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FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND  
GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL

# Late motherhood across time and space

Eva Beaujouan

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# Why studying late fertility in the low fertility countries?

- Childbearing postponement → more persons have children “late”
  - several age limit definitions, for women
    - Age 35 as biological ability to conceive declines more from that age
    - Age 40 as “social age deadline” for having children (Billari et al. 2011)
- Late childbearing has both positive and negative socio-demographic and health consequences (Schmidt et al. 2012; Myrskylä et al. 2017)
  - Older parents provide better economic resources and more stability
  - More risk for the health of the mother and of the child (age 35+)
  - Postponement always entails the risk of not having (all) the children expected, e.g. involuntary childlessness
    - Because of the increase with age in inability to conceive

# Research questions



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- Late childbearing is subject to opposite forces:
  - The share of late parents is inflated by delayed childbearing
  - but it is constrained by age-related infertility, which possibly *prevents its increase* and can also result into *more childlessness*.
  - and it is sensitive to family size (higher order births take place later)
- Did late childbearing spread the same way in all low fertility countries?
- Is the “recent” rise in late childbearing stalling?
- Are the prevalence of late motherhood and of childlessness correlated?
- How was late fatherhood changing in the meanwhile?



# Human fertility database (HFD)

- Using mostly age-specific fertility rates (ASFR) and age specific first birth rates (ASFR1)
- Calculating mostly the share of the TFR due to births  $\geq 40$ , or of the TFR1 due to first births  $\geq 40$

A few other surveys and sources (cited in due time)  
Male ASFRs provided by Dudel and Klüsener (2018)

Tomáš Sobotka and Éva Beaujouan. 2018. "Late motherhood in low-fertility countries: Reproductive intentions, trends and consequences. In: Stoop, D. (ed.). *Preventing age related fertility loss*. Cham: Springer, pp. 11-29.

Éva Beaujouan. 2018. *Late fertility intentions and late fertility in Austria*. VID working papers 06/2018

Éva Beaujouan and Tomáš Sobotka. Forthcoming. *Population and Societies*.



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# Late childbearing trends

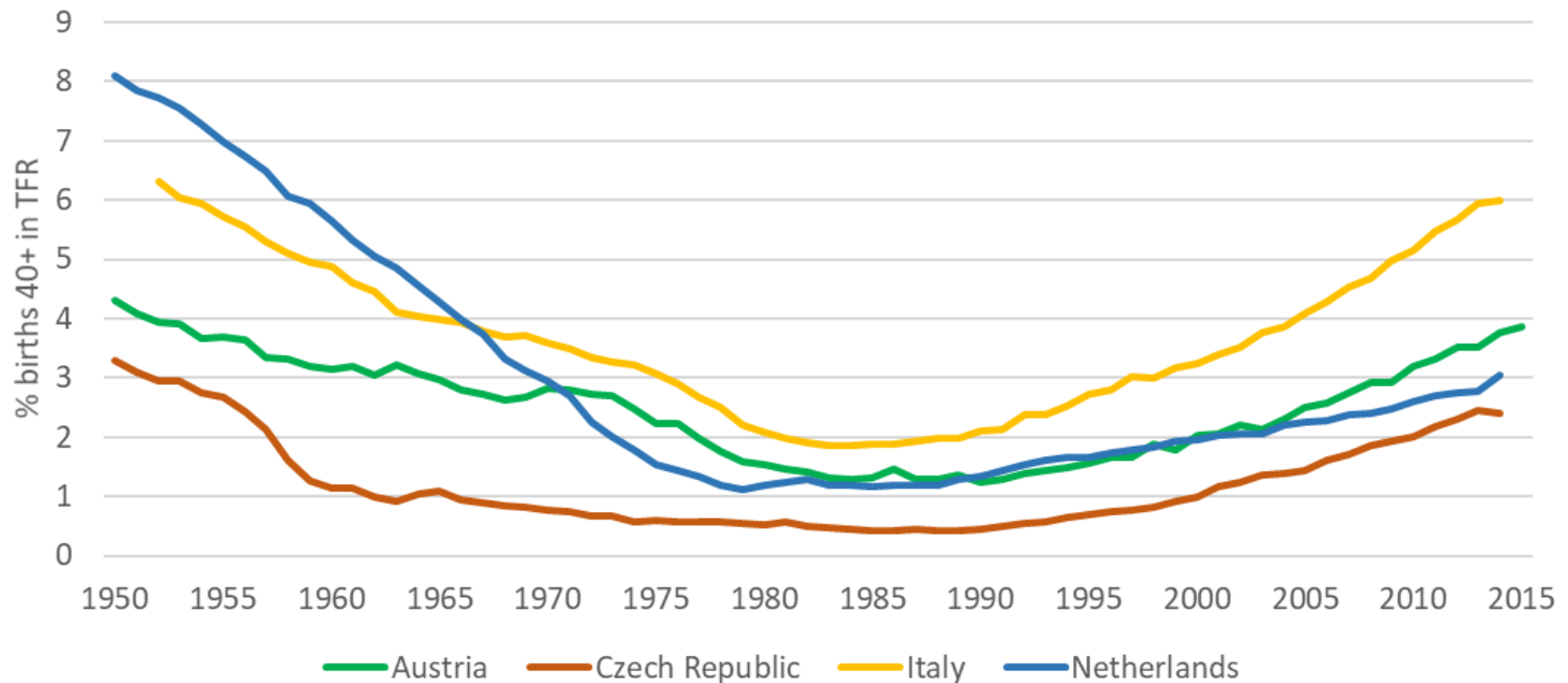
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# The revival of late fertility (1)



