UNICEF
Innocenti Research Centre

DISCUSSION PAPERS

IDP No. 2009-02
February 2009

Child Migrants with and without Parents: Census-Based Estimates of Scale and Characteristics in Argentina, Chile and South Africa

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OVERVIEW

This paper studies child migration in Argentina, Chile and South Africa. It defines child migrants as under 18 year olds whose usual residence was in a different country or province five years prior to census. The paper estimates the scale of child migration; compares relative magnitudes of internal and international migration; and considers sensitivity to alternative definitions of migration. Second, it examines family structures within which migrant children live at destinations, defining children who are co-resident with adult parents and siblings as dependent, and those outside of these close family members, as independent. Third, the internal/international and in/dependent distinctions are analysed jointly to describe some social-economic characteristics of the four sub-groups of migrant children.

Around 4 per cent of children were international or internal migrants, involving 1.4 million children and representing a quarter of all migrants. Some variations exist across the three countries, but not dramatically so. Migrant populations comprise young adults, children and mature adults, in that order of magnitude: 52 per cent were aged 18-39 years, 27 per cent were under 18 years old, and 22 per cent were aged 40+. Definitions affect age-profiles. Migration defined by birthplace rather than residence estimates a lower involvement of children, but not by much – the big difference is between migrant stocks and flows.

A conservative estimate suggests that in the three countries over 7 per cent of children (migrant and non-migrant) resided independently of adult parents or siblings. In South Africa where data was available, just 4 per cent of independent children had both parents dead. Over 10 thousand were international migrants, and 112 thousand internal migrants. This represented 9 per cent of child migrant flows. An upper estimate indicates the scale could be twice as large.

Independent child migrants had worse shelter at destinations, and this contrasts with dependent child migrants who seemed not much different from non-migrants in their type of shelter. Average schooling was around 6 years for independent child migrants, and whilst similar between internal and international migrants, this was nearly two years more than dependent migrant children. In/dependent non-migrants were similar in their years of schooling. Over a fifth of international independent child migrants aged over 15 years were employed, compared to under 4 per cent of non-migrant dependent children. Rates for internal child migrants were lower than international migrants.

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Yaqub, Shahin (2009), 'Child Migrants with and without Parents: Census-Based Estimates of Scale and Characteristics in Argentina, Chile and South Africa'. *Innocenti Discussion Paper* No. IDP 2009-02. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

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Acknowledgements**:** The author would like to thank Bela Hovy, Eva Jespersen and David Parker for comments; and Richard Bilsborrow for ideas on a much earlier draft.

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CHILD MIGRANTS WITH AND WITHOUT PARENTS: CENSUS-BASED ESTIMATES OF SCALE AND CHARACTERISTICS IN ARGENTINA, CHILE AND SOUTH AFRICA

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Keywords: migration statistics, children, census, Argentina, Chile, South Africa.

1. Introduction

This paper analyses children's internal and international migration, using individual-level census data, in the three middle-income countries of Argentina, Chile and South Africa. Statistical information on children's migration is severely lacking. There has been little quantitative description of scale or direction of movements. Much of it is based on small surveys, and therefore not necessarily nationally representative. Child migrants are diverse by age, education, employment and other characteristics, but there is little research to differentiate them.

With a view to addressing some of these research gaps, the paper reports on middle-income countries (most data is on child migration in high-income destination countries); comparatively analyses internal and international migration (most research analyses one or the other); distinguishes dependent and independent child migrants (few migration statistics recognise the distinction); and offers analysis across three countries (few child migration data are nationally representative, and fewer still are cross-national).

The paper examines three issues: (1) types of migration involving children of different ages (internal/ international); (2) adults with whom migrant children reside at destinations (family/ non-family); and (3) children's schooling levels, work and housing at destinations. Correlations between these three are analysed, with the idea that where children migrate to, the people they live with and their characteristics at destinations are related issues.

The data that exists on children's internal/international migration, and their in/dependent statuses, are highly scattered; and these four subgroups have not been studied comparatively. The paper compares the four in terms of their relative magnitudes, age-structures and a few child indicators at destinations. Generally international migration is harder and costlier, so it might be expected that international child migrants are older and less dependent on parents/ adult guardians, than internal child migrants. But the specifics of this have not been studied, and may be confounded by other factors, such as easier and cheaper international migration across bordering provinces, or to rural destinations.

Structure of the Paper

Section 2 describes data sources and definitions. In summary, children are defined as under 18 years old; migration is defined as a change in usual residence within five years preceding the census, across a provincial or international boundary; and independent children are defined as not resident with an adult parent or adult sibling. Section 3 presents estimates of the overall scale of child migrants in Argentina, Chile and South Africa, irrespective of with whom they live, and relates population age structures to directions of movements. Section 4 presents estimates of independent and dependent child migration based on children's coresidence with adults at destination, and relates this to their directions of movement and characteristics at destination. Section 5 concludes with implications for research, and the inclusion of children within global debates on migration in developing societies.

2. Data Sources and Definitions

2.1 Description of countries selected

Argentina, Chile and South Africa are middle-income countries with diverse social-economic development. The fact that middle-income countries are migrant destinations has received limited attention, particularly in terms of child migration. Argentina and Chile provide comparisons within the continent, and South Africa comparisons outside the continent at a similar average income level.

Selected social-economic indicators are shown in Table 1. Chile is by far the poorest of the three in per capita terms (by around 20 per cent), but income inequality and poverty rates are higher in South Africa. Child and youth indicators in South Africa are also the worst of the three countries. Although Argentina's indicators are better, it still has a high rate of economic activity amongst young children (one-in-five) and high rates of inequality

Table 1: Social-economic indicators in study countries

	Argentina	Chile	South Africa
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	74	78	46
School enrolment, primary (% net)	99	90	90
School enrolment, secondary (% net)	81		62
Economically active children, total (% of children ages 7-14)	21	9	28
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	99	99	94
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	32	20	57
GNI per person ($, PPP)	10,980	8,840	10,910
GINI index	52	55	57
Poverty headcount ratio at $2 a day (PPP) (% of population)	14	6	34
Poverty gap at $2 a day (PPP) (%)	5	1	13
Age dependency ratio (dependents to working-age population)	0.60	0.52	0.59

Source: World Bank.

2.2 Data source

The analysis is based on individual-level data from nationwide censuses in Argentina, Chile and South Africa, accessed through the *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series — International* (Minnesota Population Center 2008). This source provided 10 per cent samples; documentation of datasets; original questionnaires and field instructions; harmonised variables for cross-national comparisons; access to un-harmonised variables; and checks on the raw data.

