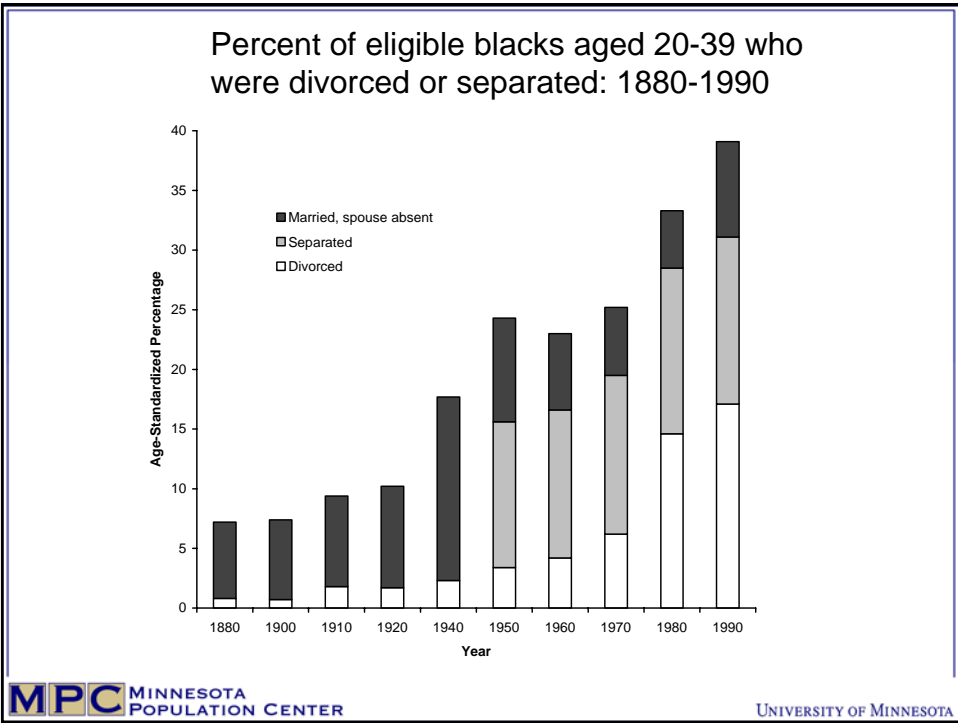
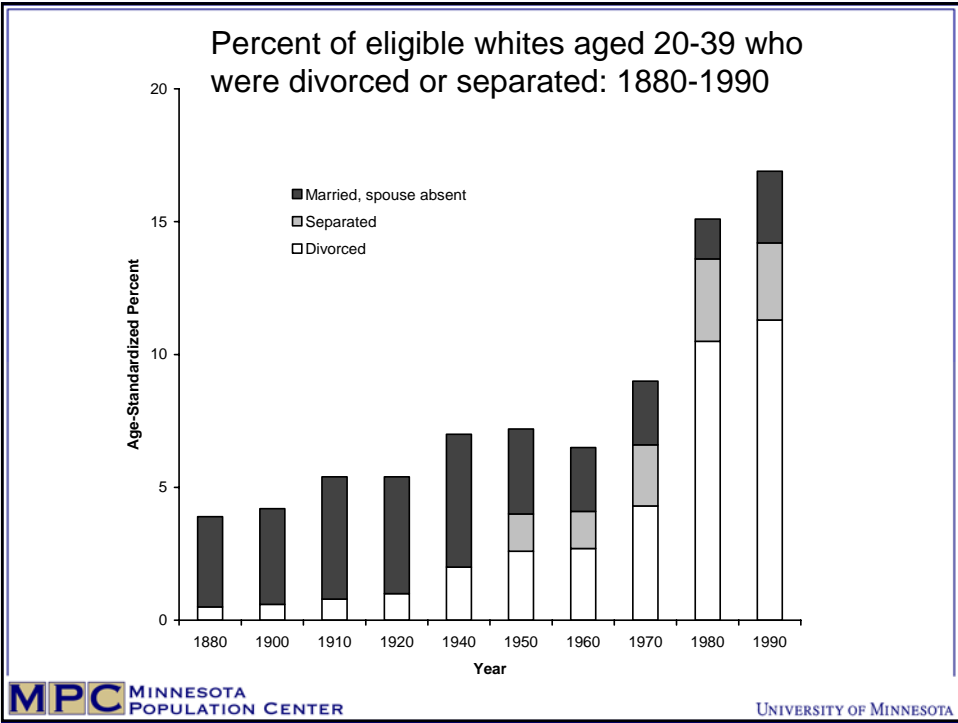


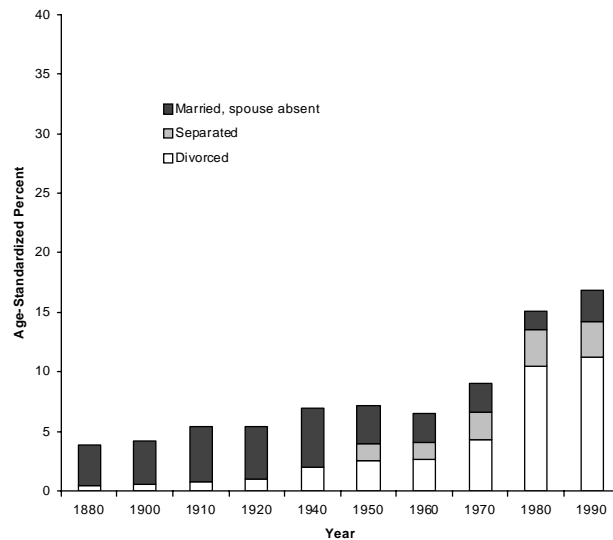
Marital Instability, Cohabitation, and the Transformation of Youth

Topics

- The rise of divorce and separation
 - Causes of long-run change and race differentials
 - Measurement of recent divorce trends
- The transformation of young adulthood
 - Education
 - Work
 - Marriage
 - Cohabitation
- Lessons of Population History



Percent of eligible whites aged 20-39 who were divorced or separated: 1880-1990



Theories of the Rise of Marital Instability

- Durkheim, Becker, Parsons: Specialization of Roles increases the returns to marriage; therefore benefits maximized when women do not work
- Cherlin, McLanahan, Ruggles: Economic opportunity for women allows them to escape from bad marriages; rising economic power of women undermined patriarchal authority by giving women an alternative
- Oppenheimer, Wilson: Declining economic opportunity for men increased marital instability
- May, Riley, Thornton: Cultural change

Testing the Theories

THE RISE OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1990*

STEVEN RUGGLES

I use the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series to assess the potential effects of local labor-market conditions on long-term trends and race differences in marital instability. The rise of female labor-force participation and the increase in nonfarm employment are closely associated with the growth of divorce and separation. Moreover, higher female labor-force participation among black women and lower economic opportunities for black men may account for race differences in marital instability before 1940, and for most of such differences in subsequent years. However, unmeasured intervening cultural factors are probably responsible for at least part of these effects.

Marital dissolution for reasons other than widowhood has increased dramatically over the course of the past century. Only about 5% of marriages contracted in 1867 ended in divorce, but over one-half of marriages contracted in 1967 are expected to end in divorce (Cherlin 1992; Preston and MacDonald 1979). Scholars and commentators have consistently explained this change as a product of the changing sexual division of labor. Writing in 1893, Durkheim (1960

the rise in economic opportunities for women was a necessary condition for the increase in divorce and separation (Cherlin 1992; Degler 1980; McLanahan 1991; Ross and Sawhill 1975). According to this interpretation, women in the past who lacked independent means of support were often trapped in bad marriages, as the opportunities for female wage-labor expanded, women were increasingly able to escape and live on their own. Thus, the rising economic power of women undermined patriarchal authority and destabilized marriages.

