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Revising Infant Mortality Rates for the Early Twentieth Century United States

P. 2001-2024

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Abstract

Accurate vital statistics are required to understand the evolution of racial disparities in infant health and the causes of rapid secular decline in infant mortality during the early twentieth century. Unfortunately, U.S. infant mortality rates prior to 1950 suffer from an upward bias stemming from a severe underregistration of births. At one extreme, African American births in southern states went unregistered at the rate of 15 % to 25 %. In this study, we construct improved estimates of births and infant mortality in the United States for 1915–1940 using recently released complete count decennial census microdata combined with the counts of infant deaths from published sources. We check the veracity of our estimates with a major birth registration study completed in conjunction with the 1940 decennial census and find that the largest adjustments occur in states with less-complete birth registration systems. An additional advantage of our census-based estimation method is the extension backward of the birth and infant mortality series for years prior to published estimates of registered births, enabling previously impossible comparisons and estimations. Finally, we show that underregistration can bias effect estimates even in a panel setting with specifications that include location fixed effects and place-specific linear time trends.

Separating the Signal From the Noise: Evidence for Deceleration in Old-Age Death Rates

P. 2025-2044

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Abstract

Widespread population aging has made it critical to understand death rates at old ages. However, studying mortality at old ages is challenging because the data are sparse: numbers of survivors and deaths get smaller and smaller with age. I show how to address this challenge by using principled model selection techniques to empirically evaluate theoretical mortality models. I test nine models of old-age death rates by fitting them to 360 high-quality data sets on cohort mortality after age 80. Models that allow for the possibility of decelerating death rates tend to fit better than models that assume exponentially increasing death rates. No single model is capable of universally explaining observed old-age mortality patterns, but the log-quadratic model most consistently predicts well. Patterns of model fit differ by country and sex. I discuss possible mechanisms, including sample size, period effects, and regional or cultural factors that may be important keys to understanding patterns of old-age mortality. I introduce *mortfit*, a freely available R package that enables researchers to extend the analysis to other models, age ranges, and data sources.

Longevity and Lifespan Variation by Educational Attainment in Spain: 1960–2015

P. 2045-2070

Iñaki Permanyer, Jeroen Spijker, Amand Blanes, Elisenda Renteria

Abstract

For a long time, studies of socioeconomic gradients in health have limited their attention to between-group comparisons. Yet, ignoring the differences that might exist within groups and focusing on group-specific life expectancy levels and trends alone, one might arrive at overly simplistic conclusions. Using data from the Spanish Encuesta

Sociodemográfica and recently released mortality files by the Spanish Statistical Office (INE), this is the first study to simultaneously document (1) the gradient in life expectancy by educational attainment groups, and (2) the inequality in age-at-death distributions within and across those groups for the period between 1960 and 2015 in Spain. Our findings suggest that life expectancy has been increasing for all education groups but particularly among the highly educated. We observe diverging trends in life expectancy, with the differences between the low- and highly educated becoming increasingly large, particularly among men. Concomitantly with increasing disparities across groups, length-of-life inequality has decreased for the population as a whole and for most education groups, and the contribution of the between-group component of inequality to overall inequality has been extremely small. Even if between-group inequality has increased over time, its contribution has been too small to have sizable effects on overall inequality. In addition, our results suggest that education expansion and declining within-group variability might have been the main drivers of overall lifespan inequality reductions. Nevertheless, the diverging trends in longevity and lifespan inequality across education groups represent an important phenomenon whose underlying causes and potential implications should be investigated in detail.

Lifespan Dispersion in Times of Life Expectancy Fluctuation: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe

P. 2071-2096

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Abstract

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have experienced considerable instability in mortality since the 1960s. Long periods of stagnating life expectancy were followed by rapid increases in life expectancy and, in some cases, even more rapid declines, before more recent periods of improvement. These trends have been well documented, but to date, no study has comprehensively explored trends in lifespan variation. We improved such analyses by incorporating life disparity as a health indicator alongside life expectancy, examining trends since the 1960s for 12 countries from the region. Generally, life disparity was high and fluctuated strongly over the period. For nearly 30 of these years, life expectancy and life disparity varied independently of each other, largely because mortality trends ran in opposite directions over different ages. Furthermore, we quantified the impact of large classes of diseases on life disparity trends since 1994 using a newly harmonized cause-of-death time series for eight countries in the region. Mortality patterns in CEE countries were heterogeneous and ran counter to the common patterns observed in most developed countries. They contribute to the discussion about life expectancy disparity by showing that expansion/compression levels do not necessarily mean lower/higher life expectancy or mortality deterioration/improvements.

