

Family change and low fertility in Japan: How useful are broad comparative theoretical frameworks?

日本の少子化：
第二次人口転換論とジェンダー平等の視点から

James M. Raymo

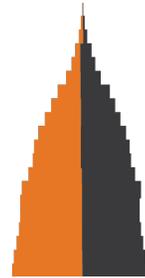
Princeton University



**PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY**



DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY



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OFFICE OF POPULATION RESEARCH

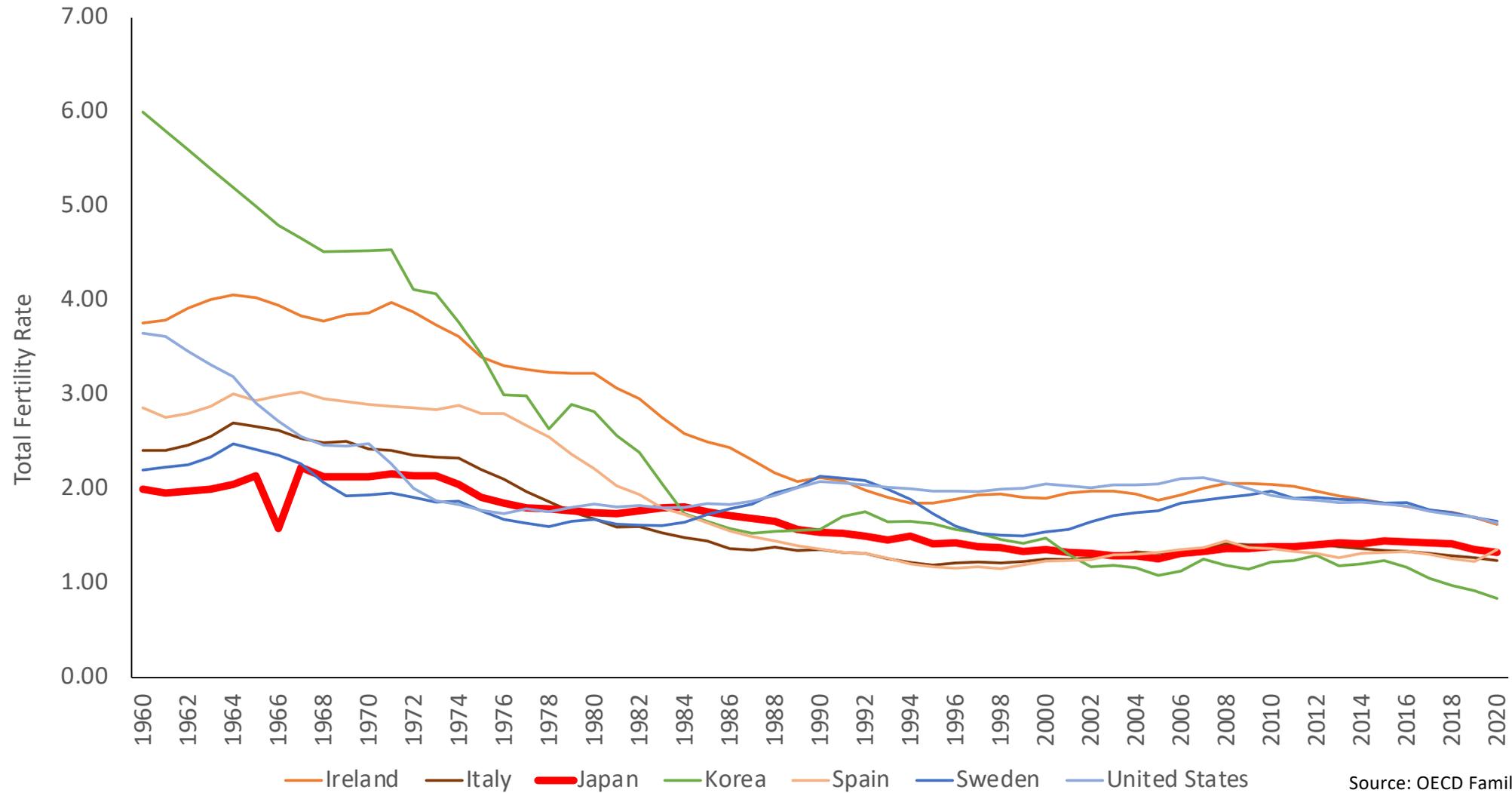


Global Japan Lab
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Overview

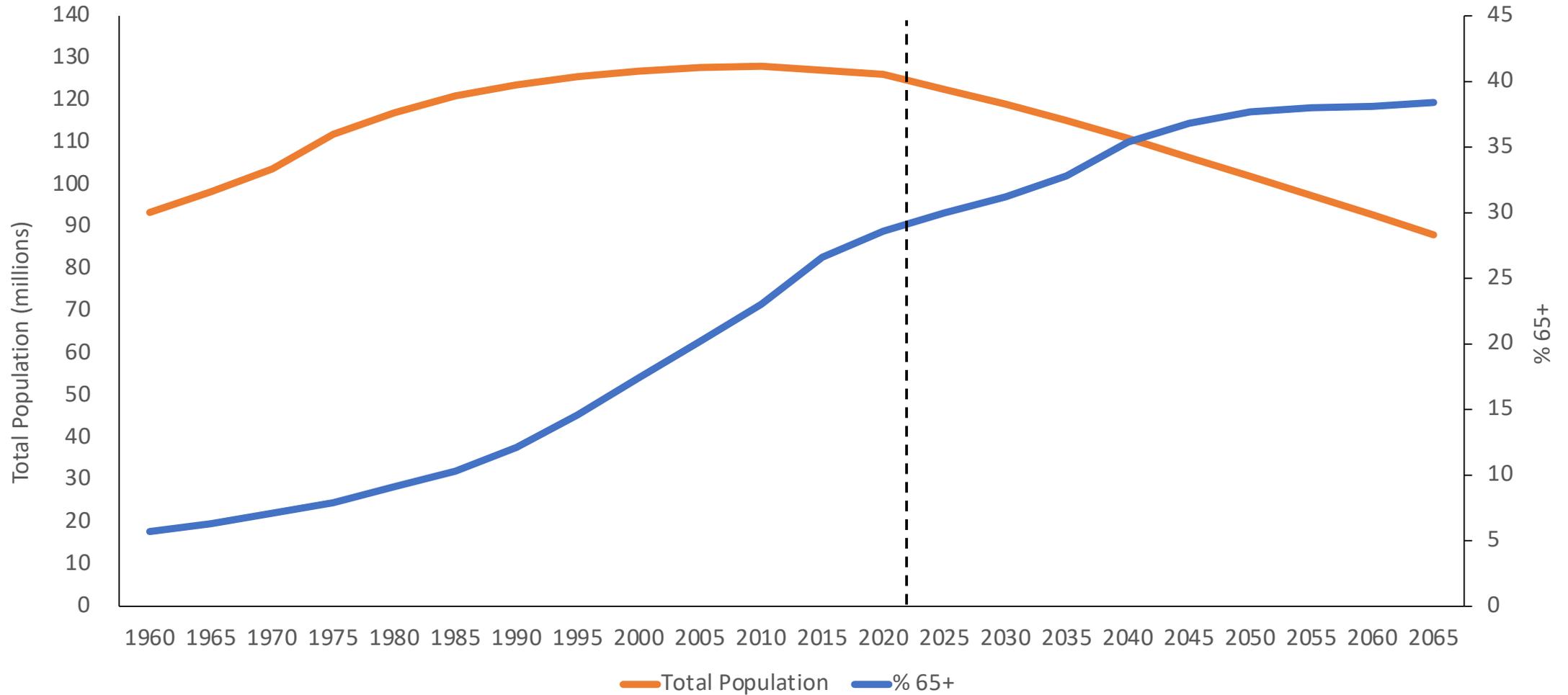
- I. Low fertility and the Second Demographic Transition
- II. Behavioral change in Japan
- III. Attitudinal change in Japan
- IV. Interpretations
 - Gender equity
 - Gender essentialism
 - Gender revolution

