

Extended abstract

Fertility of Turkish and Moroccan women in the Netherlands: second generation are much closer to native women than to their mothers

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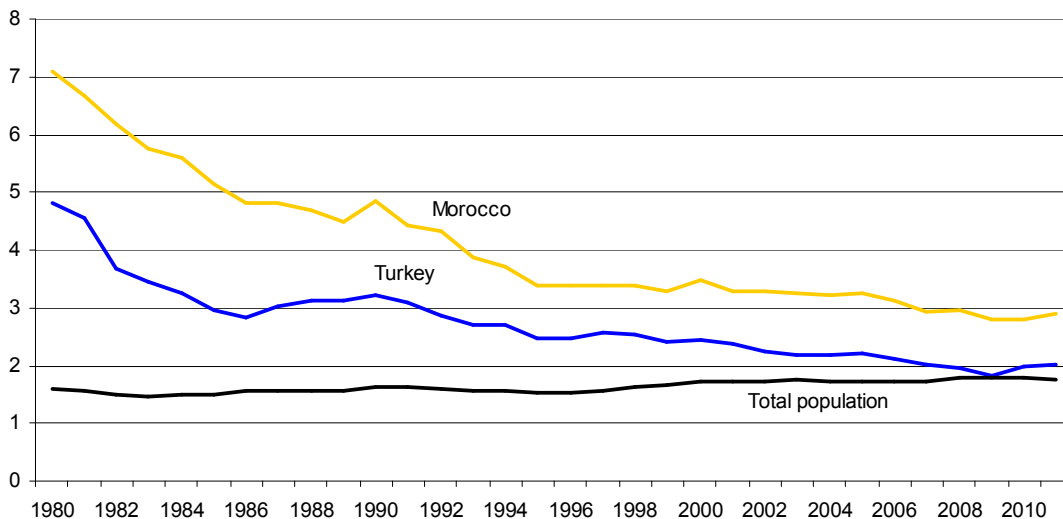
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Introduction

The fact that non-western migrants reduce the number of their children is often seen as proof of their integration into western society. The fertility of Moroccan and Turkish women in the Netherlands has indeed fallen sharply in the past few decades, and although their fertility rates are still higher than those of native women, period fertility rates are still (slowly) decreasing for both Turkish and Moroccan women (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Total age-specific fertility rate (TFR) by foreign background, first generation

