



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Soc 1101: Summer 2023

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The Family and Marriage

Lecture 16

TODAY'S LECTURE OUTLINE

- **Social Institutions**
 - **The American family**
 - **How do families form?**
- **The Deinstitutionalization of Marriage**
 - **Changes in patterns in the United States**
- **Gender Differences in Family and Mating**
- **Decline in Fertility and Explanations**
- **Next lecture: Education, Schools & Schooling**

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- **These are:**
 - **A collection of positions, roles, norms and values, lodged in particular types of social structures, which organize relatively stable patterns of human behavior**
- **They serve a role in society by:**
 - **helping it function**
 - **creating continuity across generations**

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- **Examples of social institutions**
 - **Families/Marriage**
 - **Schools/Education**
 - **Criminal Justice System/Laws**
 - **Churches/Religion**
- **Any institution in a society that works to shape behavior of the groups or people within it**

What is the “typical” American family?

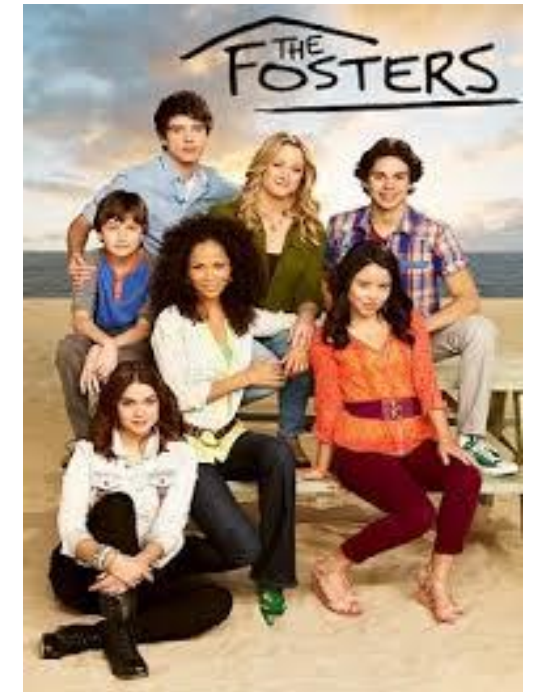


A mother, father and
their two children?

