With One Child Here and One Child There: Is There Specialization and Complementarity in Children's Support Related to Their Place of Residence? The Mexican Case

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As societies age, individuals tend to depend more on family support for their economic survival and for help with their daily activities. This is especially true in cases such as Mexico where family ties are strong and institutions are only marginally involved. Past research has shown that most of the monetary and functional help for the elderly comes from family members, especially from children. It has also shown that coresident offspring are more likely to provide instrumental support, while non-coresidents are more likely to provide economic. However, these studies have not analyzed whether there is a specialization according to place of residence among children in the kind of help they provide, that may also talk about coordination and complementarity. In this paper we focus on this issue. We also construct different types of families depending on children's place of residence and analyze the distribution of caregiving and economic support tasks.

Introduction

Mexico, like many other countries in Latin America, is undergoing a rapid ageing population process. Projections show that individuals aged 60 and older, who in the year 2010 were 9% of the population (INEGI 2010), will come to represent more than 25% in 2050 (Ordorica, 2010). This change will bring many demands in services, especially health-related, and an increased burden to families who are nowadays responsible for the caregiving of the elderly. Several studies have shown that because of Mexico's weak pension system and the importance of the informal labor market, it is common for the elderly to continue working until late in life (Ham *et al* 2003, Mejía, 2011). It has also been demonstrated that in order to make ends meet, many adults receive economic support from their family members, mostly from their children (Ham *et al* 2003). Moreover, when

individuals age and their health deteriorates, it is their kinship who cares for them (Montes de Oca y Gomes 2004, González, 2011 and Hernández, 2009).

Both economic and time transfers depend on the place of residence of the children: As the number of coresident children increases, individuals are more likely to receive instrumental help. At the same time, when individuals have children who are internal or international migrants, their likelihood of receiving economic support increases (Hernández, 2009).

Hernández Cantu's findings imply that there may be a specialization among children in the kind of help that they provide to parents. However, this question has multiply implications and needs to be fully addressed, especially in a context of high migration (including internal and international) as is the case of Mexico. For example, do elderly with only coresident children, or with children living in the same city receive the same kind of help that parents who have only internal migrant children? What happens with parents who have children distributed among different locations? Is there a possibility that children who are living in other cities and other countries specialize in economic support while those who live in the same city provide domestic support and help with activities of daily living?

In this paper we analyze these issues using the Mexican Health and Aging Study 2001 (MHAS, 2001), a national sample of individuals 50 and older and their partners. Our analysis is at the household level and focuses on the help that parents receive from their children. We restrict the sample to households who have at least one adult child, so they may be exposed to receiving economic help. Our methodological strategy is fourfold. First we identify the different types of families, according to the places where children live. For each child of the respondent and his or her partner, the survey captures their place of residence with the following options: with the couple, in a different household but in the same city, in a different city but in the same country, and in a different country. With this information, we identified, empirically, fourteen categories of families varying from those where all children correside with their parents to those where all children where international migrants and all combinations in between.

Once we had done this, we analyzed, through different measures, whether the type of help that households received and who gave each help varied between family types.

To complete this paper, we will explore whether it is possible to simplify the fourteen categories of families into a smaller number according to the type of help that parents receive and if these classes make sense, and afterwards we will run statistical models to associate the kind of help that household receive, with family type, once household characteristics are controlled for.

Results

As we said before we were interested in how the children´s place of resident is related with the kind of help children provide to their parents but also we wanted to explore whether this was different between parents who have their children distributed in different ways.

We defined fourteen types of families according where the children live, the table 1 shows the distribution of couples in the sample between this types.

Table 1. Distribution of couples according to family types

Couples distribution according to family types			
Family Type	**Housholds with:**	**Freq.**	**Percent**
1	Just coresident children	888	10.89
2	Coresident and living in the same city children	2,384	29.23
3	Coresident, living in the same city and living in other city children	1,119	13.72
4	Coresident, living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children	343	4.21
5	Coresident and living in other city children	333	4.08
6	Coresident, living in other city and living in the US children	78	0.96
7	Coresident and living in the US children	143	1.75
8	Just living in the same city children	1,093	13.40
9	Living in the same and living in other city children	719	8.82
10	Living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children	285	3.49
11	Living in the same city and living in the US children	382	4.68
12	Just living in other city children	207	2.54
13	Just living in the US children	112	1.37
14	Living in other city and living in the US children	70	0.86
	Total	8156	100.00

The most frequent type of family is where the couple have children coresiding and living in the same city (29.23%), follow by those couples with children distributed in the couple´s household, in the same city and living in other city and couples with all their children living in the same city (13.72% and 13.40% respectively), More than half of the couples (56.35%) belong to these three types of family. From the rest, 10.89% have all their children

coresiding with them, around 2% have all their children living in other city or all living in the US and finally the 28.85% of the couples are in family types with children distributed in combinations of two, three and four places.

