



Population Policy and Women's Rights: Transforming Reproductive Choice.

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making (e.g., behavioral approaches). The remainder of the book describes various analytical or statistical approaches (e.g., structural equation models, event-history modeling, log-linear models) used in previous micro and macro studies of migration. A major disappointment is that this book has no particular thesis or central question.

Indeed, this book will not find a receptive audience among sociologists and social demographers looking for innovative theoretical or methodological approaches to the study of migration. First, the book presents no new theories or even a theoretical synthesis but instead a rather pedestrian synopsis of old literature (beginning with Ravenstein). Second, *Migration and Residential Mobility* contains no original empirical research but rather illustrates statistical approaches with data published previously by the author, mostly from geography journals. The data in these tables are dated; for example, the evidence of interregional U.S. migration flows is based on pre-1980s census and other information. This is not an up-to-date survey of existing U.S. migration trends, either at the macro or micro level. Third, singly and together, the chapters lack focus or purpose. There is rarely a statement of objectives, and the chapters typically lack a concluding section. There is no final chapter that sums up or elaborates the main points.

Although this is not a treatise on migration, the book nevertheless may be a useful primer for graduate students by providing a good general background to previous empirical work in demography and population geography. But even here, *Migration and Residential Mobility* is limited in some respects, especially for sociology students. One problem is that the illustrative statistical modeling and the discussion of these methods (e.g., Markov models) are often too advanced for students without substantial formal training in statistics (i.e., this would not be good supplemental reading for master-level students). At the same time, the discussion of the formal aspects of statistical modeling is often so superficial that these methods are unlikely to be easily applied. The book is an unpleasant mix of superficiality and detail. It won't work in the classroom. And, because Cadwallader is a geographer, previous sociological studies of migration are mostly ignored.

It is difficult to give this book a strong endorsement. The field of demography needs a good book on migration and residential mobility, especially one that links the macro and micro approaches. Unfortunately, *Migration and Residential Mobility* isn't it.

Population Policy and Women's Rights: Transforming Reproductive Choice, by **Ruth Dixon-Mueller**. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993. 287 pp. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-275-94611-8. \$17.50 paper. ISBN: 0-275-94505-9.

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In September 1994 the decennial UN International Conference on Population and Development convenes in Cairo. It will be no replay of 1984 in Mexico City, where the United States alienated both North and South delegates by declaring that "population is a neutral phenomenon," nor will the South unite behind the slogan "development is the best contraceptive," as happened in Bucharest in 1974. Consensus, however, is unlikely. Feminists will denounce population control efforts that "target" women. Population controllers will predict global disasters unless efforts are intensified. A battle between feminists and population controllers over framing the world's population agenda for the coming decade is likely to distinguish the Cairo meetings. Anyone wishing to chart the ideological contours of this battleground and to peruse feminist battle plans will find Ruth Dixon-Mueller's book an invaluable aid.

Dixon-Mueller identifies herself as "a feminist demographer," although recognizing that some deem this "a contradiction in terms." As a demographer, she accepts the reality of the population problem, but as a feminist, she vehemently opposes any targeting of women. Only if growth can be contained without any coercion can her dual identity remain intact. She finds a policy that preserves her integrity: Secure for every individual woman her "human right" to control her reproduction. This policy will reduce the strength of family, kin, and ethnic social structures that are patriarchal, profoundly pronatalist, and the cause of high fertility in developing societies. It will empower women and lead to enduring low

fertility. Coercive programs, always susceptible to rejection by an aroused populace, offer no such sure route to low fertility. Dixon-Mueller thus transforms population control into a feminist endeavor, avowing that "a population policy is an equal rights policy," "a family planning policy is a reproductive rights policy," and "a family planning program is a reproductive health program."

Although those accustomed to having demographers wear a mantle of objectivity might find Dixon-Mueller's advocacy troubling, there is much to recommend this book. She presents a very good history of population controllers and their feminist critics, interesting case studies of the reactions of women's movements in Brazil, Nigeria, and the Philippines to efforts by the state to control population, and a fascinating recasting of much past fertility and family-planning research within the framework of women's rights. Her discussion of conjugal and occupational "stress" unfolds into a social psychology of fertility behavior aimed at understanding why individual women in developing societies might prefer large families. A chapter on abortion argues that it has been and is likely always to be a vital component in fertility regulation, because women in certain circumstances rationally prefer it to contraception.

Advocacy, though, has its costs. Controversial generalizations are simply asserted, and contrary evidence is overlooked. For instance, no evidence is offered that ensuring every woman's "right" to control her reproduction would lower fertility enough to alleviate problems associated with rapid growth. China's successful fertility-reduction program is never investigated, although, being both coercive and not based on feminist principles, it seems to belie several of Dixon-Mueller's assertions. Also, the population problems of societies experiencing below-replacement fertility are shrewdly not considered. Here feminist principles and population problem solutions don't experience a fortuitous convergence. Any state attempt to induce higher fertility would seemingly violate the right of each woman to determine her own reproduction.

Sociologists might find Dixon-Mueller's premise—each woman has a "human right" to determine her own fertility untouched by the influence of culture, position within the social structure, or even the desires of her mate—a profoundly "asocial" vision of

reproduction that describes a situation unknown to the human experience. The author, however, has not written a work of theory addressed to social scientists. Her objective is to influence international population policy by uniting feminists behind a reproductive rights agenda and by convincing population controllers that adopting such an agenda will further their cause. Success on this score is difficult to predict. Will radical feminists, for whom even acknowledging a population problem is anathema, see "reproductive rights" as just a way to clothe population control in feminist garb? Will those population controllers convinced of imminent ecological collapse declare "reproductive rights" to be a problem and not a solution? Success will best be determined by examining the resolution finally adopted at Cairo.

Life Course: Stages and Institutions

Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African-American Families, by **Andrew Billingsley**. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992. 444 pp. \$27.50 cloth. ISBN: 0-671-67708-X.

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There are "hidden schools" in the media, and many students arrive in our classrooms with knowledge gleaned from such sources. More often than not, the media spread stereotypes and misinformation about African Americans and their families. These stereotypes and misinformation pose a challenge to educators who teach about African Americans in the classroom. The problem is especially acute when students misperceive alleged experts as impartial and credentialed people who are well informed on African-American life. Thus many students take as fact, rather than conjecture, some commentators' statements that African-American communities are disintegrating because of culturally deficient or dysfunctional black families.

The difficulty of nullifying "commonsensical" cultural deprivation arguments makes sociologist Andrew Billingsley's new book, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring*