

Women's Work in Latin America

ABCDE 2024

Raquel Fernández
NYU

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Washington DC

Women & Work

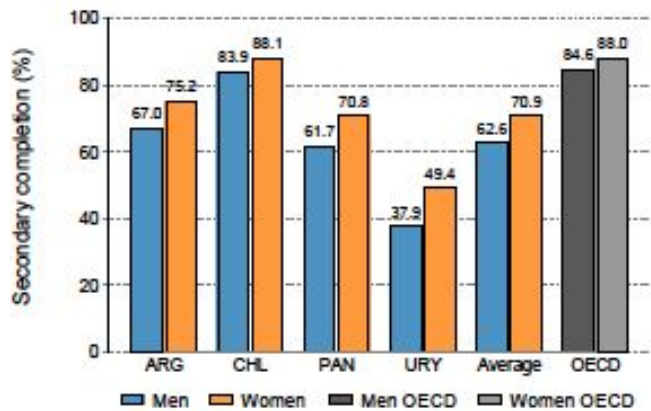
- Structural and macroeconomic conditions affect employment but a priori no reason why these should be gendered
- Differences in female vs male employment characteristics indicate areas where we should ask why gender matters:
 - Sectors & occupations
 - Formal vs informal
 - Unemployment frequency & spells
 - Hours & seasonality
 - Wages & benefits
 - Out of the labor force
- We can take a life-cycle view – here education and various facets of work – to gain some understanding of where the main issues lie.
- Presentation of LA data based on [LACIR Chapter on “Gender Inequality”](#) by Inés Berniell, Raquel Fernández, & Sonya Krutikova

EDUCATION

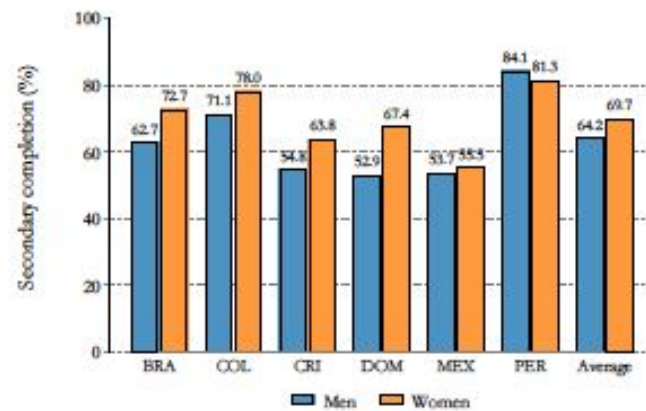
Secondary School Completion favors Girls almost everywhere

In most LA countries in our sample, almost no gender inequality in schooling until secondary school completion

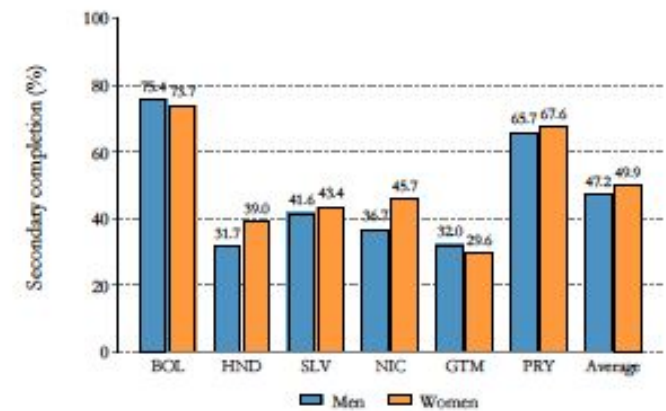
Figure 5: Secondary School Completion (2019)



(a) High income



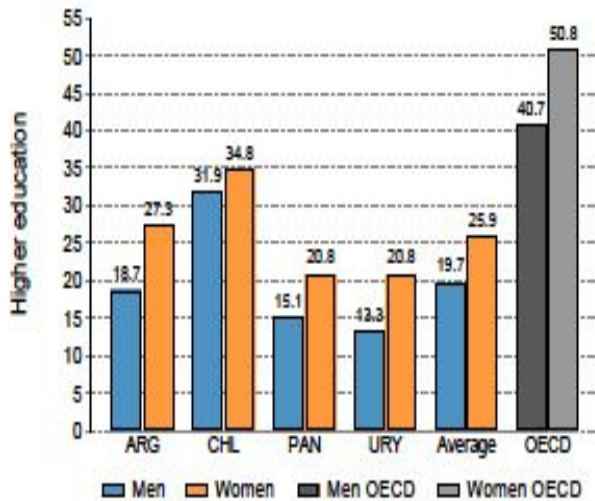
(b) Upper middle income



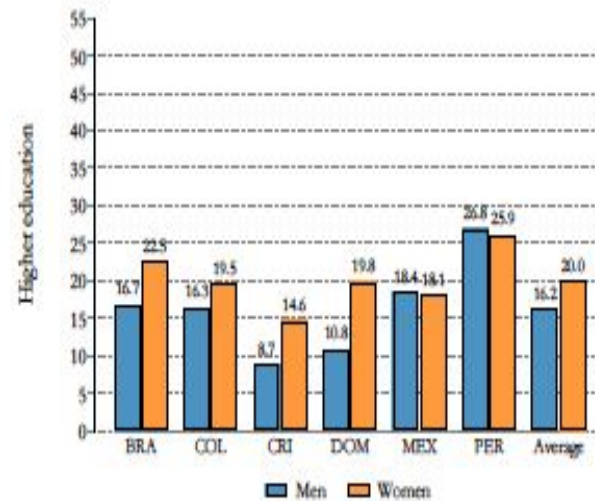
(c) Lower middle income

Tertiary Education: Gender Gap favors Women almost everywhere

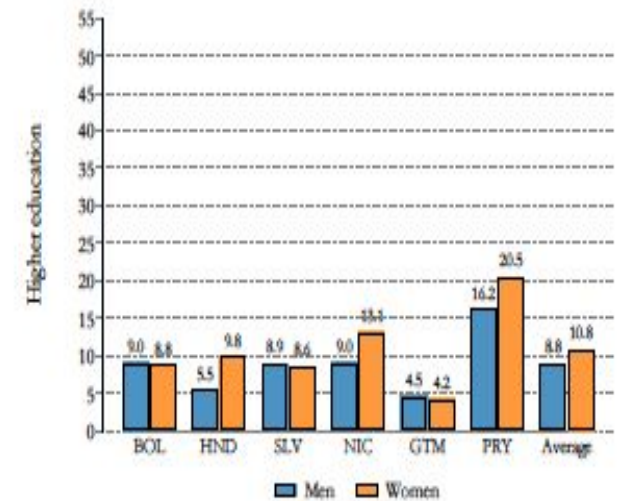
Figure 7: Higher Education Completion



(a) High income



(b) Upper middle income



(c) Lower middle income

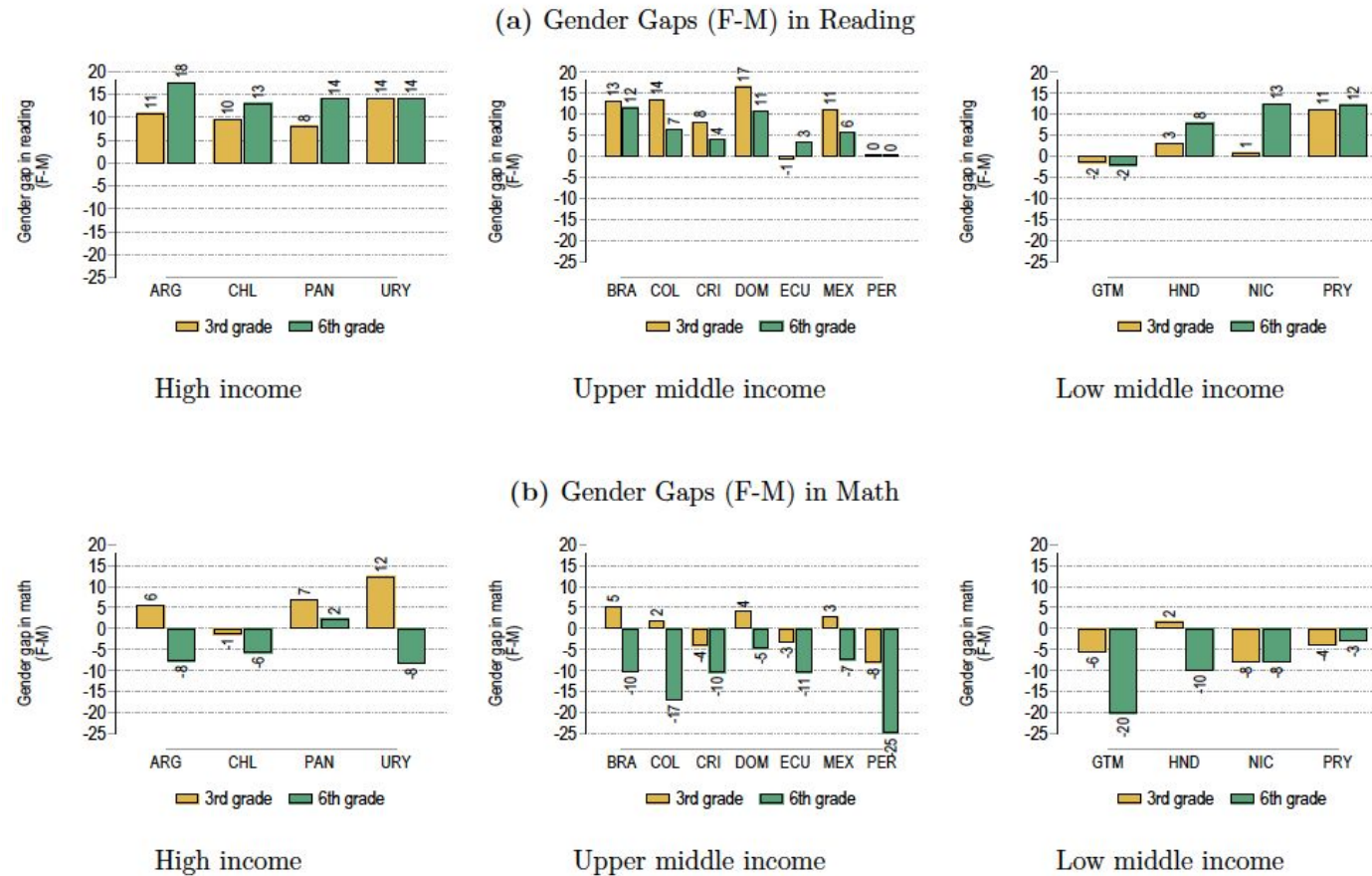
OECD gender gap is 10pp in favor of women; LA gap is significantly smaller, with exception of Argentina and Uruguay

Achievement: Gender Gaps in Reading and Math, 3rd & 6th grades, 2013

Gender gap mostly favors girls in math and reading in 3rd grade in HI. Gender gap favoring boys in math opens in 6th grade.

For UMI, more mixed in math (gender gap already exists for many countries in 3rd grade) and for LMI, gg favors boys already in 3rd grade.

Figure 9: Gender Gaps (F-M) in TERCE Scores

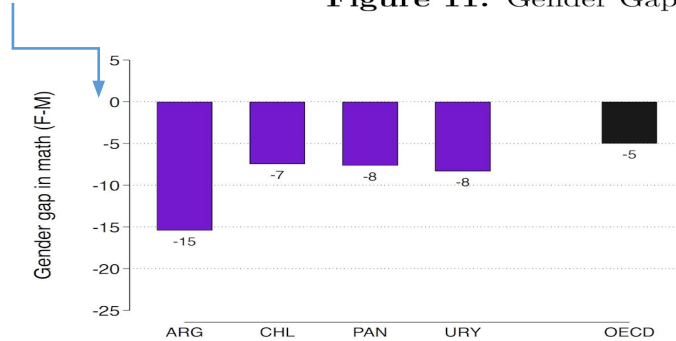


Between 2006 and 2013, the math GG in favor of girls grew for 3rd grade but so did the math GG in favor of boys in 6th grade.

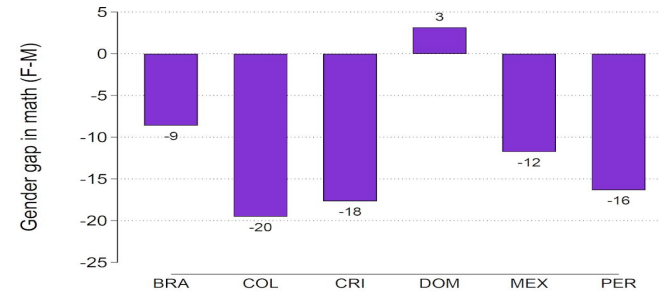
Gender gaps in reading and math scores (panel b) in 2013, for children in 3rd (ochre bars) and 6th grades (green bars). The test score scale has a standard deviation of 100 points.

PISA Scores: The Gender Gap at Age 15, 2018

This is zero



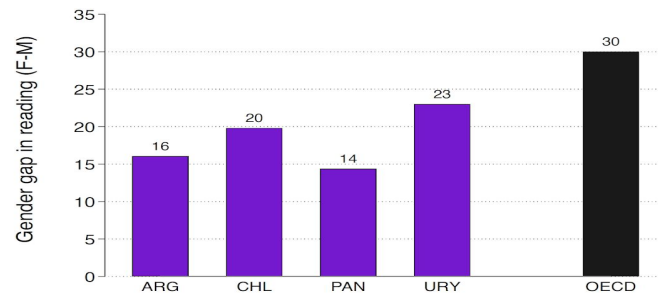
(a) High income



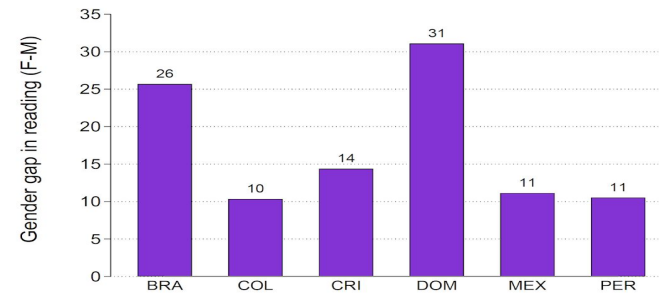
(b) Upper middle income

Note: The figure shows the gender gaps (F-M) in math scores in 2018, for 15 years old children. The test score scale has a standard deviation of 100 points. We use boy's scores as the base from which these differences are expressed: 387 Argentina, 421 Chile, 357 Panama, 422 Uruguay, 388 Brazil, 401 Colombia, 411 Costa Rica, 324 Dominican Republic, 415 Mexico, 408 Peru. The OECD average bar shows unweighted means. *Source:* authors' own calculations based on PISA 2018 (Program for International Student Assessment, OECD).

Figure 12: Gender Gaps in Pisa Scores in Reading in 2018 (F-M)



(a) High income



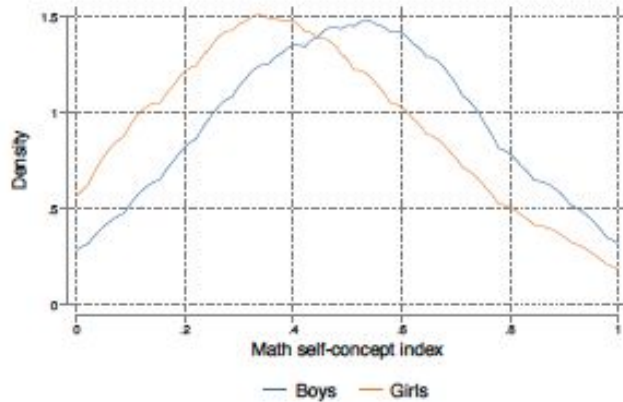
(b) Upper middle income

Between 2009 and 2018, gender gap in favor of girls in reading shrank (boys improved) as did math gap (girls improved, except Arg.)

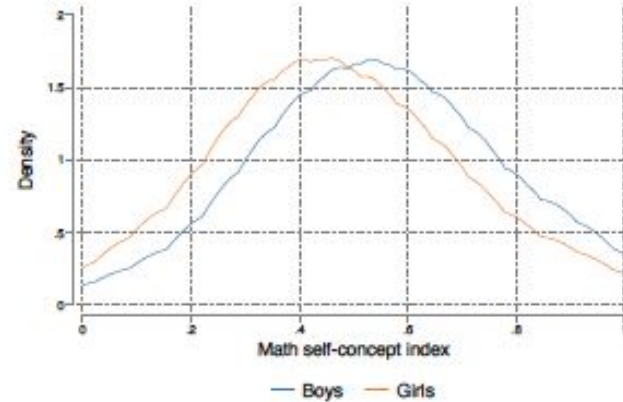
Math Self Confidence

- I am good at mathematics.
- I get good grades in mathematics.
- I learn mathematics quickly.
- I have always believed that math is one of my best subjects.
- In my math class, I understand even the most difficult work.

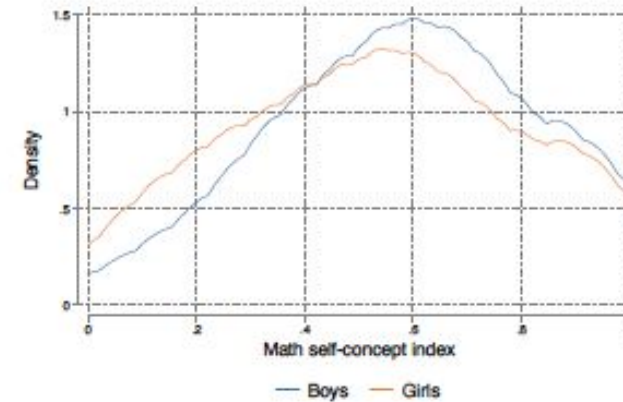
Figure 16: Math Self-concept Index Distribution



