

The family and social integration in the Middle East and North Africa

Djavad Salehi-Isfahani
Virginia Tech and the Brookings
Institution

Prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on Protecting the Arab Family from Poverty:
Employment, Social Integration and Intergenerational Solidarity, Doha, Qatar, June 2-3, 2013.

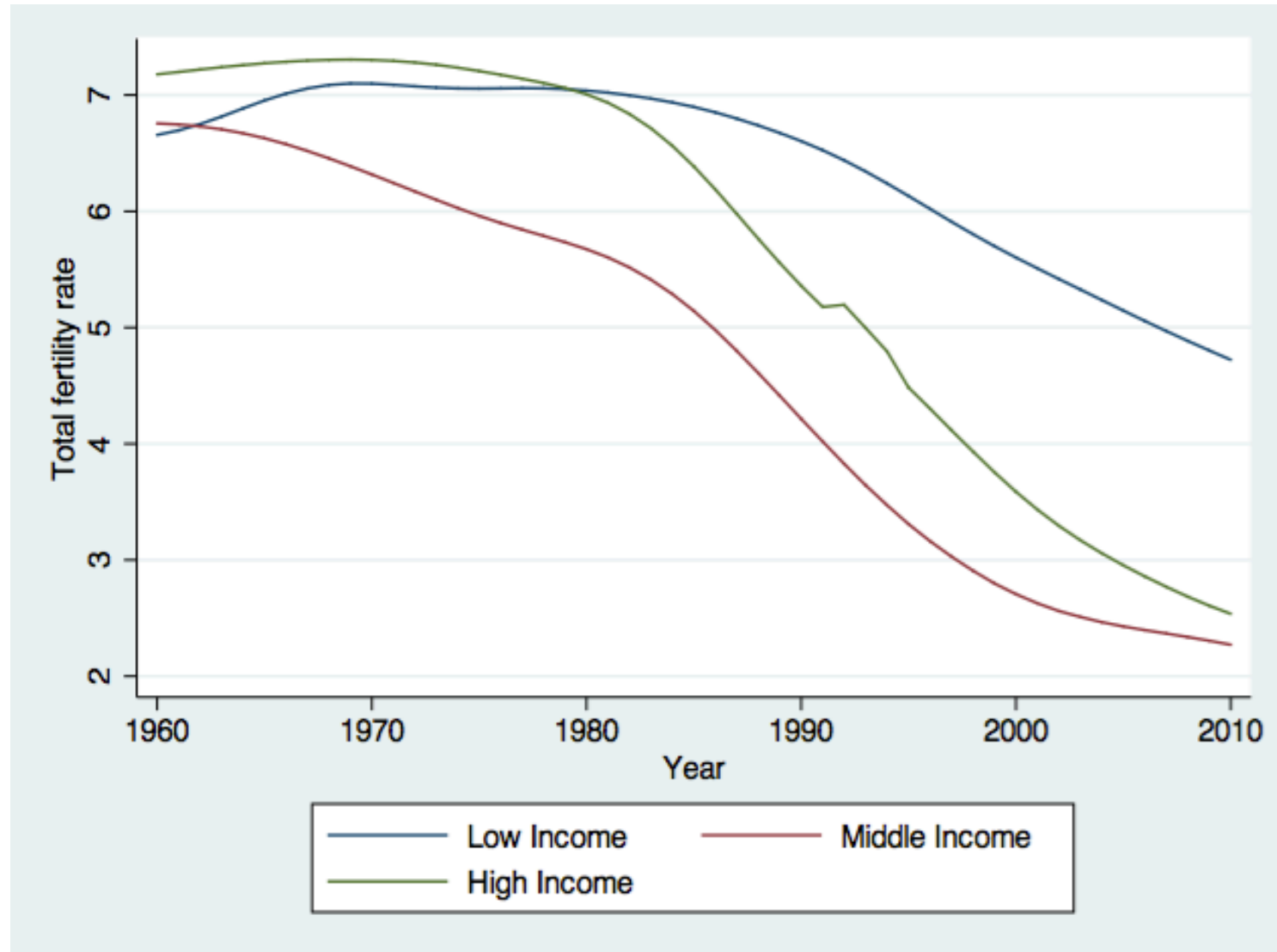
Outline

- Strong global trend toward smaller and more educated families (economic-demographic transition)
- This transition contributes to social integration, through greater gender balance
- But also causes more inequality by reproducing existing inequality
- Weak and sometimes conflicting policy responses to accommodate these changes

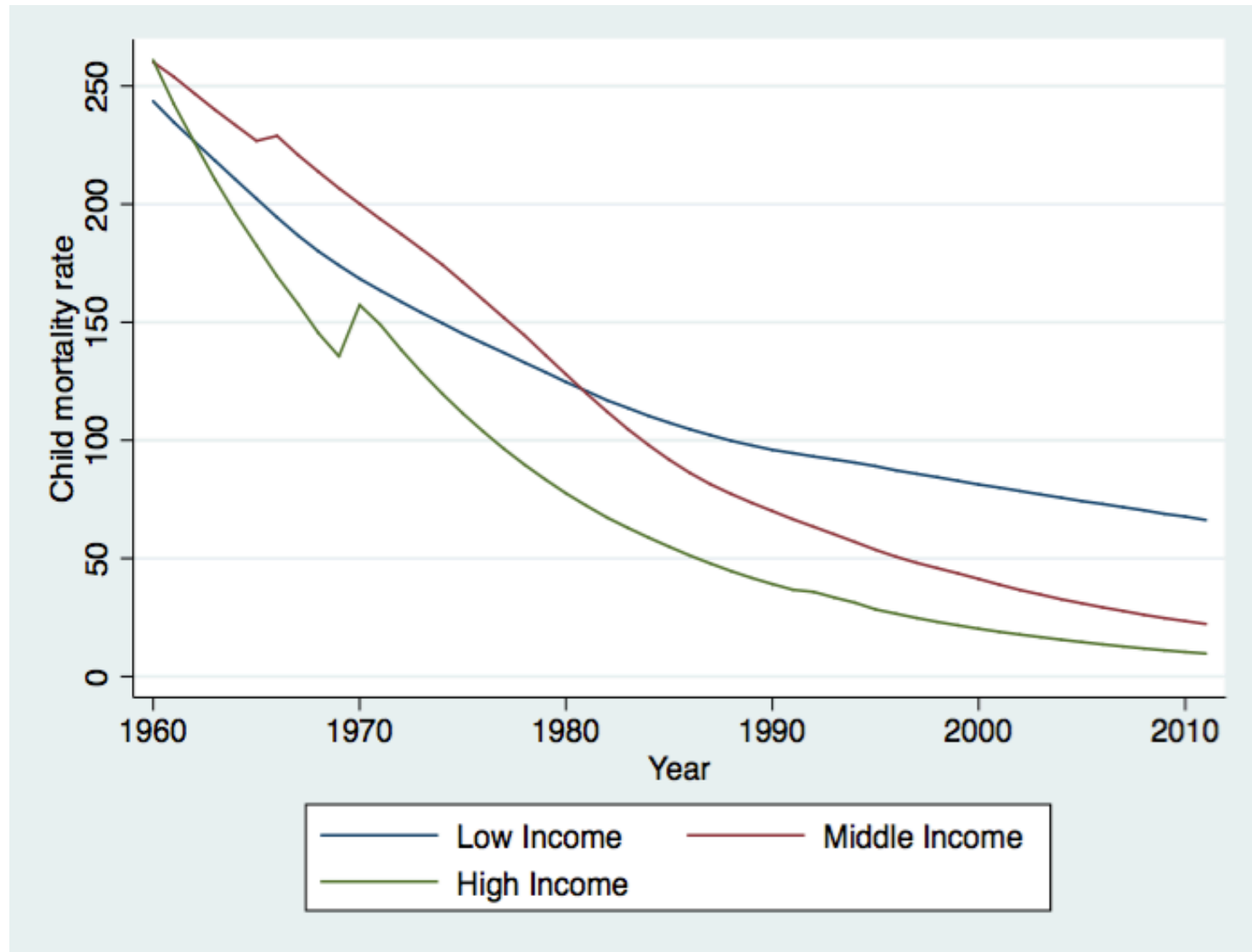
The economic-demographic transition

- Explains the role of the family in economic growth
- Has implications for social integration because it improves the gender balance within the family
- Suggests policies to take advantage of the transition at the level of the family

