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Education, fertility, and step-parenthood in France

No stepchild but common children among homogamic highly educated couples, step-families among others (lowest educated, and heterogamic couples)

Education and reproduction in low-fertility settings Conference

2ND – 4TH DECEMBER 2015 - VIENNA

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- Data: French Family Survey, 2011
- Background: Recent trends in Education and partnering
- Definitions:
 - couple, homogamy, heterogamy, hypergamy, hypogamy
 - children, common children, and step-children
- Results on step-parenthood
- Conclusions and questions

Data: French Family Survey (2011)



Data: the French Family and housing Surveys 2011



A Survey held in the context of the 2011 Annual Census Survey

Sample

Data are available on 238,000 women and 121,000 men aged 18+, as well as on 609,000 children.

Results presented here come from women's and men's answers: 79,000 men and 155,000 women born 1925-1975 (aged 35-85 at survey, January 2011), born in France or arrived before age 13.

- Data available for research: see <http://lili-efl2011.site.ined.fr/en>

- Questionnaire available at

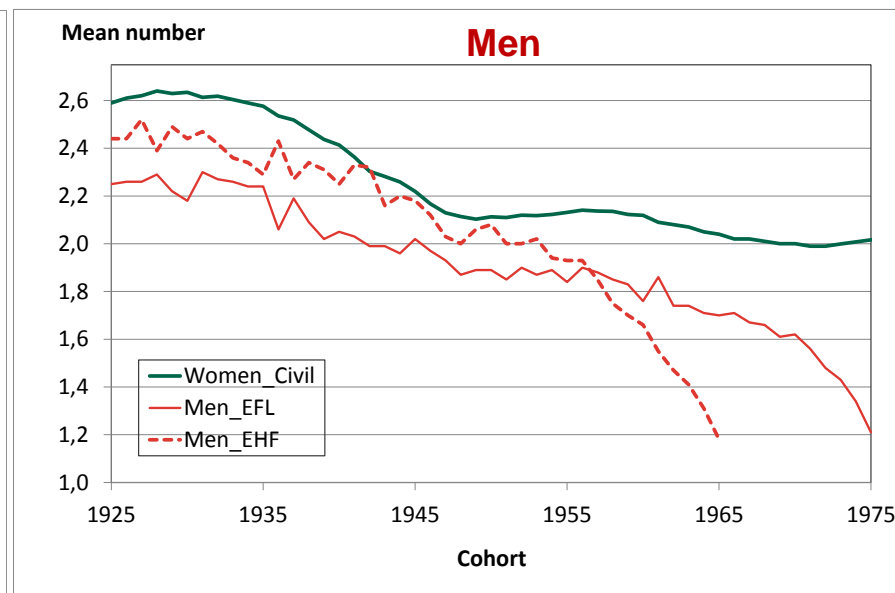
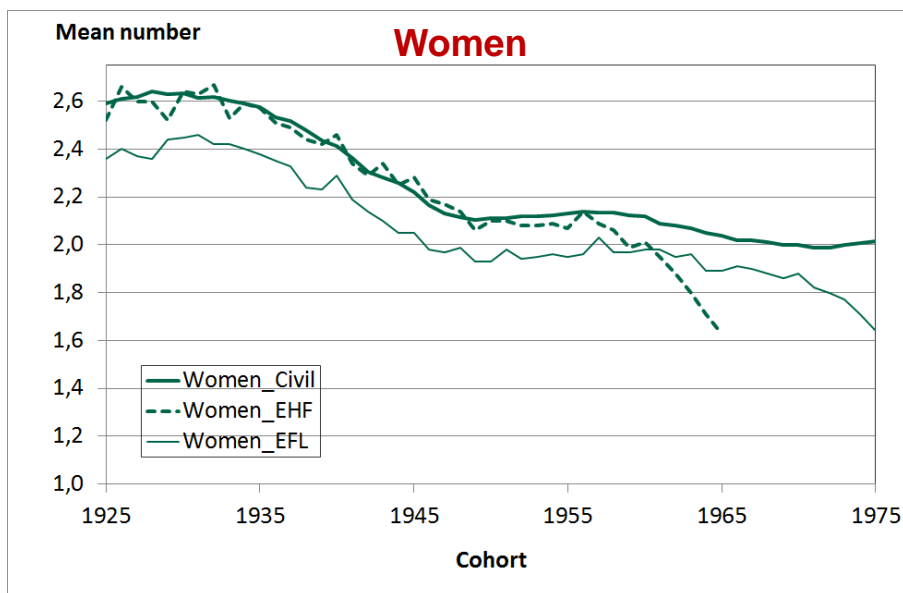
http://lili-efl2011.site.ined.fr/fichier/s_rubrique/20511/maquette.questionnaire.femmes.en.pdf

