

Family Migration Context and Youth's Marriage Choice in Settings with Changing Marriage Systems

Erick Axxe, Sarah R. Hayford, and Dirgha Ghimire (University of Michigan)

INTRODUCTION

In many contexts where arranged marriage was common, youth are increasingly choosing their own spouses. This shift is connected to broader social and economic changes from familism toward greater individualism. Since migration can affect the economic and cultural conditions in sending communities, **our study examines the relationship between household migration and youths' marriage preferences.** We analyze data from Mozambique and Nepal collected as part of the first wave of the Family Migration and Early Life Outcomes (FAMELO) study.

Why Mozambique and Nepal?

Both countries have longstanding migration streams for employment and in both countries, families have traditionally been involved in choosing marriage partners. Otherwise, the countries have unique social and cultural characteristics.

Characteristics of Mozambique



- Mozambican data are drawn from the Gaza Province.
- Migration consists mostly of men to South Africa.
- Marriage is typically virilocal (women move into husband's home) and patrilineal (children belong to father's family).
- Bridewealth is common, but in decline (Chae, Agadjanian, and Hayford 2020).

Characteristics of Nepal



- Nepalese data are drawn from the Chitwan Valley.
- Main migration destinations are India and the Gulf States (Bohra and Massey 2009).
- Marriage systems are virilocal and include strong gender norms (e.g. household labor).
- The region's rapid economic development is coinciding with changes in family & demographic behavior.