(a) High income



(b) Upper middle income



(c) United States

Boys are more self-confident at each test score

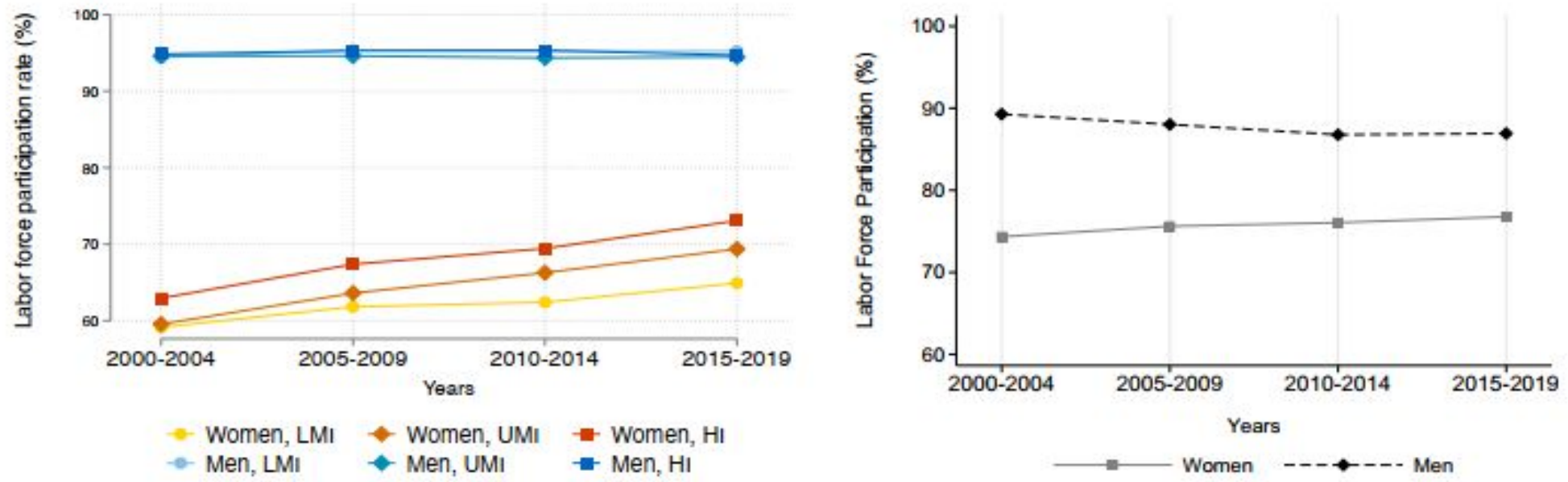
Latin America

OECD

WORK

Evolution of LFP Over 20 Years

Figure 24: Evolution of Labor Force Participation in LAC and US



(a) Evolution of Labor Force Participation in LAC

(b) Evolution of Labor Force Participation in the US

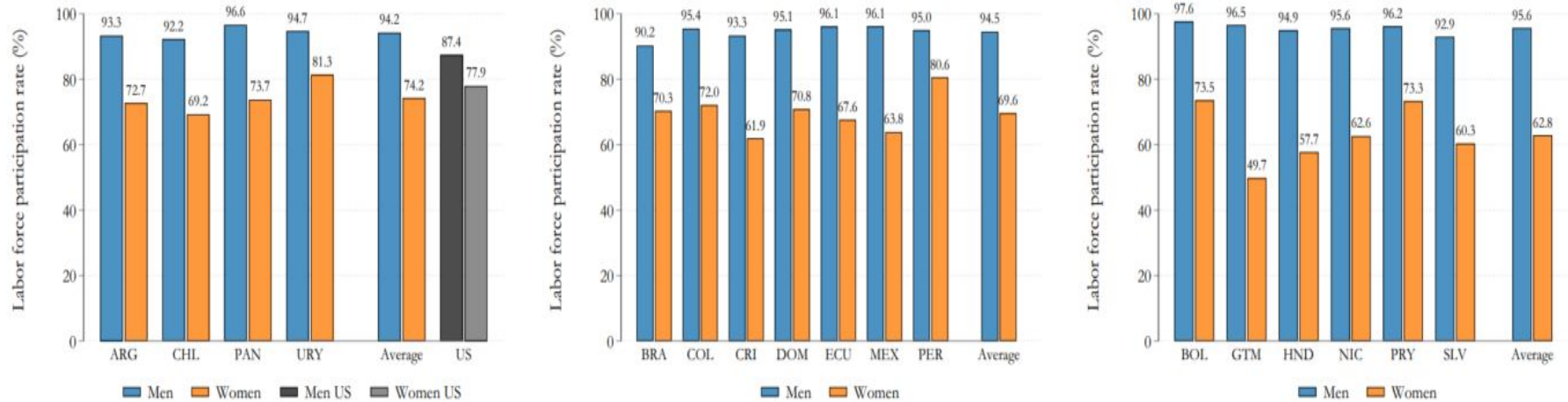
Note: These figures show the evolution of the share of the population aged 25-55 years old that is economically active, as defined in the text. In Panel (a), each dot represents the (unweighted) cross-country average of their 5-year average. In Panel (b), each dot represents the 5-year average for the US. *Source:* see note to Figure 23. Only countries with available data in the corresponding periods are included (unbalanced panel in the case of LMI countries. See Table B.1 in Appendix B).

Gender Gaps in LFP, 2019

Figure 23: Labor Force Participation in LAC circa 2019

20pp gap for HI countries vs 10 for US. Men's LFP in LA significantly higher

Gap of 25 (UMI) and 30+ pp (LMI)



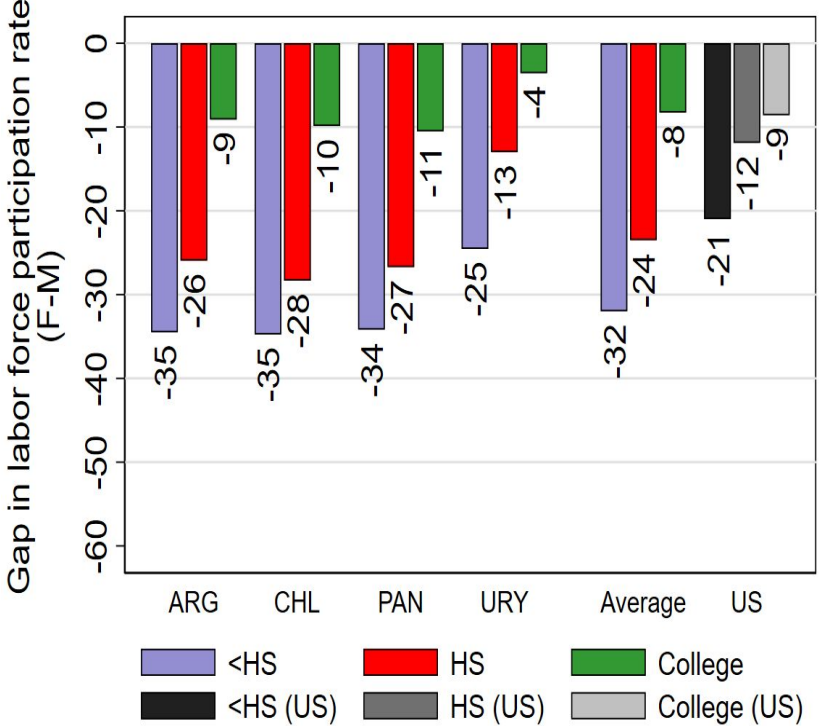
(a) High income

(b) Upper middle income

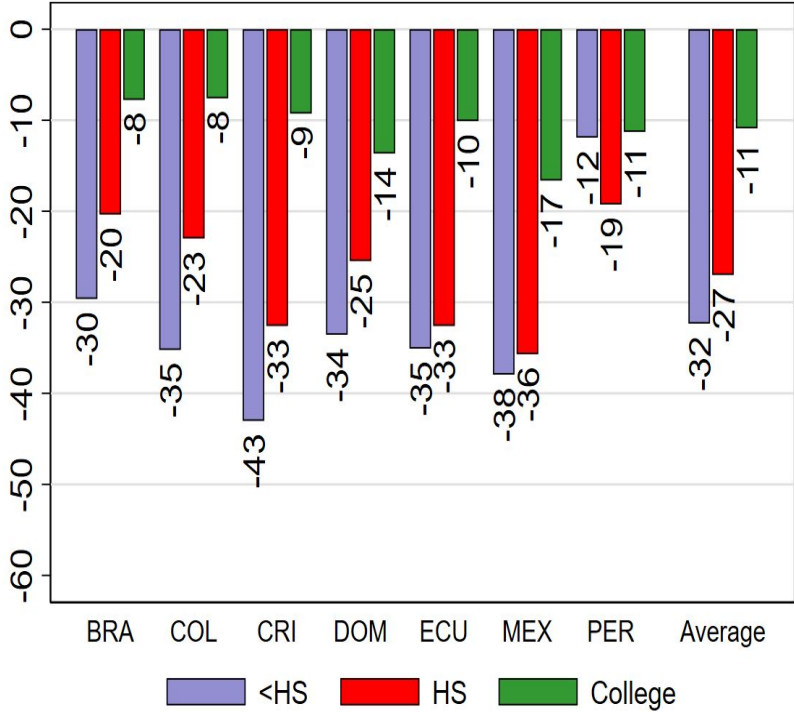
(c) Lower middle income

Note: This figure shows, by gender, the share of the population aged 25-55 years old that is economically active, as defined in the text. The average bars show unweighted means. *Source:* authors' own calculations based on LAC household surveys (GenLAC) and the American Community Survey. Survey year is 2019 or the latest year available up to 2019 (see Table B.1 in Appendix B).

