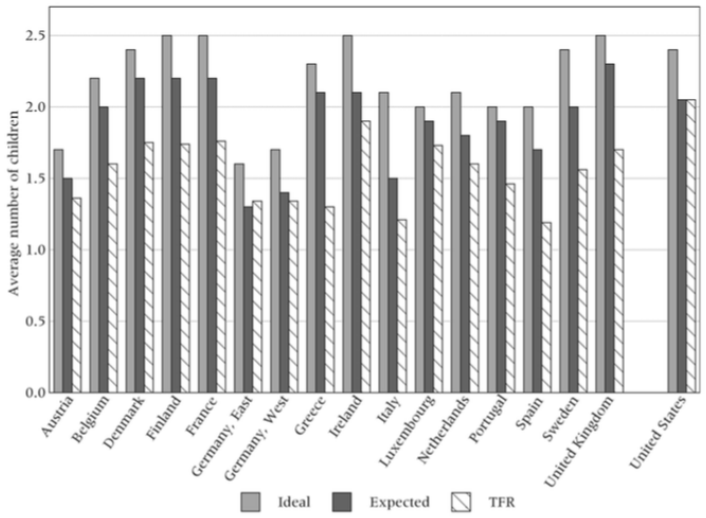
others want some, but have none.

Second, fertility matters because cultures that do not reproduce themselves die out. This is a sensitive topic. Concern about falling fertility in the West is often linked to the theory of "the great replacement", which says that elites are deliberately trying to replace white Europeans with non-white populations. This is a conspiracy theory touted by far-right extremists, including murderous terrorists. However, below-replacement fertility in Western societies is a fact, not a theory. It needs no conspiracy to explain it: we have done it to ourselves. And it is natural, normal and reasonable to care about one's culture and want it to continue. One response to this is that migration from other parts of the world will keep Western populations up, and over time the migrants will assimilate into Western culture and sustain it. It is certainly possible for people to adopt a new culture (this book contains several examples). But here is the problem with that argument: if our culture causes below-replacement fertility, then those migrants who adopt it will also adopt below-replacement fertility, and those who don't, won't. For this reason, migration is not a solution but a sticking plaster over the underlying problem.[259]

To sum up, modern Western family structures are the cause of human unhappiness, and have put our culture on an unsustainable path. Part of the failure is down to bad institutions, like too easy divorce laws. But part of the failure is due to changes in culture, which themselves also help explain the change in institutions.

The incomplete exit from the Disruption

Francis Fukuyama's book ends optimistically, suggesting that we are in the process of a "great reconstruction", which puts cultural constraints on human behaviour back in place. I hope that is true. There have certainly been signs of it. Since the 1990s, in several countries crime has come down from its post-war high. Teen pregnancy rates have fallen dramatically. Other trends in sexual behaviour also seem to have leveled



Ideal and actual family sizes in Western countries, from Hagewen and Morgan (2005)

off or reversed.[260]

However, these improvements may not reflect a cultural change. There are other reasons why crime has dropped, including the introduction of new forms of policing and surveillance, and above all, higher rates of imprisonment. The US imprisonment rate has more than tripled since 1978. In other words, society is substituting external, legal enforcement for internal, cultural controls. We are buying lower crime rates with more prisons. Since crime is still much higher than it was pre-1960s, there may be limits to this strategy. Similarly, changes in sexual behaviour may be due to the rise of awareness about HIV and AIDS. [261]

Also, not all trends have reversed. Some have flattened out. Others have carried on rising. The table below sums up what we know, and points out some alternative, less reassuring explanations ("Yes, but..."). Most data is from the United States, which tends to be a leading indicator for Europe.

Variable	Trend	Yes, but...
Crime	Reversed[1]	More policing and imprisonment.
Divorce rates	Flattened/reversed[2]	Fewer people marry in the first place.[3]
Illegitimacy	Continued[4]	
Alcohol consumption	Reversed[5]	Flat since 1990s.
Drug abuse	Reversed[6]	New forms of drug use, e.g. opioids.[7]
Obesity	Flattened[8]	
Sex in films	Reversed[9]	Internet porn.
Violence in films	Continued[10]	
Distrust	Continued[11]	
Narcissism	Continued[12]	

Great Disruption trends

While some problems have receded, new ones have appeared. The US inner cities of the 80s and 90s saw high crime rates partly due to the introduction of crack cocaine. Crack's popularity has declined, but in the 2000s, opioid abuse became a serious problem in the US, with deaths tripling. This time, the phenomenon was clustered in the towns of America's rust belt. Rather than a single increase followed by a decline, we may be facing overlapping waves of social problems.[262]

The Disruption may not be over, but some people and places have come out of it better than others. In 1989, a jogger was gang-raped in New York's Central Park, and injured so badly that she lay in a coma for 12 days. The case became a touchstone for the perception that crime and violence were out of control in inner cities. Five black and Hispanic teenagers were found guilty and jailed; in 2002, they were freed when another man confessed to the attack. Today, crime in Central Park rarely hits the headlines.