Fertility decline and



Source: OECD Family Database

.....its implications



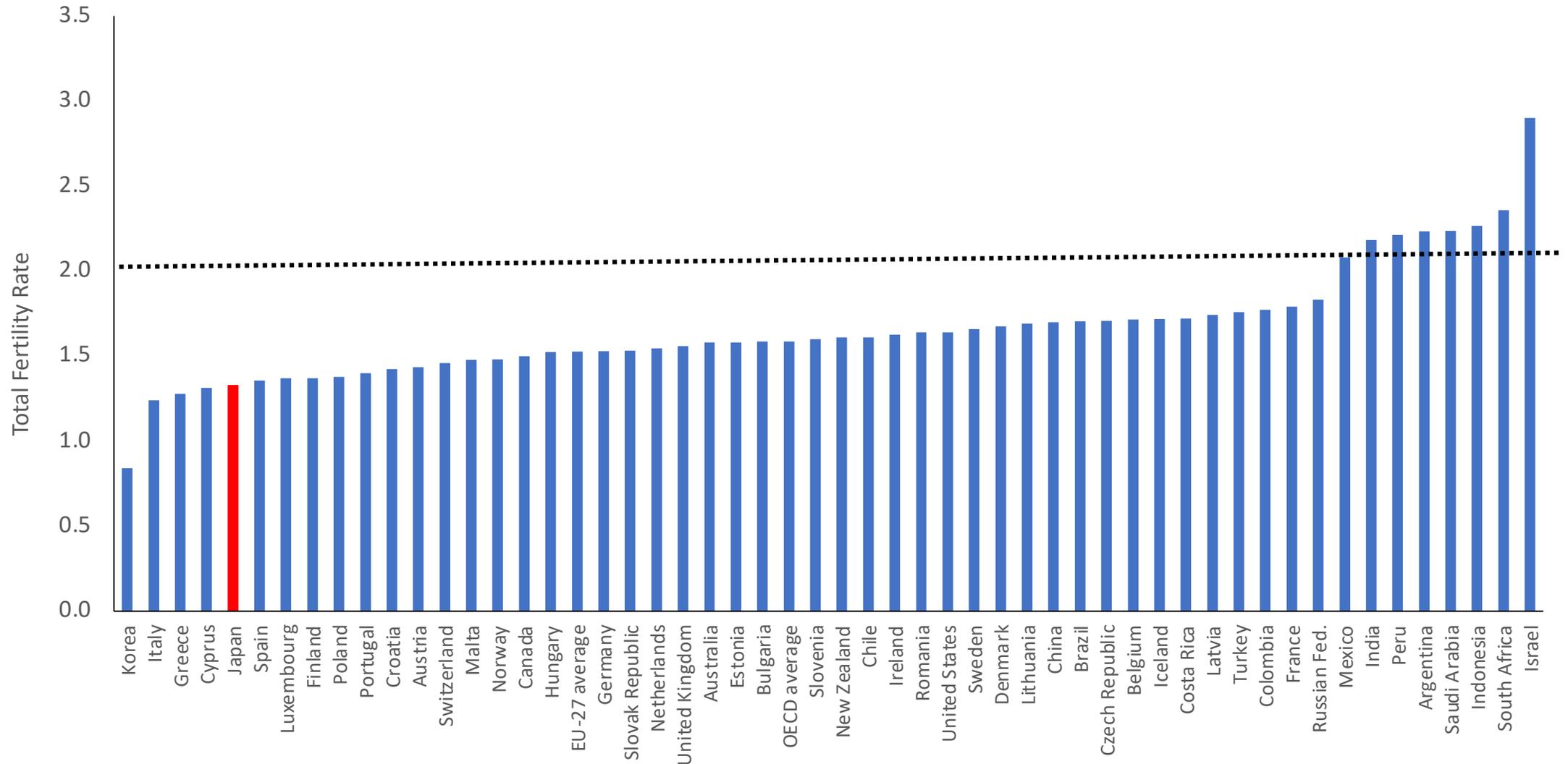
Explanations common in research on Japan

- Women's economic independence
- High financial cost of children
- High physical and emotional cost of childrearing
- Quality of single life (limited incentives to marry)
- Inefficient dating market (limited opportunities to meet partners)
- Lack of interest
- Marriage "roles" less attractive/feasible
 - Men no longer able to be sole breadwinner
 - Women face heavy "second shift"

Casting a wider net....

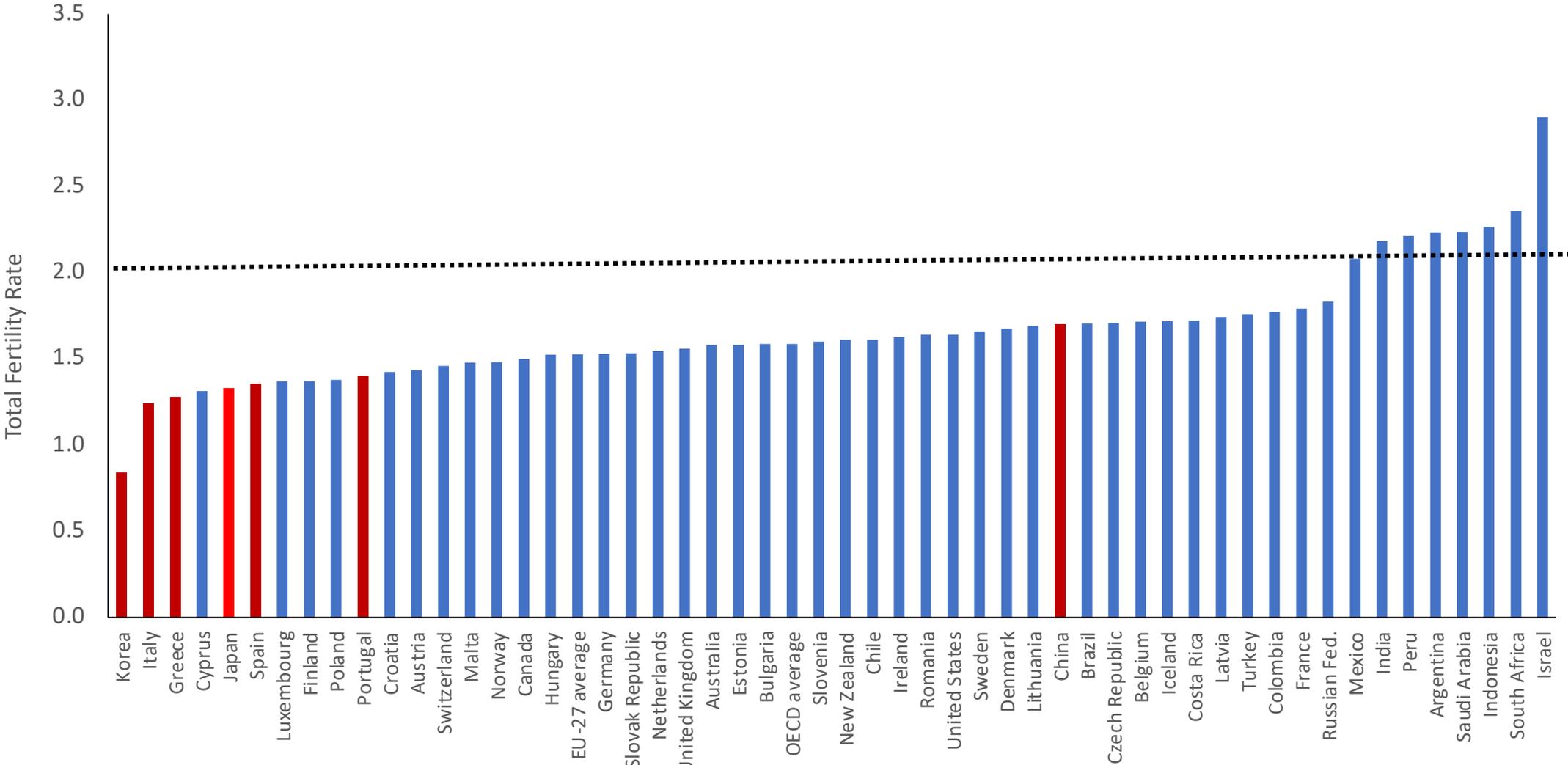
- Country-specific analyses, explanations, interpretations are tremendously valuable (especially for policy)
- They can also be clean and simple
- As social scientists, we need to think more broadly
- We need ***variation***
- Can't learn much about generality of explanations by examining single populations in isolation
- Broad theoretical frameworks for understanding universal patterns of change are essential

