

Secularization and Fertility Decline in Finland A Dyadic Approach

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1. Background

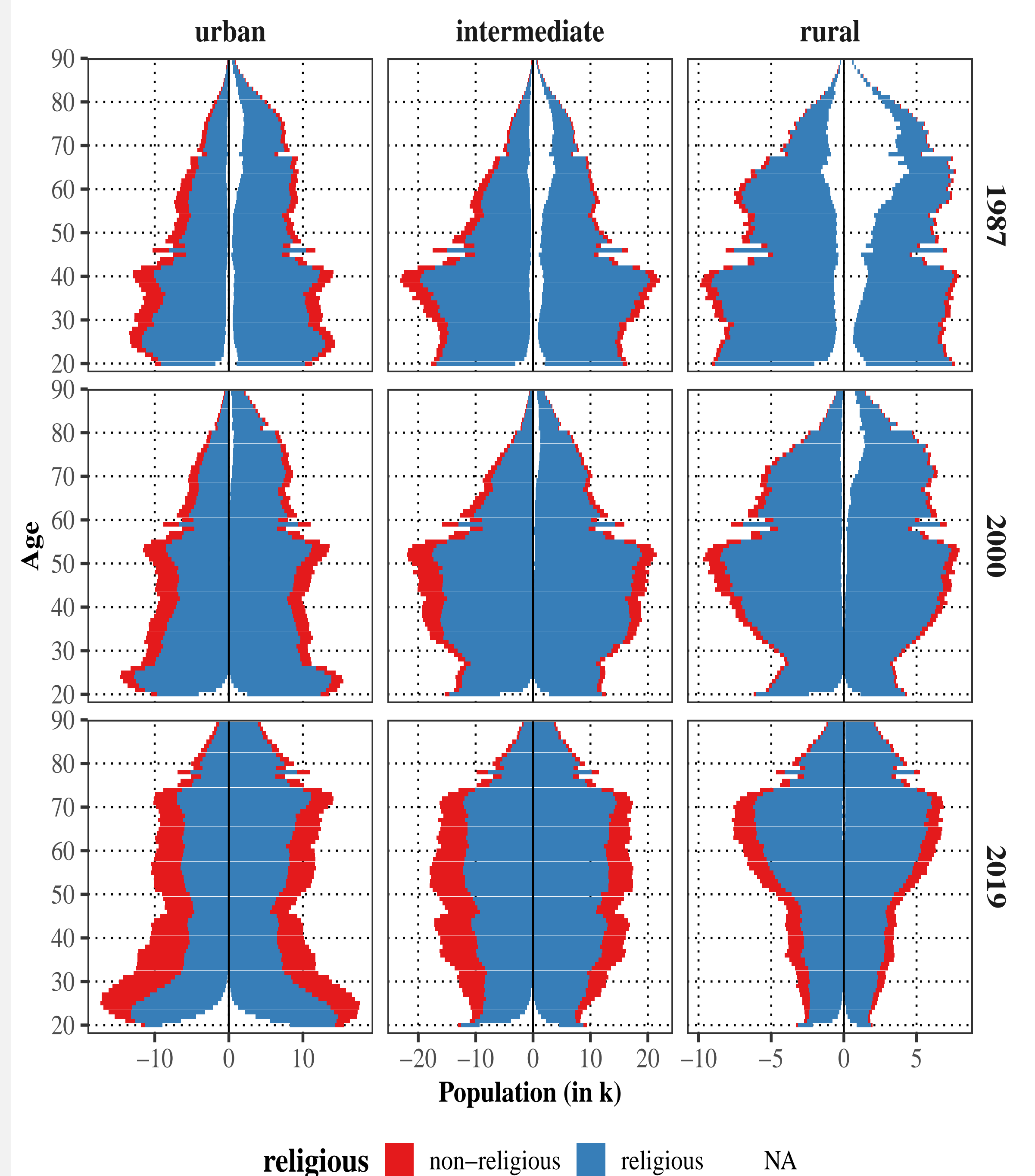
- ▶ sudden and surprising **fertility decline** in Nordic, Anglo-Saxon and many Western countries [1]
- ▶ reductions in **first-births**, which are attributable to **couples** not transitioning to birth [2]

2. Contributions of the study

1. enhance comprehension of the recent declines in fertility
2. dyadic analysis: how does couple composition change over time and relate to fertility
3. register-data approach