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Contribution of women aged 40+ to TFR, 1950-2015, selected countries

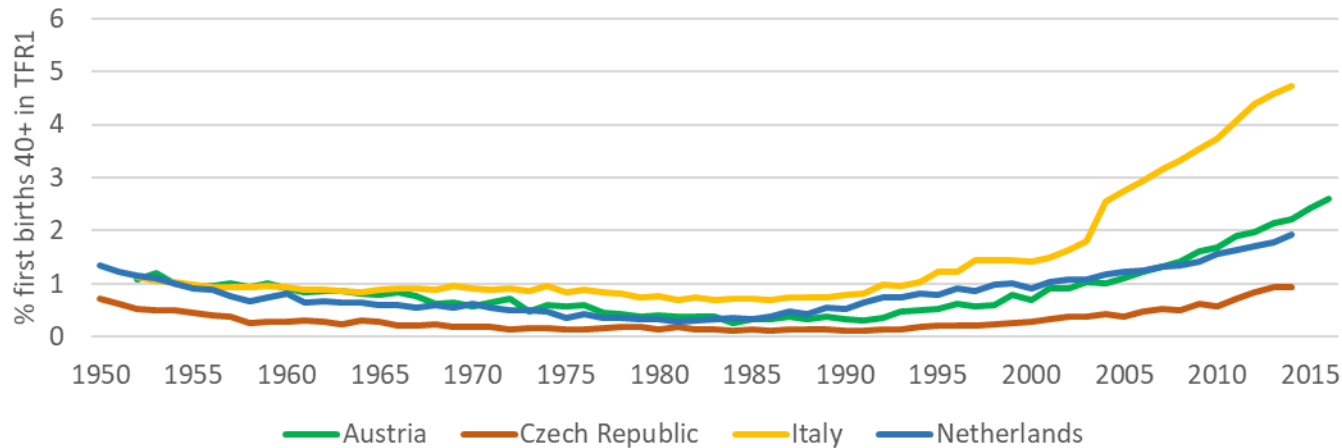


Source: Human Fertility Database and collection

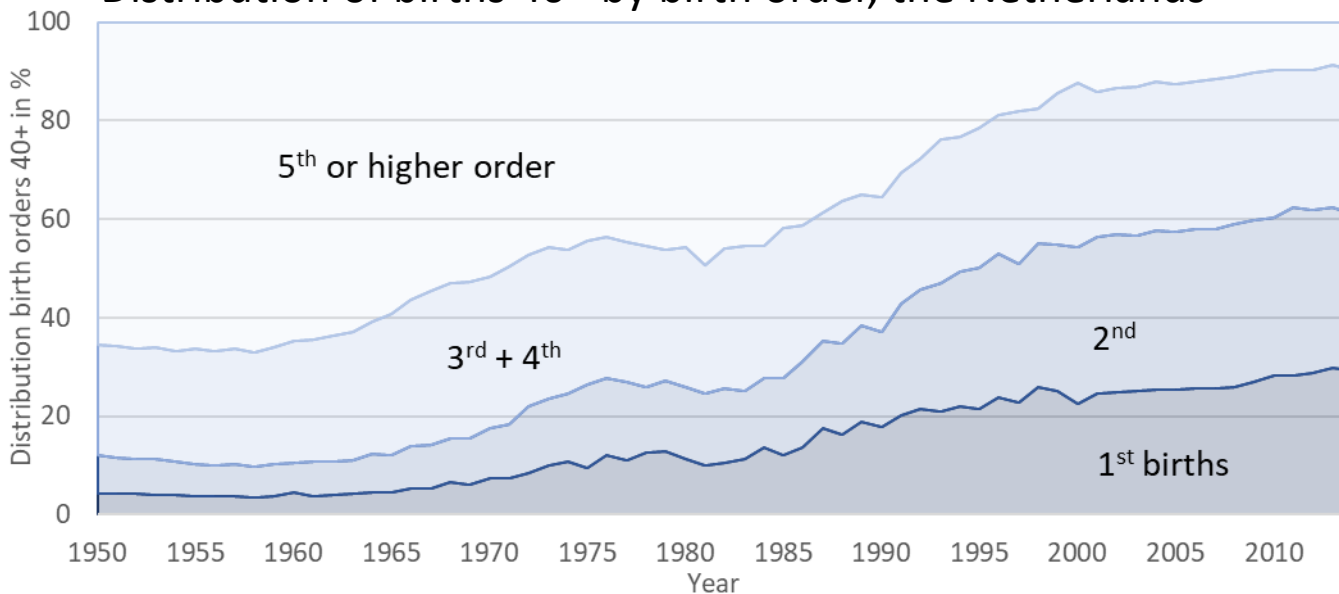


# The revival of late fertility (2)

## Contribution of women aged 40+ to 