

On the Legal Auspices of Latin America – U.S. Migration¹

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Palabras-clave:

Resumo

El status legal es una de las características más importantes en relación con una variedad de indicadores relacionados con la experiencia migratoria y la adaptación de los migrantes tales como las probabilidades de retorno, duraciones de viaje, nivel de ingresos, y acceso a ciertos servicios públicos y programas de asistencia social. Dada esta importancia y la escasez relativa de estudios comparativos en el tema, estudiamos diferencias en experiencias de legalización y migración legal para seis grupos de latinoamericanos en los Estados Unidos: México, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, y la República Dominicana. Usamos datos de los proyectos de migración mexicana y latinoamericana (MMP y LAMP por sus cifras en inglés) y de la oficina de estadísticas migratorias de los Estados Unidos para obtener un mejor entendimiento de los diferenciales internacionales e inter-comunidad en aspectos tales como la evolución temporal de la migración legal y el tipo de conductos de patrocinio y legalización, incluyendo el papel de las redes migratorias (sobretudo familiares y comunitarias) en el proceso a la vez que se toma en cuenta el contexto particular de política exterior estadounidense y de cada país. Por último, discutimos las implicaciones sustantivas y de política pública de nuestro análisis.

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Broadly conceived, immigration policy represents the State's response to the forces influencing the migration process and, in some instances, an attempt to shape them. In many occasions, the formulation and implementation of U.S. immigration policy has followed foreign policy considerations rather than humanitarian or economic ones (Coffino 2006; Coutin 2000; Massey and Sana 2003; Wasem 1997). As such, flows from a given nation have not only been somewhat endogenous to the specific geo-political context of the time but have been left a deep imprint by said context, resulting in differential immigration treatment across national groups beyond that expected by the distinct conditions leading to emigration in each country (Coutin 2000; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Mitchell 1989, 1994; Portes and Grosfoguel 1994).

The ability of a particular cohort-nation of immigrants to transition out of undocumented and gray legal statuses and into legal permanent residence (LPR) and citizenship may not only alter their own immigration experience but that of subsequent generations. Hence, even those immigration policies and practices just pertaining to particular immigrant generations may have greatly influenced the context of reception and modes of incorporation of original and subsequent waves of migrants from a nation (Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Understanding the levels and patterns of transitions into legal permanent statuses and their associated processes is of relevance for scholars and policymakers in order to understand immigrant incorporation and the evolution of immigration itself given the relevance of legal status with regards to a range of immigrant adaptation and immigration outcomes (Bratsberg, Ragan and Nasir 2002; Chavez, Flores and Lopezgarza 1992; Donato 1993; Donato, Aguilera and Wakabayashi 2005; Massey and Bartley 2005; Menjivar 2006; Phillips and Massey 1999; Stodolska 2006; White, Biddlecom and Guo 1993). While a substantial amount of work has been devoted to study naturalization processes (Bloemraad 2006; Gilbertson and Singer 2003; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1986, 1989; Pantoja and Gershon 2006; Portes and Curtis 1987; Van Hook, Brown and Bean 2006; Woodrow-Lafield et al. 2004; Yang 1994a, 1994b), where the playing field is more leveled conditional on being a permanent resident, there are fewer studies on the transition of people into legal permanent residence (LPR, also referred to as 'immigrant admission', the main requirement for naturalizing).³

Moreover, most of the work devoted to studying LPRs has looked at the profile and modes of entry of people admitted as permanent residents (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1986, 1989; Massey and Malone 2003; Newbold 2000; Newbold and Achjar 2002; Polgreen and Simpson 2006; Tyree and Donato 1985). As these studies exclusively examined permanent residents after

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³ In addition, there are requirements of good moral character, English proficiency, and a basic knowledge of U.S. government and history. Except for those individuals volunteering to serve in the military (no wait) and spouses of U.S. citizens (three-year wait), residents can only naturalize after being in the U.S. for five years.

admission, they were unable to measure the likelihood that an individual obtains legal permanent residence in the first place (for an exception studying Mexicans, see Malone 2004). These processes are particularly worth examining in populations with a high undocumented component, namely a variety of Latin American groups (Passel 2005) which have also experienced diverse contexts of ‘expulsion’ and reception, including particular immigration policy frameworks of course.

In this paper I look at legal permanent immigration from Latin America from a cross-national perspective in the context of the evolution of U.S. immigration policy by comparing the rates and patterns of transition into legal permanent residence of Mexicans, Dominicans, and Nicaraguans. I find quite distinct patterns in LPR transitions in the three countries, the result of three main factors: the interplay of conditions favoring initial emigration in origins and the specific immigration and foreign policy context in which they originated; the perpetuating effect of social networks in reproducing the legal character of flows, especially in smaller nations where the restrictive effect of national quotas is less problematic relative to the potential supply of immigrants; and differences in the effective use of the available kinship ties to LPRs, most likely not quite explained by naturalization patterns. I argue that these three factors have aided in exacerbating cross-country differences in gendered patterns of migration, thus far explained by scholars mostly in terms of differences in family systems across Latin America (Massey, Fischer and Capoferro 2006). Before presenting and discussing the results, I review the evolution of the flows in the context of U.S. policy.

U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY AND MIGRATION FROM LATIN AMERICA

Immigration from Latin America in the Pre-quota Era

During its first century and a half of existence the U.S. placed no limits on the number of immigrants that could be admitted from anywhere but East Asia and mostly set qualitative restrictions. Quantitative limits to immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere were first placed during the 1920s. In 1952, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) continued with these numerical restrictions and established a four-point preference system favoring skills and family reunification, again in both cases only for countries from the Eastern Hemisphere (Violet 1991).

Despite the lack of numerical limits on Western Hemispheric immigration, very few Latin American countries sent migrants in significant numbers until the 1960s. Before then, the only sizable flows from the region came from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, a product of the United States’ shared history and geography with the first and its unique relation with the two Caribbean nations.

The first sizable admission of Mexicans into the U.S. came as a consequence of shifting national boundaries after the Mexican-American War in 1848 and not from population movement per se. The independence of Texas from Mexico and its quasi-immediate annexation to the United States along with the incorporation of the territories mostly composing California, Arizona, and New Mexico into the U.S. as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo allowed some Mexican nationals living in these territories to remain in them (Vázquez and Meyer 1989).⁴

⁴ In some cases, residents were naturalized ipso facto although there were instances where this promise was not kept by the authorities (Vázquez and Meyer 1989).

It would not be until the late 19th Century that actual massive migration from Mexico occurred, when U.S. companies actively recruited people living in the Central-Western states mostly as agricultural laborers in the Southwest (Gamio 1930). During the post-Depression years, migration from all over the world came into a halt while Mexican and, in some instances, Mexican-American laborers were deported *en masse* (Hoffman 1974). The flow from south of the border regained momentum after the enactment of the Bracero Program in 1942 (Calavita 1992), re-activating old regional networks of Mexican farm workers and further expanding the role of Mexican labor in some industrial cities of the Midwest.

