

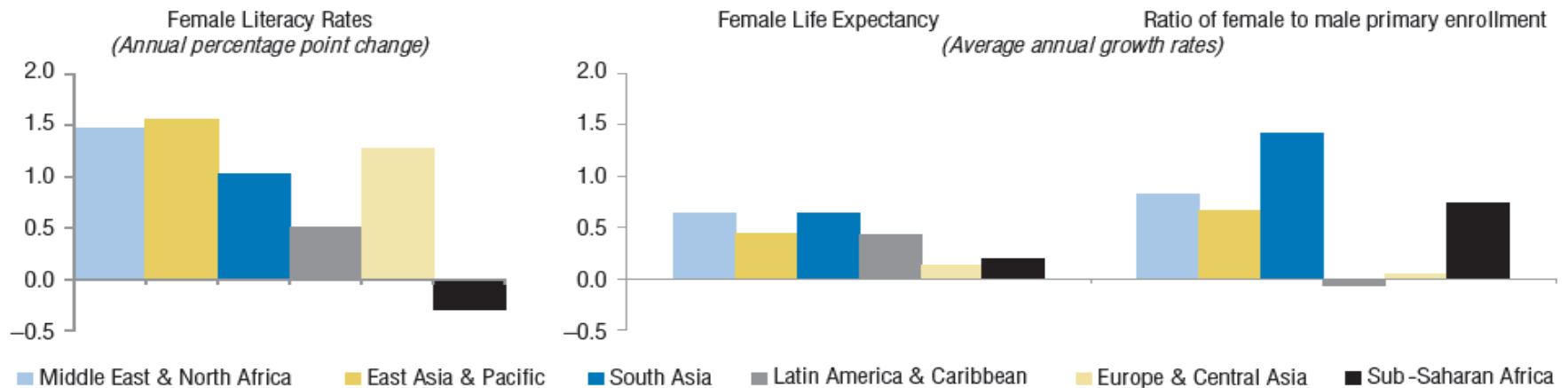
Women, education, labour market participation, and childbearing in the Middle East and North Africa

Impact of Changing Population Dynamics on the Arab Family
International Seminar, Doha

Dr. Narjes Mehdizadeh

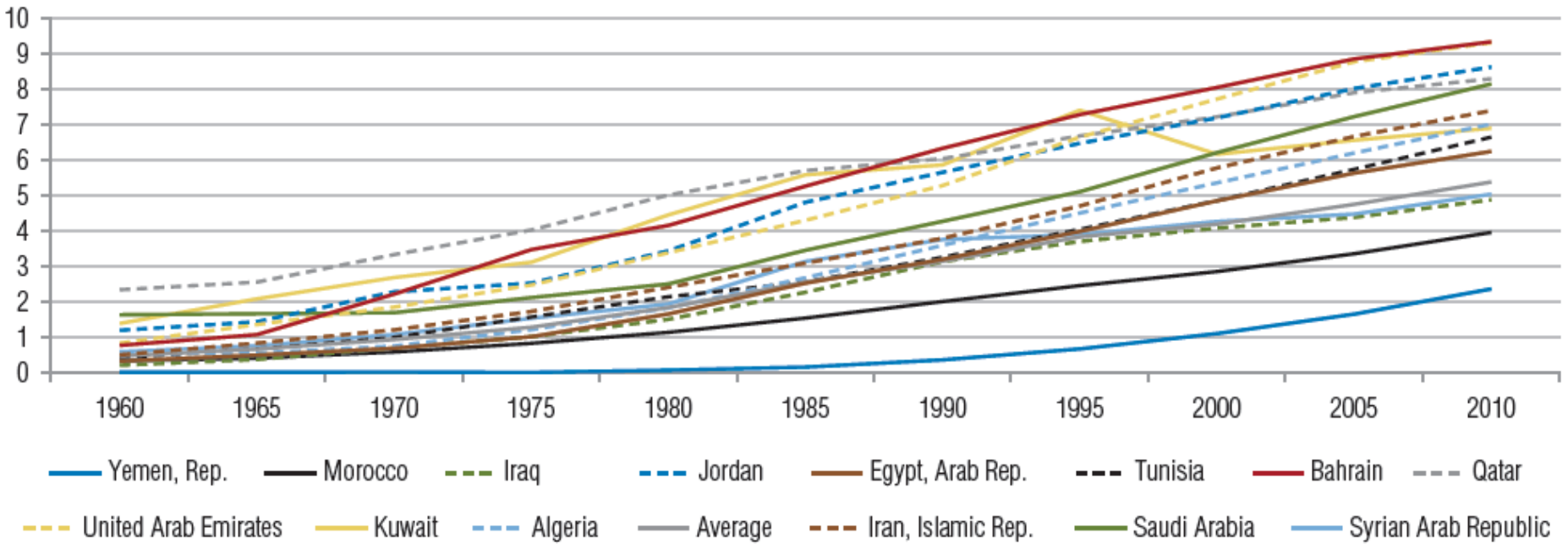
Human Development Index: Women in MENA

Figure 1: MENA's Progress in Women's Health and Education (Average Annual Growth Rates in Key Indicators: 1985–2010)