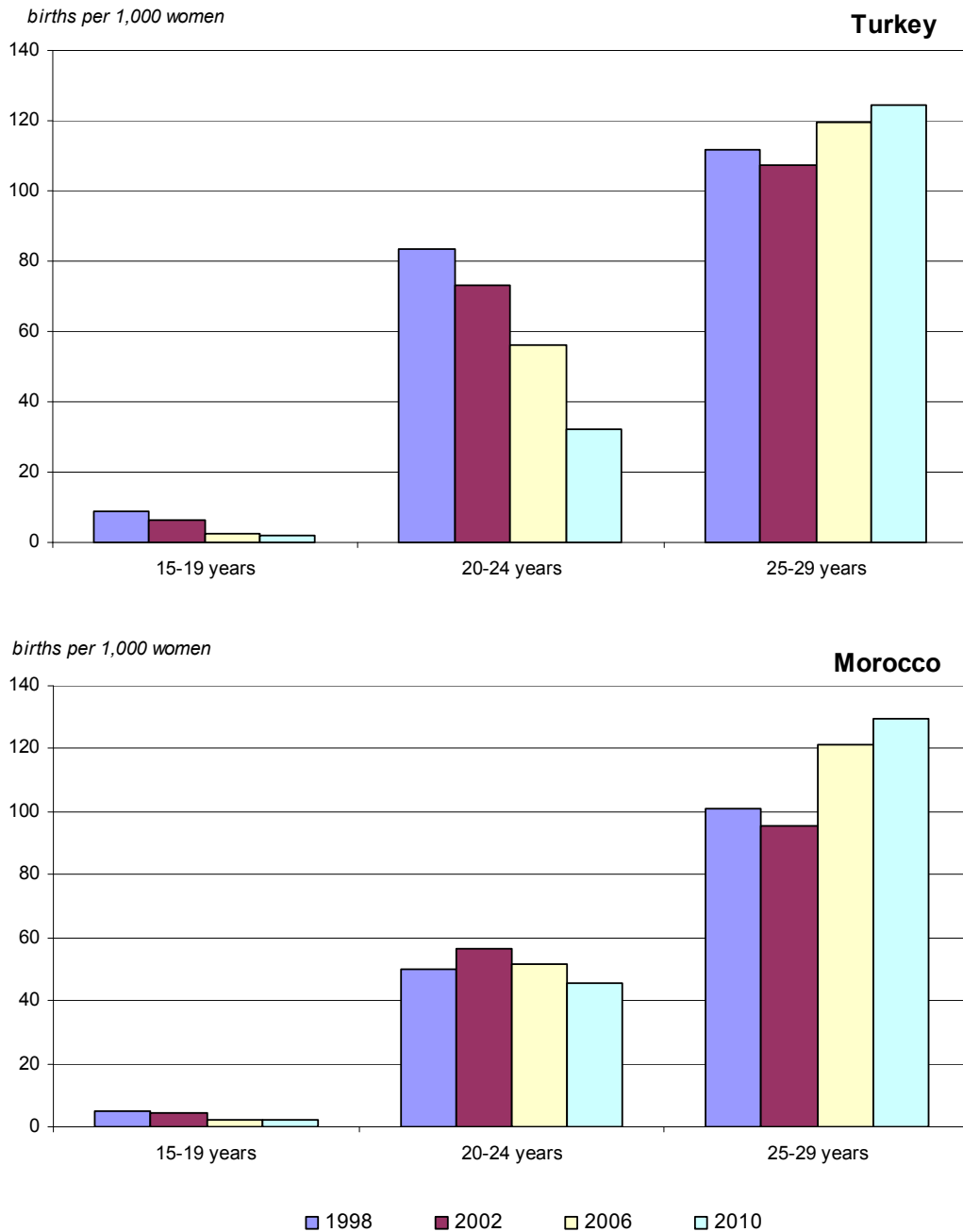


The fertility of the second generation is generally well below that of the first generation. This lower fertility, especially among the youngest women, and the rising age at which women marry is often interpreted as a sign that non-native women follow 'the example' of the native Dutch (Garssen et al. 2005). It is, however, not clear that native women set the example in this respect, as fertility has also decreased in the countries of origin (Huisman and Van Wissen 1997, Schoenmaeckers et al. 1998, Eltigani 2001, Council of Europe 2005). Data of the World Resources Institute indicates that over the last thirty years the total fertility rate (TFR) in Morocco fell from 5.40 to 2.23, and in Turkey from 4.15 to 2.13.

According to period data, the decrease in fertility of second generation Turkish and Moroccan women is not so obvious (Figure 2). Among the Turkish second generation there is a decrease up to the age of about 25 but fertility rates are on the rise for 25-29 year old women. Fertility rates of second generation Moroccan women hardly show any decrease

Figure 2

Age-specific fertility rates by five year age groups and foreign background, second generation, 1998-2010



These figures show fertility in a given year but are insufficiently reliable to calculate a TFR at the higher ages, due to the relatively small numbers per group. This period measure moreover has the serious drawback that postponed fertility leads to lower figures, but do not allow conclusions about fertility trends. A cohort approach can provide more insight and is no longer hampered by the relatively small birth cohorts of the second generation we faced five or ten years ago.

Since 2005 the non-western second generation has strongly increased in size. Their numbers increased by almost 70 per cent in the age group 20-39. The increase was even greater among the Turks and Moroccans. In six years time the number of second generation 35-39 year old Turkish women rose from 430 to 2,758. This increase enables reliable cohort estimates for the slightly older women within the fertile age category. This cohort study refers to the number of women by age and ethnicity according to the enumeration from the municipal population registers on 1 January 2011.