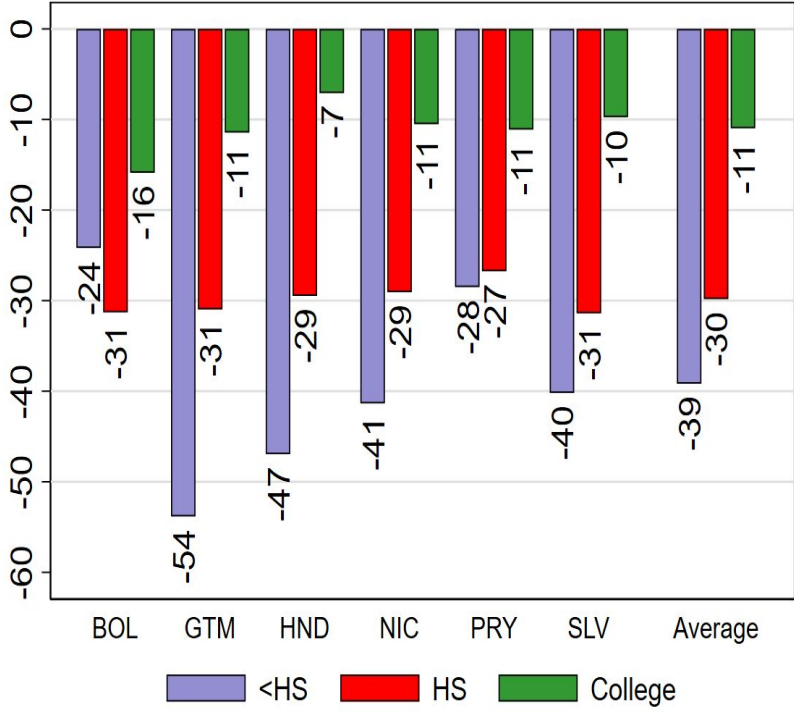
Gender Gaps in LFP by Education



HMI



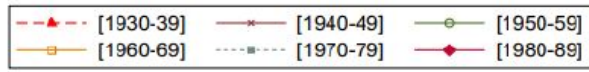
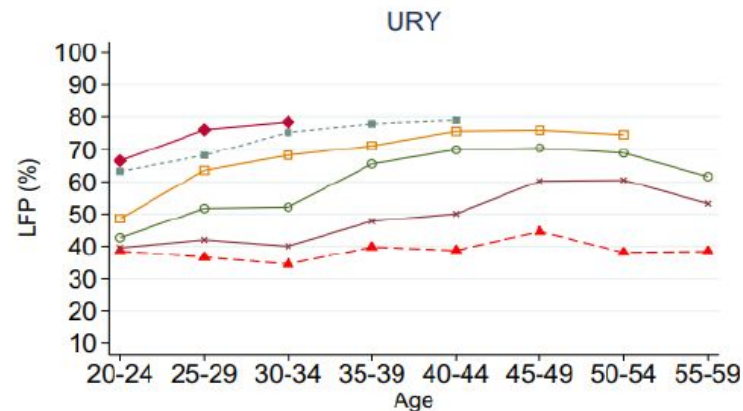
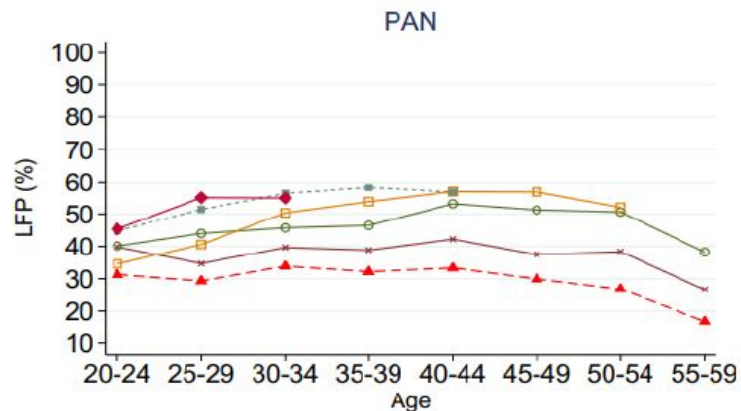
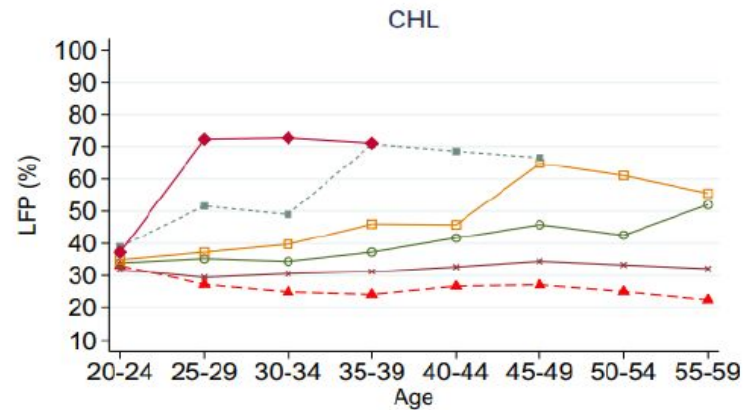
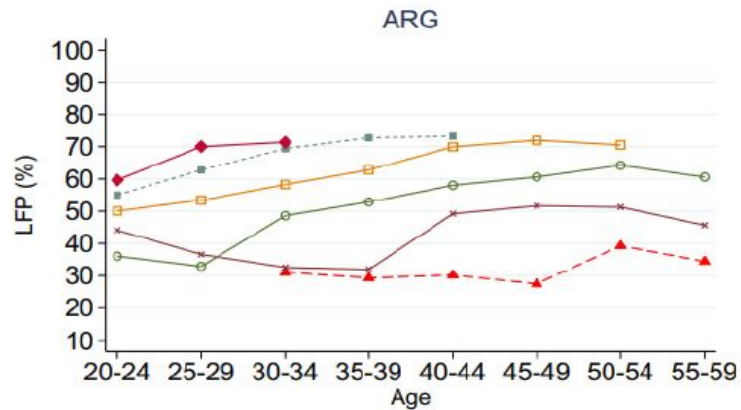
UMI



LMI

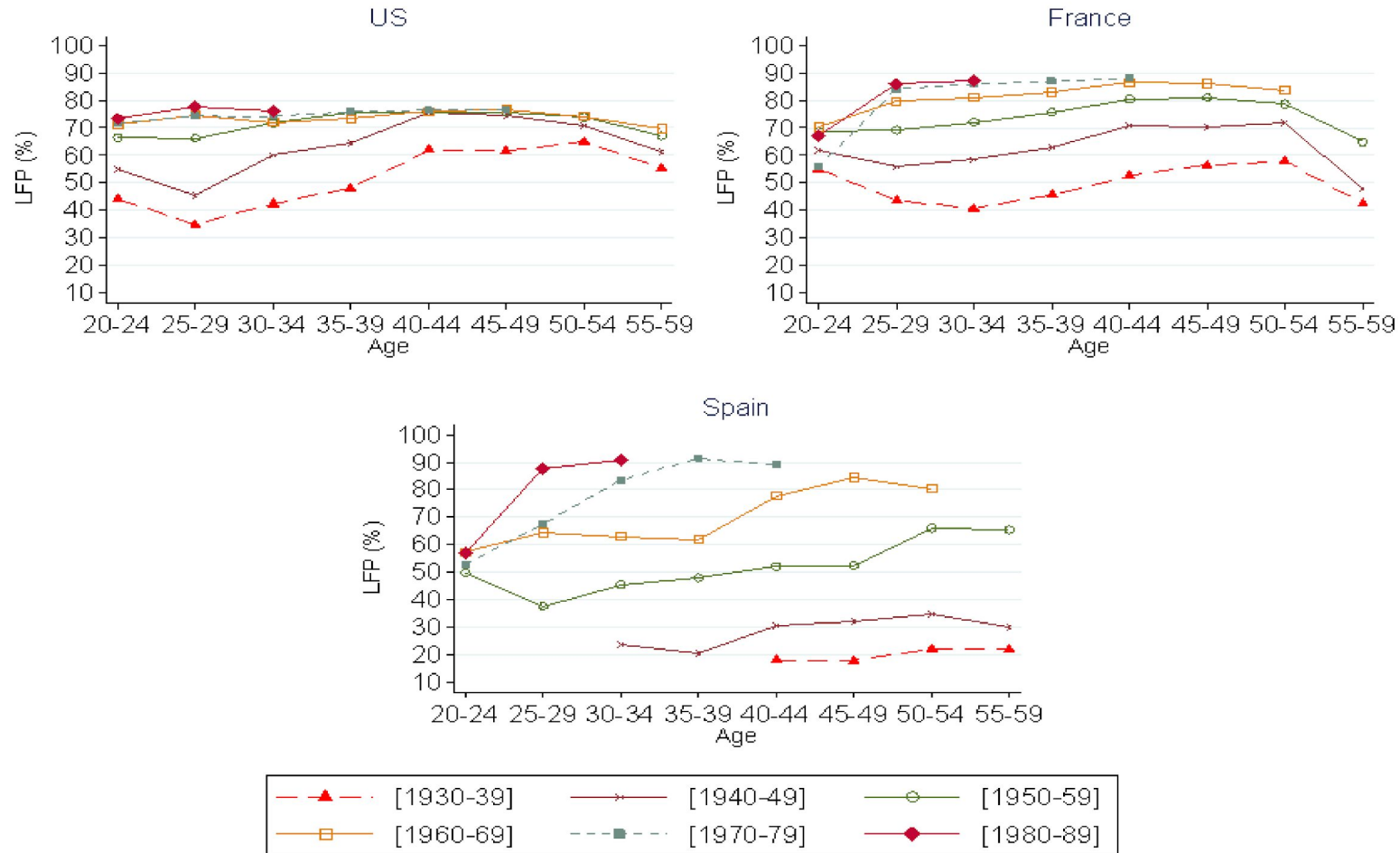
Population age 25-55, circa 2019

FLFP by Cohort: HI countries



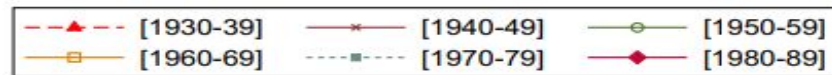
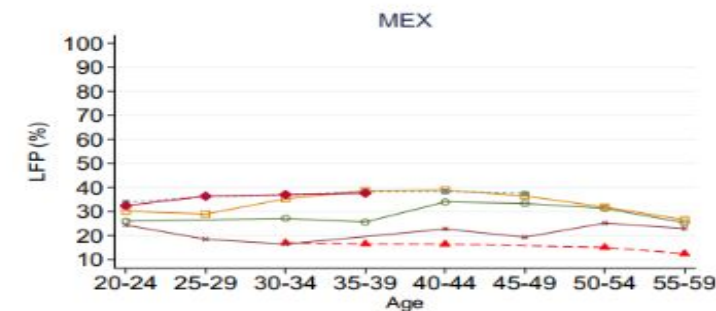
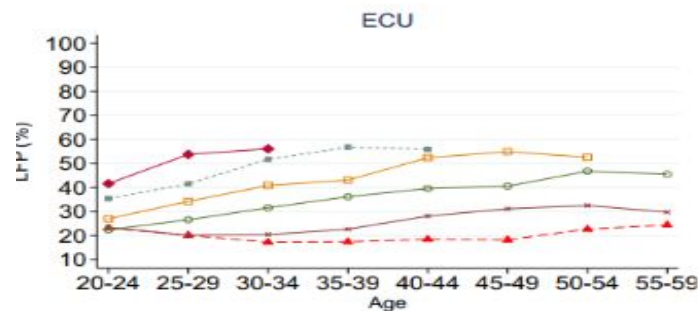
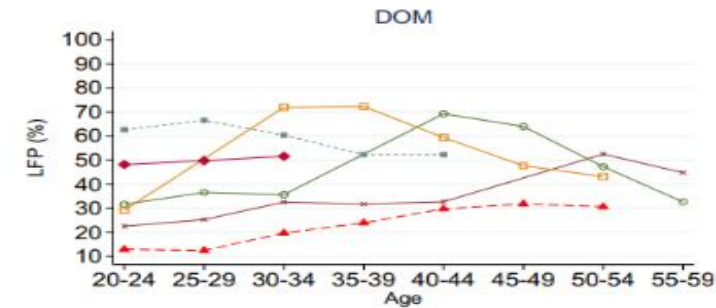
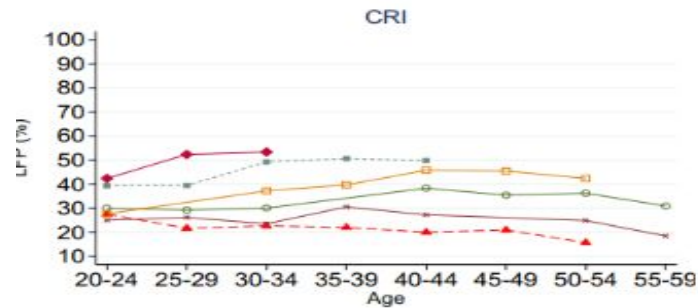
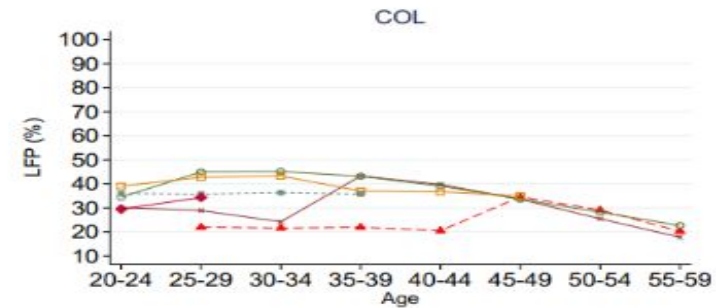
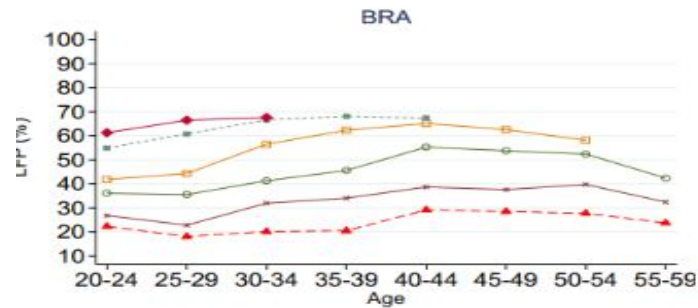
Cohort 1930-39
all the way to
cohort 1980-89,
by age

