Gender Dimensions of Migration: Implications for Adolescents' Schooling in Urban Areas of Africa and Asia

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Abstract

Migration during adolescence, particularly to urban areas, brings with it many opportunities as well as risks. Adolescents moving from rural to urban areas gain access to better schooling and economic opportunities, as well as improved infrastructure and potentially better living conditions. These opportunities and risks vary by gender and are linked to gender differences in migration experiences and reasons for migration. Despite adolescents' unique needs and circumstances, very rarely have migration studies focused on this specific age group and even fewer have compared their migration experiences across multiple countries. Our study examines migration among urban adolescents in 12 African and Asian countries. We use data from the Demographic and Health Surveys to describe the prevalence and type of migration (urban-urban, rural-urban) and examine whether adolescent migrants experience greater vulnerability and poorer schooling outcomes than non-migrants. Due to the gendered nature of migration, we explore these relationships separately by gender. Preliminary results indicate that migration prevalence is higher among girls and that most migrants originate from other urban areas. Adolescent migrants are significantly less likely to be living with one or both parents. While migrant girls are less likely to be in school than their non-migrant counterparts, no significant difference is observed among boys. The completed paper will provide greater insight into the lives of adolescent migrants in Africa and Asia and the vulnerabilities they encounter in urban areas. This information can be used to inform the development and delivery of services and programs to high-risk migrants in urban areas.

Introduction

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, a figure that is projected to increase to 68% by 2050 (United Nations Population Division 2018). As the populations of Europe and North and South America are presently predominantly urban, Africa and Asia are expected to experience the bulk of this population growth, with 56% and 64% of their populations living in urban areas by mid-century (United Nations Population Division 2014, 2018). Urbanization is due to several factors, including rural-urban migration, natural increase, and the reclassification of rural areas as urban. Although urban population growth is driven largely by natural increase, rural-urban migration remains a key factor in its growth (Montgomery et al. 2013).

Individuals who migrate typically have different sociodemographic profiles than those who stay behind. They tend to be younger, unmarried, and healthier compared to their non-migrant counterparts (Anglewicz et al. 2018; Castro and Rogers 1984; Nauman et al. 2015). Thus, it is not surprising that many migrants are adolescents (Beguy, Bocquier and Zulu 2010; Collinson, Tollman and Kahn 2007; National Research Council and Committee on Population 2005). The gender composition of these migrants varies across contexts, and depends largely on migration streams and the opportunities that exist in destination areas (Chant 1992).

Migration during adolescence can bring with it many potential opportunities as well as risks (Temin et al. 2013). Adolescents moving from rural to urban areas gain access to better schooling and economic opportunities, as well as improved infrastructure and potentially better living conditions (Beegle and Poulin 2012; Beguy et al. 2010; National Research Council and Committee on Population 2005). Whether adolescent migrants capitalize on these opportunities depends largely on their migration experiences and reasons for migration, which often vary by gender. For instance, many adolescent girls who migrate to urban areas work as domestic servants in the informal sector. Many of these girls are mistreated or exploited, and some are trafficked (Jacquemin 2009; Lesclingand 2011). While some adolescents migrate to urban areas with their parents, others do not (Collinson 2017). Regardless of who accompanies them, migrant adolescents experience disruptions in their social and kin networks (Brockerhoff and Biddlecom 1999), which could make their transition to urban life more difficult and increase their likelihood of experiencing poorer outcomes.

Despite adolescents' unique needs and circumstances, very rarely have migration studies focused on this specific age group and even fewer have compared their migration experiences across multiple countries (Beegle and Poulin 2012; Clark and Cotton 2013; Montgomery et al. 2016). Building on the existing literature, we investigate the interrelationship between migration, gender, and schooling among urban adolescents in 12 African and Asian countries. We focus on schooling as an outcome because education is an important marker of human capital that has important long-term implications. Using data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), we answer four primary questions: 1) What is the prevalence of migration among urban adolescents? 2) What type of migration (urban-urban, rural-urban) prevails? 3) Do adolescent migrants live in more vulnerable living conditions (e.g. living with neither parent) than non-migrants? and 4) How do the schooling outcomes of migrants compare to that of non-migrants in urban areas? To examine the influence of gender, we conduct analyses separately for girls and boys. This research will provide greater insight into the lives of adolescent migrants in Africa and Asia and the vulnerabilities they encounter when moving to urban areas. Policy-makers can use this information to inform the development and delivery of services and programs to high-risk migrants in urban areas.