Data & Methods

Cohort fertility rates

Cohort fertility rates for a given calendar year are derived from the Dutch municipal population register data. Demographic stock and flow data from this decentralised registration system are adjusted and aggregated by Statistics Netherlands, the central bureau of statistics. Here we use data from the register-based enumeration on 1 January 2011. This enumeration contains various demographic variables for female inhabitants, such as date of birth, date of arrival in the Netherlands, country of birth, country of birth of parents and birth dates of children. The cohort fertility rate of women currently living in the Netherlands and born in a particular year is determined by dividing the number of live-born children of these women into the total number of women concerned. Women who emigrated or died are excluded. The figures on fertility can be distinguished by country of birth, generation, age at childbirth, birth order and date of arrival in the Netherlands.

Unlike period total fertility rates, a single summary figure does not suffice in the description of cohort fertility. The cohort rates however allow a better insight in the time trends of the cumulative fertility of a real cohort of women. The main drawback of this cohort approach is that the fertility behaviour of younger women, who are particularly important for analyses and forecasts, cannot be fully described as they haven't yet ended their fertile period. Moreover, a larger number of data is required. Because the numbers of women with non-western backgrounds are strongly increasing and their fertility rates rapidly changing, the analyses presented here are mainly based on cohort data, broken down by generation where possible. Period data are used to highlight general trends.

Major differences between period and cohort rates may occur in case of selective migration, for instance if childless women would be more inclined to emigrate than women with children. On the other hand, the annual birth statistics exclude children born to migrant women before arrival in the Netherlands. With respect to women born after 1945 the differences between the two fertility measures are minimal.

In this article we compare the fertility of native Dutch women with those of first and second generation women with a Turkish or Moroccan background. The first generation consists of women born in the country of origin. The second generation is born in the Netherlands, with at least one parent born in the country concerned. If mother and father of a second generation migrant are born in different countries outside the Netherlands, the country of birth of the mother is leading in the classification. Native Dutch women are defined as women with both parents born in the Netherlands. This category therefore excludes second generation migrants.

Results

Mean age at first birth

For many years, mothers in the Netherlands, particularly native Dutch mothers, have been among the oldest in the world (Coleman and Garssen 2002). The younger birth cohorts are obviously having children later than the older cohorts. Women born in the period 1965- 1969 became first time mothers at an average age of 28.9, four years year later than women born twenty years earlier. The average age of the youngest birth cohort will still increase somewhat, as some women without children in this group will have a child in the next few years.

Earlier studies concluded that almost all Turkish women have children and at a relatively young age (Alders 2000; Garssen and Nicolaas 2008). The conclusion still stands for the first generation. The age at birth of the first child barely increased among the first generation and younger cohorts differ only little from older cohorts (Table 1). Hardly any postponement is observed: Turkish women born between 1970 and 1975 became mothers at the same young ages as those born between 1945 and 1950.

Table 1

Mean age at first birth of first generation and native mothers, by foreign background and year of birth of the mother, 1 January 2011

Year of birth of the mother	Turkey	Morocco	Native Dutch
1945-1949	22,0	22,6	24,7
1950-1954	21,8	22,4	25,5
1955-1959	22,2	23,1	26,9
1960-1964	22,2	24,6	28,0
1965-1969	22,9	25,0	28,9
1970-1974	22,8	25,0	29,1

According to Eltigani (2001), women in Morocco increasingly postpone having children, while reducing their family size. A possible explanation for this development, according to Eltigani, is the fact that young couples are forced to live with their parents because of the high costs of housing. Just like in Morocco, Moroccans living in the Netherlands postpone the first child (Table 1), although it is unlikely that housing problems play a major role. Moroccan women of the first generation have their first child over 2 years later than Turkish women of the first generation but they are four years younger than native Dutch women when having their first child (Table 1).

