

**Heterogeneity among Venezuelan migrants in terms of coping
in the context population exodus from Venezuela**

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Introduction

This study concentrates on the unparalleled exodus of Venezuelans in recent years, driven by economic deterioration, a collapsing health system, and political instability in their home country (Mazuera-Arias et al., 2020). By June 2024, the global population of Venezuelan migrants and refugees had reached 7.7 million, with 6.6 million finding settlement in Latin America and the Caribbean (R4V, 2024). This represents one of the most significant migration outflows of the 21st century, with estimated numbers exceeding those of emigration from Afghanistan, Ukraine and Syria.

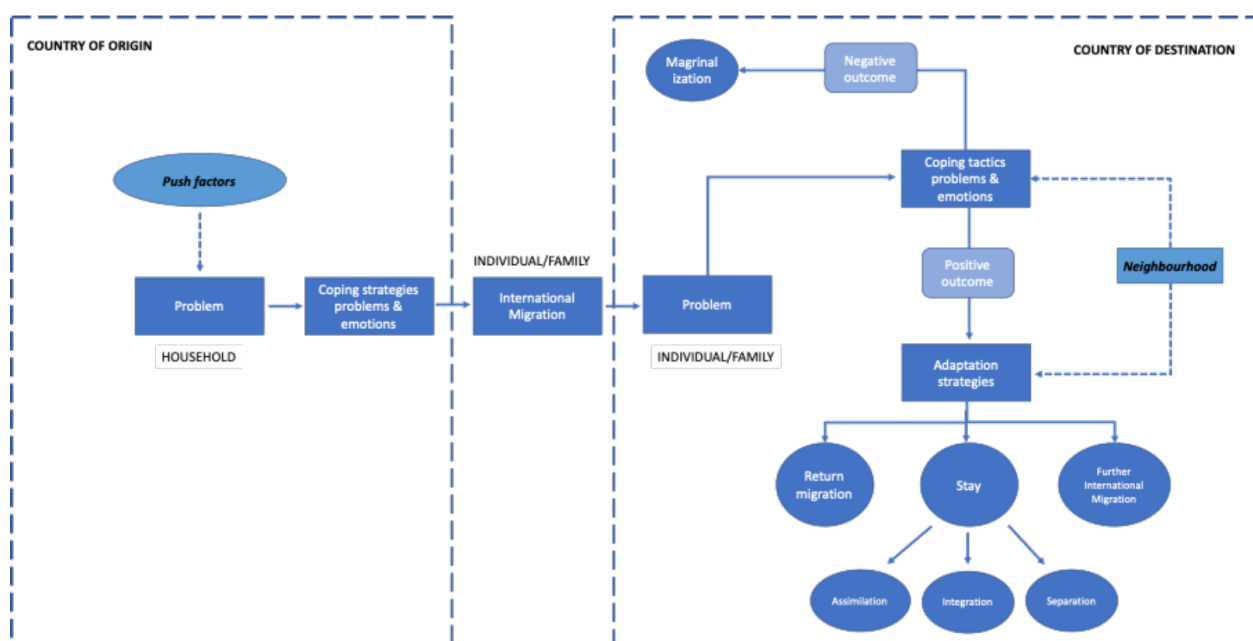
The aim of this paper is to examine coping strategies of Venezuelan migrants. The present study focuses on Peru, which has become one of the principal destinations for Venezuelans, with a migrant population of 1.5 million. By analyzing coping in this context, we aim to contribute to the evaluation of possibilities for adaptation of Venezuelans in Latin America.

Background

In the paper, we utilize the definition of coping strategies as outlined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which characterizes these as the behaviors and cognitive skills that individuals deploy in order to cope with internal and environmental demands that are perceived as stressful. One of the coping strategies employed by individuals or households to address issues resulting from push factors is international migration (Benda-Beckman et al., 2000). The decision to emigrate and its subsequent execution are intended to address an initial problem in the country of origin. However, this decision often leads to the emergence of new problems and stressful situations during the removal process and in the country of destination (Cobb et al., 2016). This is illustrated in the theoretical framework developed for the MICLACAS project (see Figure 1). Upon arrival, immigrants are compelled to determine and execute coping strategies in order to subsist, survive and flourish in an alien environment. The negative consequences of the selected

coping strategies can result in social and economic marginalization of an individual or family unit that is isolated from both the local population and other immigrants. In extreme cases, this can lead to a situation where the individual or family lacks the resources to return to their country of origin (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). A positive outcome of the tactics allows the immigrant to choose from several options. These include (a) remaining in the destination country, applying an assimilation, integration or separation strategy, (b) successfully returning to the country of destination, or (c) continuing migration to another country. In the case of Venezuelans, other Latin American countries can be considered due to the ease of accessing resources to move alone or with family to more preferable and more distant destinations, such as Europe or the United States.