Not anymore



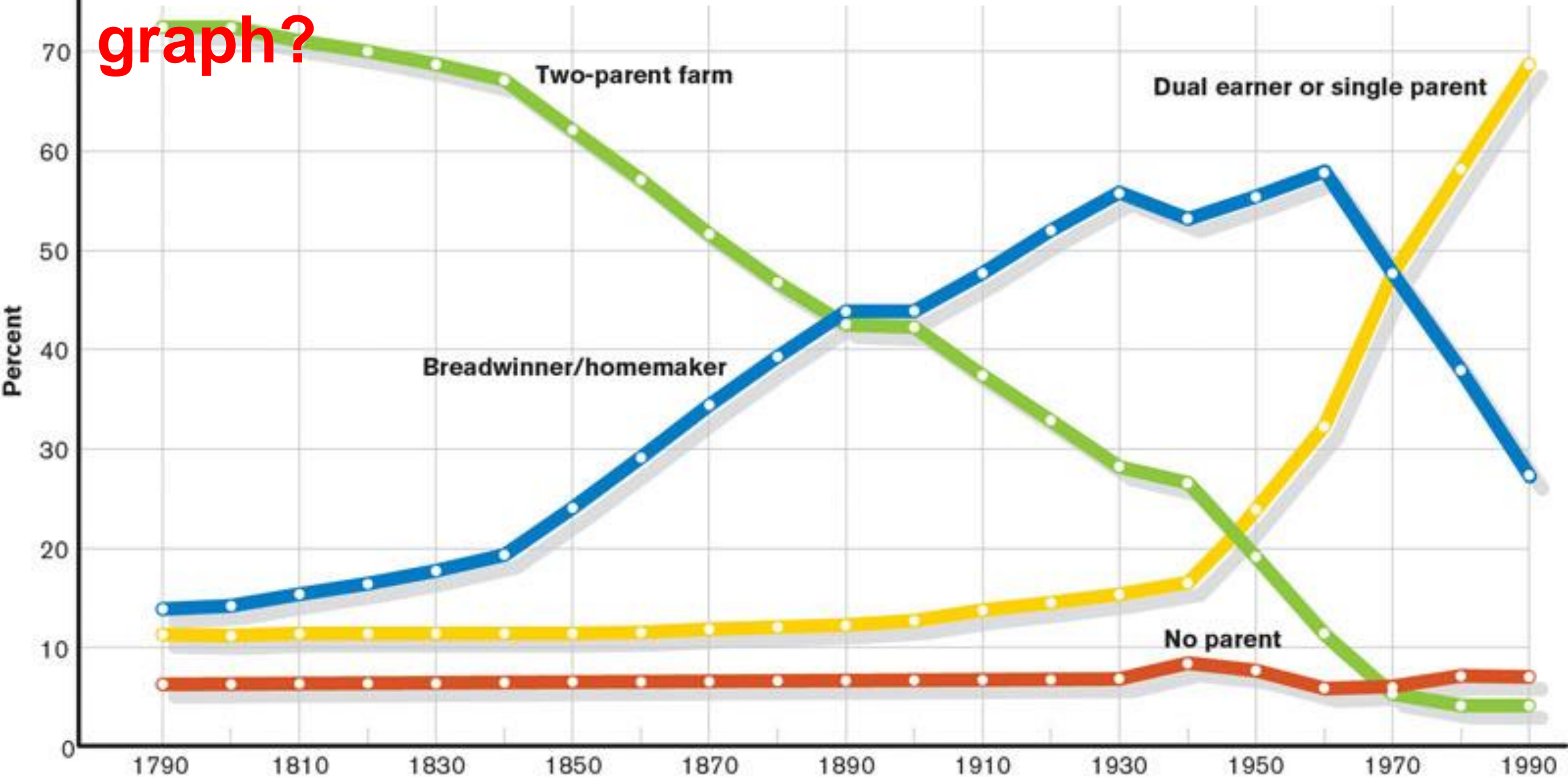
THE AMERICAN FAMILY



THE AMERICAN FAMILY (2010 CENSUS)

- **There is no one family form that accounts for the majority of US households today**
- **Only 20% of households are made up of a married couple with children under 18**
- **23% of two-parent households have a stay-at-home mother**

What might explain changes in each line on graph?



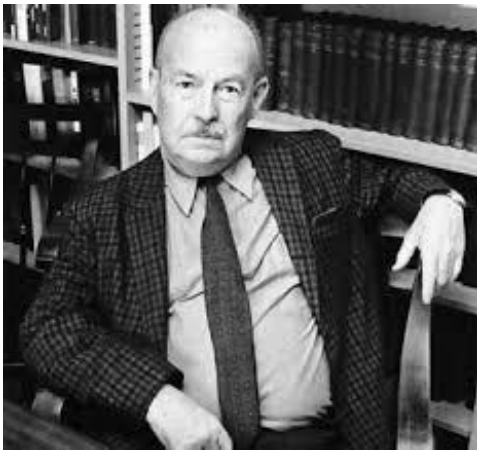
FAMILY vs HOUSEHOLD

Family: a group of people related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption; adult members are responsible for the upbringing of children

Household: a group of people sharing living quarters and subsistence for extended periods of time; need not share blood ties

WHY STUDY THE FAMILY?

Family performs important social functions



Talcott Parsons
(1902-1979), a
functionalist sociologist

Primary socialization: the process by which children learn their society's norms, values and expectations for behavior

Personality stabilization: the role of the family in assisting its adult members emotionally

WHY STUDY THE FAMILY?

Family is a site for reproducing inequality

Gender inequality

- Family is where we “do gender”
 - Domestic division of labor
- Family is a battleground for power in making collective decisions
 - Dark side to families – oppression; abuse



Intergenerational inequality

- Family is the site where advantage or disadvantage can be transferred from one generation to the next
 - Educational homogamy
 - Racial differences in the percentage of single-parent households in the US

MARRIAGE AS FAMILY FORMATION

Coupling as individual choice



Coupling as result of history, culture and laws



MARRIAGE AS AN INSTITUTION

- What does it mean for marriage to become “deinstitutionalized?” (Cherlin)
 - A weakening of social norms that define partners’ behavior and guide expectations
- The meaning of marriage has changed over time creating the social context for deinstitutionalization

CHANGING MEANING OF MARRIAGE

- Institutional marriage → companionate marriage → individualized marriage
 - Practical importance of marriage has declined
 - Marriage as a personal choice, not social norm
- Symbolic importance has remained high



WHAT SOCIAL CHANGES CAUSED THIS?