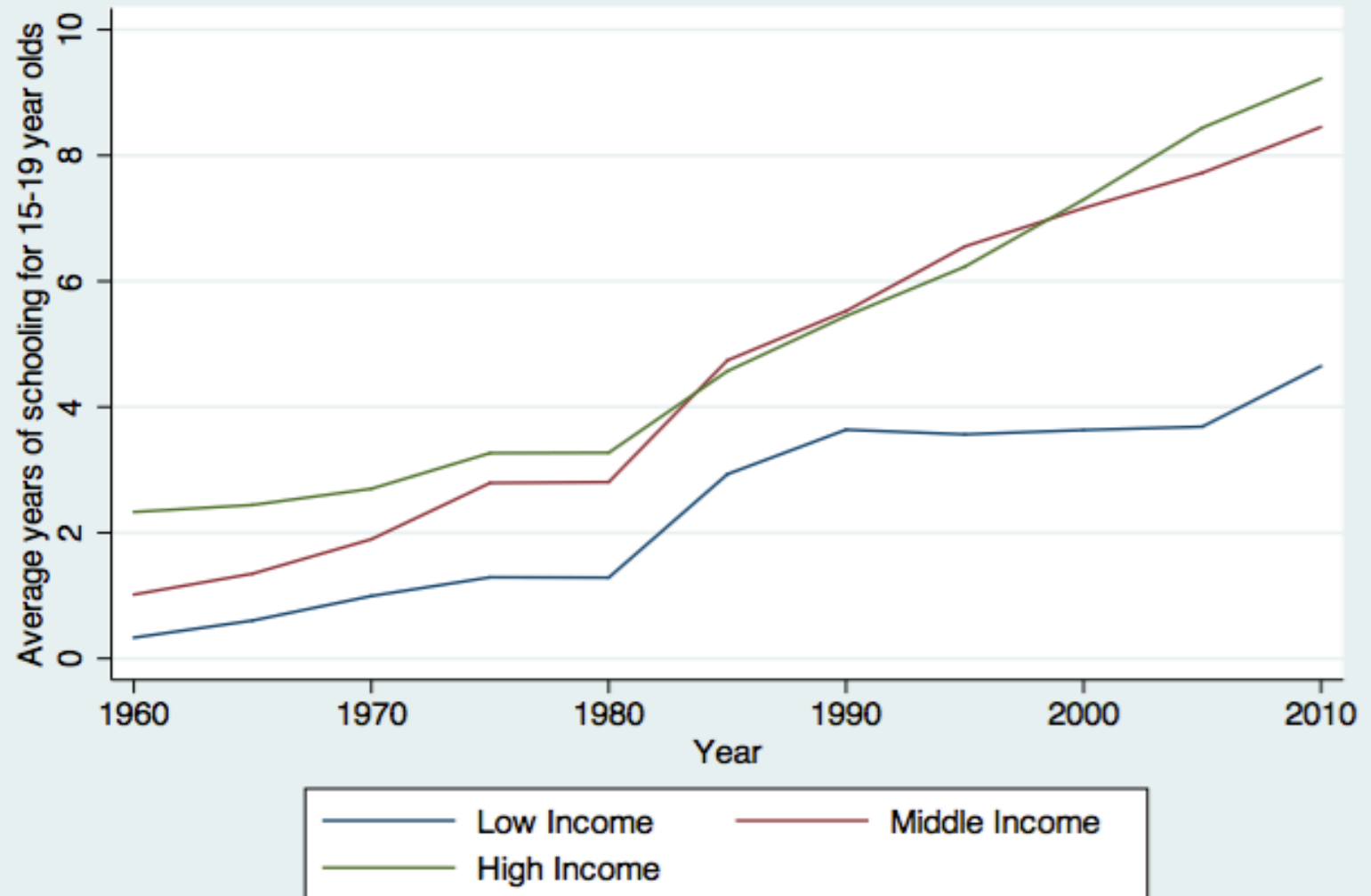
Fertility transition in groups of countries



