



LYCEUM AND UNIVERSITY ASPIRATIONS AMONG STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT A MIGRATORY BACKGROUND IN ITALY

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Background

Scholars have depicted migrants’ aspiration–achievement paradox by demonstrating that immigrant youths have, on average, higher educational aspirations than their autochthonous counterparts (Kao and Tienda 1995), although they suffer a number of negatives at school: more school dropouts, lower academic performances, and higher concentrations in vocational secondary schools (Heath and Brinbaum 2014). However, different outcomes in migrants’ educational aspirations emerge when considering different educational systems or different ethnic minorities in the same destination context.

Objective

To contribute to the current knowledge on Lyceum and University educational aspirations among students with and without a migratory background in Italy.

Research Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1a: Lyceum aspirations are lower among migrants than among non-migrants.
- Hypothesis 1b: University aspirations are higher among migrants than among non-migrants.
- Hypothesis 2: Students migrated at age 10 or older (G1.25) have lower lyceum and university aspirations than those born in Italy (G2) or migrated before age 5 (G1.75).

Data and methods

Using data from the Italian Integration of the Second Generation (ISG) survey conducted by ISTAT, we aim at analysing the educational aspirations of migrant-origin students and of the Italian counterpart enrolled in Italian lower and upper secondary state schools. We focused on two dependent dummy variables: 1. Lyceum aspirations: concerns students who are attending the 8th grade of lower secondary school. If they indicate that they aspire to attend a Lyceum, we define that they have high aspiration (1); otherwise, they have low aspiration (0). 2. University aspirations: concerns students who are attending until the 11th grade of upper secondary school. The survey asked if respondents wish to attend university: if yes, they have high aspiration (1); otherwise, they have low aspiration (0). We performed logistic regressions and compared average marginal effects (AMEs) across nested models (Mood, 2010). Ethnic origin and migratory generation are considered separately, as we want to catch their full magnitude and significance in the association with educational aspirations.

Descriptive table

Variables	Categories	Students of grade 8 (lower sec. sch.)		Students of grades 9-11 (upper sec. sch.)	
		Col. %	% lyceum aspir.	Col. %	% univ. aspir.
Migratory status	Non-migrant	85.4	46.6	88.5	46.4
	Migrant	14.6	29.0	11.5	41.3
Ethnic origin	Migrants and non-migrants				
	Migrants				
	Albania	14.6	30.5	15.5	40.3
	Romania	17.5	34.0	18.8	45.2
	Ukraine	1.1	42.0	2.4	49.4
	Moldova	2.6	28.2	3.0	40.9
	China	8.1	18.1	5.2	37.2
	The Philippines	4.3	27.3	5.2	37.6
	Morocco	11.7	20.5	12.8	34.2
	MDCs	2.3	33.4	3.1	47.9
	East. Europe EU	2.1	33.5	2.3	47.6
	East. Europe Non-EU	7.9	20.6	6.3	36.7
	North Africa	4.1	30.7	3.9	44.7
	The rest of Africa	6.8	33.3	5.3	43.0
	The rest of Asia	7.4	35.4	6.8	38.3
Migratory generation	Latin America	9.5	32.9	9.4	46.6
	G2	42.8	36.7	40.0	43.6
	G1.75	16.1	27.1	18.8	43.1
	G1.5	21.9	22.2	24.0	40.9
	G1.25	19.2	21.4	17.2	34.8

References

Kao, G. and Tienda, M. (1995). Optimism and achievement: the educational performance of immigrant youth. *Social Science Quarterly*, 76(1), 1-19.

