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Immigrant fertility in Australia: its relationship to population growth

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Abstract

The Australian population is growing at a rapid pace, yet it is unclear what exactly is causing this growth. Australia is known to be a country that experiences high levels of immigration, yet immigrant fertility has been overlooked with regard to its potential impact on population growth. There has been insufficient research conducted on the fertility patterns of immigrant women in Australia in recent years. Many of the immigrant women entering Australia come from high fertility countries with higher total fertility rates than Australia. Therefore, there is reason to be concerned with the lack of understanding of the fertility patterns of these immigrant women. Australia is already facing challenges in accurately predicting immigration flows - which have been identified as the leading cause of its population growth. Australia cannot afford to remain ill-informed on the fertility patterns of immigrants, as they are associated to future socioeconomic development and planning.

This study made use of data captured for 278 respondents in the 2016 Australian National Census data to run various binary logistic regressions, and in doing so found that when looking at the region of birth of women in Australia, Europe was identified to be a region of origin that statistically produced women who are more likely to have above replacement fertility patterns. It was also found that fertility amongst women in Australia is most likely to be above replacement fertility in the Southern states of Australia, where the majority of the immigrant population resides. Women in Australia who identify as Buddhist were found to be statistically more likely to have fertility outcomes that are above replacement fertility compared to women of other religious beliefs. We can therefore conclude, that, although limited, immigration does have a positive impact fertility levels in Australia.