Many countries have very low fertility



Source: OECD Family Database

Fertility rates particularly low in East Asia and Southern Europe



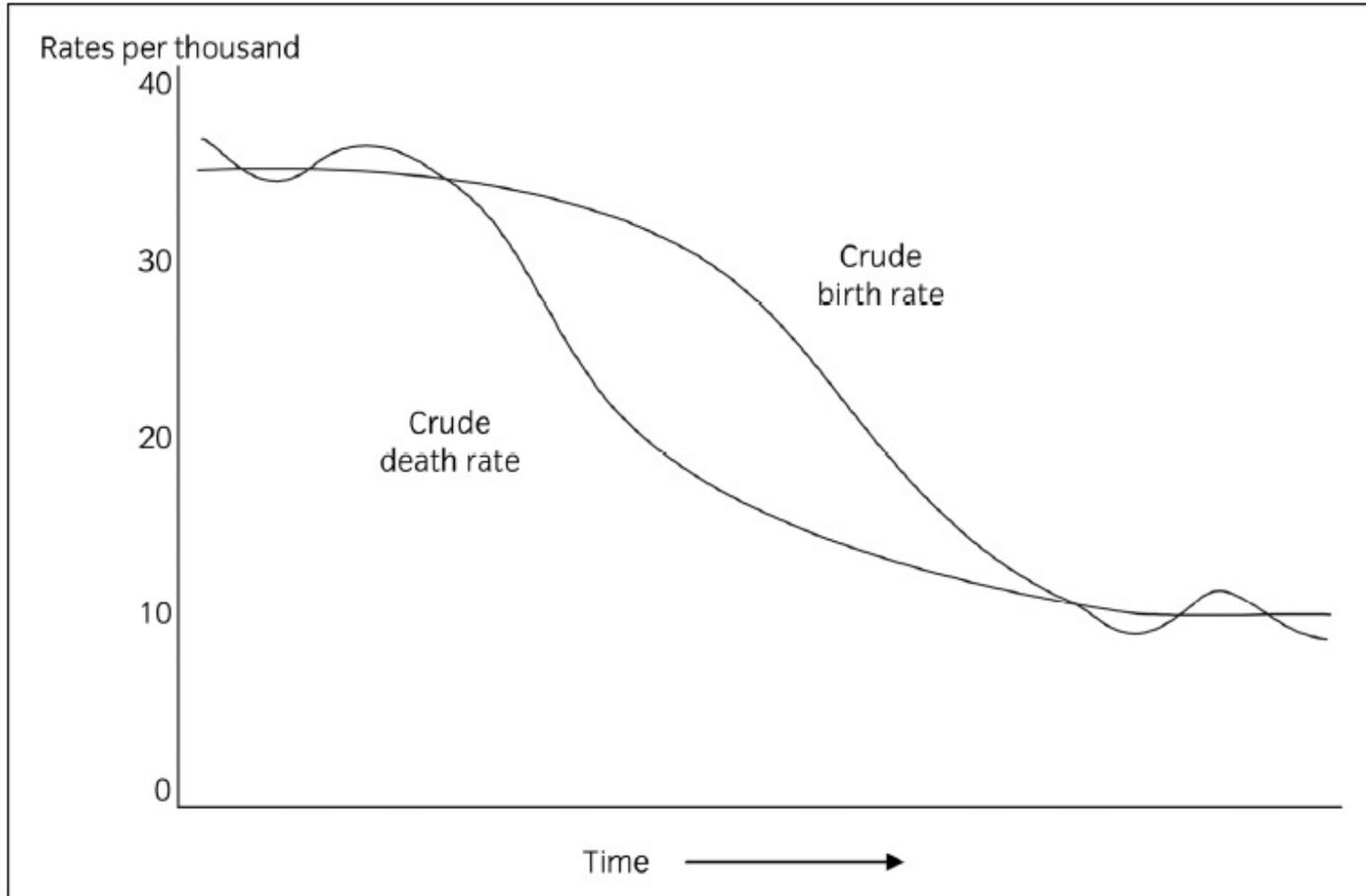
Source: OECD Family Database

A Second Demographic Transition?

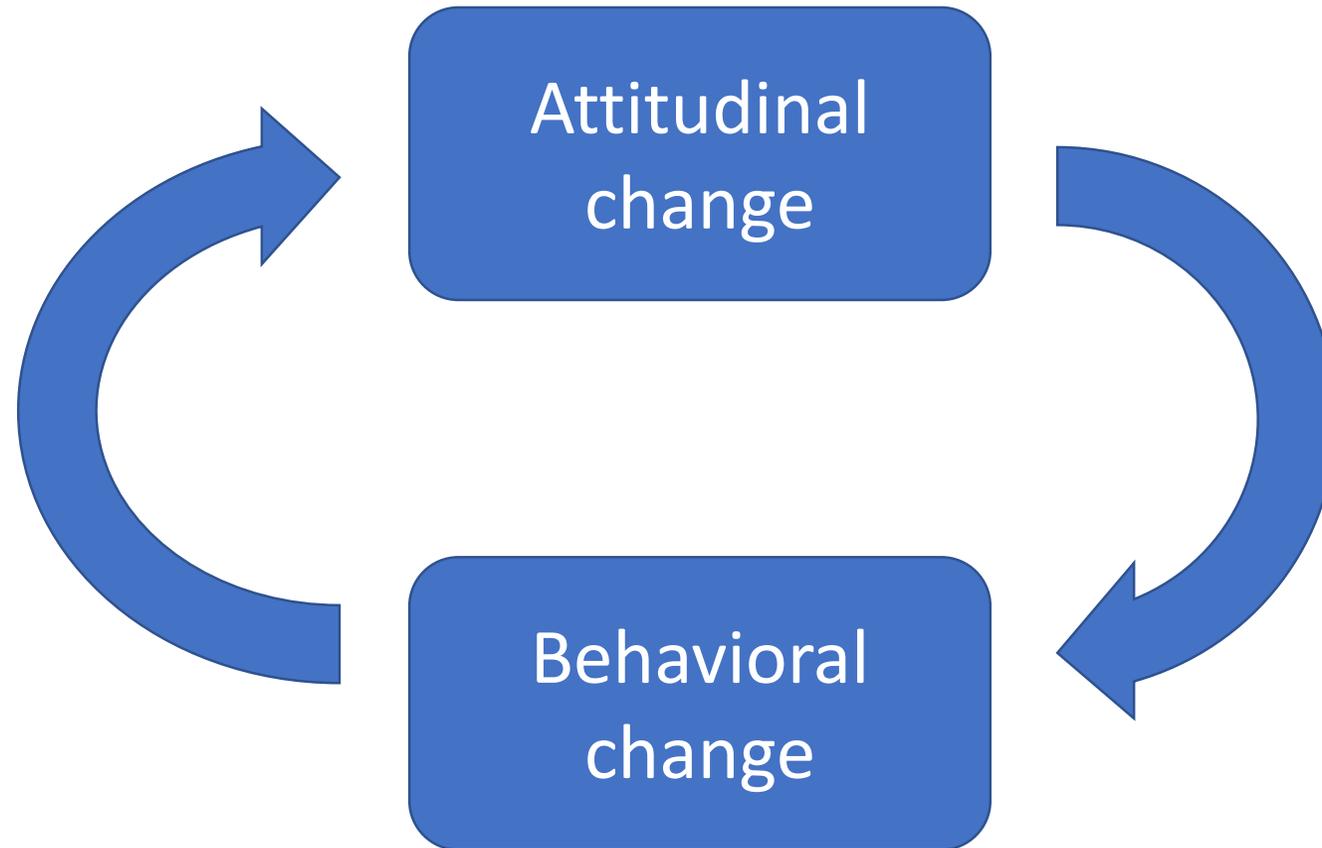
第二次人口轉換

- Emergence of below-replacement fertility
- Declining salience of marriage as an institution and decoupling of marriage and childbearing
- Growth in non-marital unions
- Driven primarily by attitudinal change
 - Secularization
 - Individuation
 - Gender equality
- My goal is to consider low-fertility and family change in Japan in the context of SDT framework

A Second demographic transition
...implies a first demographic transition



Simplistic depiction of SDT



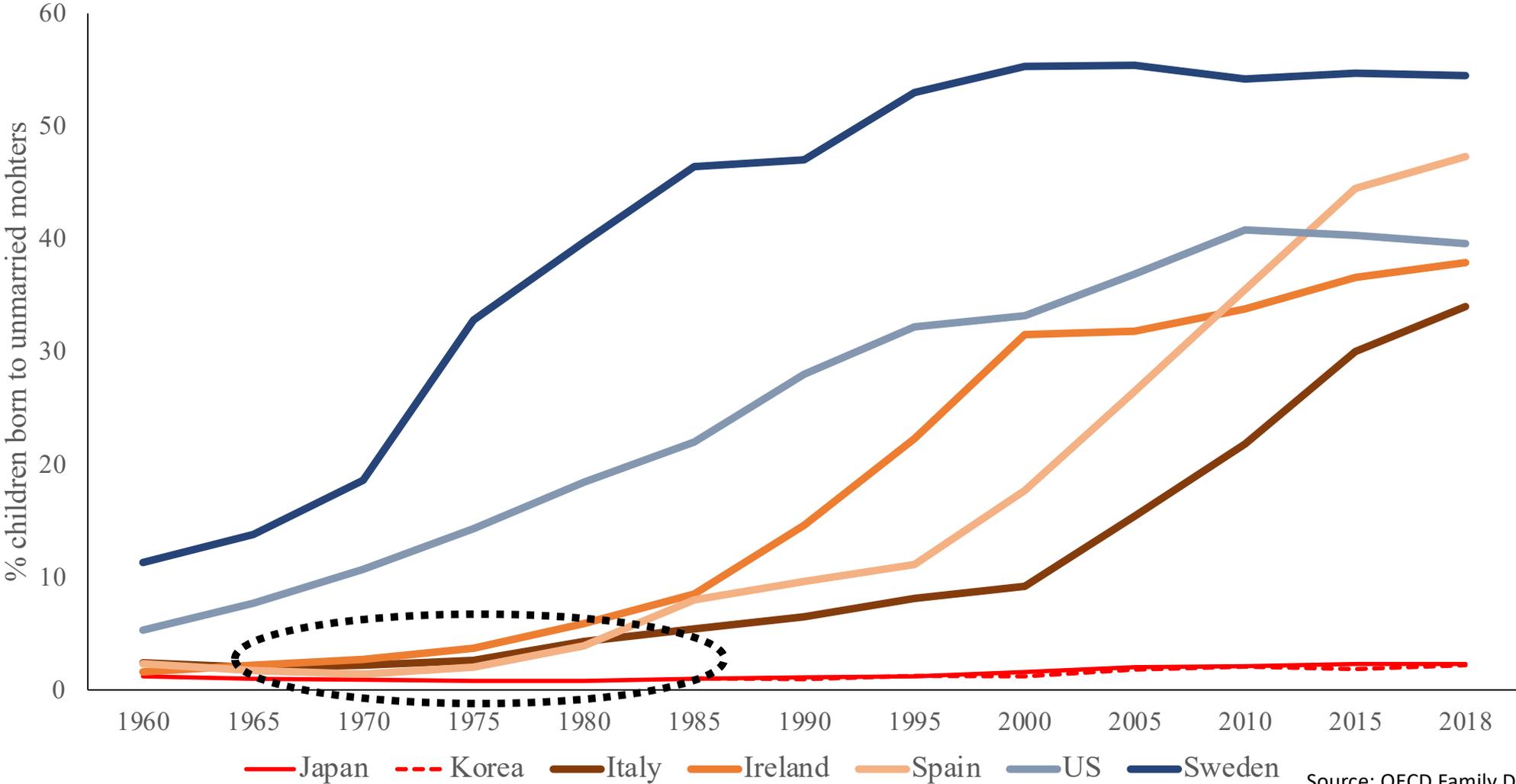
A second demographic transition in Japan?