Although the language varies, scholars of all political stripes largely agree about what happened. Those on the right bemoan the decline of marital interdependence resulting from the breakdown of the sexual division of labor. On the left, scholars applaud the decline of patriarchal authority that resulted from the increasing economic power of women. But virtually everyone agrees that as married women increasingly began to work outside the home, the economic logic of traditional marriages was undermined and the frequency of divorce and separation increased. As Cherlin (1992) put it, "al-

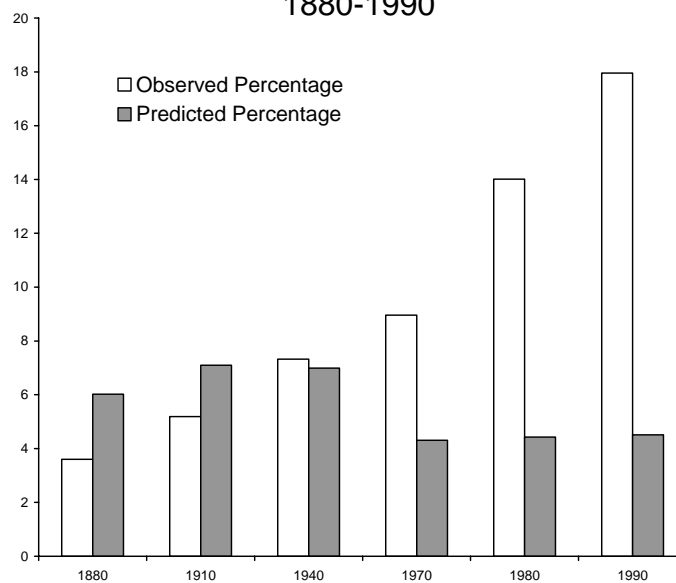
Strategy

- In every period, there was enormous variation across the country in economic opportunity for both young men and for young women
- I calculated several measures of opportunity for each sex in each economic area (about 400 in each year)
- I used these measures to predict the effects of economic opportunities on divorce and separation from 1880 to 1990
- In every year, effects were the same as expected by theory

Strategy

- Once I knew the effects, I could estimate what the levels of divorce and separation would have been if economic opportunities for men and women had not changed.
- Essentially the same idea as standardizing to control for the change in opportunities.

Observed and Predicted Percent of Divorce and Separation,
1880-1990

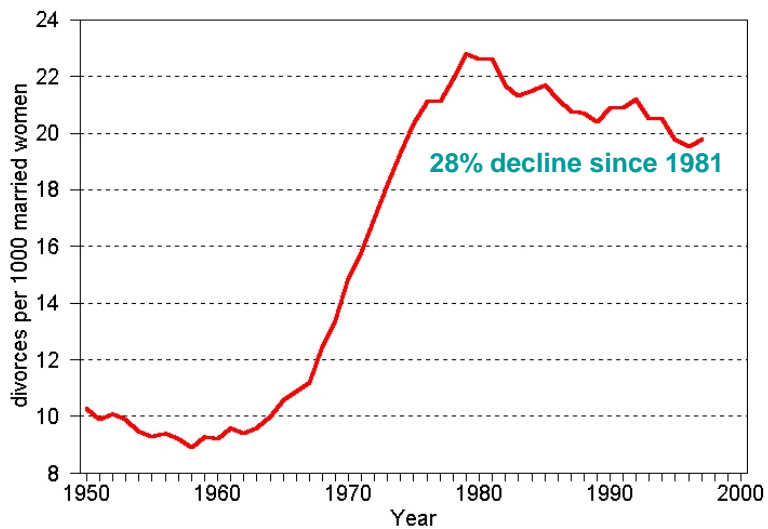


Conclusions on the Rise of Divorce and Separation

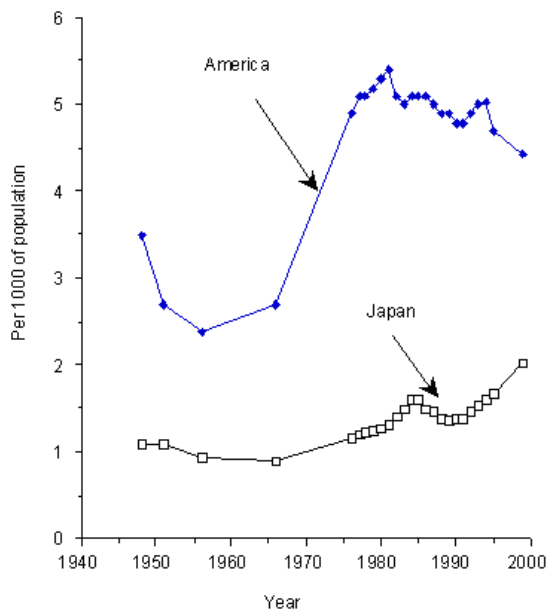
- 83% of change from 1880-1990 can be explained by rise of female labor-force participation.
- The rest can be explained by rise of non-agricultural employment (divorce was rare for farmers)
- 84% of the difference in divorce and separation between blacks and whites can be ascribed to lower black male labor force participation and job quality