Childlessness

One in eight native Dutch women born in 1945-1949 remained childless (Table 2). This is about twice as often as Turkish and Moroccan women. Childlessness among native Dutch women is clearly on the up, a development that is partly due to postponing motherhood. Also among first generation Moroccan and, to a lesser extent, Turkish women, childlessness is on the increase (Table 2). The share of women without children, however, is still considerably lower than among native Dutch women. Only 5 to 6 per cent of all Turkish women and 6 to 10 per cent of Moroccan women of the first generation had no children at all.

Table 2

Childlessness of women by year of birth and foreign background, first generation, 1 January 2011

Year of birth of the mother	Turkey	Morocco	Native Dutch
	%		
1945-1949	4,8	5,7	12,6
1950-1954	5,2	6,5	15,8
1955-1959	5,9	9,0	17,9
1960-1964	5,3	9,7	18,8
1965-1969	5,8	8,6	19,2
1970-1974	7,9	10,7	21,8

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

Native Dutch women born in the second half of the 1950s had on average 1.88 children by 2011. The fertility of younger native Dutch women will probably be only slightly lower, although it is difficult to estimate the eventual level, due to their fairly young ages and the frequent postponement of fertility (Table 3).

Table 3

Cohort fertility rate by year of birth and foreign background of the mother, 1 January 2011

Year of birth of the mother	Turkey	Morocco	Native Dutch
1945-1949	3,63	5,43	1,92
1950-1954	3,40	4,93	1,88
1955-1959	3,04	4,17	1,87
1960-1964	2,81	3,65	1,82
1965-1969	2,55	3,22	1,76
1970-1974	2,32	2,73	1,64

The period TFR of Turkish women in the Netherlands was 2.49 in 1996 and has decreased slowly in recent years. In 1980 their TFR was still 4.8 (De Jong 2003). The TFR of the Turkish women approaches that of the native Dutch women, but one cannot simply ascribe this to assimilation: in the same twenty year period the TFR in Turkey has shown a similar decrease. In the last decade the decrease in the TFR in the Netherlands slowed down, so that the TFRs of women in Turkey and of Turkish women in the Netherlands now differ very little. Fifteen years ago the TFR of Turkish women in the Netherlands was still lower than the TFR in their country of origin.

The fertility pattern among first generation Moroccan women differs a little bit from that among Turkish women, who realised only a slight decrease in their TFR. Since 2003, period TFR for Turkish women decreased by only 0.16 whereas fertility rates for Moroccan women fell to 2.91 in 2011, almost 0.4 below the TFR in 2003.

The TFR for all Moroccans in the Netherlands was 2.91 in 2011, which is considerably higher than that for women in Morocco, with 2.23 in 2011. Although the estimates may not have been very accurate, the TFR of Moroccan women in the Netherlands in 1980 was 7.1 (De Jong 2003), much higher than that of women in Morocco itself (5.4 in 1980-1984). This is caused by a combination of factors. Not only does the purpose of migration (mainly family formation, peaking in 2002-2003 and still having substantial share of total immigration from Moroccans) contribute to a high TFR, but also the fact that the majority of the Moroccan wedding partners come from regions with above-average fertility (the north and east of Morocco).

The younger cohorts of Turkish women of the first generation show fertility patterns that closely resemble that of the older cohorts. There is only a difference in the number of women who have a third or next child. Moroccan women have a third child much more often than the other groups, but among the younger birth cohorts the share of women with a fourth child is rapidly falling. This is what causes the slight decrease in fertility, although the shares of Turkish and Moroccan women with a third or next child are higher than those among all other major ethnic groups.

Second generation women

Figure 3 shows that the cumulative fertility rates of second generation Turkish and Moroccan women at age 35 are much closer to those of native women than to those of their mothers. The completed fertility of the first generation is decreasing only slowly. The substantial family formation migration in the past decade, peaking in 2003, explains why the TFR of Turkish and Moroccan women has seen little change since the mid-1990s. Many Turkish wedding partners originate from regions in Turkey where fertility is above the national average, in particular Anatolia (Esveldt et al. 1995, Koç and Özdemir 2004). The same pattern applies to Moroccan women of whom many originate from the Rif provinces Nador, Al Hoceima and Tetouan where fertility rates are high (Fokkema et al. 2009).

