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Immigrant Supply of Marketable Child Care and Native Fertility in Italy

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RÉSUMÉ

The availability of child-care services has often been advocated as one of the instruments to counter the fertility decline observed in many high-income countries. In the recent past large inflows of low-skilled migrants have substantially increased the supply of child-care services. In this paper we examine if immigration as actually affected fertility exploiting the natural experiment occurred in Italy in 2007, when a large inflow of migrants – many of them specialized in the supply of child care – arrived unexpectedly. With a difference-in-differences method, we show that immigrant female workers have increased native births by a number that ranges roughly from 2 to 4 per cent. We validate our result by the implementation of an instrumental variable approach and several robustness tests, all concluding that the increase in the supply of child-care services by immigrant women has positively affected native fertility.

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