

Fertility of national and foreign citizens, in Portugal, 1995-2008 – a comparative study

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Abstract

On the last decades Portugal remains a country with low fertility. Since the beginning of the 80's, the Total Fertility Rate in Portugal has dropped below 2.1 children per women, reaching unprecedented low levels in the last few years. This trend is observable in TFR figures for the period from 1995 to 2008: 1.41 in 1995; 1.3 in 2007; 1.4 in 2008¹.

At the same time, the foreign population with a legal status of residence in Portugal has increased: it is estimated that, in 2008, there were 443 102 individuals of foreign citizenship with a legal status of residence² (168 316 in 1995).

Despite the trend of low levels of fertility in recent years, data on fertility broken down by parents' citizenship appears to highlight an emerging growth contribution of foreign population to fertility rates in Portugal, a fact that can be related to the aforementioned increase in the population of foreign citizens and to the age profile of this population.

In 2008, 9.8% of live births mothers (live births of mothers residing in Portugal) have foreign citizenship (2.2% in 1995). Moreover, in 2008, 11.9% of the total of live births (of mothers residing in Portugal) has at least one of the parents with foreign citizenship (3.1% in 1995).

The main goal of this paper is to present a study focusing the fertility of foreign citizens in Portugal, specifically its contribution to the total fertility rate in recent years, i.e., the period from 1995 until the most recent data available (2008).

¹ Data source: Statistics Portugal

² Data source: Statistics Portugal. "A group of people of non-Portuguese nationality with residence authorisation or card, in accordance with the legislation on foreigners in force. It does not include regular foreigners under the granting of stay permits, short-term visas, study, work or temporary stay visas, as well as irregular foreigners".

Furthermore, it is also our goal to conduct a comparison of fertility indicators for national and foreign citizens, and, when possible, to break down this analysis by the most significant nationalities of foreign citizens, considering that the profile of main nationalities of foreign citizens has changed on recent years, leading to different findings in what concerns to main nationalities of live births mothers.

To carry out this study, we plan to use the available data on the Statistics Portugal website on live births, population estimates and foreign population, alongside with 2001 Portugal Census data, when it is considered relevant for filling in possible data gaps.

Keywords: Fertility, foreign nationalities