What influences young Australians' plans and desires for family formation?

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Abstract

While most young people aspire to have children, trends in Australian indicate that people are taking longer to have their first child, and ultimately having fewer children. There are a number of possible explanations for these changes, including changing social norms regarding marriage and family life, decreasing religiosity, and rising numbers of people enrolled in higher education and having career aspirations. The Social Futures and Life Pathways ('Our Lives') project is a longitudinal study that tests such theories by examining developing fertility aspirations between adolescence and early adulthood. Using survey data on a large cohort of young Queenslanders (n=2205; aged 19-20 years), this study investigated differences in young people's level of fertility desire, ideal family size and expected timeframe for having children. This study showed that traditional beliefs continue to be a significant predictor of fertility for young people in Australia. It also highlighted a disjuncture between aspirations and plans; a greater importance placed on attaining a university degree, the more likely respondents were to desire to have children, including a higher number of children. However this coincided with uncertainty when assigning a specific timeframe for having children. Further research is suggested to assess these relationships by way of longitudinal analysis.

Key words: fertility, family formation, youth, fertility desires, fertility aspirations

Introduction

This paper examines how young Australians' emerging values and aspirations in early adulthood shape their fertility intentions. Australian fertility rates having been under replacement level since 1976 and most recently stood at 1.88 births per woman in 2013 (ABS 2014). Much is already understood about the impacts of below replacement level fertility in Australia, including potential economic repercussions, changes to Australia's population composition, and related demands health infrastructure and social welfare (Drago, Sawyer, Sheffler, et al. 2011; Morgan & Taylor 2006). As such, this paper is more specifically concerned how these changing fertility trends feature in the emerging life pathways of younger Australians.

Young peoples' fertility intentions

Predicting fertility outcomes

Fertility intentions are understood to strongly predict fertility outcomes (Barber 2001). However, many studies examining this relationship employ measures of fertility intentions, such as overall desire to have children or ideal family size, which overlook the temporal dimension of an individual's plans to have children (Hayford 2009; Heard & Arunachalam 2015; Kaufman 2000). This is problematic because fertility intentions are often characterised by uncertainty with respect to life choices in other areas, such as partnering, education and career, and unclear or incompatible timeframes for meeting goals in these areas can help explain decisions to postpone fertility, particularly amongst young women (Hayford 2009). An individual's timeframe for having children is more uncertain and potentially more likely to be influenced by life choices and goals. To address this, this paper will investigate and compare the influences on several dimensions of young people's fertility intentions, including their desire to have children, their ideal number of children, and their expected timeframes for having children.

Traditional institutions and gender role attitudes

Religious affiliation is often associated with traditional beliefs and attitudes, particularly in approaches towards family and fertility (Newman & Hugo 2006). However, the number of people in Australia with religious affiliation is lessening, and is grounds to investigate whether religion is still important for explaining differences in young people's fertility intentions. A study by Newman and Hugo (2006) investigated the relationship between fertility and religion, finding that religious influence appeared to positively influence fertility. This was explained by the idea that religious groups encourage a more traditional family model, and therefore encourage women to behave as a 'mother' rather than as an individual. A study by Lisa Pearce (2002), investigating the influence of religion at a young age on childbearing attitudes and preferences as they transition into adulthood found that young adults whose parents were religiously affiliated were more likely to oppose voluntary childlessness and to want larger families for themselves. These studies are consistent with ABS statistics indicating that religion influences fertility intentions on a number of levels, including religiosity increasing the likelihood to have children rather than be childless, have children at a younger age and have larger family sizes (ABS 2013). This paper will investigate the relationship between religion and fertility intentions to understand whether religion remains a significant influence on fertility intentions for young Australians'.