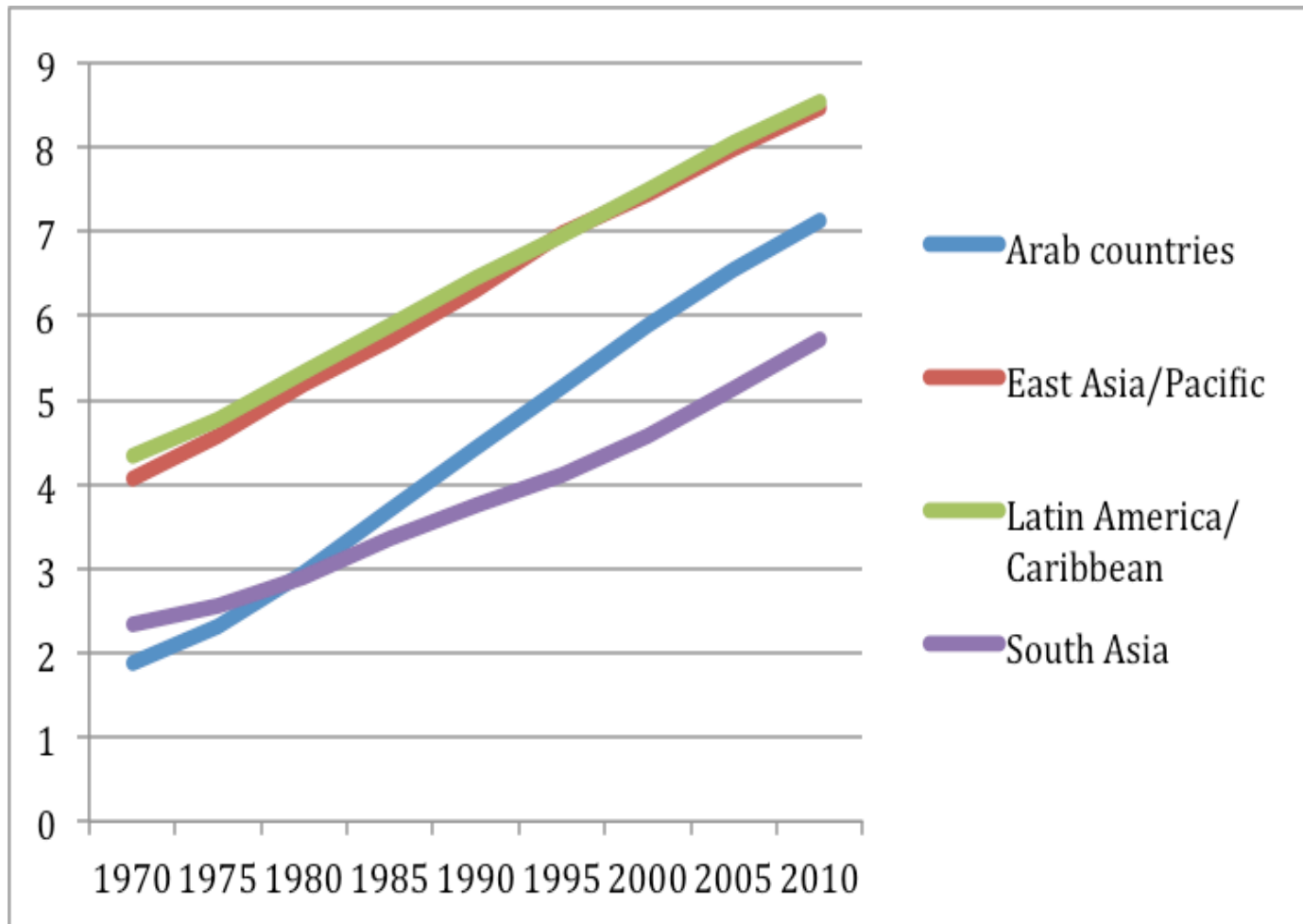
Child mortality declined earlier



Rise of schooling

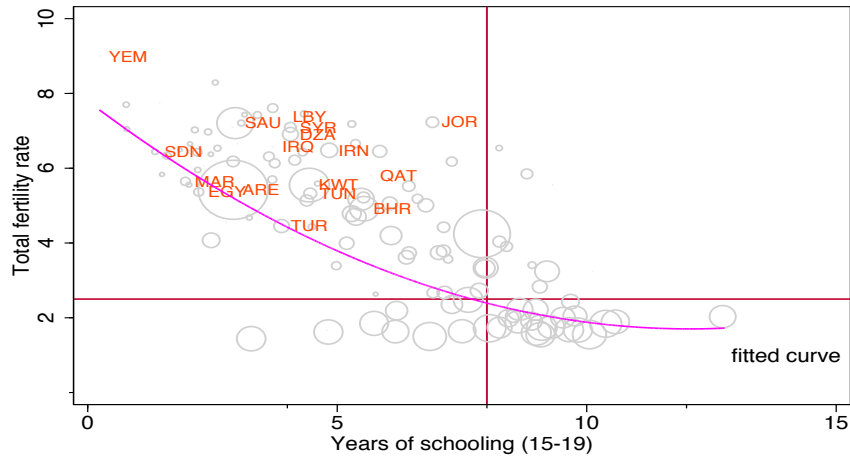


Schooling in Arab countries has grown faster than in other regions



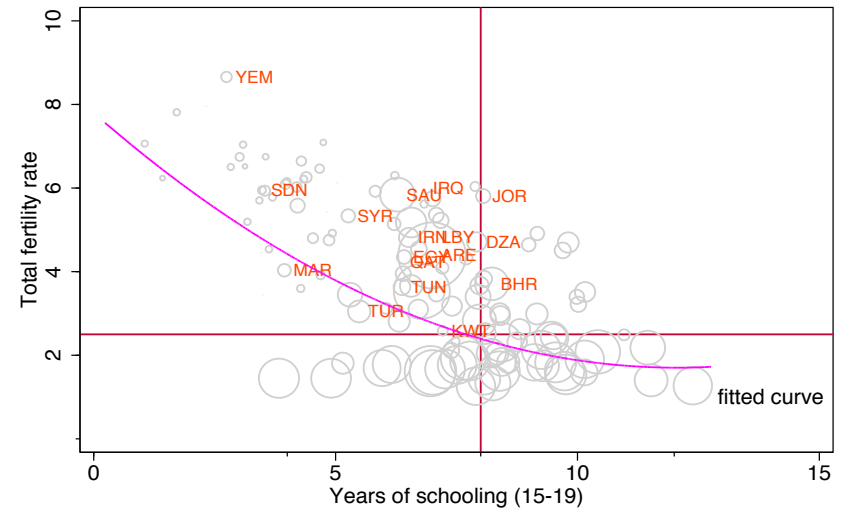
Economic-demographic transition

1980



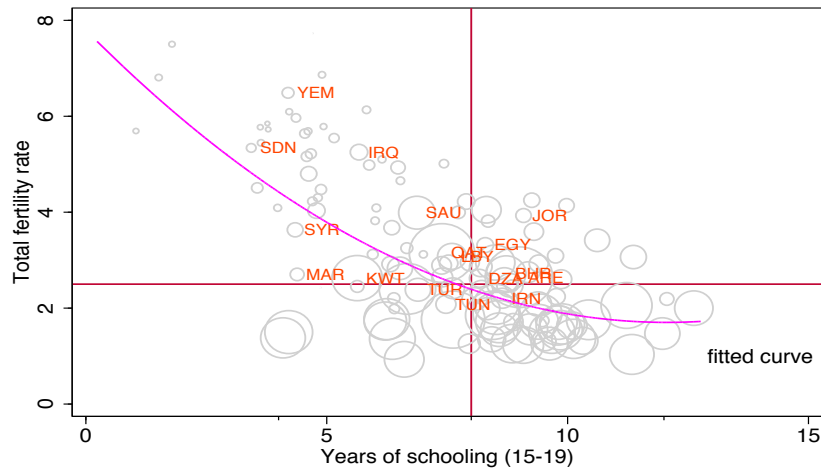
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

1990



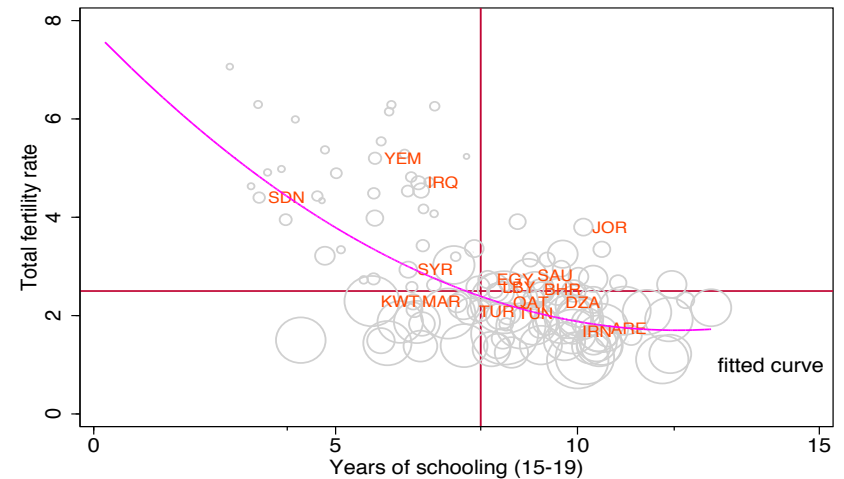
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