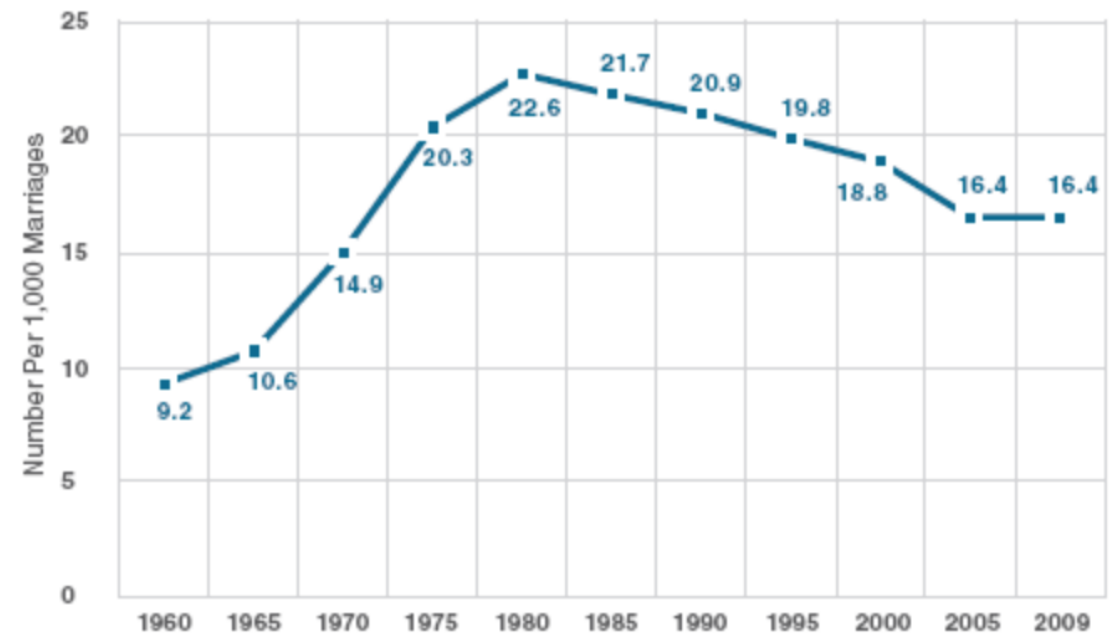
- Change in division of labor in the home
 - Dual-career families began to fade the distinct boundaries of “homemaker” and “breadwinner”
- Increase in childbearing outside marriage
- Steep rise in divorce
 - Both less stigmatized; more accepted
- Growth of cohabitation
 - An accepted alternative to marriage
- Emergence of same-sex unions
 - Outside of formal institutional support

CHANGES IN MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN THE UNITED STATES -- DIVORCE

**Divorce rate has
increased over time**

40 to 50 % of first-time
marriages in the recent
years are expected to end
in divorce

Number of divorces per 1,000 married
women in the United States



CHANGES IN MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN THE UNITED STATES -- COHABIT

- Cohabitation: living together in an intimate relationship without formal legal or religious sanctioning
 - On the rise; living arrangements of 11-15% of young heterosexual American adults



It's a good idea for a couple who intend to get married to live together first. Do you...

- A) Strongly agree
- B) Agree
- C) Neither agree nor disagree
- D) Disagree
- E) Strongly disagree