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the MICLACAS project.



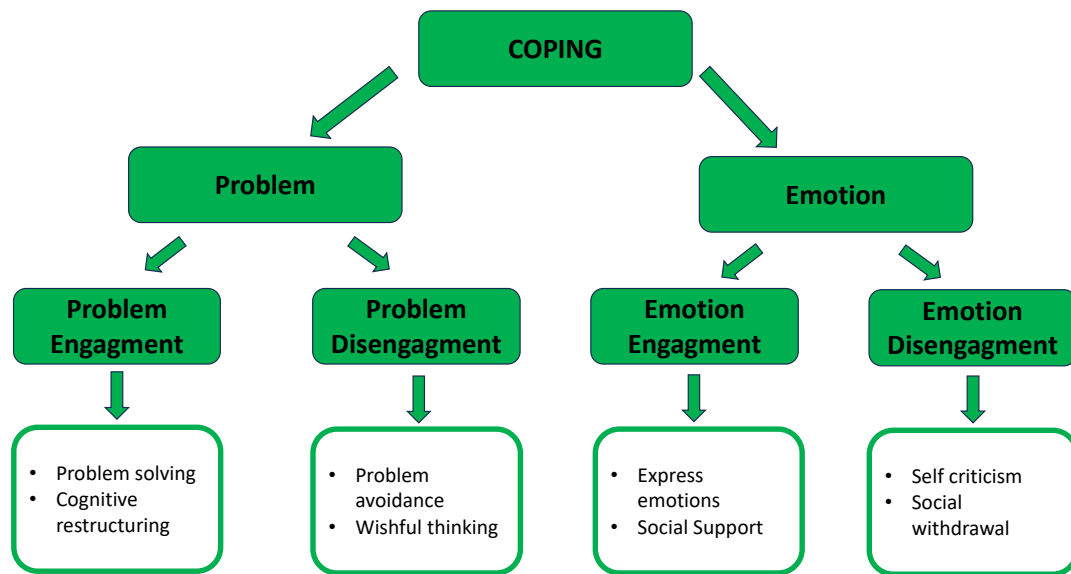
Data & Method

In our analysis, we utilise data from our own survey of 305 Venezuelans aged 18 and over, residing in Peru. This survey was conducted as part of a research project, entitled "*Migration Crisis in Latin America – coping and adaptation strategies of Venezuelan migrants and their families and the risk of global migration crisis [MICLACAS]*", which was funded by National Science Centre in Poland [UMO-2021/41/B/HS4/01680]. The fieldwork was conducted between 25 April and 15 May 2023 using the face-to-face computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) method. It is estimated that between 75 and 82 percent of Venezuelans residing in Peru live in an agglomeration around Lima, the capital city (Berganza Setién et al., 2021; INEI, 2022). Consequently, our sampling was confined to this geographical area, in consideration of

the a priori knowledge available regarding the spatial distribution of Venezuelans in Lima and Callao (see INEI studies including ENPOVE 2018, 2022), as well as the objectives and costs of the study. The survey was conducted in all districts within the city of Lima, including Lima Norte, Lima Este, Lima Sur, Lima Centro, Lima Moderna, and Callao. The sample included respondents from 37 districts within this area. The fieldwork survey was commissioned by our research team to Datum International, a well-recognised survey company in Peru and it was conducted in accordance with the ISO norm 20252.

