

International Seminar on
Youth Migration and Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries

Organised by the
Scientific Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries
International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)
and
the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) and the
Centre for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies (CEDUA)
El Colegio de México

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 8-10 December 2010

IUSSP Scientific Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries:

Chair: Fatima Juarez (Mexico);

Panel members: Véronique Hertrich (France), Cynthia Lloyd (USA), Susheela Singh (Guyana), Shireen Jejeebhoy (India);

IUSSP Council liaison: Thomas LeGrand (Canada);

Local organizer: Kaizô I. Beltrão (Brazil).

SEMINAR REPORT

The IUSSP Scientific Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries, in collaboration with the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) and El Colegio de Mexico, held a seminar on “Youth Migration and Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries” in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 8-10 December 2010. The seminar was supported by funds provided by UNFPA and the IUSSP.

The goal of the seminar was to examine the evolving patterns and processes of youth migration and their consequences for the various transitions to adulthood of adolescents in developing countries. The policy issues related to the seminar findings were discussed, focusing on how migrations differentially affect adolescents and young adults in different contexts, in part due to age at the time of the event.

The 23 papers presented at the seminar were selected from roughly 150 abstracts. They addressed issues such as the determinants of adolescent migration, how migration influences empowerment and vulnerability, the impact of migration on the transition to adulthood, and the role of gender in migration. Throughout the seminar, substantial time was set aside for the discussion of the policy implications of these papers, both in the specific countries discussed and for youth migration more generally.

The majority of seminar participants were sociologists and demographers, although anthropologists, economists, and public health researchers were also present. Participants representing all the main world regions were present: Asia (6), Latin America (5), Sub-Saharan Africa (4), North America (4), and Europe (4). All career stages were represented and about one-fifth of participants were junior scholars. Participants included two invited discussants and four of the members of the Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries, who filled the roles of discussant, panelist or session chairs. In addition,

participants from Brazil included the local organizer, a representative of the UNFPA, and four local young researchers.

The description of the call for papers guided the themes presented at the seminar. Findings were grouped into four major areas: macro-level changes and impact on sending and receiving communities; youth empowerment and vulnerability; influences on the decision to migrate; and migration in the context of transitions to adulthood. These are summarized below.

Macro level changes and impact on sending and receiving communities

The discussion of migration was framed by the current status of the demographic transition across countries. In the context of South-North migration, many destination countries are in the process of population aging, following decades of high life expectancy and low fertility, while many sending countries are experiencing or have the potential to soon experience the demographic dividend, as large youth cohorts transit to adulthood at the same time as fertility levels decline. In East Asia, studies suggest that as much as one-third of economic growth in recent decades was due to demographic dividend, and an important question is whether other regions will benefit as greatly from this stage of their development. This raises important questions about which policies are conducive to maximizing the effects of the demographic dividend, and the degree to which countries with large youth cohorts will retain and be able to productively mobilize the human capital of their young people versus having aging countries to “borrow” these resources for their own needs. There was consensus that research should be contextualized, focusing on specific countries and even smaller geographical areas, due to the difficulties in generalizing findings. In addition, there was widespread interest in the extent to which migration by young people fosters new skills and creates new opportunities for their empowerment, relative to the risk of creating new inequalities and vulnerabilities – issues that were brought up throughout the seminar.

Empowerment and Vulnerability

Migration exposes young people to conditions that may lead both to empowerment and increased vulnerability. Returning migrants may bring new skills, additional new resources, and exert more decision-making power over their lives. “Successful” return migrants may benefit from wealth that was accumulated at the destination and from an enhanced social status in the community of origin related to local perceptions of bravery, risk and sacrifice associated with the migration experience. Seminar presentations covering locations as varied as Mexico, Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania provided evidence suggesting that the local histories and conditions create a “culture of migration”, where young men (and women, in the case of Mali) may consider migration to be a necessary step in the transition to adulthood. The resources accumulated through migration can enable young people to marry, build new homes, and begin new business enterprises, as well as fund the migration of other relatives. In contrast, young people who were unable to find work or accumulate resources at their destination could find themselves not only cut off from making these other transitions (e.g., marriage), and were sometimes unable to return to their home communities because of the shame of their failure. The diverse migration experiences may transform social relationships and alter family dynamics in different contexts, at times weakening kinship connections and at others facilitating the flow of additional migrants through kinship networks.

