



Malthus to modernity: wealth, status, and fertility in England, 1500–1879

P. 3-29

Gregory Clark - Neil Cummins

Abstract

A key challenge to theories of long-run economic growth has been linking the onset of modern growth with the move to modern fertility limitation. A notable puzzle for these theories is that modern growth in England began around 1780, 100 years before there was seemingly any movement to limit fertility. Here we show that the aggregate data on fertility in England before 1880 conceals significant declines in the fertility of the middle and upper classes earlier. These declines coincide with the Industrial Revolution and are of the character predicted by some recent theories of long-run growth.

The fertility transition around the world

P. 31-44

Holger Strulik - Sebastian Vollmer

Abstract

In this paper, we study the evolution of the distribution of fertility rates across the world from 1950 to 2005 using parametric mixture models. We demonstrate the existence of twin peaks and the division of the world's countries in two distinct components: a high-fertility regime and a low-fertility regime. Whereas the significance of twin peaks vanishes over time, the two fertility regimes continue to exist over the whole observation period. In 1950, about two thirds of the world's countries belonged to the high-fertility regime and the rest constituted the low-fertility regime. By the year 2005, this picture has reversed. Within both the low- and the high-fertility regime, the average fertility rate declined, with a larger absolute decline within the high-fertility regime. Visually, the two peaks moved closer together. For the low-fertility regime, we find both β - and σ -convergence but we cannot establish any convergence pattern for the high-fertility regime. Our results support the idea of conditional convergence where the condition is the successful initiation of the fertility transition. The results are less supportive of the existence of a unique high-fertility equilibrium.

Optimal life-cycle fertility in a Barro-Becker economy

P. 45-87

Pierre Pestieau - Gregory Ponthiere

Abstract

Parenthood postponement is a key demographic trend of the last three decades. In order to rationalize that stylized fact, we extend the canonical model by Barro and Becker (*Econometrica* 57:481–501, 1989) to include two—instead of one—reproduction periods. We examine how the cost structure of early and late children in terms of time and goods affects the optimal fertility timing. Then, we identify conditions that guarantee the existence and uniqueness of a stationary equilibrium with a stationary cohort size. Finally, we examine how the model can rationalize the observed postponement of births, and we highlight two plausible causes: (1) a general rise in the cost of children in terms of goods and (2) a decline in the degree of family altruism.

Abstract

Many studies have suggested that there is an inverse relationship between education and number of children among women from sub-Saharan Africa countries, including Malawi. However, a crucial limitation of these analyses is that they do not control for the potential endogeneity of education. The aim of our study is to estimate the role of women's education on their number of children in Malawi, accounting for the possible presence of endogeneity and for nonlinear effects of continuous observed confounders. Our analysis is based on micro data from the 2010 Malawi Demographic Health Survey, and uses a flexible instrumental variable regression approach. The results suggest that the relationship of interest is affected by endogeneity and exhibits an inverted U-shape among women living in rural areas of Malawi, whereas it exhibits an inverse (nonlinear) relationship for women living in urban areas.

Perception of HIV risk and the quantity and quality of children: the case of rural Malawi**Abstract**

The empirical literature on the impact of HIV on the quality (Q) and quantity (N) of children provides limited and somewhat mixed evidence. This study introduces individual HIV risk perceptions, as a predictor of mortality, into a Q–N investment model. In this model, higher maternal mortality predicts lower N, while higher child mortality predicts lower Q. Thus, the two effects together make likely negative associations between HIV and both Q and N. Based on longitudinal micro-data on mothers and their children in rural Malawi, our results suggest that higher mothers' reported HIV risk reduces both child quality, as reflected in children's schooling and health, and child quantity, when the perceived risk is already moderate or high. The effects are sizable and, in the case of Q (schooling and health), are found for children and teenagers, both boys and girls, while in the case of N, they are found for young and mature women.

Alcohol consumption and risky sexual behavior among young adults: evidence from minimum legal drinking age laws**Abstract**

This paper exploits the discrete jump in alcohol consumption at the minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) in the USA and uses a regression discontinuity design to investigate the relationship between drinking and risky sexual behaviors among young adults. Using confidential data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997 Cohort), we document that young adults tend to drink up to 2.1 days more once they are granted legal access to alcohol at age 21. Although the discrete jump in alcohol consumption at the MLDA is associated with an increase in the probability of having sex by up to 7.8 percentage points, it does not have a significant impact on the probability of engaging in risky sexual behaviors among young adults. We also document that the effect of the MLDA on the probability of using several different birth control methods is not significant for those who had sex in the past 4 weeks. These results are robust under alternative specifications and imply that although the MLDA law is quite effective in reducing alcohol consumption among young adults, spillover effects of this law on risky sexual behaviors are relatively limited.

