Why Does Fertility Remain High Among Certain Ethnic Minority Women in the UK, France and Belgium?

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Rationale

• Increasing diversity of European societies

• Understanding dynamics of migrant and ethnic minority families
  • Immigrants shape demographic, social and cultural trends
  • Family patterns provide valuable information on immigrant lives and their integration

• Raising social cohesion
Previous Research

• Fertility levels in Europe are high among immigrants from ‘high-fertility’ countries (Sobotka 2008)

• Fertility levels of the descendants of immigrants from ‘high-fertility’ countries are usually lower than those of their parents

• But for some groups fertility remains high, e.g. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the UK; individuals of Turkish descent in Germany; Turkish and North Africans in France (Sobotka 2008; Coleman and Dubuc 2010)
Causes of High Fertility

- Large families continue to be a norm among some ethnic minorities
- High fertility is the consequence of poor education and labour market prospects among ethnic minorities
Objectives

- Investigate fertility patterns among the descendants of immigrants in selected European countries
- Examine the determinants of the relatively high fertility among certain ethnic minority groups
  - The UK case study
  - Comparative study of Britain, France and Belgium
• Britain
  • Understanding Society study (UoS); first two waves (2009, 2011)
• France
  • Trajectories and Origins survey (2008)
• Belgium
  • Population Census and Register (2000-2005)
- Sample: Women born between 1940 and 1990
- The number of women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>21,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>~20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The British Case Study
Total Fertility Rate Among Ethnic Minorities in Britain, 1989-2008

Source: Understanding Society, 2011
Steps for Analysis

• Step 1: Calculate fertility rates by **birth order** (first four transitions) – investigate the sources of fertility variation across ethnic groups

• Step 2: Calculate fertility rates by birth order controlling for **socio-economic** characteristics of women – detect the role of economic factors

• Step 3: Calculate fertility rates by birth order controlling (also) for **socio-cultural** characteristics of women – detect the role of cultural factors
Proportion of Women Having a Second Child

Data: Understanding Society
Proportion of Women Having a Third Child

Data: Understanding Society
Relative Rates of First Birth

Model 1: Controlled for the women's age and birth cohort
Model 2: Controlled for the women’s age, birth cohort and educational level
Model 3: Controlled for the women’s age, birth cohort, educational level, English skills, religiosity, the number of siblings
Data: Understanding Society
Relative Rates of Third Birth

Model 1: Controlled for time since second birth and birth cohort
Model 2: Controlled for time since second birth, birth cohort, age at first birth, educational level
Model 3: Controlled for time since second birth, birth cohort, age at first birth, educational level, English skills, religiosity, the number of siblings, sex of previous child

Data: Understanding Society
Comparative Study
Relative Rates of Third Birth

Controlled for time since second birth and birth cohort

Source: Kulu et al. 2015
Relative Rates of Third Birth

Controlled for time since second birth, birth cohort and educational level

Source: Kulu et al. 2015
Summary

• Relatively high fertility among some ethnic minority groups in the UK (women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin)

• High second-, third- and fourth-birth levels are responsible for the high total fertility among women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin

• Socio-cultural factors (the number of siblings and religiosity) account for some elevated fertility among UK-born ethnic minorities, whereas the role of education is negligible

• Similar childbearing patterns for some ethnic minority groups in France, Belgium and the UK (women of Turkish origin in France and Belgium; those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent in the UK)
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