30.0%

20.0%

10.0%

.0%

STRONGLY
AGREE

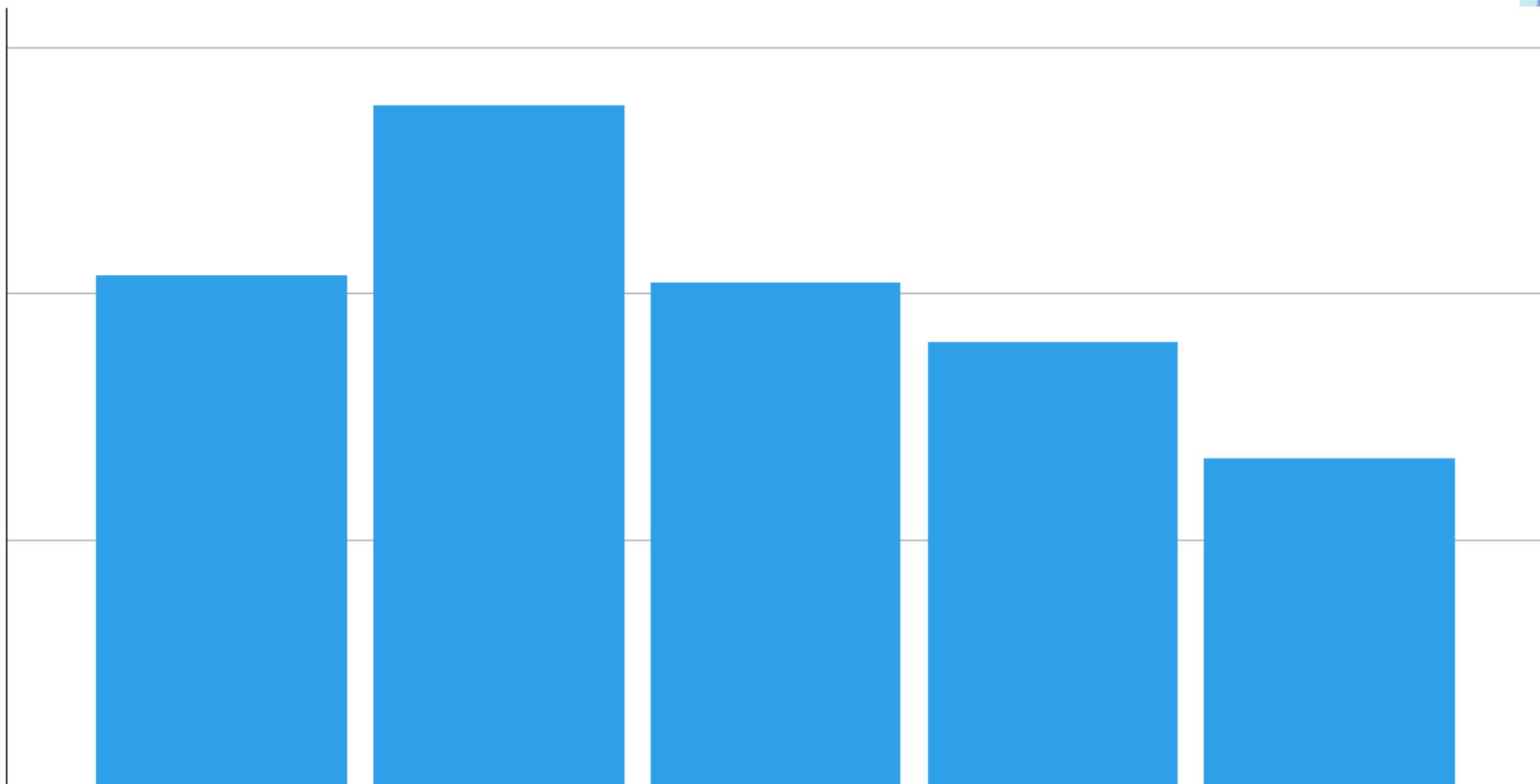
AGREE

NEITHER
AGREE NOR
DISAGREE

DISAGREE

STRONGLY
DISAGREE

People should live together before marriage



CHANGES IN MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN THE UNITED STATES -- DELAY