Source: World Bank, 2012

Figure 2: Average Years of Total Schooling for Females, Ages 15 and Above



Source: Barro and Lee, 2010

The Reality of Women, Work and Education in MENA

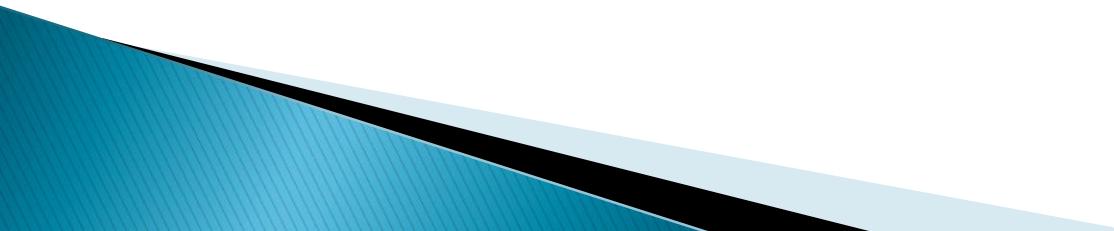
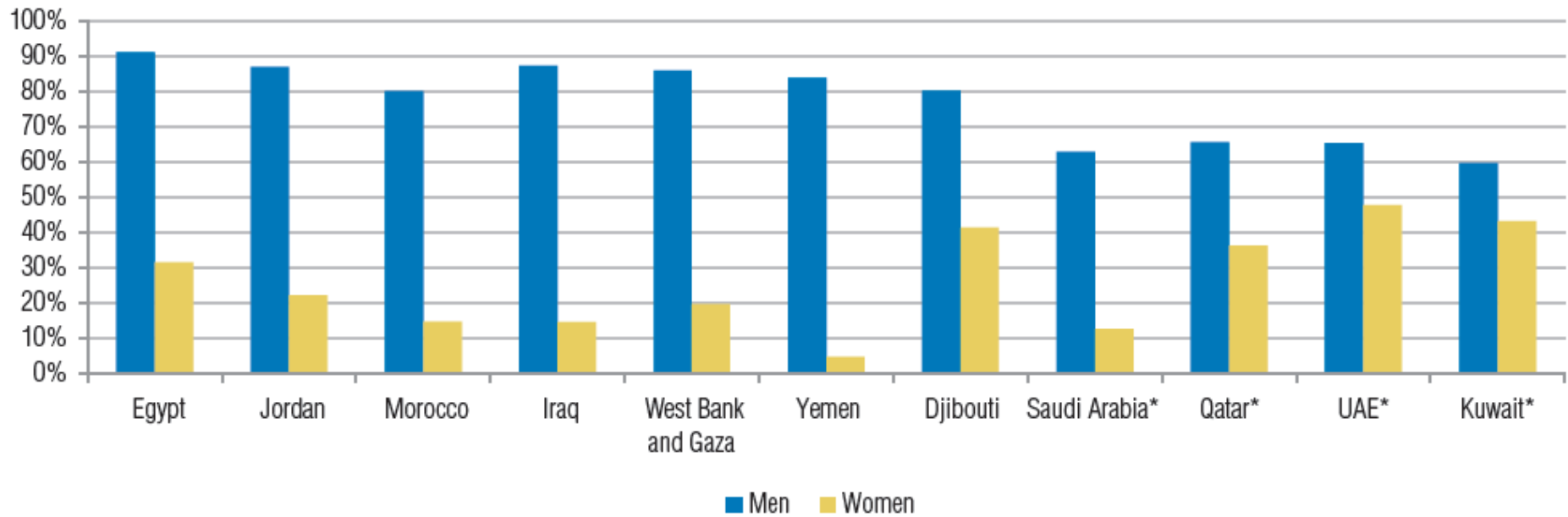
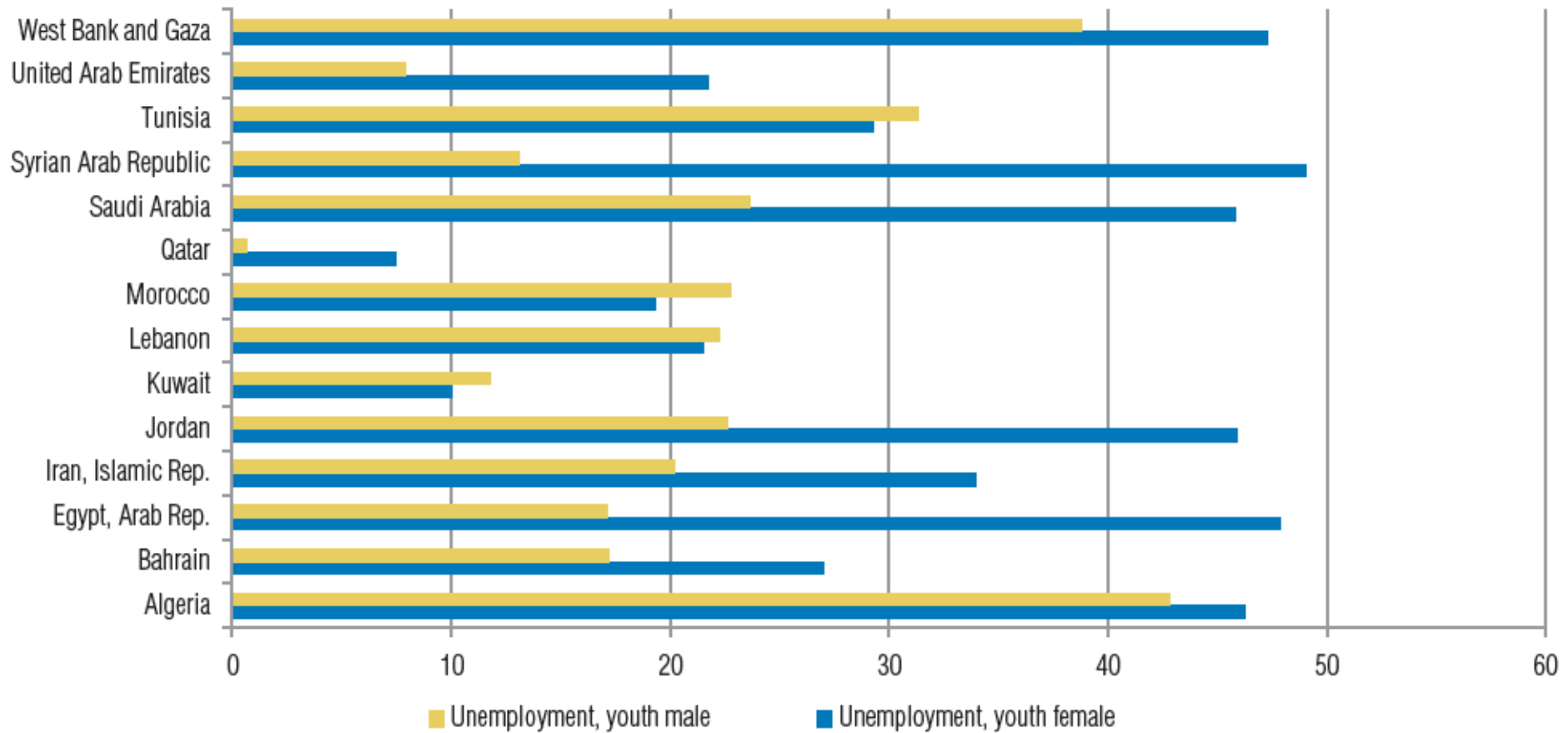
- ▶ Close relationship between education/training and employment
 - ▶ Is the increase in the number of educated women in MENA reflected in their participation in the labour market?
 - ▶ Women's labour market participation in MENA remains at about 20%.
 - ▶ The employment rate of Qatari women was 36.3 % in 2010 and the National Development Strategy 2011-2016 aims to raise this to 42%.
 - ▶ In Iran, according to the 2006 census, 12.4% of women were economically active compared to 65.6% of men.
 - ▶ The rate of female participation in the labour force in Turkey is 27.6%; the 9th Development Plan (2007-2013) aims to raise this to 29.6%.
 - ▶ The rate of female participation in the labour force In Tunisia in 2009 was 25% (ETF, 2011).
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Figure 3: Female and Male Labour Force Participation across MENA



