

## **European Population Conference 2014**

### **Differences in Fertility Plans of Adolescents in Spain: The Role of Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status**

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#### **Abstract:**

This paper aims to examine aspirations and expectations of adolescents in Spain with regard to fertility patterns, using survey data collected in secondary schools in Madrid. We are interested in the variability of these preferences across generations and between children of immigrants and their native peers. We look at fertility expectations to account for varying cultural backgrounds and for acculturation and/or integration processes. Furthermore, differentiated expectations of fertility tempo and quantum among children of immigrants and natives might be an indicator for segmented assimilation with regard to their or their parents' socio-economic status. For the empirical analysis of this paper we use survey data of some 2,600 adolescent pupils and 1,150 parents. About half of the students and parents are of immigrant origin. Besides aspirations and expectations linked to childbearing, the survey provides information about parents' labor situation and their educational levels, variables that are used as a proxy for their socio-economic status. To complement the survey, contextual data will be included, adding information on origin countries' actual fertility behaviors and the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods and schools in Madrid where the youths live. Multilevel models are computed in order to account for variations within schools and between schools and to disentangle the complex causal process that determines adolescents' aspirations and expectations. First descriptive results indicate that adolescents' expectations reflect actual cross-country differences in age at first birth. Most theoretical approaches and empirical studies in this field concentrate on the U.S. Focusing on Spain as a relatively new immigration country can give important new insights into another migratory setting, which may be valid also for other (European) immigrant-receiving countries.

## **Extended abstract**

### **1) Background**

By January 2013, the Spanish foreign-born population had reached 5.5 million, nearly 12 percent of the total population (INE, Spanish National Institute of Statistics). The 1.5 generation, individuals who migrated with their parents during their childhood, is also a rapidly growing group, with more than 1.2 million children and adolescents. Whereas fertility patterns of migrants themselves have been studied extensively, fertility intentions and behavior of the children of immigrants<sup>1</sup> are still under-examined, especially for the case of new immigration countries in Southern Europe.

### **2) Objectives of the study**

This paper aims to examine aspirations and expectations of adolescents in Spain with regard to family formation patterns. We are interested in the variability of these preferences across generations and between children of immigrants and their native peers. We look at fertility aspirations and expectations to account for varying cultural backgrounds and for acculturation and/or integration processes. Furthermore, differentiated expectations of fertility tempo and quantum among children of immigrants and natives might be an indicator for segmented assimilation with regard to their or their parents' socio-economic status.

The theoretical framework brings together different areas of recent scientific debate. On the one hand, it builds on theories addressing youths' aspirations and future achievements. Most of these theories examine the causal mechanisms between educational aspirations and actual school outcomes. Studies focusing on fertility expectations of youths are relatively scarce, and the existing ones do rarely have a special focus on immigrant youths' expectations. On the other hand, there are abundant studies on actual fertility behavior of individuals migrating at the adult age. Different theoretical approaches have been used to explain the fertility (and marriage) behavior of migrants, but there is no clear evidence to what extent these theories can also explain the behaviors of youths of immigrant origin.

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, most theoretical approaches and empirical studies in this field concentrate on migration to the United States. Focusing on Spain as a relatively new immigration country can give important new insights into

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<sup>1</sup> *Children of immigrants* are children born abroad or born in the host country with at least one foreign-born parent. Other scholars refer to these two different situations respectively as 1.5-generation and, second-generation immigrants.

another migratory setting, which may be also valid for other (European) immigrant-receiving countries. Second, taking Spain as case of study, allows taking advantage of the fact that some migrant groups come from countries with similar or even lower fertility rates than the Spanish one (e.g. Romania). This is rather unusual in other immigrant receiving countries, and thus has the potential to develop new theoretical explanations. Third, this study goes beyond the existing theories on migration and fertility by concentrating on adolescent migrants.

### **3) Data and Methods**

For the empirical analysis of this paper, we use survey data of some 2,600 adolescents and 1,150 parents collected in 2011 in Madrid<sup>2</sup>. About half of the students and parents are of immigrant origin. Besides aspirations and expectations linked to family formation processes, the survey provides information about parents' labor situation and their educational levels, variables that are used as a proxy for their socio-economic status. To complement the survey, contextual data are included, adding information on fertility and marriage indicators of the countries of origin, as well as the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods in Madrid where the youths live. Multilevel models are computed in order to account for variations within schools and between schools and to disentangle the complex causal processes that shape adolescents' aspirations and expectations.

### **4) Preliminary Results**

While the expected and desired two-child-norm is quite pervasive for adolescents of native and immigrant origin, we anticipate important variations in expected age of marriage and first birth. First descriptive results indicate that adolescents' expectations reflect actual differences in adults' age at first birth by country of origin (see Table 1). The Spanish native adolescents have the highest desired and expected age at first birth. The different migrant groups show country-specific variations and also differences in aspirations and expectations. Interestingly, youths of immigrant origin desire and expect to have their first child at higher ages than their parents' generation. This might indicate acculturation processes of the adolescents to actual behaviors of the Spanish host country.

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<sup>2</sup> CHANCES, "Aspirations, expectations and life-course orientations of immigrant and non-immigrant origin youth in Spain. The role of the social context and intergenerational conflict", is a research project co-directed by Amparo González-Ferrer and Héctor Cebolla and financed by these entities (by order of amount and date

After detailed descriptive analyses, separated models will be developed to check whether the correlates of fertility expectations are different for children of immigrants and natives. We use multilevel models.

One important question that will be checked is whether fertility *tempo* and *quantum* expectations vary by age at migration in the 1.5 generation. Duration functions depicting the length of stay in the host country and fertility expectations can be used to show in a graphical way differential family-building preferences. Another interesting question that will be explored is whether the connection between family-building preferences and age at migration changes when the interaction with the country of origin is taken into consideration. This is of special interest, since not all migrants were born in countries with higher fertility than the host country.

Furthermore, aspirations and expectations of the adolescents will be compared to those of their parents. The surveyed parents were also asked for their preferences regarding their sons' and daughters' age at first child and number of children.

**Table 1: Desired and expected age at first child of Spanish adolescents and selected migrant groups (preliminary analysis).** Source: CHANCES (2011)

	<b>Desired age at 1<sup>st</sup> child</b>	<b>Expected age at 1<sup>st</sup> child</b>
<b>Spain</b>	28.4	28.7
<b>Ecuador</b>	26.8	26.5
<b>Bolivia</b>	27.3	26.9
<b>Peru</b>	27.6	27.3
<b>Bulgaria</b>	24.8	27.3
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	25.8	25.6
<b>Morocco</b>	26.6	26.7
<b>Romania</b>	27.1	26.7
<b>China</b>	26.7	27.1

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