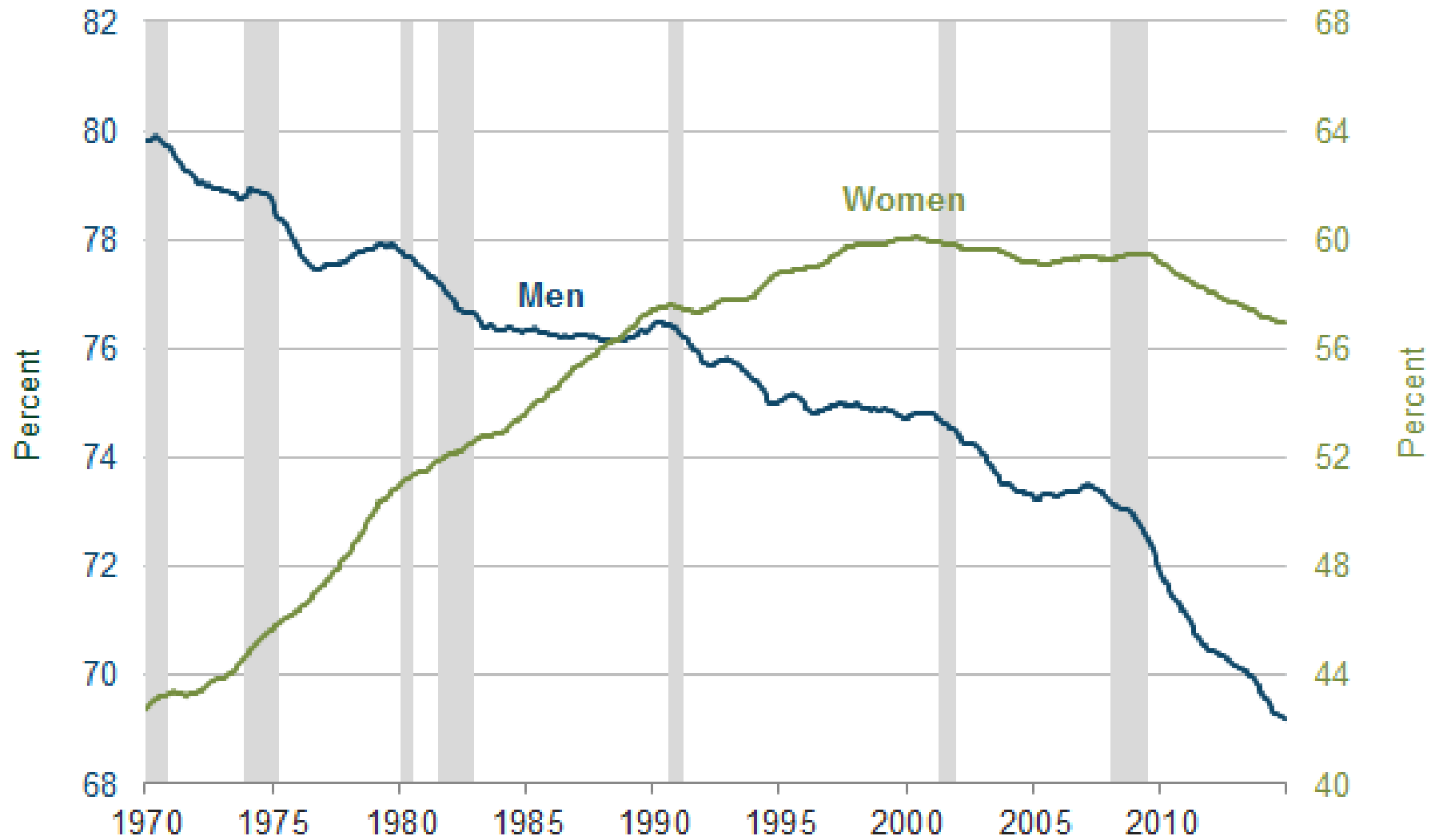
- Both men and (especially) women are delaying marriage and parenthood
 - Average age at first marriage: 27 for women; 29 for men
 - Average age at first birth has increased; and fertility has declined



WHY DO PEOPLE STILL MARRY?

- Well, a lot of people don't, or don't stay married
 - Shares of women who never marry and never have children are on the rise
 - 40% of women born in the 1980s will never be married with children
- However, marriage remains symbolically important
 - a marker of prestige and achievement
- Marriage has shifted from being the cornerstone to the capstone of adult life

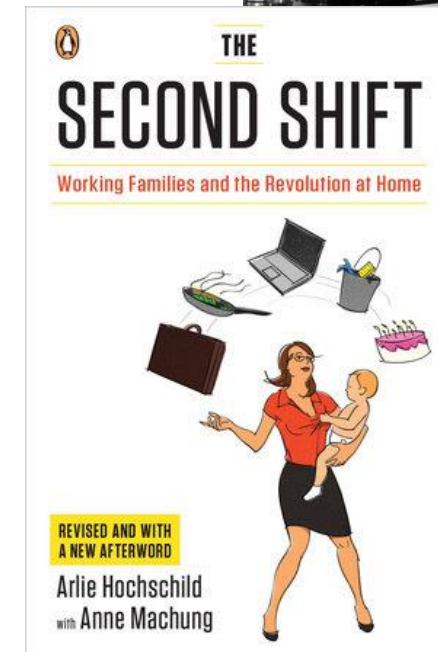
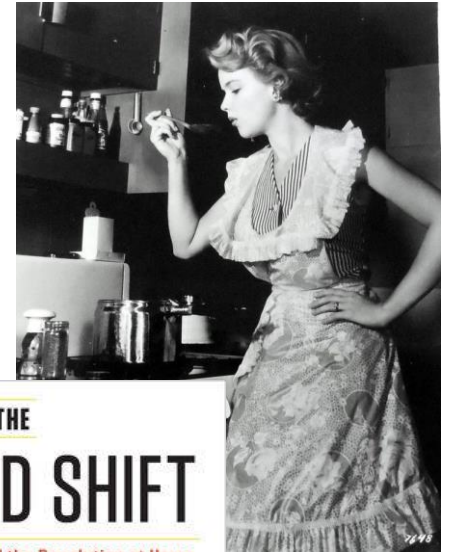
Labor Force Participation Rate of Men and Women