In order to evaluate the coping strategies employed by Venezuelan migrants in Peru we utilize the instrument developed by Addison et al. (2007) called the Coping Strategy Inventory - Short Form (CSI-SF). This is a shortened version of the 72-item CSI scale created by Tobin et al. (1989) which was based on a seminal work of Folkman and Lazarus (1984) on the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ). The CSI-SF comprises of 16 items and exhibits a comparable structure to that the original CSI scale. It includes items from all four subscales, namely (a) *Problem-Focused Engagement*; (b) *Problem-Focused Disengagement*; (c) *Emotion-Focused Engagement*, and (d) *Emotion-Focused Disengagement* (see Figure 2). The responses are quantified using a five-point Likert scale, which indicates the frequency with which respondents employ each coping strategy enumerated in the survey. Responses vary (never, rarely, sometimes, often, almost always). The total score for a given subscale is calculated by summing the responses to all items within that subscale. In conducting a survey of Spanish-speaking respondents in the Latin American context, we utilize a Spanish version of the instrument that has been developed and tested by Tous-Pallarés (2022). In the paper, the population is divided into three categories in each of the subscales: low (4-9 points), medium (10-15), and high (16-20) (overall alpha-Cronbach coefficient = 0.63).

Figure 2. The hierarchical structure of coping



Source: based on Tobin et al. (1989).

To classify Venezuelan migrants into distinct subgroups based on their response pattern to questions of CSI-SF instrument, the latent class analysis (LCA) was applied. LCA uses a person-centered approach instead of a variable-centered approach (Factor Analysis). The goal is a distinct and parsimonious classification of individuals into latent subgroups by maximizing heterogeneity between and homogeneity within subgroups (Howard & Hoffman 2018, Tan 2022). For the analysis responses for questions in CSI-SF instrument were collapsed into 1 if use of a given strategy was at least often (often, almost always) , and 0 if it was sometimes or lower (never, rarely, sometimes). We use modal assignment to the groups – each individual is assigned to the class for their posterior probability is the highest. This approach does not account for classification uncertainty. However, the estimated entropy is on the level of 0.93, that suggests good class separation. Thus, bias should be tolerable to describe characteristics of the subgroups.

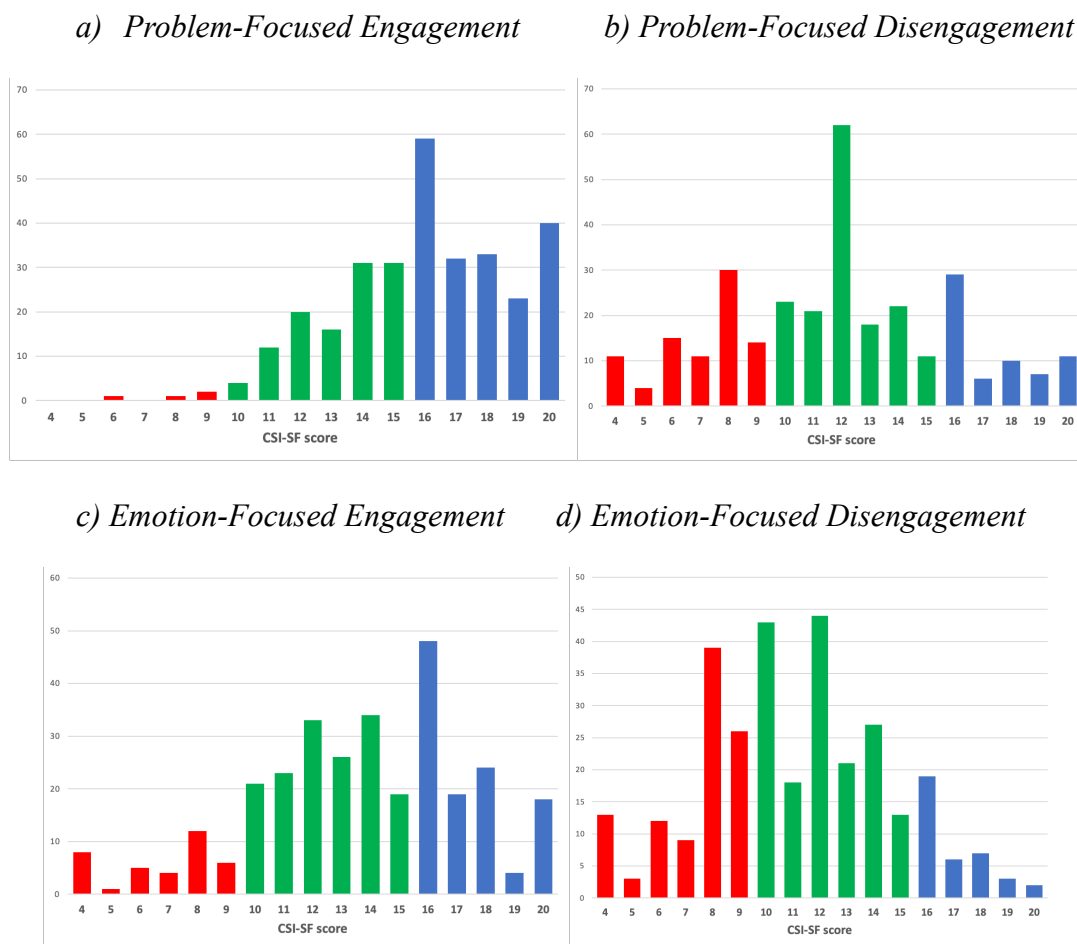
Moreover, to identify demographic and socio-economic characteristics of persons in each subgroup we use the logit regression models. A separate model for each subgroup was constructed aiming at likelihood of being a member of specific group.