2000



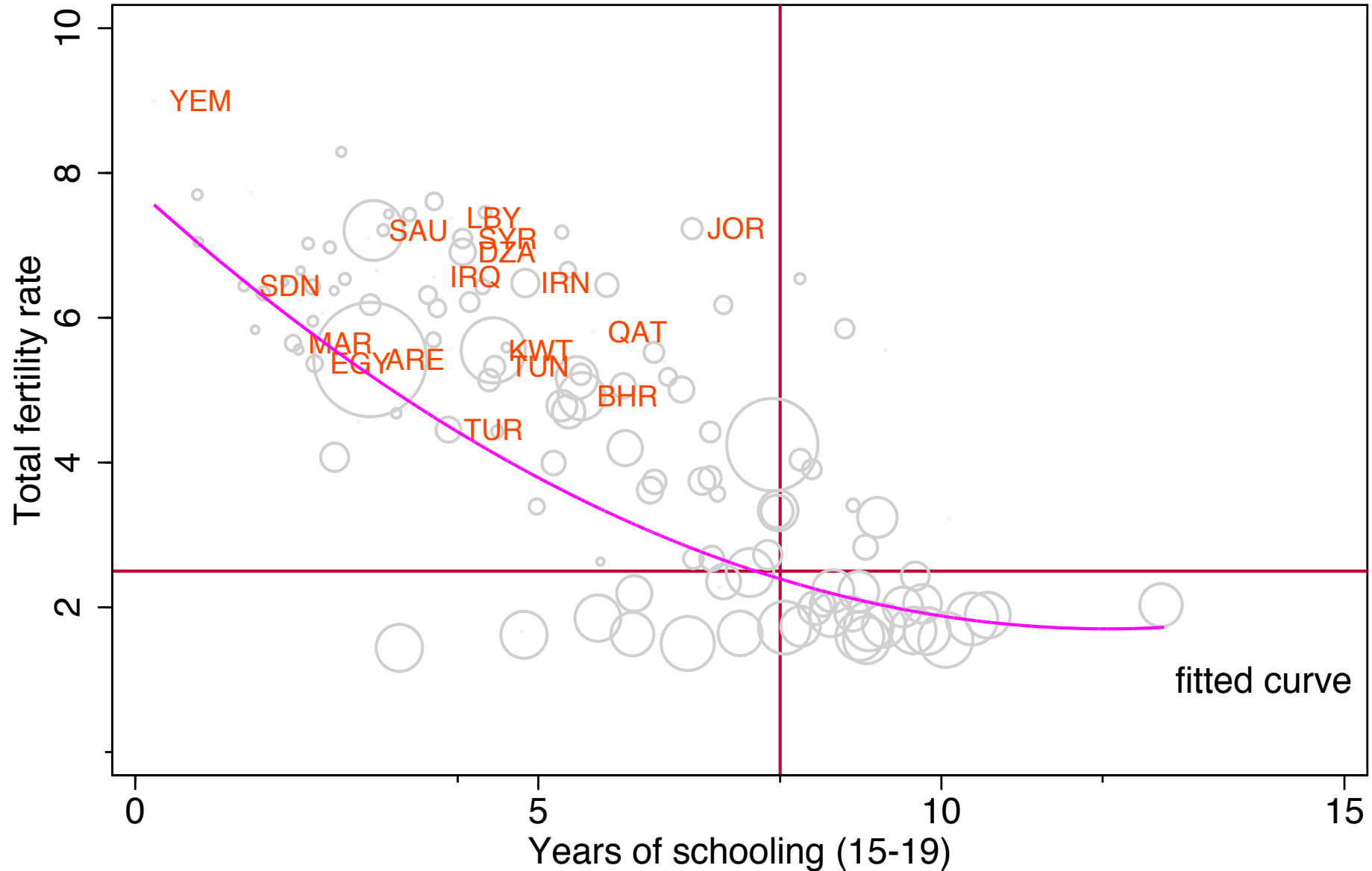
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

2010



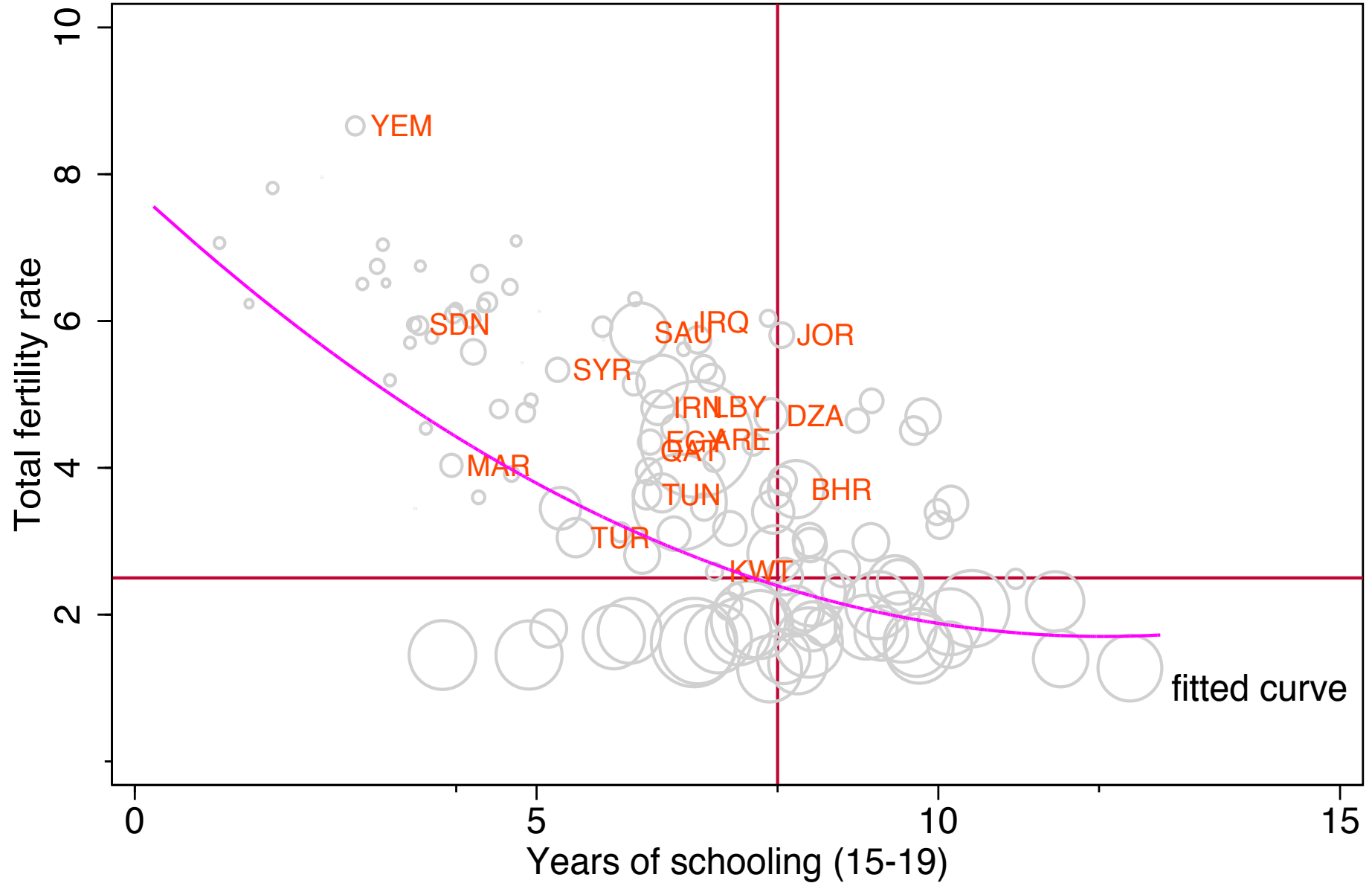
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