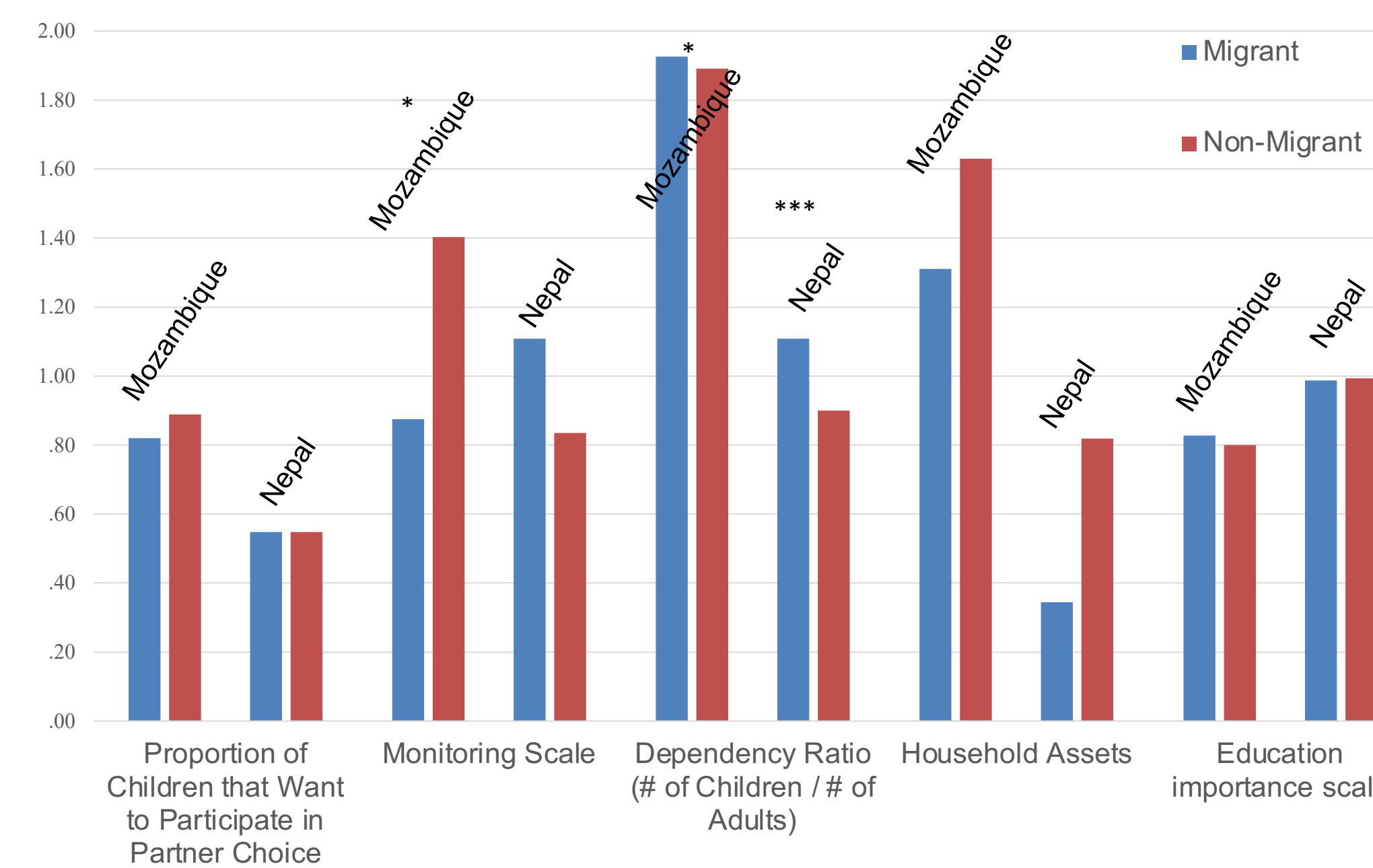
METHODS

FAMELO consists of highly comparable survey data across 3 field sites: Gaza Province, Mozambique; Jalisco, Mexico; and the Chitwan Valley, Nepal. Our sample consists of Mozambican and Nepalese youth age 11-17. We present descriptive results comparing migrant and non-migrant households. We model marriage preferences using a logistic regression model.

- Dependent variable – **Adolescent Marriage Preferences**
 - Constructed from responses to the question “When it comes time for you to get married, who do you think should make the decision about who to marry?”
 - We group respondents who believed “you should decide alone,” and “you should decide with your family.” The other group believes “your family should decide alone.”
- Key predictors – **Household Migration Variables**
 - Developed from household roster information, indicating migration timing, reasoning, destination, whether migrants remit, and migrants' relationship to adolescents.
- Controls
 - Age, sex, whether youth wish to migrate for work, importance of education to youth, views of gender essentialism, caregiver monitoring scale, household assets, and household dependency ratio.

Figure 1: Migrant-sending households tend to have larger dependency ratios and, in Mozambique, monitor youth less

Notes: Household assets, monitoring scale, and education scale were transformed for visualization purposes. T-tests compare migrant and non-migrant groups within a country. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

Models

Results from logistic regression models with all controls are shown. Each model contains a different migration characteristic: timing, location, relationship to adolescent, reason, and whether migrants remit.