Background



Evolution of women's and men's Fertility

Mean number of children for men and women by birth cohort, according to civil registration (for women), one-percent 1999 (EHF) and 2011 (EFL) Family surveys

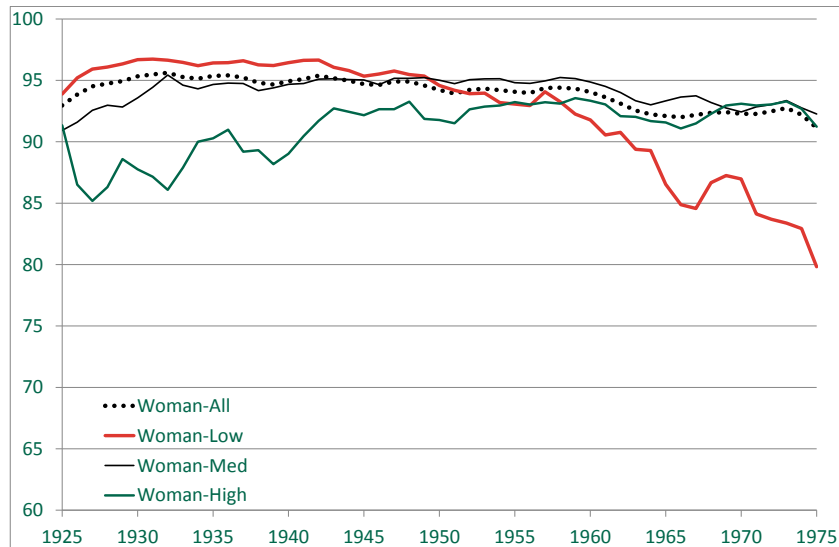


- Decline in women's and men's fertility, up to cohort 1970
- Fertility is lower in the most recent data source: likely overestimation of fertility in 1999, and from civil registration data as well (women missing at census)
- The overall level of fertility is lower for men: some children are missing in such surveys in men's forms.

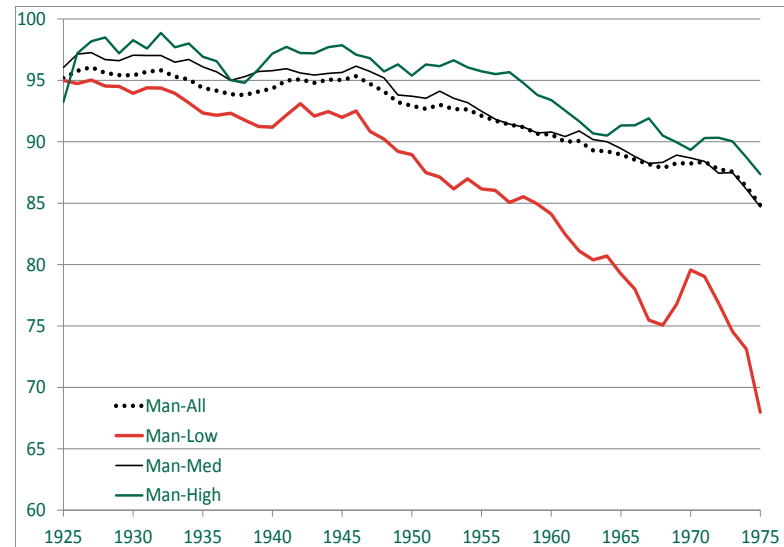
Changes in social differences in partnering

Proportion of men and women who have ever lived as a couple, by level of education and birth cohort (per cent)

Women



Men



- In older cohorts (born before 1955), **women** with a high level of education (university degree) were less likely to ever live as a couple; there was a regular downward trend by education
- In more recent cohorts the contrast by education has reversed: women with primary or short secondary education are less likely to ever live as a couple (like for men)
- For **men** the contrast by education is stable with cohort: the higher the education, the higher the probability to have ever lived as a couple