3. State-church membership, religion and secularization

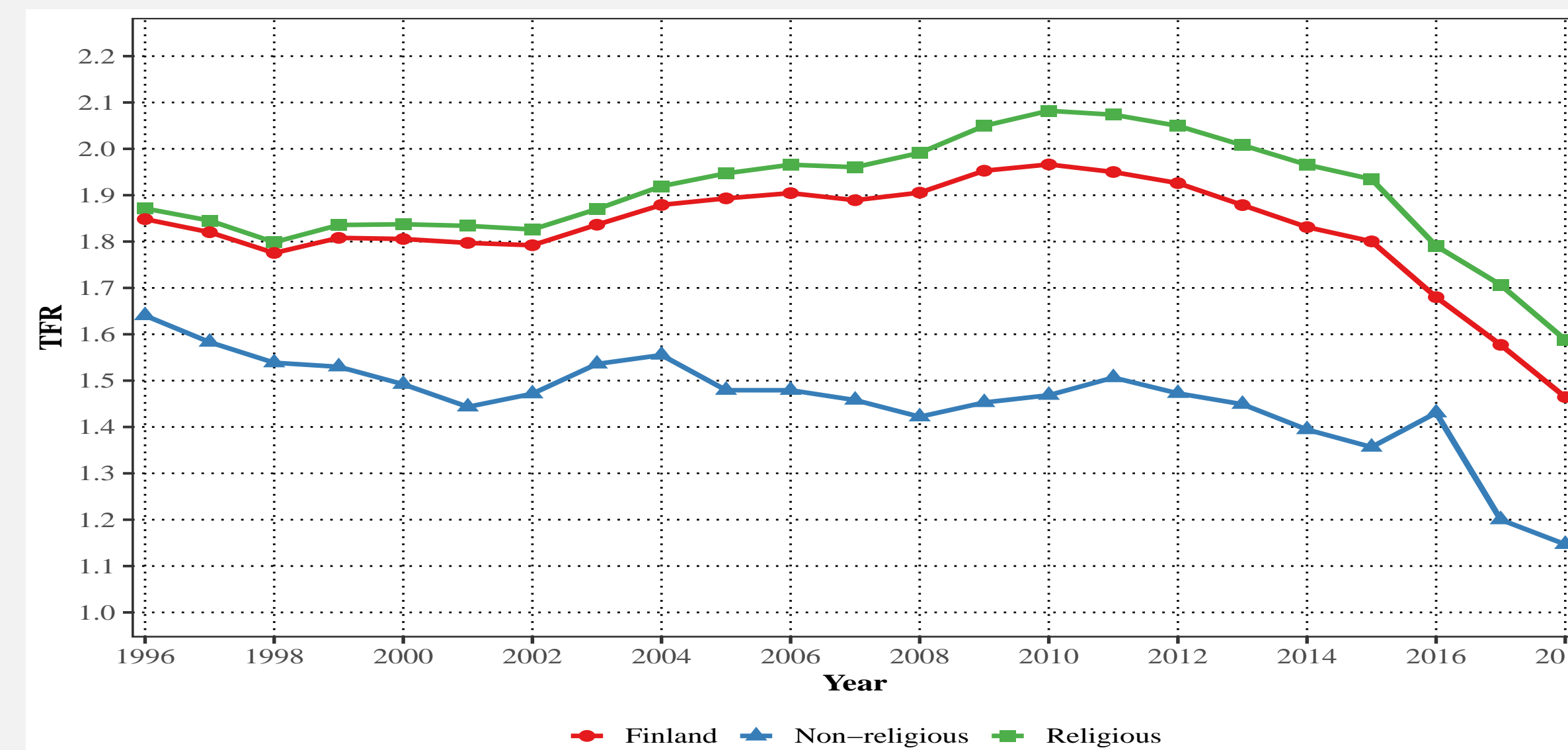
How did the population structure change:



Finnish population structure across settlement types and years.

4. Fertility differences by religion

- ▶ religion affects fertility through norms and writings about partnership, contraception et cetera
- ▶ religion affects fertility through social interaction
- ▶ churches act as partner markets