Looking at Population Health Beyond “Male” and “Female”: Implications of Transgender Identity and Gender Nonconformity for Population Health

P. 2097-2117

Danya Lagos

Abstract

Looking beyond binary measurements of “male” or “female” can illuminate health inequality patterns that correspond to gender identity rather than biological sex. This study examines disparities in overall health among transgender men, transgender women, gender-nonconforming adults, and cisgender (nontransgender) men and women in the U.S. population. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data from 32 U.S. states and territories between 2014 and 2016 yield an analytic sample that identifies 2,229 transgender and gender-nonconforming adults and 516,753 cisgender adults. Estimates from logistic regression models, using cisgender men as a reference group, show that gender-nonconforming respondents have significantly higher odds of reporting poor self-rated health than any other gender identity group. Transgender men also display higher odds of reporting poor health in some models, corresponding to their relative socioeconomic disadvantage. I find no apparent health disadvantage among transgender women and a persistent, if slight, disadvantage among cisgender women. Gender-nonconforming respondents’ predicted probabilities of reporting poor health remain nearly twice as high as those of cisgender men after adjustments for demographic, socioeconomic, and behavioral factors. Their persistent patterns of health-related disadvantage underscore the need for higher-quality data on gender-nonconforming respondents that account for sex assigned at birth.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Lifetime Prevalence of Homelessness in the United States

P. 2119-2128

Vincent A. Fusaro, Helen G. Levy, H. Luke Shaefer

Abstract

Homelessness in the United States is often examined using cross-sectional, point-in-time samples. Any experience of homelessness is a risk factor for adverse outcomes, so it is also useful to understand the incidence of homelessness over longer periods. We estimate the lifetime prevalence of homelessness among members of the Baby Boom cohort ($n = 6,545$) using the 2012 and 2014 waves of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), a nationally representative survey of older Americans. Our analysis indicates that 6.2 % of respondents had a period of homelessness at some point in their lives. We also identify dramatic disparities in lifetime incidence of homelessness by racial and ethnic subgroups. Rates of homelessness were higher for non-Hispanic blacks (16.8 %) or Hispanics of any race (8.1 %) than for non-Hispanic whites (4.8 %; all differences significant with $p < .05$). The black-white gap, but not the Hispanic-white gap, remained significant after adjustment for covariates such as education, veteran status, and geographic region.

Has Income Segregation Really Increased? Bias and Bias Correction in Sample-Based Segregation Estimates

P. 2129-2160

Sean F. Reardon, Kendra Bischoff, Ann Owens, Joseph B. Townsend

Abstract

Several recent studies have concluded that residential segregation by income in the United States has increased in the decades since 1970, including a significant increase after 2000. Income segregation measures, however, are biased upward when based on sample data. This is a potential concern because the sampling rate of the American Community Survey (ACS)—from which post-2000 income segregation estimates are constructed—was lower than that of the earlier decennial censuses. Thus, the apparent increase in income segregation post-2000 may simply reflect larger upward bias in the estimates from the ACS, and the estimated trend may therefore be inaccurate. In this study, we first derive formulas describing the approximate sampling bias in two measures of segregation. Next, using Monte Carlo simulations, we show that the bias-corrected estimators eliminate virtually all of the bias in segregation estimates in most cases of practical interest, although the correction fails to eliminate bias in some cases when the population is unevenly distributed among geographic units and the average within-unit samples are very small. We then use the bias-corrected estimators to produce unbiased estimates of the trends in income segregation over the last four decades in large U.S. metropolitan areas. Using these corrected estimates, we replicate the central analyses in four prior studies on income segregation. We find that the primary conclusions from these studies remain unchanged, although the true increase in income segregation among families after 2000 was only half as large as that reported in earlier work. Despite this revision, our replications confirm that income segregation has increased sharply in recent decades among families with children and that income inequality is a strong and consistent predictor of income segregation.

Interstate Migration and Employer-to-Employer Transitions in the United States: New Evidence From Administrative Records Data

P. 2161-2180

Henry Hyatt, Erika McEntarfer, Ken Ueda, Alexandria Zhang

Abstract

Declines in migration across labor markets have prompted concerns that the U.S. economy is becoming less dynamic. In this study, we examine the relationship between residential migration and employer-to-employer transitions in the United States, using both survey and administrative records data. We first note strong disagreement between the Current Population Survey (CPS) and other migration statistics on the timing and severity of any decline in U.S. interstate migration. Despite these divergent patterns for overall residential migration, we find consistent evidence of a substantial decline in economic migration between 2000 and 2010. We find that composition and the returns to migration have limited ability to explain recent changes in interstate migration.