Data

We use DHS data to study adolescent migration to urban areas in Africa and Asia. The DHS are nationally representative household surveys that collect information on a wide range of topics, including health, mortality, education, and reproductive health. These cross-sectional surveys, typically conducted every five years, are based on a stratified two-stage cluster design in which primary sampling units are typically drawn from census enumeration areas. In each cluster, households are randomly selected, and a household survey is conducted with the head of the household. In selected households, all women, 15-49 years, and a subset of men, usually 15-49 years[1], living in the household are invited to participate in the survey.

Since its inception, the DHS has collected data from a total of 92 countries. We restrict the analytic sample to countries and DHS surveys in which both women and men were interviewed and data on migration, parental co-residence, orphan status, and education were

[1] Not all countries collected data from men, particularly in the earlier surveys. Age range of men varies by country and survey.

collected. In countries with eligible data from more than one survey round, we select the most recent survey round. Although household surveys collect information on all adolescents living in the household, we restrict our analysis to adolescents who participated in the individual-level survey because information on migration is rarely collected at the household level. We also limit the analysis to adolescents aged 15-17 years because information on orphan status and parental co-residence are only collected for children and adolescents below age 18. Finally, we restrict analyses to countries and surveys with sufficiently large sample sizes to ensure adequate statistical power.[2] In total, 12 countries meet the inclusion criteria: 9 in Sub-Saharan Africa and 3 in Asia. These countries, along with their survey years, are listed in Table 1. Our study focuses on adolescent girls and boys, 15-17 years, living in urban areas of 12 African and Asian countries.

The DHS collects limited information on migration. Our study focuses on responses to two migration questions that are asked in the individual surveys. We construct a measure of adolescent migration using responses to the following question: 'How long have you been living continuously in (NAME OF CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE)?' Response options are: a specified number of years[3], always, or visitor. If a respondent reports 'always', then he or she is coded as a non-migrant. If a respondent reports a specific number of years, then we use this information, along with current age, to calculate the age at migration. If the respondent migrated to the current urban site before age 10, we code the respondent as a non-migrant. If the respondent migrated at age 10 or later, we code the respondent as a migrant. We exclude respondents from the analysis if they reported being a visitor because their current residence is unknown. Among adolescent migrants, we create a variable indicating the type of migration: urban-urban or rural-urban. This variable is constructed using responses to the following question: 'Just before you moved here, did you live in a city, in a town, or in the countryside?' Respondents who reported 'city' or 'town' are coded 'urban-urban'; otherwise, they are coded as 'rural-urban'.

[2] We restrict the analytic sample to surveys that collected data from at least 750 urban adolescents, girls and boys, aged 15-17 years.

[3] If less than one year, the response is recorded as zero.

Proposed Methods

In the first part of the analysis, we calculate the percentage of urban adolescents, 15-17 years, who are migrants in each country by gender. We further assess whether these migrants came from other urban areas or rural areas. We also examine the percentage of urban adolescents living with one or both parents and the percentage currently attending school by gender and migration status.

In the second part of the analysis, we build logistic regression models to determine whether adolescent migrants are in more vulnerable living situations compared to non-migrants. We measure vulnerability using a range of indicators, including lives with neither parent, orphaned, household poverty, lives in slum conditions, and others. In addition, we build logistic regression models to examine whether adolescent migrants have poorer schooling outcomes than non-migrants in urban areas, specifically related to current school attendance and educational attainment. In all models, we test whether type of migration (urban-urban vs rural-urban) and time since migration mediate any of these relationships. We control for sociodemographic and household variables that may be related to the outcomes of interest.