Furthermore, the community prevalence of migration influences the expectations and pressures to migrate among youth (evidence from studies presented on Latin American and Africa). In communities with a high prevalence of migration, young people who were unable to move at times faced real disempowerment and limited economic and social opportunities. When there is geographic inequality in the distribution of opportunities, the ability to migrate may in fact lead to increased social inequality. One seminar paper used nationally representative data from Uruguay to highlight how the concentration of universities in the capital city of Montevideo limited opportunities for young people who were unable to migrate for education, and led to diverging experiences between migrants and non-migrants. If migrants are already selected on their access to resources and have additional gains through their access to education and higher wages, then migration may serve as a process of cumulative advantage with consequences for individuals and families who do not migrate.

Influences on the decision to migrate

The decision to migrate has many individual, family, and community level influences. One key finding from the seminar was that the determinants of youth migration vary by the age at which migration is experienced. For example, one paper on Mexico-U.S. migration identified several factors that are more important for male migrants aged 15-19 (relative to 20-34 year olds), including educational attainment, prior labor force participation, parents who previously migrated, the community prevalence of male and female migration, and U.S. immigration policy. Other factors were found to be more important for migration at older ages, such as have a sibling who had previously migrated and the presence of children in the household.

The papers on Botswana and Malawi focused on how access to resources and relational proximity to household heads influences the likelihood of migration. The Botswana paper focused on how orphans aging out of social services used migration as a way to seek better economic opportunities and to escape tensions in their foster households, which may have been fueled by their previous high access to social services. Despite these tensions, the case studies described young people who migrated with or toward relatives and who first tried to access resources within their kinship network. The paper from Malawi identified adolescents and young adults who were not children of the household head as being more likely to migrate, suggesting that greater emotional and financial distance to the household head may weaken the motivation to stay. This association can also be interpreted as a sign that previous residential mobility (i.e. coming to live with someone other than one's own parents) may predict future residential mobility. These studies also suggest how youth who migrate by themselves face a different set of challenges and experiences compared to those who migrate with their families or through other social connections.

Many papers identified how wealth and social position influence the ability to migrate, given the costs of migration. Although wealth is generally positively associated with the likelihood to migrate, in some cases the greatest motivation to migrate may be amongst those who are middle income levels; the poor not be able to afford the cost of migration and the wealthy not needing the additional boost that migration promises.

Youth who migrate by themselves face a different set of challenges and experiences compared to those who migrate with their families or through social connections. Individuals vary in the extent of independence of their migration. They may migrate alone, to join family or friends, or as a family unit. Even individuals migrating alone may deepen their

embeddedness within family networks because of family contributions to the cost of migration that must either be repaid or represent expectations and obligations for the future. For instance, the seminar paper from Cameroon described how parents and other relatives played a more prominent role in the decision to migrate and financing the journey for teenage migrants, compared to migrants in their 20s. The degree to which a migrant is connected to family networks will influence their experience of social control and shape their behavior. Social ties between destination and sending communities may also create opportunities for observation. Although many papers emphasized the loss of parental support as one reason why migrant youth may be more vulnerable, it is actually unclear how many young migrants are completely separated from parental or family guidance and authority.

In general it was found that in less developed regions, the pattern and impact of migration among youth differs for male and female migrants. The majority of papers reported that migration—both internal and international—was less common among female than among male youth. Young women who did migrate often reported migrating for different reasons than their male counterparts, demonstrating how the social pressure to migrate and social support for migrants differs by local gender expectations. Female migrants in countries as diverse as Indonesia, Mali, Mexico, and South Africa left their home communities in order to seek work, although many of the seminar studies reported that the type of work women pursued differed substantively from their male counterparts. Only the paper from Malawi discussed how women may migrate at the time of marriage; however, many papers discussed how migration enabled young men to afford the transition to marriage.

