

Social Capital and Health:
Evidence that ancestral trust promotes health
among children of immigrants

By

Martin Ljunge

Comments by Jo Jacobs

Overview

- Explores the effect of trust on self-rated health
- Endogeneity issues abound
 - Reverse causality, omitted contextual factors
 - Previous treatment with IV (e.g. population density, corruption)
- Overcome this issue by ensuring the direction of the effect is from trust to health

Overview

- Reduced form two-stage model
- Focus on children of immigrants and looking at ancestral trust
 - Ancestral trust: average level of trust in parent's birth country

Overview: Hypotheses

1. Parent's trust is correlated with mean trust of birth country



2. Trust is transmitted from migrant parent to a native born child



3. Child's trust manifests in health outcomes

Overview

- Direction of causality issue addressed
 - Own health will not influence ancestral trust
- Ancestral contextual factors related to ancestral trust that need to be addressed with robustness checks
 - Development, health outcomes, inequality, institutional features, happiness, locus of control, religiosity

Parental Trust

- First step in hypothesis is “uncontroversial”
- There may be mitigating factors though that affect this
 - Marriage to a native born individual
 - Type of migrant (economic, refugee, etc.)
 - Age at migration

Age at Migration

- Stability of level of trust over time
 - A number of source countries (e.g. Eastern European countries) where this likely did change over time
- Ancestral country-level factor non-significance
 - Is this because it is not capturing context at time of migration?

Trust through the Life Course

- Reliance on trust not changing over time
- Stratification by age
- Would this be another reason to expect stronger results for younger groups?

Self-Rated Health

- Self-rated health measure shortcomings w.r.t. subjectivity not discussed explicitly
- Trust is a facet of agreeableness (Big Five)
- Addressed in section 4.3 with less subjective measure (hampered by health in daily activities)

Mothers vs. Fathers

- Any explanations for the differential effects?
- Trust is shaped by hierarchical structure on the father's side
- Alternate analyses with both parents as immigrants
 - Any alternate analyses focusing on homogamy and heterogamy w.r.t. source country for the parents?

IV Approach

- Instruments
 - No dropping first-person pronoun (i.e. respectful of individual rights)
 - Singular vs. plural personal pronouns (i.e. hierarchy and social distance)
- Inclusion of tests would be useful

Conclusions

- Great alternate approach to the endogeneity issue
- Strength of paper not just in the original way of approaching endogeneity, but in the robustness checks