1st-birth rates, 1950-2015



## Distribution of births 40+ by birth order, the Netherlands

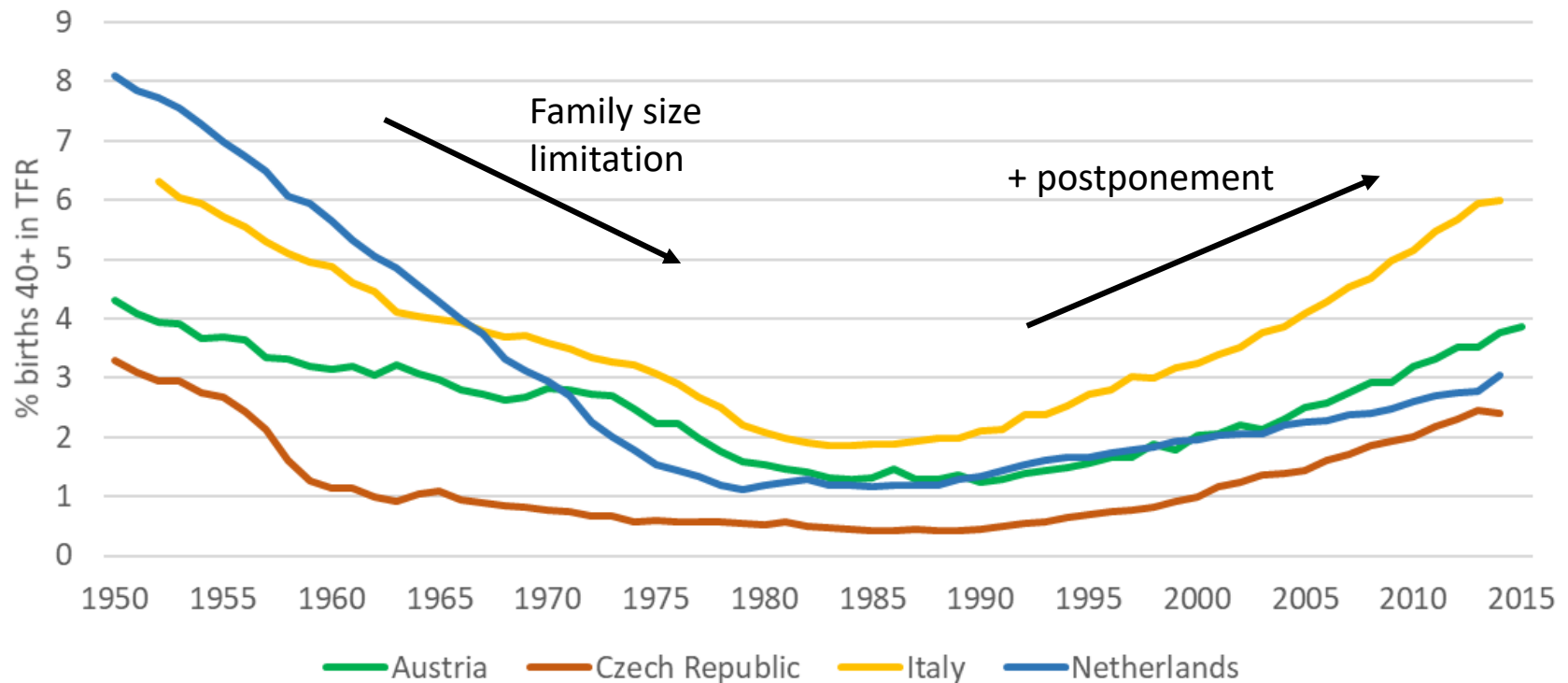


# The revival of late fertility (3)



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Contribution of women aged 40+ to TFR, 1950-2015, selected countries



Source: Human Fertility Database and collection





