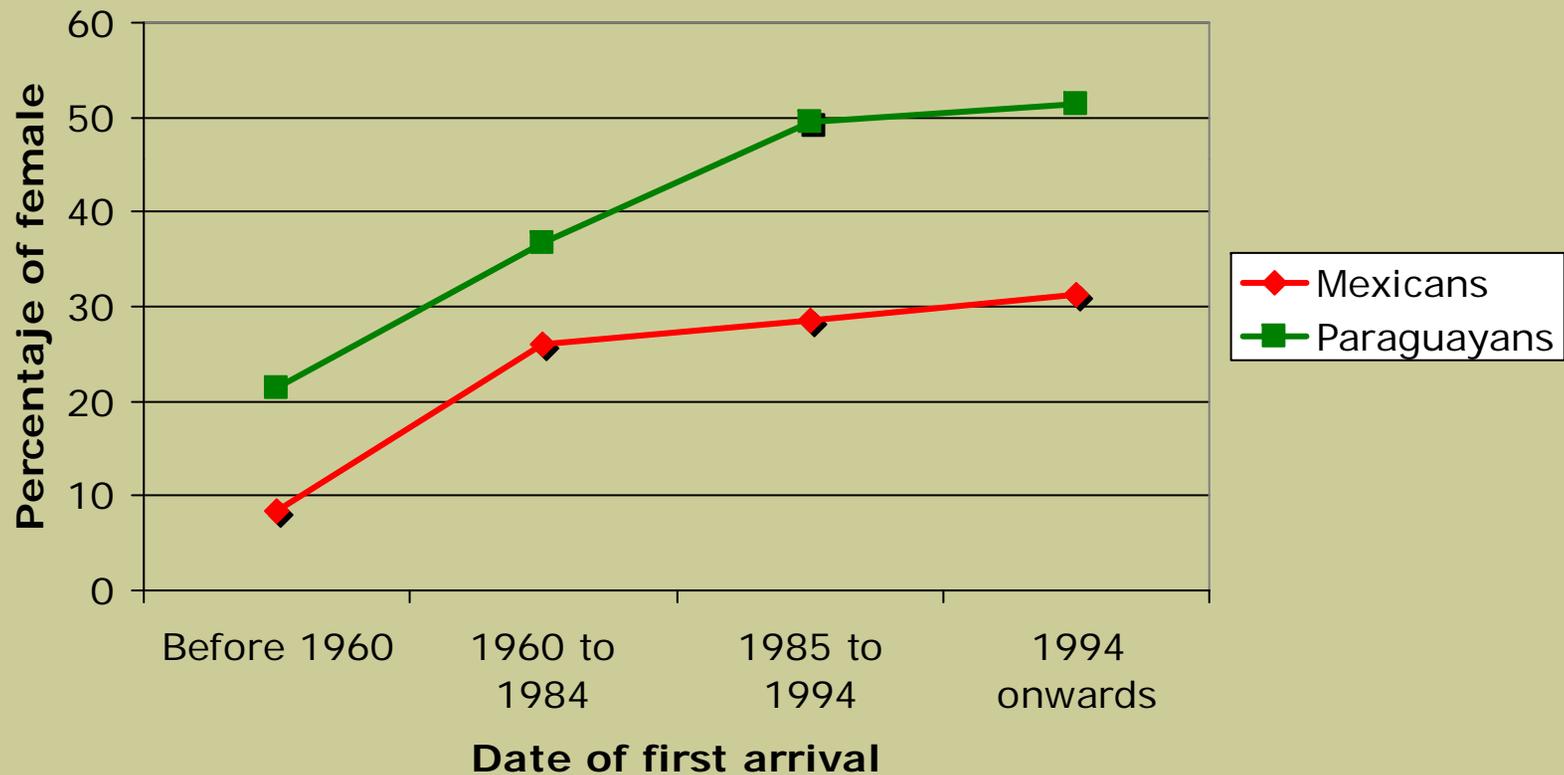
Differences:

- Initiation of flows.
- Relative economic development between origin and destination.
- Migration management and policies (border controls).
- Costs of being undocumented.
- Nature and characteristics of labor markets
- Relative access to public goods.

