Book Review/Compte rendu

Nadja Milewski, *Fertility of Immigrants: A Two-Generational Approach in Germany*. Heidelburg: Springer, 2010, 197 pp. $139.00 hardcover (978-3642037047)

The changing pattern of fertility behaviour among immigrant women has become an important concern for immigrant receiving countries in general and for Germany in particular because of their ongoing below-replacement levels of fertility (i.e., less than 2.1 children per woman). Milewski (2010) thus appropriately takes Germany as an ideal setting for studying fertility behaviour of immigrants and their second generation descendants (hereafter simply second generation).

The main focus of Milewski's monograph is to examine the changing patterns of fertility behaviour among immigrants and their descendants in Germany. The monograph has five chapters followed by an appendix and references. In Chapter 1, the author provides a detailed history of Germany's immigration experience as well as the sociodemographic structure of the foreign born. She clearly identifies gaps in the literature on fertility of immigrants through a careful review of a wide range of empirical research conducted across different countries.

Chapter 2 of the book considers five major hypotheses to explain the fertility behaviour of immigrants: disruption, interrelations of events, socialization, adaptation, and selection. The *disruption hypothesis* stipulates that migration has a depressive impact on fertility of migrants because of the time needed to adjust socially and economically to the host society; the *interrelation of events hypothesis* posits that immigrant fertility increases after migration because of various interrelated events that often take place more or less simultaneously, such as marriage and migration. The *adaptation hypothesis* asserts that the socioeconomic conditions and the cultural values and norms regarding reproductive behaviour in the host society facilitate the convergence of immigrant fertility with that of the native-born population over time. The *socialization hypothesis* posits that immigrant fertility will remain at the same level at the place of destination as that of their country of origin because of socialization and its long-term impact on behaviour. Finally, the *selection hypothesis* predicts that immigrants will have levels of fertility similar to that of native born at the place of destination because of selection effects that make immigrants different from others in the population at place of origin.

Milewski also discusses four hypotheses pertaining to the fertility of the second generation. First, the *socioeconomic characteristics thesis* attributes differences in fertility between minority and majority populations to their compositional differences (e.g., education, occupation, income, age structure, and marital status). Second, the *economic hypothesis* suggests that fertility is largely determined by the availability of resources in the household such as time and money. Third, the *subculture hypothesis* attributes the relatively higher fertility among minority groups to pronatalist norms and values regarding reproductive behaviour that are common in their country of origin. Finally, the *minority-group status hypothesis* suggests that feelings of insecurity associated with minority status motivate minority couples to have small families in order to maximize their socioeconomic opportunities.

Chapter 3 focuses on empirical analysis including data and methods. The data for Milesky's study is taken from the German Socio-Economic Panel Survey (waves from 1984–2004) to test all the above hypotheses. The samples include 728 women of the first generation immigrants, 828 second generation immigrants, and 3,932 West German nonimmigrant women. A life course approach is used to analyze the data. Kaplan-Meir (KM) survival estimates and piecewise-linear intensity regression models are applied for this purpose. The analytical approach of KM estimates and the selected regression models are quite relevant to the dependent variables of transitions to a first, second, and third birth (i.e., time to certain events of interest). An advantage of this analytical approach is that it also enables the researcher to include those respondents in the analysis who did not get the event of interest by the end of the study period (Kleinbaum and Klein 2005).

In Chapters 4 and 5, Milewski relates the empirical findings with the five hypotheses mentioned above. The author finds that first generation immigrants have 2.5 times higher transition probability to a first birth as compared to West Germans. The transition to first birth is highest in the first year after migration and decreases with increasing duration of residence in Germany. The immigrants also have higher probability of having a second and third birth (31.0 and 27.0 per cent respectively) than do West German women. These findings clearly contradict the *disruption hypothesis* and lend support to the *hypothesis of interrelated events* (elevated risk of first birth in the first year after migration) and *adaptation hypothesis* (decreasing risk of first birth over time). One of the plausible explanations of factors behind the higher transition rates, which the author provides, includes the need for immigrants to "catch-up for births that were postponed in the phase preceding the move" (p. 136).

Concerning the second generation, Milewski finds that they have higher transition to a first birth (1.2 times) than do West Germans. However, there is no significant difference in transition to a second and third birth between these two groups after controlling for compositional differences. These findings contradict the assumption of fertility disruption among the second generation due to their minority-group status insecurities. The author attributes the slightly higher or similar transitions to parity-specific fertility of the second generation to their early socialization on childbearing behaviour which takes place in the German society. This suggests that the norms and values of reproductive behaviour of the host society have greater impact on the fertility behaviour of second generation than that of their immigrant parents. She also finds that Turkish women in Germany, who are predominantly Muslim, have a higher transition to third birth than women of former Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, and Spain. This finding is consistent with the *socialization hypothesis,* because the early socialization of the Turkish women took place in Turkey where the reproductive norms and values favour formation of larger families.

This research monograph has several strengths. First, the application of two-generational approach makes it especially suitable for exploring both short- and long-term effects of migration on fertility and enables researchers to predict the extent to which reproductive norms and values of first generation immigrants are transferred to second generation. Second, the use of the life-course approach provides a better understanding of the fertility dynamics that emerge from immigrant trajectories and transitions such as education, union formation, employment, and childbearing. The use of panel data to test competing hypotheses allows for a straightforward inclusion of such life trajectories and transitions in the statistical analysis.

Milewski does not conduct multivariate regression analysis for cumulative fertility (i.e., number of children ever born). Analysis of cumulative fertility would further our understanding of the extent to which the postponement or advancement of childbearing ultimately translate into either lower or higher completed family size.

Overall, this research monograph is an excellent contribution to the literature on migration and fertility. Milewski clearly demonstrates how the fertility behaviours of immigrants and their second generation descendants are influenced by the life course. All chapters of the book are quite engaging. I would recommend this book as essential reading for all graduate students of sociology, especially students of demography. It should generate considerable interest among researchers and policy makers as well.

University of Alberta   Md Kamrul Islam

REFERENCES

Kleinbaum, D.G. and Mitchel Klein. 2005. *Survival Analysis*. Second edition. New York: Springer.

Md Kamrul Islam is a doctoral student in sociology at the University of Alberta, with research specialization in demography. He is the coauthor of *Instructor's Manual to Exercises in Canada's Population in a Global Context: An Introduction to Social Demography,* an electronic resource published by Oxford University Press. He has also published several articles examining immigrants' integration into the Canadian society.
mdkamrul@ualberta.ca