

## **Foreigners in Switzerland boost the country's fertility rate, yet they now have smaller families than native Swiss: how so?**

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The TFR by nationality – Swiss or foreign – has been calculated since 1971; this indicates that foreigners have a significantly higher fertility rate. However, cohort data provides evidence that there is little difference in completed fertility and, if one discounts childless women, then Swiss women actually have, on average, larger families than immigrants. Two parallel distortions explain this phenomenon: foreigner fertility rates are inflated because the population denominator is effectively too low; and Swiss fertility rates are deflated because of ongoing postponement. If corrections are made for both these factors then the current period fertility rates are very similar. However, there are some persistent differences: immigrants are less likely to remain childless, yet their likelihood of progressing on to a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> birth is lower than for Swiss women. Other countries with high immigration will experience similar TFR distortions; in contrast, countries with high emigration will see their TFR deflated.