Explaining Recent Divorce Trends

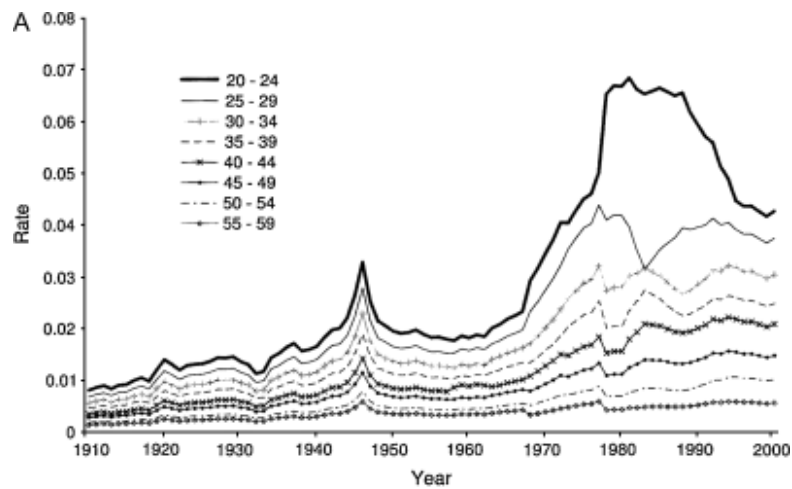
Divorce rates



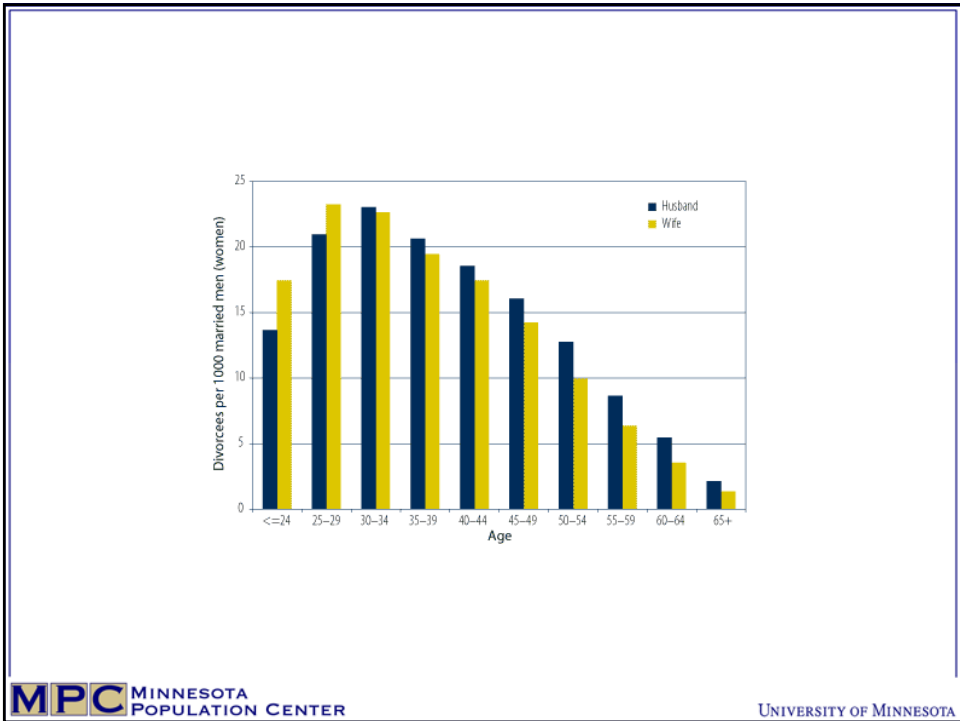
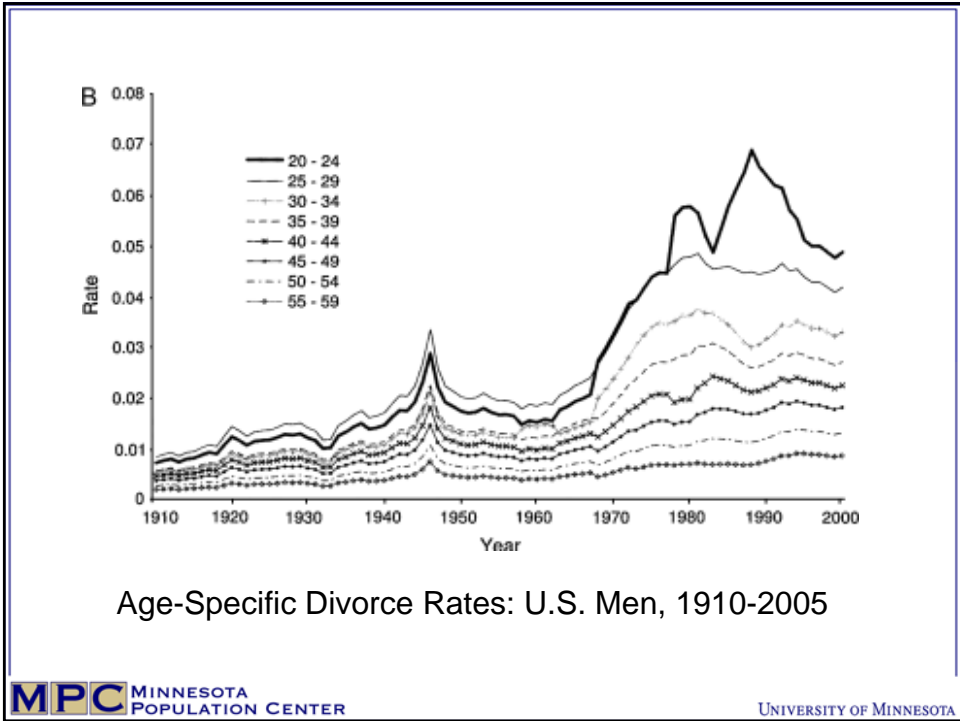
Source: Monthly Vital Statistics Reports



What compositional factors could explain the rapid rise of divorce from 1965-1979 and the stagnation thereafter?

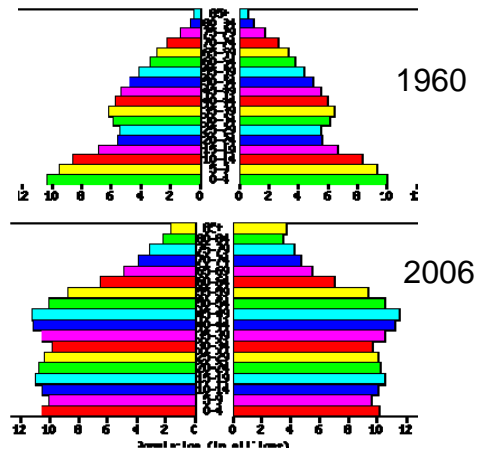


Age-Specific Divorce Rates: U.S. Women, 1910-2005



What compositional factors could explain the rapid rise of divorce from 1965-1979 and the stagnation thereafter?

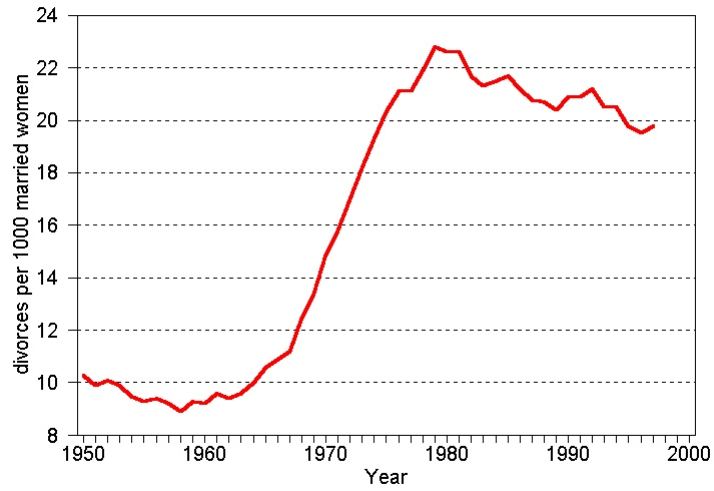
Age Distribution



What compositional factors could explain the rapid rise of divorce from 1965-1979 and the stagnation thereafter?

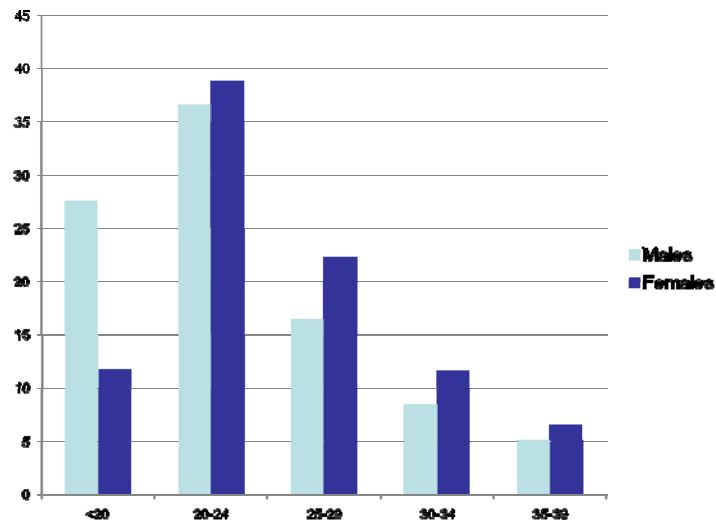
Divorce is concentrated among those aged 25-34, and the percentage of the population in that age group peaked in the early 1980s and has been declining ever since with the aging of the baby boomers

Divorce rates



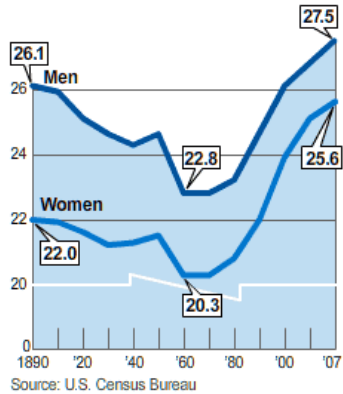
Source: Monthly Vital Statistics Reports

Divorce Rate by Age at First Marriage

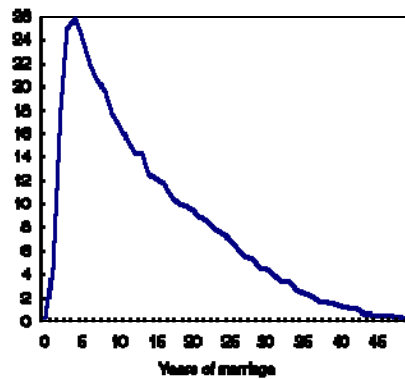


What compositional factors could explain the rapid rise of divorce from 1965-1979 and the stagnation thereafter?

Divorce is highest among people who marry young, and the percent marrying young declined greatly after the 1970s.