Preliminary Results

In Figure 1, we present the percentage of urban adolescents who migrated to their current place of residence during adolescence, defined as age 10 or later, by country. The prevalence of urban girls who are migrants varies by country. In India, where it is lowest, 16% of urban girls and 18% of urban boys experienced migration during adolescence. In Zimbabwe, in contrast, 48% of urban girls and 34% of urban boys migrated to their current place of residence during adolescence. Overall, we observe that a higher percentage of girls experienced adolescent migration than boys, with two exceptions: in India, the percentage is slightly higher among boys (18% vs 16%), and in Mozambique, the percentage is substantially higher among boys (39% vs 29%).

Table 2 shows that most adolescents migrating to urban areas actually come from other urban areas. In Nepal, Ethiopia, and DR Congo, the majority of migrant adolescents, girls and boys, originated from rural areas. While a greater percentage of migrant girls in Madagascar are rural-urban migrants, the reverse is observed from boys. In Timor-Leste, rural-urban migration is

more common among boys (67%) and urban-urban migration is more common among girls (58%).

We calculated the percentage of urban adolescents living with one or both parents by gender and migration status (Table 3). Results indicate that migrant adolescents, both girls and boys, are significantly less likely to be living with one or both parents compared to their non-migrant counterparts. The gap in the percentage living with at least one parent by migration status is striking. The smallest gap is observed among urban boys in Zambia: 74% of non-migrants versus 55% of migrants. The largest gap exists among urban boys in Timor-Leste: 90% and 14%, respectively. Similar differences are observed among girls. We also find that, in most countries, a higher percentage of migrant boys live with at least one parent compared to girls.

In Table 4, we present the percentage of urban adolescents attending school by gender and migration status. Results indicate the existence of gender-specific patterns. In most countries, migrant girls have significantly lower school attendance than non-migrant girls. In contrast, no difference in school attendance is observed for migrant boys, except in India, where 63% of migrant boys and 70% of non-migrant boys are attending school. Among non-migrants in most countries, levels of school attendance are similar by gender. Only in Benin, DR Congo, Madagascar, and Mozambique do we observe higher levels of school attendance among boys.

Discussion and Next Steps

Our study presents evidence that adolescent migration to urban areas is a common occurrence in many African and Asian countries. Although the percentage of urban adolescents who experienced migration during adolescence varies by country, it is not inconsequential and, in most countries, is higher among girls. Urban migration tends to attract adolescents from other urban areas rather than rural areas, though it is possible that some urban-urban migrants have origins in rural areas but migrated multiple times. Adolescent migrants, regardless of gender, are significantly less likely to be living with one or both parents. This finding points to the possibility that many adolescent migrants are moving to urban areas without a parent, which can increase their likelihood of being in vulnerable situations, particularly of females who are even less likely than males to live with a parent. In the completed paper, we plan to look more closely at adolescents' living arrangements, focusing on their relationship to the household head. The relationship between urban migration and schooling varies by gender. While migrant girls are

less likely to be in school than their non-migrant counterparts, this relationship does not vary among boys. This finding points to a gender dimension in adolescent migration to urban areas. Either adolescent girls are migrating for different reasons, e.g. paid or unpaid work, than boys or they are more susceptible to school dropout once they arrive in urban centers. In the completed paper, we will explore the gendered nature of urban migration and the factors contributing to poorer schooling outcomes among female migrants, including whether parental co-residence mediates the relationship between migration and schooling among girls.

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Table 1. Study sample of urban adolescent girls and boys, 15-17 years, by region and country, Demographic and Health Surveys

Region and Country	Survey Years	N(girls)	N(boys)	N(total)
Asia				
India	2005-06	5875	3674	9549
Nepal	2016-17	950	382	1332
Timor-Leste	2016	718	220	938
Sub-Saharan Africa				
Benin	2006	814	258	1072
DR Congo	2007	687	279	966
Ethiopia	2016	690	389	1079
Madagascar	2008-09	681	258	939
Malawi	2015-16	654	233	887
Mozambique	2003	841	237	1078
Nigeria	2008	1174	488	1662
Zambia	2013-14	1026	884	1910
Zimbabwe	2015	473	340	813

Table 2. Percentage distribution of urban migrant adolescents, 15-17 years, by type of migration, Demographic and Health Surveys