Given the sharp decline in family formation migration from Turkey and Morocco and the growing share of the second generation, the TFR for the total group of Turkish and Moroccan women in the next few years will be falling again.

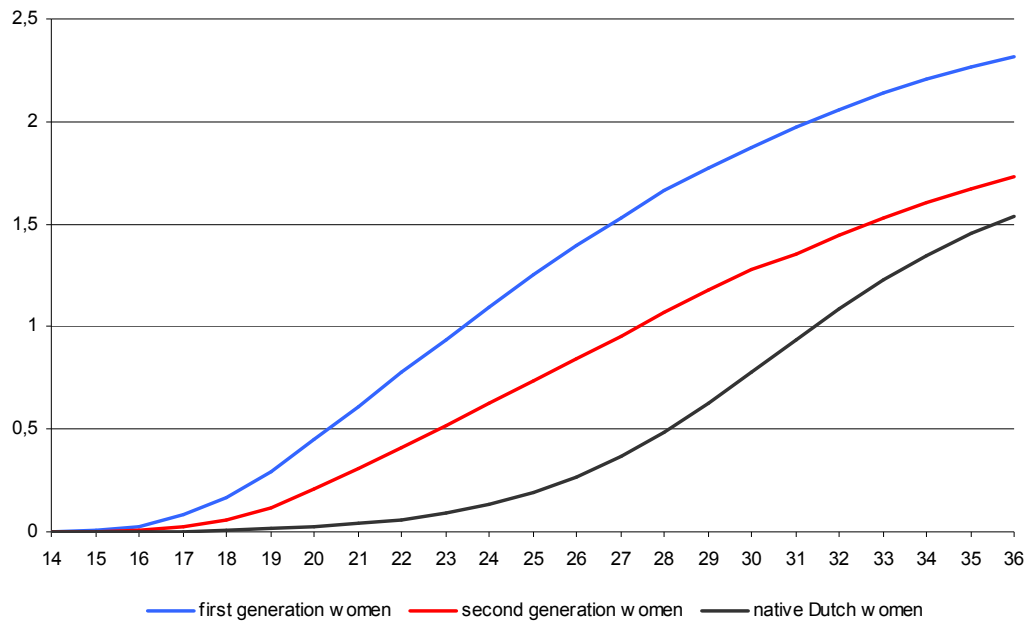
The second generation is much more often childless than the first generation (Table 4). The fertility pattern of Turkish women described earlier by Alders (2000) still exists: almost all Turkish women become mothers and have their child at an early age. The drop in the Turkish fertility rates is mainly due to the smaller numbers of third and fourth births.

Like Turkish women relatively many second generation Moroccan women in their thirties have no children (Table 4). Given the sharp increase of the second generation, these trends will have a strong downward effect on the Moroccan birth figures in the next few years.

Figure 3

Cohort fertility of first and second generation Turkish and Moroccan women and native Dutch women, cohort 1970-1974

