

Influence of place of birth on adult mortality: the case of Spain

Néstor Aldea^{†,1,2}, Dariya Ordanovich¹, Alberto Palloni¹, Diego Ramiro¹, and Francisco Viciana³

¹ Institute of Economy, Geography and Demography (IEGD), CSIC-CCHS, Madrid (Spain)

² French Institute for Demographic Studies (Ined), Aubervilliers (France)

³ Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia (IECA), Seville (Spain)

[†] Presenting & corresponding author (nestor.aldea@cchs.csic.es)

Abstract

We use a unique, individual population and mortality data set from Spain in order to compute life tables, and to estimate life expectancy at age 50 for males and females by region of residence and region of birth. We show that, consistent with expectations regarding the influence of early conditions on adult health and mortality, the effects of the region of birth on adult mortality are very strong, irrespective of place of residence. Individuals born in Andalusia, for instance, tend to have low life expectancies regardless of their region or residence, while those born in Castile-and-Leon have the highest life expectancies. Furthermore, we find that mortality levels observed in a place are strongly influenced by the proportion of migrants and their composition by place of birth. Moreover, we propose a formal decomposition of life expectancy that allows us to separate the effects of place of birth, place of residence, and inter-regional migration selection on life expectancy at 50 years old. This decomposition leads to a new measure of heritability of early childhood conditions. This heritability measure reflects the importance of the region on birth on adult mortality, and attains a value in the range .42 - .43, implying that as much as 43 percent of the variance in Spain's life expectancy at age 50 is explained by region of birth. Finally, we find evidence of the healthy migrant effect, that is, positive health selection of internal migrants, at a regional level. Thus, we argue in this paper that the study of regional mortality is enriched if one uses statistics computed by place of birth and place of residence, and that doing so leads to somewhat different assessments about the nature of regional heterogeneities in mortality.

Néstor Aldea: nestor.aldea@cchs.csic.es

Dariya Ordanovich: dariya.ordanovich@cchs.csic.es

Alberto Palloni: alberto.palloni@cchs.csic.es

Diego Ramiro: diego.ramiro@cchs.csic.es

Francisco Viciana: franciscojviciana@juntadeandalucia.es