After the termination of the Bracero Program in 1964, Mexican immigration continued mostly outside the legal system, perhaps doing so because of its flaws. As many migrants were needed and intended to come in a seasonal or temporary basis (Massey et al. 1987), the most characteristic Mexican migration flow lacked a legal framework that could accommodate of the previous arrangement, consecrated in time and practice (see Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). As settlement patterns commenced to change with the solidification of social networks and the formation of ethnic communities (Cornelius 1992) undocumented migration from Mexico increased steadily during the following twenty years (and beyond, see next section). For the most part, men would migrate first in an undocumented fashion, then followed by their spouses, many of whom tended to migrate legally (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993).

Before the 1960s, movement in and –especially- out of the Dominican Republic was severely curtailed by longstanding dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo. After his assassination in 1961 these restrictions disappeared while political turmoil related to the succession process ensued. In this context, a number of Dominicans became willing and able to leave the country, perhaps including a nontrivial subset of people who would have migrated long before the fall of Trujillo, creating a critical mass of people of similar magnitudes of an exodus from an even more critical situation (e.g. Franco’s Spain).

The advent of the Cuban Revolution and its shift to Communism did not only stimulate the creation of a sizable and influential cohort of Cuban émigrés but made a deep imprint in the geo-political climate of the region for decades to come. With the Missile Crisis in recent memory and the high stakes originally placed into the Alliance for Progress in 1961, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations seemed eager to facilitate the immigration process for many of the Dominicans looking to leave the Island. John B. Martin, U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic during the time, reports aiding the increased demand for visas by obtaining State Department’s authorization to build a new Consulate and to increase the number of Consular officers to solve the “visa mess” (see also Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; that is, the large number of applicants waiting on the Consulate, see Martin 1966: Chapter 3).

There is clear quantitative evidence consistent with these accounts. A brisk increase in immigration and nonimmigrant admissions from the Dominican Republic was observed after 1961 (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: Tables 1 and 2),⁵ mostly composed from the working and middle classes of Santo Domingo and Santiago, the two main urban centers (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). As time elapsed, Dominican migration continued

⁵ As Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) point out: “The political barriers to emigration during the Trujillo period would inevitably have resulted, even without encouragement from the United States, in an increase in the numbers of Dominicans seeking to leave after 1961. It is doubtful, however, that the accumulated demand could have been met without these politically motivated simplifications of the procedure.” (p. 33)

growing, mostly in a documented fashion (see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: p. 23 and references therein).

The Initiation of Quotas, Violent Conflict in Central America, and IRCA

Amendments to the INA in 1965 placed an annual ceiling on Eastern Hemispheric immigration of 170,000 with a 20,000 per-country limit based on a seven-point preference system favoring family reunification, attracting needed skills, and offering a safe haven to refugees. Moreover, the 1965 revisions repealed some of the discriminatory aspects of the national origins quota system by establishing that, effective July 1, 1968 Western Hemispheric immigration would be limited by an annual ceiling of 120,000. However, neither per-country limits nor a preference system were put in place for the Western Hemisphere. Only until the INA was further amended in 1976 would the 20,000 per-country limits and a similar preference system be applied to immigration from the Western Hemisphere. In 1978, a single preference system for both hemispheres and a single worldwide limit of 290,000 were enacted, replacing separate hemispheric caps and preference systems. The Refugee Act of 1980 revised the worldwide ceiling to 270,000 but also eliminated refugees from the preference system and from numerical limits, allowing foreign policy to determine refugee status (Coffino 2006) and for “protecting aliens within the country (i.e., asylum or withholding deportation)” (Wasem and Ester 2006: p. 2).⁶

Migration from Central America accelerated in the 1980s as political violence spread and insurgency strengthened by the end of the 1970s, leading thousands of Salvadoran, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans to flee their homes.⁷ The longstanding dictatorship of the Somoza family in Nicaragua was deposed by a unified communist-inspired Sandinista front in 1979. Although the Carter administration gave economic (but not military) aid to the new government, the entering Reagan administration suspended it in 1981 and eventually started supporting groups aiming to overthrow the Sandinista government operating from Honduras that would later become the Contras. Congress banned military aid to the Contras after the Sandinistas held and won elections in 1984 while the government established a total trade embargo with Nicaragua (Wasem 1997). The embargo, along with the diversion of funds to combat the Contras and the damaging effects of Hurricane Joan in 1988 paralyzed the Nicaraguan economy before a peace agreement was signed in 1989.⁸

The violence and economic deprivation directly resulting from conflict motivated many Nicaraguans to leave the country during the late 1970s and –especially- the 1980s. Many of them, especially those in slightly better socioeconomic standing, went to the United States (Funkhouser 1992; Lundquist and Massey 2005; Massey and Sana 2003). Many entered the

⁶ The guidelines for withholding deportation would change after the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996. I discuss some of these below in the context of the passage of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA).

⁷ People left as a direct response to intensified threat to their lives in the wake of high-intensity conflict; a lower but continuous risk due in the midst of low-intensity conflict; or due to poor economic prospects, many associated with said conflict (though not officially recognized as justification for asylum or refugee status).

⁸ According to the World Bank Development Indicators (2005), real GDP per capita (2000 USD) fell an average of 4% in the 1980s, including a 16% in 1988 alone.

country without documents or overstayed their tourist visas and later on applied for different types of relief.⁹

In addition to asylum claims (in which Nicaraguans had relatively high success rates during the late 1980s, more below), Nicaraguans would eventually benefit from two major regularization programs: the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997 (reviewed in the next section). Although Mexicans were the main IRCA beneficiaries, Central Americans emigrating before or during the early stages of conflict did benefit from its main amnesty provision, General Amnesty (GA). GA provided opportunities to obtain permanent residence to individuals continuously present in the country since or prior to 1982.¹⁰ In addition to granting permanent residence to just over 2 million Mexicans, 136,000 Salvadorans, 50,000 Guatemalans, and 15,000 Nicaraguans obtained LPR status through IRCA (Wasem 1997).

Given IRCA's time requirements, a majority of Central Americans fleeing conflict and its associated economic conditions were not eligible for amnesty. While Nicaraguans had relatively high asylum approval rates during most of the 1980s (they were as high as 80% in FY 1987), these fell by the end of the decade (e.g. around 20% in 1990 (Wasem 1997: p. 14)). Those denied asylum received unique treatment by way of the Nicaraguan Review Program (NRP), a special office established in 1987 under Attorney General Edwin Meese as a reaction to the Cardoza-Fonseca Supreme Court Ruling, which modified the interpretation of the standard of 'well-founded' fear of persecution (in the origin if the applicant were to be deported) from demonstrating a clear probability of persecution to the need to show a 'reasonable' one (see Wasem 1997: Note 16). The *de facto* temporary admission of Nicaraguans through establishment of the NRP would prove to be instrumental for their search for permanent residence, as it will be reviewed in the next section.

