

Religious Socialisation and Fertility: The Transition to the Third Birth in the Netherlands

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Main research questions:

- How do **religious socialisation** and **current religiosity** interlink regarding their impact on the transition to the third child?
- How does this relationship change **over cohorts**?

Previous research on religion & fertility in Europe

Frejka & Westoff 2006: EVS

- Risk of having 2+ children associated with some religious measures
- S. Europe: church attendance, W. Europe: importance of religion

Adsera 2006a: ISSP

- Church attendance matters in monoreligious countries, attendance and affiliation matter in pluralistic countries
- Importance of affiliation diminishes with cohorts especially for women, importance of attendance rises over cohorts

Philipov & Berghammer (forthcoming): FFS

- Religious measures show stronger effect on ideals and behaviour than on intentions

Spain (Adsera 2006b): 2 Spanish Fertility Surveys (1985, 1999)

- Older cohorts: similar family sizes between practicing and non-practicing Cath.
- Younger cohorts: family size of non-practicing Catholics is lower and similar to non-affiliated

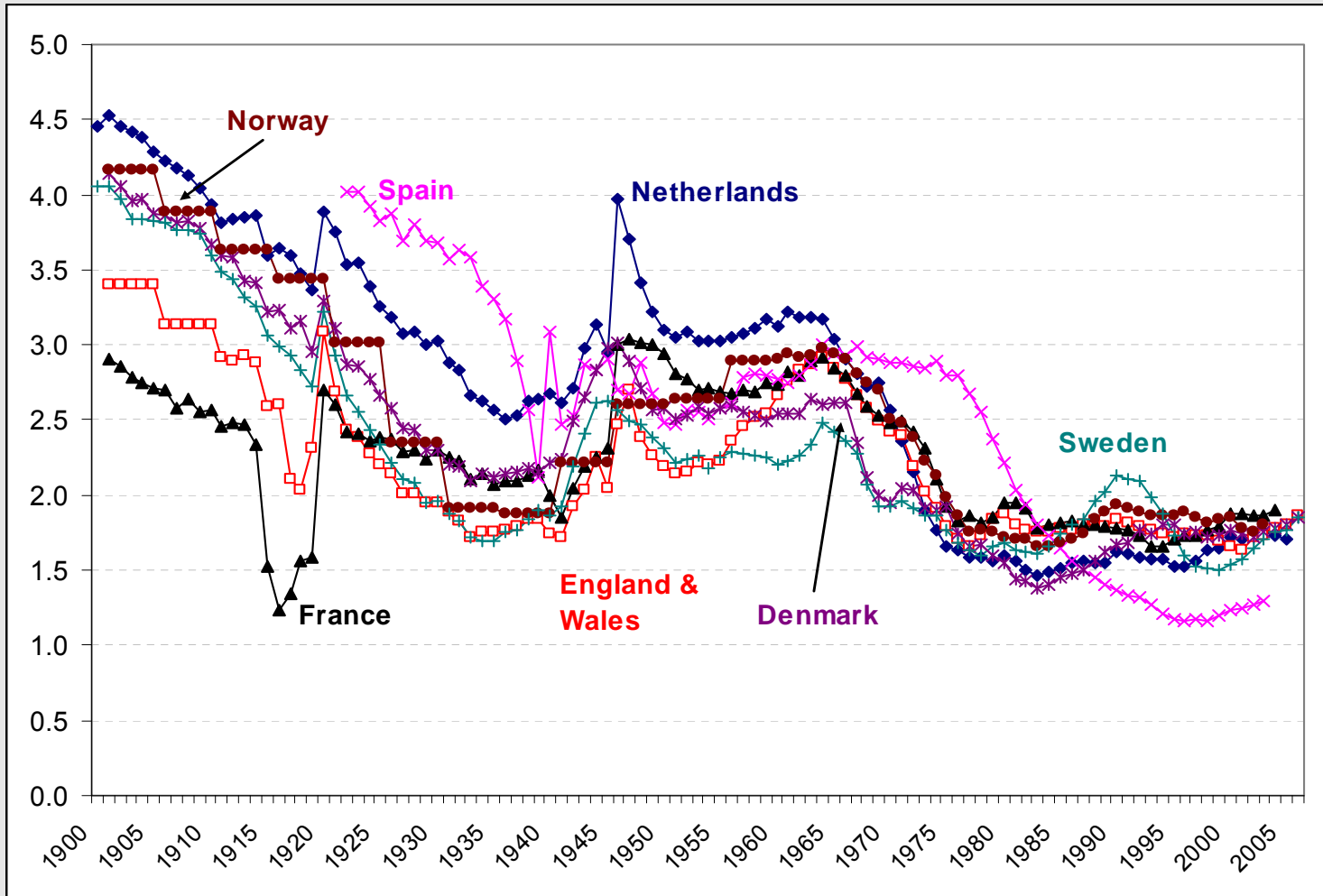
Previous research in the United States

Large body of research (for an overview: Lehrer 2004, McQuillan 2004)

