

Family formation and retreat from the labour market: An exploration of educational differentials in Belgium

David De Wachter (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

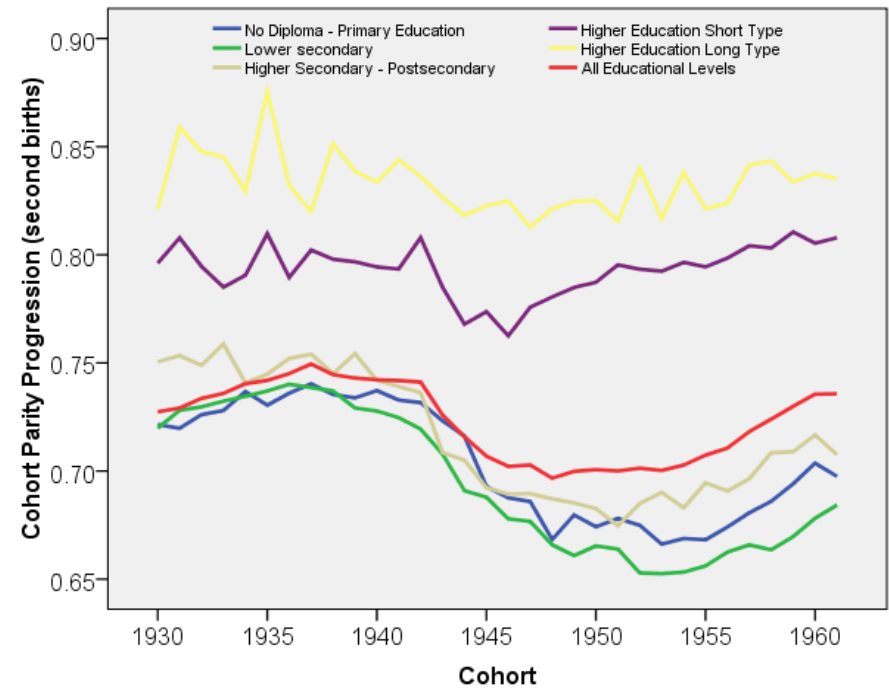
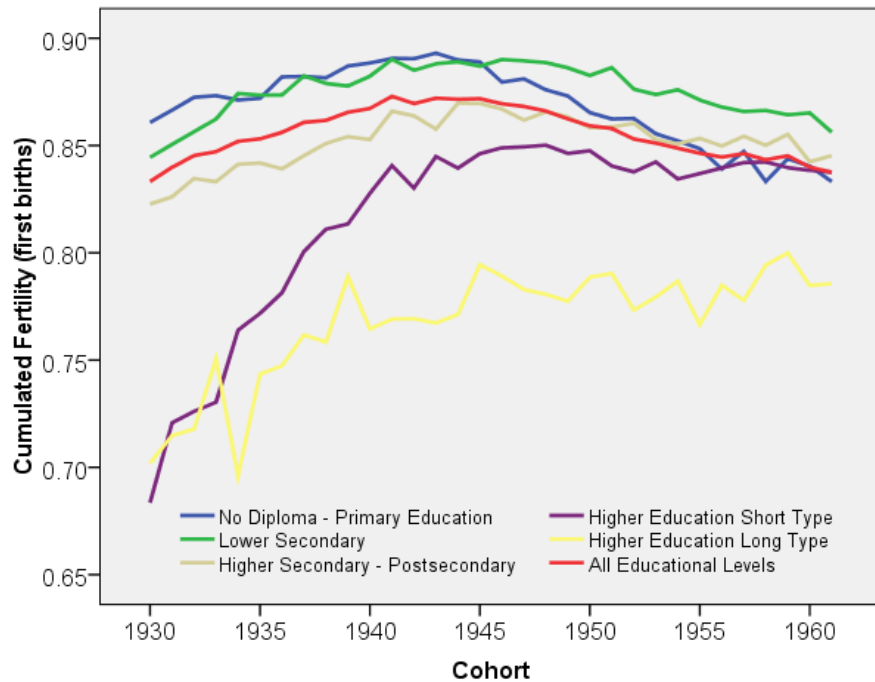
Karel Neels (Universiteit Antwerpen)



