

Van Bavel, Jan, 2004, "Beroepsarbeid van vrouwen en de daling van de vruchtbaarheid in het Westen, 1850-2000. Is er een oorzakelijk verband?", [\*Bevolking en Gezin\*](#), 33(1), pp. 61-90.

## Abstract

Female labour force participation and the decline of fertility in the West, 1850-2000. It has often been assumed that rising female labour force participation rates have contributed to the historical decline of fertility in the West. The starting point of this paper is a chronological description of the correlation between labour force participation and fertility rates in a number of Western countries since the middle of the 19th century. It turns out that the time series are not compatible with the theory that the decline of fertility is causally linked with female labour force participation. Three anomalies are identified. The main body of the paper tries to solve these by looking at the historical evolution of the external role conflict between maternal and labour market positions since the 19th century. Special attention is paid to the influence of some longstanding cultural differences between European nations and to the role of contemporary public policy.

Keywords: fertility; labour force participation; gender; demographic transition; female role; women's status