The Post-IRCA Period

The Immigration Act of 1990 reformed the preference system into three tiers that continued favoring family reunification but increased annual employment-based immigration and created a new category of diversity visas available to nationals of countries underrepresented in recent flows. It also established a flexible worldwide cap set at significantly higher levels than the previous limits in addition to allowing unused visas in employment-based categories to be available for family preference immigrants the following year (and vice versa). Said cap was set at 700,000 for the 1992-1994 FY, and has been set at 675,000 since 1995.

Currently, 71.1% (480,000) of the worldwide cap is allocated for family provisions, 20.7% (140,000) for employment-based admissions, and the remainder 8.2% (55,000) is allocated to diversity visas. Family provisions allow U.S. citizens many more opportunities for

⁹ Although the treatment of neither Central American group fleeing conflict could be qualified as welcoming by U.S. immigration policies and practices, it conspicuously varied according to foreign policy considerations based on the political ideology of the government in power (Coffino 2006; Coutin 2000; Mitchell 1989, 1992; Wasem 1997), Nicaraguans eventually getting better treatment than Salvadorans and Guatemalans. As such, results shown in this paper (e.g. permanent residence transition rates) for Nicaraguans are most likely much higher than those that would be observed for Guatemalans and Salvadorans. Results using data from three communities in Guatemala (not shown here) are consistent with this notion though the number of cases in the Guatemalan sample is not large enough to estimate these rates with much precision.

¹⁰ In addition, a Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) program provided amnesty for agricultural laborers working on the cultivation of certain commodities for at least ninety days during 1985-1986 (Martin 1994).

sponsoring relatives than those offered to permanent residents. Only the immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (defined by the INA as spouses, unmarried minor children, and the parents of adult U.S. citizens) are not subject to direct numerical limits (see Wasem 2006).¹¹ In addition, citizens can also sponsor other relatives under numerical limits: their unmarried adult children as part of the first family preference (currently, 23,400 visas plus those unused in the fourth preference); their married children as part of the third preference (23,400 visas plus those not required for the first and second family preference); and their siblings (provided the citizen is 21 years-old and over) as part of the fourth preference (65,000 visas plus those not required by the other three preferences). In contrast, permanent residents can only sponsor their spouses and unmarried children both subject to numerical limitations under the second preference (114,200 visas plus those unused by the first preference, see Wasem 2006: Table 1) though 75% of these visas are exempt from the calculation of per-country numerical limits.

Employment-based visa priority follows an analogous procedure where priority is based on the skill level of the applicant and the need for specific set of skills (Wasem 2006). All these exceptions explain why immigration can surpass worldwide levels and per-country limits on a given year, as it has for most years since 1980 (United States. Office of Immigration Statistics. 2007).

The INA also specifies per-country limits to be held below 7% of the worldwide level of immigrant admissions (that is, of the effective number and not the worldwide limit), with some exceptions. Ever since the mid-1990s, 75% of the visas allocated to spouses and children of LPRs (i.e. the first tier of the second family preference) are not subject to the per-country ceiling. Second, since 2000, per-country ceilings for employment-based immigrants can be surpassed as long as visas are available within the worldwide limit for employment preferences (Wasem 2006: p. 5). Third, per-country ceilings are also sensitive to the number of unused visas that rolls over from previous years, sometimes due to processing backlogs for a specific category. When the number of immigrant applications eligible of admission exceeds the per-country limit, immigrant visas are prorated according to the preference system allocations. That is, within the family-based category, priority is given to unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens, then to spouses and unmarried children of LPRs, then to married children of citizens, and adult siblings of citizens.¹²

Despite the fact that numerical limits to immigration were not reduced immigration policy tightened in the latter part of the 1990s in diverse ways. Besides increased vigilance at the border trying to preclude undocumented migrants to cross the border (especially on high transit border corridors),¹³ certain aspects of the admission process became more rigid. In 1996, Welfare Reform restricted immigrant eligibility for means-tested public programs while the Illegal

¹¹ Nor are refugees and asylees, who remain out of the preference system and quotas and who are admitted discretionarily. Refugees, defined by Presidential Determination, differ from asylees only in that they are located outside of the United States at the time they request the need for safe haven.

¹² However, worldwide limits for a specific family provision category (e.g. unmarried children of LPRs) could potentially prevent immigrants in a preferential category subject to a numerical cap to be admitted in a given year.

¹³ For a discussion of the effectiveness of enforcement, see Andreas (2000), Angelucci (2005), and Massey et al. (2002).

Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) toughened the requisites for immigrant sponsorship.¹⁴

IIRIRA also significantly altered the prospects of obtaining temporary and –ultimately- less transient relief from deportation. More specifically, the old procedure of suspension of deportation was overhauled by a new procedure (cancellation of removal) implying tighter standards for obtaining such relief in addition to a cap on the number who could receive it at 4,000 per fiscal year. Under the old suspension of deportation figure, relief could be obtained under circumstances of “extreme hardship to the alien, the alien’s citizen or permanent resident alien spouse, children, or parent” (Wasem 1997: p. 3). The new procedure changed these standards to “exceptional and extremely unusual hardship”. In addition, it increased the amount of time the person seeking relief had to be physically present in the U.S. (except for short absences) from 7 to 10 years. More importantly, it stated that the calculation of this time would end at the moment “the alien receives a notice to appear (the document that initiates removal proceedings) or when the alien commits a serious crime” (Wasem 1997: p. 4).

Although most of the rule changes set by IIRIRA applied only to cases started on or after April 1, 1997, it did contain language implying the retroactive nature of the “time-stop” rule (Eig 1998), potentially affecting around 300,000 Central Americans. Around 40,000 Nicaraguans who had received other forms of blanket relief, were in the process of being deported, or still on asylum proceedings entered after the phase out of the Nicaraguan Review Program in mid-1995 became vulnerable (Wasem 1997: p. 8)

The Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997 amended the implications of the retroactive nature of the new cancellation of removal conditions and gave preferential treatment to Nicaraguans (relative to Salvadorans and Guatemalans). The former (along with their spouses and children) were allowed to directly adjust to permanent residence by presenting proof of their continuous presence in the U.S. before December 1, 1995 and with no numerical limit considerations (Eig 1998). Immigrant admissions from Nicaragua accordingly peaked from their 4,000-6,000 typical range in the post-IRCA 1990s to 13,000 in 1999, 21,000 in 2000, and 11,000 in 2002 before returning to circa 4,000 per annum in 2003-2007 (United States. Office of Immigration Statistics. 2007).¹⁵

In sum, the three cases studied here differ markedly in terms of the immigration policy context in which they originated and evolved. Dominicans had relatively swift access to permanent residence given the U.S. foreign policy response to the geo-political situation in the

¹⁴ In order to sponsor a relative in the categories stipulated by INA (e.g. spouse and children for LPRs), a citizen or permanent resident is required to maintain the income of the sponsored immigrant to at least 125% of the federal poverty line and sign an affidavit of support for the new immigrant taking personal responsibility that s/he will not become a public charge. IIRIRA made the affidavit of support legally binding and allowed federal government agencies to sue the sponsor for any means-tested benefits used by the sponsored immigrant during the period in which s/he is ineligible to receive them (established by Welfare Reform also in 1996, see Vialet 1997).

