

Chapter 5

Summary

This doctoral thesis investigates the impact of international migration on the transitions to a first, second, and third child among women from Turkey, former Yugoslavian states, Greece, Spain, and Italy who have immigrated to West Germany. A distinction is made between first-generation immigrants and their descendants.

International migration is associated with rapid changes in the migrants' environment. These changes usually take place within a much shorter time span than societies alter as a whole. Immigrants have to cope with these changes quickly. Therefore, a study of the demographic behavior of migrants enables us to gain insights into the patterns and speed of the demographic responses of individuals or groups to the sudden environmental changes they are exposed to. The life-course approach allows us to analyze the sequencing of several events, and, therefore, to study the short-term as well as the long-term effects of migration on a person's life.

Our study addresses the following questions: Does international migration, and the related cultural, and socio-economic consequences have a depressing or a stimulating effect on childbearing behavior? Do immigrants tend to continue to display the behavior of their old environment, or do they adopt the behavior of the new environment? Does the behavior of the immigrants' children resemble that of their parents, or that of the population at destination?

The first chapter of the thesis provides an overview of Germany's immigration history since 1945. Germany has been one of the main countries of destination in Europe. Three main types of international migration can be distinguished; these are labor immigration, the immigration of ethnic Germans, and the immigration of non-German refugees and asylum seekers. Today, about 10% of the population in Germany is of foreign nationality. Main countries of origin are Turkey, Italy, Greece, and the states formerly belonging to Yugoslavia. The first chapter subsequently gives a summary of research carried out on the fertility of immigrants in Germany. In the 1960s, only about 5% of newborn children in Germany were of non-German nationality. But by the end of the twentieth century about 13% of all newborns were foreign nationals. The increase in the share of foreign births of the total number of births is related not only to a slight increase in the number of

foreign births, but also to the decline in West German births. Although international migration is generally associated with a reduction of births, the level of childlessness is lower among the various immigrant groups in West Germany than in the German population. Moreover, immigrants more often have three and more children, whereas there is a dominance of the two-child family among West German married couples.

The second chapter of the thesis provides the theoretical framework and an overview of previous empirical investigations. We discuss five hypotheses in order to study the fertility behavior of international or internal migrants. They refer to timing effects, the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants, as well as their living circumstances and cultural factors.

The underlying assumption of the *disruption hypothesis* is that a move in itself, as well as the time preceding and following the move, is stressful for a person; therefore, fertility is expected to be low shortly after the move.

By contrast, the *hypothesis of interrelation of events* regards the migration as a situation in which several events take place in a brief time span, namely migration and union formation. Hence, fertility is expected to be high shortly after arrival.

While the hypotheses of disruption and interrelation of events focus on short-term impacts of migration, the *adaptation hypothesis* offers a medium-term perspective. Given that fertility patterns vary between the regions of origin and destination, a convergence may be achieved within some years of arrival.

The *socialization hypothesis* emphasizes the role of the migrants' early socialization, focusing on the values, norms, and behavior dominant during a person's childhood, and assumes their continuance throughout life. According to this hypothesis, immigrants may follow the fertility patterns as perceived in their country of origin, even if they differ from that of the new host society. Immigrants from different countries of origin that exhibit different fertility patterns may also show fertility differences in the same country of destination, and the second migrant generation may exhibit fertility behavior that more closely resembles that of the receiving society.

Finally, the *selection hypothesis* predicts similar fertility patterns between immigrants and their counterparts in the host society because migrants are assumed to share the fertility intentions of the persons at destination. Therefore, immigrants may have fertility intentions that resemble those of the receiving country, rather than those dominant in their country of origin. This selection can result from observed characteristics or from unobserved factors.

For the second immigrant generation, this study also draws upon the theoretical framework on fertility behavior of minority groups. The composition of the subgroups, the economic situation, the experience of discrimination and uncertainty, and the maintenance of distinct fertility norms are discussed as having an influence on fertility.

Our study tests these hypotheses in the West German context on women who come from five countries that have provided West Germany with labor migrants since the 1950s ("guest workers"). The second chapter also presents information on the family-formation contexts of the five countries of origin considered here; these

are Turkey, the former Yugoslavian states, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Among the selected countries, Turkey has experienced the most substantial changes in the past four decades. Although the birth rates fell in these countries of origin, childlessness still remains rather an exception in each of them. Moreover, marriage and child-bearing are strongly connected in these countries of origin.

