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Relative Sizes of Age Cohorts and Labor Force Participation of Older Workers

P. 1-31

David Neumark, Maysen Yen

Abstract

We study the effects of the size of older cohorts on labor force participation and wages of older workers in the United States. We use panel data on states, treating the age structure of the population as endogenous, owing to migration. When older cohorts (50–59 or 60–69) are large relative to a young cohort (aged 16–24), the evidence fits the relative supply hypothesis. However, when older cohorts are large relative to 25- to 49-year-olds, the evidence points to a relative demand shift. Thus, we need a more nuanced view than simply whether the older cohort is large relative to the population: the cohort that they are large *relative to* matters.

Labor Force Participation Over the Life Course: The Long-Term Effects of Employment Trajectories on Wages and the Gendered Payoff to Employment

P. 33-60

Katherine Weisshaar, Tania Cabello-Hutt

Abstract

In this article, we consider how individuals' long-term employment trajectories relate to wage inequality and the gender wage gap in the United States. Using more than 30 years of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 sample, we identify six employment trajectories for individuals from ages 22 to 50. We find that women across racial/ethnic groups and Black men are more likely than White and Hispanic men to have nonsteady employment trajectories and lower levels of employment throughout their lives, and individuals who have experienced poverty also have heightened risks of intermittent employment. We then assess how trajectories are associated with wages later in careers, at ages 45–50. We find significant variation in wages across work trajectories, with steady high employment leading to the highest wages. This wage variation is primarily explained by work characteristics rather than family characteristics. Finally, we examine gender variation in within-trajectory wages. We find that the gender wage gap is largest in the steady high employment trajectory and is reduced among trajectories with longer durations of nonemployment. Thus, although women are relatively more concentrated in nonsteady trajectories than are men, men who do follow nonsteady wage trajectories incur smaller wage premiums than men in steady high employment pathways, on average. These findings demonstrate that long-term employment paths are important predictors of economic and gender wage inequality.

Does Starting Universal Childcare Earlier Influence Children's Skill Development?

P. 61-98

Daniel Kuehnle, Michael Oberfichtner

Abstract

As many developed countries enact policies that allow children to begin universal childcare earlier, understanding how starting universal childcare earlier affects children's cognitive and noncognitive skills is an important policy question. We provide comprehensive evidence on the multidimensional short- and longer-run effects of starting universal childcare earlier using a fuzzy discontinuity in the age at starting childcare in Germany. Combining rich survey and administrative data, we follow one cohort from age 6 to 15 and examine standardized cognitive test scores,

noncognitive skill measures, and school track choice in a unified framework. Children who start universal childcare four months earlier around age 3 do not perform differently in terms of standardized cognitive test scores, measures of noncognitive skills, school track choice, or school entrance examinations. We also find no evidence of skill improvements for children with low socioeconomic status, although we provide suggestive evidence that they may benefit from high-quality care. Our estimates refer to children who start childcare before they become legally entitled, for whom the literature would predict low gains to starting childcare earlier. We provide further evidence on this relationship between parental resistance to and children's potential gains from childcare. Simply allowing children to start universal childcare earlier is hence not sufficient to improve children's skill development, particularly for children with low socioeconomic status.

Worth the Weight? Recent Trends in Obstetric Practices, Gestational Age, and Birth Weight in the United States