¹⁵ In contrast, NACARA merely allowed Salvadorans and Guatemalans under temporary protected status or asylum to be grandfathered under the old cancellation of removal rules. In addition to stating that the eventual admissions of these individuals would be offset from the limits set for some specific employment-based and diversity visa provisions, only Salvadorans entering the U.S. before September 19, 1990 and Guatemalans entering before October 1, 1990 would be eligible to qualify for relief, two arbitrary dates bearing little on the actual development of violent conflict in these countries (Coffino 2006). Moreover, this form of deportation relief would still need to be granted at the discretion of the Attorney General as per the old rules of suspension of deportation. These faculties would be later transferred to the Director of Homeland Security with the creation of the DHS in 2002 (Siskin et al. 2006).

Caribbean during the time in which emigration from the Island became not only desirable per se but free of restrictions. Nicaraguans, on the other hand, began migrating in significant numbers at a much later time when refugee flows into the U.S. had significantly increased (e.g. Indochina, Afghanistan, Cuba), not to mention undocumented ones. Although Cold War politics did benefit them (Wasem 1997), their struggle for residence lasted for several years and was more multi-faceted in terms of the resources used to achieve permanent residence, relying on special regularization programs to a larger extent than Dominicans. Likewise, Mexican admissions benefited from regularization programs given the lack of a previous legal framework to accommodate the settlement of a large group of people initially coming only temporarily. Although family provisions were probably a relevant avenue for legal migration and legalization for all groups (after all, it is the main immigration preference as stipulated by the INA), one could expect that those national groups in which an initial critical mass of LPRs relative to the size of its flow accumulated benefited more extensively (again, in relative terms). Hence, one could expect that Dominicans benefited more from said provisions given their initial context of reception. The next section looks at trends in LPR transition rates and modes in order to verify if they are consistent with this story while exploring and comparing the role of family, work-related provisions, and one-time regularization programs such as IRCA and (in the Nicaraguan case) NACARA in each country.

LEGAL MIGRATION AND LEGALIZATION FROM MEXICO, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND NICARAGUA

I use data from comparable surveys from the Mexican and Latin American Migration Projects (see Donato et al. this volume, also see Massey and Capoferro 2004; Massey and Sana 2003). In addition to 7 Dominican and 9 Nicaraguan communities (surveyed in 1998-1999 and 2002-2003 respectively), I include data from 66 Mexican communities surveyed during similar periods (1998-2004) and where information is most comparable with that from the LAMP samples. I specifically use the U.S. migration and permanent residence modules (i.e. variables in the PERS file mostly located in *Cuadros* A, D, and D2 in the questionnaire) for the complete household roster (i.e. household members plus children of the head). As the evolution of migration from these countries has also followed clear gendered patterns (Massey et al. 2006), I look at these trends for men and women separately.

Legal Migration and Legalization Dynamics

Table 1 shows means and standard errors for legal migration and legalization dynamics by country in two separate Panels according to the respondents' gender. A rather small proportion of the sample consists of U.S.-born individuals, at roughly 1.2% in Mexico and 2.7% in the Dominican Republic and slightly below 1% in Nicaragua. Given our focus on legal migration and legalization, I eliminated these individuals from the ensuing analyses.

Mexican males are the most likely to have U.S. migration experience (21% of them do) while Dominicans men report the second highest migration prevalence at 13% not significantly different from that of Dominican women (12%). Mexican women rank fourth behind Dominicans at 7% while 6% of Nicaraguan men and 5% of Nicaraguan women have U.S. migration experience.

-TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE-

While almost a third of Mexican men with U.S. migration experience engage in more than one migratory trip (possibly due to distance, having more seasonal occupations, and a lower likelihood of settlement due to rather specific temporary migration motivations, see Lindstrom 1996), only 13% of Dominican and Nicaraguan men engage in a second trip. Female gradients are relatively similar but more nuanced: Mexican women are most likely to engage in more than one trip at 16% whereas only 11% and 9% of Nicaraguan women reported having more than one U.S trip.

A clear inter-country (and gendered) pattern can be seen in the prevalence of U.S. permanent residence, where Dominicans stand quite alone vis-à-vis the other groups. Holding a green card is a relatively rare event in most countries, where their prevalence is in the 2 – 3% neighborhood in Mexico and Nicaragua and where men are more likely to be green card holders in the former (3.3% vs. 1.8%; differences are not significant in the latter). In clear contrast to Nicaraguans and Mexicans, a whopping 10% of Dominicans in the sample (including non-migrants) reported holding U.S. permanent residence. Contrary to what happens in Mexico, Dominican women are just as likely to hold a green card as their male counterparts.

The higher male prevalence of green cards in Mexico relative to women is merely a reflection of the former's higher propensity to become migrants in the first place. If we only consider those with U.S. migration (including those who became permanent residents before ever being in the U.S. as well as those who migrated in other status first), Mexican migrant women are in fact more likely than migrant men to have permanent residence (25% vs. 16%). Both groups however are also the least likely to have permanent residence among migrants. Dominican migrant men and women, again, have by far the highest probability of having a green card at a whopping 84% and 90% respectively (which are not significantly different from each other). Nicaraguan women and men come in a distant second, standing at 54% and 49% respectively.

As expected by the evolution of immigration from these countries and of immigration policy when national flows originated or increased, the timing in which people obtained permanent residence with respect to the initiation of their migratory careers also varies conspicuously across countries. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of Mexicans and Nicaraguans made their first U.S. trip before obtaining legal permanent residence: 83% and 92% of Mexican and Nicaraguan men who eventually obtained permanent residence entered the U.S. before obtaining their green card while only 20% of Dominican men reported coming to the U.S. before becoming a LPR. In all cases women are less likely to report entering the U.S. before their permanent admission than men but only in Mexico are these differences relatively large and statistically significant (83% of men vs. 64% of women), consistent with the notion that Mexican women were less likely to migrate without documents and tended to follow a parent or spouse (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993), oftentimes one who had already obtained permanent residence and sponsored them (as we will see below).

While the percent of LPRs obtaining their green card after initiating their last U.S. trip decreases for all country-gender groups, it only does so considerably for the group with the highest proportions with more than one trip: Mexicans, especially for males. The percent entering their last U.S. trip before obtaining permanent residence decreases from 83% to 46% for

Mexican men and from 64% to 48% for Mexican women differences are not statistically significant among Dominicans and Nicaraguans.