Affection, speed dating and heartbreaking**Abstract**

Love and other emotional rents play an important role for marriage decisions. A mutually happy marriage often ends a long series of emotionally disappointing matches. This paper analyses the role of "speed daters", that is, individuals who are matched more frequently with new possible marriage partners. Speed daters change the equilibrium in a marriage matching model. Speed daters reject quite good matches, leading to a high rate of rejections and failed

matches. Speed daters appear to be “heart-breakers”. This imposes a welfare loss on other individuals who meet new candidates less frequently. Hence, finding out that the next matched partner is a speed dater is actually bad news for an unmarried person.

Endogenous division rules as a family constitution: strategic altruistic transfers and sibling competition

P. 173-194

Yang-Ming Chang - Zijun Luo

Abstract

Based on the notions of parental altruism, sibling competition, and family constitution, we present a self-enforcing model where heterogeneous children have economic incentives to supply family-specific merit goods (e.g., companionship) to their parents for securing inheritable wealth and the altruistic parents decide on division rules according to an optimizing behavior. In our analysis of intergenerational cooperation and intragenerational competition, the altruistic parents care about the efficiency of the children-provided merit goods and the equity of the children's incomes. For an optimal allocation of wealth, the parents strategically partition it into two pools: one to be distributed equally whereas the other unequally according to their children's supply of merit goods. We look at motivation of the parents in allocating their wealth to the two different pools. The analysis of endogenous division rules has implications for the compatibility between equal postmortem transfers and unequal inter vivos gifts, both of which are consistent with parental altruism.

United but (un)equal: human capital, probability of divorce, and the marriage contract

P. 195-217

Helmuth Cremer - Pierre Pestieau - Kerstin Roeder

Abstract

This paper studies how the risk of divorce affects the human capital decisions of a young couple. We consider a setting where complete specialization is optimal with no divorce risk. Couples can self-insure through savings which offers some protection to the uneducated spouse, but at the expense of a distortion. Alternatively, for large divorce probabilities, symmetry in education, where both spouses receive an equal amount of education, may be optimal. This eliminates the risk associated with the lack of education, but reduces the efficiency of education choices. We show that the symmetric allocation will become more attractive as the probability of divorce increases, if risk aversion is high and/or labor supply elasticity is low. However, it is only a “second-best” solution as insurance protection is achieved at the expense of an efficiency loss. Finally, we study how the (economic) use of marriage is affected by the possibility of divorce.

Strategic non-marital cohabitation: theory and empirical implications

P. 219-237

Amy Farmer Andrew W. Horowitz

Abstract

Non-marital cohabitation is a rapidly growing global phenomenon. Prior literature examines the puzzling empirical regularity that premarital cohabitation is associated with higher divorce rates. Since cohabitation should yield improved match-quality information, one might expect the opposite. This result, and its recent weakening, have been explored empirically and produced theoretically using matching models. In this paper, we develop an intra-household bargaining model of alternative dating and cohabitation paths to marriage in which higher relationship exit costs for cohabitators relative to daters generates the observed higher divorce rate. We also show that asymmetric exit costs can produce rejection and generate exits that would not otherwise occur. In addition, we show that even when cohabitators have lower average marriage quality, expected utility for a given match quality is higher, and some utility enhancing marriages that would not have taken place without cohabitation will occur in its presence.

Extract

Minutes General Assembly 2014

The Twenty-Seventh General Assembly of the European Society for Population Economics was held on Friday, June 20, 2014 at the Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal.

The President of the Society, James Albrecht, chaired the Assembly.

He informed that Erik Plug will be the next president in 2015, whereas Arthur van Soest will be the president-elect. He reported on the results of the elections held during the autumn of 2013. According to those results, he informed that the new members of the 2014 Council are Paul Devereux and Kjell G. Salvanes.

The president informed that the council agreed on leaving the fees for the 2015 European Society for Population Economics (ESPE) membership and for the 2015 conference as they are now:

The treasurer of the Society, Marco Caliendo, presented the accounts, which have been audited by Nicole Schneeweis and Jonathan James. As of December 31, 2012, the net worth of ESPE is 61,887.94 EUR and the result after taxes -6,074.80 EUR. ...
