

The Protective Effect of Coresidence for Adolescent Mothers in Latin America

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Introduction

The theoretical literature on families posits that economic development weakens family ties and reduces the prevalence of extended families (Goode, 1963). Nevertheless, there is increasing evidence of a resurgence of multigenerational families over the last decades. In several high income countries, there has been an increase in multigenerational families where the children and grandchildren live with an older generation who tends to outearn the younger generations (Bryson & Casper, 1999, Takagi & Silverstein, 2006, Pew Center, 2010). In middle and low income countries, there is even stronger evidence of a positive association between socioeconomic development and the prevalence of multigenerational families headed by the older generation (Rugles & Hegeness, 2008). Yet, there is another type of multigenerational families, composed of single mothers living with their parents, which is usually associated with low socioeconomic status and that has also become more prevalent in those countries (Kennedy & Ruggles, 2012; Esteve, Lesthaghe & Garcia-Roman, 2013). The main force behind this trend is persistently high adolescent fertility levels.

This is the case of several Latin American countries, where total fertility rates rapidly declined in the last forty years (on average, from 5.1 in 1970 to 2.2 in 2010)¹, but ASFR among women ages 15 to 19 years old remained high. Some of these countries have even witnessed an increase in the mean number of children ever born among adolescents (Rodriguez-Vignoli, 2003; Wong & Bonifácio, 2009). The negative lifelong consequences of teen pregnancy and childbearing to women and their children have been much discussed elsewhere (e.g. Herman, 1991; Ermisch, 2003, Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003; Urdinola & Ospino, 2014). The list includes a myriad of effects on educational attainment, job enrollment, the probability of marrying and having traditional family arrangements, and health-related risks. Specifically in the case of the deleterious educational effects, it is worth mentioning the higher likelihood of adolescent mothers dropping school because of childcare activities or lack of career prospects (Novellino, 2011). On the other hand, some research points to a positive effect on job enrolment, as adolescent mothers face extra pressure to find a job to financially support themselves and their children (Urdinola & Uspino, 2014).

In this paper we examine one important dimension of the association between these two main trends in Latin American, namely, how multigenerational families are related to better education/employment outcomes among adolescent mothers.

Methods

We examine census data for a set of Latin American countries that has been characterized by persistently high adolescent fertility since early 1990s (Rodriguez-Vignoli, 2003; Wong & Bonifácio, 2009). The list includes Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and

¹ CELADE/ECLAC population estimates and projections, 2007

Venezuela. We draw demographic census data from IPUMS- international² for each one of the aforementioned countries. Since the census years are not exactly the same, we examine data for two broader periods of time: early 1990s (1990-1993) and mid 2000s (2000-2007).

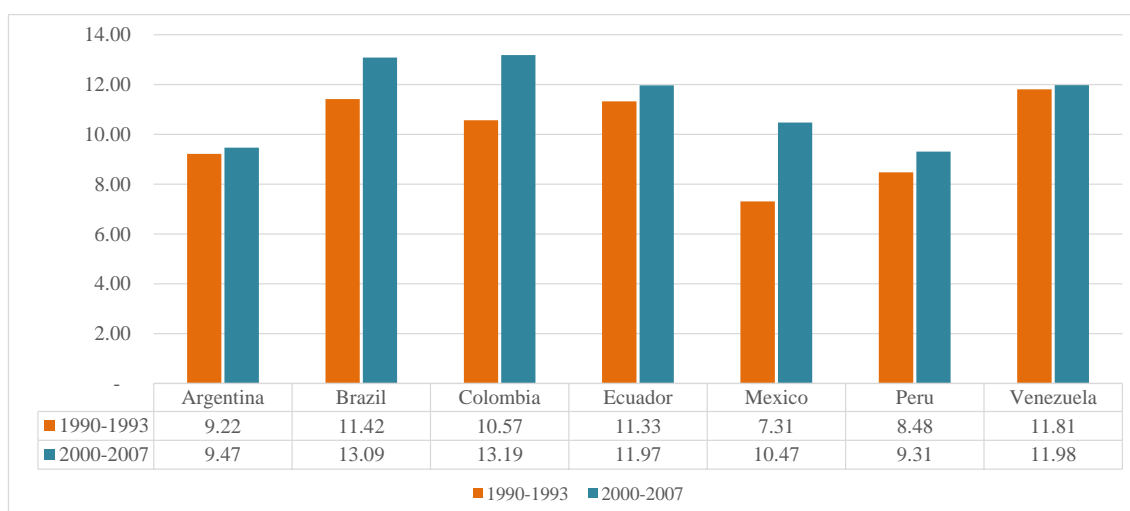
We define adolescent mothers (AMs) as women ages 15 to 19 who live with at least one surviving child in the same household. Our objective is to measure the association between multigenerational coresidence and employment/education activities among AMs, as a way to examine the intergenerational protective effect for these young mothers in their pre-adulthood lives. We define multigenerational households as the households that include the child, the adolescent mother and her mother, regardless of the presence of other household members. The employment/education activities are measured in four categories: AMs who work, study, do both or neither.

