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Values of Immigrants' Family or Values of Residing Society?:

A Typical Pattern

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Abstract

This paper presents a typical pattern in order to examine the competing role of the values of immigrants' family and the values of their residing country. The indicator used, the context of the study, the method of analysis, and the particular focus group of this study provide the opportunity to deal appropriately with this key objective. This paper gives specific attention to the female migrants from the Middle East and North Africa region living in the multiethnic and multicultural context of Australia. The region monopolizes unique values for women's family roles, whereas the values of the residing country of this migrant group provide women opportunity to work outside the home and family. Accordingly, this contrast presents an empirical basis to examine whether the values associated with family or the predominant values of residing country are more influential.

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Introduction

This paper presents a typical pattern in order to examine the competing role of the values of immigrants' family and the values of their residing country. The indicator used, the context of the study, the method of analysis, and the particular focus group of this study provide the opportunity to deal appropriately with this key objective. This paper gives specific attention to the female migrants from the Middle East and North Africa region living in the multiethnic and multicultural context of Australia. The region monopolizes unique values for women's family roles, whereas the values of the residing country of this migrant group provide women opportunity to work outside the home and family. Accordingly, this contrast presents an empirical basis to examine whether the values associated with family or the predominant values of residing country are more influential.

Data and Method

The findings of this study are based on the special tabulations from the 2001 Population and Housing Census of Australia. This study uses logistic regression analysis. This statistical method is particularly advantageous for this study as it would be possible to examine the work patterns of the female migrants from the MENA region and to highlight their work differentials with the comparison groups while simultaneously controlling for other relevant determinants included in the analytical models. Moreover, logistic regression examines the effect of each factor while other characteristics considered in the analysis are held constant. This is also worthwhile noting that this method is privileged for this analysis since the determinants associated with the labour force participation of migrant groups (including duration of residence in the receiving

country, ethnic origin, English proficiency and educational attainment) have been observed to be significantly correlated (e.g. Evans 1984; Wooden 1994; McAllister 1995; VandenHeuvel and Wooden 1996; VandenHeuvel and Wooden 1999; Khoo and McDonald 2001, Foroutan 2008).

Findings and Discussion: A Summary

The multivariate results of this analysis show that female migrants from the MENA region present very interesting and typical patterns of performance in the labour market from a comparative perspective. More importantly, they hold the lowest level of employment. This paper argues that these typical patterns echo a key point: the greater importance of the values associated with ‘home and family’ rather than to ‘work outside the home’. Interestingly, this key point tends to apply to two typically different groups: First, ‘migrant mothers’ (that is, the first generation) who were socialized in a place where gender roles are predominantly defined within the frame of ‘home and family’. Second, ‘their daughters’ (that is, the second generation) who have been socialized in a context with different values. In sum, the values system of prioritization predominant in the origin (that is, higher values on ‘home and family’ and lower values attached to ‘work outside the home and family’) tends to play a more influential role in this analysis.