Table 2 reports information on the censuses analysed. The Chilean census was conducted in 2002, and the others in 2001. Relevant for undocumented migration, all three censuses adopted the de facto approach, which attempts to assign people to their residence at the time of census (the alternative *de jure* approach assigns people to their legal residence, Cork and Voss 2006).

Table 2: Description of censuses analysed

	2001 Argentina	**2002 Chile**	**2001 South Africa**
Census date	17 and 18 Nov, 2001	24 April, 2002	10 October, 2001
De jure or de facto	De facto	De facto	De facto
Coverage	Everybody in the territory; including all nationalities in Argentine embassies abroad; all ships with an Argentine Flag or in Argentine waters	Entire resident population living in private and collective dwellings	Entire present population in private and collective dwellings, as well as homeless individuals
Estimated undercount	2.75%	Not reported	Varies by province: 14.1% to 22.5% of individuals
Analysed	10 per cent sample	10 per cent sample	10 per cent sample
# households	1,040,852	437,766	991,543
# persons	3,626,103	1,513,914	3,725,655
# children (<18 yrs)	1,216,874	467,706	1,464,697

Source: Adapted from https://international.ipums.org/international/samples.html

Censuses offer three advantages over other sources of data on child migrants:

- In any population, relatively few people are migrants, and so a household sample survey of typical size might not allow useful disaggregation or detect less-prevalent migrant groups (such as independent child migrants). Using 10 per cent random samples, this paper's analysis is based on 3.1 million child-cases and 5.7 million adult-cases in 2.5 million households in the three countries (see Table 2).
- Migrants may be harder to survey (UN 2007): 1/ they live disproportionately in 'grouped quarters', including dormitories, workplaces, boarding houses and the street; 2/ migrants may change accommodation relatively more frequently; and 3/ some may not want to be surveyed or may misreport their migrant status. As censuses, data collection explicitly attempts universal population coverage, increasing the chances of including migrants who might have been missed due to type 1 and type 2 issues. In particular, the analysis includes populations in grouped quarters (see also Table 3).
- International standardisation of census methods offers a certain degree of cross-national comparability.

Drawbacks of censuses are that data to describe the migration process or children's situations is limited; mainly censuses ask about those present, and so are suited to studying in-migration; and enumerators may have had little time or training to collect data on children (although this latter point would not differ much in most household sample surveys).

Other potential data sources on migrants, apart from censuses, are registers of foreigners, administrative data at borders, visas records, work permits, labour surveys and household sample surveys (Osaki 2006). No single data source reflects the complexity of migration. Visas, work permits and labour surveys may underestimate populations not of legal working age. Administrative data at borders may concentrate on adult movements, and leave out undocumented migrants.[1] Sample surveys may underestimate migrants not in private dwellings, as this is the usual sampling unit.

2.3 Definition of migration

In this paper migration is understood as a change in 'usual residence'. This follows UN recommendations on international and internal migration statistics (UN 1978; UN 1998):

- "A person's country of usual residence is that in which the person lives, that is to say, the country in which the person has a place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest. Temporary travel abroad for purposes of recreation, holiday, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage does not entail a change in the country of usual residence" (UN 1998).
- "…internal migration has often been restricted to… a change of usual residence, hence excluding not only movement that is incidental to daily or slightly less frequent routine, but also the moves of nomads and regular seasonal moves, whether or not they are connected with economic activity. This concept… further restricts migration to refer to movement that involves a change of locality… [and since] change of locality is not readily amenable to objective measurement and distance is seldom recorded, and because migration statistics are necessarily tabulated for the administrative or political units into which a country is divided, migration is operationally defined as a change of residence from one civil division to another" (UN 1978).

In estimating flows, this paper counts as migrants people who arrived in the five years leading up to the censuses, or children under five years old with a household head who arrived within those five years. The five-year period was because the censuses asked for usual residence five years prior to the census dates. Obviously this reference point could not apply to under-five year olds, and they were assigned their household head's migration status. People who migrated more than five years before the censuses were not counted in the flows; nor were people born at destination more than five years prior to the census; nor were people who migrated and returned within five years.

In summary, the definition of migration used was a change in usual residence to another province or country in the five years preceding census dates. The censuses recorded 24 provinces in Argentina, 44 provinces in Chile and 9 provinces in South Africa.

Data limitations

Two particular issues are not considered due to data limitations. UN (1998) distinguishes that a long-term migrant is a person who has changed his or her usual residence for at least one year, and a short-term migrant for 3-12 months. It is not specified whether the duration refers to the expected stay, the actual stay or the entry permit, and Lemaitre (2005) notes that countries that collect this data apply varied definitions. The three censuses analysed in this paper do not provide the relevant data.

A second issue is seasonal migration. The definition above excludes it. Indeed some countries time their census to minimise the effects of seasonal migration.[2] Whilst migration for the duration of a season is rightly excluded for the present purposes, some research on children's migration suggests that the timing of children's departures, and their returns as circular migrants, may be influenced by seasons and festivals, particularly for independent migrant children; and this

may involve both international and internal migrants. The connections between short/long-term migration, circular migration and seasons might define types of migration in terms of their cost-benefits, with greater participation of vulnerable children in certain types. Censuses rarely collect this data, and specialised surveys would be needed.

Lehohla (2005) cites a number of difficulties in collecting 'usual residence' data. Complications arise from persons who maintain two or more residences, students living at school, people living at a military base but still maintaining private living quarters away from the installation, and persons who migrate frequently or circularly. Currently, the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision I do not provide guidelines on how to deal with these situations, but instead request that "the treatment of all such cases should be clearly set forth in the census instructions". Without specific guidelines, it is conceivable that countries do not treat these groups the same, hence affecting the international comparability of data.[3]

Alternatives: birthplace and stocks

Alternative definitions are considered in later analysis. Citizenship and birthplace are often used (OECD 2006). Multiple citizenship, territorial changes, statelessness and naturalisation can complicate the collection of citizenship data. Country of birth is more straightforward to collect, although complications can arise sometimes, for example, from changes in territorial boundaries.

Global statistics on international migration usually use birthplace, and report foreign-born population stocks (e.g. UN 2006). The foreign-born population includes first-generation migrants, and may consist of both foreign and national citizens. In contrast, the foreign population includes first and subsequent generations who retain the nationality of the country of origin even if born in the destination country.

Statistics often report migrant stocks. This refers to migrants at a particular point in time regardless of how long ago they migrated (rather than flows over a defined period). Whilst flow data address many policy questions, concerns around ethnicity, race, language and difference are more usefully captured by stock concept.