Turkish women



Moroccan women

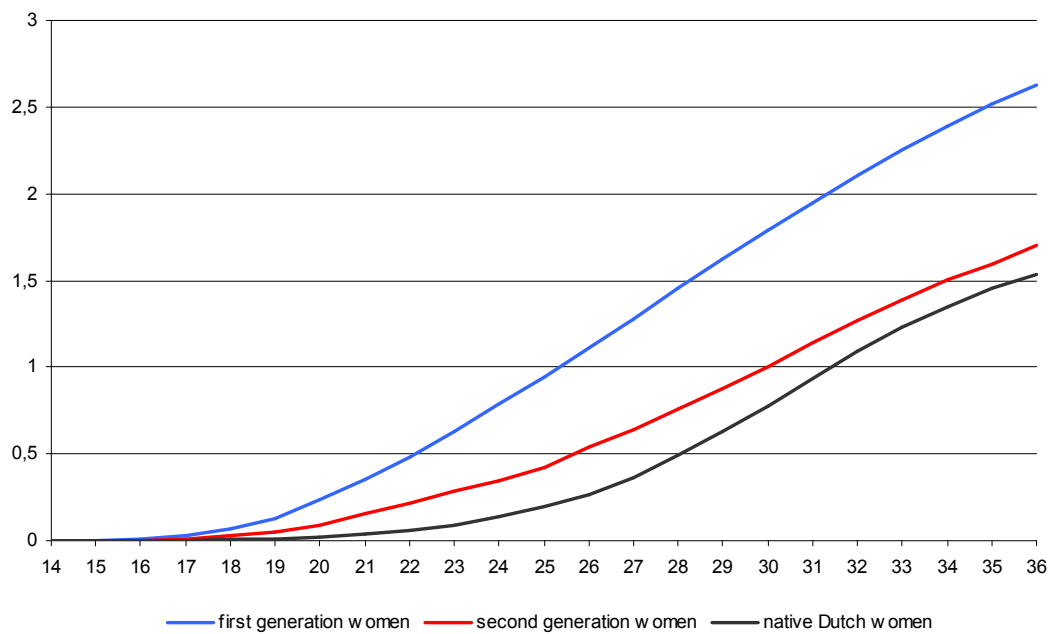


Table 4

Childlessness of women by year of birth and foreign background, first and second generation women and native Dutch women, 1 January 2011

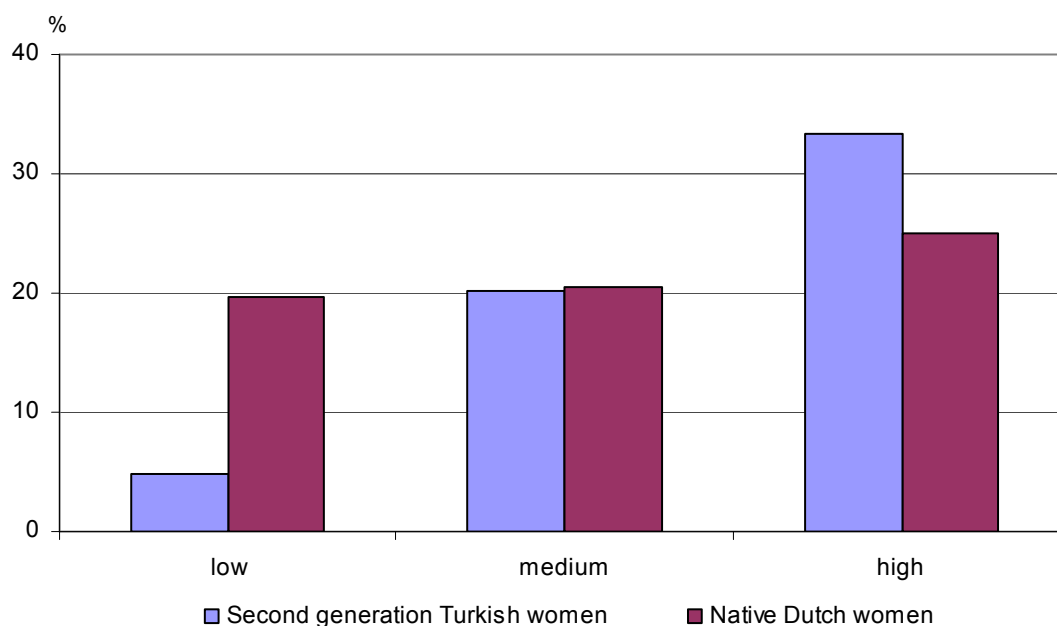
	Turkey		Morocco		Native Dutch	
	first generation	second generation	first generation	second generation		
%						
1970-1974	7	17	10	21	22	
1975-1979	12	24	16	33	34	
1980-1984	26	45	30	53	65	

Second generation women: high share of childlessness among highly educated

For the total Dutch population there is a strong negative relationship between level of education and women's fertility. This is also seen for the second generation, of which a relatively large proportion of highly educated women remained childless. The share of childlessness among second generation Turkish women is even higher than among the highly educated native Dutch women (Figure 4).

