The Impacts of International Migration on Remaining Household Members: Omnibus Results from a Migration Lottery Program

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Abstract
We use a migration lottery program to overcome the double selectivity problems posed by migration. We compare a wide range of outcomes for the remaining household members of Tongan emigrants with those of members of similar households who were unsuccessful in the lottery, with the policy rules determining which household members can move. Multiple hypothesis testing procedures are used to examine robustness. The overall impact on households left behind is largely negative in terms of resource availability, and both sources of selectivity matter, leading studies that fail to address them adequately to misrepresent the impact of migration on households.

Gender Connection | Gender Informed Analysis
Gender Outcomes | Gender disaggregated income, property, nutrition, labor force participation
IE Design | Natural Experiment

Intervention
In early 2002 the Pacific Access Category was opened up which allows a quota of 250 Tongans to emigrate to New Zealand each year without going through usual migration categories. Any Tongan between age 18 and 45 who can meet certain English, health and character requirements can register to migrate to New Zealand. More there are more applicants than open spaces so participants are chosen through a lottery. If a recipient Tongan receives a job offer within 6 months, they are able to move to New Zealand.

Intervention Period | The migration program began in 2002
Sample population | The sample is comprised of 101 randomly selected Tongan immigrant households in New Zealand who was a participant in the program from 2002-2005, and 26 households who are recipients of the program but are still in Tonga. Additionally, there are 119 households that were not selected by the lottery. There were also 90 randomly selected non-applicant households.
Comparison conditions | The study compares individuals selected to migrate and do migrate with those selected and did not yet migrate, those who were not selected to migrate and those who did not even apply to migrate.
Unit of analysis | Individual and Intra-household level
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Period</th>
<th>2005-2006</th>
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<td>Results</td>
<td>In the short run, there may be some adverse consequences to migration. Income falls rapidly, by 22-25%, with a rise in remittances failing to offset a large fall in labor earnings. Ownership of livestock, durable, and access to financial services is lower for the remaining household members. Diets change to be less nutritious and more rice and root crops. Immigration has a negative impact on household size. There is no significant impact of migration on labor supply for men nor women.</td>
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<td>Primary study limitations</td>
<td>Future waves of the survey will allow the authors to track long term changes in mental health. Additionally, the program restricted the migration of the family members so the program may not reflect migration's true impact on a household if a family is permitted to emigrate as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>World Bank, Stanford University, the Waikato Management School, Mardsen Fund</td>
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