Janssen and Hauser 1981: Religion, socialization and fertility

- Current affiliation is more important than family's affiliation during adolescence
- Women are more responsive to Catholic socialisation than men
- Catholic background increases the likelihood of progression mainly at higher parities (three and four)

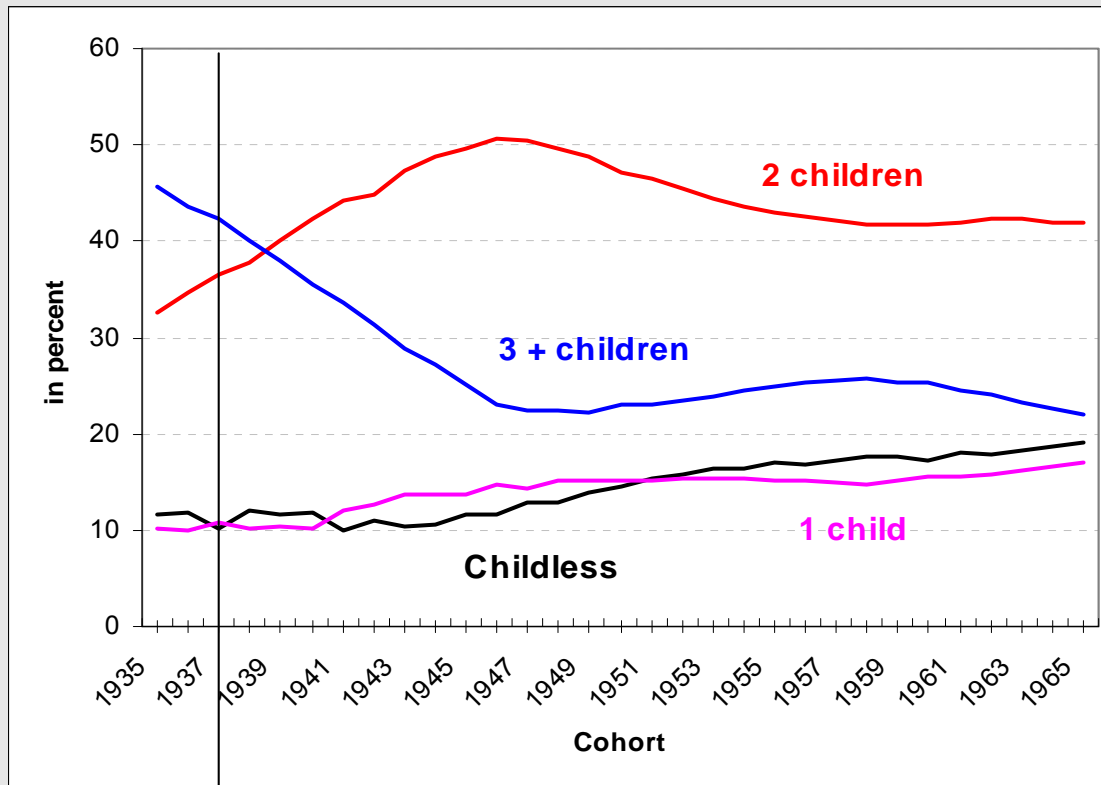
Total fertility rate 1900-2005, selected European countries



- High fertility rate until 1960s – mainly owing to high Catholic fertility (e.g. Van Poppel 1985)
- Rapid drop to below the European average (1975: NL 1.66, EU-25 2.02)
- In 2006: 1.72

Why study the third birth?