In recent years, most immigrant admissions have been adjustments of status within the United States rather than ‘arrivals’ processed in embassies and consulates abroad (see Wasem 2006: Figure 2). In addition, a nontrivial proportion of Latin Americans admitted for permanent residence tend to have previous experience in the U.S., either as temporary workers, students or in some other legal status though a nontrivial proportion also entered in an undocumented fashion or violated the terms of their tourist visas (e.g. over-staying or obtaining employment). It could thus be plausible that trends in pre-admission migration are simply reflecting where people are choosing to wait for their visas to process or that they had originally entered the U.S. in another legal status or indicating previous undocumented experience. Regardless of country of origin, gender, or previous number of trips, the data strongly indicate that most people who arrived to the U.S. for the first (or second-plus) time before obtaining their permanent residence entered first undocumented or using a tourist visa. Between 92 and 96% of LPRs entering the U.S. before admission reported entering the country without documents or using a tourist visa. Although a significant part of the spell could have been spent on a legal status, the picture regarding mode of entry seems clear suggesting people followed two separate processes: initial legal (“permanent”) immigration and subsequent legalization. The first is most characteristic of Dominicans and –to lesser extent- Mexican women. The second describes Mexican men and Nicaraguans of both sexes.

Types of Sponsorship

Table 2 dissects probabilities of obtaining a green card according to specific major sponsorship categories for men and women from each country separately.¹⁶ It is rather clear that the great bulk of the Dominican advantage in LPR transition probabilities stems from their use of family members as sponsors, also consistent with the evidence on pre-admission U.S. experience presented above and the general account in the literature regarding the low likelihood of undocumented migration in the Dominican Republic (see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: Chapter 2 and references therein). The likelihood that Dominican migrant men and women obtain permanent residence being sponsored by a family member is rather high at 79% and 86%, representing of course not only the vast majority of Dominican LPRs but also of Dominican migrants. In contrast, the probability of obtaining residence sponsored by a relative is much lower in all other countries and never above 25% for either men or women. Nicaraguan and Mexican women come in distant third and fourth with a probability of 22% and 16% of obtaining a green card while sponsored by a relative. The figure is only 5% for Mexican men. Transition probabilities through work-related provisions are much smaller for all groups, always on or below the 2% mark.

-TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE-

¹⁶ As these are sponsor-specific transition probabilities ($\Pr\{\text{sponsor}_i, \text{LPR}\}$, as opposed to the distribution of permanent residents by sponsor, $\Pr\{\text{sponsor}_i|\text{LPR}\}$) they denote the probability of becoming a legal resident through a given method, a more appropriate measure to assess inter-country comparisons in sponsorship types than comparing the distribution of residents in each country according to the sponsor they used, which only indicate the relevance of sponsorship categories within countries as the prevalence of green cards varies conspicuously across them (see Table 1).

Legalization programs were just as instrumental important in providing avenues for permanent residence as family provisions were (if not more) in the case of both Mexicans and Nicaraguans. Altogether, the two IRCA amnesty programs helped regularize the status of 7.7% of Mexican migrants, a quite similar proportion to that of those sponsored through family provisions (7.9%, see Table 2, Panel C). Despite the temporary nature of IRCA, it represented a more important legalization avenue for Mexican men than family provisions (8% vs. 5%, differences significant at the 5% significance level).

While only 4% of Nicaraguan migrants benefited from IRCA, a much larger set of them benefited from the provisions of NACARA. Although this specific program was not included as a separate option in the questionnaire and the actual open-ended responses are not available in the Nicaraguan database, reports from the fieldwork coordinator¹⁷ and analyses of the timing of migration and legalization (not shown here) suggest that at least half of the 24% of Nicaraguan migrants reporting being sponsored by “other” provisions used NACARA relief (the other half possibly involving asylum cases for the most part). Thus, altogether and being conservative, IRCA and NACARA were just as relevant as family provisions in Nicaragua, providing legalization and legal migration opportunities for 15% of migrants each while asylum cases probably constitute the third (if not second) most important avenue for legalization as suggested by the accounts indicating Nicaraguans arriving before the early 1980s benefited from IRCA (15,000 of them); those leaving Nicaragua during the height of conflict benefiting from high asylum success rates during the mid-late 1980s; and more than 50,000 from NACARA, in contrast with yearly immigrant admissions in the three to four thousand, most of which can be attributed to family provisions.

Family Provisions More in Detail

Given the relevance of family provisions in the legalization process and the rather large differences in rates of permanent residence acquisition across countries, it seems worthy of exploring if there are differences in which a specific family member is sponsoring a migrant that could help explain differences in LPR transitions through family means across countries. Table 3 shows probabilities of becoming a resident while sponsored by specific relatives by country and gender. As both residents and citizens can both sponsor their spouses and minor children, it is not surprising that spouses and parents appear as the most likely conducts of family provisions regardless of country, though there are interesting differences of magnitude in reliance to each of these two sponsors across countries.

Spouses are the most common sponsors of immigrant women in Nicaragua and Mexico (in the latter, spouses alone are the most important provision for women, cf. Table 2). 11.4% and 8.9% of all Nicaraguan and Mexican women with U.S. experience obtained residence through their husbands. Women from these two countries are also quite more likely to rely on their husbands for permanent residence than Mexican and Nicaraguan men are to become LPRs through their wives (specifically, 5 and 9 times more likely respectively). Although Mexican and Nicaraguan men tend to rely more on parents than on spouses, they still have lower probabilities of becoming a legal resident sponsored through a parent than their female co-nationals. 2.6% (3.8%) of Mexican (Nicaraguan) men with U.S. experience obtained their residence sponsored by their parents while only 1.6% (1.3%) of them was sponsored by their wives.

¹⁷ Personal communication with Juan Carlos Vargas. June 2, 2008.

The situation of Dominicans is, again, somewhat different. Like in the Mexican and Nicaraguan cases, Dominican men are also more likely to be sponsored by a parent than by a spouse (i.e. 49% vs. 26% of all Dominican men with U.S. experience). However, in contrast to the cases of Mexico and Nicaragua where men tend to rely on their wives as sponsors at a lower rate than their female co-nationals, Dominican men are almost just as likely to obtain a green card sponsored by a spouse (26% of all Dominican men with U.S. experience do vs. 30% of women, difference is not significant at the 5% significance level). Likewise in contrast with Mexico and Nicaragua, where women are more likely to be sponsored by their husband than by their parents, Dominican women are 65% more likely to be sponsored by parents than they are by husbands (i.e. 50% vs. 30% of Dominican women with U.S. experience).

Moreover, differences in patterns between Mexico/Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic are eclipsed by sheer differences in the magnitude of these rates across countries. Both Dominican men and women are far more likely to be sponsored by either a spouse or a parent than their Mexican and Nicaraguan counterparts. Dominican women (30%) are 3.4 and 2.6 times more likely to be sponsored by their husbands than Mexican (9%) and Nicaraguan (11%) women whereas they are 9.8 and 7.6 times more likely to be sponsored by a parent (i.e. 50% for Dominicans vs. 6.5% and 5% for Nicaraguans and Mexicans respectively). These differences are even more striking for men. Dominican males (26%) are 16 and 20 times more likely to be sponsored by their wives than their Mexican (1.6%) and Nicaraguan counterparts (1.3%) whereas they are 18 and 12 times more likely to be sponsored by a parent (49% of Dominicans with U.S. experience are sponsored by a parent compared to only 3.8% and 2.6% of Nicaraguan and Mexican men).

-TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE-

In sum, the much higher likelihood of Dominicans of becoming a resident is a result of their use of family provisions especially parents and spouses (in that order) in the form of legal migration rather than legalization after an undocumented spell (see Table 1). Given the much higher likelihood of obtaining a green card sponsored by parents or spouses, we would not expect Dominicans to have lower rates than Mexicans or Nicaraguans at any age, but especially during childhood. Table 4 is consistent with this notion while presenting age-specific transition probabilities by country for two major periods divided by the passage of IRCA: 1965 – 1985 and 1986 – survey year.¹⁸ Even in 1965 – 1985, the period where more sizable Dominican migration started and in which Mexican migration from the Central-Western part of the country was already more established thanks to linkages re-established by the Bracero Program (1942 – 1964), were LPR transition rates much higher in the Dominican Republic than in Mexico and Nicaragua for the three age groups depicted. For instance, whereas 1.9 in 10,000 Mexicans ages 0 -14 in the sample (including non-migrants) obtained a green card the equivalent figure is 8.1 times higher for Dominicans and 31 times higher for Nicaraguans. This suggests the pattern of family migration from the Dominican Republic initiated much earlier than that of Mexico most likely thanks to the availability of legal documents to do so.

-TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE-

Mexican and Nicaraguan legalization rates increased considerably after the passage of IRCA, which also benefited Dominicans though in lower relative terms (see Table 2) given the

¹⁸ These figures are presented only for both sexes combined for the sake of simplicity and due to reasons of statistical power.

large size of the LPR Dominican population relative to the undocumented residents (more on this below). The probability that a Mexican obtained legal permanent residence almost doubled from 5.1 to 9.8 per 10,000 habitants between the two periods. This increase dwarfs in comparison to that of Nicaraguans, whose transition probabilities increased from 2.1 to 17.1 per 10,000 habitants in the origin and became higher than those of Mexicans after age 15 (see Table 4). Both the magnitude and (older) age pattern of the increase in Nicaraguan transition probabilities are consistent with the notion that Nicaraguans not only benefited from IRCA, but also from the passage of NACARA in 1997 (see Table 2, United States. Office of Immigration Statistics. 2007).

A Final Note on Potential Misreporting of LPR Status

As transition rates to permanent residence are much larger in the Dominican Republic than in Nicaragua and Mexico, the reader might suspect the possibility that Dominicans could be over-reporting their propensity to obtain permanent residence. While I cannot entirely rule out this possibility, there is sufficient evidence potential over-reporting is not driving the conclusions of the paper whatsoever.

As mentioned above, studies using other data sources also suggest Dominicans are not as likely to be undocumented as other groups. Evidence based on administrative data and indirect estimation of undocumented migrants seems to provide a similar picture with respect to Dominican migration. Permanent admissions from the Dominican Republic reported in immigration statistics are quite sizable relative to the size of the country. Even by the beginning of the 1980s, the Dominican Republic had the third highest rate of legal admissions per 10,000 population in the home country, at 32.3 (see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: Table 3). This figure is remarkably similar to and within the 95% confidence interval of the annual average rate estimated with LAMP data for the pre-IRCA period (36.6, see Table 4, Panel A). If there was a large undocumented component not registered in LAMP data, these two figures would most likely differ substantially. Likewise, around 8.3% of Dominicans living in New York enumerated in the 1980 census are estimated to be undocumented (i.e. 14,000 out of 169,000, see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: p. 22, 163).¹⁹ While most Dominicans in the sample reporting going directly to the U.S. mainland (and specifically to New York), it is important to note the Dominican undocumented component is around six times higher in Puerto Rico in recent years as has traditionally been the main entry hub for undocumented Dominicans into the U.S. (Duany 2005).

Finally, even in the presence of misreporting, the bias in Dominican self-reports relative to that of Mexicans and Nicaraguans would need to be rather large to change the conclusions of this study. I would expect those groups with a lower likelihood of return to misreport their legal

¹⁹ In addition, at least two other studies suggest similar conclusions. In his study of undocumented Dominicans in New York, Perez (1981, cited in Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: p. 22) found that a third of Dominicans had been on an irregular status at some point during their lives in the U.S. but only 17% of them were undocumented at any point in time due to their high likelihood to eventually legalize, not far off from LAMP data figures that estimate 15% of Dominican migrants had undocumented experience in their first trip (see Table 1). In addition, preliminary results of the Boston Metro Brazilian and Dominican Health and Legal Status Project also suggest Dominicans are quite unlikely to report undocumented status. Personal communication with Enrico Marcelli, June 3, 2008. While studies based on self-reports of legal status could have similar problems as LAMP data, it is likely these figures would be higher than those reported in the LAMP as they were gathered in the U.S., where people would be most likely to misreport their legal status. They are however not significantly different from each other. Although these data come from an older period and LAMP data come from seven specific communities, other bits of data are equally consistent with the findings of this study.

status. As Dominicans are indeed less likely to return relative to both Mexicans and Nicaraguans (Riosmena 2005: Chapter Four) this is indeed a possibility.²⁰ But the amount of additional Dominican misreporting would need to be extremely large to change the results presented here. For instance, assuming no Nicaraguans misreported having a green card, differences between Dominicans and Nicaraguans would reduce substantially (say, such that their 95% confidence intervals would overlap) only if around 25% of Dominican migrants was misreporting being a LPR. This figure would need to be much larger in the case of Mexicans: circa 60% of Dominicans would need to be misreporting their legal permanent status for results to change substantially and significantly. These differences seem rather large, especially as they represent lower bounds: they would need to be larger in the event misreporting bias for Mexicans and Nicaraguans was not negligible.²¹

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has shown evidence consistent with the notion that immigration policy leaves an imprint not only on particular but subsequent immigrant generations, by allowing or restricting the creation of a critical mass of people with legal permanent residence that would be able to sponsor the legal migration of relatives. If such critical mass of people lacks access to legal residence, the ‘effect’ of social networks would be to reproduce such patterns of undocumented or gray-status migration, only ‘remedied’ by one-time regularization programs.

Of the three groups studied here, Dominicans have by far the highest likelihood of obtaining residence at all ages, mostly through family provisions (sponsored by parents and spouses in particular) and a result of legal migration as opposed to legalization after an undocumented spell. Nicaraguans evinced the second higher transition rates (a distant second), also with relatively few gender differences, but mostly denoting a post-undocumented migration legalization process aided by special immigration provisions such as IRCA and NACARA in addition to a nontrivial subset being sponsored by family members and –possibly- asylum provisions. Mexican migrants had a rather low likelihood of becoming a LPR and presented sharper gender differentials: women were more likely to legalize (mostly sponsored by spouses) while men benefited from IRCA as much as from family ties (mainly parents).