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# **Late entry into parenthood across low fertility countries**

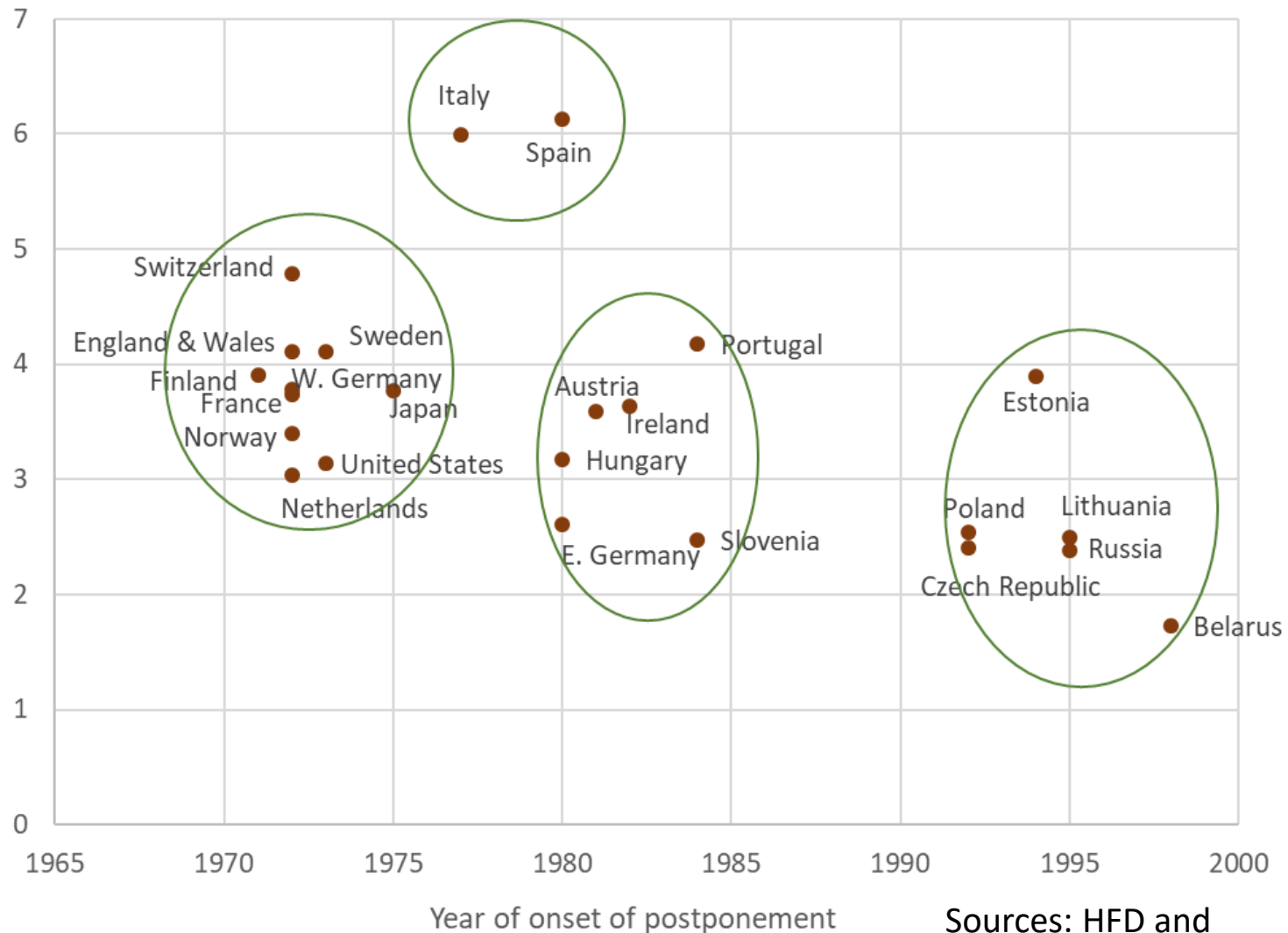
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# Contribution of first births at 40+ to first birth rates correlated to year of onset of postponement