Divorce rate by length of marriage, 2002
Rate per 1,000 marriages



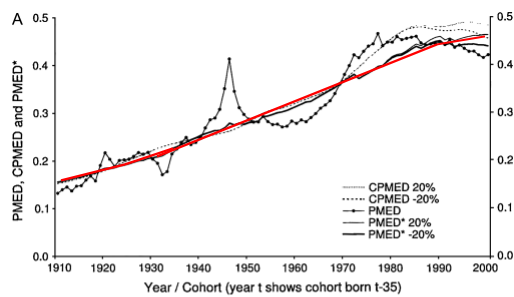
What compositional factors could explain the rapid rise of divorce from 1965-1979 and the stagnation thereafter?

The risk of divorce is highest for those married less than ten years.

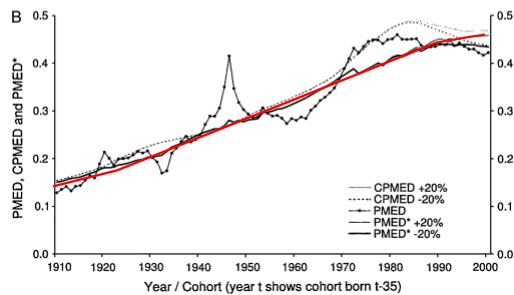
Because of the declining rate of marriage after the 1970s and the aging of the baby boom, the proportion of marriages less than 10 years old has declined dramatically since the 1970s.

Percentage of marriages ending in divorce:
period and cohort

Women

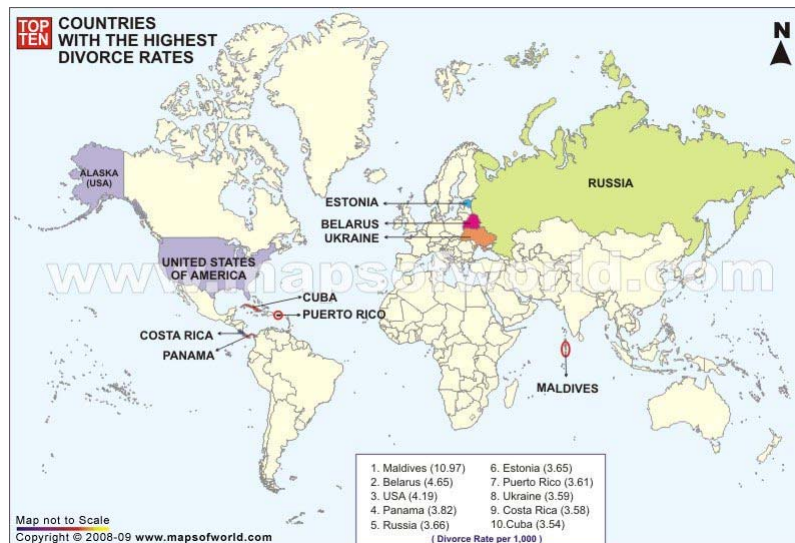


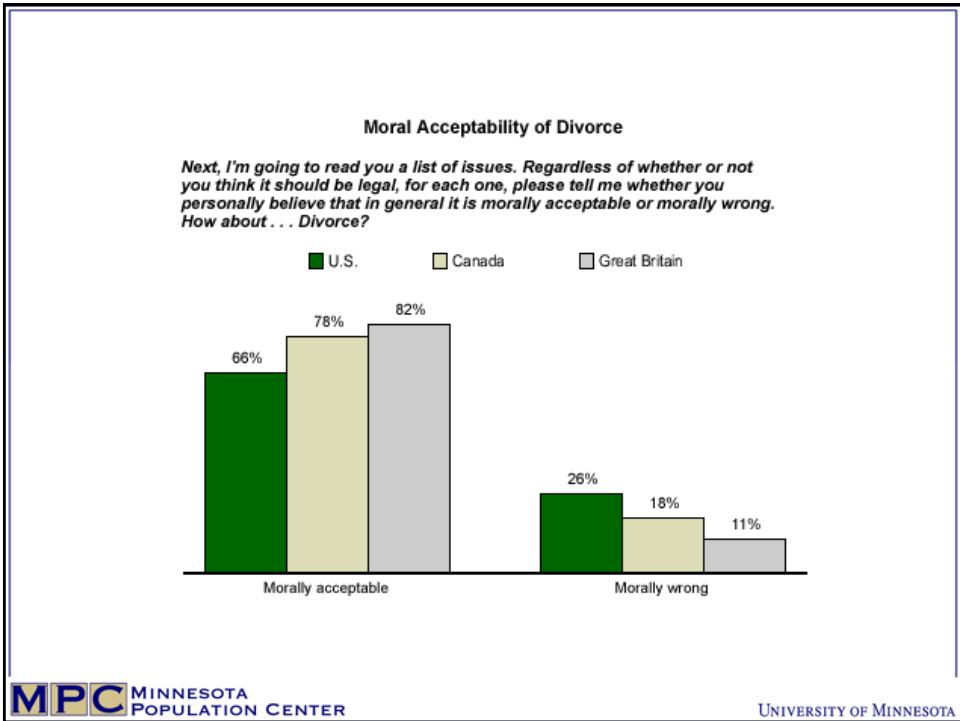
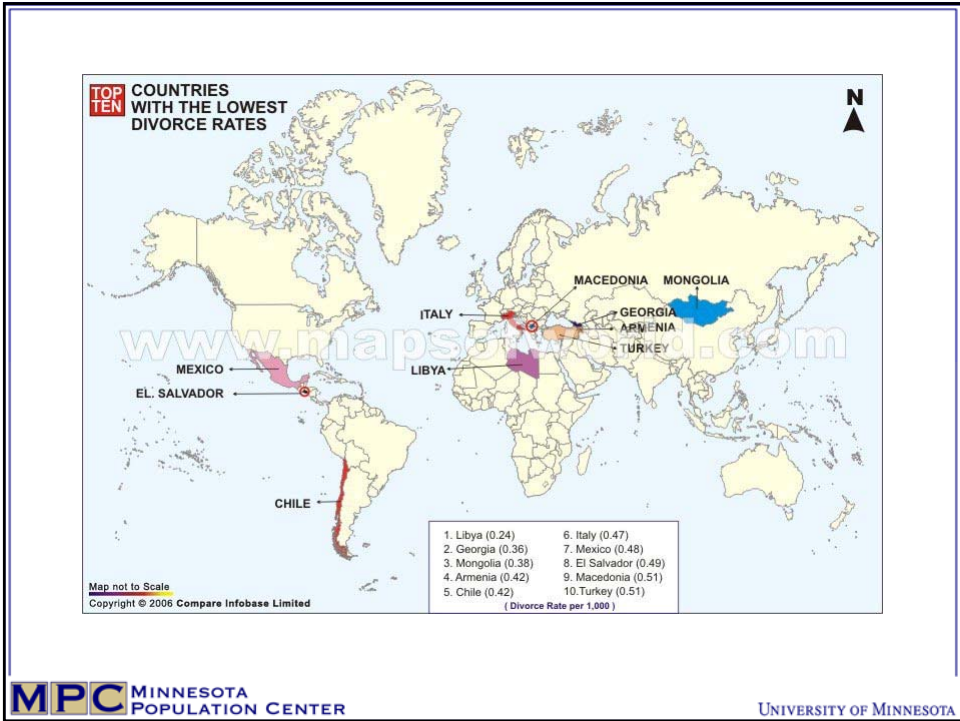
Men

