

# Family Trajectories of Immigrants and Their Descendants in the UK and France

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to investigate family trajectories of immigrants and their descendants in the UK and France. A growing body of literature examines partnership changes and fertility patterns among migrants and their descendants; however, most research studies one life event at a time (e.g. first marriage, first birth), little research has examined full family trajectories and their determinants. We compare family trajectories of the descendants of post-WWII immigrants and post-1990 immigrants, individuals from the same birth cohort, but with different migration experience. We move beyond sequence analysis and apply multistate competing-risks survival models, which allow the study of trajectories with and without adjusting for observed and unobserved characteristics of individuals. We use data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study and the Trajectories and Origins Survey. The study will significantly deepen our understanding of how various factors shape family trajectories of immigrants and their descendants (e.g. socialisation, parental background, education, employment, family history and societal context).

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## Extended abstract

### Background

European countries are witnessing increasing migration streams and the ethnic heterogeneity of their populations (Castles and Miller 2009). A large body of literature has examined various aspects of migrants' lives in Europe including employment, health and political rights. The recent literature has also investigated family dynamics and patterns among immigrants and their descendants. One research strand studies the formation and dissolution of exogamous marriages in Europe to deepen our understanding of the factors that influence the spread and stability of mixed marriages and their role in immigrant integration (Dribe and Lundh 2012; Milewski and Kulu 2014). Another stream investigates fertility dynamics among immigrants and their descendants (Milewski 2007; Coleman and Dubuc 2010).

The aim of the current study is to investigate partnership trajectories of immigrants and their descendants in the UK and France comparing their patterns to those of the 'native' British and French population. We extend previous literature in the following ways. First, we study family trajectories of migrants thus moving beyond the 'one-life-event-at-a-time' approach, which is dominant in the research on migrant families. Second, we examine family trajectories among the descendants of post-WWI migrants and post-1990 immigrants. Comparing immigrants and descendants of immigrants who experience the same historical context will improve our understanding of the short- and long-term effects of the migration experience. Finally, we compare patterns in the UK and France to better understand how socio-economic, institutional, and policy settings shape the family lives of immigrants and their descendants.

### Data

The UK data come from the Understanding Society study (USoc), a large-scale longitudinal study, which was launched in 2009 and covers more than 50,000 individuals in the UK. The main immigrant and minority groups in Britain were overrepresented in the study, thus ensuring a sufficient sample size to investigate differences in attitudes and behaviour across population subgroups. Retrospective partnership and childbearing histories were collected on the first and second wave (Hannemann and Kulu 2015). For France, we use data from the retrospective Trajectories and Origins Survey (TeO), a joint project of the French National Institute of Demography (INED) and the French National Statistical Office (INSEE), to investigate the living conditions and social trajectories of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants living in France (Beauchemin et al. 2015). In total, 22,000 persons born between 1948 and 1990 were interviewed; immigrants and the descendants of immigrants were oversampled. The survey contains retrospective information on family histories.

## Methods

We will apply sequence analysis and multistate modelling to study the life courses of immigrants and their descendants. Sequence analysis will be used to describe and visualise the evolution of family trajectories among different population subgroups (Kogan 2007). Multistate survival models will be used to investigate and explain different life-course transitions (Putter 2007, Kulu and Steele 2013). We include in simultaneous analysis both partnership transitions (union formation and dissolution) and childbearing (the birth of a first or a subsequent child). Other life events, e.g. employment changes enter into the analysis as time-varying covariates. We will examine whether and how much differences across the descendants of immigrants, post-1990 immigrants and natives change when controlling for factors related to early life context, critical transitions and parallel careers (e.g., the role of socialisation, parental background, education, employment and family history). We will then pool the data from the two countries to explicitly study and compare dynamics in life trajectories across population subgroups and countries.

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