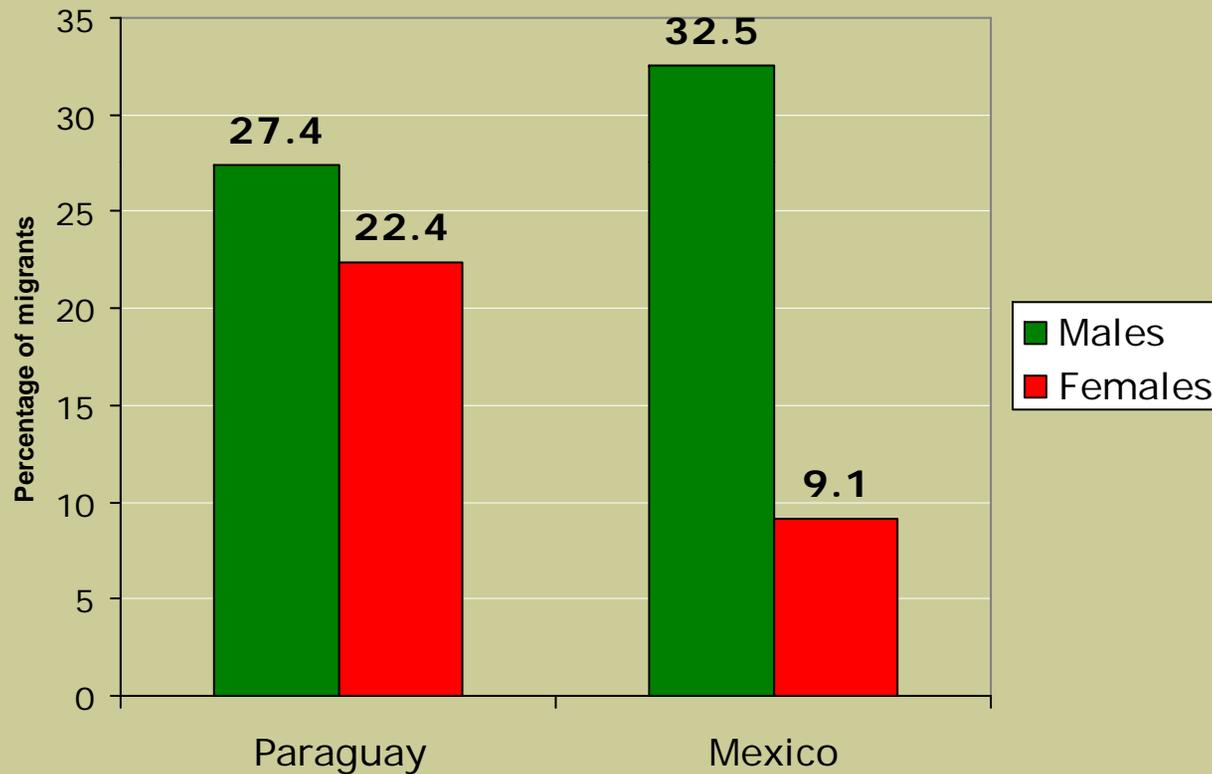
Female and male migration

- 10.3% of Mexicans live in the US.
- 6.3 % of Paraguayans live in Argentina.
- Significant differences in sex patterns of migration:
 - Mexican women constitute 44.6% of migrant stock in US; and Paraguayan women 57.6% in Argentina.

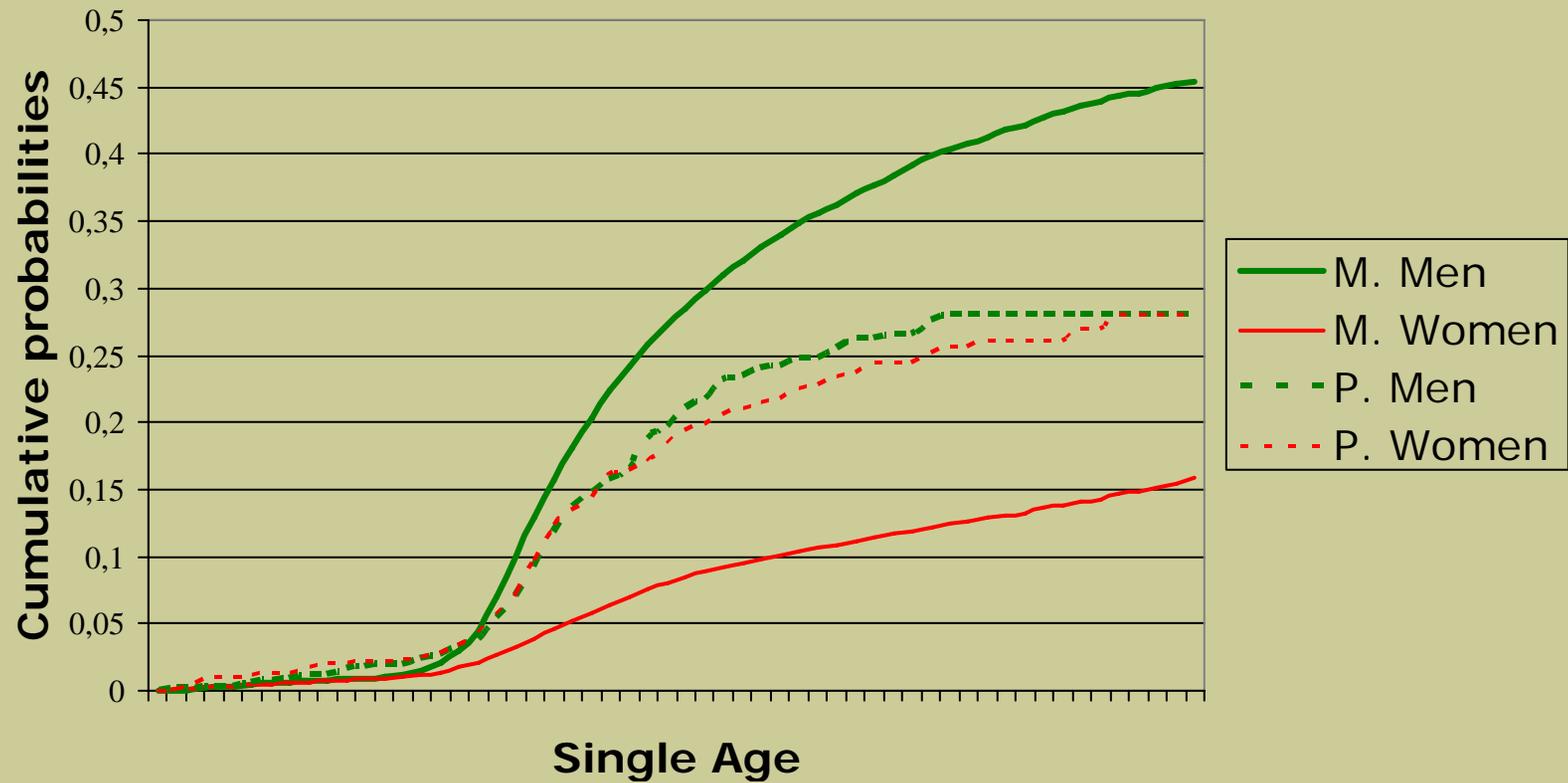
Sex composition of migration cohorts



Percentage with migratory experience



Cumulative age-specific probabilities of first migration



Associational or independent migration

Timing of first migration:

Before marriage or consensual union

- 21.9% of Mexican spouses
- 66.9% of Paraguayan spouses

After having the first child

- 66.1% Mexican female heads and spouses
- 45.5% Paraguayan female heads and spouses

Factors associated with first migration (spouses of heads)