1980



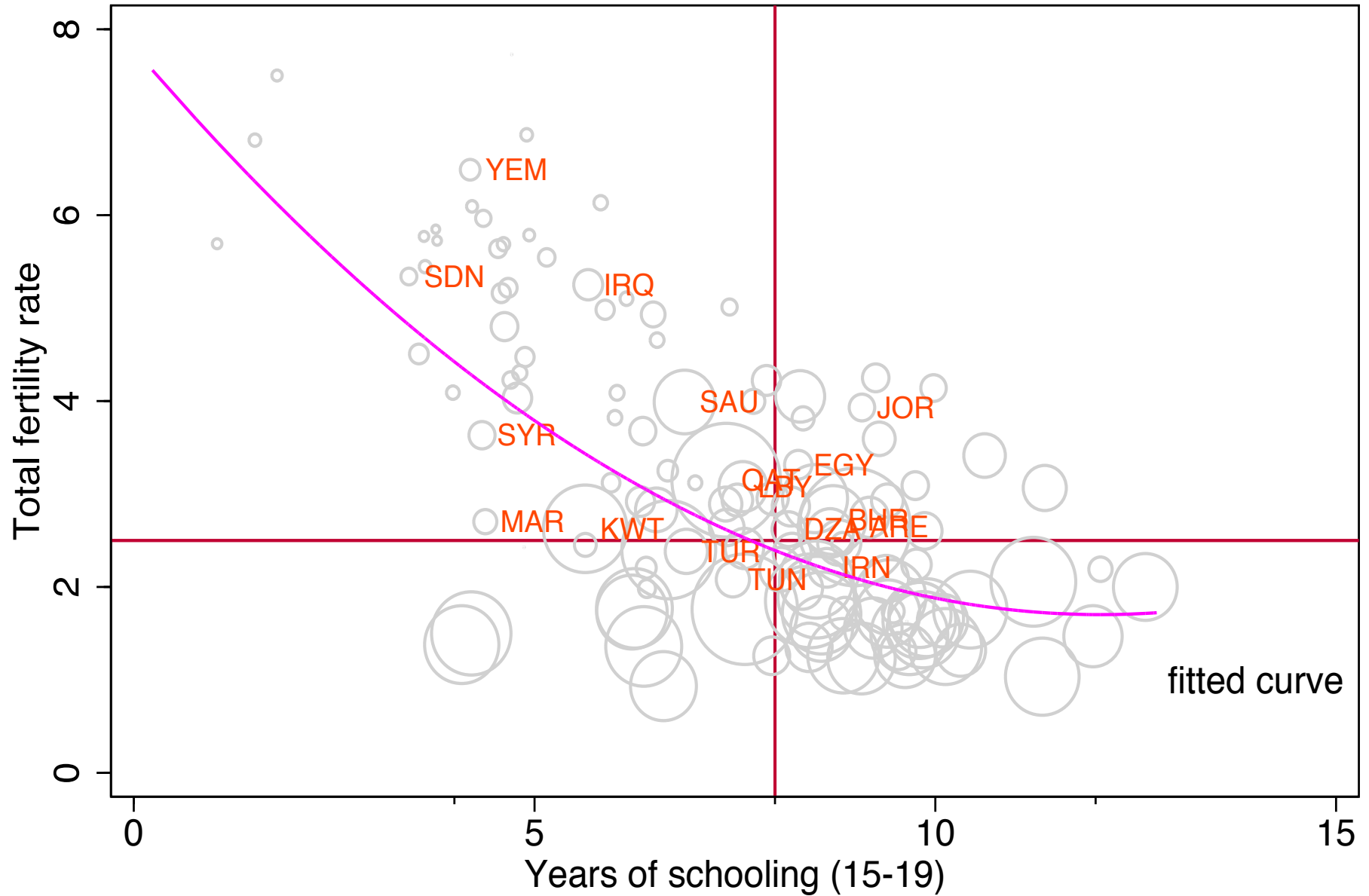
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

1990



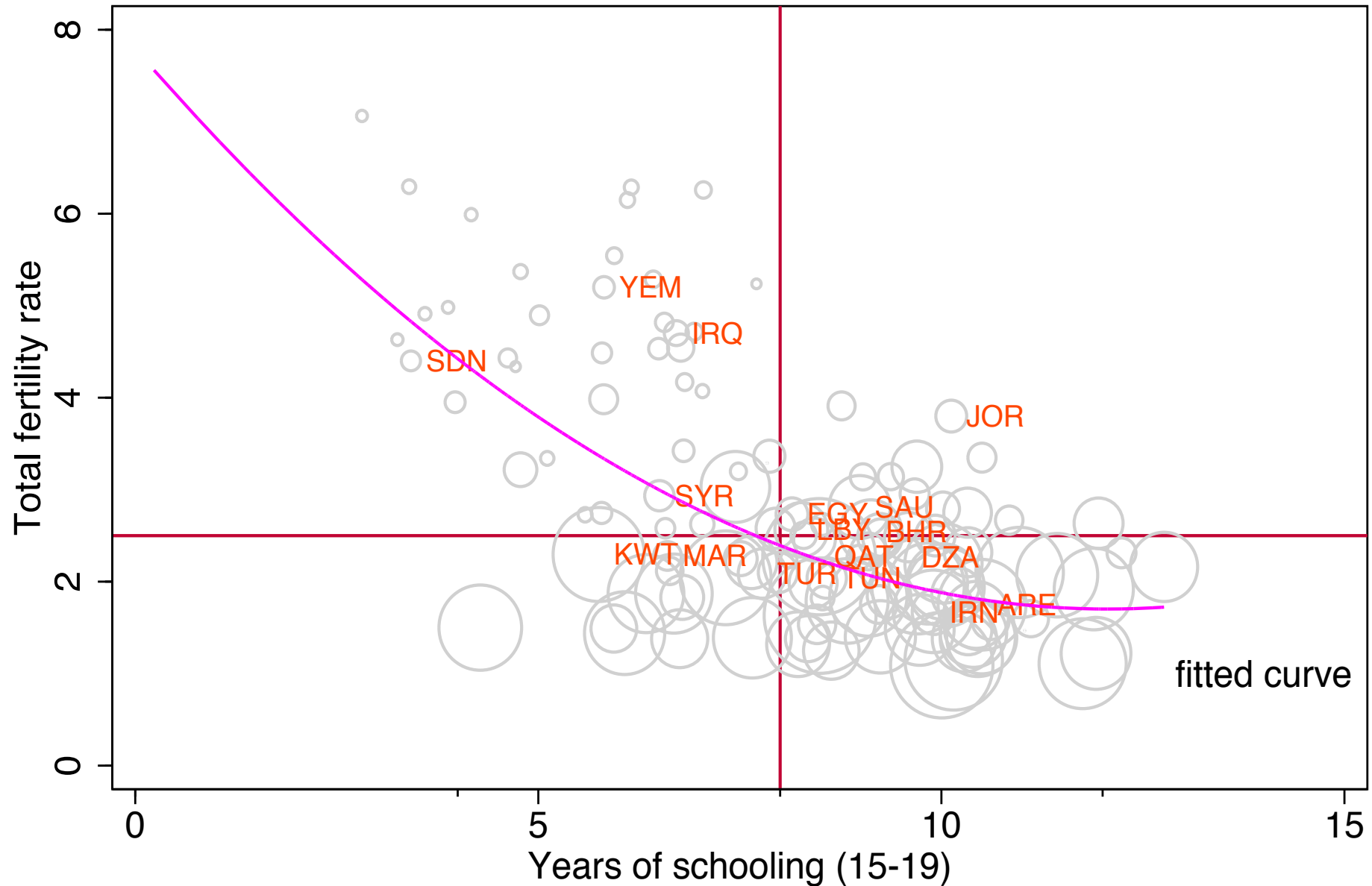
Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