- Nearly 50 years of below-replacement fertility
- Late marriage, life-long singlehood, childlessness
- Relatively high rates of divorce and remarriage
- Some evidence of changing attitudes

A second demographic transition in Japan?

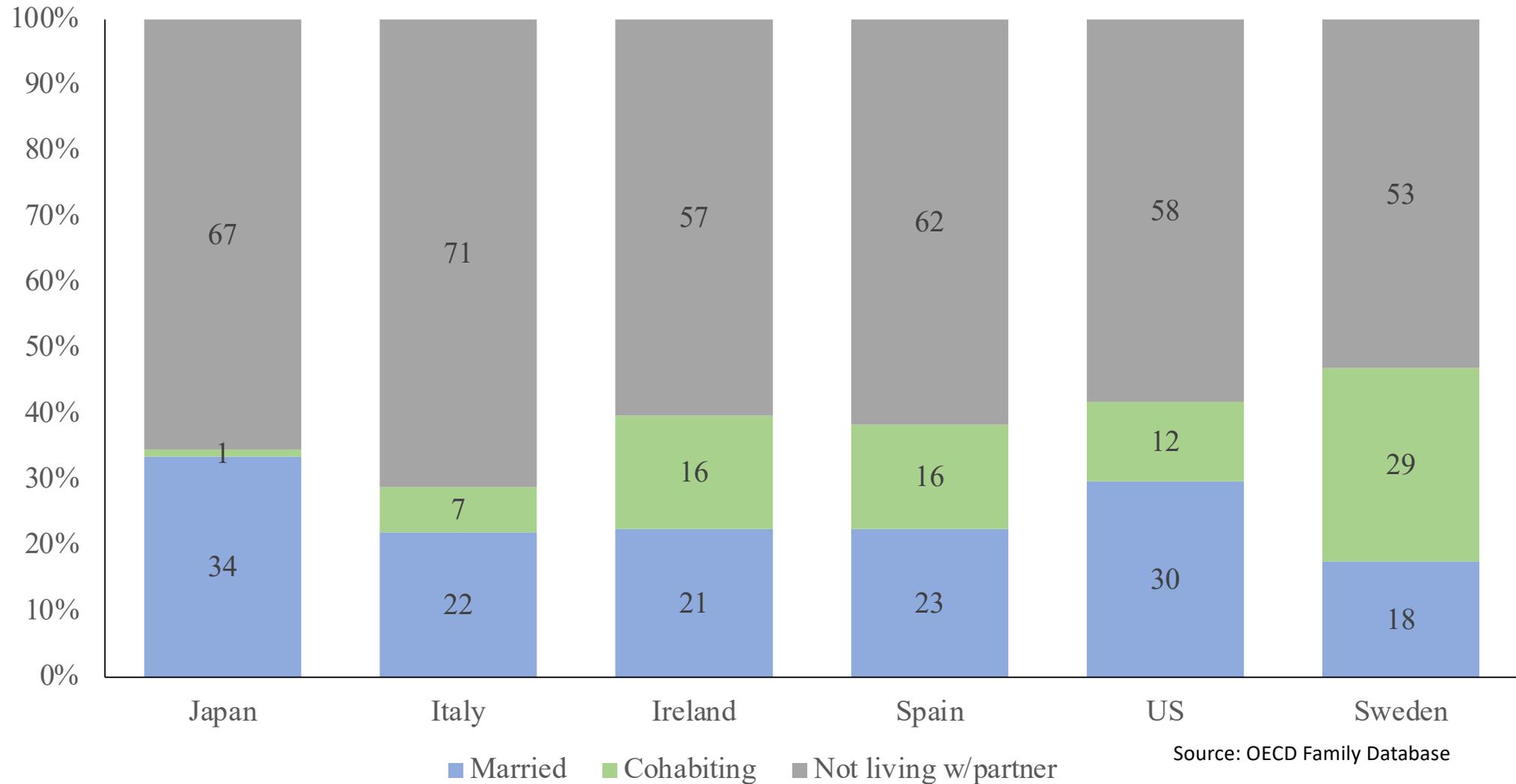
- Nearly 50 years of below-replacement fertility
- Late marriage, life-long singlehood, childlessness
- Relatively high rates of divorce and remarriage
- Some evidence of changing attitudes
- **Almost no non-marital childbearing**
- **Little evidence of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage**
- **Limited evidence of growing individuation**
- **Gender inequality**

The link between marriage and childbearing



Source: OECD Family Database

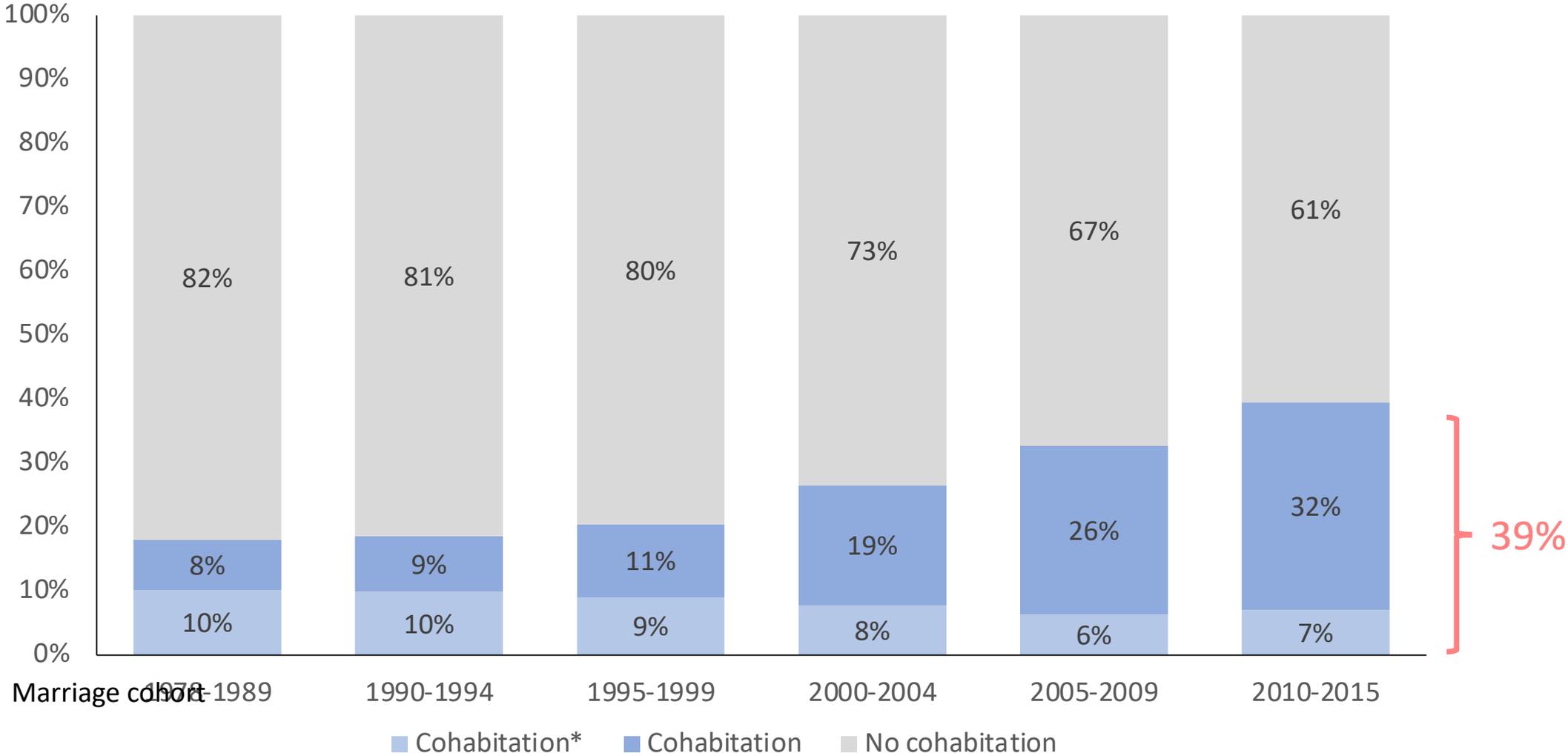
Current union status (women age 20-34*)