Since socio-demographic characteristics of the women and their partners play an important role in fertility behavior, the second chapter also gives an overview of the structure of the “guest-worker” population of Turkish, former Yugoslavian, Greek, Italian, and Spanish backgrounds living in West Germany. The social and occupational structure of the immigrant population is characterized by social and economic disadvantages stemming from the former “guest-worker” milieu. These disadvantages were passed on to the next generation in the form of lower social starting position. Accordingly, educational attainment among the immigrant generations is on average lower than among West Germans, and the occupational position of immigrants is worse. Moreover, this part of the study outlines the family-formation context of immigrants in Germany. In union formation, “guest workers” and their descendants show a preference for a partner of their own national group, their share of married persons is higher than the respective share among the West Germans, and marriage takes place earlier in life.

In the previous decades, parallel to the drop in fertility in the countries of origin, the fertility rates of immigrants to West Germany declined, either to convergence levels or to rates slightly above those of Germans. The second chapter assesses research on the fertility of “guest workers” in Germany that has been carried out to date. Previous studies have only sporadically tested the introduced hypotheses, and their main focus has been on first-generation immigrants. So far, evidence has been found mainly for fertility adaptation and the impact of socialization on fertility. Moreover, compositional differences, largely with regard to educational attainment, have been shown to be of importance in explaining fertility differentials between “guest workers” and German women.

The second chapter concludes with the derivation of the working hypotheses that guide our analyses in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 contains the empirical analyses; it begins with information on data, methods, and covariates used. We employ data of the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (waves 1984–2002) on immigrant women and West Germans, born 1946 to 1983. Then we apply a hazard-regression analysis to the transitions to first, second, and third births of women of the first and second immigrant generations and West Germans. The parity-specific view takes into account the length of the immigrants’ stay in West Germany and allows for exploration of the dynamic nature of the family-formation process. The study also examines individual behavior in the context of “linked lives” by including marriage duration and the partner’s characteristics in the analyses.

The results are discussed in the context of our working hypotheses in Chapter 4.

Disruption: None of the analyses of a first, second, and third child finds any evidence for a disruptive effect of migration. First-generation immigrants have higher transition rates to all three births than West Germans and the second

generation. Second-generation migrants have either slightly elevated or similar transition rates compared to West Germans, which contradicts the disruption assumption due to a minority-group experience.

Interrelation of events: The hypothesis of the interrelation of events is supported: first-generation immigrants who move to West Germany without a child experience the migration, the first marriage, and the first conception within a short time span. First-birth rates are high during the first 2 years after arrival. The analyses of the subsequent births show that first-generation immigrants who moved with one or two children also exhibit higher birth risks than women who migrated without a child.

Adaptation: Our study provides evidence supporting the assumption of adaptive behavior of first-generation immigrants. Women who were childless upon arrival show declining birth risks with increasing length of stay in Germany, and the risks of having a subsequent birth are lower than those of first-generation immigrants who arrive with one or two children.

Selection and characteristics: The first-child analysis clearly demonstrates that first-generation immigrants are a selected group; childless women from “guest-worker” countries experience the move and the first marriage within a short time span. Therefore, it can be concluded that marriage migrants also intend to have a first child soon after the conjugal household is formed. First-child risks are increased in the first 2 years after arrival and they decrease considerably when controlling for marriage duration, but remain elevated. In addition, the analyses prove the assumption of compositional differences between the immigrant groups and Germans to be true. Fertility differentials are diminished or become non-existent when we control for socio-demographic factors of the women. This applies to both first- and second-generation immigrants.

Socialization: After controlling for compositional differences, we find evidence for the impact of early socialization. On the one hand, birth risks of each parity are much more similar between second-generation immigrants and West German women than they are between the second and the first generations. On the other hand, fertility differences occur by country background, i.e., first-generation immigrants from Turkey have higher transition rates to a second and third child than women from Southern and Southeastern European countries, which is also true for the third child for the second generation of Turkish descent.

Our study gives more detailed insights into the impact of migration on fertility behavior of international migrants and their descendants than has been previously available. This opens new research avenues in family demography, such as a deeper analysis of the fertility differences between first- and second-generation immigrants. The thesis concludes with a reflection on the work presented and perspectives for further research.