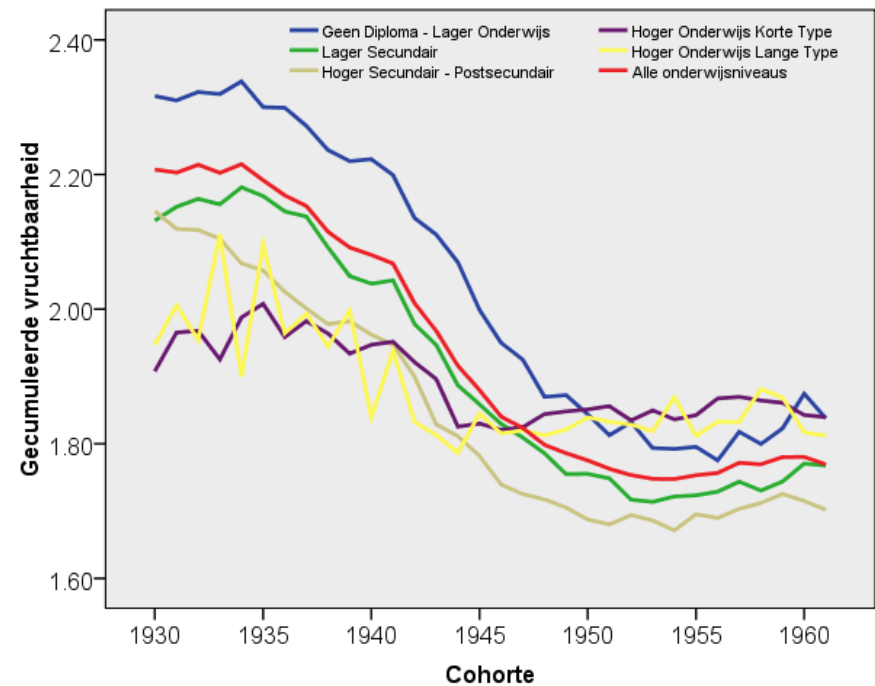
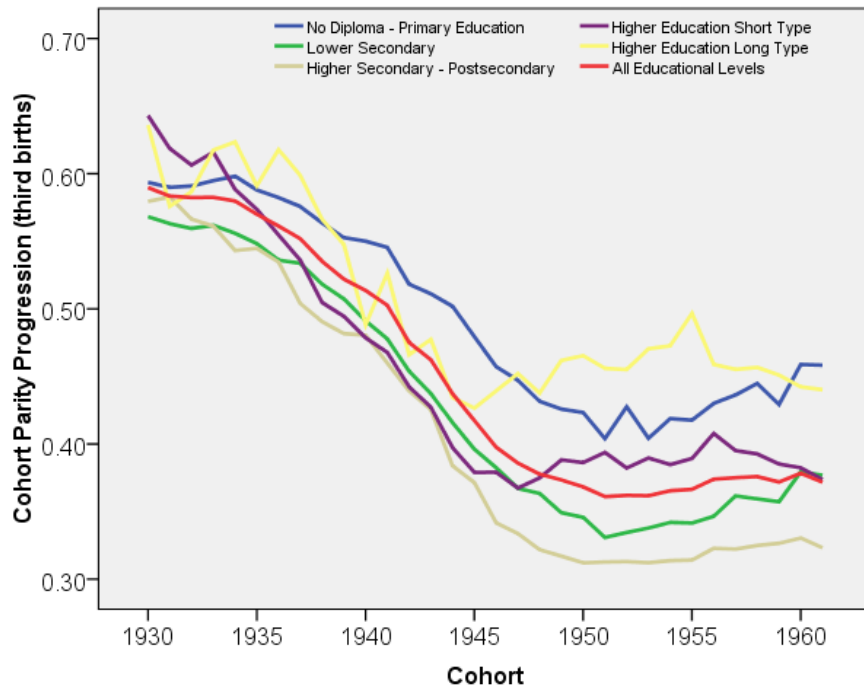
Background and outline

- Varying effects of education on fertility ideals and fertility outcomes: positive effect on ideal family size, negative effect on entry into parenthood, positive effect on subsequent births, ...
- Theory suggests differential effect of labour market position, depending on parity, educational level
- Survey data such as FFS, GGS or ESS do not allow to explore such interactions in detail
- This contribution: use prospective census design to explore educational differentials in subsequent fertility transitions: correlation between education & LFP and differential effects on family formation,...

Educational differentials: first and second births



Educational differentials: third births and total fertility



Educational differentials in cohort profiles of order-specific fertility

- Educational differentials in making the transition to **first births** have decreased substantially
- Educational differentials in making the transition to **second and third births** persisted

Research questions

1. Explore the correlation between educational attainment and occupational status (at parity 0, 1 and 2);
2. Estimate the effect of female and male activity status on first, second and third birth hazards

Female labour force participation and fertility

1. Opportunity costs...

- Reduce fertility
- impact more pronounced at higher parities/levels of education

2. Income

- May enhance fertility
- impact more articulated at higher parities/levels of education

3. Economic uncertainty

- Delaying impact on childbearing behaviour
- Less articulated among lower educated women

Male perspective?

