

Background

- The impact of parental migration on children's educational trajectories varies by many factors.
- Previous research has attended to the economic returns to migration for children left in origin communities.
- However, migration may also influence children's own aspirations regardless of the economic success of their migrant parents.
- We propose that the timing of parental return migration also alters children's own educational aspirations.

Research Questions

Is father's migration associated with children's own educational aspirations? Does this vary by timing of migration or with child's age?

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

- Parental migration will be negatively associated with children's educational aspirations.

Hypothesis 2

- Ongoing parental migration will have a more negative impact on children's educational aspirations than migration occurring in the past and now completed (i.e. parent has returned).

Hypothesis 3

- The association between parental migration and children's educational aspirations will be moderated by child age (smaller impact for older children).

Data: Mexican Family Life Survey (MxFLS)

- Individual and household data from MxFLS-1 (2002) and MxFLS-2 (2005-06)
 - A nationally representative longitudinal survey
 - Nested within households
- Analytic sample
 - Children aged 11-14 who responded both waves
 - N= 2,505 children

Methods

- Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE)
 - Dependent outcome is dichotomous
 - Children are nested within households
 - PROC GENMOD in SAS

Measures

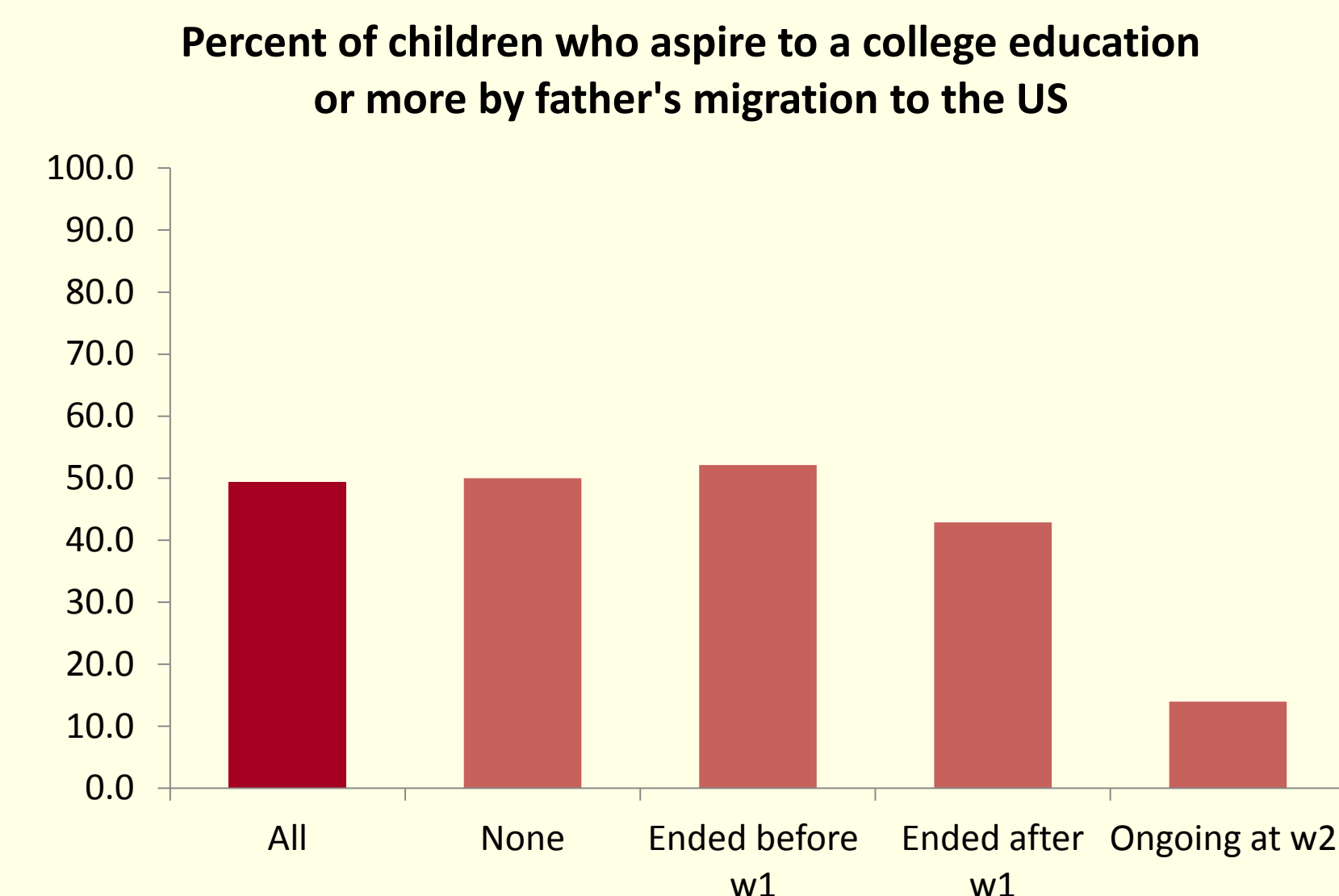
- Dependent variable: **aspirations for higher education**
 - Whether a child aspires to complete college or higher (0=no, 1=yes)
- Main independent variable: **father's migration to the US** and its timing
 - Father's ongoing migration at w2
 - Father's previous migration ended b/w w1 and w2
 - Father's previous migration ended before w1
 - No paternal migration to the US (ref.)
- Controls
 - Individual characteristics: children's age and sex
 - Household characteristics: household asset index, mother's education, sibling size, and parental status

Descriptive Table

Variables	Children aged 11-14	
	N	Percent
Aspiration for college	1236	49.34
Father's migration to the US		
Current ongoing	43	1.72
Ended b/w w1 and w2	35	1.40
Ended before w1	71	2.83
None	2356	94.05
Total	2505	100.00

Bivariate Results

- Compared to children of fathers with no migration to the US, children whose father are currently staying in the US report lower aspirations for higher education
- In contrast, father's past migration to the US is not associated with differences in children's aspirations for higher education



Multivariate Result:

Variables	Aspiration for college	
	Est.	SE
Child's age	0.058	0.037
Father's migration to the US (ref: None)		
Current ongoing	-1.443	0.475 **
Ended b/w w1 and w2	-0.459	0.377
Ended before w1	-0.171	0.262

Notes: Child's sex, household asset index, mother's education, sibling size, and parental status were controlled; used the GEE method with an exchangeable working correlation structure; ** $p < 0.01$

Summary and Discussion:

- Children of migrant fathers who are left behind in Mexico have lower educational aspirations than children with non-migrant fathers.
- Overall, children age 11-14 whose father is currently away in the US are significantly less likely to aspire to a college education, which is consistent with prior research.
- The timing of migration matters: prior migration experience that ended in the past is not associated with differential aspirations.
- Older children whose fathers are current migrants have higher aspirations than younger children (interaction results not shown).
- Additional research is needed: Father's prior migration may improve ability to afford higher education while ongoing migration may encourage youth to discontinue school and plan for their own migration.

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