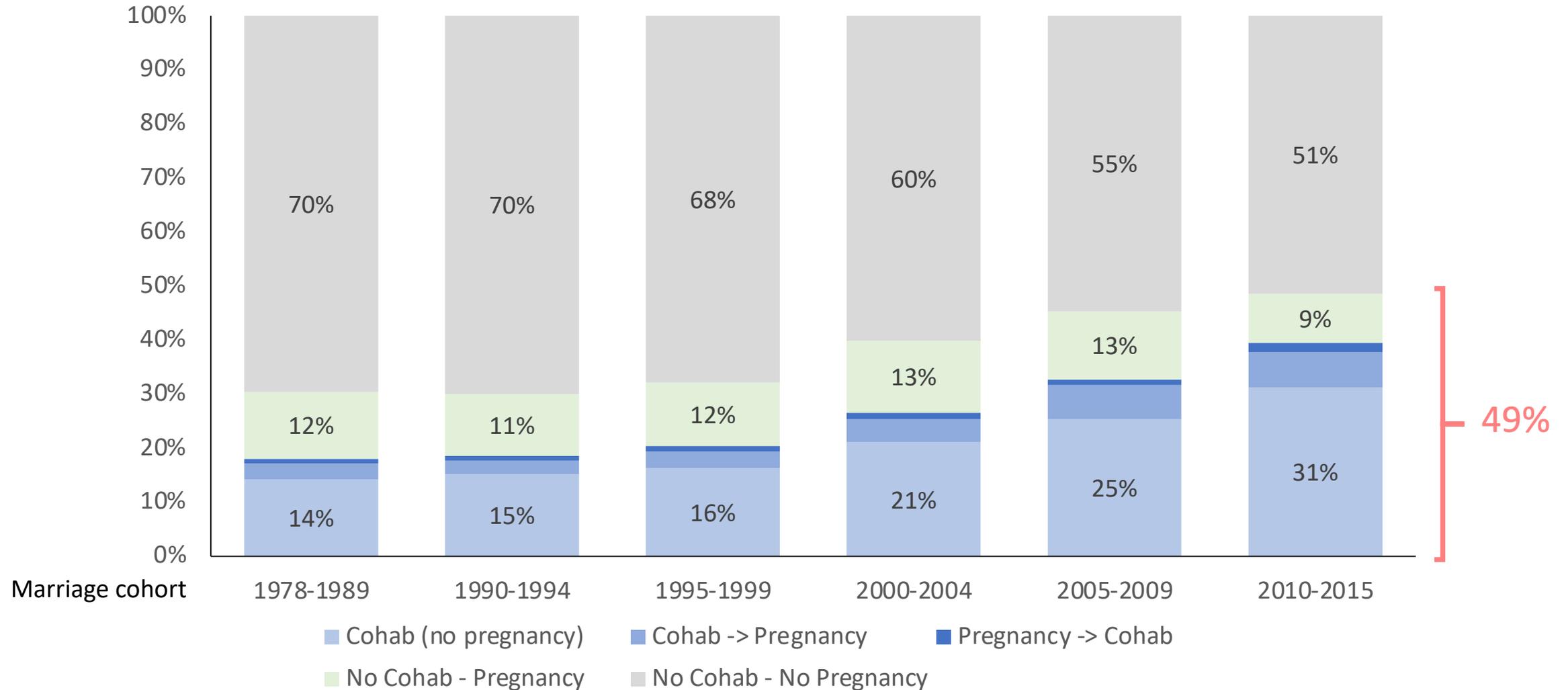
Source: OECD Family Database

*Japan data are age 18-34

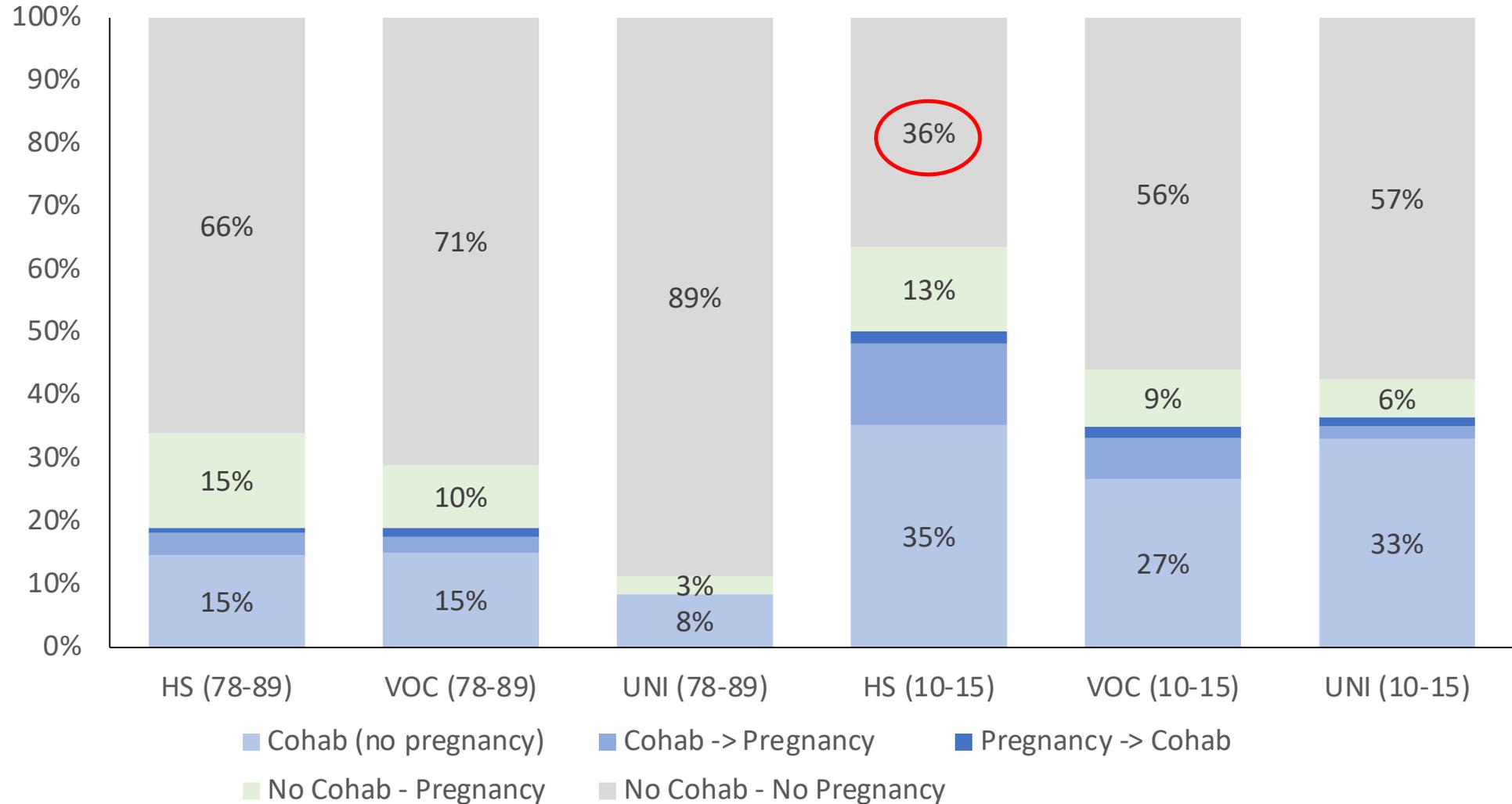
Trends in pathways to first marriage: The role of cohabitation



Trends in pathways to first marriage: The roles of cohabitation & pregnancy



Trends and SES differences: Cohabitation & Pregnancy



Divorce is common

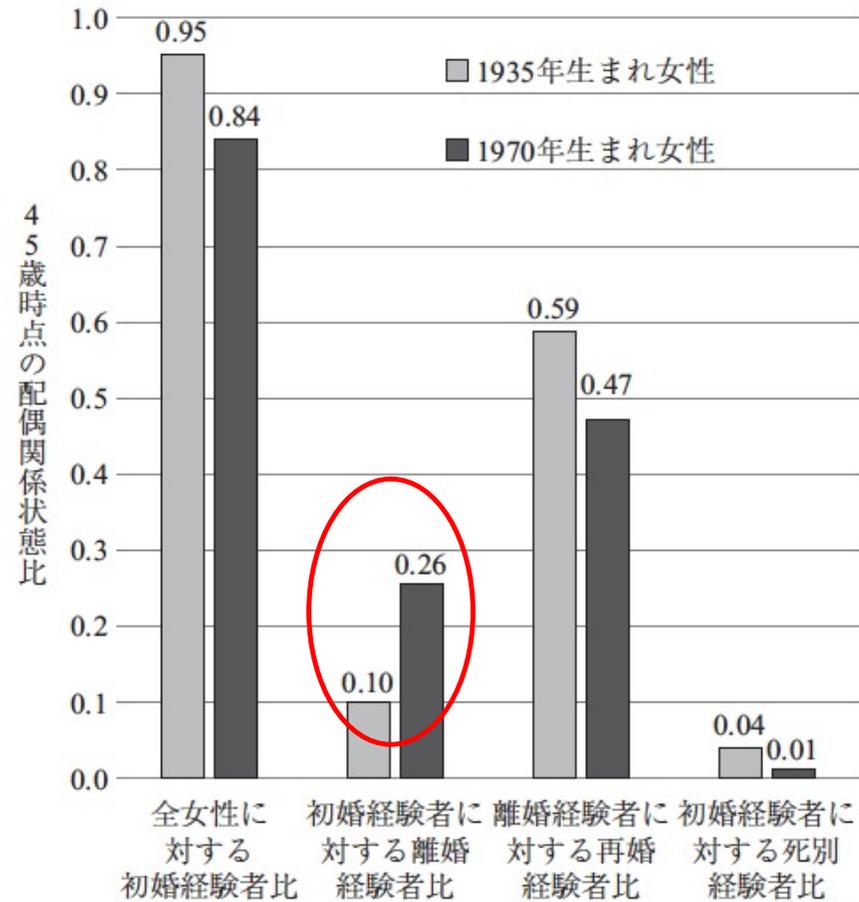


図2 45歳時点での配偶関係状態比の変化で見る非婚化の進展

岩澤美帆. (2019). 人口「結婚・離婚・再婚の動向と日本社会の変容に関する包括的研究」(平成 25~29 年度)について. *社会保障研究*, 4(1), 142-145.