The deinstitutionalisation of marriage, described as a weakening of social norms that define people's behaviours in social institutions, is in many ways reflected in Australian partnerships and families (Cherlin 2004). It can be argued that contemporary marriages and partnerships allow for more flexibility within the gendered roles which where once defined, such as women were the caretakers and men the 'breadwinner', as well as no longer necessarily following an expected format of being married prior to have children (Cherlin 2004; Traikovski 2007). A study by Kaufman (2000) found that gender role attitudes, meaning traditional or egalitarian concepts of female and male roles within in the family, for women who had more contemporary views on family, were less likely to have a child and more likely to complete this intention than their traditional counterparts. However, men with egalitarian attitudes were more likely to intend to have children compared to men with traditional attitudes. Kaufman (2000) argues that this difference may be due to of different ideas about egalitarianism. Women may still expect significant changes in their life after having children, as even with a supportive partner they will be required to take time off work or reduce their work outside of the household in order to balance home and career responsibilities. Males on the other hand may see their role with raising children to be secondary to the main caregiver and therefore supported and not as significantly influencing their other commitments (Beck & Beck Gernsheim 2002; Kaufman 2000; Newman

2012; Weston & Parker 2002). Kaufman's (2000) study highlights that gender role attitudes are a significant indicator of fertility intentions. However, as this study was based on American data collected in 1987/1988 and 1992/1994, it may not be representative of a younger cohort in contemporary society in Australia. This paper will expand on past research by investigating the relationship between attitudes towards gendered roles and fertility intentions.

Education and career aspirations

Past research has indicated that education is a significant influence on fertility intention outcomes (Franklin & Tueno 2004; Heard 2011). Education is now considered an important part of transitioning into adulthood for young people, giving them a chance to increase their career prospects while also going through a time of personal development, exploring options in career pathways, partnering and housing (Arnett 2000). Becker (1981) had previously hypothesised that increased female independence arising from education and employment would cause a reduction in marriage rates. While this has not been found to be the case, it has been found that educational attainment and career ambitions do delay marriage and having children (Heard 2011). In Australia female university graduates have fewer children than women non-graduates (Franklin & Tueno 2004). However, Bryson, Strazzari and Brown (1999) found that women do desire marriage and children, regardless of their educational attainment. Young people may therefore be intending to have children, but in their planning must allocate a more flexible timeframe for when this may occur due uncertainty about when they will finish their years of education.

There has also been recent Australian research highlighting the types of jobs people are employed in having an impact on fertility. Heard and Arunachalam's (2015) study on fertility, using secondary data from the Australian Census of Population and Housing from 2011, in part looked at fields of occupations and the relationship with cohort fertility rates. The relationship between occupation and CFR follows the pattern that women in more highly skilled occupations have fewer children. Heard and Arunachalam state that occupation has the most influence over fertility among women with no post-school qualifications, whereas it makes little difference for women with post-school qualifications at any level. This is consistent with ABS statistics indicating that the higher level of education, which is generally linked to higher skilled occupations, often have higher rates of childlessness or have fewer children than those with lower level qualifications (ABS 2008; Franklin & Tueno 2008). The above research suggests that aspiring to skilled occupations, in which many require longer time in education, may delay or postpone fertility. There has however, been limited research examining the association between work and fertility plans amongst young Australians'.

The present study and research questions

The younger age groups in Australia has received less comprehensive research in the field of family formation despite the unique opportunities associated with the study of youth in this context. While there are many theories and research conducted as to what influences fertility intentions, there is limited research on young people's fertility intentions and how this is influenced by their aspirations for other life goals. Therefore, this research will aim to fill these gaps by investigating the following research questions in the Australia context:

Research questions:

1. How do young Australians' traditional or egalitarian beliefs, including religiosity and gendered attitudes towards marital roles, influence fertility intentions?

2. How do young Australians' educational and occupational aspirations influence fertility intentions?

Method

Overview of the Our Lives Project

The Social Future and Life Pathways ("Our Lives") project is a longitudinal cohort study of young people in Queensland, Australia. The study began in 2006 when participants were in their first year of secondary school (aged 12-13 years). The initial Our Lives cohort consisted of 7,031 students from 213 schools across Queensland, and had a response rate of 55% for schools and 34% for students within those schools. This was largely representative of all school sectors and geographic regions across Queensland. Follow-up surveys are conducted every 2-3 years, with the most recent wave occurring in 2013, two years after participants had finished high school (Wave 4: aged 19-20 years). The Wave 4 survey was conducted online or via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Unless otherwise specified the data for these analyses are taken from this most recent survey wave.

