

Risky Moms, Risky Kids? Mother's Fertility Decision and Criminal Propensity of Children after the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Olivier Marie

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Abstract:

We study the link between parental selection and children criminality using a natural experiment which dramatically affected fertility decisions. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, number of birth more than halved in East Germany. Such a change in fertility decision likely altered the composition of cohorts. Indeed, we estimate that the children from these (smaller) cohorts are 40 percent more likely to commit crimes, and that their mothers had worse observable characteristics. We further investigate the role of emotional attachment and risk attitudes in the fertility-crime relationship.