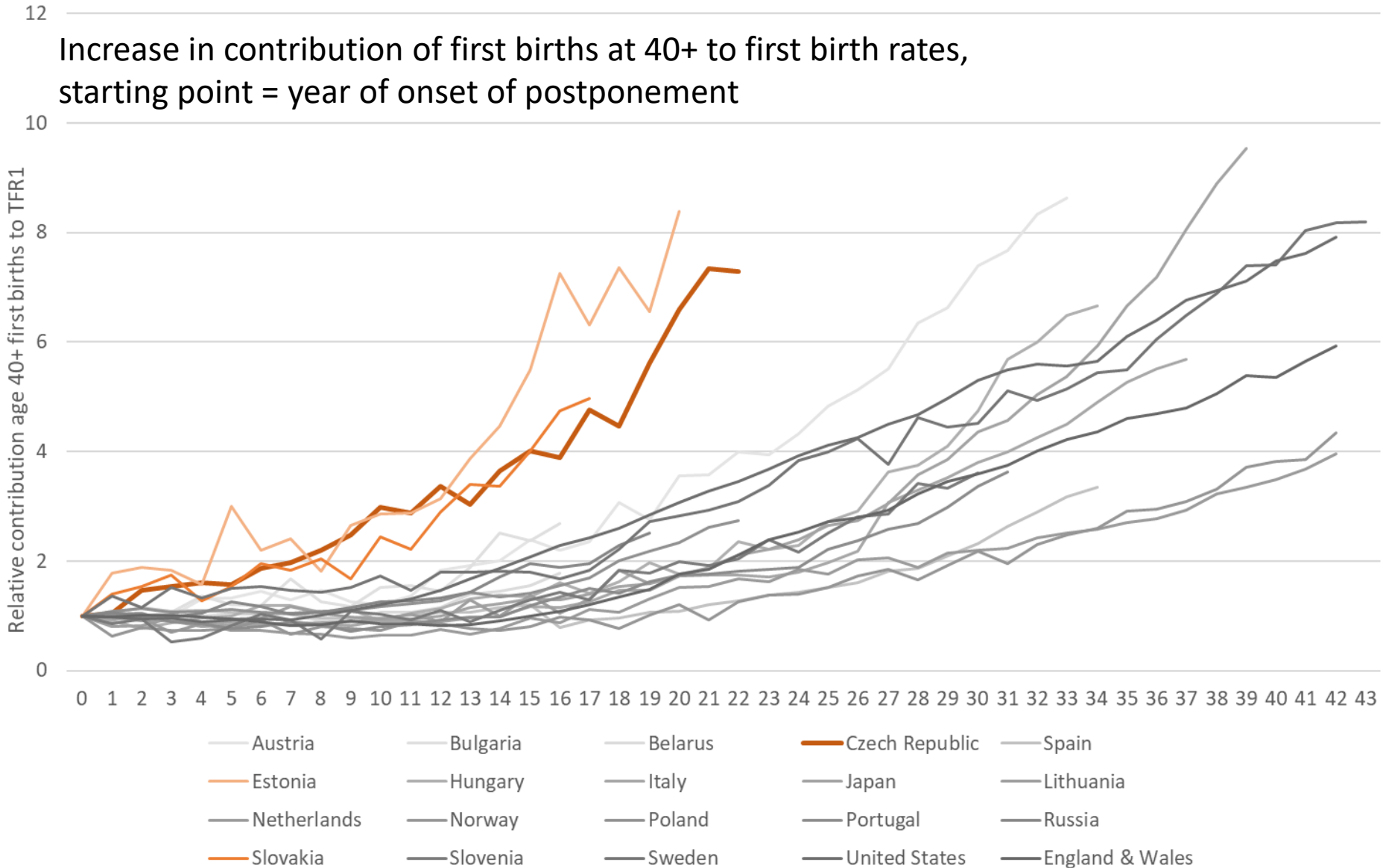
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Contrib. 40+ to TFR1 2014 (%)