2000



Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

2010

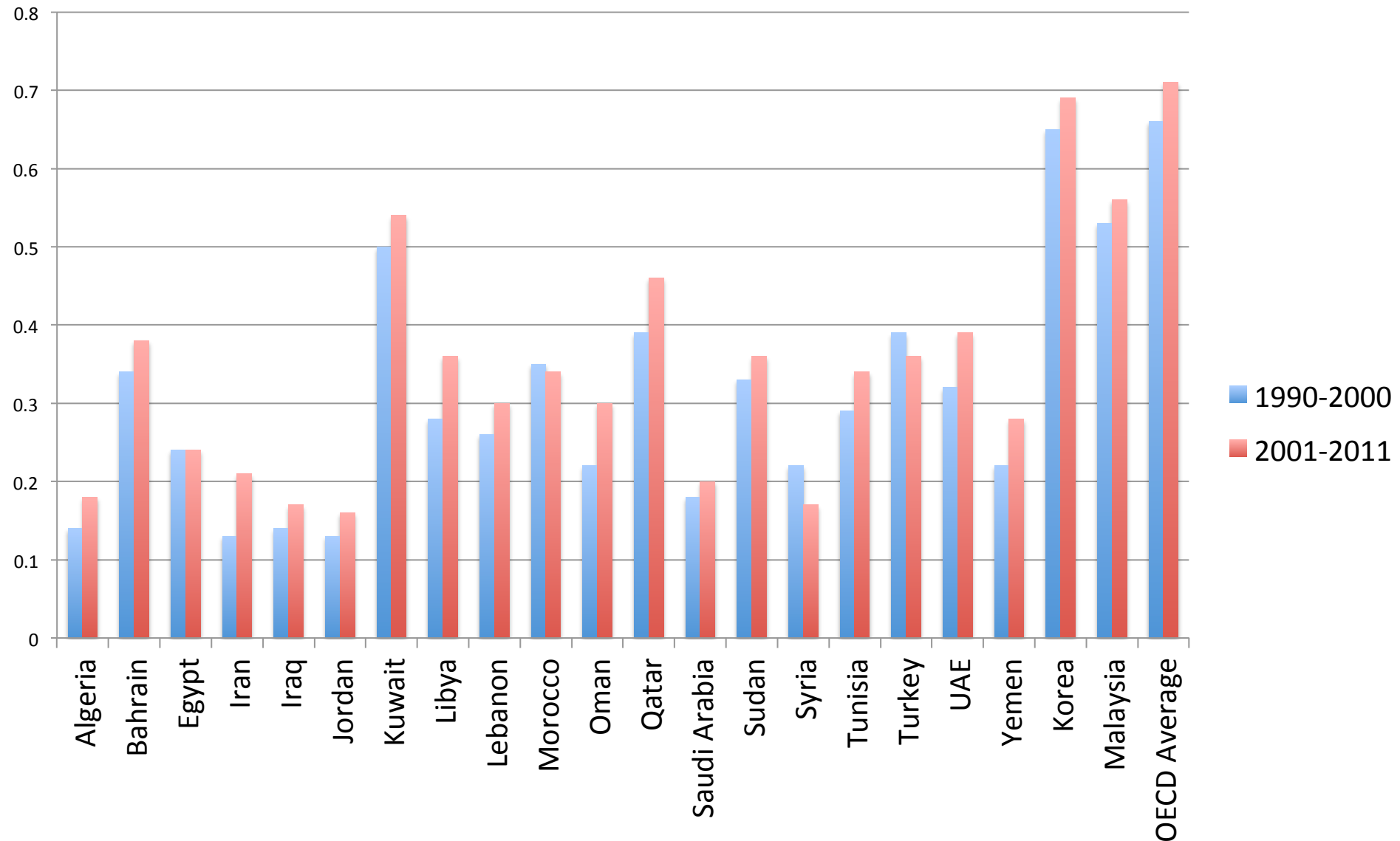


Source: WDI and Barro and Lee (2010)

Positive micro trends, contrary macro trends

- Labor markets have not accommodated the change in the role of women in the family
- Education has not helped youth get jobs, creating a burden for the family and making the micro transition incongruous with the rigid macro setting
- Investment in education quantity, less in quality
- Education-oriented families reduce social integration by increasing inequality of opportunity

The share of women in employment



High rates of youth unemployment

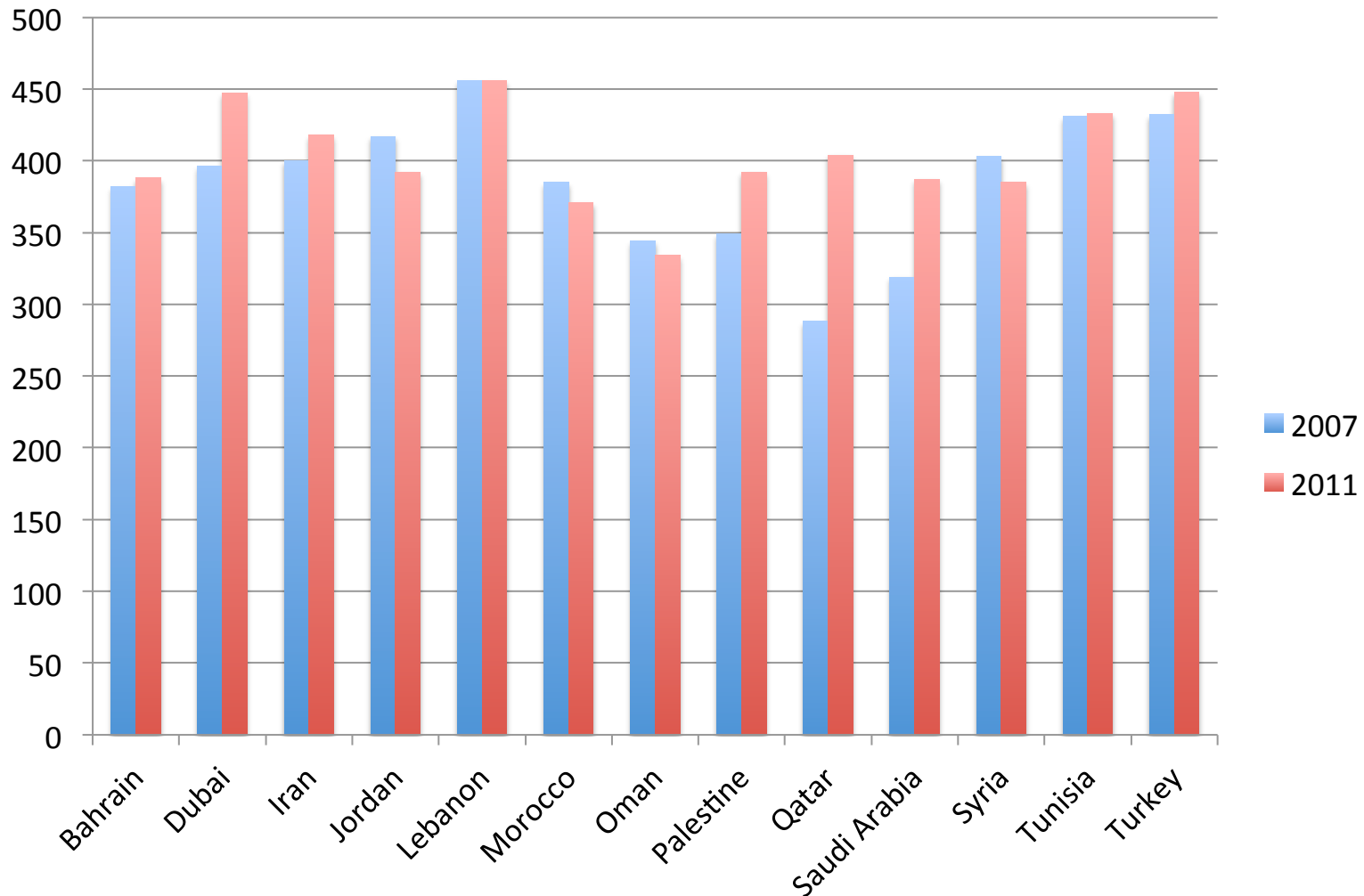
Country	Youth Unemployment		Total Unemployment	
	1990-2000	2001-2011	1990-2000	2001-2011
Algeria		36.7	24.3	17.1
Bahrain	25.4	24.2	6.3	7.3
Egypt	21.8	28.7	9.4	9.9
Iran		22.8	10.1	11.3
Iraq				22.6
Jordan		27.6	16	14.1
Kuwait	13.2	11.3	0.7	1.4
Morocco	26.5	17.6	17	10.8
Qatar		1.6	2.4	2
Saudi Arabia		28.2	4.5	5.4
Syria		20.2	7.7	9.7
Tunisia	31.9	30.7	15.9	14.5
Turkey	15.2	20.3	7.7	10.8
UAE	6.3	10.1	2.1	3.6
Yemen	18.3		9.9	15.5