Results

Descriptive findings

The findings provide evidence that Venezuelan migrants tend to employ engagement coping strategies with greater frequency, as illustrated in Figure 3. This is particularly evident in the case of problem-focused strategies, as illustrated by the distribution on Figure 3a, which demonstrates a high frequency of scores above 15 points. A total of 61% of respondents exhibited high scores, indicating a proclivity for active problem-solving behaviors (e.g., planning, problem-solving) (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Distribution of CSI-SF scale:



Source: own calculations based on MICLACAS survey in 2023.

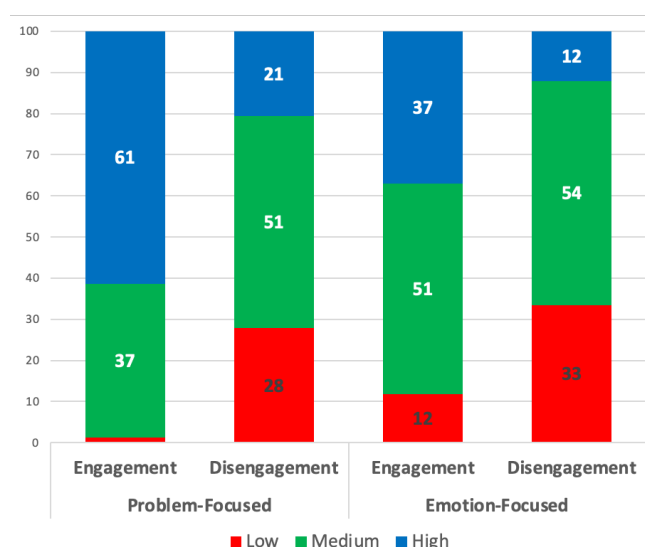
It appears that problem-focused disengagement strategies are not a prevalent phenomenon among migrants. Figure 3b illustrates that the majority of migrants exhibit low and medium scores on the scale. Approximately 28% of the sample is situated in the low group and only

21% in the high group, which indicates that they engage in this kind of behaviour with a high degree of frequency (e.g. allowing the problem to be resolved by itself, avoiding thinking about the problem or hoping for a miracle).

In the case of emotional distress, Venezuelan migrants in Peru frequently employ active coping strategies, such as discussing their feelings with friends and family or expressing their emotions to reduce stress. Approximately 37% of respondents exhibited high scores on the scale, with the majority situated at the midpoint of the distribution (Figure 3c). Only 12% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never utilise these strategies.

A considerable proportion of Venezuelans refrain from disengagement strategies in the emotional domain, including activities such as spending time alone, self-criticism, and the isolation of emotions and thoughts (Figure 3d). One-third of the migrants surveyed did not utilize these strategies or did so on an occasional basis, resulting in a low score on the scale.

Figure 4. Distribution of Venezuelan migrants by CSI-SF subgroups



Source: own calculations based on MICLACAS survey in 2023.