We use multinomial logistic regression to model the probability of AMs performing each one of the four employment/education activities conditional on the presence of their mothers in the households, during the two periods of observation (1990-1993 and 2000-2007). In order to avoid confounding demographic effects, our models control for AMs’ age measured in single years of age between 15 and 19 years, the number of AMs’ children, and the presence in the household of the AMs spouse, which is coded as dichotomous variable.

Preliminary Results

Figure 1 shows the percentage of adolescents who are mothers and coreside with at least one child in the seven selected Latin American countries. In the 1990s, the proportion of AMs varied between 7.3% in Mexico and 11.8% in Venezuela, which confirms the elevated presence of adolescent mothers in the region. In the following decade, the proportion of AMs increased in every country, particularly in Mexico (43%), Colombia (25%), Brazil (15%) and Peru (10%). In Colombia and Brazil, the proportion of AMs reached figures above 13%, reflecting the high fertility levels at ages 15 to 19 in these countries.

Figure 1 – Proportion (%) of adolescents ages 15 to 19 who are mothers and live with at least one child. Selected Latin American Countries: 1990-1993 and 2000-2007



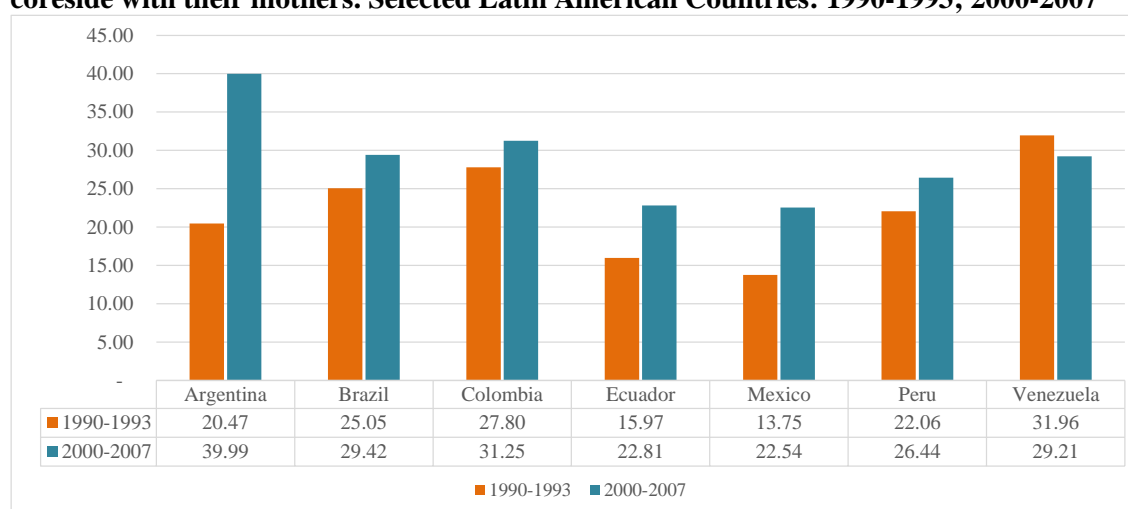
Source: IPUMS-Internacional

Note The census years are: Argentina (1991 and 2001), Brazil (1991 and 2000), Colombia (1993 and 2005), Equator (1990 and 2001), Mexico (1990 and 2000), Peru (1993 and 2007) and Venezuela (1990 and 2000).

² Minnesota Population Center. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 6.4 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015.

We are interested in comparing adolescent mothers who coreside with their mothers with those who do not. Figure 2 indicates the proportion of adolescent mothers who live with at least one child and who co-reside with their mothers. Not surprisingly, considering the low ages of these young mothers, about a fifth of them in the 1990s and a third in the 2000s coresided with their mothers. It is worth mentioning the substantial increase in the proportion of adolescent mothers living in multigenerational households in Argentina, which almost doubled between 1991 and 2001 (from 21 to 40%), probably as a consequence of the economic crisis that stroke the country by the end of the 1990s. Other countries also witnessed a sharp increase in the proportions over the ten year period, including Mexico (from 13.7 to 22%) and Ecuador (from 15.9 to 22.8%).

Figure 2 – Proportion (%) of adolescent mothers who live with at least one child, and who coreside with their mothers. Selected Latin American Countries: 1990-1993; 2000-2007



Fonte: Source: IPUMS-Internacional

Note The census years are: Argentina (1991 and 2001), Brazil (1991 and 2000), Colombia (1993 and 2005), Ecuador (1990 and 2001), Mexico (1990 and 2000), Peru (1993 and 2007) and Venezuela (1990 and 2000).