P. 99-121

Andrea M. Tilstra, Ryan K. Masters

Abstract

Birth weight in the United States declined substantially during the 1990s and 2000s. We suggest that the declines were likely due to shifts in gestational age resulting from changes in obstetric practices. Using restricted National Vital Statistics System data linked birth/infant death data for 1990–2013, we analyze trends in obstetric practices, gestational age distributions, and birth weights among first-birth singletons born to U.S. non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, and Latina women. We use life table techniques to analyze the joint probabilities of gestational age-specific birth and gestational age-specific obstetric intervention (i.e., induced cesarean delivery, induced vaginal delivery, not-induced cesarean delivery, and not-induced vaginal delivery) to fully document trends in obstetric practices by gestational age. We use simulation techniques to estimate counterfactual changes in birth weight distributions if obstetric practices did not change between 1990 and 2013. Results show that between 1990 and 2013, the likelihood of induced labors and cesarean deliveries increased at all gestational ages, and the gestational age distribution of U.S. births significantly shifted. Births became much less likely to occur beyond gestational week 40 and much more likely to occur during weeks 37–39. Overall, nearly 18% of births from not-induced labor and vaginal delivery at later gestational ages were replaced with births occurring at earlier gestational ages from obstetric interventions. Results suggest that if rates of obstetric practices had not changed between 1990 and 2013, then the average U.S. birth weight would have increased over this time. Findings strongly indicate that recent declines in U.S. birth weight were due to increases in induced labor and cesarean delivery at select gestational ages.

Crime and Inequality in Academic Achievement Across School Districts in the United States

P. 123-145

Gerard Torrats-Espinos

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of violent crime on school district-level achievement in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The research design exploits variation in achievement and violent crime across 813 school districts in the United States and seven birth cohorts of children born between 1996 and 2002. The identification strategy leverages exogenous shocks to crime rates arising from the availability of federal funds to hire police officers in the local police departments where the school districts operate. Results show that children who entered the school system when the violent crime rate in their school districts was lower score higher in ELA by the end of eighth grade, relative to children attending schools in the same district but who entered the school system when the violent crime rate was higher. A 10% decline in the violent crime rate experienced at ages 0–6 raises eighth-grade ELA achievement in the district by 0.03 standard deviations. Models that estimate effects by race and gender show larger impacts among Black children and boys. The district-wide effect on mathematics achievement is smaller and statistically nonsignificant. These findings extend our understanding of the geography of educational opportunity in the United States and reinforce the idea that understanding inequalities in academic achievement requires evidence on what happens inside as well as outside schools.

Two Decades of Same-Sex Marriage in Sweden: A Demographic Account of Developments in Marriage, Childbearing, and Divorce

P. 147–169

Martin Kolk, Gunnar Andersson

Abstract

In this study, we provide demographic insight into the still relatively new family form of same-sex marriage. We focus on period trends in same-sex marriage formation and divorce during 1995–2012 in Sweden and the role of childbearing in same-sex unions. The period begins with the introduction of registered partnership for same-sex couples and also covers the introduction of formal same-sex marriage in 2009. We use register data for the complete population of Sweden to contrast patterns in male and female same-sex marriage formation and divorce. We show that female same-sex union formation increased rapidly over the period, while trends for male same-sex unions increased less. The introduction of same-sex marriage legislation in 2009 appears to have had little effect on the pace of formation of same-sex unions. In contrast, legal changes supporting parental rights in same-sex unions may have fueled the formation of female same-sex marriages as well as parenthood in such unions. Further, we show that divorce risks in the marital unions of two women are much higher than in other types of marriages. We find some convergence of divorce risks across union types at the end of our study period: male same-sex unions have the same divorce risk levels as opposite-sex marriages, and the elevated risks of divorce in female same-sex unions appear to have stabilized at somewhat lower levels than those observed in the late 1990s.

Marriage Decline in Korea: Changing Composition of the Domestic Marriage Market and Growth in International Marriage

P. 171–194

James M. Raymo, Hyunjoon Park

Abstract

Explanations for the substantial decline in rates of marriage in East Asian countries often emphasize the role of rapid educational expansion for women in reducing the desirability of marriages characterized by a strong gender-based division of labor. Focusing on South Korea, we consider a very different scenario in which changing educational composition of the marriage market reduces the demographic feasibility of such marriages. Analyses of 1% microsamples of the 1990 and 2010 Korean censuses show that changes in the availability of potential spouses accounted for part of the decline in marriage rates over a period of 20 years (1985–1989 to 2005–2009) for highly educated women and less-educated men. We also show that growth in international marriages played a role in preventing an even more dramatic decline in marriage among low-educated men. These findings support the general relevance of marriage market mismatches in gender-inegalitarian societies and highlight the declining feasibility of marriage for low-educated men in such contexts. Findings also hint at important implications for inequality in a society such as Korea, where marriage remains a symbol of social success and is closely related to women's economic well-being and men's health and subjective well-being.