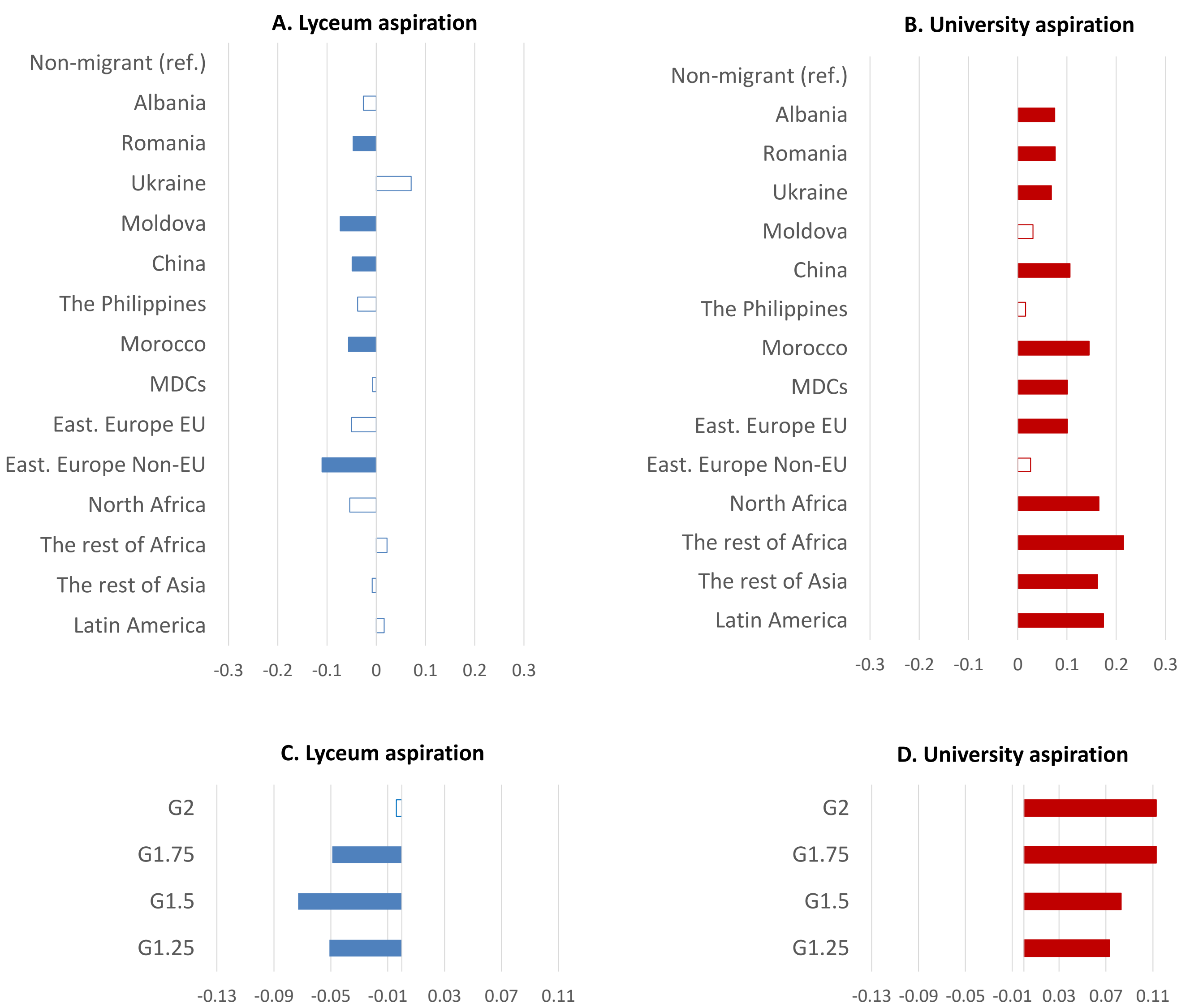
Heath, A. F. and Brinbaum, Y. (2014). *Unequal Attainments. Ethnic Educational Inequalities in ten western countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gil-Hernández, C. J. and Gracia, P. (2018). Adolescents' educational aspirations and ethnic background: The case of students of African and Latin American migrant-origins in Spain. *Demographic Research*, 38(23), 577-618.

Results

When considering students enrolled in grade 8 of lower secondary school, all the ethnic-minority groups with significant coefficient have a negative AMEs in their lyceum aspiration. A similar analysis is carried out when considering the role of migratory generation. All migratory generations are negatively associated with lyceum aspiration compared to the non-migrant group excepted for G2 that is no statistically different in lyceum aspiration compared to non-migrants. The picture about the university aspiration of ethnic groups enrolled in grades 9–11 of upper secondary school is different. In this case, all the ethnic-minority groups with significant coefficient have a positive AMEs in their lyceum aspiration. Moreover, all the migratory generation considered have significantly higher AMEs on university aspiration than the non-migrant referent group.

Binary logistic regressions: effect of ethnic origin and of migratory-generation on educational aspirations by school grades. Average marginal effects (AMEs)



Notes: if the area of the rectangle is white the values are not statistically significants. *Control variables:* Gender, grade attendend, Self-perceived school performances, Failures, Parents' educational and employment level, Self-perceived wealth level, Number of goods missing at home, Siblings, Positive expectations of the social network and good relationships, Individual motivation.

Source: our elaboration on ISG data

Conclusions

According to hypothesis 1a we fund that Chinese, Moroccan, and non-EU Eastern Europe students (in particular Moldovan ones) have the lowest lyceum aspiration. Results on university aspiration confirmed the evidences found in other European contexts (Gil-Hernández and Gracia, 2018): when performing logistic regressions and compositional effects are controlled for, students reflecting most of the ethnic origins show significant (with the exception of the Moldovans, the Filipinos and Eastern Europeans non EU) and positive AMEs in having university aspiration compared to non-migrants (hypothesis 1b). When considering the differential role of migratory generation in defining educational aspirations, the second generation has higher educational aspirations than fractional first generations (hypothesis 2). Thus, educational aspirations are positively associated with the acculturation process of migrants in Italy.