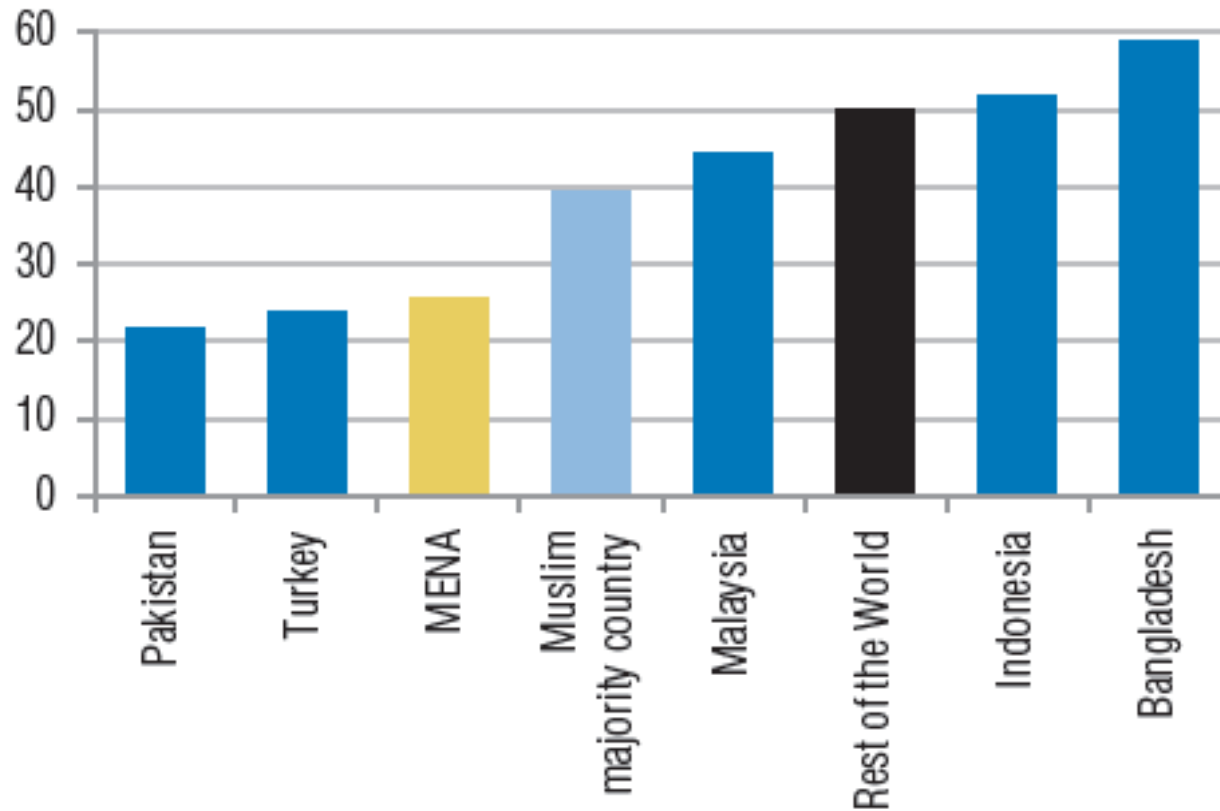
Source: World Bank, 2012

Figure 4: Gender Gap in Unemployment for Young Women



Source: World Development Indicators, 2011.

Figure 5: Relatively Low Rates of Female Labour Force Participation in MENA



Source: World Development Indicators, 2011

Addressing the fundamental puzzle

- ▶ Researchers have cited the following factors as being obstacles to women's employment in the MENA. (e.g., Olmsted, 2003);
- ▶ Ideas and values
- ▶ Overall low education levels,
- ▶ Islamisation,
- ▶ Wage discrimination,
- ▶ Patriarchy,
- ▶ High fertility,
- ▶ Type of economic development
- ▶ Lack of employment opportunities

- ▶ In European societies welfare policies, particularly childcare, are of significance to women's employment. (e.g., Gornick *et al* , 1997; Tomlinson, 2006).

Is the effect of welfare policies neglected in MENA context?

- ▶ Fluctuation of state support of women's employment
- ▶ Lack of childcare and work-related welfare/support policies that fit with working mothers' needs and preferences

Figure 6: Trends in total fertility rates in selected Muslim-majority countries, 1970-1975 to 2005-2010