Table 1 presents average scores in each subcategory of coping. Venezuelan migrants residing in Peru get the highest score in *problem-focused engagement* strategies – 16 out of 20 points – with corresponds to high level. The next are emotion-focused engagement strategies with an average score of 13.6 points. The lowest are disengagement strategies problem-focused – 11.8 and emotion-focused – 11.1 points.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of CSI-SF score subscales

Indicator		Mean	SD
Problem-Focused	Engagement	15.97	2.77
	Disengagement	11.83	3.91
Emotion-Focused	Engagement	13.65	3.70
	Disengagement	11.08	3.47

Source: own calculations based on MICLACAS survey in 2023.

Latent Class Analysis

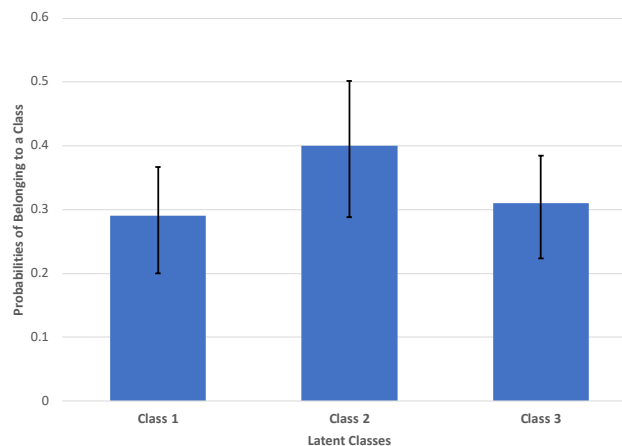
Our findings revealed significant discrepancies in the utilization of coping strategies among Venezuelan migrants, contingent on their responses to the CSI-SF instrument questions. We conducted latent class modelling at varying levels of classification and evaluated the goodness-of-fit statistics. The analysis indicates that a three-class model is the most appropriate for our data in terms of parsimony, goodness of fit, and interpretability.

Table 2. Summary of Information for Selecting Number of Latent

No. of classes	Likelihood ratio G	Degree of freedom	AIC	BIC
1	-2928.835	16	5889.669	5949.194
2	-2801.837	33	5669.674	5792.444
3	-2761.266	50	5622.532	5808.548
convergence not achieved				
4	-2734.111	66	5600.221	5845.762
5	-2715.153	78	5586.307	5876.491

Based on this, we calculated probabilities of belonging to each class for the 3-class model. The likelihood of belonging to the first group is estimated at approximately 29%, to the second group at 40%, and the third at 31% (Figure 5).

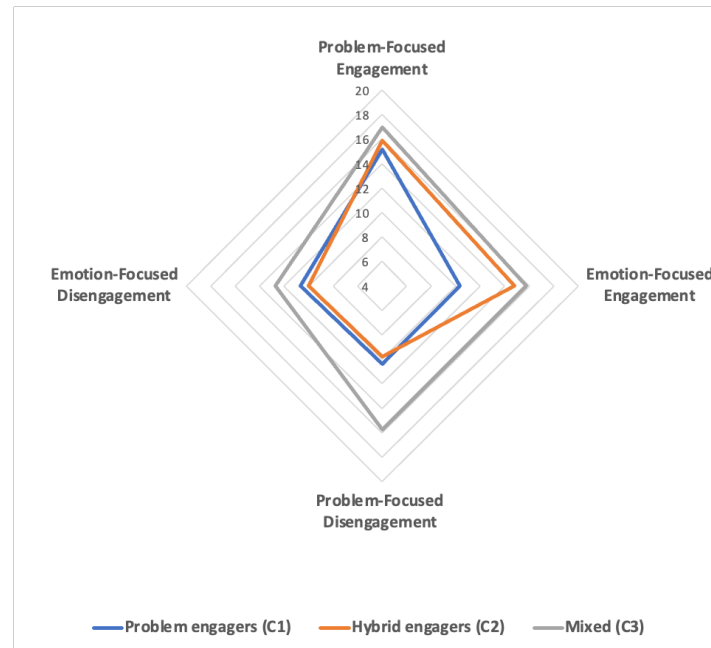
Figure 5. Probability of membership in classes in LCA



Source: own calculations based on MICLACAS survey in 2023.