	Girls		Boys	
Country	Urban-Urban	Rural-Urban	Urban-Urban	Rural-Urban
Nepal	27.3	72.8	39.6	60.4
Ethiopia	30.7	69.3	15.8	84.2
DR Congo	41.0	59.0	39.0	61.0
Madagascar	45.1	54.9	59.6	40.4
Timor-Leste	57.9	42.2	32.7	67.3
Malawi	58.6	41.4	57.6	42.4
India	58.8	41.2	57.9	42.1
Mozambique	69.5	30.5	56.5	43.5
Nigeria	77.9	22.1	85.0	15.0
Zambia	80.0	20.0	81.9	18.1
Benin	84.1	15.9	91.2	8.8
Zimbabwe	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

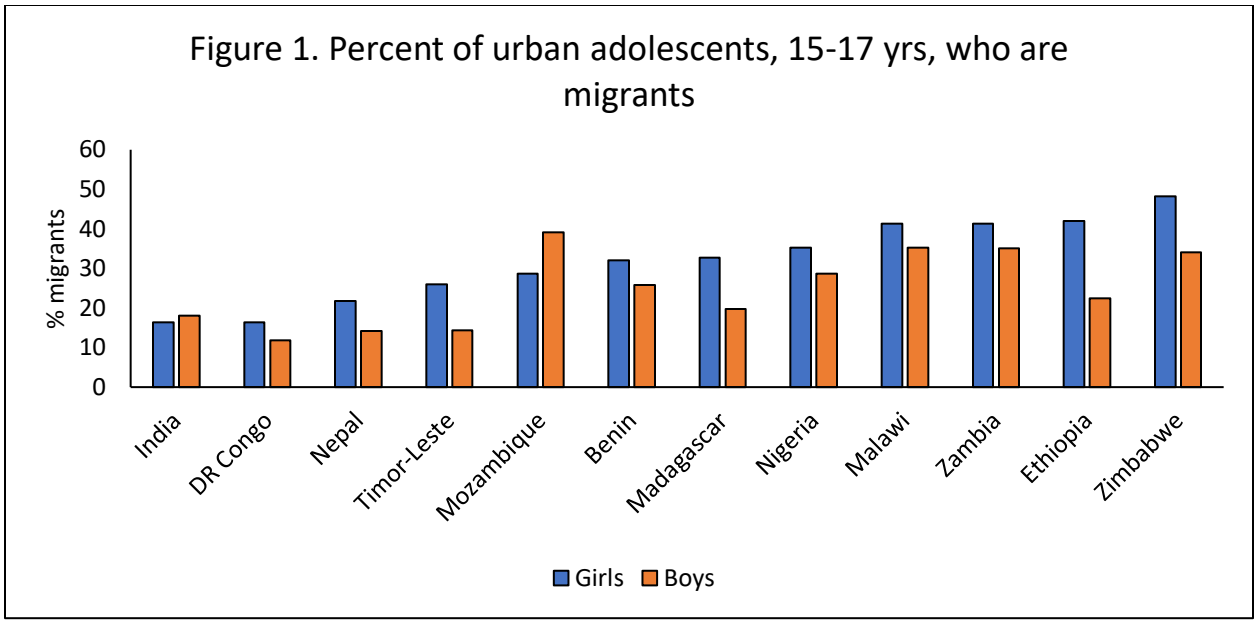
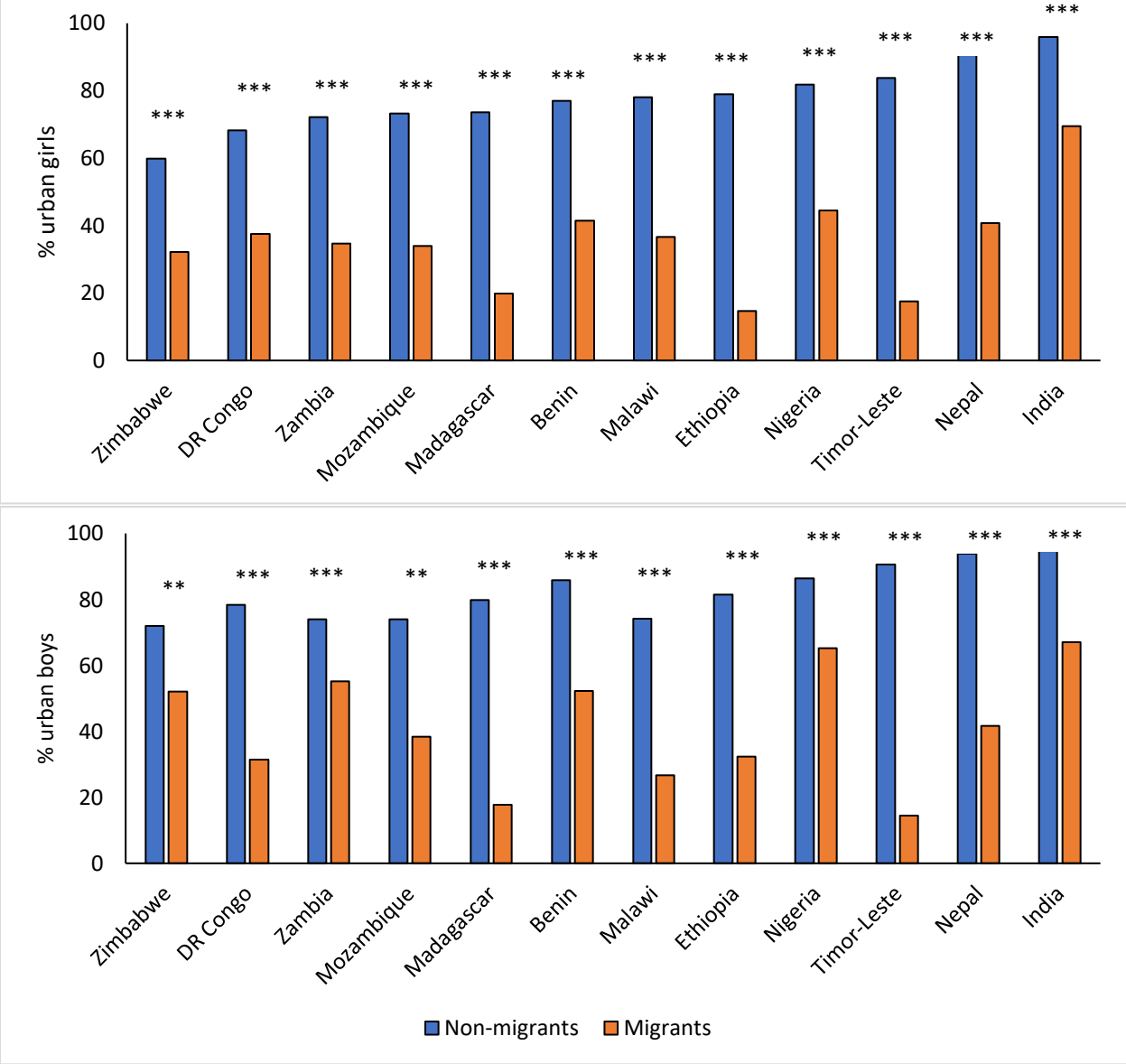