Cross-national differences in the degree and modes of transition into LPR status are the result of three main factors: the interplay of conditions favoring initial emigration in origins and the specific immigration and foreign policy context in which they originated; the perpetuating effect of social networks in reproducing the legal character of flows, especially in smaller nations where the restrictive effect of national quotas is less problematic relative to the potential supply

²⁰ It is no Dominican over-reporting that matters the most in the context of these cross-national comparisons, but that relative to the potential over-reporting of permanent residence by the other two groups. One could assume over-reporting is highest for those interviewed in the U.S. followed by the proxy report of family members in origins with regards to relatives living in the U.S. at the time of the survey (in order to protect them). Return migrants reporting their own behavior in sending areas would perhaps be the least likely to over-report having a green card.

²¹ I also verified the consistency of the dates of legalization for household heads sponsored by their parents (the most common legalization avenue in the Dominican Republic, see Tables 2 and 3) with the dates of legalization of their parents reported in a separate section of the questionnaire (granted, by the same respondent). If anything, Dominican responses were more consistent than those of Mexicans (almost no Nicaraguan reported being sponsored by their parents), though both were somewhat consistent. To the best of my knowledge, these particular data were not regularly recoded by MMP/LAMP staff if inconsistencies were found.

of immigrants; and differences in the effective use of the available kinship ties to LPRs, most likely not quite explained by naturalization patterns. All of these have given an imprint in the character of subsequent immigration flows in addition to those associated with conditions in origins, most clearly in helping shape cross-country differences in gendered and family patterns of migration.

The interplay between legal context of reception and conditions in origins

Dominicans faced a relatively favorable legal context of reception during the initiation of the flows, originally spurred by the sudden relaxation of emigration restrictions and the unstable political situation in the country in the early 1960s. This legal context of reception was not more favorable than that faced by Puerto Ricans (U.S. citizens by birth but members of a geographically, linguistically, and culturally-distinct nation, see Duany 2002) or Cubans (eligible for quasi-immediate admission through a variety of mechanisms mostly devoid of numerical limits, see Eig 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wasem 1997). But it was indeed laxer and more favorable than that Nicaraguans and Mexicans have faced, especially when each of these flows originated.

Dominican migration also initially evolved during a time of more liberal immigration policy, devoid of numerical limits or preference systems that could favor but still curb family reunification. Although Mexican immigration also originated in this context, the conditions stimulating migration from these two countries (and not necessarily doing so from others such as Nicaragua) were rather different in the Dominican Republic. Dominican emigration was jump-started by their newfound freedom to emigrate, fueled by instability of the political (and thus economic) situation of the Republic, and further facilitated by a liberal (albeit short-lived) policy of granting nonimmigrant and immigrant visas (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Martin 1966).

The cumulative causation of legal migration

Many studies have shown the relevance of migrant networks in facilitating the migration process (Flores, Hernández-León and Massey 2004; Fussell and Massey 2004; Massey and Espinosa 1997; Munshi 2003; Palloni et al. 2001). As more migrants incorporate into the flow, the costs of migration lower for future immigrants as they have access to a network of people able to provide the individual with information and assistance reducing the uncertainty surrounding the move. In the context of a preference system favoring family reunification, specific kinship ties to migrants (and, even more, naturalized citizens) becomes instrumental for the prospects of legal migration. When the legal context of reception (initially or by way of posterior legalization programs) and conditions associated with emigration create or fail to create a critical mass of individuals with legal documents, they may influence the size of future flows and –most notably- reinforce their relative legal/undocumented character (see also Massey et al. 2002).

A question worth of future research would be to ascertain if a critical mass of LPRs tends to ‘attract’ a larger migrant flow from a given country (judging from the Dominican case it does, but one would need to control for the conditions associated with emigration in each country), and if such flow would tend to be more legal than undocumented. While there is some evidence that men with direct family members with legal permanent residence had a higher likelihood of U.S. migration relative to having migrant relatives with no LPR status (Riosmena 2005: Chapter Four), the analysis did not specify if such likelihood is larger because individuals migrated as a part of a family unit, or if such ties were associated with legal, undocumented migration, or both.

Effectiveness in the use of family provisions

No matter how broad or narrow the base or critical mass of LPRs, groups also have apparently been more 'effective' in taking advantage of provisions of the preference system. Dominicans did not benefit from a more liberal immigration policy framework for too long, but indeed long enough for Dominican legal, permanent immigration to gain considerable momentum. Transition to permanent residence (i.e. emigration in the Dominican case) was already remarkably high during the first twenty years of Dominican immigration (see Table 3). Furthermore, even in an era of national quotas (somewhat flexible but clearly below their potential levels, see Jasso and Rosenzweig 1986, 1989) and taking advantage of the provisions of the preference system, Dominicans have exhibited rather large immigration rates.

Given that said system favors family reunification since 1977 and, specifically, that of immediate relatives of citizens first and the spouse and children of residents, it is not surprising Dominicans are mostly sponsored by parents and spouses. As naturalization is not available in the Dominican LAMP survey, it is not possible to directly observe if Dominicans in the sample were more instrumental in sponsoring more relatives (and some of them faster and in an untapped fashion) given their citizenship status. While possible, this is most likely not driving a great deal of the observed patterns given the relatively low naturalization rates of Dominicans during most of the period hereby studied (e.g. Woodrow-Lafeld et al. 2004),²² though naturalization could also be facilitating transnational life for a subset of Dominicans (Gilbertson and Singer 2003). It is however a matter of future research to ascertain the relevance of human capital characteristics in explaining differences in sponsorship rates across countries.

The role of documentation in explaining gendered patterns of migration

Scholars have suggested that Dominican gendered migration patterns (i.e. little if any gender differentials, higher likelihood of female migration) are a result of less patriarchal family systems being at place in the Dominican Republic (Massey et al. 2006; Massey and Sana 2003). While it is indeed likely that migration and return patterns for males and females are not different because of lower patriarchal constraints allowing women to migrate independently or giving them more bargaining power to influence a potential move, these decisions are greatly facilitated when individuals have access to permanent residence. The level sponsor-specific legalization rates and the actual sponsors most commonly used by Dominicans suggest that families are also more able to eventually reunite in the United States (and thus, be less likely to return to the Dominican Republic, at least in the short term, see Riosmena 2005: Chapter 4), at the very least helping explain how differences in family systems are manifested in gendered patterns of migration.

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²² These rates, although higher than those of Mexicans before and after controls, were lower than those of all other groups studied by Woodrow-Lafeld et al. (2004), namely: Cubans, Jamaican, and Colombians along with five Asian groups (Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Indian, and Korean).