After excluding 54 respondents due to missing data, the analytic sample for this paper contains 2,205 respondents from Wave 4. As with Australian studies of a comparable cohort (e.g. LSAY – see Rothman, 2009) female respondents have become overrepresented in the longitudinal sample after successive waves. Controlling for gender and socioeconomic variables likely to influence sample attrition should help to minimise the impact of attrition bias in the analyses.

Measures

Table 1. Frequency distributions for analytic variable		
Variable	N	Respondent %
All respondents	2205	
Dependent variables		
Fertility timing expectations		
Sometime in the future (ref.)	966	44%
Within 5 years	243	11%
5+ years	890	40%
Unsure/Don't know	107	5%
Desire to have children (1-10)		
Low desire	322	15%
Medium desire	547	25%
High desire	1315	60%
Ideal family size		
2 children or less (ref.)	1130	57%
3 or more children	858	43%
Control vairables		
Gender		
Male (ref.)	833	38%
Female	1372	62%
Parental education		
Bachelor's or higher (ref.)	1045	50%
Less than year 12	232	11%
Year 12	237	11%
Vocational	505	24%

Don't know/missing	90	4%
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual (ref.)	1942	90%
Other	215	10%
Work/study status (wave 4)		
Both working and studying (ref.)	1247	58%
Only studying	384	18%
Only working	438	20%
Neither working nor studying	84	4%
Country of birth		
Australia (ref.)	2001	91%
Overseas	203	9%

Dependent variables

Three aspects of young people's fertility intentions are considered in this paper; (1) desire to have children, (2) ideal number of children and (3) fertility timing expectations. Participants were asked "On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you feel about having children?", which could be answered on a scale 1="Definitely do not what to have children, to 10="Definitely do want children". These were coded into three groups: 1-4="Low desire"; 5-7="Moderate desire"; 8-10="High desire". Participants were also asked "What would you consider an ideal number of children to have?" Responses were coded into two groups, 2 children or lower and 3 children or more, considering 2 children to be the normative expectation (ABS 2013). Lastly, participants were asked "When, if ever, do you think these things might happen?; Have children". Four timeframe options are included in the analysis: 1="Never"; 2="Sometime in the future"; 3="5+ years"; and 4="Within 5 years".

Control variables

The control variables in the analysis were gender, parental education, work/study status, participant birth country and sexual orientation. To address a high number of missing or "Don't know" responses, the parental education measure is based on the highest level of educational attainment for either parent, using data from either Waves 2 or 3 depending on its availability. For analysis these were recoded to 1="Less than Year 12, 2="Year 12", 3="Vocational", 4="Bachelor's or higher", 5="Don't know / Missing". The work/study status variable determined what participants were undertaking in their average week, with four possible measures, 1="Working and studying", 2="Only studying", 3="Only" working, 4="Not working or studying". Participants birth country asked what country they were born in, 1="Australia", 2="Other". Participants were also asked what they identified their sexual orientation as, to which they self-classified. This was coded to show 1="Heterosexual or straight", 2="Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other".

Intervening variables

The intervening variables used for this paper included religion, Gendered Attitudes Towards Marital Roles (GATMR) scale, educational aspirations and career aspirations. The religion variable asked participants how important religion was in their lives, to which they could respond on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1="Not at all important" to 10="Most important thing in my life". The GATMR scale (Hoffman & Kloska 1995) is a scale made up of 6 questions that each ask about gender roles within marriage. Responses were given from 1 to 5, with 1="Strongly disagree", 2="Disagree", 3="Neither agree nor disagree", 4="Agree" or 5="Strongly agree". These responses were summed, creating one variable with scores from 6 to 30. Lower scores show greater disagreement and more egalitarian attitudes, whereas a high score shows greater agreement

and more traditional views. The educational aspirations variable was recoded to 4 responses from the original 5, 1="Not important", 2="Somewhat important", 3="Important", 4="Very important". The career aspirations variable asked participants what their ideal job type would be. There were 11 options over a range of fields. These were recoded into 4 options 1="Managers", 2="Professionals", 3="Working class", 4="Unsure".