Migration in the context of the transition to adulthood

The seminar papers also provided evidence that the impact of migration on youth will differ depending on the age at which the migration occurs. Many papers explored the consequences of these age variations. In particular, papers from Kenya and Indonesia highlighted more adverse outcomes among those who migrated during early adolescence relative to migrations that occurred either in early adulthood or during childhood, when they accompanied their parents who relocated. These examples suggest that migration may be more disruptive during a the time when individuals are developing agency and becoming embedded within peer networks.

The impact of migration on health outcomes also varies depending on the context of migration. Evidence from India suggests that “mobile” young adults were more likely to have ever had sex. In contrast, a study using the Nairobi Demographic and Health Surveillance System found that migrants to two slum areas had less risky sexual behavior relative to individuals who had lived their entire lives in the slums. The two papers from Kenya both found that migration at younger ages increased the probability of early sexual debut. The paper based on data from the Agincourt Demographic and Health Surveillance System found no differences in the fertility of women who were temporary labor migrants relative to women who did not migrate, but also reported that women who migrated for reasons other than work had 40% lower odds of having a child. This difference was speculated to be due to migration for other reasons that led to statuses less compatible with childbearing, such as being a student or caring for other relatives.

There are varied implications of what migrants do with the wealth and resources that are acquired through migration. Although remittances and migrant savings have the capacity to

help develop local communities, many of the papers highlighted individual material aspirations and intentions to improve the standard of living for immediate family members. Several of the papers from West and North Africa highlighted how migration is altering marriage patterns, in particular expectations related to brideprice and the material expectations for marriage. Remittances and individual wealth accumulation may also impact family decision-making processes, as migrants who contribute to the household economy are able to exert greater influence than their age or sex may have permitted in the absence of migration.

Education can be a motivation for migration, but migration may lead some young people to leave school prematurely. In communities with a high prevalence of migration, young people may not perceive the lessons taught in school to be skills relevant to the migrant experience. However, for children and younger adolescents who migrate with their families, schools may serve as the primary location for integrating into the receiving community. The integration of young migrants into destination communities involves many domains of life, and schools serve as an important point of orientation for both migrant children and their families, such as discussed in the paper about African immigrants to Canada.

Migration adds complexity and alters the life course by reducing or expanding the choices available to young people have during their transitions to adulthood. Migrants are exposed to new ideas, lifestyles, and standards of living that transform their expectations for the future and influence their behavior. This may lead to social change in sending communities, but it also raises the possibility of conflict and frustration for young people who lack the resources to achieve new ideals or who encounter inflexible social and political systems.



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PROGRAMME

Tuesday, December 7

5:30-7:00 Registration in Rio de Janeiro (at Hotel)
Dinner (participants make their own arrangements)

Wednesday, December 8

8:30 Transport from Hotel to IBGE (Before departure, breakfast at hotel)

9:00-9:45 **Welcome:**
Kaizô I. Beltrão, IBGE
Thomas LeGrand, IUSSP Headquarters
Silvia Giorguli, El Colegio de Mexico
Tais de Freitas Santos, UNFPA Brazil

9:45-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-12:30 **Session 1. Migration in the context of transitions to adulthood**
Discussant: Monica Grant
Chair: Fatima Juarez

Silvia E. Giorguli and René Zenteno “Mexican Adolescent Migration to the
U.S. and the Transition to Adulthood”

Wednesday, December 8 [cont'd]

Daniel Ciganda and Julieta Bengochea “Internal Migration and the Transitions to Adulthood in Uruguay. A comparison of the 1990 and 2008 Youth Surveys”

Kathleen Beegle and Michelle Poulin “Migration and the transition to adulthood in contemporary Malawi”

Bianca Dahl “The Effects of Social Service Support on Orphaned Youths’ Subsequent Migration Choices in Botswana”

12:30-1:30 LUNCH

1:30-4:00 **Session 2. Consequences of migration for health, reproductive outcomes and childbearing**

Discussant: Claudine Sauvain-dugerdil and Susheela Singh

Chair: Véronique Hertrich

Kanyiva Muindi, Donatien Beguy, Blessing U Mberu and Netsayi Mudege “Migration and sexual behavior among youth in Nairobi’s slum areas”

Nancy Luke, Hongwei Xu, Blessing U. Mberu and Rachel Goldberg “Migration experience and sexual debut among youth in urban Kenya: An event history analysis”

Rajib Acharya, K.G. Santhya and Shireen J Jejeebhoy “Association between mobility and transition to sexual life among unmarried young people: Evidence from India”

Monica A. Magadi “Migration as a risk factor for HIV infection among the youth in sub-Saharan: Evidence from the DHS.”