Changes in Education and homogamy

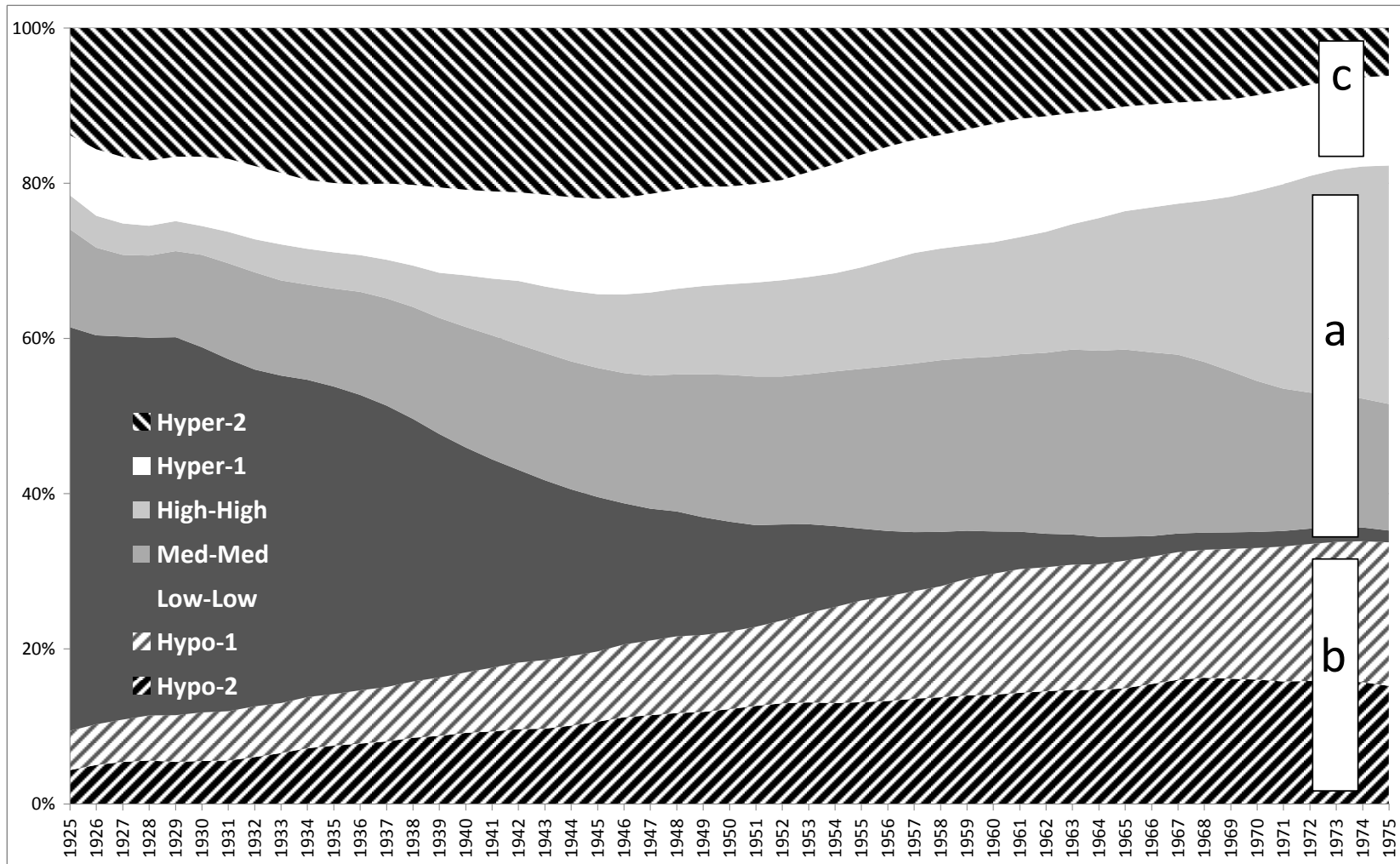
		Woman				
	Man	Low	Med1	Med2	Med3	High
No or primary:	Low	Low-Low	Hypo-1	Hypo-1	Hypo-1	Hypo-1
Secondary, short:	Med1	Hyper-1	Med-Med	Hypo-1	Hypo-1	Hypo-1
Secondary, professional:	Med2	Hyper-2	Hyper-1	Med-Med	Hypo-1	Hypo-1
Secondary, completed:	Med3	Hyper-2	Hypo-1	Hyper-1	Med-Med	Hypo-1
University degree:	High	Hyper-2	Hyper-1	Hyper-2	Hyper-1	High-High

