

Abstract

This study explores perceptions of religion and attitudes towards childrearing of white women. The focus on whites is motivated by the misconception that they comprise a homogeneous population group in South Africa.

These perceptions of religion are measured through a focus on religiosity, in other words, religious commitment. Different levels of religiosity are then identified, through a number of indicators, including women's own views on what religion means to them. A scale of three levels of religiosity is consequently used to observe to what extent religion influences childrearing attitudes.

In terms of childrearing, the analysis identifies four major components in which religion informs, in different ways, childrearing attitudes: attitudes towards children's education, attitudes towards the family, attitudes towards the children's future, and the role of the partner in childrearing.

This analysis is located as well within the context of the 'secularisation debate', where we try to find out to what extent the identified religiosity corresponds to trends in regards to secularisation.