Cohort parity distribution, birth cohorts 1935-1965



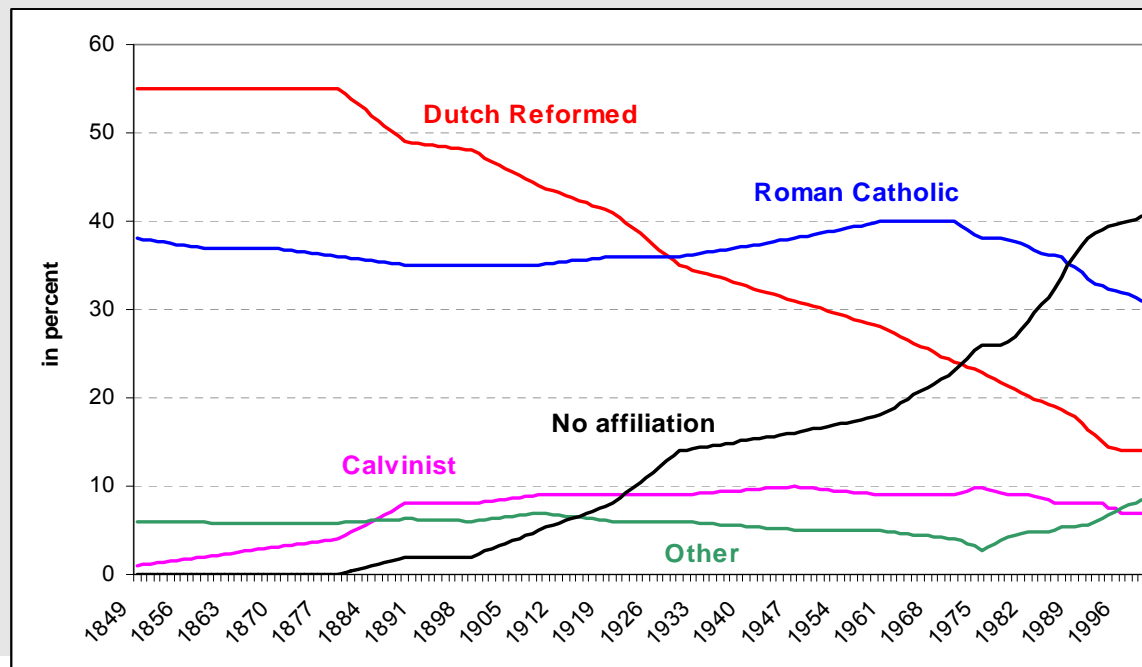
Birth cohorts from 1937 onwards are studied

- Steep decline of 3rd births between cohorts 1933-47
- Until and including cohort 1938: 40% and more women had 3+ children
- Cohorts 1945-1965, average:
 - 2 children ~ 45%
 - 3 children ~ 24%

Religion in the Netherlands

- Until mid-1960s: system of pillarisation – Protestants, Catholics, Socialists
- Strong regional concentration
- Rapid and profound secularisation → one of the most secularised countries in Europe

Percentage of the Dutch population adhering to a certain church, 1849-1999



Source: CBS 2000

Data: Netherlands Kinship Panel Study

- First wave: 2002-04
- $n = 8,161$ women and men, aged 18 to 79
- Final sample size: $n = 2,091$ women aged 24 to 65
- Women experiencing a third birth: $n = 751$
- Fertility and partnership history, socio-economic variables
- CAPI and self-completion questionnaire (for respondent, partner, other family members)

Variables on religiosity

1) Religious socialisation:

- Importance of church/religion at age 15
- Father's affiliation when respondent was 15 years old

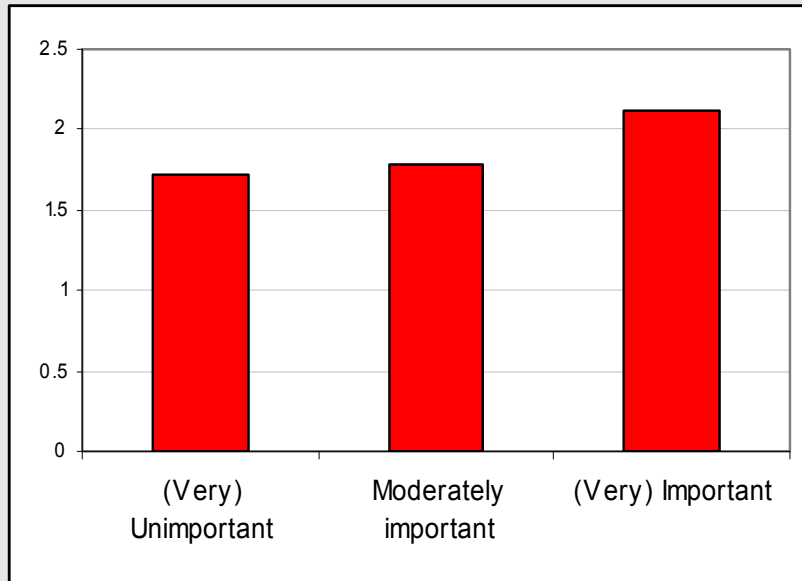
2) Current religiosity:

- Religious affiliation: Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Calvinist, Calvinist (orthodox)
- Attendance of church services
- Membership in religious/church association

