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Low Fertility: An Impending Problem for Egypt

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Abstract

Although fertility rate is rapidly declining in Egypt since 1950, fears of overpopulation are mounting in media outlets and government agendas. Almost none of the official and academic demographic publications about Egypt have examined the projected fertility change in Egypt until the end of the century. Therefore, this paper aims to demonstrate that low fertility is an impending problem for Egypt. Based on the statistical analysis of UNDESA data, three important results that support this argument have been reached. First, Egypt is projected to go below replacement fertility of 2.32 by 2045, and below replacement fertility of 2.11 in 2058. According to EU-JRC data, these dates are projected to by 13-21 years earlier, in 2032 and 2037 respectively. Second, by 2100, Egypt's fertility rate will go as low as 1.85 according to UNDESA data, and only 1.59 according to EU-JRC data. Third, by 2100, Egypt will almost be in the same fertility level of France, Germany, Japan, and Italy, which all are currently suffering acute demographic problems. This is not an appropriate situation for Egypt with its non-industrial economy and would pose many demographic and development challenges. Finally, the paper presents some recommendations for dealing with such problem in Egypt.

Keywords: Fertility Decline, Projected Fertility 2100, Demographic Challenges, Egypt