

DOES BEING YOUNG FOR GRADE ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD? A STUDY OF MEXICAN TEENAGE WOMEN

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Existing research has documented a negative association between women’s educational attainment and early transitions to sexual intercourse, union formation, and motherhood. However, the implications that school progression relative to age may have on these demographic transitions are poorly understood. In this paper, I argue that educational attainment implies different social experiences depending on a student’s progression through school grades relative to her age. Using the case of Mexico, I show that advanced school progression relative to age can accelerate the occurrence of family-related transitions among teenage women. I use month of birth as a plausibly exogenous instrument, and find that women who progress through school ahead of their birth cohort are more likely to accelerate the timing of the first sexual intercourse, first pregnancy, and first union formation. I argue that this is caused by experiences that may include exposure to relatively older peers in school and completing academic milestones earlier in life.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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About the Speaker

Dr. Mónica Caudillo is a Postdoctoral Associate in the Maryland Population Research Center at the University of Maryland, College Park. She holds a PhD in Sociology from New York University, and has conducted domestic and international research in family demography, education, community violence, contraception, and sexual behavior, among other topics. Her dissertation focuses on how social context impacts teenage women’s sexual activity, fertility, marriage, and cohabitation in Mexico.