What is wrong with MENA education?

- High levels of attainment (schooling) not matched by achievement (learning and skill formation)
- The role of families in achievement is stronger than in attainment
- Families reproduce, sometimes increase inequality

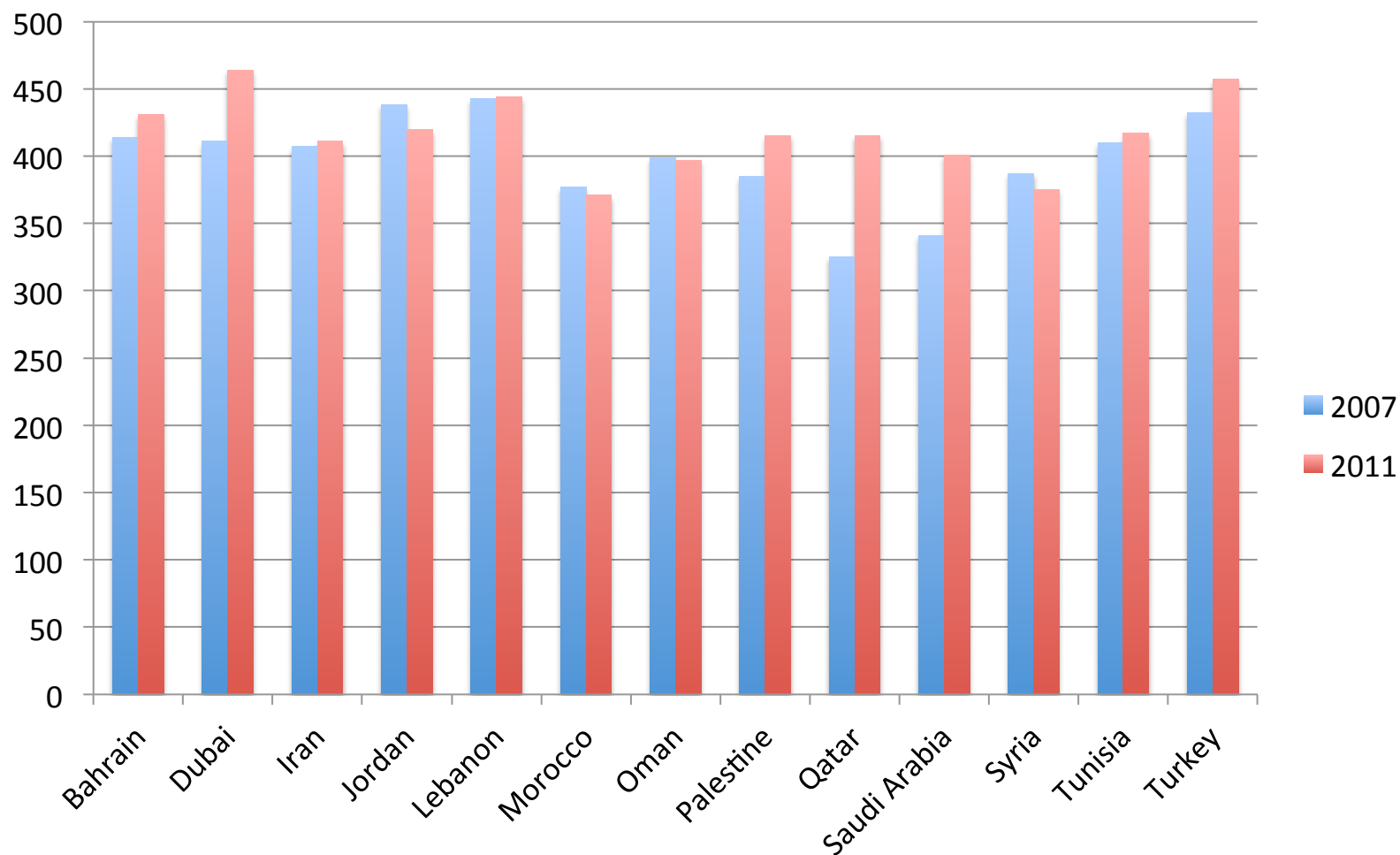
Average mathematics scores in 2007 and 2011 for MENA countries for 8th grade boys and girls