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey, Haver Analytics

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE FAMILY

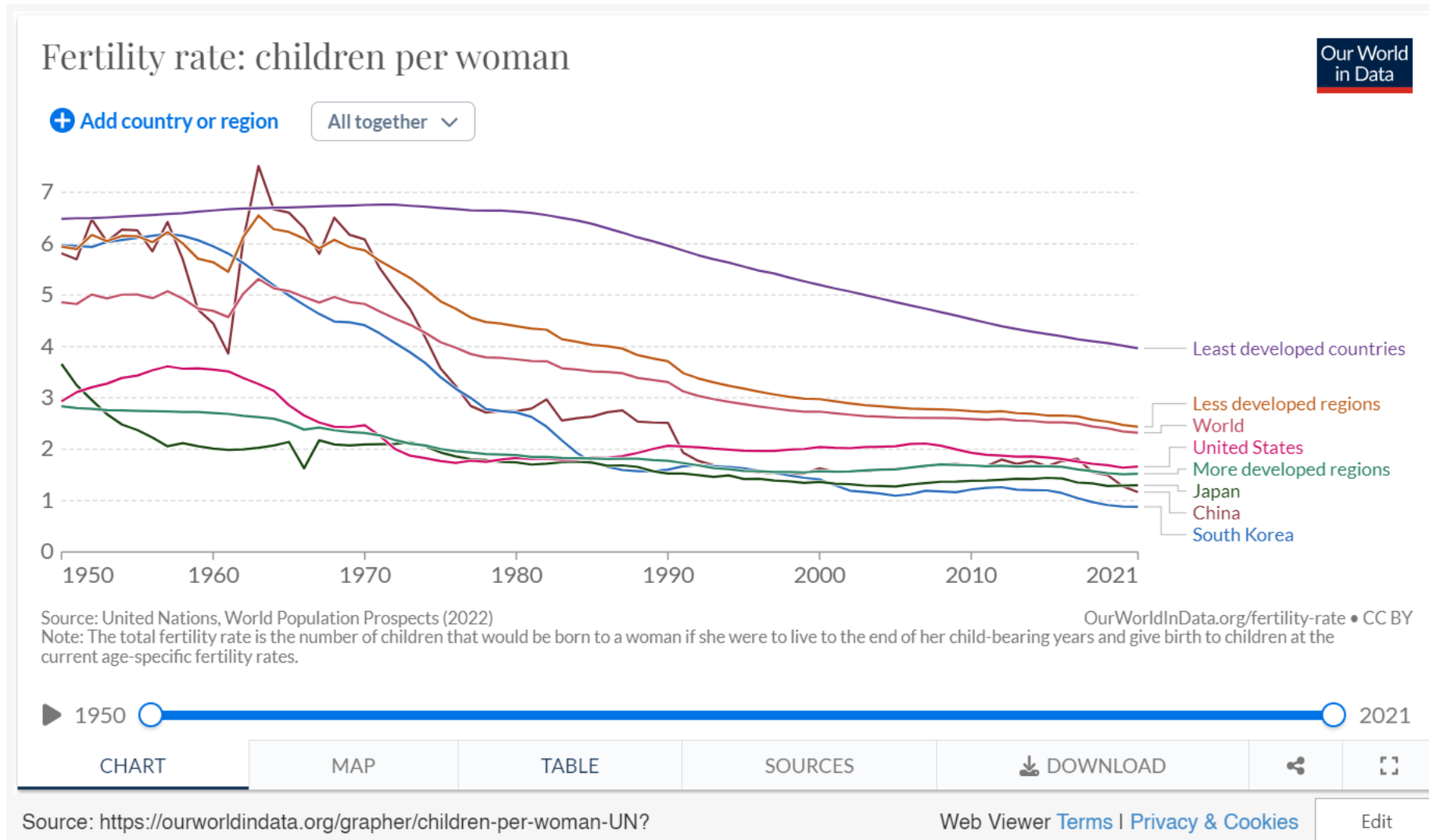
- **Women still do a disproportionately higher share of domestic duties**
- **Working women have a “second shift” at home (Hochschild, 1989)**
 - **Working moms**
 - **Gender ideologies**
- **Despite women’s gains in the labor market, the revolution at home has ‘stalled’**



