Single Parenthood and Intergenerational Coresidence in Developing Countries

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Abstract

Despite widespread predictions of a decline in intergenerational co-residence in developing countries, the existing literature provides only mixed evidence for this trend. In this paper, we will examine one possible explanation for these slow and inconsistent trends in living arrangements: rising rates of single parenthood. We use data from the IPUMS-International[1], the world's largest archive of publicly available international census microdata archive. Our analysis will include roughly 25-30 low and middle-income countries for which at least two census years are available for analysis.

Background

This paper builds on previous research examining trends in intergenerational co-residence. A large theoretical literature argues that economic development weakens traditional family ties and results in shift toward nuclear family living arrangements (Goode 1963).

Recent studies, however, suggest a more complex story. Palloni (2001) founds a small decrease in elder co-residence with children in several Asian countries, but little change in Latin America and the Carribean. Ruggles and Heggeness (2008) looking at adults ages 30-39 and those ages 65 and older, find considerable variation in trends across 15 developing countries in living arrangements; some countries show the expected decline in intergenerational co-residence, other countries show no trend, while still others show an increase intergenerational coresidence. Finally, Spijker and Esteve (2011) find that extended family residence is decreasing slowly among young couples (although not in all countries). In addition, they find a strong relationships between GDP and young couples residence in a nuclear family.

Across these disparate countries, Ruggles and Heggeness (2008) find a shift from child-headed households to household headed by the elderly parent, a trend that is strongly correlated with increased

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economic development. This trend suggests a shift from economic dependence of the older generation to the economic dependence of the younger generation. In addition, Ruggles and Heggeness argue that population growth and urbanization may create housing shortages for adult children. Furthermore, they argue that in many societies, extended families living arrangements may be preferred over nuclear families, and growing economic wealth may make it easier for families to fulfill their desire for extended family living arrangements.

In contrast, there evidence of an increase in single-parenthood in many developing countries, the result of increased nonmarital childbearing and divorce. (See Table 1, see also Heggeness 2010). This is particularly true in Latin America; increases are smaller and in some cases not evident in Asia and Africa. In both developing and developed countries, coresidence with parents is extremely common for single mothers. Heggeness (2010) find that in developing countries between 20 and 50 percent of single mothers are not household heads, residing instead with parents or other relatives. Further, she finds evidence that the percent of single mothers who are not the household head has other relatives has increased in some countries. Thus, increasing levels of single parenthood might increase the number of young women living with parents.

Data and Measures

We will use data from roughly 25-30 countries from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Our analysis will be restricted to countries with at least 2 censuses available since 1970. Many studies of elder living arrangements are drawn from surveys, such as the DHS, that typically have small very samples of older adults and limited historical coverage. In contrast, censuses provide full coverage of the age spectrum, large sample sizes, and have been regularly collected in most developing countries since the 1970s. IPUMS-International now provides data for 62 countries and 185 censuses (Minnesota Population Center 2011). Thus, the IPUMS data set is an extremely valuable resource for studying the living arrangements of older adults in the developing world (Ruggles and Heggeness 2008).

We will use the restrictive measures of intergenerational coresidence implemented in Ruggles and Heggeness (2008): adults ages 65 and above residing with at least one child over age 17, and adults ages 30-39 residing with parents. The advantage of these measures is that they definitively measure coresidence between adult children and elderly parents, and exclude intergenerational co-residence occurring as a result of fertility at older ages or delayed transition to adulthood.

The downside of these measures is that they may exclude many instances of coresidence between children and parents. This may be especially true for single mothers, who on average have children at an earlier age. If, for instance, the mother had a daughter at age 25 and the daughter in turn had a daughter at age 25 and resided with her parents after a nonmarital birth or a divorce, then we would observe coresidence only if occurred 15 years after the birth of the grandchild. To ensure that we examine the full impact of single-motherhood on intergenerational living arrangements, we will also broaden our analysis past the ages used by Ruggles and Heggeness. For older parents, we propose an alternate measure of parent co-residence: ages 50 and above and living with a child ages 22 and older. Likewise, we will look at adult children ages 22 and older living with a parent. By examining multiple

age- cutoffs, we will be able to better observe the impact of single-motherhood on parent-child living arrangements, as well as the impact of delayed transitions to marriage.

We will identify single mothers using the IPUMS pointers which identify the likely parents and spouses of individuals in the household. We plan to separately identify single mothers who are never-married, separated, or divorced and those who are widowed. These statuses are the result of different process (changes in marital processes rather than changes in mortality) and are often trend in different directions (see Table 1). Some countries treat separated persons as still married, so we will either need to include those reported to be married but who have no spouse present in the household as separate, or exclude these countries from our analysis. Finally, in samples that do not collect mother's fertility data, the IPUMS pointers slightly overestimate the prevalence of single motherhood (Sobek and Kennedy 2009). Our analysis will include sensitivity checks to ensure that trends in single parenthood do not reflect changes in the available of fertility data across censuses.