Heterogeneity – Comparison Countries



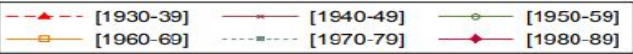
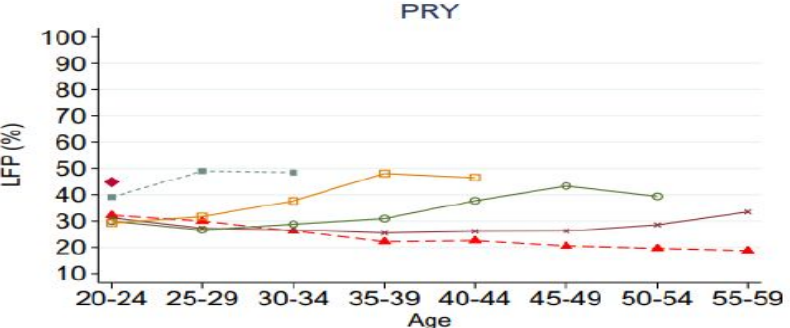
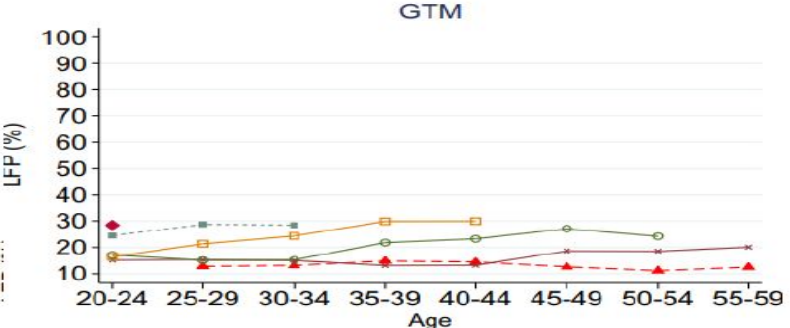
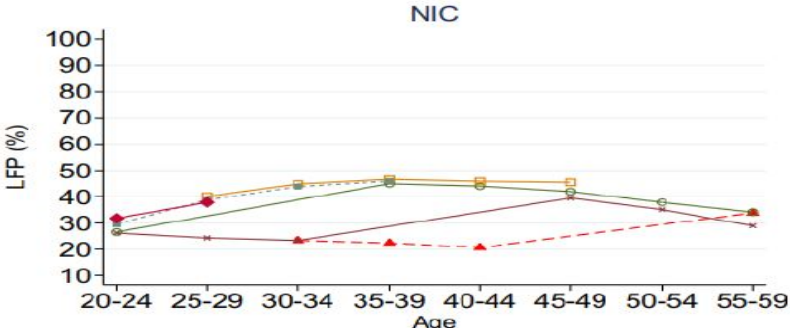
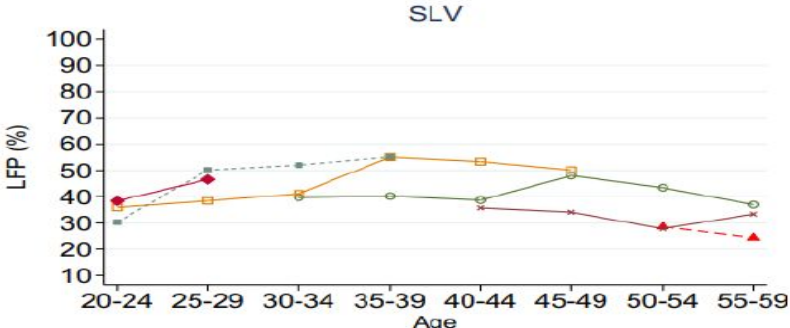
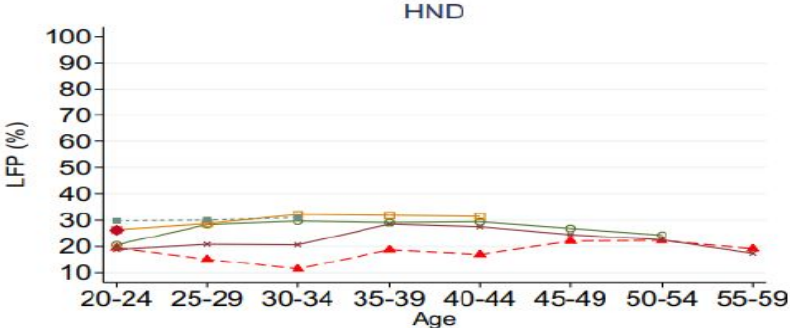
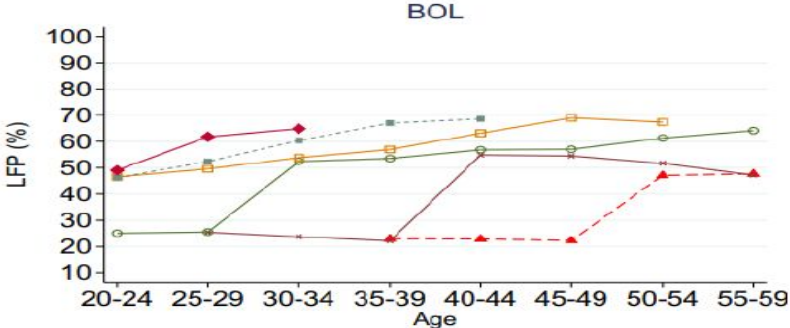
Note: This figure shows the share of the population that is economically active, as defined in the text, over the life cycle and for six different cohorts (individuals born in 1930-39, 1940-49, 1950-59, 1960-69, 1970-79, and in 1980-89). *Source:* see note to Figure 27.

FLFP by Cohort: UMI countries



Mexico stagnating; Colombia and DR decreasing, at very low levels of LFP.

FLFP by Cohort: LMI countries

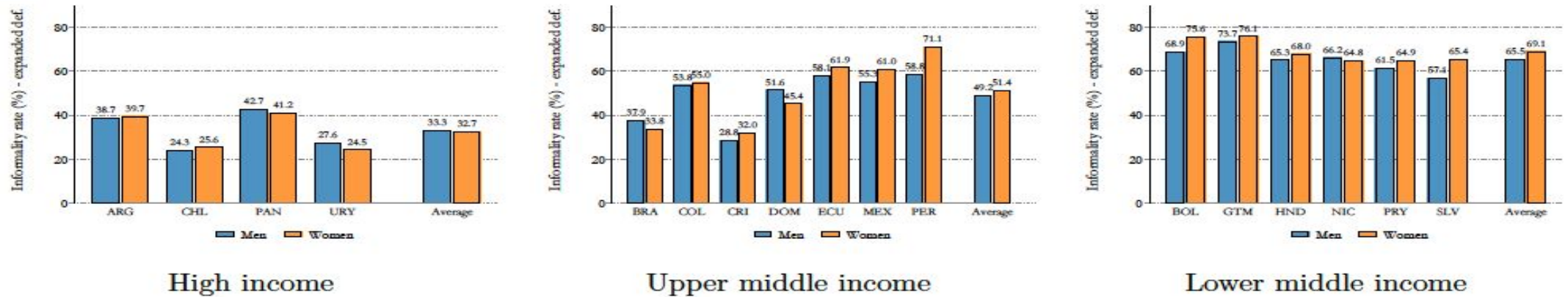


With the exception of Bolivia and perhaps Paraguay, LMI are stagnating at a very low level

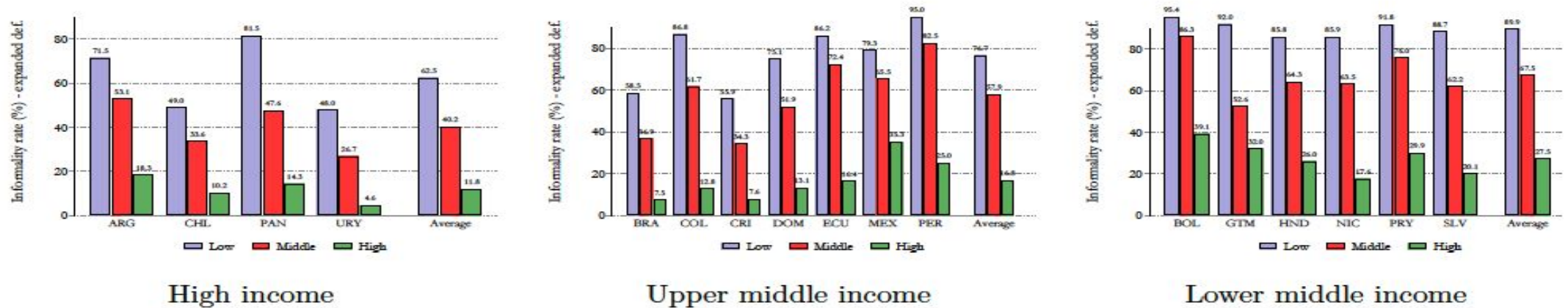
Relatively Small Gender Gap in Share Employed in Informal Sector

Figure 39: Share of employment in informal sector

(a) Share of Employment in Informal Sector by Gender



(b) Share of Employed Women in the Informal Sector by Education



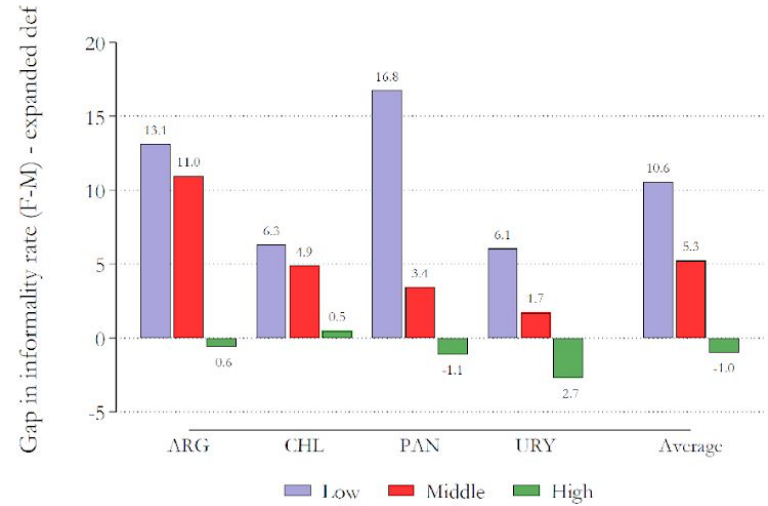
Large differences between women by level of education