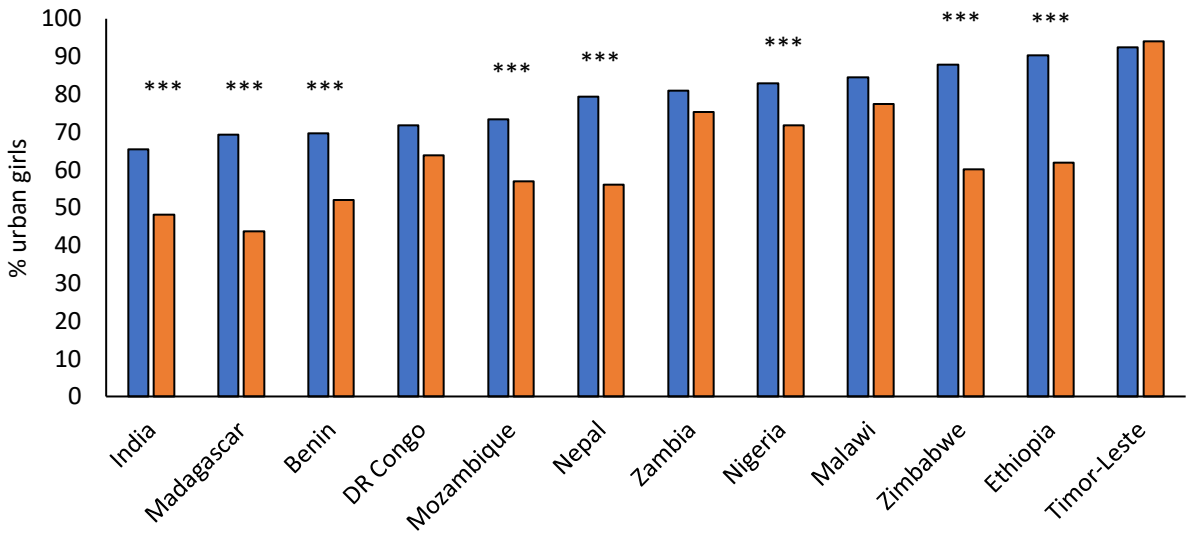
Figure 1. Percent of urban adolescents, 15-17 yrs, who are migrants
% migrants
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
India
DR Congo
Nepal
Timor-Leste
Mozambique
Benin
Madagascar
Nigeria
Malawi
Zambia
Ethiopia
Zimbabwe
Girls
Boys