Sources: HFD and Sobotka 2004, table 2.2 p.57

# Uniform spread of late first births then divergence across low fertility countries, with a few exceptions





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# Late childbearing and childlessness

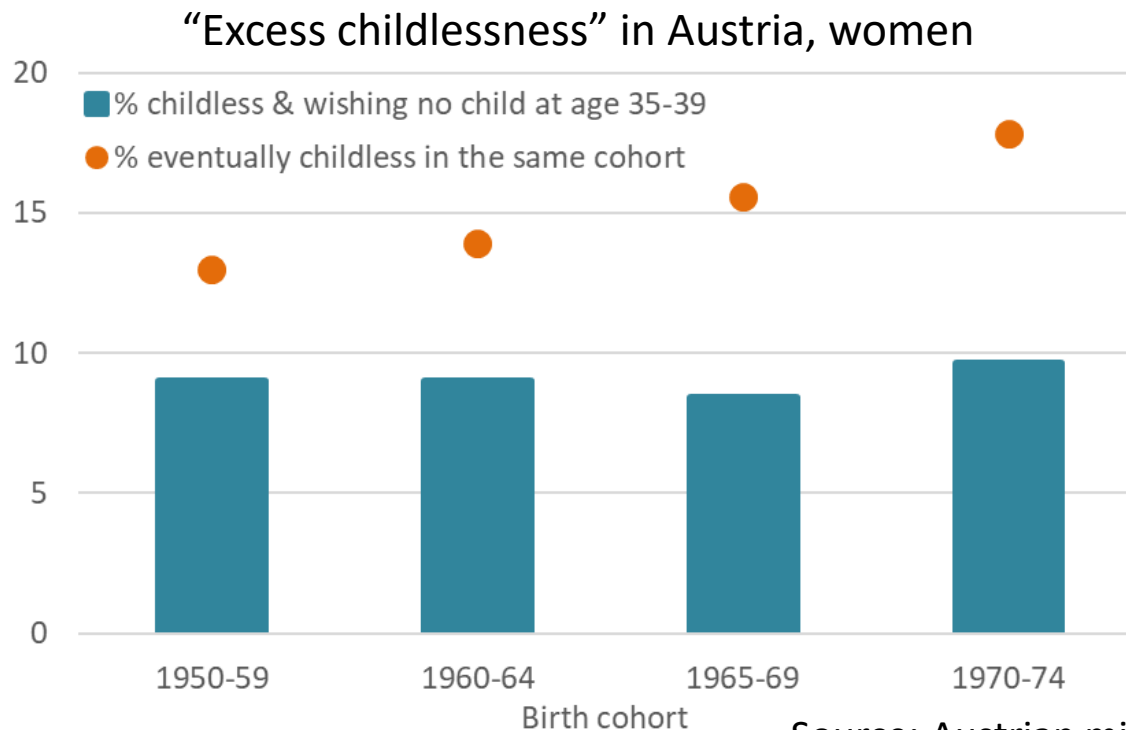
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# Increasing mismatch between “childlessness intentions” at older ages and definitive childlessness levels



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- “Age and Fertility: how late can you wait?” (Menken 1985)
  - Chances of conception leading to a live birth start decreasing dramatically from age 35 (particularly for women)
  - postponement → increase in involuntary childlessness (te Velde et al. 2012)