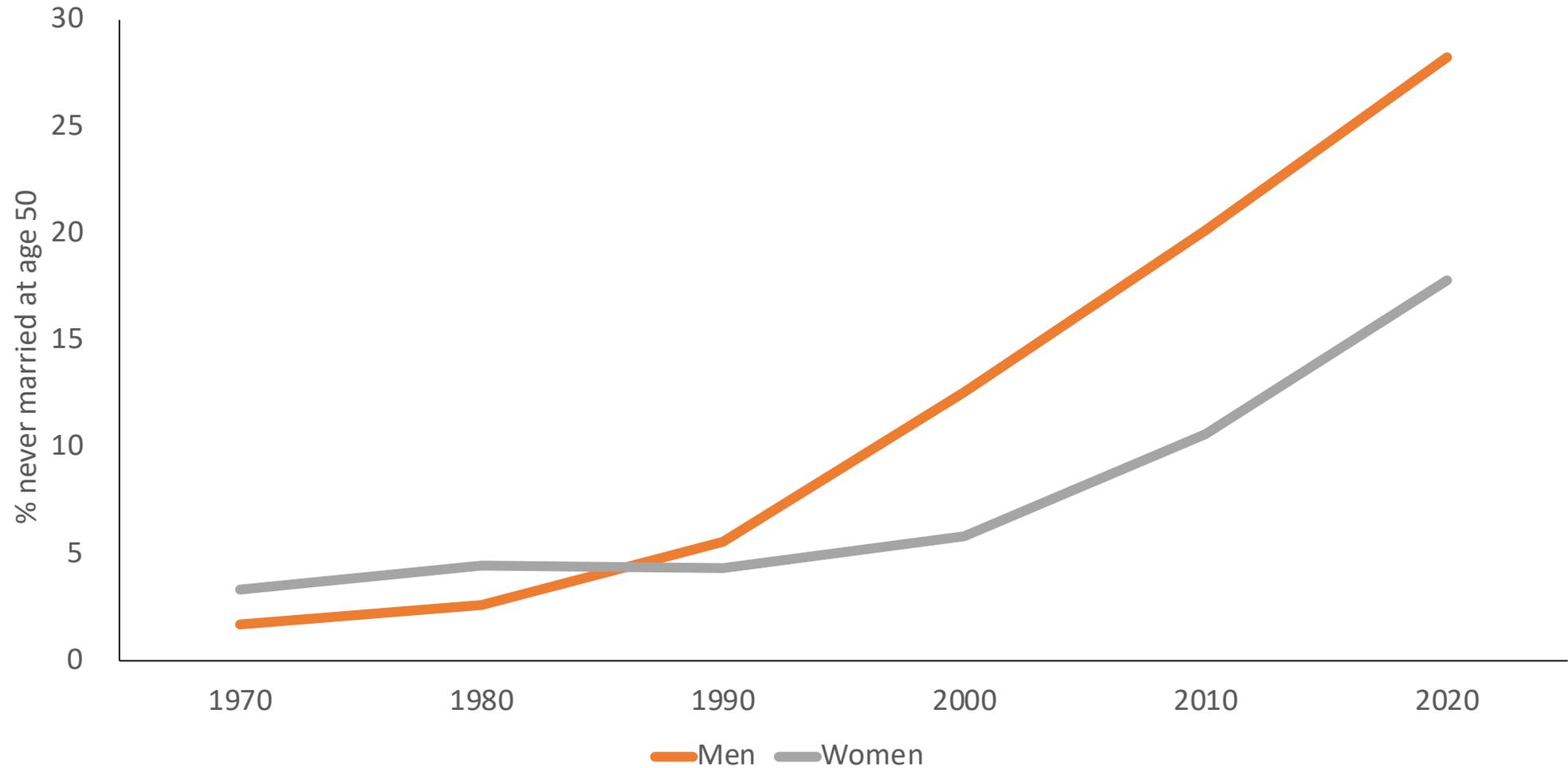
Another view of trends in divorce



Figure 3: Cumulative Probability of Marital Dissolution, by Marriage Cohort.

Raymo, J. M., Iwasawa, M., & Bumpass, L. (2004). Marital dissolution in Japan: Recent trends and patterns. *Demographic Research*, 11, 395-420.

Marriage and low fertility in Japan



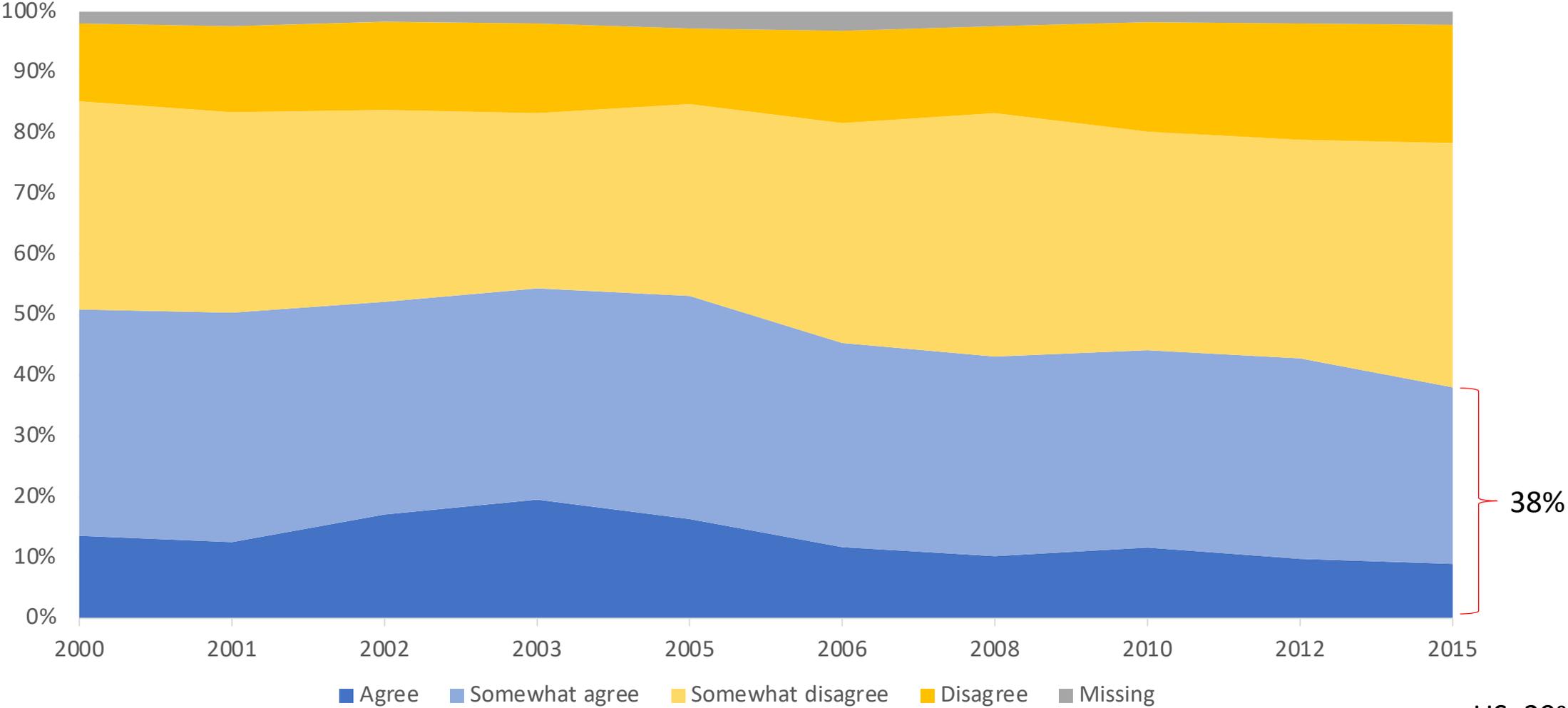
Source: Population Statistics, Table 6-23

How do we understand these distinctive patterns of change?

- Remember that the SDT places central emphasis on attitudinal change
 - a) Secularization
 - b) Individuation
 - c) Gender equality
- All three are arguably of limited relevance in Japan
- But broad theoretical frameworks suggest the salience of (c)

