

## *Book Reviews*

**G. M. Farooq and G. B. Simmons (eds.). *Fertility in Developing Countries.*** London: The MacMillan Press (for the International Labour Office). 1985. xxiii + 533 pp.

In 1972 the United Nations Fund for Population Activities initiated support for a programme of research within the International Labour Organization on population and employment. Determinants of fertility have been a major theme in this research programme, as is evident in an earlier Progress Report on the programme [3]. The book here reviewed is an attempt to distil some general conclusions from this research, and to present ideas and evidence not included in the 1982 publication.

The first section of the book contains a summary of theories of fertility determination; a brief description of the findings of empirical research on fertility, and of the problems of empirical research on the economics of fertility; some comments on the relevance for policy of research on the economics of fertility; and some suggestions for more fruitful research strategies. The second part deals with selected methodological problems: the definition and measurement of fertility; econometric problems of analysing cross-sectional and time-series data; estimation and interpretation of aggregate data; specification and estimation of models fertility; and the uses of simulation techniques in studying the effects of economic policy on fertility. As this list of topics indicates, the emphasis in this section (and in most of the book) is on research on fertility by economists. The last chapter in the second section, however, describes anthropological approaches to the study of fertility. The final section contains six case studies on Kenya, Nigeria, rural India, rural Turkey, Yugoslavia, and a comparative study of Costa Rica and Mexico.

As noted in the preface, there is no linkage between the case studies in the final section and the methodological chapters, so that some of the methodological recommendations are inconsistent with the procedures in some of these studies. For example, in the methodological chapter on the definition of fertility, the disadvantages of using the number of children ever born to older women as a dependent variable are stressed. The most serious deficiency is that this cumulative measure of childbearing is strongly influenced by the behaviour a good many years earlier, such as age at marriage and, of course, the rate of childbearing in the early years after marriage. To relate this measure of fertility, then, to indicators of current socio-economic status is of dubious validity. The methodological chapter notes that births

in the year prior to the survey could be used in micro-fertility analysis, but, since there are various defects in such data, it is recommended that live births during the past five-year period be used as possibly a superior dependent variable. One of the characteristics of the case studies is that they do not draw on the wealth of data available (often for the very countries considered) in the World Fertility Survey, where precisely such data are available.

Indeed, a surprising feature of this book is the absence of more than two casual references to the World Fertility Survey (WFS) in the whole volume. The WFS, employing a more or less uniform core questionnaire, involved extensive surveys of fertility histories, fertility intentions, contraceptive practice, breast-feeding, marital histories, etc., in more than forty developing countries. The results have been published in forty-one, usually massive, country reports and nearly one hundred and fifty technical bulletins, scientific reports, comparative studies and occasional papers. The data provided include age-specific fertility rates for the preceding five years, number of children ever born, plus useful, if somewhat disappointingly meagre, socio-economic data. WFS publications also include many methods of determining the quality of the basic data, and, in some instances, of adjusting the reported rates and measures.

Despite such oversights, the book under review is a useful addition to the literature that summarizes economic research on fertility in less developed countries; for example, to Caldwell's book on the *Theory of Fertility Decline* [2] and the volume edited by Bulatao and Lee on *Determinants of Fertility in Developing Countries* [1].

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#### REFERENCES

1. Bulatao, Rodolfo A., and D. Lee with P.E. Hollerback and J. Bongaarts (eds.). *Determinants of Fertility in Developing Countries*. New York: Academic Press. 1983.
2. Caldwell, John C. *Theory of Fertility Decline*. London: Academic Press. 1982.
3. International Labour Office. *Population and Development: A Progress Report on ILO Research on Population, Labour, Employment and Income Distribution*. 4th Edition. Geneva, April 1982.