Parents' Marital Quality and Children's Transition to Adulthood

P. 195–220

Sarah R. Brauner-Otto, William G. Axinn, Dirgha J. Ghimire

Abstract

Unique longitudinal measures from Nepal allow us to link both mothers' and fathers' reports of their marital relationships with a subsequent long-term record of their children's behaviors. We focus on children's educational attainment and marriage timing because these two dimensions of the transition to adulthood have wide-ranging, long-lasting consequences. We find that children whose parents report strong marital affection and less spousal conflict attain higher levels of education and marry later than children whose parents do not. Furthermore, these findings are independent of each other and of multiple factors known to influence children's educational attainment and marriage timing. These intriguing results support theories pointing toward the long-term intergenerational consequences of variations in multiple dimensions of parents' marriages.

Population Pyramids Yield Accurate Estimates of Total Fertility Rates

P. 221–241

Mathew E. Hauer, Carl P. Schmertmann

Abstract

The primary fertility index for a population, the total fertility rate (TFR), cannot be calculated for many areas and periods because it requires disaggregation of births by mother's age. Here we discuss a flexible framework for estimating TFR using inputs as minimal as a population pyramid. We develop five variants, each with increasing complexity and data requirements. We test accuracy across a diverse set of data sources that comprise more than 2,400 fertility schedules with known TFR values, including the Human Fertility Database, Demographic and Health Surveys, U.S. counties, and nonhuman species. We show that even the simplest and least accurate variant has a median error of only 0.09 births per woman over 2,400 fertility schedules, suggesting accurate TFR estimation over a wide range of demographic conditions. We anticipate that this framework will extend fertility analysis to new subpopulations, periods, geographies, and even species. To demonstrate the framework's utility in new applications, we produce subnational estimates of African fertility levels, reconstruct historical European TFRs for periods up to 150 years before the collection of detailed birth records, and estimate TFR for the United States conditional on race and household income.

Family, Firms, and Fertility: A Study of Social Interaction Effects

P. 243–266

Zafer Buyukkececi, Thomas Leopold, Henriette Engelhardt

Abstract

Research has indicated that fertility spreads through social networks and attributed this phenomenon to social interaction effects. It remains unclear, however, whether the findings of previous studies reflect the direct influence of network partners or contextual and selection factors, such as shared environment and common background characteristics. The present study uses instrumental variables to improve the identification of social interaction effects on fertility. Using data from the System of social statistical data sets (SSD) of Statistics Netherlands, we identify two networks—the network of colleagues at the workplace and the network of siblings in the family—to examine the influence of network partners on individual fertility decisions. Discrete-time event-history models with random effects provide evidence for social interaction effects, showing that colleagues' and siblings' fertility have direct consequences for an individual's fertility. Moreover, colleague effects are concentrated in female-female interactions, and women are more strongly influenced by their siblings, regardless of siblings' gender. These results are the first to demonstrate spillover effects across network boundaries, suggesting that fertility effects accumulate through social ties not only within but also across different domains of interaction.

Pathways to Low Fertility: 50 Years of Limitation, Curtailment, and Postponement of Childbearing

P. 267–296

Ian M. Timæus, Tom A. Moultrie

Abstract

This study applies survival analysis to the birth histories from 317 national surveys to model pathways to low fertility in 83 less-developed countries between 1965 and 2014. It presents period measures of parity progression, the length of birth intervals and total fertility that have been standardized fully for age, parity, and interval duration. It also examines parity-specific trends in the proportion of women who want no more children. Outside sub-Saharan Africa, fertility transition was dominated by parity-specific family size limitation. As the transition progressed, women also began to postpone their next birth for lengthy periods in many countries. During the first half of the fertility transition in much of sub-Saharan Africa and in some other countries, however, women stopped childbearing without targeting particular family sizes. Moreover, birth intervals in sub-Saharan Africa have been lengthening since the onset of the transition. Birth control is not restricted to a dichotomy between limitation and spacing. Other reasons for curtailing childbearing and postponing having another birth also shape countries' pathways through fertility transition.