Patrilocal Residence and Female Labor Supply: Evidence From Kyrgyzstan

P. 2181-2203

Andreas Landmann, Helke Seitz, Susan Steiner

Abstract

Many people live in *patrilocal societies*, which prescribe that women move in with their husbands' parents, relieve their in-laws from housework, and care for them in old age. This arrangement is likely to have labor market consequences, in particular for women. We study the effect of coresidence on female labor supply in Kyrgyzstan, a strongly patrilocal setting. We account for the endogeneity of coresidence by exploiting the tradition that youngest sons usually live with their parents. In both OLS and IV estimations, the effect of coresidence on female labor supply is negative and insignificant. This finding is in contrast to previous studies, which found positive effects in less patrilocal settings. We go beyond earlier work by investigating effect channels. In Kyrgyzstan, coresiding women invest more time in elder care than women who do not coreside, and they do not receive parental support in housework.

Intergenerational Transmission of Multipartner Fertility

P. 2205-2228

Trude Lappegård, Elizabeth Thomson

Abstract

Using data from administrative registers for the period 1970–2007 in Norway and Sweden, we investigate the intergenerational transmission of multipartner fertility. We find that men and women with half-siblings are more likely to have children with more than one partner. The differences are greater for those with younger versus older half-siblings, consistent with the additional influence of parental separation that may not arise when one has only older half-siblings. The additional risk for those with both older and younger half-siblings suggests that complexity in childhood family relationships also contributes to multipartner fertility. Only a small part of the intergenerational association is accounted for by education in the first and second generations. The association is to some extent gendered. Half-siblings are associated with a greater risk of women having children with a new partner in comparison with men. In particular, maternal half-siblings are more strongly associated with multipartner fertility than paternal half-siblings only for women.

Maternal Age and Child Development

P. 2229-2255

Greg J. Duncan, Kenneth T. H. Lee, Maria Rosales-Rueda, Ariel Kalil

Abstract

Although the consequences of teen births for both mothers and children have been studied for decades, few studies have taken a broader look at the potential payoffs—and drawbacks—of being born to older mothers. A broader examination is important given the growing gap in maternal ages at birth for children born to mothers with low and high socioeconomic status. Drawing data from the Children of the NLSY79, our examination of this topic distinguishes between the value for children of being born to a mother who delayed her first birth and the value of the additional years between her first birth and the birth of the child whose achievements and behaviors at ages 10–13 are under study. We find that each year the mother delays a first birth is associated with a 0.02 to 0.04 standard deviation increase in school achievement and a similar-sized reduction in behavior problems. Coefficients are generally as large for additional years between the first and given birth. Results are fairly robust to the inclusion of cousin and sibling fixed effects, which attempt to address some omitted variable concerns. Our mediational analyses show that the primary pathway by which delaying first births benefits children is by enabling mothers to complete more years of schooling.

Saving, Sharing, or Spending? The Wealth Consequences of Raising Children

P. 2257-2282

Michelle Maroto

Abstract

This study uses 1986–2012 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort data to investigate the relationship between raising children and net worth among younger Baby Boomer parents. I combine fixed-effects and unconditional quantile regression models to estimate changes in net worth associated with having children in different age groups across the wealth

distribution. This allows me to test whether standard economic models for savings and consumption over the life course hold for families at different wealth levels. My findings show that the wealth effects of children vary throughout the distribution. Among families at or below the median, children of all ages were associated with wealth declines, likely due to the costs of child-rearing. However, at the 75th percentile and above, wealth increased with the presence of younger children but decreased after those children reached age 18. My results, therefore, provide evidence for a saving and investment model of child-rearing among wealthier families but not among families at or below median wealth levels. For these families, the costs of raising children largely outweighed motivations for saving.