Gayatri Singh, Benjamin D Clark, Jill Renee Williams, and Mark Collinson “Onset of childbearing and circular migration among women in rural South Africa: An Event History Analysis”

4:00-4:30 Coffee Break

4:30-5:30 **Special Session. Brazil: Migration and adolescents**

Chair: Tais de Freitas Santos

Presenter from IBGE: Kaizô I. Beltrão “Brazil Census 2010: Field Operations and First Results”

7:00 Group Dinner

Thursday, December 9

8:30-10:45 **Session 3. Integration of migrant youth**

Discussant: Cynthia Lloyd
Chair: Thomas LeGrand

Nathalie Mondain, Solène Lardoux and Fasal Kanouté “Transition to adulthood among first generation African immigrant adolescents in Canada: evidence from a qualitative study in Montreal”

Juhua Yang “Triple Disadvantages: Economic Integration of Post-80 Born Rural-to-Urban Migrants to the Host Society in China”

Georgina Rojas García “Transition from School to Work being a 1.5er: the case of Mexican Origin College Students in California”

Alejandro Francisco Román Macedo and Sagrario Garay Villegas “High school dropout of Mexican origin and White non-Hispanic youth in the United States and its relation with early adulthood”

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-1:00 **Session 4. Factors Affecting Migration of Adolescents**

Discussant: Thomas LeGrand
Chair: Nancy Luke

Fabienne Tanon and Abdoulaye Sow “Unaccompanied Migrating Minors from Africa: The case of Mauritania”

Aree Jampaklay and Ramesh Adhikari “First Migration among Young People in the Thai Context”

Honoré Mimche “Les migrations clandestines vues de l’Afrique Noire: Refus de la marginalisation ou stratégie de promotion sociale chez les jeunes?”

1:00-2:00 LUNCH

3:00 Depart from hotel: Tour of city and dinner

Friday, December 10

9:00-10:45 **Session 5. Gender, generation and migration**

Discussant: Edith Pantelides

Chair: Monica Magadi

Ondoua Owoutou and Seke Kouassi de Syg “Parental authority and migration of adolescents and youths in Yaounde (Cameroon)”

Marie Lesclingand et Véronique Hertrich “Du village à la ville, entre logiques familiales et émancipation individuelle. Migrations juvéniles et rapports de genre au Mali”

Jhonatan Ferreira, Juliana Mota de Siqueira and Mariana Vieira Araújo “Analysis of the profile of young immigrants in the Federal Capital of Brazil: a gender dimension”

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-1:30 **Session 6. Migration: strategies and consequences**

Discussant: Véronique Hertrich

Chair: Kaizo Beltrao

Alioune Diagne, Nathalie Mondain and Sara Randall “Migration et responsabilités intergénérationnelles : implications pour la transition à l’âge adulte des jeunes migrants sénégalais”

Claudine Sauvain-Dugerdil “Youth mobility in an isolated population of the Malian Sahel: A mitigating factor to cope with new uncertainties or a dimension of the social disintegration?”

Akm Ahsan Ullah “Mother’s land and others’ land: Stolen’ youth of returned female migrants”

Peter McDonald, Iwu Dwisetyani Utomo, Ariane Utomo, Terry Hull and Gavin Jones “Human capital outcomes among young migrants to Greater Jakarta”

1:30-2:30 LUNCH

2:30-3:15 **General discussion, conclusions and policy implications.**

Chair: Cynthia Lloyd

3:15-3:45 Coffee Break

3:45-4:15 **Closing remarks and Next Steps:**

Thomas LeGrand, IUSSP Headquarters

Fatima Juarez, Chair of the IUSSP Scientific Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries

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List of Participants

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