Informal definition: wage workers without access to social security, self-employed workers who have not completed higher education, and zero-income workers

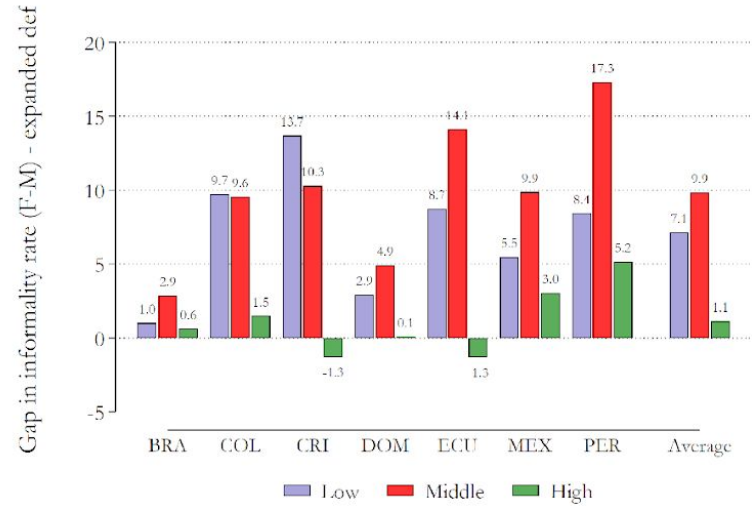
Figure 39: Gender Gap in Informality by Education (F-M)

Surprisingly large gender gaps for those with secondary education

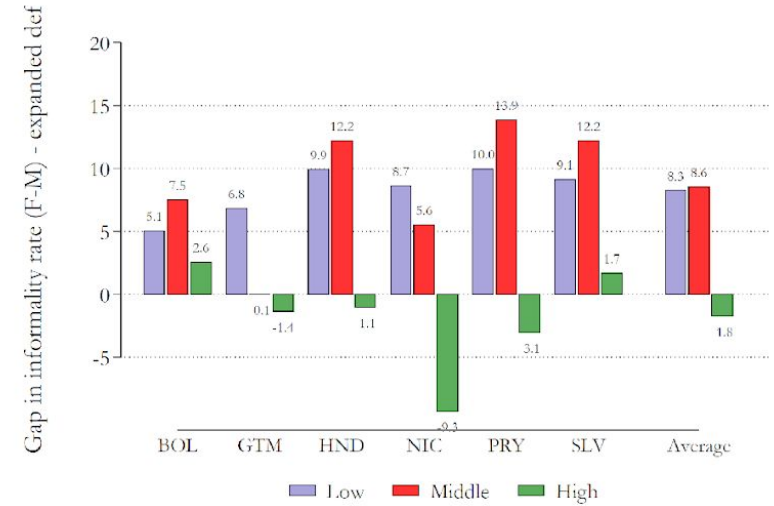
(a) Gender Gap in Informality



High income



Upper middle income

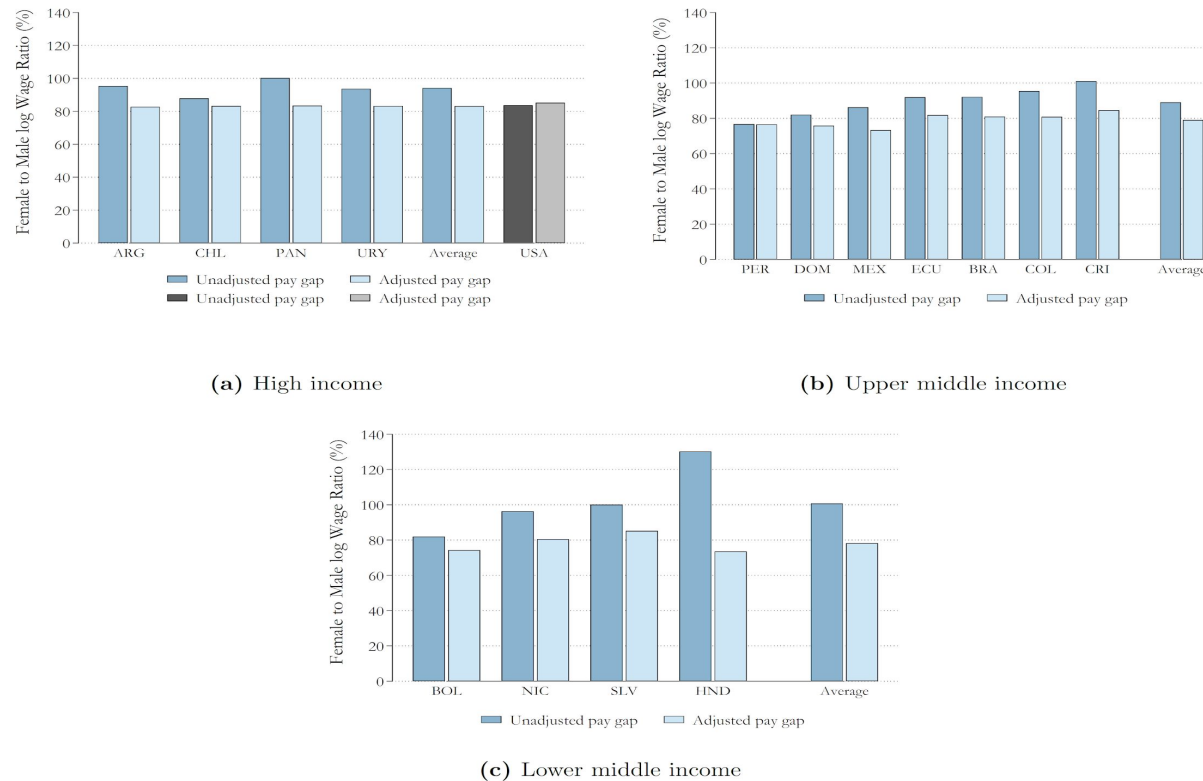


Lower middle income

Gender gaps for college graduates mostly favor women (lower informal); favors men for less than college education (lower informal)

The Gender Wage Gap: Oaxaca Decomposition

Figure 45: Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition: Female to Male log Wage Ratio (%)



Adjusted wage includes controls for age, education, sector, two-digit occupation, full vs part time worker, informal vs formal sector

In all LAC countries, the adjusted wage gap is greater than the unadjusted gap.

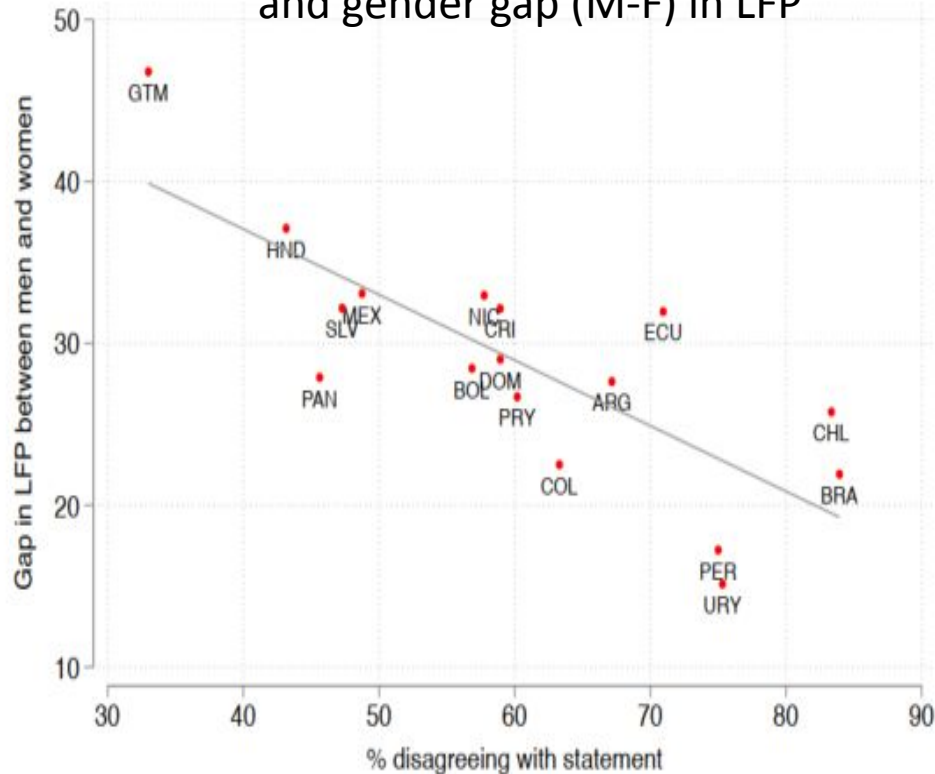
Note: Workers aged 25-55 years old, working at least twenty hours a week. The model used for the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition controls for age, age squared, region of residence, an indicator for living in a rural area, education, sector, occupation (2-digits codes ISCO), an indicator for full-time worker (35+ hours a week), and another for working in the informal sector. The unadjusted gender wage gap represents the female-to-male log wage ratio, multiplied by 100, and it is calculated as the inverse of the exponential of the log-point values shown in Table A.12 in Appendix, column 6. Lighter bars show the adjusted female-to-male log wage ratio after accounting for covariates and are calculated as the inverse of the exponential of the values shown in column 5. The values shown in this figure are also displayed in columns 13 and 14 of Table A.12 in Appendix. The average bars display unweighted means. *Source:* see note to Figure 23.