2.4 Definition of dependent and independent children

Children are defined as less than 18 years old, following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Sub-groupings of under 12 years, 12-14 years and 15-17 years are suggested by ILO conventions on children's work.[4]

Dependent children (whether migrant or non-migrant) are defined as those with a parent or legal/customary adult guardian. In the data, this is taken as coresidence with an adult biological parent, adopted parent, step-parent or sibling. All other children are termed independent. A sub-group of independent children are with adult relatives and termed separated, whilst others are with adult non-relatives and termed unaccompanied.[5]

In summary, children in close family are termed dependent; children in extended family, separated; and children with non-relatives, unaccompanied. In addition, another sub-group of independent children reside with no adults.

This parallels the traditional concept of dependency in demography and economics, such as in the dependency ratio, and modifies it to account for children's relationships to adults (of working and non-working ages).

Amongst migrants, independence refers to children's independence at destination, as distinct from independence in travel. Children can be independent in one or other or both.[6] Independent travel has its dangers, especially when undocumented or at young ages, but independence at destination seems to raise the more complex issues.[7] Censuses rarely contain the information needed for these distinctions. Specialised surveys would be required to understand the manner, scale, reasons and sources of risks in children's independence in travel (current information is largely anecdotal), and to assess inter-relationships between independent travel and independence at destination.[8]

The enumeration 'units' on which co-residence is determined are similar in the three censuses. This is reported in Table 3. Households 'share a cooking pot', dwellings are where people live whether intended for that purpose or not (and so capture informal dwellings), and all three censuses surveyed 'grouped quarters' with multiple households. Grouped quarters include various forms of temporary shelter which might be relatively important amongst child migrants.

Table 3: Definitions of dwellings, households and group quarters

	2001 Argentina	2002 Chile	2001 South Africa
Dwelling	Structurally separated and adapted lodging (whether originally intended for people or not). Considered as private dwellings each *inquilinato* room, *pensione* or hotel room not for tourism.	Structure equipped for temporary or permanent lodging, with separate access. It can be fixed or mobile; made of various materials; and house one or more households.	Any structure intended or used for human habitation.
Household	A person or a group of people that live under the same roof and share food expenses.	One or more persons, either related or unrelated, that: 1) live in the same dwelling; 2) share a common budget; 3) eat together; 4) recognize a household head.	Persons who live together, and provide themselves jointly with food and/or other essentials for living, or a single person who lives alone.
Group quarter	Lodgings for people living with non-family, including penal, work-related, administrative, military, religious, health, etc. places.	Dwelling with unrelated people with no household head sharing for reasons of health, work, religion, study, discipline, etc.	Living quarters have facilities shared by individuals or households, including hostels, hotels and institutions.

Source: Adapted from https://international.ipums.org/international/samples.html.

In/dependence: data limitations

A couple of qualifications may be noted with the idea of in/dependence used in the paper. First, some misclassification is possible. A co-resident adult sibling or step-parent is assumed to always indicate guardianship. Also, working children's relationships to co-resident adults might be stated inaccurately sometimes (although the Argentinean and Chilean censuses list domestic servants).

Secondly, in/dependence understood in terms of adult coresidence (or co-travelling, for that matter) does not strictly capture issues such as children's care; autonomy and agency; or contacts with and dependencies on adults left behind. These can vary to some extent even when parents are coresident (or co-travelling). Independent children might in some respects depend on others, such as employers, other adults, institutions or other children.

However the idea is that, although contexts can vary, whether or not a child lives day to day with close family is important information; such as on how surrounding adults view a child's needs as a dependent, whether emotionally, physically or economically, and the related issue of the child's self-dependence. How migration reorganises the family's provisioning and quality of children's care, and the nature of their dependencies on adults, is an under-researched issue, which would require specialised data not in censuses.

3. Children's Migration: Scale and Form

This section has three objectives. First, it reports the scale in Argentina, Chile and South Africa of children in international and inter-province migration flows in the five years preceding the censuses. This estimates overall scale regardless of children's different coresidence with adults. Secondly, the age-structure is disaggregated by migration types, viz. internal and international. Thirdly, estimates are presented using alternative definitions – viz. migrant stocks by birthplace and migrant flows by birthplace. Also, the data on Argentina and Chile allows intra-province migrants to be identified as a type of internal migration (although these cases were excluded from the total scale estimates).

3.1 Scale of children's migration flows

The following tables show three indicators of scale: the numbers of children who were migrants (Table 4), the percentages of children who were migrants (Table 5) and the percentage of migrants who were children (Table 6).

The results, as estimates subject to the above qualifications, indicate that:

- in the three countries, 4 per cent of children were international or internal migrants, involving 1.4 million children and representing well over a quarter of all migrants (see pooled columns in Table 5 to Table 6);

- the number of child migrants is nearly half a million in South Africa, 437 thousand in Argentina and 426 thousand in Chile (Table 4); around as many again are intra-province migrants in Argentina and Chile, the countries for which data exists;
- internal child migrants, considering inter-province migration only, are 11 times as numerous as international child migrants (Table 4);
- rates vary across countries: between 0.2 and 0.6 per cent of children are international migrants, and between 2.7 and 8.7 per cent of children are inter-province migrants (Table 5);
- the share of children amongst migrants (including adults) is one quarter in South Africa, and higher in Argentina and Chile (Table 6);
- the age profile in each country is younger amongst inter-province migrants than international migrants, and youngest amongst intra-province migrants (Table 6).

Table 4: Numbers of children who are migrants, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Numbers of children who are…			
	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Non-migrant children	11,252,440	3,810,340	16,801,111	31,863,891
1. International migrants	51,820	29,430	33,987	115,237
2. Inter-province migrants	384,850	396,570	462,526	1,243,946
3. Intra-province migrants	467,140	340,400	n/a	807,540
Migrant children (1 + 2 only)	436,670	426,000	496,513	1,359,183

Table 5: Percentages of children who are migrants, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	% of children who are…			
	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Non-migrant children	92.6	83.3	97.1	93.6
1. International migrants	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.3
2. Inter-province migrants	3.2	8.7	2.7	3.7
3. Intra-province migrants	3.8	7.4	n/a	2.4
Migrant children (1 + 2 only)	3.6	9.3	2.9	4.0

Table 6: Percentages of population groups who are children, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	% who are children…			
	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Population	33.5	31.0	38.8	35.6
Non-migrants	33.7	31.4	39.5	36.2
1. International migrants	26.3	22.4	18.6	22.5
2. Inter-province migrants	29.0	27.9	25.0	27.1
3. Intra-province migrants	35.2	31.2	n/a	33.4
Migrants (1 and 2 only)	28.6	27.5	24.4	26.6

Table 7 indicates the main origins of international child migrant flows to Argentina and Chile (this data was unavailable for South Africa). Countries of residence 5 years before the census are shown for international migrants aged 5-17 years. Bordering countries make up the largest shares. Several high-income countries are in the top ten suggesting return or circular migration, even with families with children.