Method. Combined distribution of man's and woman's education, by women's birth cohort, to define:

Couple homogamy,
 hypergamy (man more educated than woman)
 hypogamy (man less educated than woman)

Changes in Education and homogamy

Distribution of couples by level of education of both partners, and woman's birth cohort (%)
Cohorts 1925 to 1975



Changes in Education and homogamy

In younger cohorts:

- a. Almost 50% of the couples are homogamic (after the decline of couples with no education and the growing part of homogamic highly educated couples: 30%)
- b. More and more couples are hypogamic: 30% among couples where the woman is born in 1975
- c. After a maximum for cohorts of women born in 1945 (one third), less and less couples are hypergamic: 20% for cohort 1975

Effects of the Changes in Education on homogamy

Research main questions:

- How do these recent changes impact fertility and family pathways of men and women?
- Are family pathways of men, women and couples, different regarding to educational levels and assortative mating?
- Are those changes specific to the French context, or common with other countries?

Results

We compare hypergamic, hypogamic, homogamic couples:

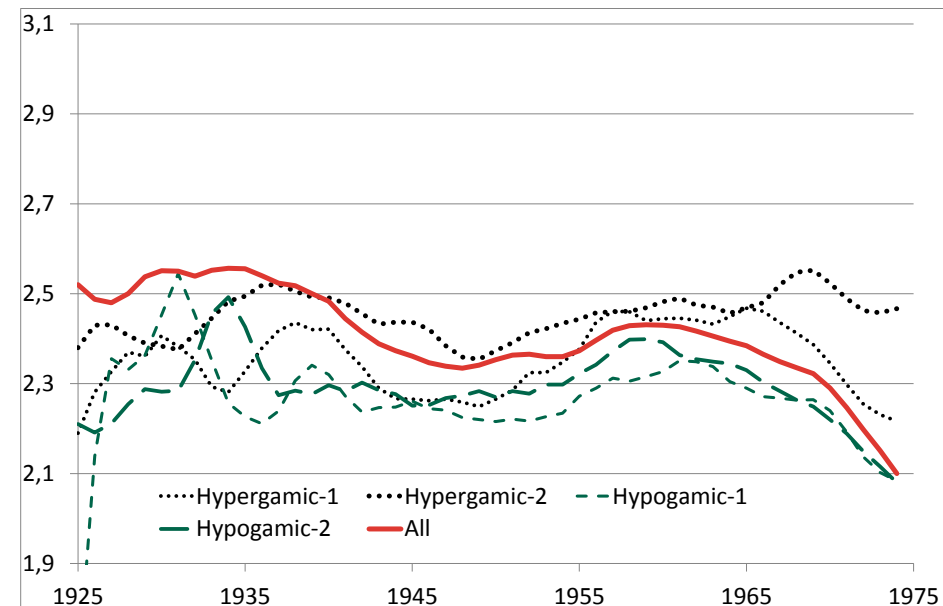
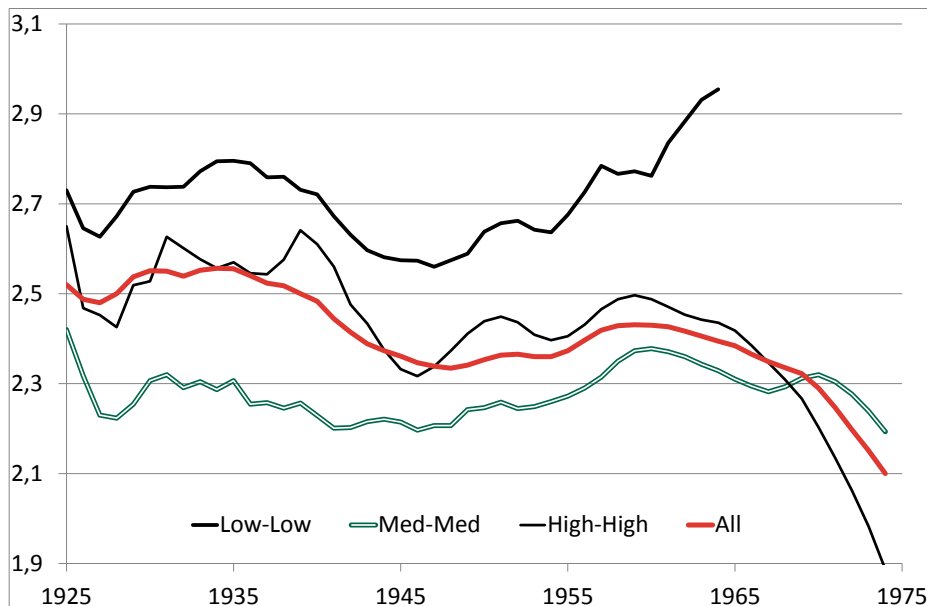
- mean number of children
- proportion childless (in the union)
- occurrence of children born before the union