Beyond the Nuclear Family: Trends in Children Living in Shared Households

P. 2283-2297

Natasha V. Pilkauskas, Christina Cross

Abstract

Using data from the 1996–2008 panels of the Survey of Income and Program Participation and the 2009–2016 American Community Survey, we examine trends in U.S. children living in shared households (living with adults beyond their nuclear (parent/parent's partner/sibling) family). We find that although the share of children who lived in a shared household increased over this period, the rise was nearly entirely driven by an increase in three-generation/multigenerational households (coresident grandparent(s), parent(s), and child). In 1996, 5.7 % of children lived in a three-generation household; by 2016, 9.8 % did likewise—more than a 4 percentage point increase. More economically advantaged groups (older, more educated mothers, married households) experienced the largest percentage increase in three-generation coresidence, although correlates of coresidence remained largely stable. Decomposition analyses suggest that the rise in Social Security receipt and changes in parental relationship status (less marriage, more single parenthood) most strongly explained the increase in three-generation households. Given the dramatic rise in three-generation households, more research is needed to understand the consequences of these living arrangements for children, their parents, and their grandparents.

Subjective Well-being and Partnership Dynamics: Are Same-Sex Relationships Different?

P. 2299-2320

Shuai Chen, Jan C. van Ours

Abstract

We analyze Dutch panel data to investigate whether partnership has a causal effect on subjective well-being. As in previous studies, we find that, on average, being in a partnership improves well-being. Well-being gains of marriage are larger than those of cohabitation. The well-being effects of partnership formation and disruption are symmetric. We also find that marriage improves well-being for both younger and older cohorts, whereas cohabitation benefits only the younger cohort. Our main contribution to the literature is on well-being effects of same-sex partnerships. We find that these effects are homogeneous to sexual orientation. Gender differences exist in the well-being effects of same-sex partnerships: females are happier cohabiting, whereas marriage has a stronger well-being effect on males.

“His” and “Hers”: Meeting the Economic Bar to Marriage

P. 2321-2343

Christina Gibson-Davis, Anna Gassman-Pines, Rebecca Lehrman

Abstract

Scholars have suggested that low-income parents avoid marriage because they have not met the so-called economic bar to marriage. The economic bar is multidimensional, referring to a bundle of financial achievements that determine whether couples feel ready to wed. Using the Building Strong Families data set of low-income parents ($n = 4,444$), we operationalized this qualitative concept into a seven-item index and examined whether couples who met the economic bar by achieving the majority of the items were more likely to marry than couples who did not. Meeting the bar was associated with a two-thirds increase in marriage likelihood. The bar was not positively associated with cohabitation, suggesting that it applies specifically to marriage. When we examined different definitions of the bar based on whether the mother, father, or both parents contributed items, all variants were associated with marriage, even if the bar was

based on the mother's economic accomplishments alone. When mothers contributed to the economic bar, they reported significantly higher relationship quality. Our results reinforce the importance of the multidimensional economic bar for marriage entry, highlighting the role of maternal economic contributions in low-income relationships.

Nonlabor Income and Age at Marriage: Evidence From China's Heating Policy

P. 2345-2370

Junhong Chu, Haoming Liu, I. P. L. Png

Abstract

We exploit China's heating policy to investigate how nonlabor income affects marriage. From the mid-1950s, the policy gave substantial subsidies to urban residents north of the Huai River. Applying geographic regression discontinuity, we find that with the policy, urban men in the north married 15 months earlier than men in the south. The difference is substantial given that the average age at first marriage is 24.9 years for urban men in the south. The effect is larger for later birth cohorts, which is consistent with the progressive implementation of the policy. The effect is smaller among women, consistent with women having less power in the household than men. There is no effect among rural residents, who did not benefit from the heating policy.

From Privilege to Prevalence: Contextual Effects of Women's Schooling on African Marital Timing

P. 2371-2394

Margaret Frye, Sara Lopus

Abstract

In Africa and elsewhere, educated women tend to marry later than their less-educated peers. Beyond being an attribute of individual women, education is also an aggregate phenomenon: the social meaning of a woman's educational attainment depends on the educational attainments of her age-mates. Using data from 30 countries and 246 birth cohorts across sub-Saharan Africa, we investigate the impact of educational context (the percentage of women in a country cohort who ever attended school) on the relationship between a woman's educational attainment and her marital timing. In contexts where access to education is prevalent, the marital timing of uneducated and highly educated women is more similar than in contexts where attending school is limited to a privileged minority. This *across-country convergence* is driven by uneducated women marrying later in high-education contexts, especially through lower rates of very early marriages. However, within countries over time, the marital ages of women from different educational groups tend to diverge as educational access expands. This *within-country divergence* is most often driven by later marriage among highly educated women, although divergence in some countries is driven by earlier marriage among women who never attended school.