Table 7: Top ten origin countries: residence 5 years before, international migrants aged 5-17 years

Rank	Argentina			Chile		
1	Paraguay	26.0	Border	Argentina	37.2	Border
2	Bolivia	19.7	Border	Peru	12.8	Border
3	Peru	16.5		Ecuador	8.7	
4	Chile	6.5	Border	United States	7.2	
5	Brazil	3.8	Border	Brazil	4.6	
6	United States	3.5		Bolivia	4.3	Border
7	Uruguay	3.3	Border	Canada	2.9	
8	Spain	2.7		Colombia	2.3	
9	Ukraine	2.5		Venezuela	2.3	
10	Mexico	1.6		Spain	2.1	

3.2 Form of migration

The type of migration that involves children is correlated to age. Figure 1 presents the age distributions for three migration types, viz. international, inter-province and intra-province, with the data pooled across countries. The vertical line is set at age 18 years, and so children lie to the left and adults to the right.

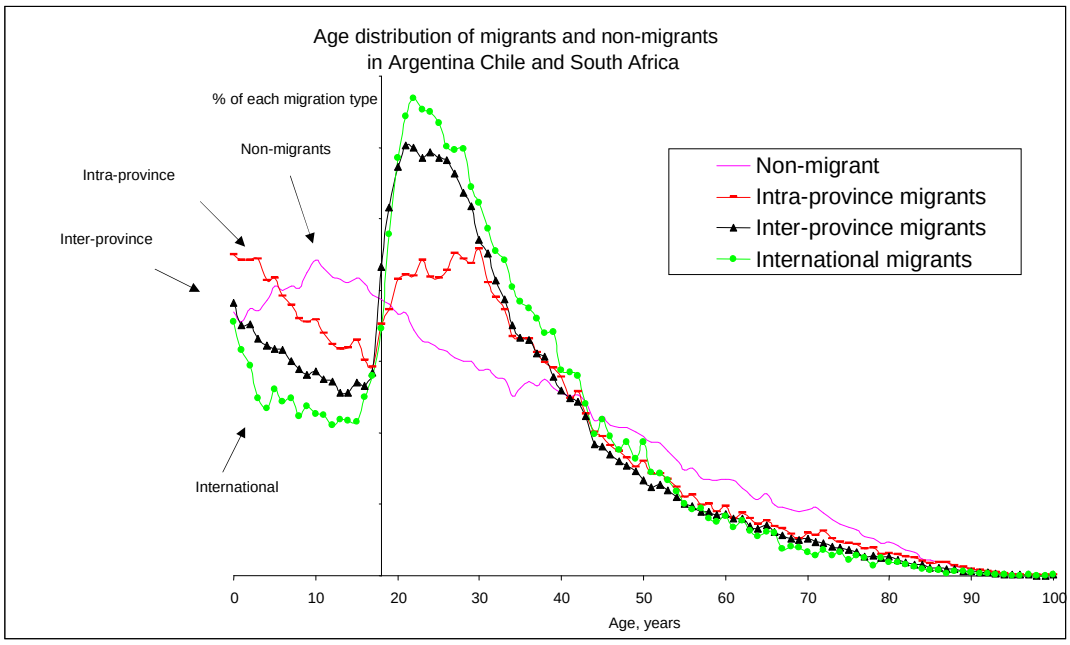
The peak migrant age-group is young adults in their early-20s, and the rise begins in late adolescence between ages 15 to 17 years. After around age 40 years, children's shares in the migrant population exceed that of adults, this being later for international migration and earlier for intra-province migration.

Thus the ranking by age composition of migrants is young adults, children and mature adults (40+). In the three countries, 52 per cent of international and inter-province migrants were aged 18-39 years, 27 per cent were children and 22 per cent were aged 40+. Referring to results in Table 6, children made up 27 per cent of inter-province migrants and 23 per cent of international migrants.

By age 40 years, the age profiles merge. This is likely tied to a shifting balance between migration costs and migration benefits (including financial, social and psychological costs and benefits). Mature adults may find it harder to recoup migration costs later in their working career and lifecycle, particularly with family formation and child-rearing.

A similar cost benefit trade-off could explain why migration involving children gradually drops until age 7 or 8 years, and picks up after adolescence. Children add to the costs of migration (hence most migrants are young adults). Costs increase as children grow (hence the falling child migration rates). But then finally, there may be a shift towards greater rewards in early adolescence (around 12+) when children's earnings potentials rise.

Figure 1: Age profiles by migration types, Argentina, Chile and South Africa



3.3 Sensitivity to definitions

This section presents estimates using a birthplace definition of migration, rather than the residence one used so far. It distinguishes the foreign-born (international migrants) from the native-born, and amongst the native-born those born within the province (non-migrants) and those outside (internal migrants). Initially a stock concept is applied, which includes everybody regardless of when they migrated. Later tables report on flows in the five years preceding the censuses (i.e. native/foreign-born within the flows discussed above).

Table 8 and Table 9 report the absolute numbers and percentages of children born outside the province.[9] Relatively few children were foreign-born, totalling some 234 thousand in the three countries. By birthplace, internal migrant populations have 15 times more children than international migrant populations. Some 11 per cent of children were born outside the province, with the rate being nearly twice as large in Chile than in South Africa.

Table 8: Numbers of children born outside of province of residence, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Birthplace…	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Native	Same province as current residence	10,611,770	3,870,660	15,871,970	30,354,400
Native	Other province than current residence	1,456,950	652,940	1,389,342	3,499,232
Foreign	Other country than current residence	100,020	45,480	88,344	233,844
	Total born out of province	1,556,970	698,420	1,477,686	3,733,076

Table 9: Percentage of children born outside of province of residence, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Birthplace…	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Native	Same province as current residence	87.2	84.7	91.5	88.8
Native	Other province than current residence	12.0	14.3	8.0	10.2
Foreign	Other country than current residence	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.7
	Total born out of province	12.8	15.3	8.5	11.0

The next three tables explore effects of estimating migrant stocks rather than flows. Table 10 shows children were 17 per cent of the population stock born outside the province. But on flows, Table 11 shows that children were nearly 24 per cent of the population born outside of the province that arrived within the five years preceding the censuses. Table 12 shows the absolute number of outside-born flows across the three countries was 892 thousand children, of which 84 thousand were foreign-born.