Attitudes toward mother's employment when children are young

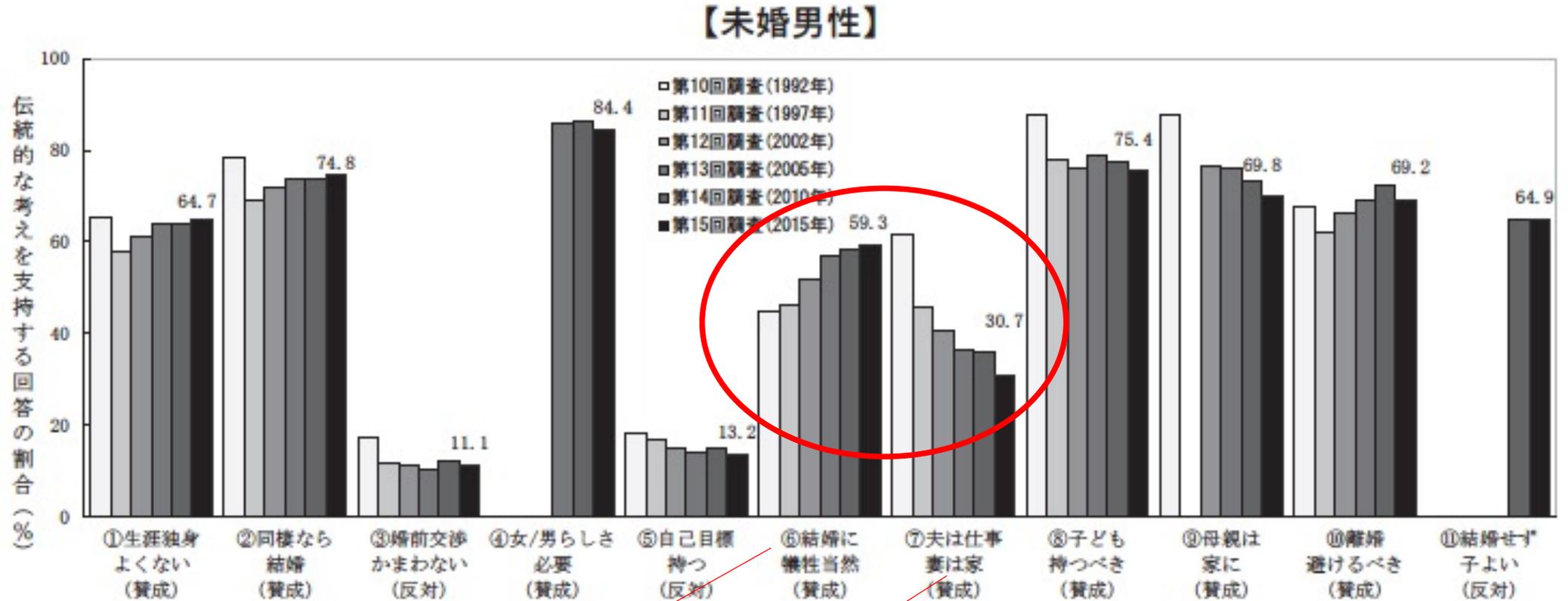
"If mothers work, it has a negative effect on pre-school age children"



US: 29%

Trends in attitudes (18-34 year-old unmarried men)

図表Ⅲ-3-2 調査別にみた、結婚・家族に関する未婚者の意識（伝統的な考えを支持する割合）



結婚したら、家庭のためには自分の個性や生き方を半分犠牲にするのは当然だ

結婚後は、夫は外で働き、妻は家庭を守るべきだ

National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. (2017). *Marriage and Childbirth in Japan Today - The Fifteenth National Fertility Survey*. Tokyo: National Institute for Population and Social Security Research. [in Japanese]

TABLE 1.1 The Global Gender Gap Index 2022 rankings

#1 Iceland

2022 Global Gender Gap Index

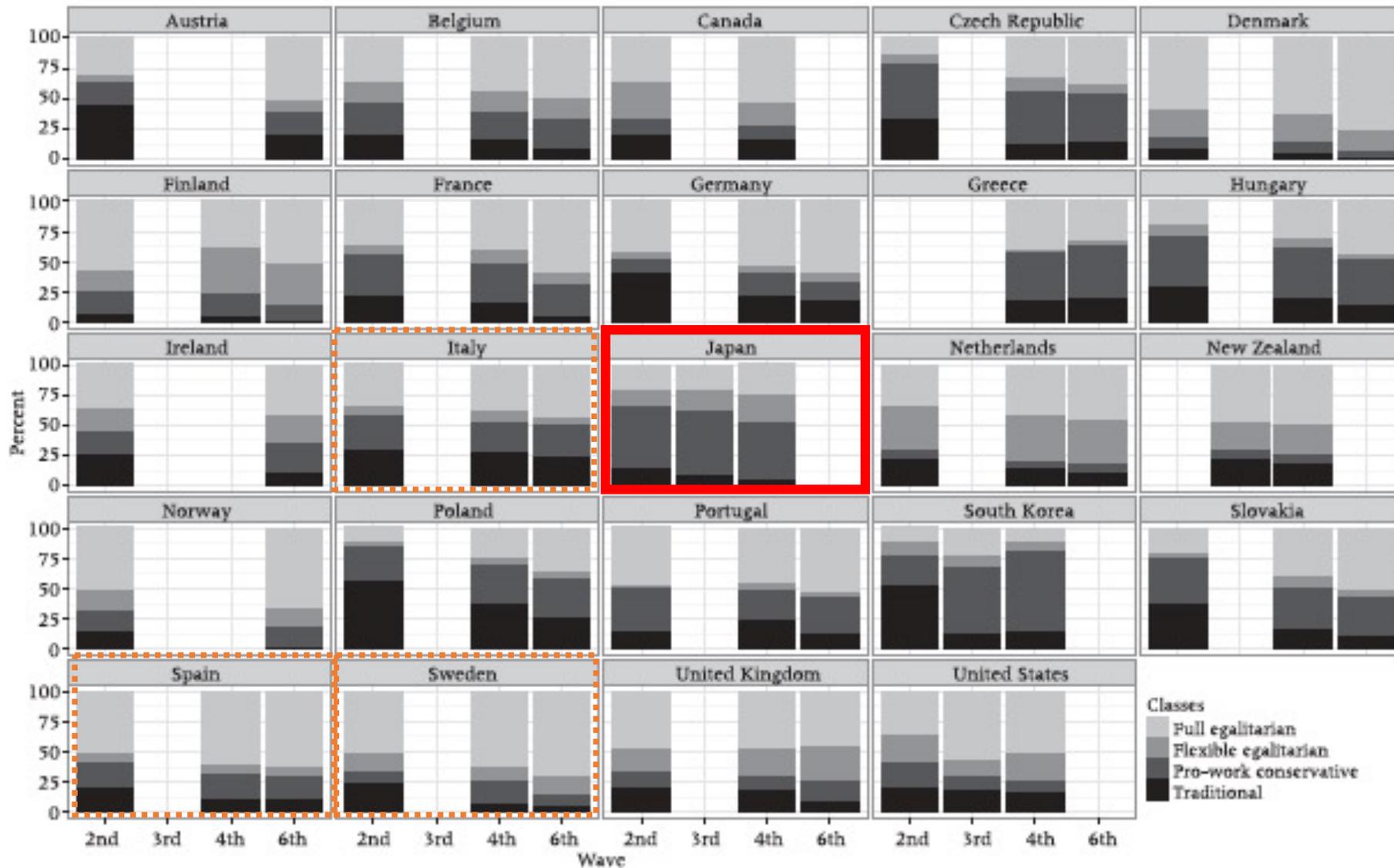
Rank	Country	Score	
		0-1	2021
1	Iceland	0.908	+0.016
2	Finland	0.860	-0.001
3	Norway	0.845	-0.004
4	New Zealand	0.841	+0.001
5	Sweden	0.822	0.000
6	Rwanda	0.811	+0.006
7	Nicaragua	0.810	+0.015
8	Namibia	0.807	-0.002
9	Ireland	0.804	+0.005
10	Germany	0.801	+0.005
11	Lithuania	0.799	-0.004
12	Costa Rica	0.796	+0.010
13	Switzerland	0.795	-0.003
14	Belgium	0.793	+0.004
15	France	0.791	+0.007
16	Moldova	0.788	+0.02
17	Spain	0.788	0.000
18	Albania	0.787	+0.017
19	Philippines	0.783	-0.001
20	South Africa	0.782	+0.001
21	Austria	0.781	+0.004
22	United Kingdom	0.780	+0.005
23	Serbia	0.779	-0.001
24	Burundi	0.777	+0.008
25	Canada	0.772	0.000
26	Latvia	0.771	-0.007
27	United States	0.769	+0.006
28	Netherlands	0.767	+0.005
29	Portugal	0.766	-0.009
30	Barbados	0.765	-0.004
31	Mexico	0.764	+0.007
32	Denmark	0.764	-0.004
33	Argentina	0.756	+0.005
34	Mozambique	0.752	-0.006
35	Guyana	0.752	+0.024
36	Belarus	0.750	-0.008
37	Peru	0.749	+0.028
38	Jamaica	0.749	+0.007
39	Slovenia	0.744	+0.003
40	Panama	0.743	+0.006
41	Ecuador	0.743	+0.003
42	Bulgaria	0.740	-0.006
43	Australia	0.738	+0.006
44	Suriname	0.737	+0.008
45	Cape Verde	0.736	+0.020
46	Luxembourg	0.736	+0.011
47	Chile	0.736	+0.020
48	Madagascar	0.735	+0.010
49	Singapore	0.734	+0.007
50	Zimbabwe	0.734	+0.002
51	Bolivia	0.734	+0.011
52	Estonia	0.733	-0.001
53	Lao PDR	0.733	-0.017
54	Montenegro	0.732	0.000
55	Georgia	0.731	-0.001
56	Timor-Leste	0.730	+0.01
57	Kenya	0.729	+0.037
58	Eswatini	0.728	-0.001
59	El Salvador	0.727	-0.011
60	Israel	0.727	+0.003
61	Uganda	0.724	+0.007
62	Zambia	0.723	-0.002
63	Italy	0.720	-0.001
64	Tanzania	0.719	+0.012
65	Kazakhstan	0.719	+0.009
66	Botswana	0.719	+0.003
67	Slovak Republic	0.717	+0.005
68	United Arab Emirates	0.716	+0.001
69	North Macedonia	0.716	+0.001
70	Mongolia	0.715	-0.001
71	Bangladesh	0.714	-0.005
72	Uruguay	0.711	+0.008
73	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.710	-0.003