Culture

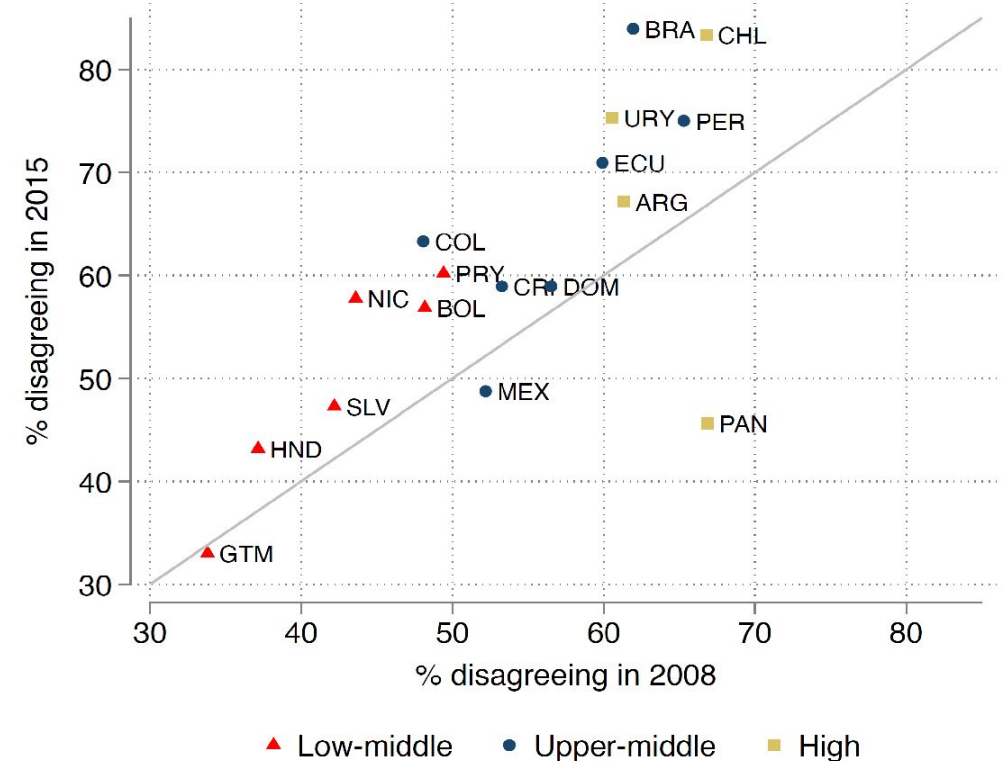
Attitudes towards Women Working

A Woman should work only if husband doesn't earn enough (% disagreeing)

Negative correlation between the % who disagree with the statement and gender gap (M-F) in LFP



More disagreement almost everywhere over time



Attitudes toward Women vs Men as Business & Political Leaders

Figure 54: Men make better business executives than women (% disagreeing)

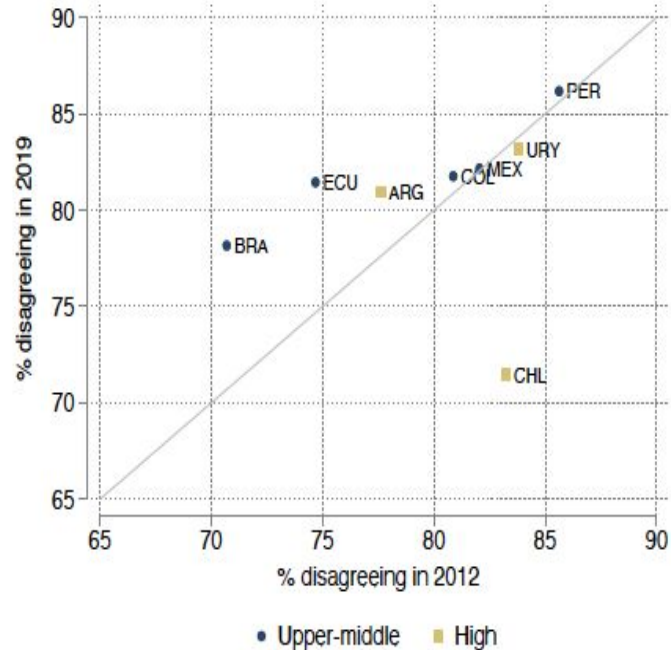
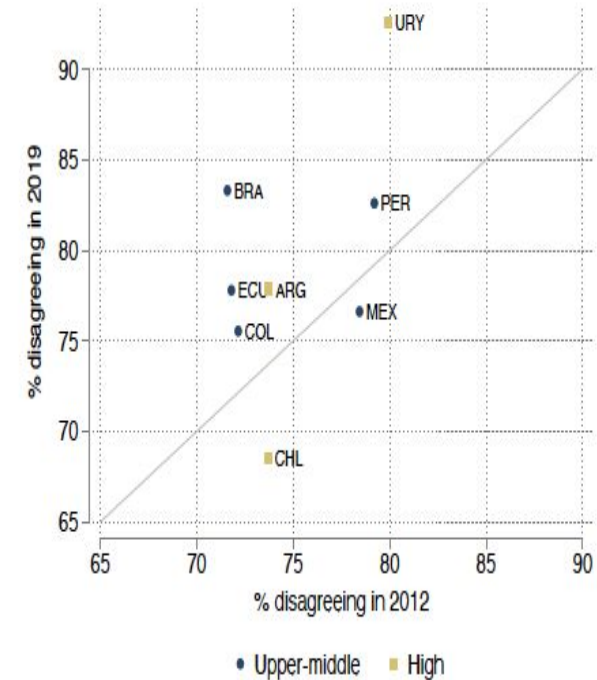
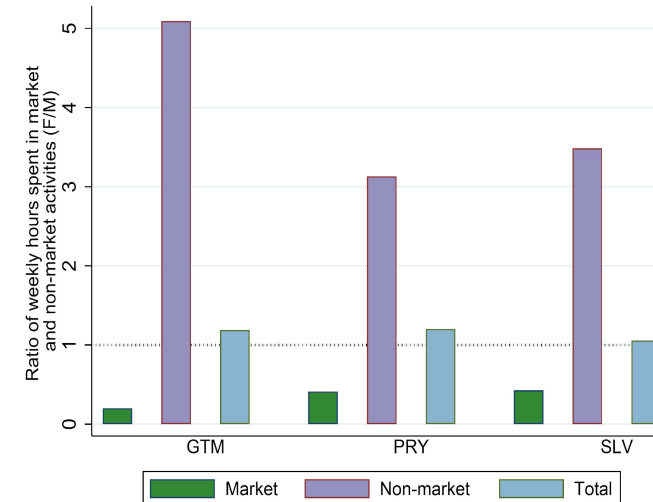
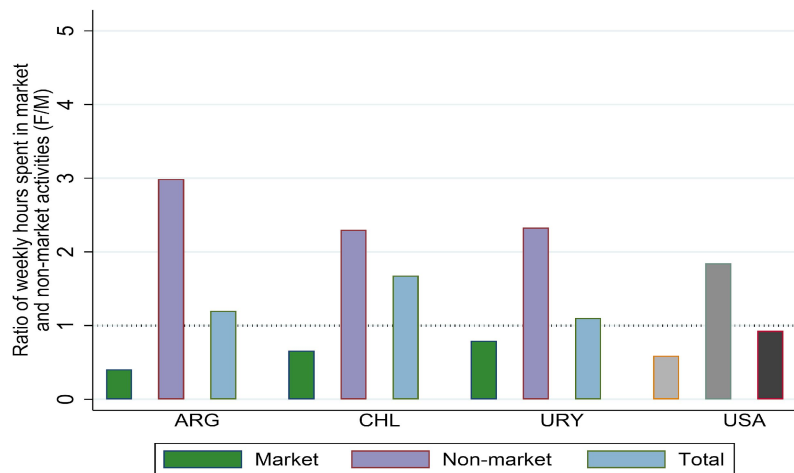


Figure 55: Men make better political leaders than women (% disagreeing)

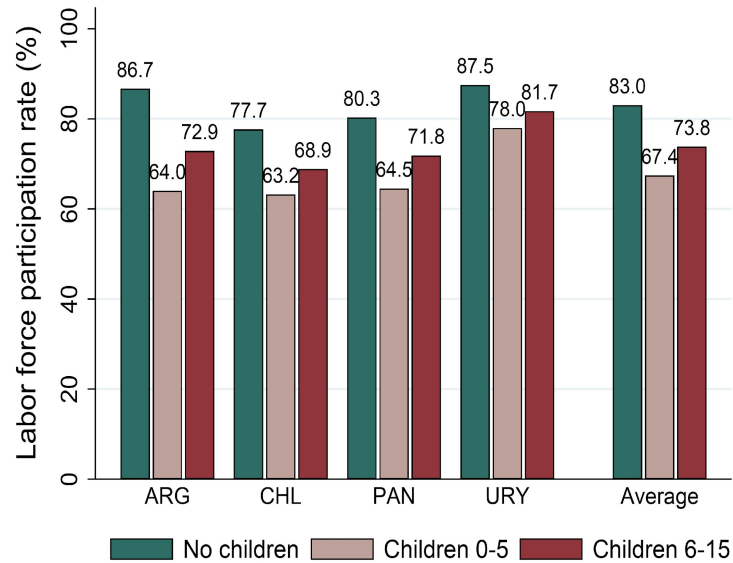


Hours Worked: Market, Non-Market, & Total (ratios)

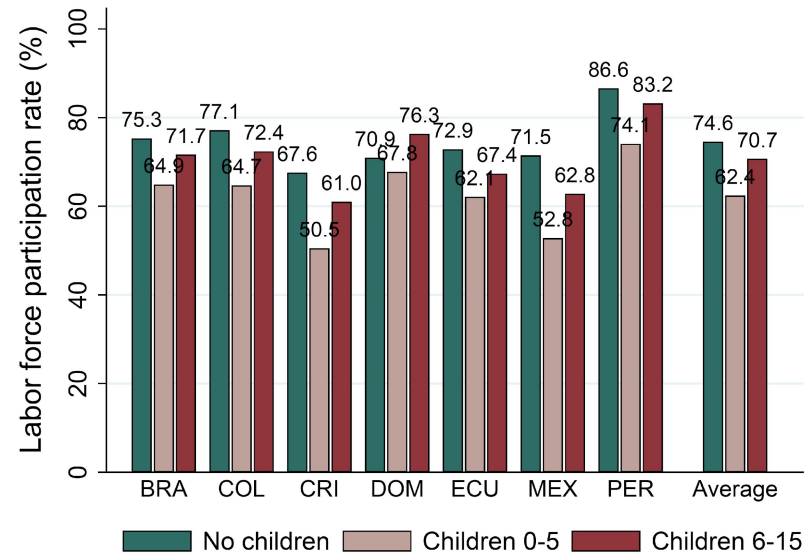


Individuals in couples, age 25-45 years old. Non-market hours include care activities and household chores.