Table 10: Percentages of population stocks who are children by birthplace, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Birthplace…	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Native	Same province as current residence	39.4	38.0	42.9	40.9
Native	Other province than current residence	18.7	14.7	20.6	18.4
Foreign	Other country than current residence	6.5	23.0	8.6	8.5
	Outside-born	16.7	15.1	19.1	17.2

Table 11: Percentages of population flows who are children by birthplace, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Birthplace…	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Native	Same province as current residence	34.7	33.6	36.6	35.2
Native	Other province than current residence	28.3	25.6	21.5	24.7
Foreign	Other country than current residence	17.7	23.2	12.0	16.2
	Outside-born	26.3	25.4	20.1	23.6

Table 12: Numbers of child migrant flows by birthplace, Argentina, Chile and South Africa

	Birthplace…	Argentina	Chile	South Africa	Pooled
Native	Same province as current residence	147,930	122,440	193,168	463,538
Native	Other province than current residence	252,110	278,760	276,769	807,639
Foreign	Other country than current residence	36,630	21,270	26,577	84,477
	Outside-born	288,740	300,030	303,346	892,116

Definitions and concepts seem to affect estimates of the extent of children in migrant populations. Migration as:

1. change in residence within the 5 years before the census (a flow concept): 1.4 million children or 27 per cent of the migrant population
2. different birthplace from residence at time of census (a stock concept): 3.7 million children or 17 per cent of the migrant population
3. different birthplace from residence at time of census for arrivals within the five years preceding the census (flow concept based on birthplace): 892,000 children or 24 per cent of the migrant population.

Estimates 1 and 3 compare residence and birthplace definitions of migration, and estimates 2 and 3 compare stock and flow concepts. Foreign-born stock is a common indicator in migration debates, but it appears to indicate the lowest child share (8.5 per cent, Table 10). A lower share of children in migrant stocks is expected since child migrants add to the adult stock as they grow up.

4. Independent Child Migrants

Children's independent and dependent statuses were determined based on their relationships with adults they were resident with, and this was tabulated against their migration patterns. This section describes how the in/dependent statuses were assigned; estimates numbers of independent child migrants; and examines their characteristics at destinations. In the following, the term child refers to under-18 year olds. The term offspring refers to the relationship between people.

4.1 In/dependent children: coding

Recalling the earlier discussion of definitions, dependent children were identified in the data as those under 18 years and resident with adult parents, step-parents, adopted parents or adult siblings; and independent children were without any of these close family members coresident. Subgroups were identified to differentiate dependent children with both-parents, solo-parents, or adult siblings without parents. Independent children were grouped into those with adult relatives in extended and marital families (termed as separated children) or with non-relatives (termed as unaccompanied) or with no adults (termed as adultless).

The coding scheme is shown as Table 13, along with shares of children in each group. The first digit shows in/dependence, with dependent children coded in the 1000 series and independent children in the 2000 series. The second and third digits provide further disaggregation as described above. Many children could be identified to a potential fourth digit (and in sufficient numbers for useful analyses), but this was not possible for all.

Importantly some cases could be only partly identified. For one group, it was not possible to differentiate dependent children from separated children, and the other group mixed dependent children with separated and unaccompanied children. The reasons for this are discussed below. These cases were 'allocated' to the dependent category to give a conservative estimate of independent children, and then re-allocated to the separated and unaccompanied categories, respectively, to give an upper estimate of independent children. The last two columns of Table 13 show the effects of these allocations.

Table 13: Children's in/dependence: four digit code

Digit 1	Digit 2	Digit 3	Child resident with…	Four digit code	Conservative, %	Upper, %
1. Dependent						
	1. Parent/s					
		1. Solo		1110	17.5	17.5
		2. Both		1120	53.1	53.1
	2. Adult sibling			1200	1.5	1.5
	3. Allocated					
		1. Mixed with separated cases		1310	20.3	
			G/parent w adult offspring or son/dtr-in-law present			
			G/parent w adult g/child present			
			Relative w adult son/dtr-in-law or sib or sib-in-law or other rel present			
		2. Mixed w sep and unaccomp		1320	0.3	
			Non-relative w adult non-relative present			
			Domestic employer w adult dom employee present			
			Adult present in grouped quarters			
2. Independent						
	1. Adults					
		1. Separated		2110	5.8	26.1
			Adult spouse			
			Grandparent			
			Other			
		2. Unaccompanied		2120	0.3	0.7
			Non-relatives			
			Domestic emp w/out adult dom emp			
	2. Adultless					
		Solo		2210	0.7	0.7
			Grouped quarters without adult			
			Other			
		Multiples		2220	0.4	0.4
			Child siblings			
			Child parents			
			Child spouse			
			Unrelated children			
			Grouped quarters without adult			

The censuses reported relationships to household heads only. This allowed 1100 and 1200 codes to be assigned to children whose adult head was a parent or sibling; and child heads with coresident adult parents or adult siblings.

This is shown in Table 14 (which has been slightly simplified for presentation).

Table 14: Reported and inferred relationships between child-adult pairs

Child's relationship to hhold head	At least one coresident adult with this relationship to household head…												
	Head	Spouse/ partner	Offspring	Grand-offspring	Parent	Parent-in-law	Son/ dtr-in-law	Sibling	Sibling-in-law	Other relative	Non-relative	Domestic employee	Group quarters
Child is head					1100			1200					
Spouse/ partner						1100			1200				
Offspring	1100												
Grand-offspring			1310	1310			1310						
Sibling	1200												
Sibling-in-law		1200											
Other relative							1310	1310	1310	1310			
Non-relative											1320		
Domestic employee												1320	
Group quarters													1320

Other offspring-parent and sibling pairs were coded using inferred relationships.

- If a child was a spouse of the household head, and a coresident adult was a parent-in-law of the head, then an offspring-parent pair was inferred, and the child was coded 1100. Similarly, for siblings-in-law. On the whole the 1100 and 1200 codes were well identified.[10]
- For children whose heads were grandparents, potential offspring-parent pairs existed if a coresident adult was an offspring of the head or son/daughter-in-law of the head; and potential sibling pairs if a coresident adult was a grand-offspring. Similarly for children who were 'other relatives' of the head. These cases might have been dependent children, or might have been separated children living with other relatives, and were coded 1310.
- Non-relative children, child domestic workers (identified in Argentina and Chile only) and children in grouped quarters (as defined in Table 3) residing

with a co-resident adult in similar circumstances (i.e. as a non-relative, or a domestic worker or in grouped quarters, respectively), might have been dependent children, separated children or unaccompanied children, and these cases were coded 1320.

The conservative estimate of independent children counted 1310 and 1320 cases as dependent, and the upper estimate counted them as independent.

Finally, it should be noted that independent children are not necessarily orphans. This is borne out by the South African census which included a question on surviving parents. Table 15 shows that no more than 4 per cent of independent children had both parents dead.

Having a mother dead, father dead or both parents dead seemed not to have much relationship with whether children were residing with relatives, non-relatives or without adults. There seems to be little connection between forms of adult co-residence and parental mortality.