Immigrant Fertility in Comparative Perspective: South Africa and the United States

P. 297–322

Guadalupe Aguilera, Kim Korinek

Abstract

Because immigrant fertility is situated within two societies, the resultant childbearing patterns reflect a culmination of selectivity into migration alongside blended experiences of origin-destination contexts around fertility norms. We analyze the ways that national origin shapes patterns of childbearing within fertility covariates. We use data from Statistics South Africa and the United States Census Bureau harmonized in the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International for a disaggregated analysis of the odds of a birth in the past year among the three most prominent immigrant groups compared with native-born women in each receiving country. Interacted logistic regression analyses and margins results demonstrate significant nativity-based differences in the odds of childbearing across age, previous childbearing, and marital status, but not across educational attainment. We attribute variation in the covariates of fertility across nativities to demographic composition and the contexts of migration unique to each group.

The Impact of Parental Involvement Laws on the Abortion Rate of Minors

P. 323–346

Theodore J. Joyce, Robert Kaestner, Jason Ward

Abstract

In this article, we conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effect of parental involvement (PI) laws on the incidence of abortions to minors in the United States. We contribute to the extant literature in several ways. First, we explore differences in estimates of the effect of PI laws across time that may result from changes in contraception, the composition of pregnant minors, abortion access in nearby states, and differences in how these laws are enforced. We find that PI laws enacted before the mid-1990s are associated with a 15% to 20% reduction in abortions to minors, but PI laws enacted after this time are not associated with declines in abortions to minors. Second, we assess the role of out-of-state travel by minors and find that it is not a significant factor moderating the effect of PI laws. Third, we use a synthetic control approach to explore state-level heterogeneity in the effect of PI laws and find large differences in the effect of PI laws on abortions to minors by state that appear unrelated to the type of PI law or whether contiguous states have enacted PI laws. Finally, we show that estimates of the effect of PI laws using data from either the Centers for Disease Control or the Guttmacher Institute do not differ qualitatively once differences in the states and years available across these data are harmonized.

The Marital Implications of Bereavement: Child Death and Intimate Partner Violence in West and Central Africa

P. 347–371

Abigail Weitzman, Emily Smith-Greenaway

Abstract

In high-mortality contexts, research examining the effects of child mortality has focused almost exclusively on couples' fertility responses while overlooking other potential family consequences. Using nationally representative survey data from 13 West and Central African countries, we estimate multilevel discrete-time hazard models to determine how women's risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) varies with the death of children. We assess heterogeneity in this association across two surrounding circumstances: children's age at death and regional prevalence of child bereavement. Findings indicate that the risk of IPV initiation rises with the death of children under age 5—for whom women are most intensely responsible—but not with the death of older children. The effect of young child bereavement is most pronounced in regions where it is least prevalent among mothers—a finding not explained by concomitant regional variation in gender inequality, family norms, and infrastructural development. These findings highlight the importance of child mortality for family outcomes beyond fertility in the African context and demonstrate the prominent role of the broader mortality context in shaping these implications.

Midlife Work and Women's Long-Term Health and Mortality

P. 373–402

Jennifer Caputo, Eliza K. Pavalko, Melissa A. Hardy

Abstract

Although paid work is a well-established predictor of health, several gaps in our knowledge about the relationship between adult work patterns and later health and mortality remain, including whether these benefits persist over long periods and whether they are dependent on subjective experiences with work. We draw on more than three decades of

data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Mature Women to assess how labor force participation over a period of 20 years during midlife is related to mental and physical health and mortality over the following 16–25 years. We find that consistent work earlier in life continues to predict improved health and longevity over many years as women enter late life, and this relationship does not differ between women with positive and those with negative subjective work experiences. These findings add to knowledge about how key adult social experiences are related to health as individuals enter later life.
