



European journal of population, ISSN 0168-6577
Volume 31, number 3 (august 2015)

Can We Trust Older People's Statements on Their Childhood Circumstances? Evidence from SHARELIFE

P. 233-257

Enkelejda Havari - Fabrizio Mazzonna

Abstract

This paper analyzes the quality of subjective assessments related to childhood circumstances when provided by old-age individuals. Early life events are important for social scientists to predict individual outcomes later in life and because of data restrictions, retrospective assessments are often used. Nevertheless, there is widespread skepticism on the ability of old-age respondents to recall with good accuracy events occurred many years ago. Using data from the survey of health, aging and retirement in Europe (SHARE), we assess the internal and external consistency of some measures of childhood health and socio-economic status. Our study suggests that overall respondents seem to remember fairly well their health status and their living conditions between age 0–15. Applying a cross-country comparison (13 European countries), we analyse within survey responses with external historical data (e.g., GDP per capita in period 1926–1956) at a country and cohort level. Our results should mitigate some of the doubts on retrospective data collection and promote their use for research purposes.

Family Attitudes and Fertility Timing in Sweden

P. 259-285

Jennifer A. Holland - Renske Keizer

Abstract

Employing a novel latent attitude profile approach, as developed by Moors (Eur J Popul 24:33–57, 2008), within the theory of planned behavior, this paper models the association between attitudes and the transition to parenthood. We use survey data from the Young Adult Panel Study (1999) and linked prospective population register data (1999–2009) to investigate the family attitudes and fertility timing of a sample of three birth cohorts in Sweden, a country at the leading edge of family change in Europe. We generate latent attitude profiles of men and women based on attitudes related to the Value of Children, the Second Demographic Transition, and Competing Alternatives. We then show that compared with *Children- and Partnership-Oriented* individuals, the *Partnership-Oriented* and *Non-Family-Oriented* were less likely to transition to parenthood. We found greater diversity in fertility behavior by latent attitude profiles than previous work, suggesting that more attention should be given to the role of attitude profiles in determining modern-day fertility intentions and behavior.

The Interrelation of Immigrants' Interethnic Ties and Socioeconomic Status in Germany. An Autoregressive Panel Analysis

P. 287-307

Sascha Riedel

Abstract

This paper analyses the causality between interethnic ties and socioeconomic status (SES) for Italian, Turkish and former Yugoslavian immigrants in Germany. Referring to social capital theory and its inherent problem of homophily, the interrelation between these two constructs remains ambiguous. The data come from the German socioeconomic panel study. After demonstrating the drawbacks of existing empirical studies on this issue, results of fixed effects panel regressions and autoregressive cross-lagged panel models (ARM) with latent variables are presented. In this respect, the latter are

considered more appropriate to tackle the formulated questions. To counter common criticism of ARM, an unmeasured variable model is computed in order to control for spurious relationships. After accounting for simultaneity, reverse causality and unobserved heterogeneity, the interethnic ties of immigrants positively influence the respondents' SES. In the strictest test, no significant reverse effect remains. Hence, the results support social capital theory.

The Quality of Life of Female Informal Caregivers: From Scandinavia to the Mediterranean Sea

P. 309-333

Cinzia Di Novi - Rowena Jacobs - Matteo Migheli

Abstract

We analyse the impact of the provision of care on the health and quality of life (QoL) of adult female informal caregivers using a representative sample drawn from the survey of health, ageing and retirement in Europe (SHARE). We match each informal caregiver with a non-carer using propensity score matching and test whether matched individuals differ on self-assessed health and a functional indicator of QoL and whether this relationship differs across European regions. We find a North–South gradient both for self-assessed health and QoL, and our results show that the provision of caregiving to close relatives in Europe impacts on the caregivers' QoL and health in a way that depends on their geographical location, the degree of formal care and specific cultural and social factors of the area. We find that informal caregiving is a complex phenomenon which may bring both psychological rewards and distress to providers of care and this complexity, along with the geographical gradient highlight the importance of ensuring that policies match the needs of individual carers in their own geographical areas and cultural contexts.
