

Preface

This book provides an empirical investigation of the employment status of Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) and Australia-born women. The analysis adds to the work of Australian authors who have found that NESB women are under-represented in occupations that have relatively high pay and congenial working conditions, and are over-represented amongst the unemployed. This study develops a definition of primary sector employment from the occupation categories in the 1996 Census, and uses the ANU2 occupational prestige scale and earnings data from the Census.

The book constructed univariate probit models for labour market participation, and primary sector employment and unemployment for both groups of women. The models were estimated using the 1% sample from the 1996 Australian Census. The Census provided useful information regarding labour market status and a range of human capital and demographic variables that were relevant to the analysis. These models suggested that NESB women faced disadvantages in the labour market if they had poor English language skills or had arrived in Australia comparatively recently. The models tended to support the works of other authors who have found that education and labour market experience were significant in improving the labour market position of individuals.

In addition, we developed bivariate probit models that deal with outcomes that resulted from simultaneous decisions of different parties. Though this approach has been used before in empirical studies, we believe it has not been used in Australian studies of employment status, and have not been able to identify any such studies in the overseas literature. In the primary sector employment models, the outcome is the consequence of an individual's decision to participate in the labour market and an employer's decision to hire that person for a primary sector job. In the unemployment models, the outcome is the consequence of an individual's decision to participate in the labour market and the decision of an employer not to hire that person for any job. Generally, the bivariate models tended to confirm the results found in the univariate probit models; however, in some cases they revealed results that could not be otherwise achieved.

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