Boys

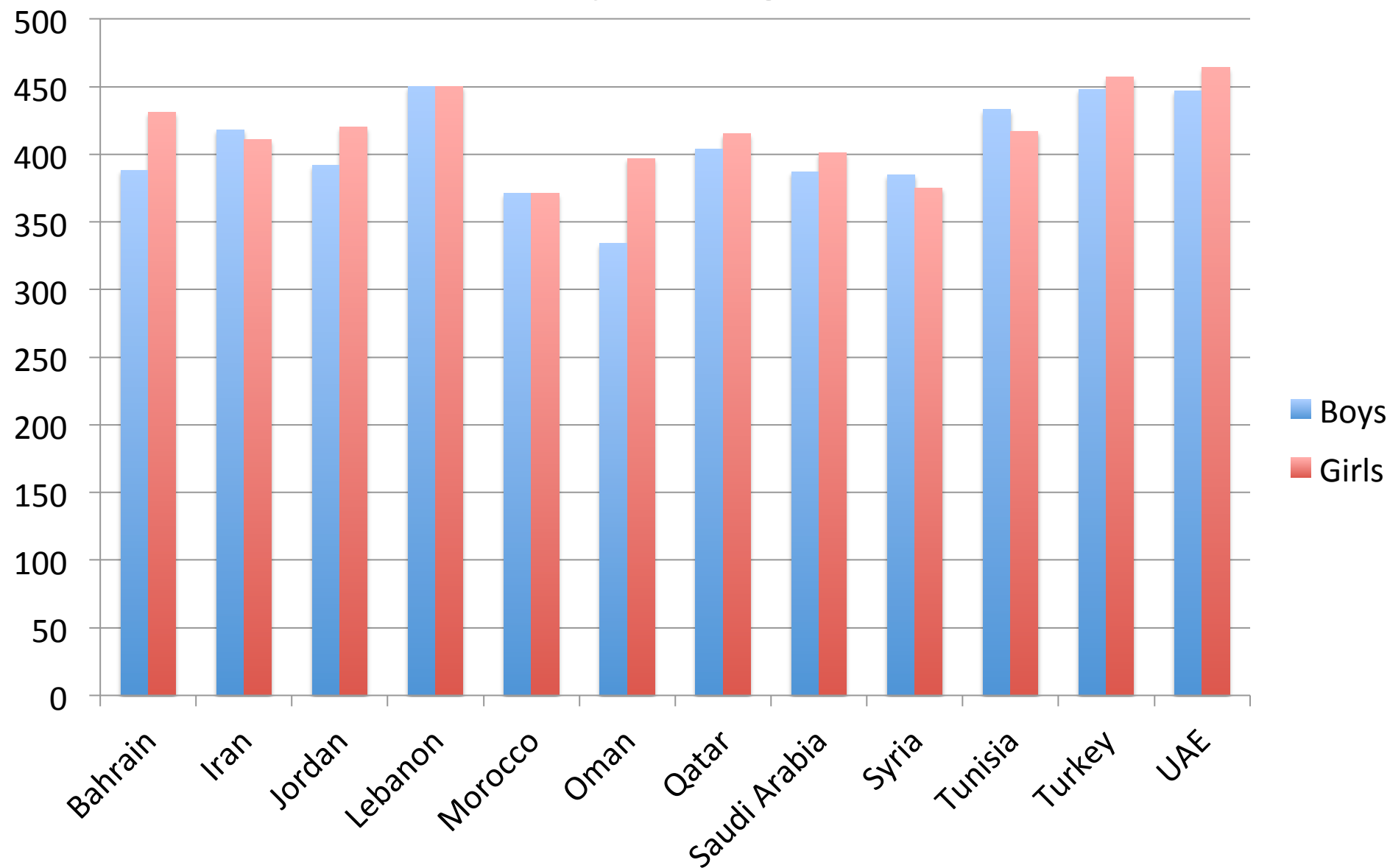


Girls scores are higher in oil-rich nations

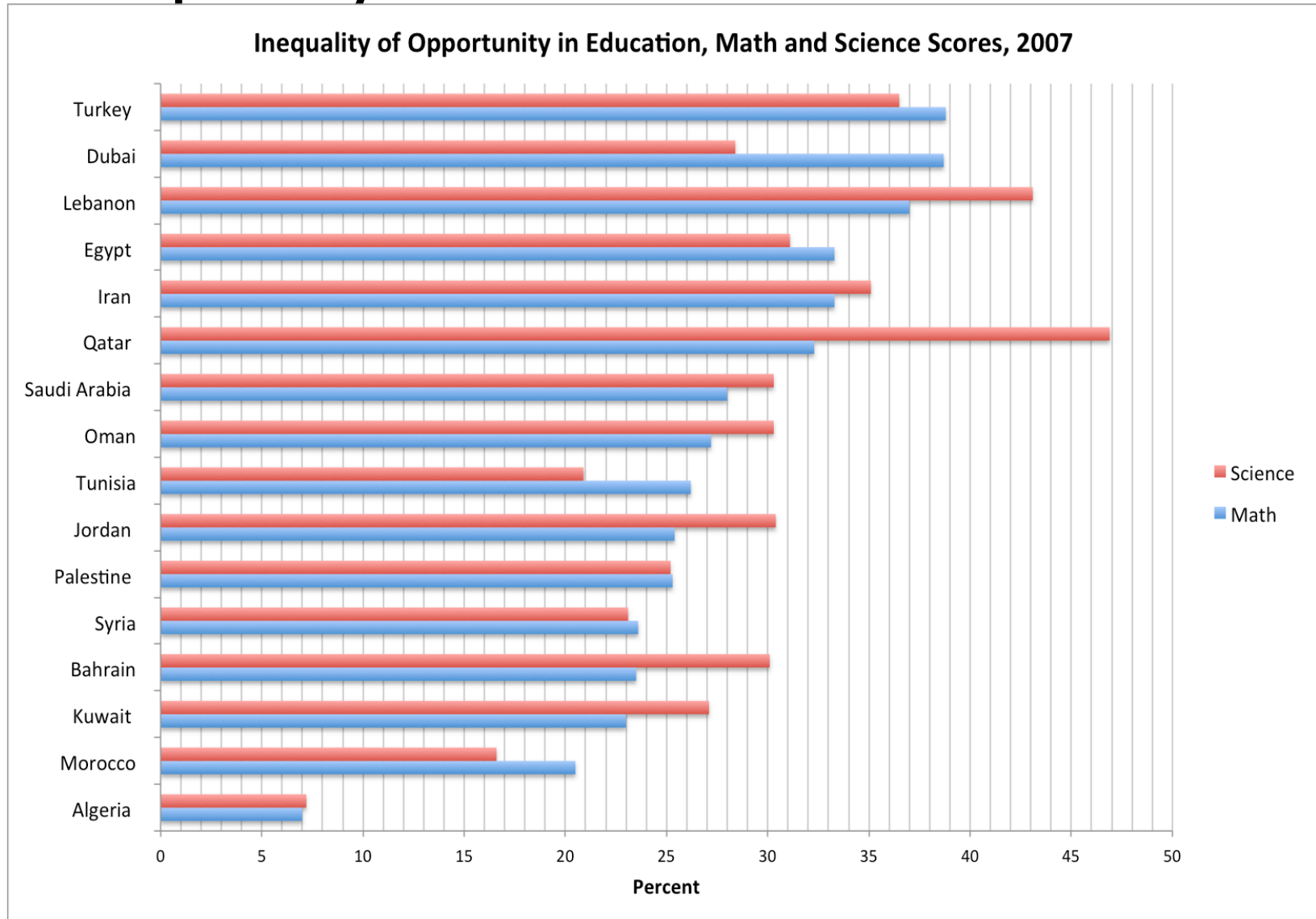
Girls



Math scores: boys vs. girls in TIMSS 2011



The share of circumstances in inequality of education achievement



Policy implications

- Align policies with secular trends corresponding to the economic-demographic transition.
 - Reform family laws to increase the bargaining power of women within the family in accordance with their changing roles.
 - Increase women's status in economic and civic life to correspond to their increased status within the family
 - Reform education to increase returns to family investments in educating their children.
 - Reform labor markets to increase returns to the type of skills families have a comparative advantage in.
- Equality of opportunity policies: level the playing field by lifting the low end of the social spectrum.