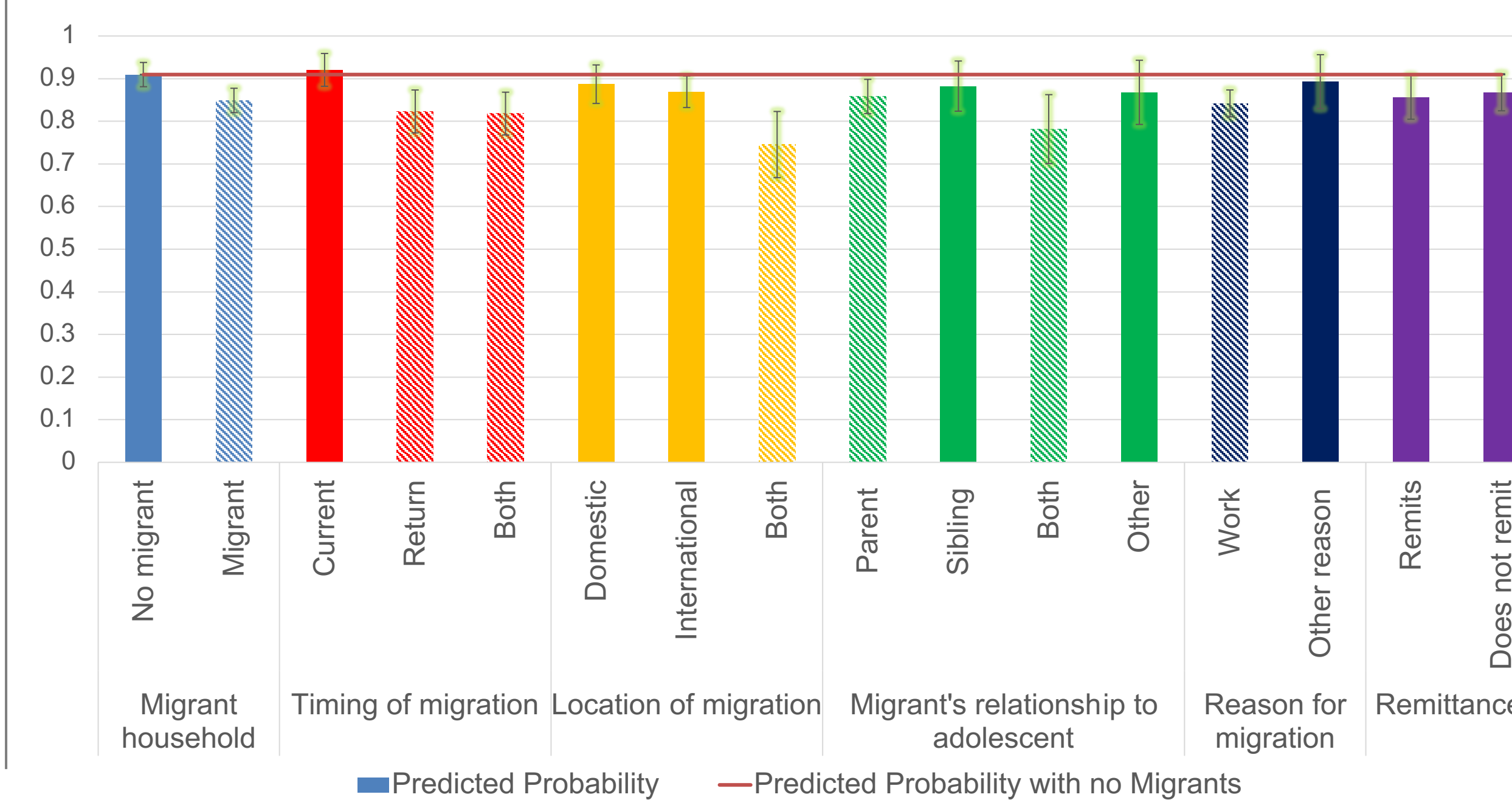
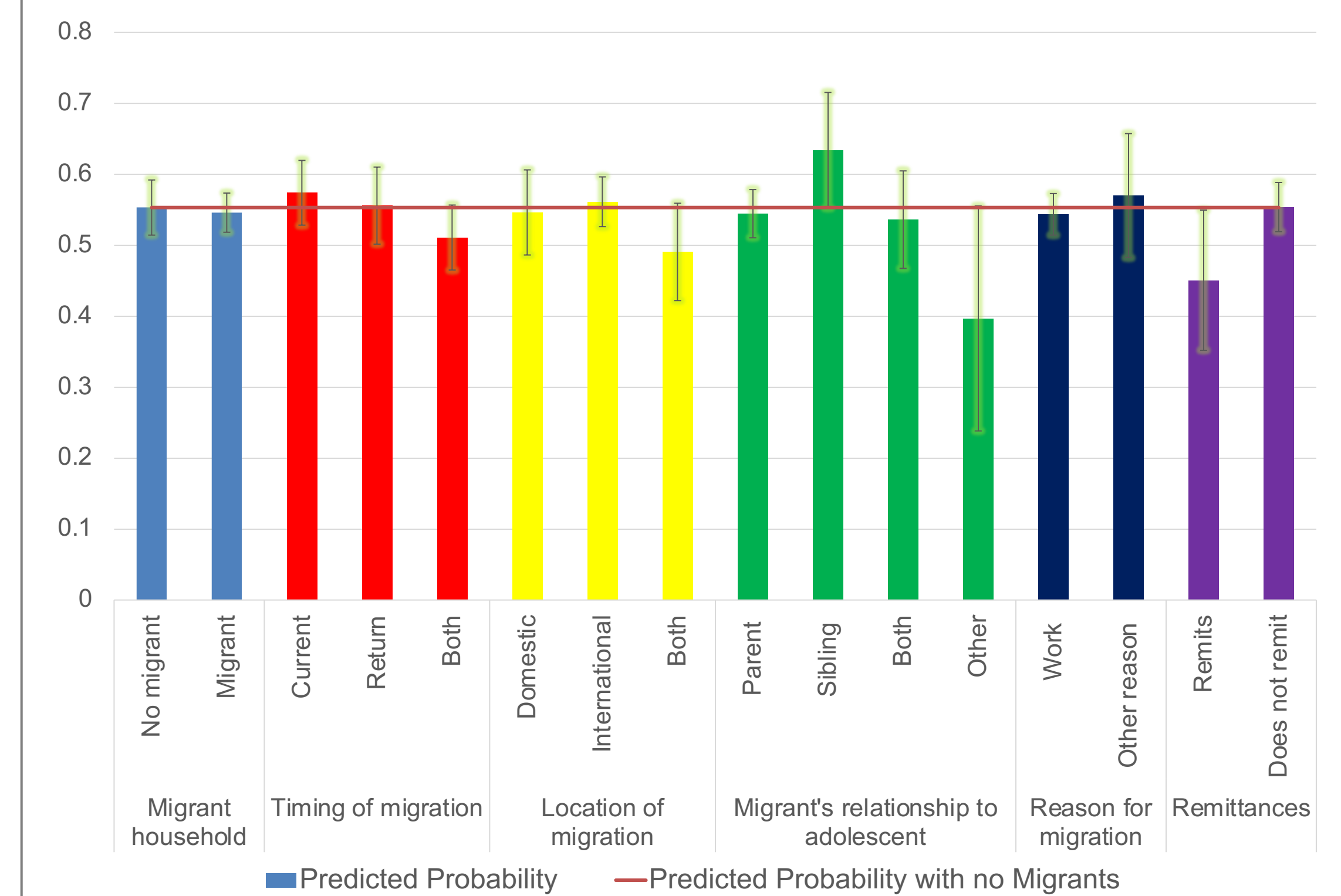


Figure 2: Predicted probabilities show Mozambican youth in households with return migrants, both international and domestic migrants, migrant parents, and labor migrants are more likely to want their family to choose their spouse.

Notes: 95% confidence intervals are displayed on top of bars. Horizontal orange line reflects the predicted probability of wanting to participate in marriage decision for adolescents in households without migrants.

Striped bars indicate that differences are statistically significant.

Figure 3: Predicted probabilities show no significant differences between Nepalese youth in migrant and non-migrant households



Notes: 95% confidence intervals are displayed on top of bars. Horizontal orange line reflects the predicted probability of wanting to participate in marriage decision for adolescents in households without migrants. No results are significantly different than households without migrants.

CONCLUSIONS

- According to figure 1, migrant-sending households have higher dependency ratios than households without migrants. In Mozambique, migrant-sending households also tend to monitor children less than households without migrants.
- According to figure 2, youth in Mozambican households that include migrants tend to want their family to choose their spouse compared to households without migrants. The effect is starkest for houses with multiple migrants. Households with multiple migrant types (e.g. domestic and international, current and return migrants) are less likely to want to be involved in choosing a spouse.
- According to figure 3, there appears to be no migration effect in Nepal.

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