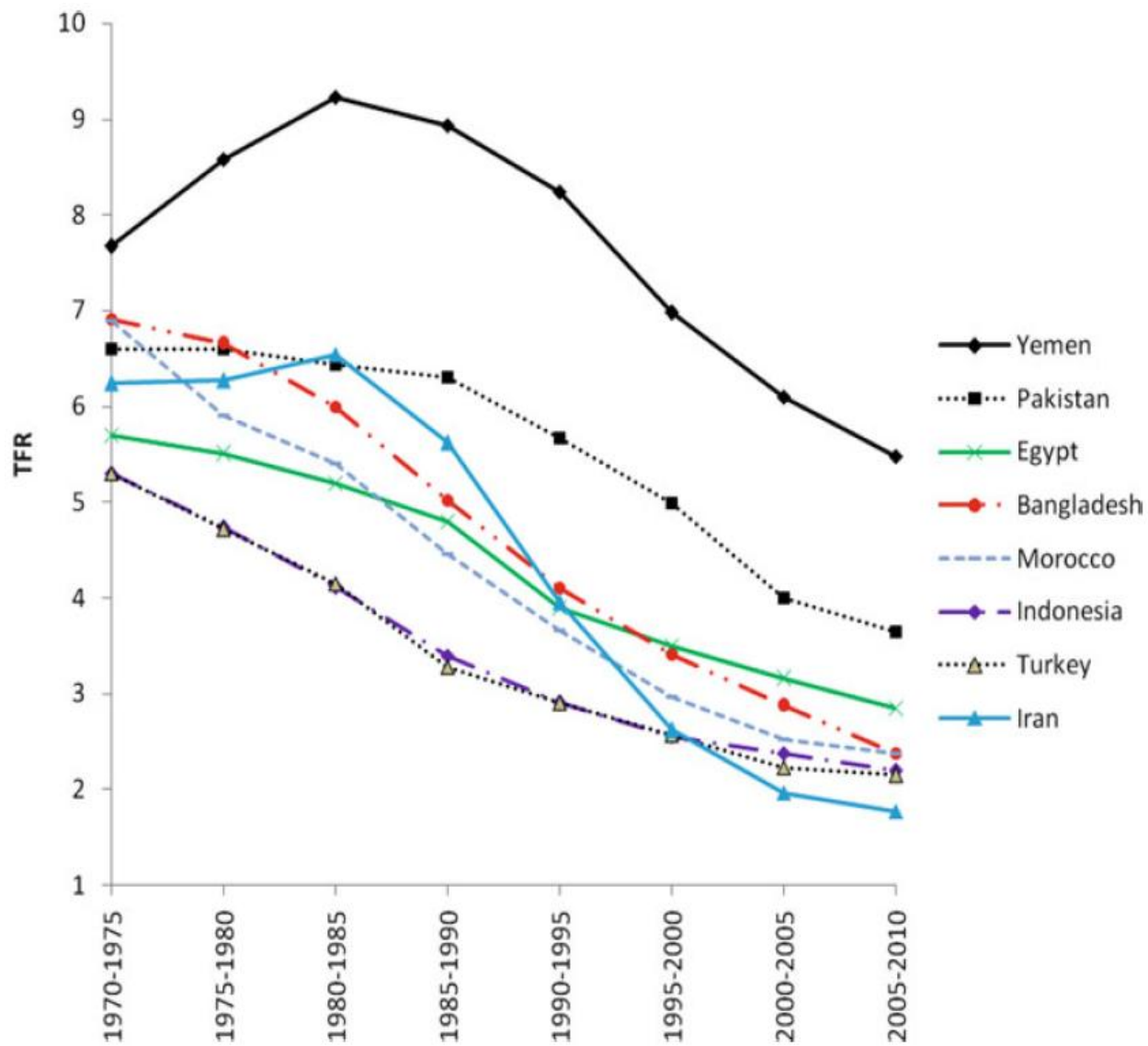
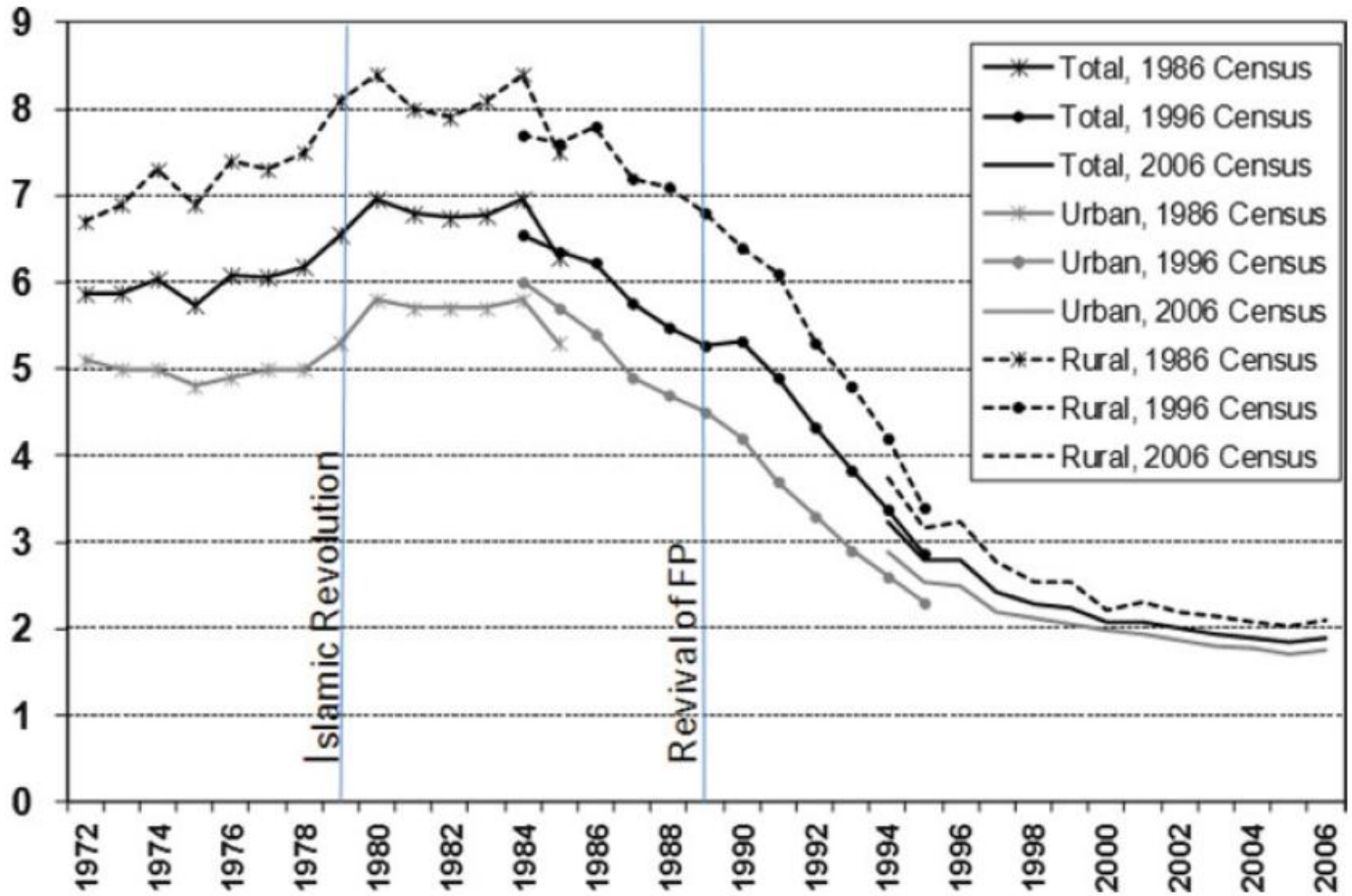