Table 15: Orphanhood and independence status, South Africa (per cent)

	Conservative estimate			Upper estimate		
	Mother dead	Father dead	Both dead	Mother dead	Father dead	Both dead
Dependent	3.1	11.1	1.1	2.0	10.0	0.7
Independent…	9.0	18.6	3.9	6.4	15.0	2.6
...of which coresident with:						
Adult relatives	84.8	83.8	85.2	93.4	93.7	93.1
Adult non-relatives, inc employer	2.9	2.5	3.2	1.9	1.7	2.1
Adultless solo	5.7	6.1	5.7	2.2	2.1	2.4
Adultless multiples	6.6	7.5	5.9	2.5	2.5	2.4

4.2 Scale and form of independent child migration

Table 16 reports the numbers of in/dependent children in the migration flows described earlier across the three countries. The conservative estimate suggests over 10 thousand international child migrants reside at destination independently of close family, compared to 112 thousand internal child migrants who do so; an upper estimate would be 21 thousand and 250 thousand respectively. Internal independent child migrants are over 10 times as numerous as international ones.

Together, children residing at destinations independently of close family represent between 9 per cent and 19 per cent of the overall child migrant flows over five years, amounting to annual in-flows of between 24 thousand to 54 thousand children.

Table 16: Numbers and shares of independent child migrants

		Conservative estimate		Upper estimate		% independent children	
		Dependent	Independent	Dependent	Independent	Conservative	Upper
Pooled	Internal (intra-province)	739,550	67,990	664,480	143,060	8.4	17.7
	Internal (inter-province)	1,132,243	111,704	993,769	250,177	9.0	20.1
	International	105,128	10,109	93,893	21,344	8.8	18.5
Argentina	Internal (intra-province)	432,690	34,450	391,530	75,610	7.4	16.2
	Internal (inter-province)	361,370	23,480	326,210	58,640	6.1	15.2
	International	47,990	3,830	42,830	8,990	7.4	17.3
Chile	Internal (intra-province)	306,860	33,540	272,950	67,450	9.9	19.8
	Internal (inter-province)	358,650	37,920	314,890	81,680	9.6	20.6
	International	27,720	1,710	24,000	5,430	5.8	18.5
South Africa	Internal (inter-province)	412,223	50,304	352,669	109,857	10.9	23.8
	International	29,418	4,569	27,063	6,924	13.4	20.4

Of the three countries, the largest numbers of independent child migrants are in South Africa for both internal and international migration. Between Argentina and Chile, whilst Argentina has more international independent child migrants, Chile has more internal ones.

Table 17 gives a more detailed picture of how migration is associated with altered adult coresidence. Amongst migrant children, much larger proportions are living with relatives, non-relatives, or are adultless, and there is not much difference between international or internal migrant children. The latter result might mask two opposing factors: children might find it easier to be

adultless independent migrants within their own country, whilst at the same time, parents might find it easier to make arrangements for children with relatives or non-relatives at destinations within their own countries. Some 6 per cent (conservative estimate) of international child migrants reside with adults who are not close family. Of course, the causality between migration and adult co-residence may run in both directions.

Table 17: Adult co-residence and migration types (countries pooled) (per cent)

	Conservative				Upper			
	Non-migrant	Intra-province	Inter-province	International	Non-migrant	Intra-province	Inter-province	International
Dependent	93.0	91.6	91.0	91.2	71.8	82.3	79.9	81.5
One parent	17.8	11.9	15.8	13.5	17.8	11.9	15.8	13.5
Both parents	52.5	70.1	62.4	66.7	52.5	70.1	62.4	66.7
Adult sibling	1.5	0.3	1.7	1.3	1.5	0.3	1.7	1.3
Allocated (mixed w sep cases)	21.0	8.6	10.1	8.6				
Allocated (mixed w sep+unacc cases)	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.2				
Independent	7.0	8.4	9.0	8.8	28.2	17.7	20.1	18.5
Adult relatives	5.8	4.3	5.2	4.9	26.8	12.9	15.4	13.4
Adult non-relatives, inc employer	0.3	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.6	1.9	1.9	2.3
Adultless solo	0.5	2.8	2.4	2.3	0.5	2.8	2.4	2.3
Adultless multiples	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 2 plots the ages of children by their in/dependence status and migration type (using conservative estimates). Where migration involves older children or crossing borders, the close family is less likely intact, and this probably relates to rising barriers to migration. There is a sharp rise in child migrants residing independently of close family from as early as age 12 years, whilst rates for dependent children are flat or slightly declining with age. This applies to both internal and international migration. These patterns are consistent with the discussion earlier of how household dependency burdens may shape migration patterns of both children and adults, and shift as children grow up. By around age 16 years, international migration rates begin to exceed internal ones, and children probably increasingly blend into adult irregular migration processes.

Figure 2: Age structure by migration type and children's in/dependence (conservative estimates)

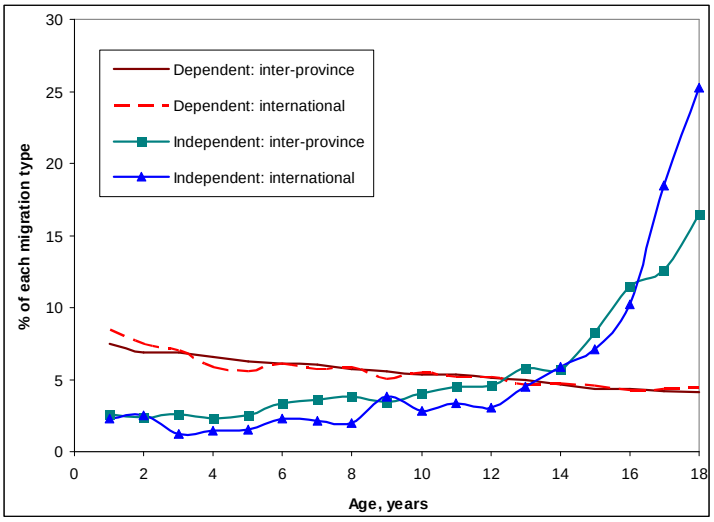


Table 18 relates children's adult co-residence to their ages and migration type. If a child is residing independently of close family, non-migrants over 15 years are as likely as migrants under 12 years to be residing with relatives (roughly 70-85 per cent). In other words, there is a three-year age gap between migrant and non-migrant children in co-residence outside the extended family. Migrant 15-17 year olds are two to three times as likely to be with non-relatives or be adultless as non-migrant 15-17 years olds and migrant under 12 year olds. Children's independent residence from adult parents and siblings is not just a function of age, but is related also to migration (although again, the direction of causality may run in both directions).