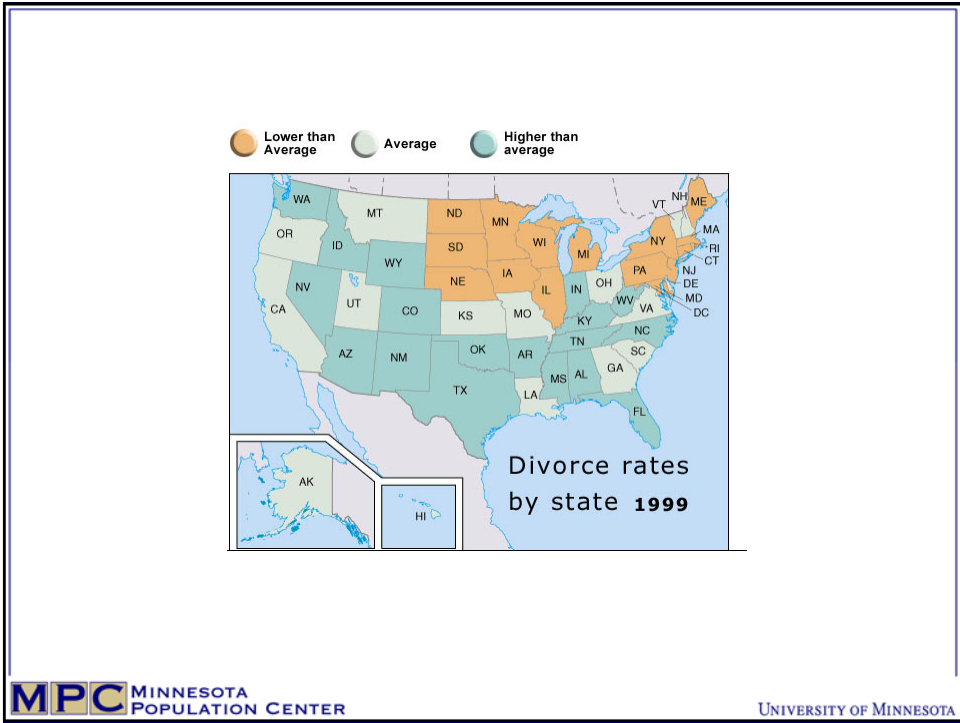


Recent Divorce Trends

- Once we control for changes in age distribution and timing of marriage, divorce is still going up, but the pace of increase has slowed
- The slowed pace of increase may have resulted from *selection*: as the proportion of people who get married goes down, some of the riskiest marriages may not take place
- At current rates, about half of marriages are expected to end in divorce





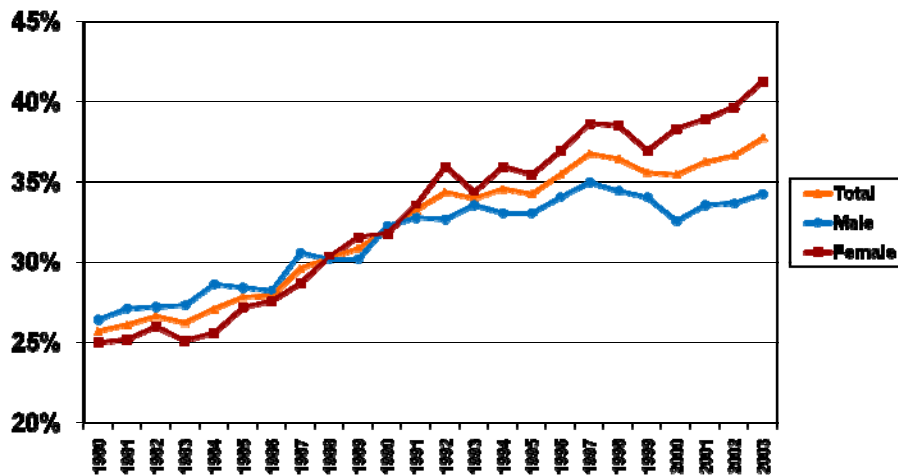


The transformation of young adulthood

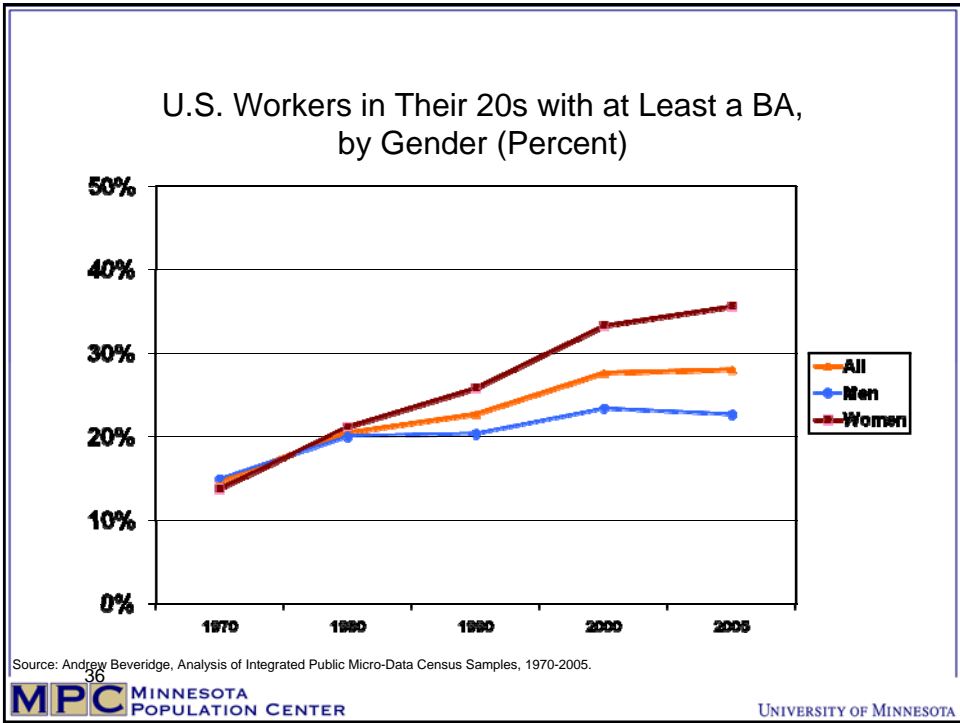
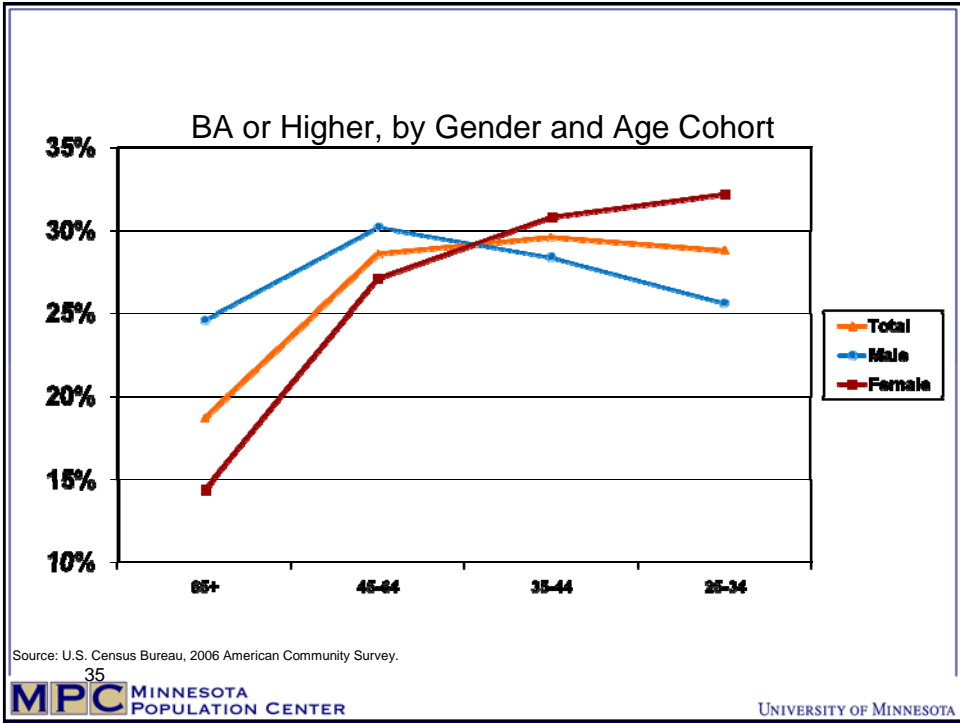
- Education
- Work
- Marriage
- Cohabitation