Figure 7: Estimated total fertility rate, Iran, 1970–2006

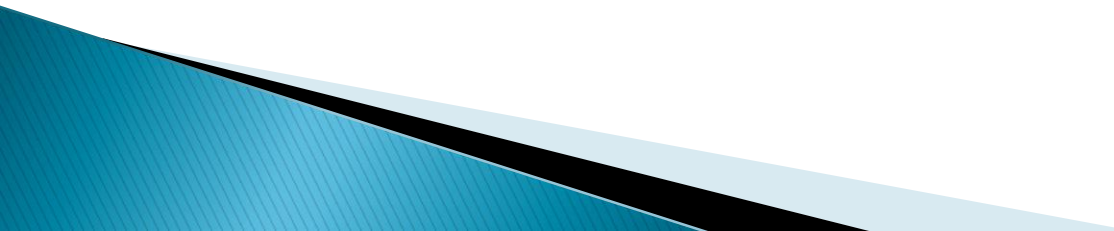


Source: Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2009

Women, education and fertility in Middle East and North Africa

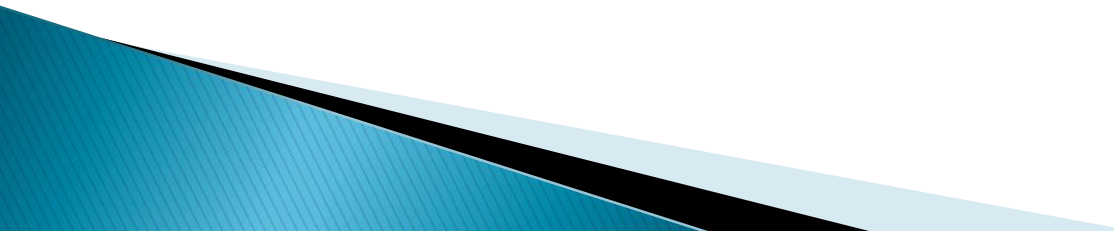
- Social and economic changes reduced influence of traditional values and customs, legal reforms have changed status of women
 - Reducing infant mortality, raising age at marriage; promoting gender equity within couples.
 - Women's education impacts on fertility in three ways: (1) greater knowledge of contraception (Martin 1995); (2) number of surviving children that couples would have without contraception; (3) number of children couple would like to have; and (4) psychic, social, and monetary costs of deliberate fertility control.
 - Family unit as basis of society; mothers key to family cohesion: main principles of social policy.
 - Factors affecting demand for children : gender preferences, value attached to children; costs of bearing and bringing up children (Mason 1987)
 - Education decreases the demand for children by improving women's social standing, altering the perceived value of girls; raising the time and opportunity costs of children (Mason 1987; Jejeebhoy, 1995).
 - Women's ability to fulfil their own aspirations (Blossfeld, 1995).
 - Changes in fertility rates depend on policies to combine work and family life
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Women, work and fertility trends

- In MENA birth rates remained high until 1980s.
 - Educated women more likely to want to participate in the labour market.
 - Despite more women graduates, still low rate of female participation in the workforce
 - In Turkey, falling birth rates, increasing life expectancy, and an ageing population are in future. 27% of the total population currently below age 15, but elderly already 7.2% with constant increase expected in next twenty years.
 - By 2025 number of elderly will exceed 8 million (TURKSTAT 2011).
 - High unemployment rate: , preponderance of young people; misalignment between education and labour market demands.
 - The same demographic changes as most transformations as most developed countries? Eberstadt and Shah (2012)
 - By 2050, the GCC will face an ageing population and a slowing down of the increase in national workforces. To reduce reliance on expatriates, nationals should be trained and women encouraged to take up employment (Mujahid, 2012).
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Effect of childcare on women's employment

Conventional labour–supply model:

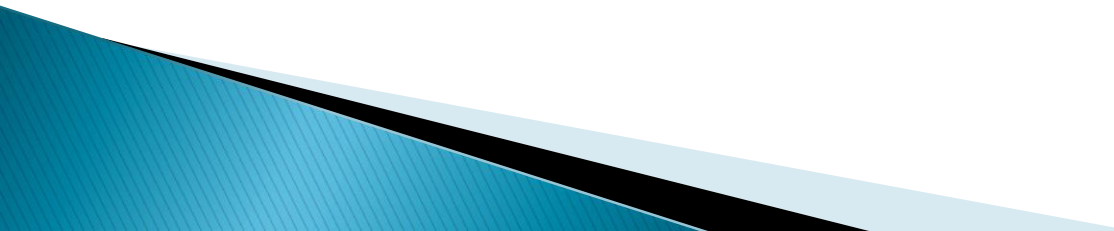
- Caring for children increases mothers' 'preferences' for non–market time vs time spent in paid work.
 - More satisfactory childcare options would decrease mothers' preferences for time spent at home.
 - Higher cost of care would have the same effect as lower income
 - Leading to a decrease in mothers' employment and hours of paid work.
 - Improvement in childcare alternatives related to labour supply growth.
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Variation in implementing family policies

