Increasing Heterogeneity in the Entry into Motherhood in Uruguay

The role of education for 1955-1985 cohorts

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Background

- Some Latin American countries experienced the onset of the *postponement transition* after 2000 (Esteve et al. 2012; Rosero-Bixby et al. 2009)
  - Expansion of secondary and tertiary education as the main driver
  - High levels of teenage fertility

- Uruguay: a forerunner of fertility changes
  - Signals of social polarization of age at first birth
Conditional age-specific fertility rates for first birth order

Source: Nathan, Pardo & Cabella (forthcoming).
Aim

- To examine the changes in age at first birth in Uruguay from a cohort approach

- To examine the evolution of educational gradient, taking into account the changes in the educational composition of the female population
Data

- 2011 national population census
  - Birth cohorts 1955-1985 (N=647,390)
- Retrospective fertility questions (women 12+):
  - Year at birth of first child born alive
- Education attainment:
  - Years of education ➔ Education terciles
Method

- **Single-decrement life tables:**
  - Conditional age-specific probabilities of first birth by age \((x)\), cohort \((c)\) and education tercile \((e)\):
    \[
    q_1(x, c, e) = \frac{B_1(x, c, e)}{W_0(x, c, e)}
    \]
    For \(x=[12,13,…,44]\), \(c=[1955,1956,…,1985]\) and \(e=[\text{low, medium, high}]\)
  - Cumulative proportion of childless women
  - Descriptive statistics
Results
Conditional probabilities of first birth (q1) between exact ages 12-20, 20-30 and 30-40
Cohorts 1955-1985

Source: Author's computations from 2011 population census, Uruguay.
Conditional age-specific probabilities of first birth
Selected cohorts 1955-1985
(three-cohort moving average)

Source: Author’s computations from 2011 population census, Uruguay.
Conditional age-specific probabilities of first birth by education level
Selected cohorts 1955-1985
(three-cohort moving average)

High Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>12+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>13+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>13+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>13+ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medium Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>7–11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8–12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>10–12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>10–12 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>0–6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>0–7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>0–9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>0–9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s computations from 2011 population census, Uruguay.
Median age at first birth by education
Selected cohorts 1955-1985
(three-cohort moving average)

Source: Author's computations from 2011 population census, Uruguay.
Increasing heterogeneity of age at first birth in Uruguay is highly correlated with widening differentials by educational groups.

- Low educated women from younger cohorts tend to start motherhood earlier than the previous generations, even though the composition effects were controlled.

Bi-modal pattern of conditional probabilities at first birth illustrates the social polarization of fertility timing.
Discussion

- Is the trend seen in Uruguayan the expected pattern for Latin America?
  - Probably

- Is heterogeneity of first birth in Uruguay larger than in developed countries (USA and UK, for instance)?
  - Probably

- Implications:
  - An expected phase of the *postponement transition*?
  - A marker of increasing inequalities?
THANK YOU!

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