1. There is an emerging gender gap in education of young adults.

College Enrolled, 1980-2003, by Gender

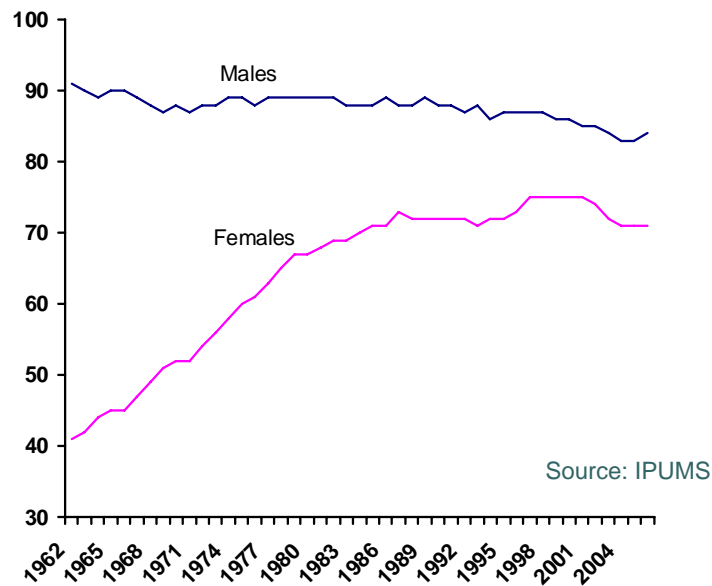


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys (CPS), October, various years, unpublished tabulations.

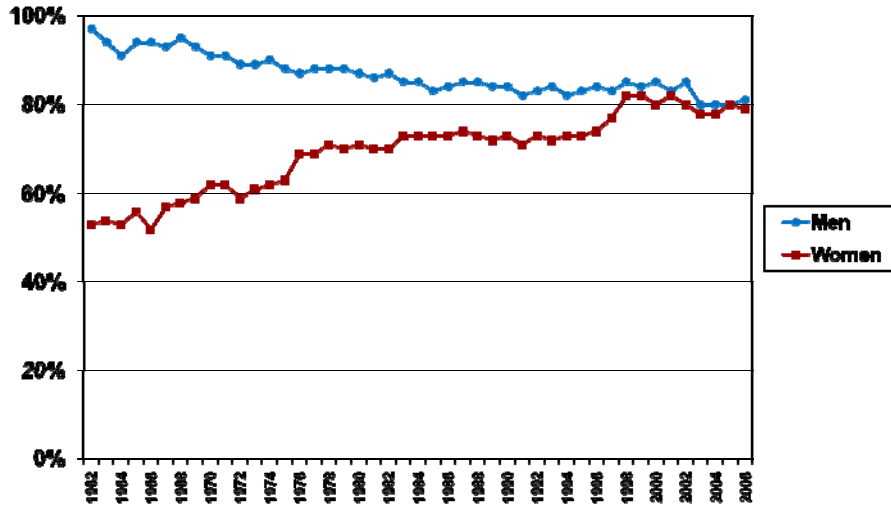


2. After a dramatic post-war increase, workforce participation of young women has leveled off, and the participation of young men is slowly declining.

Percent in labor force at ages 20-29, 1962-2006

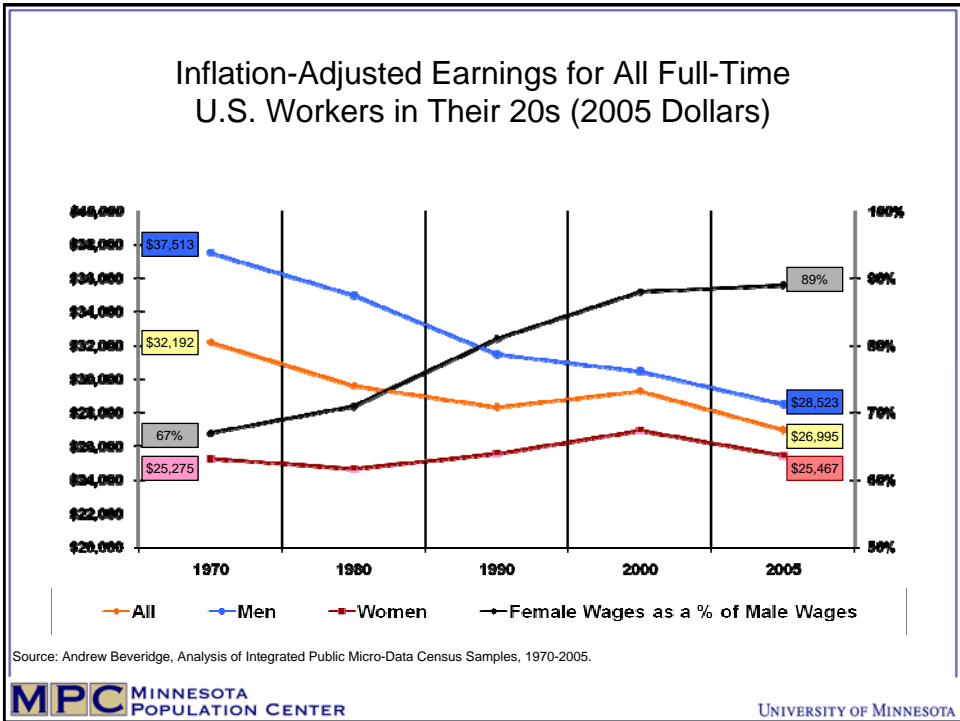
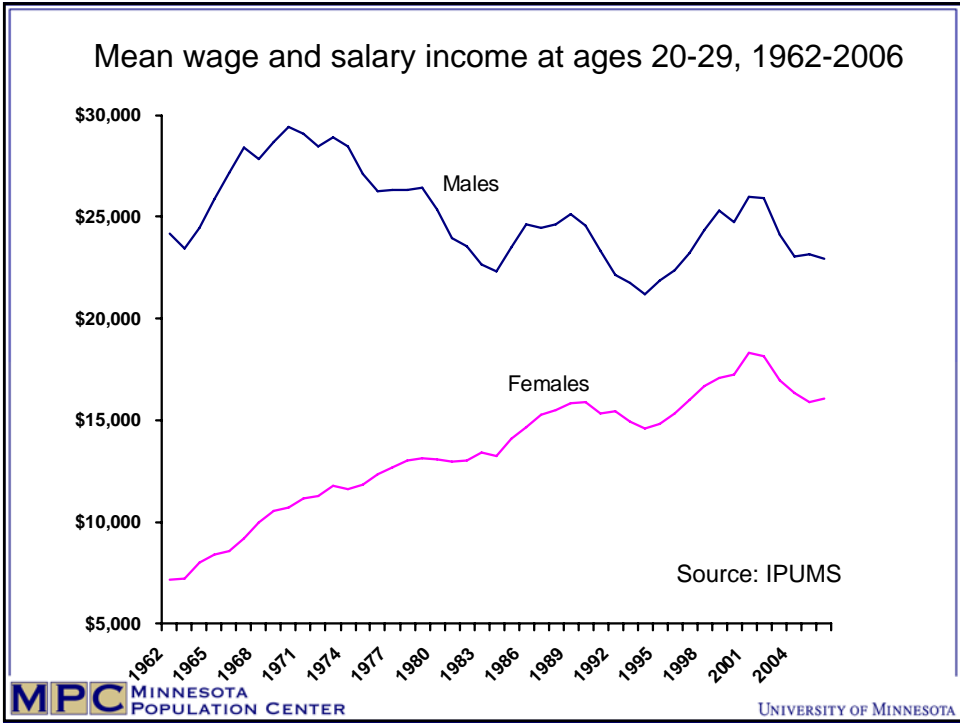


