MILLENNIALS AS PARENTS-MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS OF ENTRY INTO PARENTHOOD

Natalija Mirić

University of Belgrade Faculty of Geography Department of Demography

Studentski trg III/3

11000 Belgrade

Serbia

Telephone: +381659999591

E-mail: nmiric@gef.bg.ac.rs

Extended Abstract:

Today, millennials present the largest part of reproductive potential, and their specific fertility behavior in terms of late entry into parenthood is evident which implies fewer children than past generations. Educational and professional achievement is highly placed in the lives of millennials which can be considered as one of the direct cause of delay of parenthood. The aim of this paper is to point out the predictors of entry into parenthood among millennials, as well as to investigate whether there are differences between men and women.

Multilevel analysis is used which is based on data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions in Serbia (2017). The analysis included 1 284 millennials or 642 households consisted of married couples who had a child/children. The dependent variable in this study is the wife's/husband's age at entry into parenthood. In a sample of 642 married couples of millennials, the average age at entry into parenthood is 23.4 for women and 27.9 for men. The average number of children of these married couples is 1.74. In the light of theories of fertility (Becker 1960; Becker and Lewis 1973), the author postulate in this study that the age at entry into parenthood is a function of demographic and socio-economic variables, both at the individual and household level. The variables are described in Table 1.

The basic formula of a general multilevel model, consisting of a fixed and a random part, from which the author started, is:

$$Y_{ij} = Y_{00} + Y_{10} X_{ij} + Y_{01} Z_j + Y_{11} Z_j X_{ij} + u_{1j} X_{ij} + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

i is the individual level (level 1) and j is level 2 (partner) and level 3 (household) in this formula.

The results show that individual and wife's/husband's characteristics explain significant portion of variations in age at entry into parenthood, while socio-economic characteristics of the households are not significant in explaining these variations. Individual and partner's characteristics differently affect entry into parenthood among women and men. Results show that 70% of variations in age at entering into parenthood among women are explained by their own individual characteristics, while the same variation among men is largely explained by the characteristics of their wives. This is confirmed by an intra-class correlation coefficient in the amount of 0.77 for men and 0.29 for women, which means that 77% and 29% of variations in age at entry into parenthood are explained by partner's characteristics (by level 2 variables) (Table 2).

Random intercept model 2 shows that all level 1 predictors of entry into motherhood are statistically significant (sig. <0.050), or in other words, all socio-demographic characteristics of women included in the model (age, education, age when highest level of education attained and age when began first regular job) are relevant for explaining variations in age at entry into motherhood (Table 3). On the other side, random intercept model 2 shows that only age and education of men are statistically significant level 1 predictors of entry into fatherhood (Table 4).

The inclusion of both individual (level 1) and partner's characteristics (level 2) in the model (random intercept model 3) shows that economic stability in term of stable employment of husband is a significant predictor of entering into motherhood. A statistically significant level 2 predictor of entry into motherhood is husband's age when began first regular job (sig. 0.001), which definitely suggests the importance of the husband's financial stability as a "precondition" for the family formation among millennials (Table 3). However, the wife's economic stability is not an important predictor of entry into fatherhood. In contrast, random intercept model 3 shows that education and length of schooling of wife are statistically significant level 2 predictors of entry into fatherhood (Table 4).

The household's characteristics (income and degree of urbanization) included in model 4 are not prove as significant predictors in explaining age at entry into motherhood/fatherhood.

In summary, it can be concluded that the women's characteristics are dominant in the decision to entering into parenthood among millennials. The findings confirm the importance of professional achievement as a "precondition" for family formation among millennials, which is reflected through education among women, through economic stability among men.

Table 1: Description of individual characteristics (level 1 variables), partner's characteristics (level 2 variables) and household's characteristics (level 3 variables) in the sample.

		Wife	Husband
Age	20-24	11.7	1.4
	25-29	33.2	2.8
	30-34	56.1	95.8
	Mean	29.7	33.2
Education	Primary	4.0	4.1
	Secondary	77.3	81.9
	Tertiary	18.7	14.0
Age when highest level of education attained	15-19	77.3	82.9
	20-24	13.2	7.5
	25-29	7.9	6.9
	30-34	1.6	2.7
	Mean	18.9	18.9
Age when began first regular job	15-19	30.2	44.4
	20-24	43.8	37.5
	25-29	23.1	14.5
	30-34	2.9	3.6
	Mean	21.9	20.7
Age at entry into parenthood	15-19	16.2	2.4
	20-24	46.3	22.2
	25-29	30.9	41.3
	30-34	6.3	34.1
	Mean	23.4	27.9
Income of household	Low	23.4	
	Medium	61.3	
	High	15.3	
Degree of urbanization	Densely populated area	22.7	
	Intermediate area	27.9	
	Thinly populated area	49.4	

Table 2: Random intercept models

	Model 1 null random intercept		Model 2 random intercept level 1		Model 3 random intercept level 1+2		Model 4 random intercept level 1+2+3	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
Intercept	.016670	.047465	-.036857	-.049968	.122412	-.007767	.032417	-.097762
$\sigma^2 r$	10.2210	5.97798	4.77656	5.49582	6.43232	4.98704	7.85166	7.85166
$\sigma^2 \mu 0$	4.29469	18.8317	4.62760	4.86780	1.51089	2.95610	1.79218	6.64316

Table 3: Random intercept models with level 1,2,3 predictors od entry into **motherhood**

| | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
| | Random intercept with level 1 predictor | | Random intercept with level 1 and 2 predictors | | Random intercept with level 1, 2 and 3 predictors | |
	Coef.	Sig.	Coef.	Sig.	Coef.	Sig.
Wife's age	.320612	.000	.484655	.000	.489037	.000
Wife's education	.007676	.000	.004812	.029	.004790	.030
Wife's age when highest level of education attained	.201907	.014	.189590	.024	.165754	.050
Wife's age when began first regular job	-.090711	.046	-.094651	.051	-.099025	.040
Husband's age			-.230082	.000	-.222439	.000
Husband's education			.001344	.569	.001184	.639
Husband's age when highest level of education attained			.035646	.608	.019230	.782
Husband's age when began first regular job			.144166	.001	.140593	.002
Income of household					3.62307	.055
Degree of urbanization					-.244891	.209

P<0.05

Table 4: Random intercept models with level 1,2,3 predictors od entry into **fatherhood**

| | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
| | Random intercept with level 1 predictor | | Random intercept with level 1 and 2 predictors | | Random intercept with level 1, 2 and 3 predictors | |
	Coef.	Sig.	Coef.	Sig.	Coef.	Sig.
Husband's age	.602126	.000	.769917	.000	.777561	.000
Husband's education	.007392	.003	.001344	.596	.001184	.639
Husband's age when highest level of education attained	-.003768	.959	.035646	.608	.019230	.782
Husband's age when began first regular job	.082587	.054	.144166	.001	.140593	.002
Wife's age			-.515344	.000	-.510962	.000
Wife's education			.004812	.029	.004790	.030
Wife's age when highest level of education attained			.189590	.024	.165754	.050
Wife's age when began first regular job			-.094651	.055	-.099025	.040
Income of household					3.62807	.054
Degree of urbanization					-.244891	.209

P<0.05