Results

Desire to have children

Table 2. Ordered logistic regression results for fertility desire (1=Low (1-4); 2=Moderate (5-7); 3=High (8-10))

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Gender								
Male (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Female	1.5***	0.1	1.6***	0.2	1.5***	0.1	1.5***	0.1
Parental education								
Bachelor's or higher (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Less than year 12	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.2	1.0	0.2
Year 12	1.1	0.2	1.1	0.2	1.1	0.2	1.1	0.2
Vocational	1.3*	0.1	1.3*	0.1	1.3*	0.1	1.3*	0.1
Don't know/missing	1.0	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.0	0.2
Sexual orientation								
Heterosexual (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other	0.3***	0.0	0.4***	0.1	0.3***	0.0	0.4***	0.1
Work/Study status (wave 4)								
Both working and studying (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Only studying	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.1
Only working	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.1
Neither working nor studying	1.2	0.3	1.1	0.3	1.4	0.3	1.3	0.3
Country of birth								
Australia (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Overseas	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1
Religiosity (1-10)	–	–	1.1***	0.0	–	–	1.1***	0.0
GATMR scale (7-30)	–	–	1.0**	0.0	–	–	1.0**	0.0
Importance of Uni degree								
Important (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Not important	–	–	–	–	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.1
Somewhat important	–	–	–	–	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1
Very important	–	–	–	–	1.3*	0.1	1.4**	0.2
Future job aspiration								
Professional (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Managerial	–	–	–	–	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.1

						1.3	0.2	1.3	0.2
Working-class	–	–	–	–	1.3	0.2	1.3	0.2
Unsure	–	–	–	–	0.9	0.2	1.0	0.2
No. of obs.	2149		2149		2149		2149	
Pseudo R2	0.027		0.045		0.031		0.050	

Exponentiated coefficients
$^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Ordered logistic regression was used to analyse the fertility desire variable. A step wise approach was used, however result did not differ throughout the stages, so only the final model, model 4, which includes the entire model is presented here. Table 2 displays the results for the ordered logistic regression. The pseudo R^2 value in model 4 indicates that this model accounts 5 percent of the overall variation in fertility desire.

Several variables were significantly correlated with fertility desire. Of the demographic controls, gender, sexual orientation and parental education were significantly correlated with a respondent's level of desire to have children. Compared to males, female respondents were 50 percent more likely to display a one level increase in desire to have children. Compared to heterosexual participants, those with an 'Other' sexual orientation were 60 percent less likely to display a one level increase in desire to have children. Respondents whose parents' highest level of education was vocational were 30 percent likelier than those with tertiary educated parents to display higher fertility desire. Respondents' religiosity, gendered attitudes towards marital roles, and attitudes towards university were also associated with their fertility desire. For religion, every 1-point increase in religiosity was correlated with a 10 percent increase in the likelihood of increased desire to have children. Similarly, for every 1-point increase on the GATMR scale there was a small but significant increase in the odds of higher fertility desire. Compared to those who considered a university degree important, participants who considered a university degree very important were 40 percent more likely to display increased fertility desire.

Ideal family size
Table 3 displays the results for the logistic regression model analysing the preference for ideal family size (with "1" indicating a preference for a family size above the normative expectation of 2 children). The pseudo R^2 value indicates that this analysis accounts for 5 percent of the overall variation in ideal family size. Firstly, gender was significantly correlated with ideal family size. Female respondents were 90 percent more likely than males to prefer a larger than normal family size. Religiosity was also significantly correlated with family size preferences. Every one point increase in religiosity, was correlated with a 10 percent increase in the likelihood of preferring 3 or more children. Lastly, compared to those who considered a university degree important, participants who considered a university degree very important were 40 percent more likely to want 3 or more children.