African-American Labor Force Participation Rate,
Ages 25 to 35, by Gender



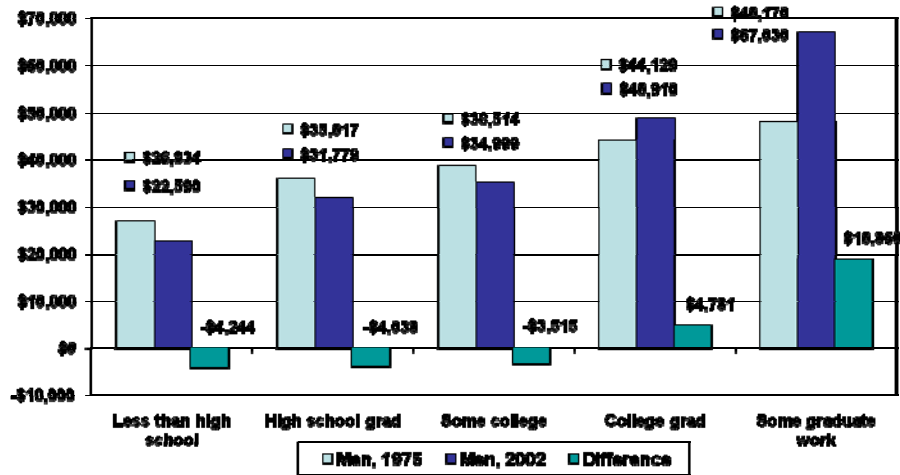
Source: Emily Roussel, The Brookings Institution, analysis of CPS data

3. Earnings for young men continue to decline, except for those with education, and earnings for young women may be leveling off or declining too.



Men's (aged 25-34) Earnings by Education, 1975 & 2002

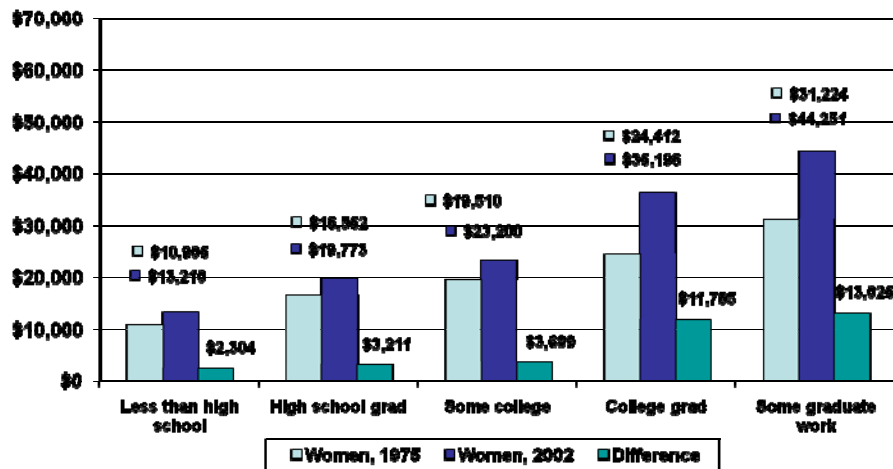
(Data exclude nonearners; 2002 dollars)



Source: Network on Transitions to Adulthood, Data Brief #17 (2004)

Women's (aged 25-34) Earnings by Education, 1975 & 2002

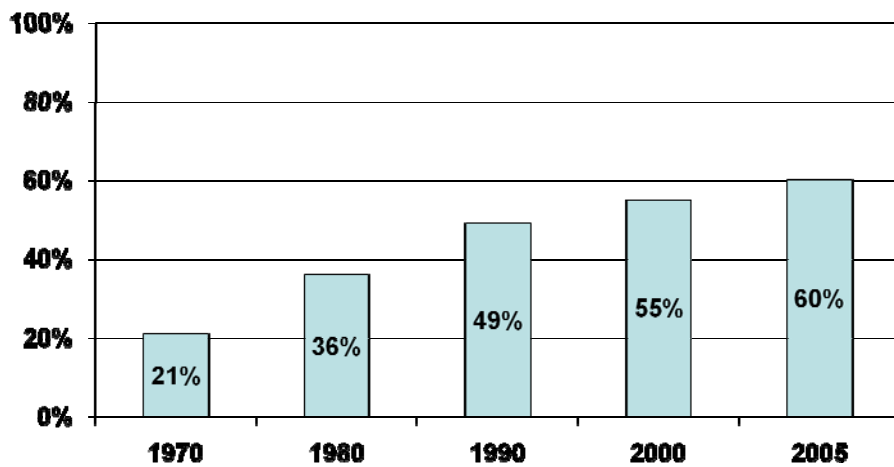
(Data exclude nonearners; 2002 dollars)



Source: Network on Transitions to Adulthood, Data Brief #17 (2004)

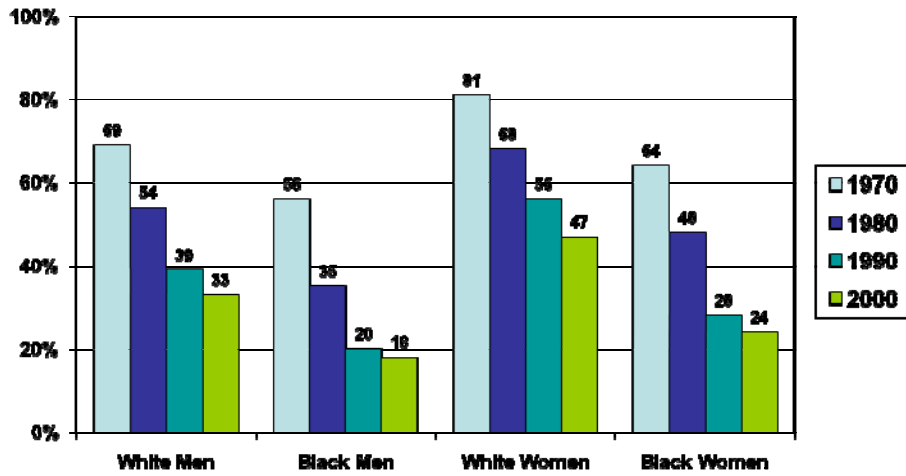
4. Young people are delaying or abandoning marriage throughout the developed world.

Never Married at Age 25 (%)



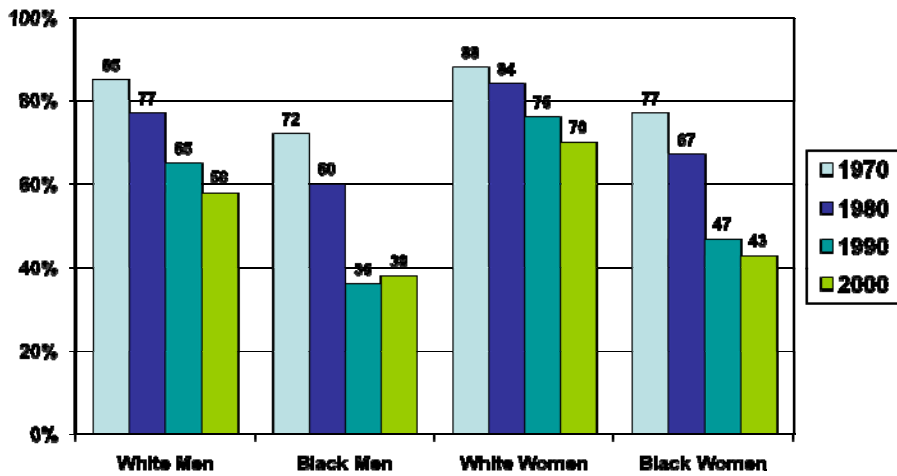
Source: Bill Frey, The Brookings Institution, analysis of US censuses and 2005 American Community Survey

Married at Age 25 (%)