Results (1) : higher fertility for hypergamic couples

Mean number of children

Homogamic couples

Heterogamic couples

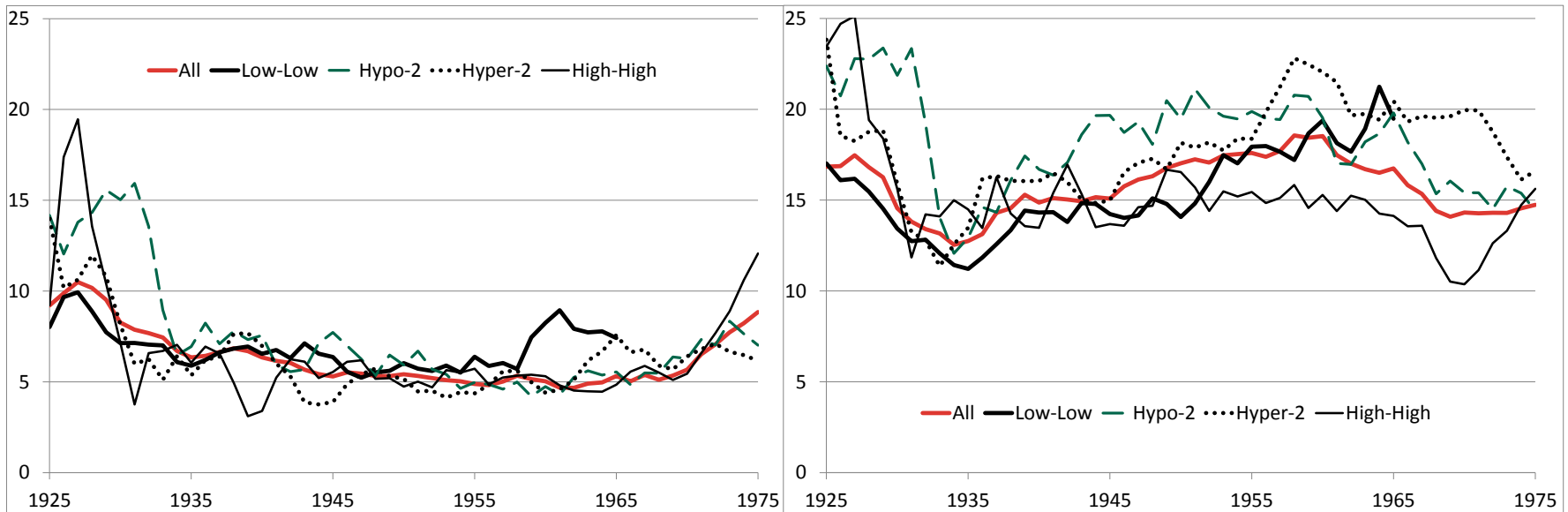


Hypergamic couples have more children than hypogamic couples, but the contrasts are vanishing

Results (2) : complete childlessness is rare; heterogamic couples are more often childless