[1] Fukuyama (1999).
[2] Pew Research Center (2017); Kennedy and Ruggles (2014).
[3] Kennedy and Ruggles (2014).
[4] Putnam (2015).
[5] Haughwout and Slater (2016); Anderson and Baumberg (2006).
[6] Johnston (2010).
[7] Segal et al. (2017).
[8] Flegal et al. (2012).
[9] Bleakley et al. (2012).
[10] Bleakley et al. (2012).
[11] Twenge et al. (2014).
[12] Twenge et al. (2012).

New York's crime rates have fallen dramatically. Why is a complicated question, but the trend is unmistakable and is shared across many major cities. Similarly, inner city schools, which in the 80s were notorious for educational failures, now sometimes perform better than those in rural areas. Crack was urban; opioid addiction is worst in small towns, Appalachia and the rustbelt.[263]

Also, the rich have done better than the poor. Charles Murray's *Coming Apart* and Robert Putnam's *Our Kids* have both documented this gap in the state of the social fabric. The rich get married more and divorced less; they are less likely to become single mothers; they are less likely to commit crimes – and to be victims. And when they do go off the reservation, they have airbags. Rich people who get caught taking drugs are less likely to go to jail. Rich single mothers can pay for "help" to raise their children. If an upper-class teenager develops an opioid addiction, his family can afford high quality rehab and counselling. Lastly, when the social fabric fails, the rich are better protected by formal institutions. They can call the police, who will arrive promptly. But in many areas – and not surprisingly, rich people often struggle to understand this – calling the police just isn't an option. In these areas, people have to manage social order on their own.[264]

None of this should be news. But it suggests that rich and poor people are likely to have very different attitudes to the social norms which are the first line of defence against the Disruption. Indeed, today, poor people are more favourable to the concept of rules than the rich. They bring their children up with more structure and less freedom, and they are more strict in punishing rule violations. Judging by the historical evidence, this was not always so. In the Hothouse period, a highly moralized upper class struggled mightily to transmit its values down the social ladder.[265]

There seems to be a paradox here. How can today's rich both have a more traditional lifestyle than the poor – in terms of marriage, two-parent families, paid employment and so on – and less traditional attitudes and beliefs? Charles Murray puts it

this way: the rich don't preach what they practice. In private, they conduct themselves according to quite traditional moral rules, aided by their higher levels of wealth and social capital. But they do not have the confidence to support these rules in public. Put another way: in the Disruption period, the moral rules of the Hothouse were *privatized*. They still helped to govern social life within many households, schools, and other small-scale contexts. But the new cultural elite, whose power base was mass media and the culture industry, no longer broadcast them. This in turn made a difference in the micro-contexts. It is the difference between a class teacher who knows she can rely on the head teacher to support her, and a class teacher who does not have that backup.

In some cases, that is literally the difference. *The World We Created at Hamilton High* is the story of an American high school which became integrated in the 1960s. After a period of high racial tensions and violence, the 1970s saw a more liberal regime. Previous social norms – which had included some racist double standards – were replaced by formal instittutional rules protecting due process. One teacher described a typical result:

> I saw the kid cheating.... They wanted documentation.... I said I am telling you that he was cheating. But the question now is, "We've heard John's side of the story, what's yours?"

Teachers themselves varied in their belief in the rules. Some wanted to enforce higher standards. Others were more relaxed about, say, drug use: "It's not a problem if there is no effect on the kid's performance... who are we to say what's right or wrong?" Not surprisingly, in this contest, the lower standards won out. (Rule enforcement is a team sport.)[266] And those parents who could afford it moved their children to areas with better schools.

Social scientists have puzzled for decades over working class conservatism. I claim that it exists because poor and working class people have greater need of moral rules,

and less resources to enforce them. There are two alternative accounts. One is Ronald Inglehart's theory of value change. On this story, poor people are more involved in a daily struggle for the necessities of life, while rich people can afford the search for self-expression – in other words, they are higher up the Maslowian hierarchy of needs. As a result, poor people value economic security above individual freedom. Inglehart was one of the first to point out this cultural shift. But, as I said above, the Maslowian hierarchy is a myth. There is no universal progression from basic needs to higher things. Indeed, even the poorest often value self-respect as much or more than supposedly basic goods. And values like self-expression are not universal: they are a contingent fact about Western culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. They exist because of Nietzsche, Vienna and Bloomsbury, not because of Modernization and Progress. Lastly, the value change theory might explain economic conservatism, but it cannot explain social conservatism – about, e.g., the family – without a great deal of handwaving.

Another theory of working-class conservatism comes from psychology and is called system justification theory. In this story, working-class people defeat their own self-interest, voting for parties that lower taxes and welfare, because of a deep psychological need to believe that they live in a just world, even when this world oppresses them. I think we should be sceptical of any theory which explains a widespread phenomenon by recourse to a form of mass delusion. We should ask for solid evidence before accepting that a whole segment of people are, essentially, gullible and naïve. Unfortunately, the evidence for system justification theory is not strong. It often consists of correlations with various personality questionnaire measures, which can be interpreted in many ways, and which may be confounded with other attitudes. And it comes out of social psychology, which has suffered well-known failures to replicate its results. Are working-class conservatives who vote for lower taxes like turkeys voting for Christmas? They might also be hoping, like most people, to improve their own