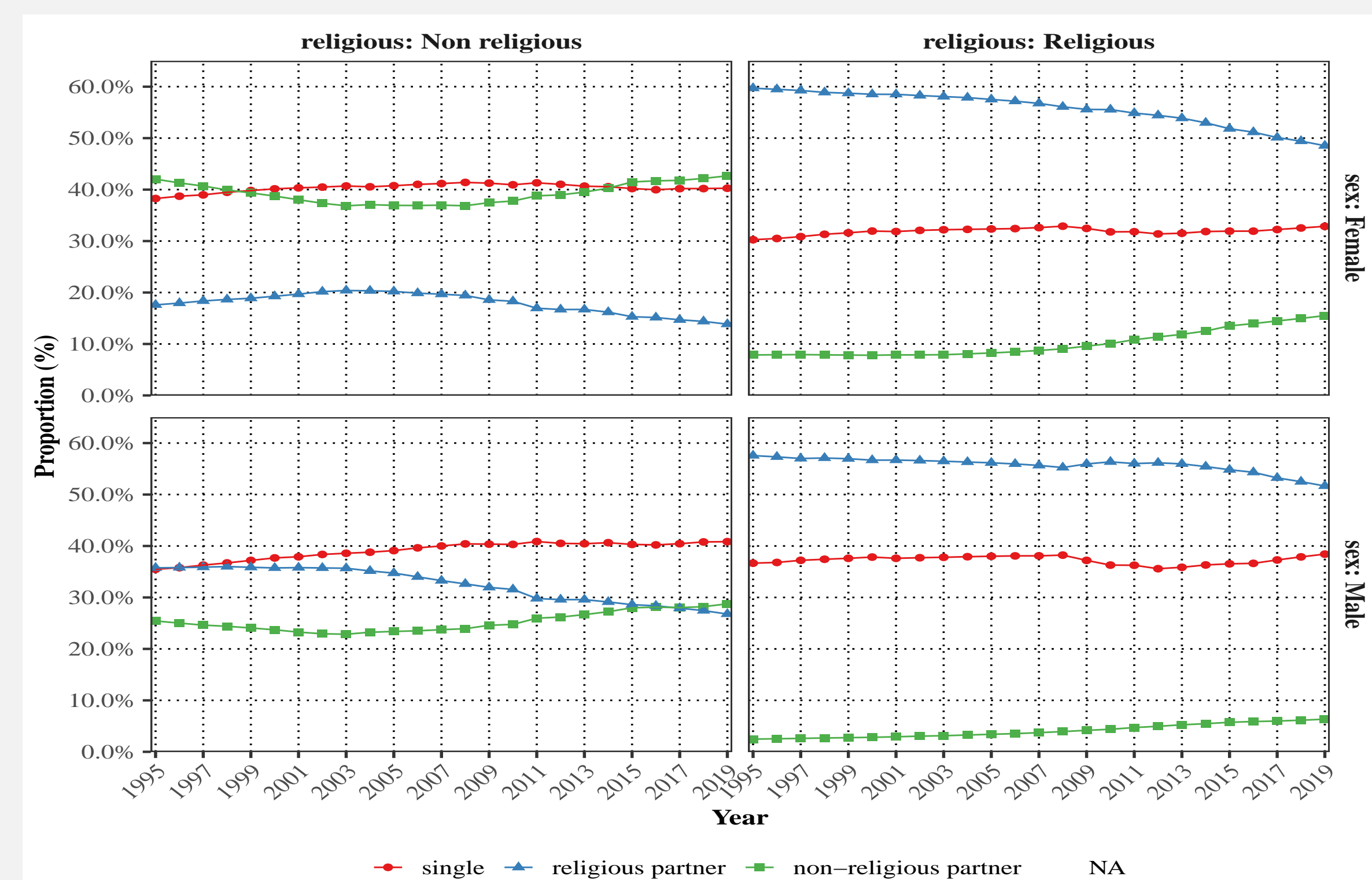
5. Argument

Secularization has a negative self-reinforcing impact on fertility.

1. Secularization affects the **couple composition**, as the share of religious individuals diminish in the partner pool. [3]
2. The **couple composition** affects **childbearing**, as fertility of homogeneous religious couples is higher than of mixed or non-religious couples.