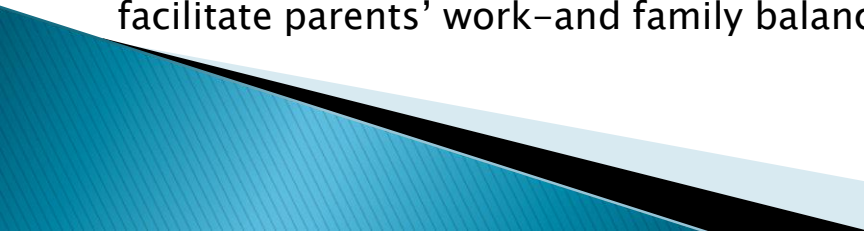
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report:

- Governments spend money on child care to help families' work and family balance. This helps increase fertility rates more than giving money directly to subsidise births.
- Childcare can increase both mothers' and children's wellbeing

However

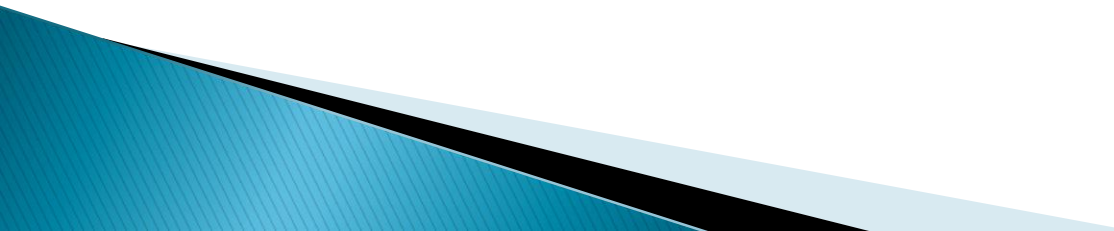
- Cross-country variation in relating to spending to implement family policies
 - Policies to help women back to workforce soon after childbirth, e.g. childcare facilities,
 - Policies to increase birth rate, e.g. subsidising women to take time off work.
 - Others see men's roles and attitudes as crucial to successful policy.
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Work and family balance and fertility

- Preference theory – women have choices about work, family life and fertility (Hakim, 1996; 2000, 2003) .
 - changing patterns of fertility, work and family balance strategies more likely to be useful accompanied by women’s choices of the role they prefer.
 - lack of literature on how women balance care and work; their preferences about toward work and motherhood (Mehdizadeh, 2010).
 - Lack of childcare for school-age children and other work–family balance strategies impacts strongly on women (Mehdizadeh, 2010) in the MENA (Mehdizadeh, 2013b, 2013d).
 - Average age for educated women to have children is around graduation, adding to barriers to employment. More institutional resources for women with family responsibilities is vital to facilitate transition to employment from education.
 - Luci-Greulich and Thévenon (2013), using macro panel data from 18 OECD countries for the period 1982–2007
 - Each instrument of the family policy package had a positive effect; working parents’ choice to have children facilitated by combined forms of support in children's early years.
 - Cash transfers for low-income parents, child care and parental leave part of policy mix to facilitate parents’ work–and family balance.
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Recommendations for future family policy in the Middle East and North Africa

To achieve greater population dynamic, MENA countries need to consider work and family balance agenda more seriously:

- To increase female participation rates in the labour market.
 - To create jobs for the young population. Governments can implement a number of immediate measures to accelerate job creation and enhance the employability of their young populations through work and family balance strategies such as job flexibility
 - To have a more balanced population to be able to face the future challenge of aging populations and encouraging births.
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Thank you!



Fertility^a

	Total fertility rate 1990	Total fertility rate 2008	Total fertility rate 2009	Fertility growth rate (annual), 1988–1998	Fertility growth rate (annual), 1998–2008
Afghanistan	8	7.7	6.6	8	7.7
Algeria	4.7	2.6	2.4	4.7	2.6
Bahrain	3.7	2.6	2.3	3.7	2.6
Cyprus	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.6
Djibouti	6.2	4.8	3.9	6.2	4.8
Egypt, Arab Rep.	4.6	3.3	2.9	4.6	3.3
Iran, Islamic Rep.	4.8	2.2	1.8	4.8	2.2
Iraq	6	5	4.1	6	5
Israel	3	2.9	2.8	3	2.9
Jordan	5.5	3.9	3.1	5.5	3.9
Kuwait	3.5	2.4	2.2	3.5	2.4
Lebanon	3.1	2.4	1.8	3.1	2.4
Libya	4.8	3.2	2.7	4.8	3.2
Malta	2	1.6	1.3	2	1.6
Morocco	4	2.7	2.4	4	2.7
Oman	6.6	4.4	3	6.6	4.4
Pakistan	6.1	4.7	4	6.1	4.7
Qatar	4.4	3.1	2.4	4.4	3.1
Saudi Arabia	5.8	4.2	3.1	5.8	4.2
Somalia	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.6	6.5
Sudan	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.7
Syrian Arab Republic	5.5	3.8	3.2	5.5	3.8
Tunisia	3.6	2.1	1.8	3.6	2.1
Turkey	3.1	2.4	2.1	3.1	2.4
United Arab Emirates	4.4	2.7	5.1	4.4	2.7
West Bank and Gaza	5.5	3.9	3.1	5.5	3.9
Yemen, Rep.	8.1	6.3	5.2	8.1	6.3