There are significant discrepancies in the mean scores for each coping style across the distinguished classes. Class 3 exhibits the highest scores across all four dimensions. Class 1 demonstrates a notable reduction in the utilization of emotion-focused engagement strategies (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Mean CSI score for each dimension by the classes



The analysis of responses to each question revealed the coping patterns of each group, thus enabling the creation of a typology of Venezuelan migrants in Peru in terms of their coping strategies. We label them in the following way:

- **Problem engagers** (class 1) are individuals who predominantly use problem-focus engagement strategies. Interestingly, these type use only two strategies with high frequency. The probability of answering coping questions exceeded 0.75 only in case of problem focused engagement (“*I look for the silver lining or try to look on the bright side of things*” and “*I tackle the problem head on*”), with very low likelihood of usage of other type of coping strategies. These persons avoid disengagement strategies and emotion-focused strategies.
- **Hybrid engagers** (class 2) Hybrid engagers (class 2) also apply problem-focus engagement strategies but complement them with emotion-focus engagement ones seeking very often for support from family and friends in terms of talking about stressful situations (probability 0.79) and asking for help or advise (0.84). In total they used frequently 4 engagement coping strategies - 2 problem-focused and 2 emotion-focused.

- **Mixed** (class 3) persons the combine engagement (problem and emotion-focused) with disengagement strategies trying to avoid thinking about problems (probability of 0.91), hoping for a miracle (0.78) or keeping their thoughts and feelings to themselves (0.78). They are persons with highest usage of coping strategies – in total probability of high frequency usage was very high in case of 8 coping strategies (2 problem-focused engagement, 3 emotion-focused engagement, 2 problem-focused disengagement and 1 emotion-focused disengagement).

The results of the logistic models for the likelihood of belonging to each subgroup (problem engagers, hybrid engagers and mixed) indicate that individuals with a pessimistic outlook and higher levels of education are more likely to be classified as problem engagers (Table 3). With regard to the subgroup of hybrid engagers, the probability of belonging to this subgroup is greater for males, those with higher levels of education and those with more optimistic outlooks. The likelihood of utilizing a mixed set of coping strategies is increased among women, individuals aged 45 and above, those with lower levels of education and those who exhibit moderate optimism.

Table 3. Main results of the logistic models; dependent variables: 1. Being problem-engager, 2. Being a hybrid engager, 3. Being mixed.

Independent Variables		Problem engagers (C1)		Hybrid engagers (C2)		Mixed (C3)	
		b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
<i><u>Main Characteristics</u></i>							
Sex (ref. Male)							
	Female	0.147	0.251	-0.746 ***	0.249	0.705 ***	0.266
Age (ref. 18-29)							
	30-44	0.278	-0.290	-0.277	0.280	0.422	0.302
	45+	-0.566	0.370	-0.166	0.345	0.755 *	0.355
Education (ref. Primary&lower)							
	Secondary	0.621	0.450	0.799 *	0.447	-1.188 ***	0.394
	Postsecondary+	0.773 *	0.461	1.037 **	0.457	-1.664 ***	0.421
Optimism (ref. Pesimists)							
	Moderate Optimism	-0.729 **	0.306	0.222	0.323	0.612 *	0.342
	High Optimism	-0.821 **	0.356	0.780 **	0.360	0.013	0.399
Migration Intentions (ref. Leave Peru)							
	Stay in Peru	0.026	0.265	-0.074	0.262	0.057	0.275
Constant		-0.717	0.493	-1.179 **	0.51	-0.659	0.471
Wald chi-square		13.28		21.92		33.8	
df		8		8		8	
Pseudo R-Square		0.0345		0.0548		0.0893	
N		305		305		305	

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Source: own calculations based on MICLACAS survey in 2023.

Conclusions

The present study offers insights into the coping strategies employed by Venezuelan migrants. The population residing in Peru predominantly opts for engagement strategies over disengagement solutions when confronted with both problem- and emotion-based challenges. The application of latent class analysis has enabled the identification of three distinct homogeneous groups of migrants, characterized by differing patterns of coping strategy utilization. These are designated as *problem-engagers*, *hybrid engagers* and *mixed users*. The regression analysis indicates that there are significant differences in the socio-economic characteristics of these groups. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to apply Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model in conjunction with Latent Class Analysis in the field of migration studies. We think this approach will prove useful in increasing our understanding coping strategies among both migrant and native populations.

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