To investigate whether the family type was related with the kind of help children provide to their parents we use two measures: the average number of children giving support by family type (table 2) and the average proportion of each kind of children giving support to parents (according where they live). We did this for the different kinds of support (economic transfers, help with household chores, errands and transport, help with ADL and help with IADL) and then we explored if there were differences according the type of family.

Table 2. Average number of children giving support, by kind of help and family type

Average number of children giving support by kind of help and family type														
	Type 1 Just coresident children		**Type 2** Coresident and living in the same city children		**Type 3** Coresident, living in the same city and living in other city children		**Type 4** Coresident, living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 5** Coresident and living in other city children		**Type 6** Coresident, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 7** Coresident and living in the US children	
	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average
Children giving economic transfers	183	1.55 ***	874	2.26 *	484	2.46 *	190	2.62 **	99	2.11	41	2.37	63	2.56
Children helping with household chores, errands and transportation	306	1.55	970	1.66 **	541	1.69 **	158	1.62	145	1.59	36	1.64	53	1.64
Children helping with ADL	30	1.40	125	1.68	69	1.81	22	1.36	15	1.53	1	4.00	8	1.38
Children helping with IADL	48	1.42	199	1.41	105	1.40	34	1.35	18	1.22	3	3.00 ***	7	1.43
	Type 8 Just living in the same city children		**Type 9** Living in the same and living in other city children		**Type 10** Living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 11** Living in the same city and living in the US children		**Type 12** Just living in other city children		**Type 13** Just living in the US children		**Type 14** Living in other city and living in the US children	
	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average
Children giving economic transfers	306	2.17 **	291	2.40	150	2.89 **	186	2.67 **	51	2.08	49	1.94 *	37	2.51
Children helping with household chores, errands and transportation	353	1.44 ***	254	1.52 **	93	1.49	112	1.65	49	1.49	23	1.30 **	12	1.75
Children helping with ADL	48	1.79	25	1.20 *	18	1.17 *	18	1.89	5	1.40				
Children helping with IADL	77	1.32	53	1.19 *	23	1.30	27	1.67 **	6	1.50				

Significance level * p<0.1, ** p<0.05 and *** p<0.001

We can see in table 2 that the average number of children giving economic transfers is higher than de number of children providing other kind of help, and this does not change with family types, with the exception of the couples with coresiding, living in other city and living in the US children (type 6), who have the higher average of children providing help with IAVD (3 children). The type of family seems to be more important in the number of children giving economic transfers, couples having all children coresiding receive economic transfers from less number of children, but the number of children giving economic transfers increases in those couples who have children distributed in all the places (type 4) and also in the family types where there are no children living with the couple but there are children living in other places (family types 8, 10 y 11), the average is even higher when the couple has children in the same city, in other city and living in the US.

Having children living in the same and in other city but none on the US (types 2, 3 8 and 9) seems to be related with differences in the average number of children helping with household chores, errands and transportation. Families with children living in the same and other city an also with children living in the US (types 9 and 10) are the only ones related with significant differences in the number of children giving help in ADL.

As the average number of children giving any kind of help is actually influenced by the number of children couples in each type have, we compare then the proportional contribution of each kind of child (living with the couple, in the same city, in other city or in the US), we present the average contributions for each type of family in table 3.

In general, data confirm that participation in economics transfers of non-coresident children is higher than the participation of the coresident, but there are some differences according the type of family; for example, the percentage of living in the same city and living in other city children who give economic transfers decreases if the couple also have children living in the US.