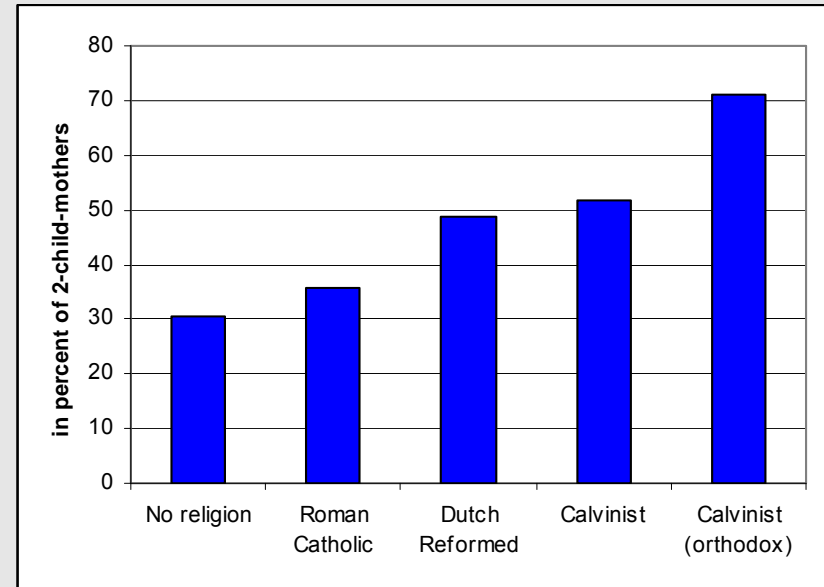
Method: Event history analysis

- Discrete model
- To model the risk per year for the third birth to occur
- Population at risk: women at parity two (biological children)
- Censoring: at the third birth, at age 45, at the time of the survey

Descriptive results



Mean number of children (women aged 35-65) by importance of religion at age 15 (n = 4,731)



Percentage of two-child mothers experiencing a 3rd birth by religious affiliation (n = 2,091)

Results I

Importance of religion and church at age 15							
Very important	1.36 **	1.28 *	1.21	1.12	1.10	1.09	
Moderately	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Not important	0.80 *	0.82	0.86	0.89	0.94	0.96	
Membership in religious or church association							
No	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Yes	1.45 ***	1.16	0.96	0.96	0.96	1.00	
Religious affiliation							
No affiliation		1	1	1			
Roman Catholic		1.14	0.89	0.75 *			
Dutch Reformed		1.60 ***	1.30	1.35			
Calvinist		1.70 **	1.22	1.11			
Calvinist (orth)		1.97 ***	1.35	1.17			
Church attendance							
Never/hardly ever			1	1	1		
Yearly			1.50 ***	1.48 ***	1.38 **		
Monthly			1.67 **	1.66 **	1.55 **		
Weekly			2.18 ***	2.19 ***	2.11 ***		
Religious affiliation father							
No affiliation				1	1		
Roman Catholic				1.60 **	1.35 *		
Dutch Reformed				1.22	1.47 *		
Calvinist				1.57 *	1.74 **		
Calvinist (orth)				1.62	1.84 **		

Controlled for education, cohort, sex composition of previous children, gap between first and second child, age at second birth

Notes: *** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$

Results II

Cohorts 1937-54 vs. Cohorts 1955-79

- Affiliation is more important for the older cohorts
- Attendance is more important for the younger ones: with each subsequent level the third birth intensity increases while for the older cohorts there is only a significant difference between those who never attend and those who attend weekly

Results III

Interaction: Importance of religion at age 15 + Church attendance

	All respondents	Older cohorts	Younger cohorts
In past not important + No attendance	1	1	1
In past important + No attendance	1.36 *	1.16	1.57 **
In past not important + Attendance	2.28 **	-	-
In past important + Attendance	2.32 ***	1.86 ***	3.02 ***

Interaction: Respondent's affiliation + Father's affiliation

Father	Respondent	All respondents	Older cohorts	Younger cohorts
No affiliation	No affiliation	1	1	1
Catholic	No affiliation	1.52 *	1.75	1.42
Catholic	Catholic	1.64 **	1.48	1.91 **
Dutch Reformed	No affiliation	1.46	1.41	1.58
Dutch Reformed	Dutch Reformed	2.33 ***	2.57 ***	2.48 ***
Calvinist	No affiliation	1.94 *	-	-
Calvinist	Calvinist	2.97 ***	3.09 ***	-
Calvinist (orth)	No affiliation	-	-	-
Calvinist (orth)	Calvinist (orth)	3.48 ***	-	4.45 ***

Notes: “-“ denotes that $n < 30$; *** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$

Controlled for education, cohort, sex composition of previous children, gap between first and second child, age at second birth, marital status (tv)

Summary

- Stronger impact of measures of current religiosity than of „importance of church/religion at age 15“ because of selection over time
- Church attendance more relevant than membership in church association (which is more diverse) and religious affiliation (which can be nominal) – especially for younger cohorts (selection)
- Religious socialisation raises 3rd birth intensities also of those who ceased attending churchly services
- Father’s affiliation has significant influence while respondent’s own affiliation does not – the „non-affiliated“ category consists also of respondents with religious background who show elevated 3rd birth intensities and are therefore not significantly different from the affiliated

Thank you!

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