Rank	Country	Score	
		0-1	2021
74	Ethiopia	0.710	+0.019
75	Colombia	0.710	-0.015
76	Czech Republic	0.710	-0.001
77	Poland	0.709	-0.004
78	Liberia	0.709	+0.016
79	Thailand	0.709	-0.001
80	Paraguay	0.707	+0.006
81	Ukraine	0.707	-0.007
82	Honduras	0.705	-0.011
83	Viet Nam	0.705	+0.004
84	Dominican Republic	0.703	+0.004
85	Malta	0.703	0.000
86	Kyrgyz Republic	0.700	+0.019
87	Lesotho	0.700	+0.002
88	Hungary	0.699	+0.010
89	Armenia	0.698	+0.025
90	Romania	0.698	-0.002
91	Togo	0.697	+0.014
92	Indonesia	0.697	+0.009
93	Cyprus	0.696	-0.011
94	Brazil	0.696	+0.001
95	Belize	0.695	-0.004
96	Nepal	0.692	+0.01
97	Cameroon	0.692	0.000
98	Cambodia	0.690	+0.006
99	Korea, Republic of	0.689	+0.002
100	Greece	0.689	0.000
101	Azerbaijan	0.687	-0.001
102	China	0.682	0.000
103	Malaysia	0.681	+0.005
104	Brunei Darussalam	0.680	+0.002
105	Mauritius	0.679	0.000
106	Myanmar	0.677	-0.004
107	Fiji	0.676	+0.002
108	Ghana	0.672	+0.007
109	Sierra Leone	0.672	+0.017
110	Sri Lanka	0.670	0.000
111	Vanuatu	0.670	+0.045
112	Senegal	0.668	-0.015
113	Guatemala	0.664	+0.009
114	Tajikistan	0.663	+0.013
115	Burkina Faso	0.659	+0.008
116	Japan	0.650	-0.006
117	Maldives	0.648	+0.006
118	Guinea	0.647	-0.013
119	Lebanon	0.644	+0.006
120	Tunisia	0.643	-0.006
121	Gambia, The	0.641	-0.004
122	Jordan	0.639	+0.001
123	Nigeria	0.639	+0.012
124	Turkey	0.639	+0.001
125	Angola	0.638	-0.019
126	Bhutan	0.637	-0.002
127	Saudi Arabia	0.636	+0.033
128	Niger	0.635	+0.006
129	Egypt	0.635	-0.004
130	Kuwait	0.632	+0.011
131	Bahrain	0.632	0.000
132	Malawi	0.632	-0.039
133	Côte d'Ivoire	0.632	-0.005
134	Comoros*	0.631	0.000
135	India	0.629	+0.003
136	Morocco	0.624	+0.012
137	Qatar	0.617	-0.007
138	Benin	0.612	-0.041
139	Oman	0.609	0.000
140	Algeria	0.602	-0.030
141	Mali	0.601	-0.010
142	Chad	0.579	-0.014
143	Iran, Islamic Republic of	0.576	-0.005
144	Congo, Democratic Rep.	0.575	-0.001
145	Pakistan	0.564	+0.008
146	Afghanistan	0.435	-0.009

World Economic Forum. 2022 World Gender Gap Report
 (https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf)

#146 Afghanistan

FIGURE 2 Percent of respondents in 24 OECD countries in each of four gender-role attitude classes across WVS waves



NOTE: 2nd wave 1990–94, 3rd wave 1995–98, 4th wave 1999–2004, 6th wave 2008–2011. Data for Austria are from the European Values Survey.

Brinton, M. C., & Lee, D. J. (2016). Gender-role ideology, labor market institutions, and post-industrial fertility. *Population and Development Review*, 405-433.

Theories of Gender Equity

- Developed to explain low fertility in Southern Europe
- How do we understand lowest-low fertility in "strong-family" countries?
- Peter McDonald

Rapid growth in women's opportunities in the public sphere

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Limited change in women's roles and expectations in the private sphere

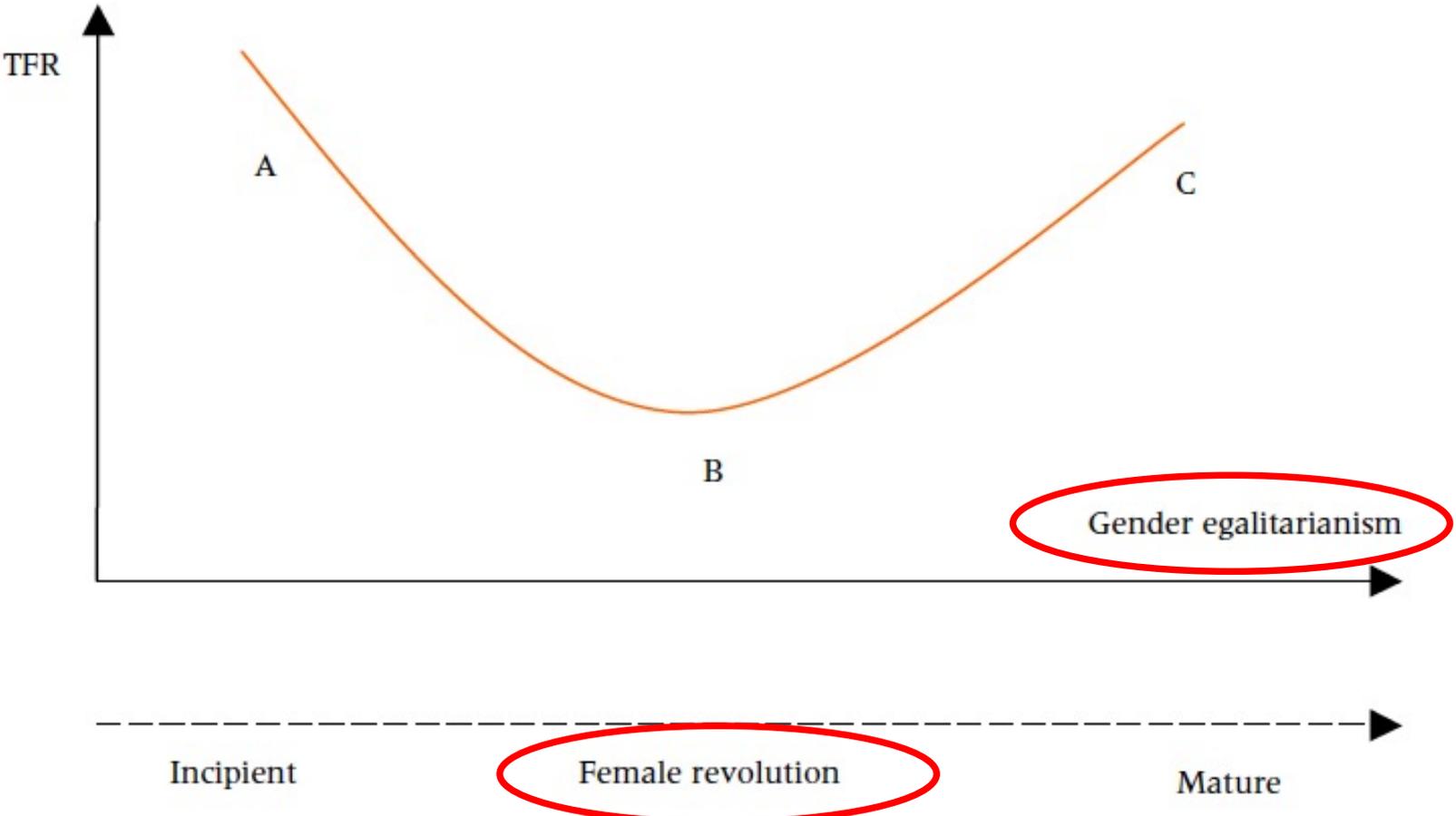
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Tension between personal goals and family, an "either-or" choice

Gender revolution, fertility, and multiple equilibria

How do we understand fertility recuperation in Scandinavia?

FIGURE 1 Schematic fertility trend over the “female revolution”



Esping-Andersen, G., & Billari, F. C. (2015). Re-theorizing family demographics. *Population and development review*, 41(1), 1-31.

Gender essentialism

- Normative endorsement of fundamentally different roles/skills/nature of men and women
- Normative basis for:
 - Breadwinner-homemaker marriage
 - Wives as supplemental earners
 - Intensive *mothering*
- Mary Brinton, Ekaterina Hertog on Japan
- Gender essentialist family organization has become less desirable and more difficult
- Central emphasis on inflexible labor market:
 - Protection of core (men)
 - Limited flexibility (women)

Brinton, M. C., & Oh, E. (2019). Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women's employment and fertility in East Asia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 125(1), 105-140.

Brinton, M. C., & Lee, D. J. (2016). Gender-role ideology, labor market institutions, and post-industrial fertility. *Population and Development Review*, 405-433.

Hertog, E. (2008, June). 'The worst abuse against a child is the absence of a parent': how Japanese unwed mothers evaluate their decision to have a child outside wedlock. In *Japan Forum* (Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 193-217). Taylor & Francis Group.

Concluding thoughts

- Japan appears to be following a distinctive path through the SDT
 - Along with other East Asian and perhaps Southern European countries
- Behaviorally, a typical SDT country with one major exception
 - Marriage-fertility link remains strong
 - Growth in lifelong singlehood = childlessness
- Attitudinally, quite different from other SDT countries
 - Change consistent with SDT but slower than elsewhere
- Several general frameworks suggest a role of gender inequality, maintenance of gender essentialist norms
- Nothing operates in isolation: emphasis on gender needs to be understood w/re to labor market, policy, education, etc.