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MATING

- **Female hypergamy**
 - **Stereotypes about highly educated women and socioeconomically disadvantaged men**
- **Motherhood penalty and men's marriage premium**
- **N.B.: Delay in marriage \neq No (eventual) marriage**
 - **Higher marital rate among highly educated women in the US and Japan**

GLOBAL DECLINE IN FERTILITY



DECLINE IN FERTILITY (IN EAST ASIA)

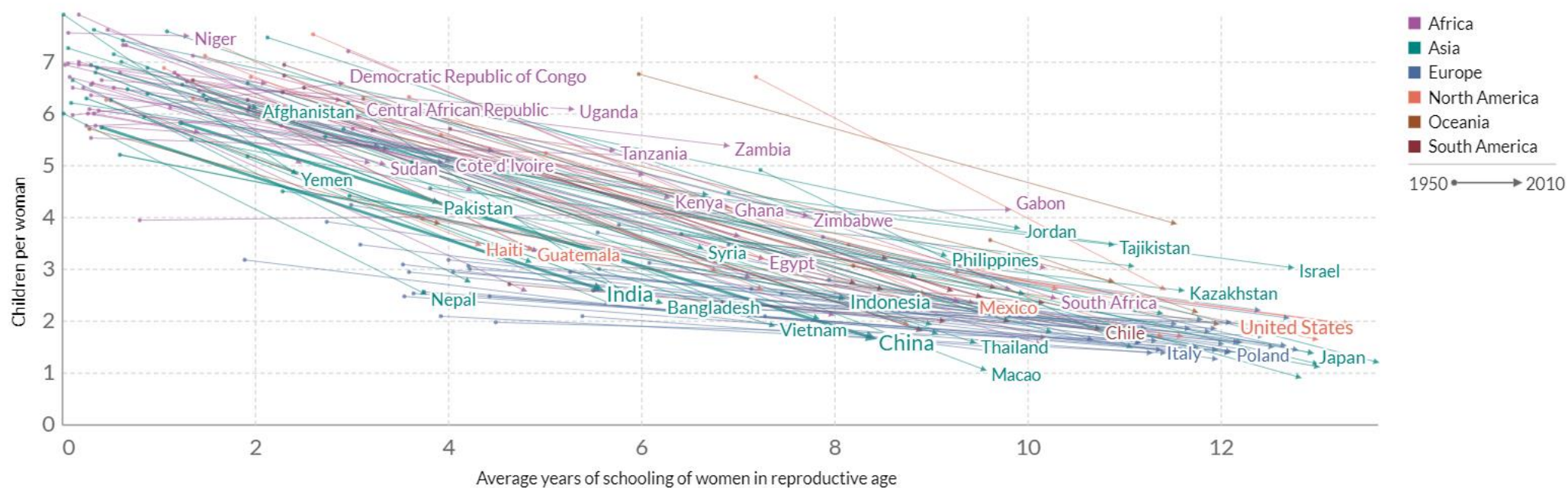
- **Modernization and economic development**
- **Women's empowerment**
 - **Women's education**
 - **Women's labor force participation**
- **High cost of raising children**
- **Strong burdens and obligations for married women**
 - **Intensive mothering**
 - **Intergenerational co-residence and care**
 - **Discrimination in labor market**

Women's educational attainment vs. number of children per woman, 1950 to 2010

Shown on the x-axis is the average number of years of schooling of women in the reproductive age (15 to 49 years). On the y-axis you find the 'total fertility rate' – the number of live births per woman in reproductive age.

Our World
in Data

Select countries or regions ☐ Average annual change



Source: UN Population Prospects (2022); Our World In Data (2017)

OurWorldInData.org/fertility 2010 CBY

1950 2010

CHART

TABLE

SOURCES

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Source: [https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/womens-educational-attainment-vs-fertility?](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/womens-educational-attainment-vs-fertility?time=earliest_latest)

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NEXT CLASS

- **Schooling**
- **Readings**
 - **Davies and Guppy 2014**