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Table 1. Means and standard errors on legal migration and legalization by country and gender

	Mexico	Dominican Republic	Nicaragua
A. Men			
Born in the U.S.	0.012 (0.001)	0.027 (0.003)	0.008 (0.001)
Non-U.S.-born			
Ever a U.S. migrant	0.208 (0.002)	0.129 (0.006)	0.062 (0.003)
Migrants with 2+ trips	0.325 (0.006)	0.136 (0.018)	0.133 (0.018)
Ever a permanent resident	0.033 (0.001)	0.105 (0.006)	0.026 (0.002)
LPR ever being a U.S. migrant	0.162 (0.005)	0.837 (0.021)	0.491 (0.030)
Made first U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.832 (0.012)	0.195 (0.024)	0.919 (0.024)
Pct. undocumented	0.936 (0.009)	0.956 (0.031)	0.916 (0.027)
Made last U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.460 (0.016)	0.154 (0.022)	0.867 (0.029)
Pct. undocumented	0.936 (0.009)	0.956 (0.031)	0.916 (0.027)
No. of individuals in sample	30,495	2,664	5,286
B. Women			
Born in the U.S.	0.012 (0.001)	0.022 (0.003)	0.009 (0.001)
Non-U.S.-born			
Ever a U.S. migrant	0.071 (0.001)	0.118 (0.006)	0.048 (0.003)
Migrants with 2+ trips	0.159 (0.008)	0.093 (0.015)	0.113 (0.019)
Ever a permanent resident	0.018 (0.001)	0.104 (0.006)	0.022 (0.002)
LPR ever being a U.S. migrant	0.254 (0.010)	0.896 (0.017)	0.539 (0.033)
Made first U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.643 (0.020)	0.130 (0.020)	0.871 (0.030)
Pct. undocumented	0.949 (0.013)	0.923 (0.052)	0.928 (0.026)
Made last U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.486 (0.021)	0.113 (0.018)	0.855 (0.032)
Pct. undocumented	0.949 (0.013)	0.923 (0.052)	0.928 (0.026)
No. of individuals in sample	31,462	2,877	5,771
C. Both Sexes			
Born in the U.S.	0.012 (0.000)	0.023 (0.002)	0.008 (0.001)
Non-U.S.-born			
Ever a U.S. migrant	0.138 (0.001)	0.123 (0.004)	0.055 (0.002)
Migrants with 2+ trips	0.282 (0.005)	0.115 (0.012)	0.124 (0.013)
Ever a permanent resident	0.026 (0.001)	0.104 (0.004)	0.024 (0.001)
LPR ever being a U.S. migrant	0.186 (0.004)	0.866 (0.014)	0.513 (0.022)
Made first U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.763 (0.011)	0.161 (0.015)	0.896 (0.019)
Pct. undocumented	0.940 (0.008)	0.944 (0.027)	0.922 (0.019)
Made last U.S. trip before becoming LPR	0.469 (0.013)	0.133 (0.014)	0.861 (0.021)
Pct. undocumented	0.940 (0.008)	0.944 (0.027)	0.922 (0.019)
No. of individuals in sample	61,957	5,553	11,057

Table 2. Probability that a person with U.S. migration experience becomes a permanent resident through a specific sponsor by country and gender

	Mexico		Dominican Republic		Nicaragua	
A. Men						
Family	0.052	(0.003)	0.799	(0.023)	0.092	(0.019)
Work	0.021	(0.002)	0.006	(0.005)	0.017	(0.008)
IRCA - General	0.063	(0.003)	0.010	(0.006)	0.050	(0.014)
IRCA - SAW	0.018	(0.002)	0.003	(0.003)	0.000	(0.000)
Other	0.004	(0.001)	0.016	(0.007)	0.255	(0.028)
No. with U.S. experience	6,353		343		328	
No. with permanent residence	999		276		135	
B. Women						
Family	0.160	(0.008)	0.862	(0.020)	0.224	(0.029)
Work	0.016	(0.003)	0.013	(0.006)	0.015	(0.009)
IRCA - General	0.061	(0.005)	0.010	(0.006)	0.025	(0.011)
IRCA - SAW	0.008	(0.002)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Other	0.003	(0.001)	0.010	(0.006)	0.214	(0.029)
No. with U.S. experience	2,222		339		277	
No. with permanent residence	569		298		124	
C. Both sexes						
Family	0.079	(0.003)	0.831	(0.015)	0.152	(0.017)
Work	0.020	(0.002)	0.010	(0.004)	0.016	(0.006)
IRCA - General	0.062	(0.003)	0.010	(0.004)	0.039	(0.009)
IRCA - SAW	0.015	(0.001)	0.002	(0.002)	0.000	(0.000)
Other	0.004	(0.001)	0.013	(0.005)	0.236	(0.020)
No. with U.S. experience	8,575		682		605	
No. with permanent residence	1,568		574		259	

Table 3. Probability that a person with U.S. migration experience becomes a permanent resident sponsored by a specific relative, by country and gender

	Mexico		Dominican Republic		Nicaragua	
A. Men						
Spouse	0.016	(0.002)	0.262	(0.025)	0.013	(0.007)
Parent	0.026	(0.002)	0.485	(0.028)	0.038	(0.012)
Child	0.004	(0.001)	0.019	(0.008)	0.029	(0.011)
Sibling	0.005	(0.001)	0.032	(0.010)	0.013	(0.007)
B. Women						
Spouse	0.089	(0.006)	0.301	(0.026)	0.114	(0.022)
Parent	0.050	(0.005)	0.497	(0.028)	0.065	(0.017)
Child	0.015	(0.003)	0.035	(0.010)	0.040	(0.014)
Sibling	0.006	(0.002)	0.029	(0.009)	0.005	(0.005)
C. Both Sexes						
Spouse	0.035	(0.002)	0.282	(0.018)	0.059	(0.011)
Parent	0.032	(0.002)	0.491	(0.020)	0.050	(0.010)
Child	0.007	(0.001)	0.027	(0.007)	0.034	(0.009)
Sibling	0.006	(0.001)	0.031	(0.007)	0.009	(0.005)

Table 4. Age-specific transition probabilities to permanent resident per 10,000 population in the country of origin by country and periods

	Mexico		Dominican Republic		Nicaragua	
			A. 1965 - 1985			
0 - 14	1.9	(0.23)	15.5	(2.17)	0.5	(0.28)
15 - 34	9.9	(0.63)	63.1	(5.18)	2.9	(0.83)
35+	4.6	(0.73)	45.1	(7.03)	6.9	(2.18)
All ages	5.1	(0.27)	36.6	(2.36)	2.1	(0.43)
			B. 1986 - survey year			
0 - 14	4.3	(0.46)	25.7	(4.01)	3.8	(0.95)
15 - 34	13.8	(0.67)	75.3	(5.79)	20.9	(1.97)
35+	9.1	(0.69)	48.1	(5.95)	27.8	(2.91)
All ages	9.8	(0.37)	52.9	(3.19)	17.1	(1.15)
			C. All periods			
0 - 14	2.9	(0.22)	19.1	(1.92)	2.0	(0.42)
15 - 24	17.0	(0.53)	69.1	(3.74)	12.4	(1.10)
35+	10.5	(0.60)	48.3	(4.45)	20.8	(2.03)
All ages	10.1	(0.26)	44.4	(1.88)	9.6	(0.60)

Notes: Standard errors of estimates are indicated between brackets