1. Male partner characteristics less frequently considered

- Lack of available data
- Male employment assumed to have positive effect
- Lack of a household perspective
- ...

2. Worthwhile to take male perspective back into account

- Childbearing is the joint decision of women and their partners
- Male breadwinner model increasingly under stress:
Increasing variation in male labour market outcomes
- Gender roles are becoming more and more similar:
increasing variation in division of household labour

Data and Methods

- **Data & Research design:**
 - Individual link between the 1991 and 2001 Belgian censuses
 - 3-year prospective study (cfr. GGS)
 - male/female activity status measured in 1991 census
 - Fertility outcomes measured retrospectively in 2001 census
 - Entry in risk set on January 1st 1992 to avoid reverse causation
 - Analysis restricted to period 1992-1994
- **Models:**
 - Discrete time event-history models of 1st, 2nd, 3rd birth hazards:
complementary log-log link, late entry design
 - 2 models:
 - Model 1: only female characteristics
 - Model 2: controlling for male partner characteristics

Data and Methods

- **Stratification**

1. Parity (on January 1st 1991)
2. Highest level of education (on March 1st 1991)
 - PE = None and primary
 - LSE = lower secondary education
 - HSE = higher secondary education
 - HEST = higher education short type
 - HELT = higher education long type
3. Age group of women (on March 1st 1991)
 - Aged 22-27 years (1964-69 cohorts)
 - Aged 28-33 years (1958-63 cohorts)

- **Control variables**

- Partnership/Marital status
- Educational attainment male partner

Labour market attachment by parity and education, Belgian women aged 28-33

Parity		Full-time		Part-time		Unemployed		Other act	
		LSE	HEST	LSE	HEST	LSE	HEST	LSE	HEST
0		48.0%	59.8%	27.9%	34.7%	19.4%	4.7%	4.6%	0.4%
1		37.2%	43.8%	34.3%	49.1%	25.8%	6.5%	2.6%	0.5%
2		26.7%	29.2%	36.3%	60.0%	33.6%	9.9%	3.4%	0.8%

Source: 1991 census

?

Results event history analysis

- **First births**
 - No significant difference between full-time/part-time for women
 - Unemployment has a clear negative effect on fertility
 - penalty more severe for higher educated women
 - but higher educated women have few difficulties in securing a position on the labour market
 - Male unemployment results in lower first birth hazards (but low prevalence of unemployment among men in union)
 - Male education increases birth hazards (income effect)
 - After control for male partner characteristics, female activity status remains significant

Results event history analysis

- **Second births**
 - Minor impact of female activity status on second birth hazards
 - No clear educational differentials in impact of activity status
 - After control for male partner characteristics, no significant differences between full-time, part-time and unemployed women
 - Male unemployment results in lower first second hazards (but low prevalence of unemployment among men in union)
 - Male education increases second hazards (income effect)

Results event history analysis

- **Third births**
 - Highest third birth hazards among unemployed and part-time
 - Effect of unemployment and part-time more articulated among higher educated women
 - After control for male partner characteristics, female activity status remains significant
 - Male unemployment results in lower third birth hazards (but low prevalence of unemployment among men in union)
 - Male education increases third hazards (income effect)

Conclusions

Female labour market attachment differs markedly by education and differential in activity status increase with parity

- **Higher educated women:**
 - More likely to work full-time at all parities (cfr. childcare)
 - Part-time often temporary (i.e. parental leave)
 - Less likely to be unemployed/inactive at all parities.
 - Suggesting strong preference to remain attached to labour market, even when one or more children in the household
 - Homogamy and positive (male) income effect on birth hazards
 - Additional mechanisms: selection of family-oriented women in unemployment/part-time; employment in jobs/sectors with better options to reconcile work and family

Conclusions

- **Lower educated women:**
 - Less likely to take up full-time or part-time employment
 - More often in unemployment or disengaged from labour market
 - Benefit less from income effect
 - Labour market attachment further decreases with parity
 - more traditional gender roles or family-oriented lifestyle
 - more precarious jobs/sectors of employment
 - Limited access to childcare/parental leave reducing employment opportunities

Family formation and retreat from the labour market: An exploration of educational differentials in Belgium

David De Wachter (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Karel Neels (Universiteit Antwerpen)

