

This project will test the thesis that the population of the developed world will become increasingly religious and conservative in the long-term, reversing decades - even centuries - of liberal secularisation. There will be no mass conversions or sudden shifts in the cultural mood. Instead, religiosity will spread largely through demographic advantage. An analogy may be drawn with early Christianity, which grew from some 40 converts in 30 C.E. to over 6 million adherents in 300 C.E. Religious sociologist Rodney Stark claims that an important component of this growth came from Christians' mortality advantage over pagans. This allowed Christians to maintain a population growth rate of 40 percent per decade. Coincidentally, the Mormon church in the United States has managed to grow - through higher fertility rather than lower mortality - at the 40 percent per decade rate for the past century, thus retaining its 70 percent share of Utah's population in the face of large-scale non-Mormon in-migration. A similar dynamic enabled the descendants of 5-10,000 17th century French settlers to expand to over 8 million French-Canadians and thereby retain their demographic position in the face of rapid British immigration in the 1815-1930 period. And were it not for the high fertility of evangelical Protestants in the United States, white American secularisation, fertility and voting patterns would be a great deal more similar to Europe and Canada. This thesis suggests that demographically-mediated cultural contradictions will displace class contradictions as the principal challenge to liberal-capitalist modernity. In an age of declining mortality, fertility (along with migration) is becoming an increasingly important inter-group demographic determinant. One need look no further than the large cities of the West to see the impact that inter-ethnic fertility differences and immigration have had on the cultural and political landscape. The fertility of non-Europeans is rapidly converging with that of Europe, however the same cannot be said for the fertility of the religious. Given the capacity of ethnic 'others' to change the complexion of the West, is it not plausible to presume that the religiously committed can similarly transform society and politics through demographic advantage? This study begins by regressing fertility on religiosity and a set of control variables in the European Values Survey (EVS) 1981-2000 and European Social Survey (ESS) of 2004 as well as related datasets for the rest of the world (WVS) and United States (GSS). It then charts church attendance and other measures of religiosity by age and survey wave. A similar task is performed to isolate fertility by level of religiosity for each birth cohort across survey waves. All of this will generate parameters for demographic projections of the timing of reverse secularisation in the 21st century. Immigrants and their descendants will be increasingly important in Europe as native populations decline due to low fertility. Therefore, stage 2 analysis will examine religiosity (approximated by religious identification) and fertility over time among British Muslims in the ONS Longitudinal Census dataset. Time permitting, the project will analyse the electoral and ideological implications of these changes in global perspective.