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Women's Retirement Intentions and Behavior: The Role of Childbearing and Marital Histories

P. 339-363

Marleen Damman, Kène Henkens, Matthijs Kalmijn

Abstract

Although from a life course perspective women's retirement timing can be expected to be related to family events earlier in life, such as childbirth and divorce, empirical insights into these relationships are limited. Drawing on three-wave panel data, collected in 2001, 2006–2007, and 2011 among Dutch female older workers ($n=420$) and if applicable their partners, this study examines retirement intentions and behavior in relation to past and proximal preretirement family experiences. The results show that women who postponed childbearing and still have children living at home during pre-retirement years have the intention to retire relatively late. For retirement behavior, this effect was not statistically significant. Ever divorced single women both intend to and actually retire later than continuously married women. Repartnering after a divorce seems to offset the negative divorce effect: retirement timing intentions and behavior of repartnered women did not differ from continuously married women. Also the pre-retirement financial, health, and work opportunity structure—factors that are often central in studies among men—did play an explanatory role. Women who have a less beneficial preretirement financial situation, a better health situation, and challenging work intend to and actually retire relatively late.

Age Differences in Unions: Continuity and Divergence Among Swedish Couples Between 1932 and 2007

P. 365-382

Martin Kolk

Abstract

Age differences in unions have important implications for a number of demographic and societal outcomes. This study examines patterns of age differences in Swedish marital and childbearing unions during the twentieth century, using administrative register data on all first births (1932–2007) and first marriages (1968–2007). All first births are further analyzed by civil status of the parents, and non-married and married parents are compared. The study discusses the theoretical and methodological importance of distinguishing between age heterogamy (absolute age differences) and age hypergamy (gendered age differences) and examines changes in both measures. Results show that age differences in unions changed only slowly over the twentieth century. Age hypergamy decreased at a slow pace, while age heterogamy showed a u-shaped pattern with increasing heterogamy the last decades. These results are confirmed in quantile analyses. Standardizations are also done to examine the influence of age distribution of first unions. Trends for marital versus childbearing unions are similar overall.

Socialisation or Institutional Context: What Determines the First and Second Birth Behaviour of East–West German Migrants?

P. 383-415

Anja Vatterrott

Abstract

In the more than two decades since German reunification, a convergence of total fertility rates in the eastern and western

parts of the country has occurred. However, east–west differences remain in the timing, number, and spacing of births. The aim of this paper was to gain a better understanding of the relative importance of cultural norms and institutional contexts in the persistence of these differences by examining the fertility behaviour patterns of east–west migrants. Using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel for the years 1990–2011, and applying event history modelling, the first and second birth behaviour patterns of female east–west German migrants are compared to those of the non-mobile populations in the eastern and western parts of the country. The migrants' first and second birth risks were found to lie between those of non-mobile eastern and western Germans. It is known that migrants are a selected group with respect to their socio-economic characteristics, value orientations, and partners' characteristics. This selectivity appears to explain the second birth behaviour of migrants. For first births, the differences between the migrants and the eastern Germans were shown to be even greater after controlling for selective characteristics. For both birth orders, there is evidence for socialisation and adaptation effects, but not for progressive adaptation over time. The effect of an east–west migrant being partnered with a western German was accounted for, but did not seem to accelerate adaptation.

Social Background and Becoming a Parent in Sweden: A Register-Based Study of the Effect of Social Background on Childbearing in Sweden

P. 417-444

Johan Dahlberg

Abstract

In this study, I introduce three measures of social background, namely occupational class, social status, and parental education, into fertility research. The objective is to examine whether these dimensions of social background affect entry into parenthood even after controlling for several potential pathways. I estimate event history models on first birth rates using data, which include all Swedes born in 1960. The results show that each of the three dimensions of social background has a clear bivariate association with the risk of becoming a parent, both for men and for women. Parental education has the strongest effect of class and status background, and the latter two do not affect the entry into fatherhood when the effects of all dimensions of social background are estimated simultaneously. Much of the remaining association between social background and fertility persists when controlling for own educational history, mother's age at first birth, and father's mean incomes. The results also show that higher social background leads to postponement of childbearing but that it has no effect on the final likelihood of ever become a parent. The influence of social background on fertility is stronger for women than for men.

Ethnic Health Inequalities in Unequal Societies: Morbidity Gaps Between Palestinians and Jews in Israel

P. 445-466

Ameed Saabneh

Abstract

Health inequalities between ethnic groups are found in many multiethnic societies. A widely used model for explaining these inequalities posits that social inequalities among ethnic groups account for a large portion of differences in their health statuses. By analyzing gaps in morbidity in Israel between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority, this study applies this model in a context characterized by large social inequalities. Propensity score matching is applied to form two ethnic groups, minority and majority, with similar social positions, using data from the Israel Health Survey 1999–2000. The matched groups are then compared in prevalence of two chronic diseases: diabetes and heart disease. In addition, reduction in the ethnic health gap is decomposed into two components: size of social inequalities between the two groups and strength of the socioeconomic gradient of health among the majority group. Results show that social inequality may only partially account for higher morbidity among the Palestinian minority. Reduction in the female gap was higher than that in the male gap, which reflects larger social inequalities between females in addition to a stronger female socioeconomic gradient of health. Results also show that matching was not completely successful in forming comparable minority and majority groups, which indicates that in societies characterized by high inequality there is a methodological limitation in estimating the role of social inequalities in explaining ethnic health gaps.