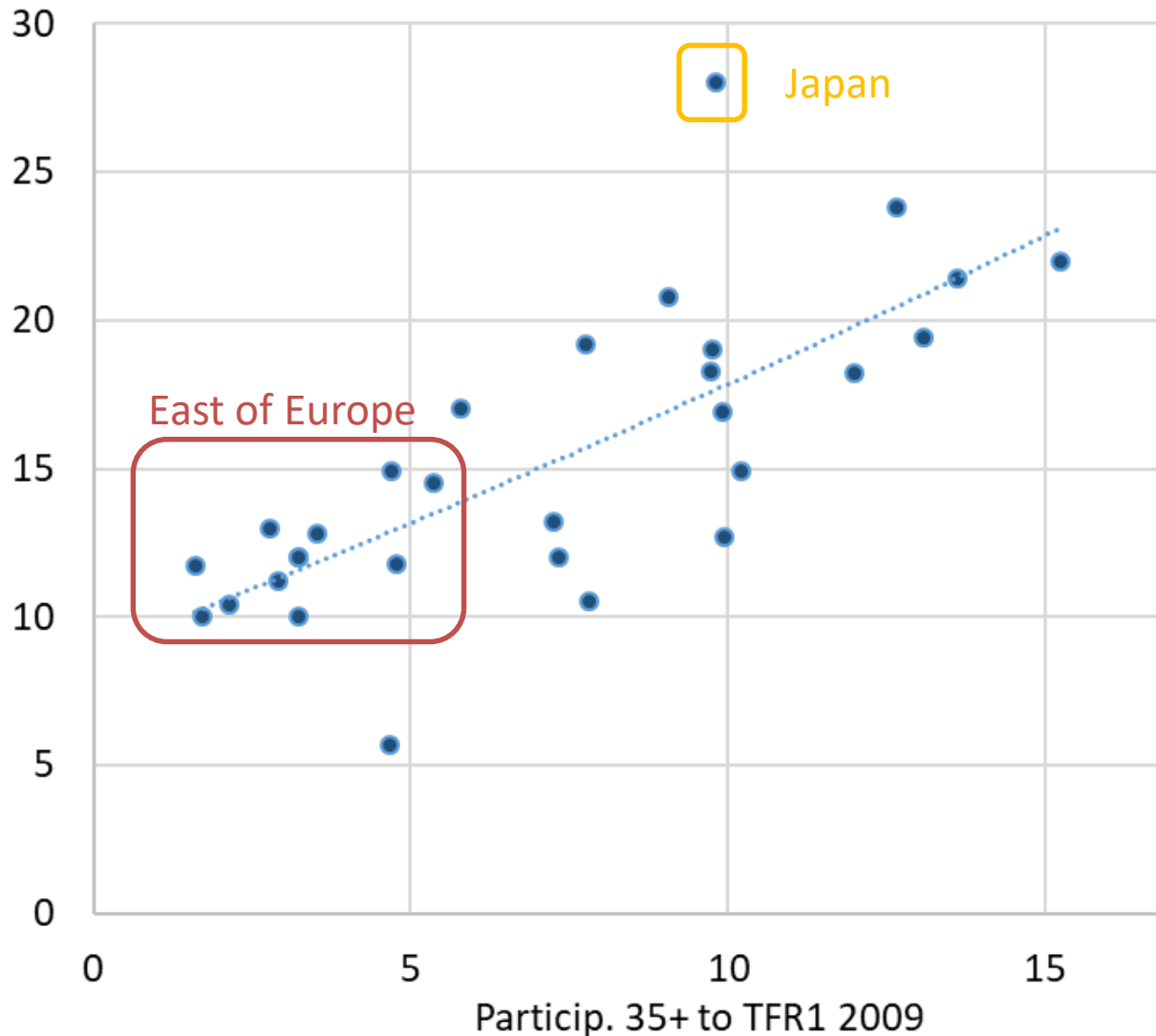
Source: Austrian micro-censuses 1986-2016

# More childless women where fertility takes place the latest



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% childlessness 1972 cohort



Sources: HFD, Sobotka 2016, European demographic/fertility datasheets...