Figure 4

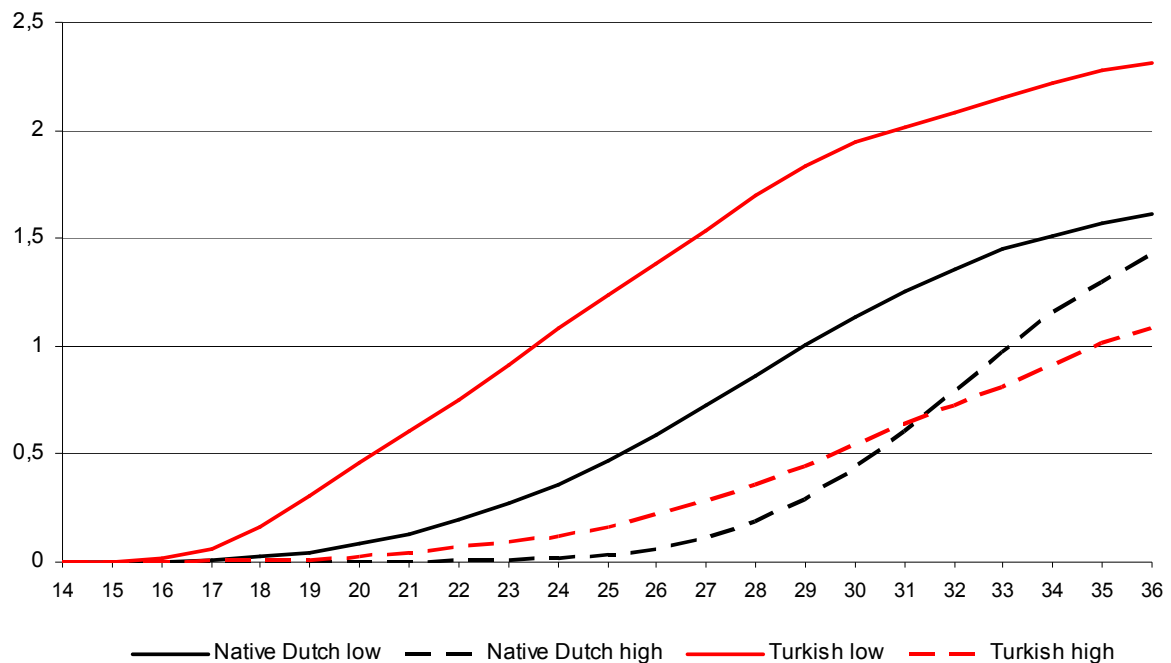
Childlessness of second generation Turkish women and native Dutch women by level of education, cohort 1970-1974



Lower educated women have their first child younger than higher educated women and have more children as well. A large fertility gap is seen among Turkish second generation women. Highly educated native Dutch women recuperate the postponement while second generation Turkish women reach very low fertility rates (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Cohort fertility of second generation Turkish women and native Dutch women by level of education, cohort 1970-1974



Conclusion

The fertility levels of non-western and native Dutch women still converge, but there are major differences within and between groups. The first generation of Turkish and Moroccan women maintain high fertility rates, similar to or even higher than those of the women in their countries of origin. The cohort figures only show a slowly decreasing fertility.

In striking contrast to the first generations, the second generations have a completed fertility and mean age at first childbirth that hardly differ from those of native Dutch women. In terms of fertility, women of the second generation no longer take up a middle position between the first generation and native Dutch women, but resemble native Dutch women much more than their mothers.

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