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of employment/education activities among adolescent mothers when their mothers are absent or when they coreside in the same household. In every country and in both periods of observation, there is a striking proportion of young mothers out of school. Despite the current high school attendance rates in these countries, the majority of adolescent mothers are simply not studying. Nevertheless, there is a clear positive association between the presence of mothers in the household and better outcomes for the adolescent mothers, including higher rates of school attendance and lower rates of adolescents neither studying nor working.

Table 1: Distribution (%) of adolescent mothers who live with a child by education/employment activities, and the presence of their mothers in the households. Selected Latin American Countries: 1990-1993, 2000-2007

Country	Education/Employment Activities	1990-1993		2000-2007	
		Mother is absent in the household	Mother lives in the same household	Mother is absent in the household	Mother lives in the same household
Argentina	Only working	18.49	26.59	8.16	9.43
	Only studying	4.04	10.95	8.80	24.42
	Both working and studying	0.85	3.22	0.83	1.93
	Neither working nor studying	76.63	59.24	82.21	64.23
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Brazil	Only working	12.93	26.50	14.34	16.89
	Only studying	3.73	9.65	11.43	24.57
	Both working and studying	0.69	3.59	2.52	7.28
	Neither working nor studying	82.65	60.26	71.71	51.26
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Colombia	Only working	12.22	17.25	9.57	14.02
	Only studying	6.20	15.95	8.66	19.27
	Both working and studying	1.02	2.08	1.15	2.33
	Neither working nor studying	80.56	64.71	80.63	64.38
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ecuador	Only working	14.21	16.13	15.82	22.58
	Only studying	8.06	17.15	7.89	12.73
	Both working and studying	1.06	2.38	1.13	2.25
	Neither working nor studying	76.66	64.35	75.16	62.45
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mexico	Only working	4.93	21.79	11.61	28.18
	Only studying	2.45	5.76	1.96	6.89
	Both working and studying	0.22	1.11	0.37	2.12
	Neither working nor studying	92.40	71.34	86.06	62.80
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Peru	Only working	14.19	16.32	16.94	18.33
	Only studying	6.75	12.66	7.32	14.66
	Both working and studying	1.01	1.12	1.57	2.80
	Neither working nor studying	78.05	69.90	74.16	64.21
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Venezuela	Only working	8.14	13.50	9.40	13.15
	Only studying	6.91	12.76	8.66	19.56
	Both working and studying	1.14	2.39	1.27	2.56
	Neither working nor studying	83.80	71.35	80.66	64.73
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Fonte: Source: IPUMS-Internacional

Note The census years are: Argentina (1991 and 2001), Brazil (1991 and 2000), Colombia (1993 and 2005), Equator (1990 and 2001), Mexico (1990 and 2000), Peru (1993 and 2007) and Venezuela (1990 and 2000).

Next, we model the probability of adolescent mothers performing each one of the four employment/education activities conditional on the presence of their mothers in the household,

during the two periods of observation (1990-1993 and 2000-2007). We control for the adolescents' age, number of children and the presence of their spouse. The results in Table 2 show the logistic coefficients for the predictor variable (presence of adolescents' mother) for each alternative category of the outcome variable. The reference category is neither working nor studying. The regression coefficients show a pattern of statistically significant improvements in the probability of studying when adolescent mothers have their mothers living together. In some countries such as Brazil and Argentina the presence of mothers also increases the probability of doing both (working and studying) particularly in the 2000s.

Table 2: Estimated coefficients from the multinomial logistic models for the predictor variable (presence of adolescent mothers' mothers) for each category of employment/education activity. Selected Latin American countries: 1990-1993, 2000-2007.

Country	Education/Employment Activities	1990-1993	2000-2007
Argentina	Only working	0.00687 ***	0.00663 ***
	Only studying	-0.00294 ***	-0.00336 ***
	Both working and studying	0.00201 ***	0.00247 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Brazil	Only working	-0.00466 ***	-0.00146 ***
	Only studying	0.00362 ***	0.00519 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.00167 ***	0.00166 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Colombia	Only working	-0.01166 ***	-0.00709 ***
	Only studying	0.00413 ***	0.00316 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.01139 ***	-0.00467 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Ecuador	Only working	-0.00752 ***	-0.00361 ***
	Only studying	0.00413 ***	0.00505 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.00729 ***	-0.00374 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Mexico	Only working	-0.00378 ***	-0.00357 ***
	Only studying	0.0033 ***	0.00465 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.00409 ***	-0.00024 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Peru	Only working	-0.009 ***	-0.00752 ***
	Only studying	0.00191 ***	0.00347 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.01491 ***	-0.00521 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		
Venezuela	Only working	-0.0083 ***	-0.00509 ***
	Only studying	0.00462 ***	0.00497 ***
	Both working and studying	-0.00466 ***	-0.00185 ***
	Neither working nor studying (reference)		

*** p-value<0.001

In the final version of the article we plan to examine more in-depth this apparent protective effect of mothers' coresidence by measuring the interactive effects between the presence of

adolescent mothers' spouses and mothers, and by addressing whether the results hold for all socioeconomic groups in Latin America or are typical of the lower SES groups.

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