Proposed analysis

Our paper will expand upon the existing literature in several ways. First, we will examine trends in living arrangements over 3 decades in 25-30 countries. Most studies, use a much smaller number of countries (for exceptions see: Ruggles and Heggeness 2008; Spijker and Esteve 2011). The IPUMS database has roughly doubled in size since the Ruggles and Heggeness article, and now provides substantially better coverage of Africa and Asia. Consequently, we will be able to assess trends separately in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

We will also include an analysis in trends by gender to see whether the increase in elderly parent headship experience by both male and female parents and by male and female children. Ruggles and Heggeness (2008) control for individual gender, but do not examine whether trends vary by gender and whether the changing configurations of parent and child gender are important for understanding trends in living arrangements.

In addition, by considering wider age ranges than Ruggles and Heggeness, we will be able to examine trends in parent-adult child coresidence in a larger life course perspective. Our final contribution is to consider the family structure of adult children. To what extent do trends in living arrangements vary by the marital and parenthood status of the children and to what extent does changes in the family structure of adult children explain trends in elder child coresidence. Here we build upon Spijker and Esteve's (2011) study of nuclear and extended family residence for young married and cohabiting couples. Consistent with this study, we expect to find that married and cohabiting couples are less likely to reside with parents. Based on prior research, we expect considerable cross-country variation in the percent and trends in extended family living arrangements for single mothers (Heggeness 2011). We expect that increased single parenthood in many countries combined with delayed transition to adulthood should work to counteract increased nuclear family residence among young couples. Finally, we expect that single childless children will continue to reside with parents for as long or longer than previously, and that the growing prevalence of these young people contribute to increased levels of intergenerational coresidence.

Our analysis will use descriptive and multilevel multivariate techniques to examine these trends in living arrangements. Our multivariate analysis will incorporate important characteristics of individuals and countries that may explain trends in single parenthood and trends in intergenerational coresidence. These variables include age, gender, educational attainment, economic development, and urbanization (Ruggles and Heggeness 2008; Spijker and Esteve 2011).

Citations

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Table 1. Percent of all women ages 18-49 and 18-29 who are single mothers by country and year

	% never-married and have at least one child in the household		% divorced or separated and have at least one child in the household		% widowed and have at least one child in the household	
	Ages 18-49	Ages 18-29	Ages 18-49	Ages 18-29	Ages 18-49	Ages 18-29
Argentina 1980	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Argentina 2001	19%	23%	4%	2%	1%	0%
Bolivia 1976	4%	5%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Bolivia 2001	6%	6%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Brazil 1980	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Brazil 2000	7%	8%	5%	2%	1%	0%
Cambodia 1998	0%	0%	3%	3%	4%	1%
Cambodia 2008	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Chile 1982	6%	6%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Chile 2002	10%	11%	5%	2%	1%	0%
China 1982	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
China 1990	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Colombia 1985	5%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
Colombia 2005	9%	10%	6%	3%	2%	1%
Costa Rica 1984	8%	8%	4%	2%	1%	0%
Costa Rica 2000	7%	7%	6%	4%	1%	0%
Ecuador 1982	4%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Ecuador 2001	5%	5%	5%	3%	1%	0%
Guinea 1983	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Guinea 1996	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
India 1983	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%
India 2004	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%
Jamaica 1982	37%	39%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Jamaica 2001	42%	41%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Kenya 1989	7%	8%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Kenya 1999	6%	7%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Malawi 1987	1%	2%	6%	6%	2%	1%
Malawi 2008	1%	2%	6%	5%	3%	1%
Malaysia 1980	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Malaysia 2000	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Mali 1987	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Mali 1998	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Mexico 1970	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Mexico 2000	3%	3%	5%	3%	2%	1%
Mongolia 1989	4%	5%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Mongolia 2000	5%	6%	4%	3%	3%	1%
Pakistan 1973	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%
Pakistan 1998	1%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Panama 1980	3%	4%	8%	6%	1%	0%

	% never-married and have at least one child in the household		% divorced or separated and have at least one child in the household		% widowed and have at least one child in the household	
Panama 2000	4%	4%	9%	7%	1%	0%
Peru 1993	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Peru 2007	5%	5%	5%	3%	1%	0%
Philippines 1990	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Philippines 2000	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Rwanda 1991	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	1%
Rwanda 2002	4%	5%	2%	2%	9%	3%
Saint Lucia 1980	39%	41%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Saint Lucia 1991	45%	47%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Senegal 1988	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Senegal 2002	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Vietnam 1989	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Vietnam 2009	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%
South Africa 1996	15%	17%	2%	1%	2%	0%
South Africa 2007	22%	24%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Thailand 1980	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Thailand 2000	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Uganda 1991	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
Uganda 2002	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Egypt 1996	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%
Egypt 2006	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%
Tanzania 1988	5%	6%	4%	3%	2%	1%
Tanzania 2002	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%
Venezuela 1981	7%	7%	5%	4%	1%	0%
Venezuela 2001	7%	7%	7%	4%	1%	0%