6. Partnership change

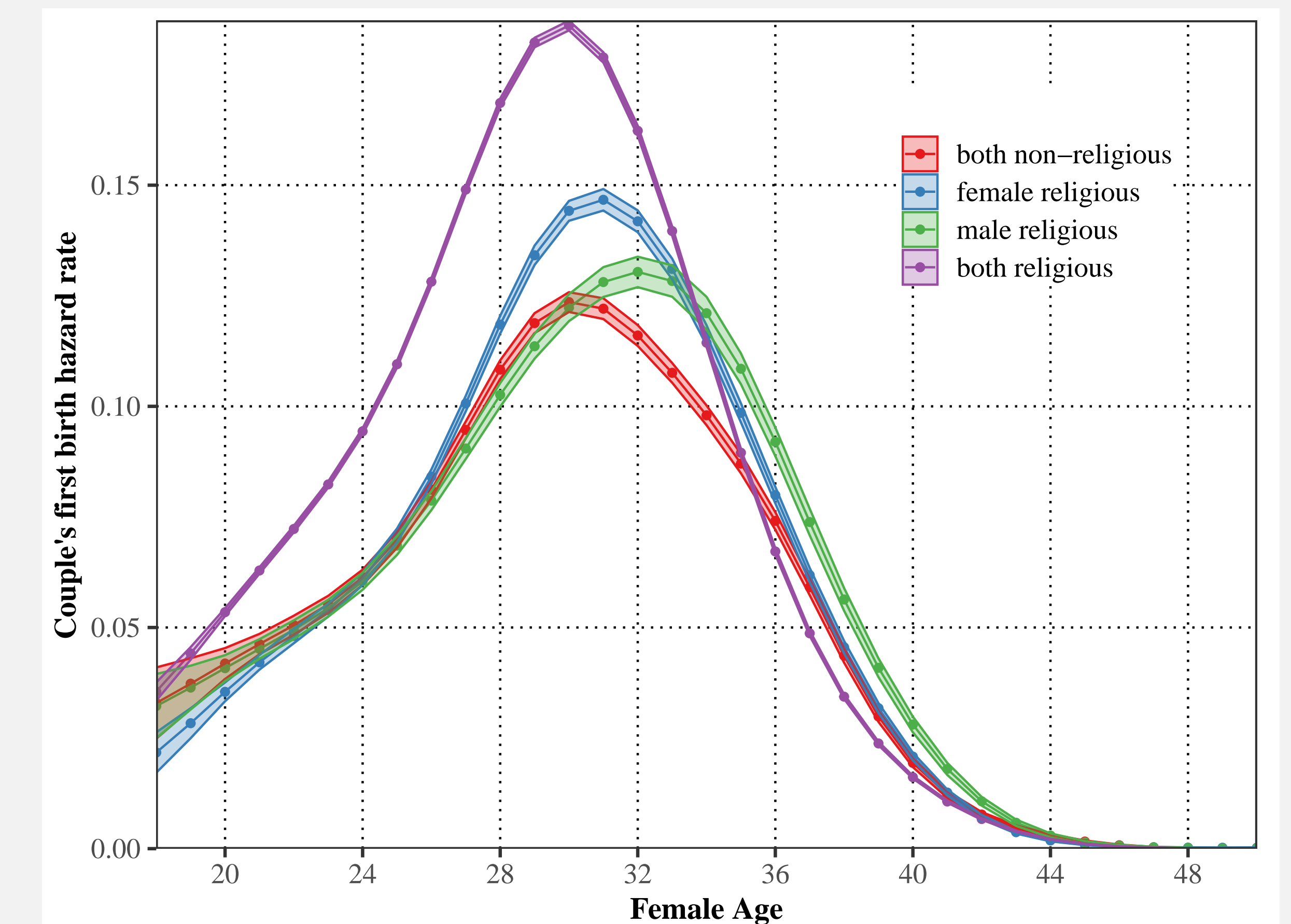
Share of partnerships with respect to religiosity



7. Couple fertility

- ▶ **Outcome:** transition to first birth
- ▶ **Risk population:** Finnish cohabiting or married childless couples
- ▶ **Right-Censoring:** union-dissolution, death/emigration, end of observation period, reaching age 55

$$\log \left[\frac{P(Y = 1)}{(1 - P(Y = 1))} \right] = \beta_1 \text{religious}_m + \beta_2 \text{religious}_f + \beta_3 \text{religious}_{\text{both}} + \beta_4 \mathbf{X} \quad (1)$$



8. Results

- ▶ Secularization has contributed to the recent fertility decline.
- ▶ State-church membership is strongly associated with childbearing.
- ▶ The couple composition with respect to religion has changed fundamentally.
- ▶ The couple composition with respect to religion matters for childbearing.
- ▶ The female religiosity affects childbearing stronger.

9. References

- [1] Melissa S. Kearney, Phillip B. Levine, and Luke Pardue. The Puzzle of Falling US Birth Rates since the Great Recession. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 36(1):151–176, February 2022.
- [2] Julia Hellstrand, Jessica Nisén, and Mikko Myrskylä. Less partnering, less children, or both? Analysis of the drivers of first-birth decline in Finland since 2010? Technical Report WP-2021-008, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, May 2021.
- [3] Peter M. Blau, Carolyn Becker, and Kevin M. Fitzpatrick. Intersecting Social Affiliations and Intermarriage. *Social Forces*, 62(3), 1984.