Table 18: Age-specific independence amongst child migrants (per cent)

		Conservative estimate				Upper estimate			
		Non-migrant	Intra-province	Inter-province	International	Non-migrant	Intra-province	Inter-province	International
0-11 years	Adult relatives	89.3	56.4	71.6	70.7	97.0	83.2	87.3	86.3
	Adult non-relatives, inc employer	3.8	15.1	10.7	11.0	1.6	8.0	7.3	8.7
	Adultless solo	2.4	27.1	14.1	12.9	0.5	8.4	4.3	3.5
	Adultless multiples	4.6	1.5	3.6	5.5	0.9	0.5	1.1	1.5
		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
12-14 years	Adult relatives	77.6	43.6	49.0	53.6	91.4	61.4	66.3	67.0
	Adult non-relatives, inc employer	4.7	12.6	8.8	10.7	2.7	11.9	10.0	13.9
	Adultless solo	9.3	42.6	36.4	31.7	3.1	25.9	20.5	17.1
	Adultless multiples	8.3	1.2	5.7	4.0	2.8	0.7	3.2	2.1
		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-17 years	Adult relatives	70.3	50.1	49.6	48.0	85.8	58.1	58.2	55.8
	Adult non-relatives, inc employer	5.4	13.9	10.5	14.1	3.8	15.2	14.0	17.0
	Adultless solo	15.3	33.9	35.4	32.5	6.5	25.1	24.7	23.4
	Adultless multiples	9.1	2.1	4.5	5.4	3.9	1.6	3.1	3.9
		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

4.3 Migrant children at destination

This section examines children's characteristics at destination according to their migration type and their in/dependence (using the conservative classification). The censuses contained information on shelter, schooling, and economic activity of over 15 year olds. Children's access to these is largely mediated by adults. So migrant children's in/dependence may be an important conditioning factor, as well as whether they are from another country or not.

Table 19 shows that migrant children are less likely to have stable shelter, and are relatively more likely to be in collective dwellings, such as institutions. Not shown is that migrant children are more likely in the seemingly lower quality and more temporary homes (e.g. shacks and rooms). These results are due mainly to independent child migrants. Migrant children coresident with close family are not much different from non-migrants in their shelter types (although qualitative differences are possible). Internal independent child migrants are less likely than international ones to be in stable shelter. This probably partly reflects their greater access to collective dwellings within their own countries (bearing in mind that the homeless category is probably under-enumerated) and that international migrants may take greater care to make shelter arrangements (possibly arranged in connection to employment).

Table 19: Shelter at destination by migration type and in/dependence (per cent)

		Non-migrant		Inter-province migrant		International migrant	
		Dependent	Independent	Dependent	Independent	Dependent	Independent
Argentina	1. House, apartment, shack, hut, room	99.8	94.4	99.3	75.0	99.4	88.3
	2. Street, homeless, mobile	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.8
	3. Collective dwelling	0.0	5.3	0.0	24.2	0.0	11.0
Chile	1. House, apartment, shack, hut, room	99.8	88.8	99.4	72.0	99.3	85.4
	2. Street, homeless, mobile	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.4	2.3
	3. Collective dwelling	0.1	11.2	0.5	26.9	0.4	12.3
South Africa	1. House, apartment, shack, hut, room	99.3	94.7	98.1	74.3	96.5	62.5
	2. Street, homeless, mobile	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0
	3. Collective dwelling	0.7	5.2	1.9	25.5	3.4	37.5

Table 20 shows that mean years of school was greater amongst independent child migrants. The average international independent child migrant had 5.9 years of schooling. Whilst this was not much different to internal independent child migrants, it was nearly two years more than dependent migrant children**.**

Table 21 shows that residing independently of close family and/or migration are linked to children's work. Over a fifth of international independent child migrants aged over 15 years were employed, compared to fewer than 4 per cent of non-migrant dependent children. Rates for internal child migrants were lower than international migrants. Amongst international migrants, coresidence with an adult sibling also entailed large proportions of children working.

Table 20: Years of schooling by migration and in/dependence status

		Dependent	Independent
Non-migrant	Mean	4.0	4.4
	Variance	11.0	10.6
Intra-province	Mean	3.5	5.7
	Variance	11.6	11.9
Inter-province	Mean	3.8	5.8
	Variance	11.6	12.1
International	Mean	3.8	5.9
	Variance	11.9	13.2

Table 21: Per cent employed by migration and in/dependence, aged 15+ years

	Non-migrant	Intra-province	Inter-province	International	All
Dependent	3.7	10.6	6.1	10.2	3.9
One parent	3.3	10.9	5.0	5.6	3.5
Both parents	4.2	9.9	5.3	7.0	4.4
Adult sibling	2.4	15.5	7.9	31.4	2.9
Allocated (mixed w sep cases)	2.2	10.8	7.2	19.5	2.4
Allocated (mixed w sep+unacc cases)	11.2	22.6	21.9	15.9	14.0
Independent	5.8	14.4	12.3	22.1	6.8
Adult relatives	5.1	16.3	12.1	24.3	6.0
Adult non-relatives, inc employer	15.2	25.2	23.3	22.9	17.4
Adultless solo	7.0	6.0	9.8	14.8	7.4
Adultless multiples	3.4	32.8	8.1	44.4	4.1

5. Discussion

This section draws on the evidence presented to reflect on some ideas for further research. In recent years, a lot of migration research has been directed towards understanding potential links between migration and development.[11] Largely this has centred on the development implications of immigrants in high-income countries, totalling around 115 million people worldwide (UN 2006). This 'tip of the iceberg' gives a partial picture of the global scale of migration, who is involved and why, and consequently, the development issues raised by migration.

Results presented above indicate South-South migration and internal migration are large, and may involve greater participation across social groups. Findings refer specifically to the middle-income countries studied, but are expected to be applicable to lower-income countries as well. Lower barriers to migration to developing countries and to internal destinations imply greater migration by whole families including children, by children migrating independently and by children in poverty. Around 1.4 million children in Argentina, Chile and South Africa were migrants, comprising over a quarter of all migrants. Internal inter-province migration was 11 times as large as international migration; and internal intra-province migration was roughly as large. Around half of international child migrants were from bordering countries.

Crucially definitions seem to affect the age profiles of migrant populations, and hence give different pictures on the numbers of children involved. Defining migration as: (1) change in residence within five years prior to census (a flow concept), indicated 1.4 million migrant children or 27 per cent of the migrant population; (2) different birthplace from residence at census (a stock concept), indicated 3.7 million migrant children or 17 per cent of the migrant population; (3) different birthplace from residence at census for arrivals within five years prior to census (flow concept based on birthplace), indicated 892,000 children or 24 per cent of the migrant population. Foreign-born stocks (type 2) are the most prevalent, internationally comparable statistics shaping migration debates.