Table 3. Logistic regression results for ideal family size (preference for 2 children or less vs. preference for 3 or more children)

	b	se
Gender		
Male (ref.)	–	–
Female	1.9***	0.2
Parental education		
Bachelor's or higher (ref.)	–	–
Less than year 12	0.8	0.1

Year 12	0.8	0.1
Vocational	0.9	0.1
Don't know/missing	0.8	0.1
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual (ref.)	–	–
Other	1.0	0.2
Work/Study status (wave 4)		
Both working and studying (ref.)	–	–
Only studying	0.9	0.1
Only working	1.0	0.2
Neither working nor studying	1.0	0.3
Country of birth		
Australia (ref.)	–	–
Overseas	0.8	0.1
Religiosity (1-10)	1.1***	0.0
GATMR scale (7-30)	1.0	0.0
Importance of Uni degree		
Important (ref.)	–	–
Not important	1.3	0.2
Somewhat important	1.1	0.2
Very important	1.4**	0.2
Future job aspiration		
Professional (ref.)	–	–
Managerial	1.0	0.1
Working-class	1.0	0.2
Unsure	1.3	0.3
No. of obs.	1959.000	
Pseudo R2	0.051	

Exponentiated coefficients
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Fertility timing expectations

A multinomial logistic regression approach was used to analyse fertility timeframe expectations. Table 4 displays the results for the multinominal regression. The pseudo R^2 value for this analysis indicated that it accounts for 6.5 percent of the overall variation in fertility timing expectations. Amongst the demographic controls, gender and parental education displayed strongest associations with fertility timing. Compared to males, females were 3.4 times more likely to say they expected children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future". They were also 40 percent more likely than males to expect children in "5 or more years" instead of "Sometime in the future". Meanwhile, respondents without tertiary-educated parents were significantly more likely to expect children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future". This association grew the most pronounced for respondents whose parent's highest reported education level was less than year 12. Sexual orientation was also significantly correlated with fertility timing expectations. Participants who identified as 'Other' (e.g. gay/lesbian/bisexual or unsure) were 2.2 times more likely than heterosexual participants to report never expecting children, and half as likely to report expecting children in "5 or more years" instead of "Sometime in the future". Compared to respondents who were both studying and working, those who were neither working nor studying

were 2.2 times more likely to expect to children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future". Participants born overseas, rather than in Australia, were 60 percent less likely to expect to have children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future".

For the intervening variables a number of relationships arose. Firstly, every one point increase in religiosity was correlated with a 10 percent decrease in the odds of being in the "Never" category rather than the "Sometime in the future" category. Displaying higher scores on the GATMR scale (e.g. holding more traditional values towards gendered marital roles) was correlated with more immediate fertility timeframe expectations. For every one-point increase on the GATMR scale, there was a 10 percent increase in the odds expecting children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future". Participants who considered attending university "Not important" rather than "Important" were 80 percent more likely to expect children "Within 5 years" instead of "Sometime in the future". Respondents' future job aspirations were associated with fertility timeframes in two ways. Compared to those who aspired to professional occupations, participants who were unsure of their job aspirations were 40 percent less likely to expect children in "5 years or more" rather than "Sometime in the future". Secondly, for participants who aspired to managerial work rather than professional work, there was a 90 percent increase of odds of being in the "Within 5 years" category instead of the "Sometime in the future" category.

Table 4. Multinomial regression results for fertility timing expectations (Reference category: "Sometime in the future")

	Never		5+ years		Within 5 years	
	b	se	b	se	b	se
Gender						
Male (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Female	1.2	0.3	1.4**	0.1	3.4***	0.6
Parental education						
Bachelor's or higher (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Less than year 12	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.1	2.3***	0.6
Year 12	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.1	2.1**	0.5
Vocational	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.1	1.6*	0.3
Don't know/missing	1.4	0.5	0.7	0.1	1.3	0.4
Sexual orientation						
Heterosexual (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other	2.2**	0.6	0.5***	0.1	0.7	0.2
Work/Study status (wave 4)						
Both working and studying (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Only studying	1.4	0.4	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.2
Only working	1.0	0.3	0.9	0.1	1.2	0.2
Neither working nor studying	1.6	0.8	0.6	0.2	2.2*	0.7
Country of birth						
Australia (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Overseas	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.4*	0.2
Religiosity (1-10)	0.9**	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
GATMR scale (7-30)	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.1***	0.0
Importance of Uni degree						
Important (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Not important	1.4	0.5	0.8	0.1	1.8*	0.5
Somewhat important	1.0	0.4	1.1	0.2	1.3	0.4
Very important	1.0	0.3	1.1	0.1	1.0	0.2
Future job aspiration						