	Mexicans	Paraguayans
Intercept	-5,695 3)	-5,533 3)
Age		
Less than 10	-3,009 3)	-0,983
10 to 14	-1,994 3)	-1,451 1)
15 to 19	-0,215	1,198 2)
20 to 24	0,190	1,848 3)
25 to 29	0,018	1,596 3)
30 to 34	-0,332 2)	1,033 1)
35 to 39	-0,341 1)	-0,116
40 to 44	-0,115	0,082
<i>(45 and older)</i>		
Education		
Primary complete	0,558 3)	0,487 2)
High school	0,910 3)	0,498 2)
More than high-school (Primary Inc. or lower.)	0,318 1)	-1,757 1)
Conjugal Status		
Husband in destination	1,231 3)	0,118
Husband in origin	-1,237 3)	-1,272 3)
<i>(Single)</i>		

1) p. > .90; 2) p. > .95; 3) p. > .99

Reasons for the differences

Literature on gender differences in Mexico points out:

- Initiation of the flow.
- Gender socialization and the social role of women in origin communities.
- Resources and opportunities in origin and destination.
- Risks.

MEXICO-US

- Active recruitment: Guest worker programs.
- Subordinate role, patriarchal ideologies.
- Division of labor: lower female participation in market activities.

PARAGUAY-~~ARGENTINA~~

- Agricultural labor: not a program, more erratic.
- Since XIX, women play a central role in subsistence agriculture and commercial activities.
- Matrifocal families, mothers stable family factor..
- Decomposition of peasant economy and low economic dynamism. Higher incidence of poverty and indigence

MEXICO-US

- US borders: tighter controls.
- Movements more expensive, dangerous and real possibilities of being deported.
- Greater limitations for being undocumented.
- Labor demand: greater, more stable and diversified, but less informal (more barriers).

PARAGUAY-ARGENTINA

- Argentina: borders more permeable
- Movements are cheaper and easier.
- Lower penalization for being undocumented (in both access to jobs and public goods).
- Defined niches of activities, informality/flexible, predominately in domestic services (60%).

Searching for meaning: The experiences of Paraguayan migrants

- Migrated when young (ages 16-33), and they were never married or separated at the time of first migration.
- None for family reunification motives.
- Economic reasons (search for labor opportunities first motive).
- In all cases, other reasons triggered the decision:
 - Family change that increase the need of economic help
 - A guarantee job in Argentina
 - Search for independence
 - Aspirations generated by visiting or returned migrants

Searching for meaning: The experiences of Paraguayan migrants

- Migration was not censored, but sometimes promoted and supported by other family members.
- *All* women's first migration was assisted by female chains of help. Primary from sisters, but also from other female relatives or friends.
- Initial expectations: temporary migration.
- *None* had any trouble crossing the borders, and spent time as undocumented.
- Jobs were either secured before migration or obtained soon afterwards. Vast majority: domestic services.

Searching for meaning: The experiences of Paraguayan long-distance mothers

- Migration was either to support children left behind or promoted by unexpected pregnancies.
- Grandmothers first source of care for children left behind.
- Frequent trips to Paraguay.
- Feelings toward separation are diverse. Many do not have definite plans to bring the children.
- Having left children in Paraguay is not *stigmatized* and has been a long standing strategy (internal migration).

Searching for meaning: Family formation in destination

- Many never married migrants constituted new families in Argentina. Usually with Paraguayan men or Paraguayan origin men.
- Those who have children in Argentina consider that it is a safer environment (against mothers who keep their children in Paraguay)
- They greatly value access to public educational and health care system, and the direct help provided by social programs.
- Although many would like to return, they recognize that it will be very unlikely given the circumstances.

Conclusions

- In order to develop a corpus of knowledge of the factors that affect gender patterns of international migration more comparative analysis is needed.
- Need to determine empirical indicators of gender systems, resources (in origin and destination) and barriers and risks for mobility; which seem to be the ultimate factors affecting male and female patterns of migration.
- Indicators should be sensible to account for both, male/female propensity to migrate at any given moment, and variations over time.

A note on long-distance motherhood

- Elusive concept, difficult to measure.
- Knowing how many female migrants have left children in the origin communities and for how long they have lived apart, demands specific data collection procedures.
- Probably the most economical way to go will be to focus on children in household origin and to recompose time lived apart from fathers and mothers while in origin communities (problem: capture evolution of the phenomenon if cross-sectional data).
- Only by assessing it correctly, will be possible to examine the social, economic and psychological impacts of long-distance upbringing.