



Religion and the Decline of Fertility in the Western World

Renzo Derosas, Frans van Poppel

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Religion and the Decline of Fertility in the Western World Renzo Derosas, Frans van Poppel This book provides new insights into the relationships between religion and demography during the crucial period of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Apart from providing a wealth of descriptive information on family life and fertility in different national and religious settings, the major strength of the book lies in its conceptual insights. The book will attract and stimulate readers at the advanced undergraduate or at the graduate level in history, religious studies, women's studies, family studies, social demography, sociology, and anthropology due to its subject matter (moral issues related to fertility decline and family change played an important role in processes like secularisation, and religious secessions in the 19th and 20th century), its analytical approach (all chapters make use of micro-level data on family and family size and use comparable statistical methods specifically suited for these kinds of data), and its theoretical orientation (the chapters explicitly focus on the variety of mechanisms via which religions had an effect on family life and fertility). The book is truly cross-cultural, showing the similarities as well as the differences in the positions of the various churches on matters important for reproduction in Western Europe, the US and Canada in the period 1850-1950. The consideration of the causes of variations in family size in the past provides a refreshing perspective on contemporary effects of religion on reproductive behaviour and the family.

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