Professional (ref.)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Managerial	1.5	0.4	1.0	0.1	1.9**	0.4
Working-class	0.4	0.2	0.9	0.2	1.2	0.3
Unsure	1.3	0.5	0.6*	0.1	0.8	0.3
No. of obs.	2149					
Pseudo R2	0.065					

Exponentiated coefficients

$^{*} p < 0.05,\ ^{**} p < 0.01,\ ^{***} p < 0.001$

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated young Queenslanders' fertility intentions on three levels and to what extent these are influenced by religiosity, gendered attitudes towards marital roles, and educational and career aspirations. I did so while accounting for demographic characteristics, including gender, parental education, sexual orientation and country of birth.

Research question 1 dealt with the relationship between traditional or egalitarian beliefs and fertility intentions. Based on previous research, I expected that having more traditional beliefs, including higher importance placed on religion and traditional beliefs about gendered roles within marriage, would be associated with increased desire to have children, larger desired family size and more immediate timeframes in mind for having children. Supporting these expectations it was found that higher religiosity and traditional beliefs about gendered attitudes towards marital roles, were associated with all aspects of fertility intentions. Traditional beliefs were associated with a higher likelihood of having strong desire to have children, want a larger family size, have a more immediate timeframe in mind for having children and less likely to never want children. While not all of these aspects were covered by both 'belief' variables, these results show a pattern that, if intentions are realised, would result in higher fertility rates for those with more traditional beliefs (ABS 2013; Newman & Hugo 2006; Pearce 2002). Clearly, although the number of people who are religious in Australia has declined over time, the fertility intentions of those who are religious strongly reproduce traditional beliefs and structures of family.

The aim of research question 2 was to investigate the relationship between fertility intentions and education and career aspirations. It was expected that participants who considered university very important and aspired to higher skills job types, would have less certain timeframes in mind for having children and smaller ideal family sizes. However they would have similar strength of desire to have children. Results were not consistent with these expectations. Firstly, participants who considered a university degree very important rather than important were a lot more likely to display increased fertility desire and also more likely to want 3 or more children. These results contrast Australian fertility trends which indicate that Australian women graduates tend to have fewer children then non graduates, but may indicate an inconsistency with young peoples' aspirations concerning education and family formation, and what their eventual fertility outcomes may be later in life (Franklin & Tueno 2004). It is however consistent that these results indicated that education can delay childbearing, compared to those who do not consider university degrees to be important. Consistent with past research was the likelihood to have more immediate fertility intention timeframes if participants aspired to managerial work rather than professional work. While also much less likely to have a specific timeframe in mind when unsure of job type aspirations. It could be argued that the types of jobs not requiring years of study, may be entered into at an earlier time in their lives, and therefore offer more immediate opportunities to have children, particularly if considering the workforce as an entry into adulthood for young people (Arnett 2000).

This research has aimed to explain differences in young people's fertility intentions on three levels; fertility desires, ideal family size and fertility intention timeframes, by accounting for

their religiosity, egalitarianism regarding gendered marital roles, and their educational and occupational aspirations. In conclusion, this study highlights that traditional beliefs continue to be a significant predictor of fertility for young people in Australia. This study also highlighted a disjuncture between aspirations and plans, with fertility intentions potentially conflicting with education and career aspirations, and young people displaying uncertainty in long term planning. Future research will investigate these findings further using longitudinal data, to investigate how and why fertility intentions may change for young people throughout their adolescence and entry into adulthood.

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