Table 3. Average proportion of children providing support by kind of help and type of family

Average proportion of children providing support by kind of help and type of family														
	Type 1 Just coresident children		**Type 2** Coresident and living in the same city children		**Type 3** Coresident, living in the same city and living in other city children		**Type 4** Coresident, living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 5** Coresident and living in other city children		**Type 6** Coresident, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 7** Coresident and living in the US children	
	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average
Economic transfers														
Coresident children	181	1.00 ***	580	0.76	253	0.69 ***	66	0.63 ***	61	0.79	16	0.66	22	0.66
No coresident children	0		544	0.79 ***	368	0.84 ***	164	0.91	62	0.82 ***	34	0.90	56	0.86
Living in the same city children	0		538	0.79 ***	261	0.63 ***	70	0.51 ***	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		0		234	0.61 **	70	0.49 ***	61	0.83 ***	20	0.61	0	
Living in the US children	0		0		0		127	0.62 ***	0		25	0.73	55	0.87 ***
Help with household chores, errands and transportation														
Coresident children	305	1.00 ***	729	0.89 ***	408	0.89 **	120	0.88 **	136	0.95 **	34	0.98 **	52	0.98 **
No coresident children	0		402	0.80 ***	218	0.81 ***	66	0.80 **	21	0.73 **	3	0.89	3	0.67 **
Living in the same city children	0		399	0.80 ***	188	0.77 ***	60	0.75 ***	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		0		39	0.67 *	10	0.60	21	0.73	2	0.67	0	
Living in the US children	0		0		0		2	0.50	0		2	0.67	3	0.67
Help with ADL														
Coresident children	30	1.00 **	110	0.91	62	0.93	17	0.84 **	15	0.98	1	1.00	7	1.00
No coresident children	0		34	0.74 **	15	0.75 *	10	0.77	0		0		0	
Living in the same city children	0		33	0.72 **	14	0.64 **	8	0.71	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		0		3	0.44	0		0		0		0	
Living in the US children	0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Help with IADL														
Coresident children	48	1.00 **	171	0.95	95	0.94	27	0.88 **	18	1.00	3	1.00	7	1.00
No coresident children	0		45	0.81 **	21	0.73 ***	13	0.78 **	0		0		0	
Living in the same city children	0		45	0.81 **	17	0.70 ***	11	0.79	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		0		4	0.63	0		0		0		0	
Living in the US children	0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
	Type 8 Just living in the same city children		**Type 9** Living in the same and living in other city children		**Type 10** Living in the same city, living in other city and living in the US children		**Type 11** Living in the same city and living in the US children		**Type 12** Just living in other city children		**Type 13** Just living in the US children		**Type 14** Living in other city and living in the US children	
	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average	Cases	Average
Economic transfers														
Coresident children	0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
No coresident children	294	0.99 ***	288	0.99 ***	149	0.99 ***	183	1.00 ***	47	1.00 ***	48	1.00 ***	37	1.00 **
Living in the same city children	290	0.98 ***	212	0.75	72	0.54 ***	101	0.67 ***	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		184	0.68	63	0.51 ***	0		46	1.00 ***	0		20	0.64
Living in the US children	0		0		113	0.68 **	147	0.77 ***	0		47	1.00 ***	32	0.74
Help with household chores, errands and transportation														
Coresident children	0		0		0		0							
No coresident children	284	0.98 ***	225	0.97 ***	73	0.96 ***	95	0.95 ***	26	1.00 **	8	0.94	8	0.92
Living in the same city children	280	0.98 ***	206	0.93 ***	67	0.89	86	0.90 *	0		0		0	
Living in other city children	0		38	0.70	12	0.56 **	0	***	26	1.00 ***	0		6	0.89
Living in the US children	0		0		5	0.77	15	0.73	0		7	0.93 **	2	1.00
Help with ADL														
Coresident children	0		0		0		0							
No coresident children	30	0.92 *	18	0.94 *	15	1.00 **	14	0.93 ***						
Living in the same city children	30	0.92 **	18	0.92 *	13	1.00 **	14	0.89 ***						
Living in other city children	0		0		2	1.00 *	0							
Living in the US children	0		0		0		1	0.50 ***						
Help with IADL														
Coresident children	0		0		0		0							
No coresident children	57	0.96 ***	44	0.98 **	19	0.97 *	17	0.88						
Living in the same city children	57	0.94 **	39	0.96 **	17	0.91	17	0.85						
Living in other city children	0		7	0.83	2	0.75	0	***						
Living in the US children	0		0		2	0.75	1	0.50 ***						

Significance level * p<0.1, ** p<0.05 and *** p<0.001

When the help provided is concern with the household chores, errands or transport, the proportion of children that participates is higher in families where there are no children living with the couple. About help in AVD and IAVD we can see that the type of family is also important; for example, in those families where there are children with the couple, the participation of children living in the same city is about the 62 and 74% of the total number of children for help with ADL and about 81 and 73% on IADL (in types 2 and 3) but in families where there are no coresident children (types 8, 9 y 10) more than 90% of the children living in the same city participates. Then we think that, who gives support and what kind is not only related with the place of resident of each child, but also with where live the others.

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