Women's LFP by Children Status



HI



UMI

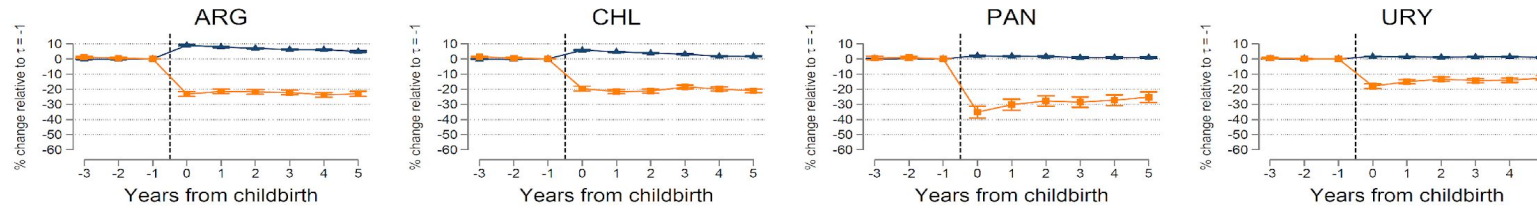
LMI

Women age 25-55. Data from 2019

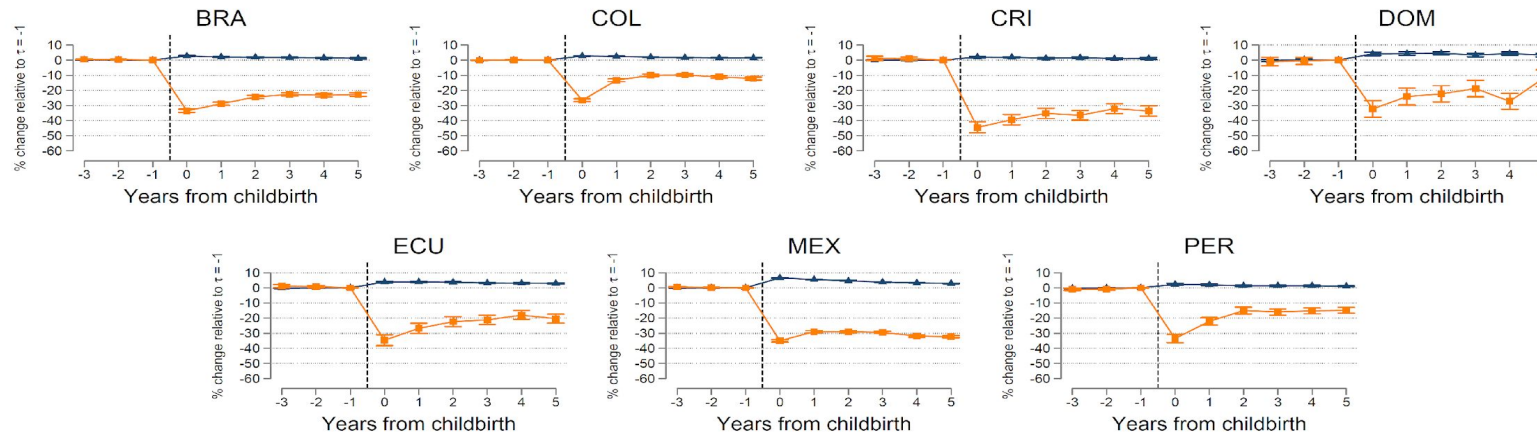
Parenthood and LFP

Figure 48: Parenthood and Labor Force Participation

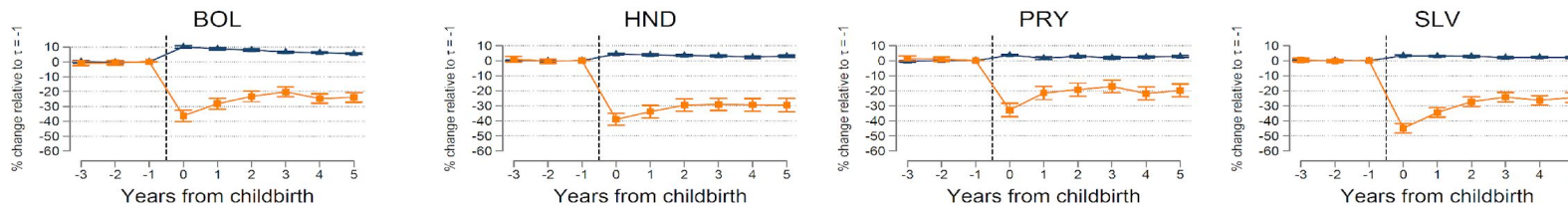
(a) High income countries



(b) Middle income countries



(c) Lower middle income countries

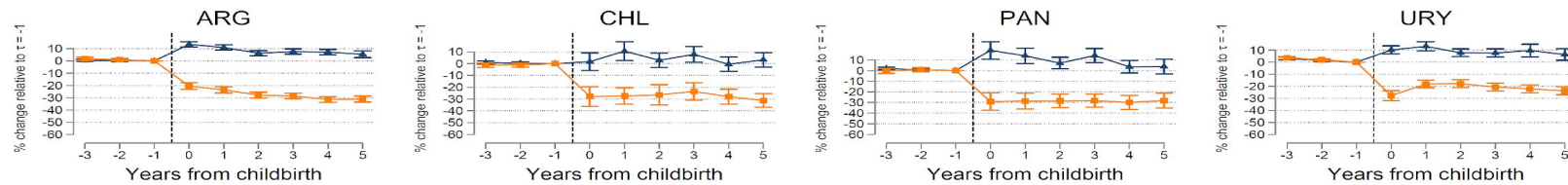


▲ Men ■ Women

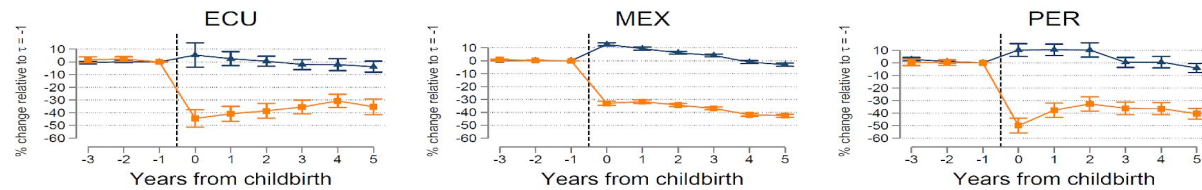
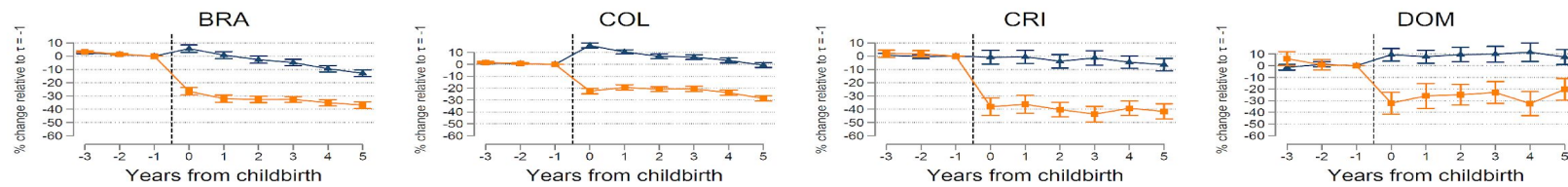
Parenthood and Labor Earnings

Figure 49: Parenthood and Earnings

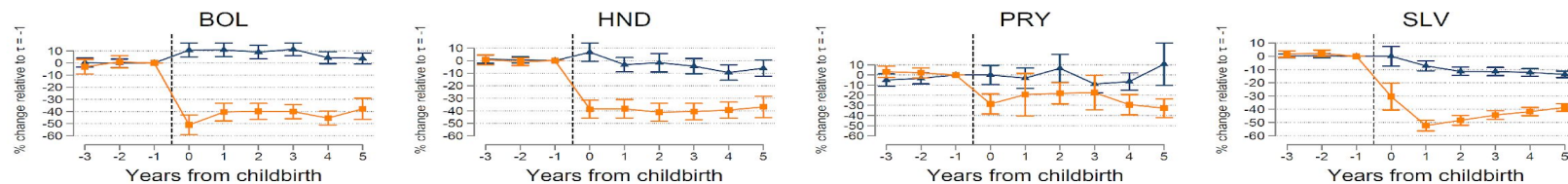
(a) High income countries



(b) Upper middle income countries



(c) Lower middle income countries



▲ Men ■ Women

Policies

Increasing Women's Work Opportunities

- Childcare and afterschool centers: Some LA evidence
 - [Argentina](#). Berlinski and Galiani (2007): large-scale construction of pre-primary school increased maternal employment 7-14 pp.
 - Berlinski, Galiani, and McEwan (2011) similar findings using a regression discontinuity approach.
 - [Chile](#). Martínez and Perticará (2017): large-scale expansion of after-school care increased employment rates of eligible mothers by 5 pp
 - [Uruguay](#). Nollenberger and Rodríguez-Planas (2015): universal preschool increased maternal employment by 8 pp
 - [Mexico](#). Padilla-Romo and Cabrera-Hernández (2019) evaluated Mexico's Full-Time Schools Program (Programa Escuelas de Tiempo Completo) which extended the school day from 4.5 to 8 hours, effectively providing additional childcare. It increased LFP of mothers with young children by approximately 5 pp
- Structural change, transportation, and safety

Encouraging Cultural Change

- Role models and bias in education:
 - **US.** Bettinger and Long (2005): female instructors in college STEM courses increased female STEM majors and female enrollment in math and science
 - **US.** Carrell, Page, & West, J. E. (2010): similar findings using Air Force Academy data
 - **US.** Porter & Serra (2020): even brief exposure to successful female economics graduates in introductory economics courses increased enrollment in intermediate econ courses and economics majors
 - **Greece.** Lavy and Megalokonomou (2023): high-school teacher gender bias affects choice of major in university (only for girls when teacher is biased against girls) and the probability of enrolling in university (for both boys and girls equally)

Encouraging Cultural Change

- Role models in media and politics
 - **India**. Jensen and Oster (2009): introduction of cable television in rural India allowed exposure to women in leadership roles on TV. Decreased acceptance of domestic violence against women and increased women's autonomy
 - **Brazil**. La Ferrara, Chong, & Duryea (2012): exposure to soap operas portraying small families was associated with a decrease in fertility in Brazil
 - **US**. Kearney & Levine (2015): MTV's show "16 and Pregnant" led to a reduction in teen births and more interest (tweets/internet searches) about contraception and pregnancy
 - **India**. Beaman et al. (2009): female leadership quotas in Indian village councils led to weakened stereotypes about gender roles and, after 10 years, led women to run for and win elected positions.