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# Late childbearing by sex

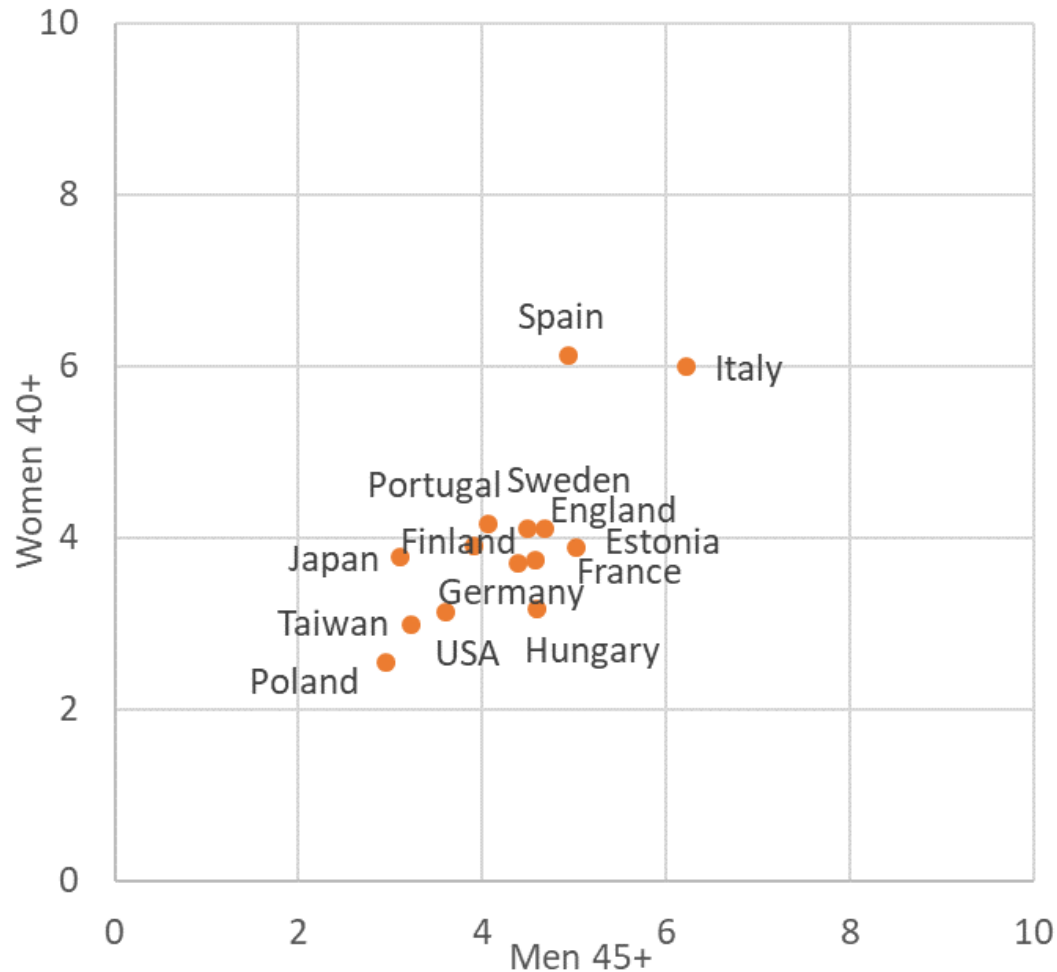
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# Larger share of late births among men, but consistency between 45+ for men and 40+ for women



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### Contribution late births to TFR, 2014



Sources: HFD,  
Dudel and Klüsener



# Universal increase in late childbearing, but stronger for women than for men



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Increase between 1990 and 2014, in %

	Men 45+	Women 40+
England	53	180
Estonia	142	227
Finland	57	69
Germany	64	201
Hungary	222	296
Poland	44	68
Portugal	48	112
Spain	90	167
Sweden	101	138
USA	29	140

Note: Similar increase for men 40+ as for men 45+



# Discussion

- The rise in late childbearing does continue, it is booming
- In most countries the spread of late entry into parenthood started slowly after the onset of childbearing postponement, and differentiated afterwards
  - The increase was slower in countries where there are more late births traditionally
  - The spread of late fertility is also slower among men than women
- “Reaching the limits”?
  - There are very good chances that involuntary childlessness is pushed up by postponement and transition to further children limited → to explore further
  - How far is assisted reproduction used today, and may it help those who postponed “too much”?



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*Thank you*

Starting soon!

**“Later fertility in Europe”**

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