Sources: UN, annual reports from WHO, UNFPA, the World Bank, UNESCO and ILO.

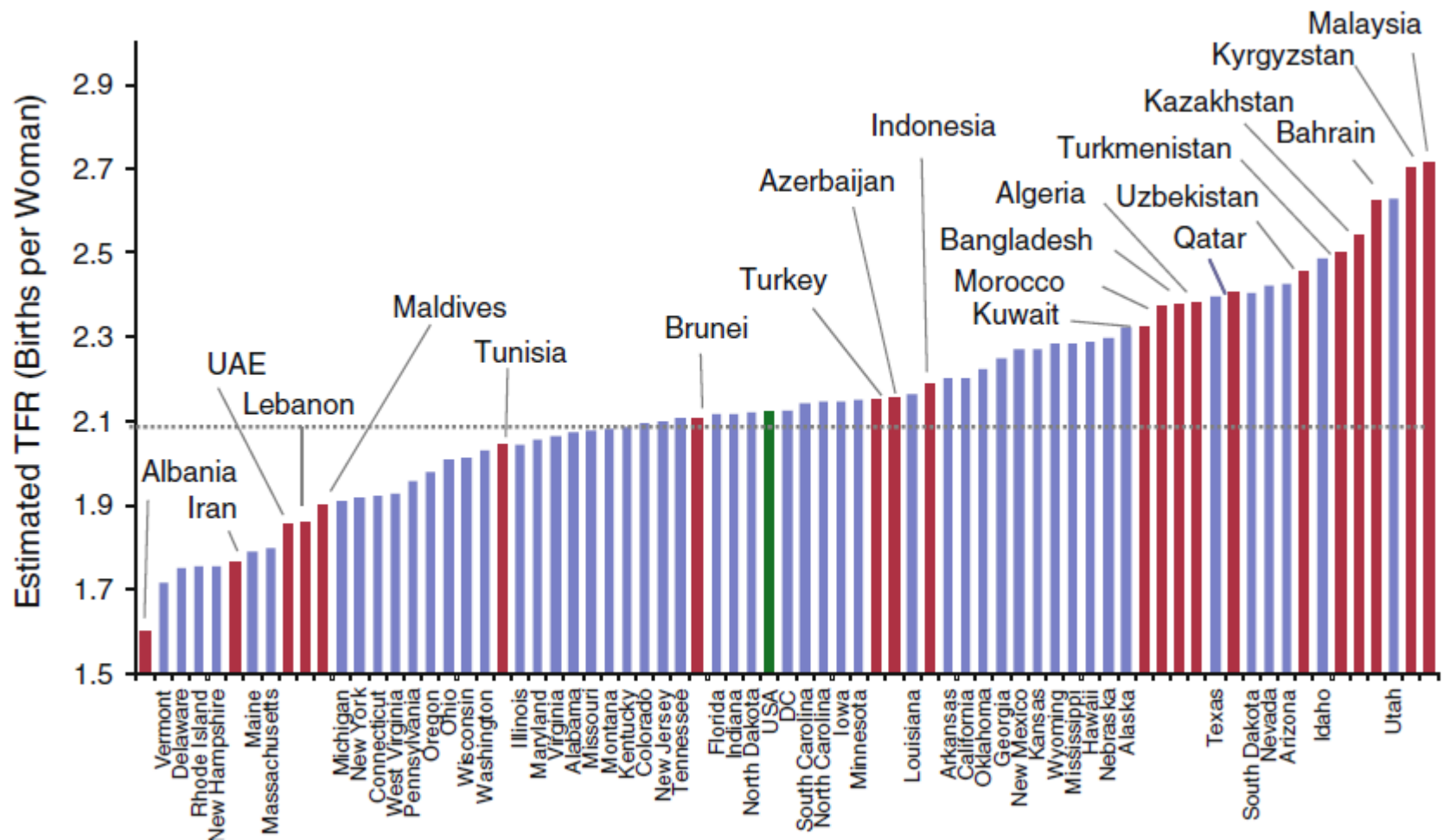


Fig. 2.2 Total fertility rates in United States and selected Muslim-majority countries, c. 2007.
 Note: Muslim-majority TFRs as reported by the UNPD for 2005–2010 period (Sources: US TFR source (2007 data): National Vital Statistics, Volume 58, Number 24, May 24, 2010, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58_24.pdf; Muslim-majority country TFR source (2005–2010 data): Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 revision)