Two definitions of couple childlessness

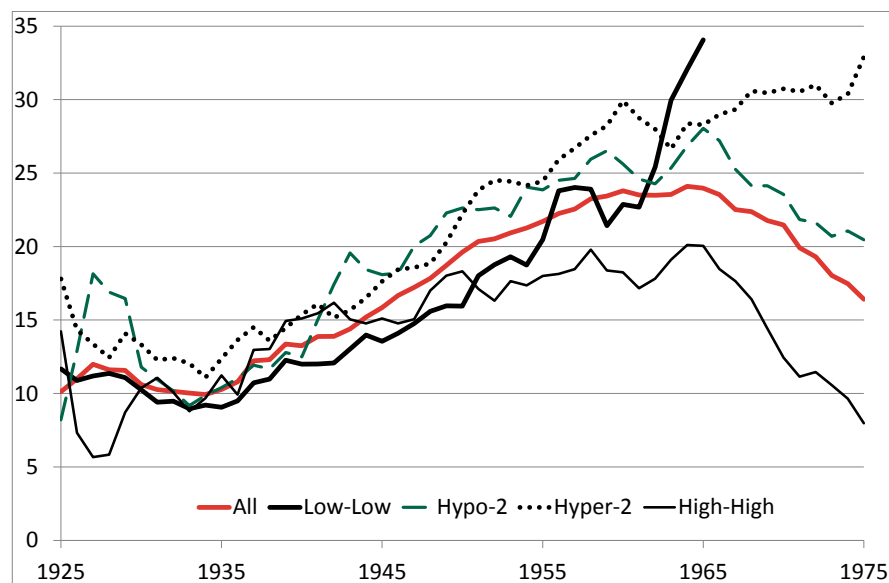
No children at all No common children



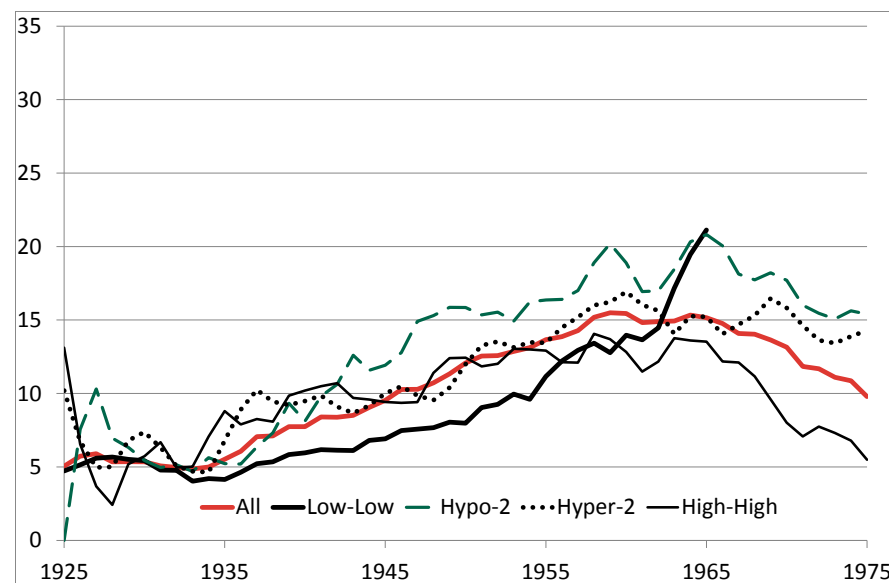
Very few couples remain childless, with almost no difference by education, when both children and stepchildren are considered; when only common children are considered, heterogamic couples remain more often childless

Results (3) : children born before the current union

Proportion of couples with children born before the union... to the woman



to the man



Heterogamic couples more often have a child born to the woman than homogamic couples; but only hypogamic couples more often have a child born to the man. In heterogamic couples, stepchildren more often come from the least educated partner

Conclusion



Effects of growing hypogamy

- Most educated women used to remain more often unmarried and with no union. The educational gradient has been reversed for women; in more recent cohorts the contrast is the same for men and women: the higher the level of education, the higher the probability to ever live as a couple.
- Couple hypergamy (man's level of education being higher than woman's) is becoming less common. Homogamy is stable (but now most frequent in the highest educational levels), and there is a shift towards hypogamy: recent couples are more diverse in terms of assortative mating.

Effects of growing hypogamy

- Hypergamic couples used to have a higher fertility, but the difference is vanishing. More and more couples (especially heterogamic ones) have children born before the union. The partner who had a previous child is most often the less educated partner.
- These differences come from a sequence of behaviour: couples' formation, birth of children, union disruption, and a new union.
- Fertility remains high and stable in all social groups, and life histories become more complex.

Open questions



A (future) new Pattern?

- Growing hypogamy: a common and mechanic shape since
 - Educational levels have grown sharply, especially for women
 - Less reluctance towards couples where the woman is more educated than the man
- Homogamic couples in “traditional” families situations and heterogamic couples with step-children, a consequence of:
 - different life pathways before the current union;
 - fertility timing by education;
 - children most often living with mother and stepfather;
 - Changing social inequalities and gender roles?



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Thank you

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