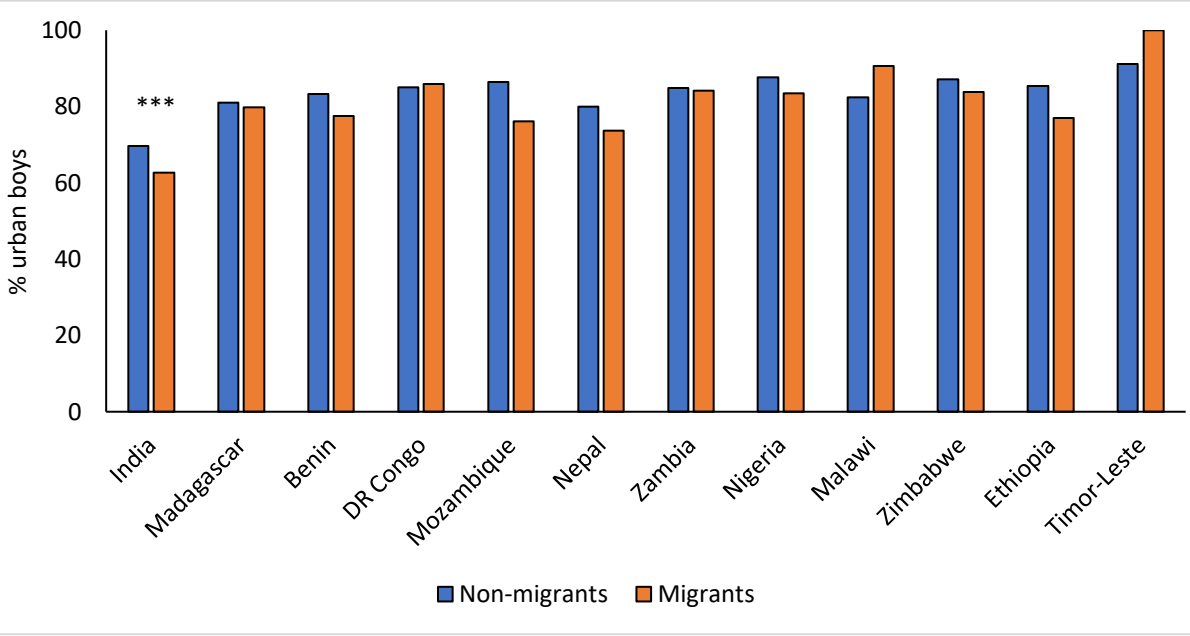
Figure 2. Percent of urban adolescents, 15-17 years, living with one or both parents, by migration status



Note: Significance levels are relative to non-migrants.
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 3. Percent of urban adolescents, 15-17 years, attending school, by migration status





Note: Significance levels are relative to non-migrants.
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05