Although international migration and internal migration can raise some different issues, and have traditionally been separate fields of enquiry, some authors have begun to recognise the limitations of this (DeWind and Holdaway 2008; 2005). From the perspective of a poor family or child, internal migration and international migration may simply be alternative potential

movements, and separating them does not allow understanding of why one movement is chosen rather than another. Skeldon (2003, p.12) argues that "those looking at internal migration and those looking at international migration are separately looking at what are likely to be different responses to similar forces".

A more unified approach would help to understand how the alternatives facing many families are not simply 'non-migration' or 'migration', but many types of migration. The type taken may be conditioned by potentially endogenous selection effects, particularly due to poverty. Types of migration may vary in terms of participation by different family members (e.g. by gender and age) and by destinations (international/internal, rural/urban, etc.). Clearly the resulting composition of migrant populations – such as in terms of their human capital, age or poverty before migration – influences the overall development impact of migration. At the family level, migration by individual children of the poor may be a response by families otherwise constrained in migration opportunities.

A conservative estimate suggests that in Argentina, Chile and South Africa over 7 per cent of children were resident at destinations independently of adult parents or siblings (of whom few were orphans, according to South African data). Over 10 thousand in total were international migrants, and 112 thousand internal migrants. Upper estimates were twice as large. The children tended to be in worse shelter, have more years of schooling, and were more likely working.

An important result was the variation in children's coresidence with adults – amongst both migrants and non-migrants, but with the variety greater amongst migrants. Correspondingly therefore, at places of origin, many adults (including older ones) do not live with their children. The spatial relocation of family members presumably can lead to rearrangements within the family in its organisation of income-earning, consumption, unpaid household work, protection of vulnerable members, etc. Understanding how migration alters 'who lives with whom' is a key aspect of understanding the social implications of migration. The three censuses analysed allowed the issue to be studied to some extent, but did not report absent household members (and so populations 'left behind' by migrants could not be identified), and more detailed data on the relationships to coresident individuals would have allowed for a clearer picture of the full diversity of coresidence arrangements.

Insufficient attention to South-South and internal migration has led to misleading assumptions in conceptualising children's migration. Extrapolations from high-income countries have created the perception that children's migration is less prevalent than it is in other parts of the world; it misleadingly suggests that children migrate independently of their parents and adult guardians only in exceptional circumstances; and since migrant children generally do not work in the North, the debate fails to recognise the relationship between migration and children's paid and unpaid work, and this applies to whether children migrate independently, with families or are left behind. Migration research often conceptualises children's migration as a residual of adult labour decisions, which ignores how the timing and organisation of migration by children and adults may depend on children's labour potential and intra-family relationships.

Children can differ from adults in some obvious ways that may affect how they relate to migration: physiology, psychology, life experiences, knowledge, legal protections and restrictions, and society's norms regarding childhood. These can mean that, as migrants, children have special vulnerabilities; limited opportunities for documented migration; age-specific responses to incentives and risks; limited independent access to shelter or basic services or livelihoods; and in parallel to gender-constructions, are subject to legal and social norms, restrictions and expectations as "children".

The above is relevant to a wide range of actors that influence perceptions of children's migration in the absence of statistics. Media tend to focus on stories of child migrants who are abused or in hardship. OECD governments see children's movements as part of immigration control, labour and national security. NGOs focus on service provision, which is a priority, but situation analysis is distinct from understanding causal processes. Developing country governments focus on emigration, and do not prioritise questions raised by their countries being destinations or by their internal migrants (including their treaty duties under the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Donors are only recently viewing migration as part of development cooperation.

The evidence presented in this paper suggest that there is significant scope to build on available data and develop a more accurate, coherent and useful understanding of child migrants and their role in the development process.

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[1] For example, Adhikari and Pradhan (2005) studies five borer check-points from Nepal to India, over a three month period, and found that only 4 per cent of children carried an identification document.

[2] For example, the Tanzania Census 2002: "The month of August has traditionally been selected for census taking due to two main reasons. The dry weather facilitates transportation and communication. Second, most farmers have finished harvesting their crops, which means that seasonal labour migration is slightly lower." http://www.tanzania.go.tz/sensa/report2.htm, accessed May 2008.

[3] See Bell et al. (2002) on other issues of comparability, especially Table 7.

[4] Migration is tied to children's work. According to ILO conventions 138 and 182, children 15 years and older can work if it is not hazardous for their safety, physical or mental health, or moral development; and children 12-14 years old can perform certain types of light work a few hours per week. All other economically active children are termed as 'child labourers'. Economic activity encompasses productive activities, except schooling and chores in the child's own household, of at least one hour per week (whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, casual or regular, or legal or illegal).

[5] See interagency report involving UNICEF, UNHCR and four international NGOs (Red Cross et al. 2004). For example, a migrant child domestic worker without a parent in a relative's house is separated, but not unaccompanied.

[6] For a minority, independence in one might not imply the other. Children may be independent at destination after travelling with families, because of parental death, deportation or abandonment. Some cases have been noted of children independent from the border onwards. Also, children may travel independently but not be independent at destination, because their travel is for family reunification, such as when undocumented migrants cannot return to collect their children.

[7] Media coverage has tended to emphasise travel, particularly towards Europe and the USA – see for example, 'Children Highlight Migrants' Desperation in Canary Islands Journey' *Fox News* 30 May 2006; 'Human Rights Groups Urge Compassion Toward Minors Crossing Illegally from Africa to Europe' *Christian Science Monitor* 2 May 2003; 'Child migrants die in shipwreck' Adelaide Now 28 Nov 2006; 'Mexico Says Growing Number of Children Found Crossing Corder Illegally' *San Diego Union Tribune* 14 April 2006; 'Growing Number of Migrant Kids Held in U.S. Shelters' *Arizona Republic* 23 May 2004.

[8] Though commonly applied to children who migrate, independence can apply to children left behind by migrating adults, and defined identically in terms of children without a parent or legal/customary adult guardian.

[9] Around 2.3 per cnet of the sample in Chile had missing data on birthpklace, and were dropped for this analysis. Missingness weas not correlated to age.

[10] The Argentinean census did not differentiate parents from parents-in-law, nor identify siblings and siblings-in-law. Rather than drop these potential pairings, aggregate codes were used instead which would have meant that some independent children might have been wrongly coded as dependent (and remain so even in the upper estimate, although these cases are likely to be few).

[11] For example, it was the topic of inter-governmental dialogue at the UN General Assembly in 2003 and 2006, in Belgium in 2007, and in the Philippines in 2008.