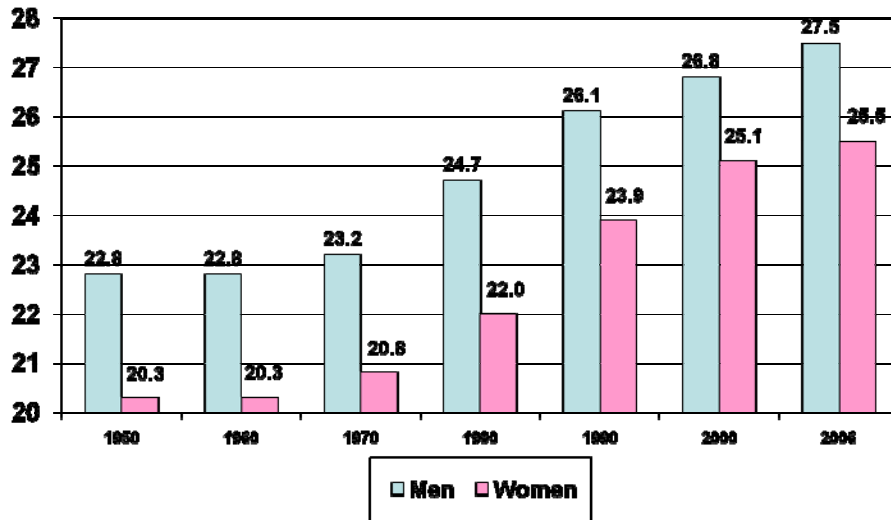
Source: Calculations based on tables in *On the Frontier of Adulthood*, pp. 60-71 (2005)

Married at Age 30 (%)



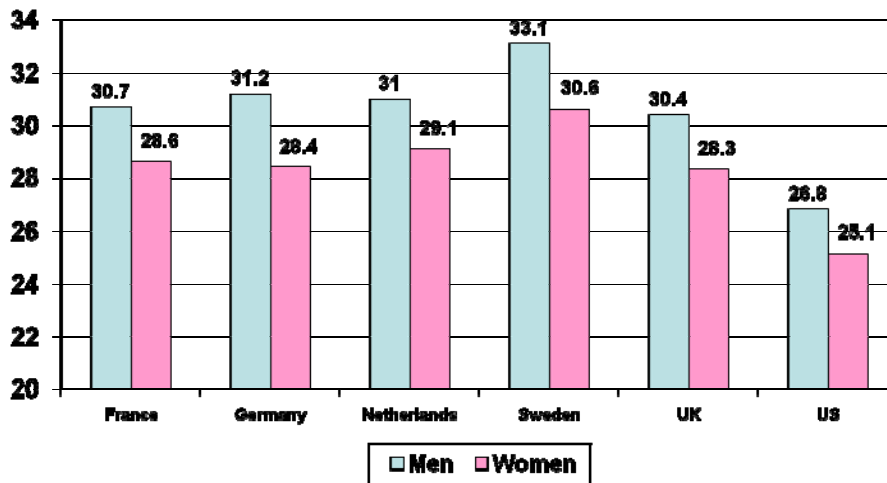
Source: Calculations based on tables in *On the Frontier of Adulthood*, pp. 60-71 (2005)

Median Age at First Marriage, 1950-2006



Source: Current Population Survey, Table MS-2

Median Age at First Marriage, 2000, by Country



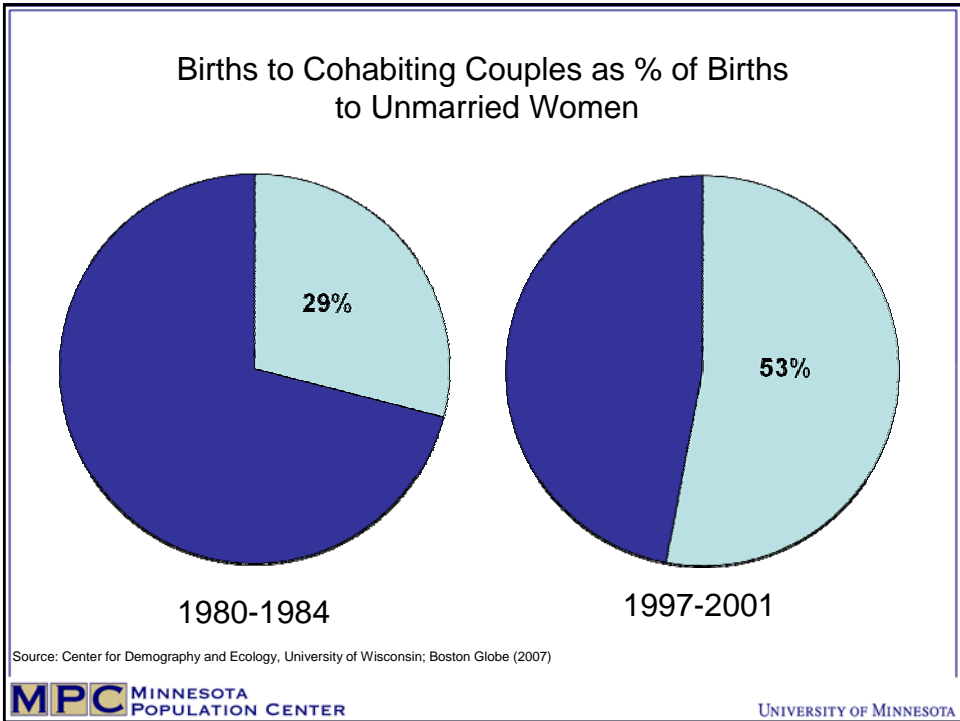
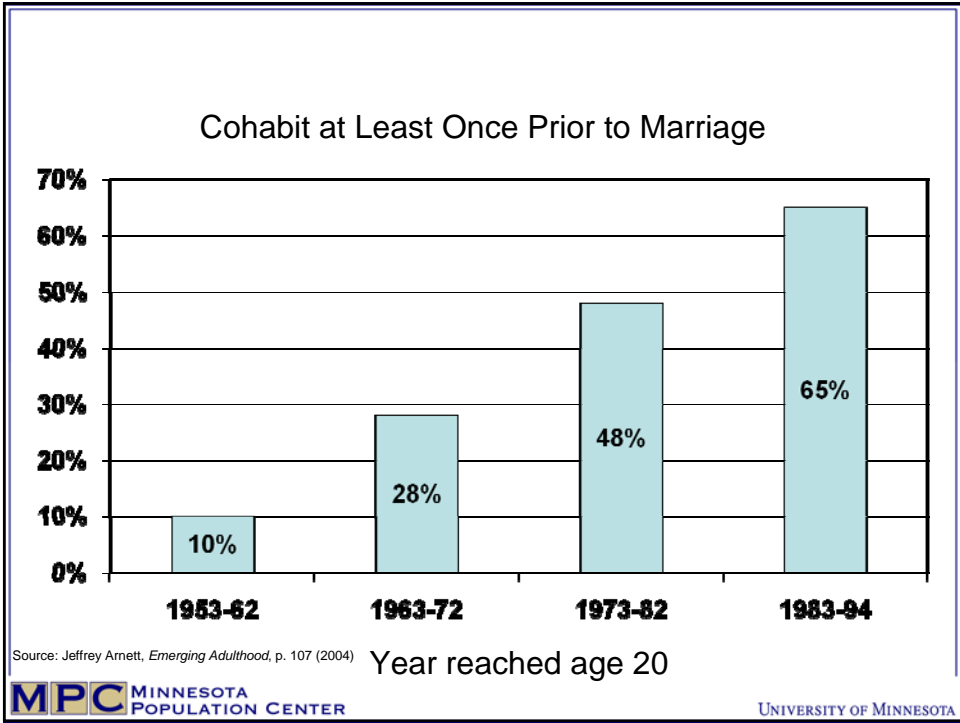
Source: Jeffrey Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood in Europe" (2006)

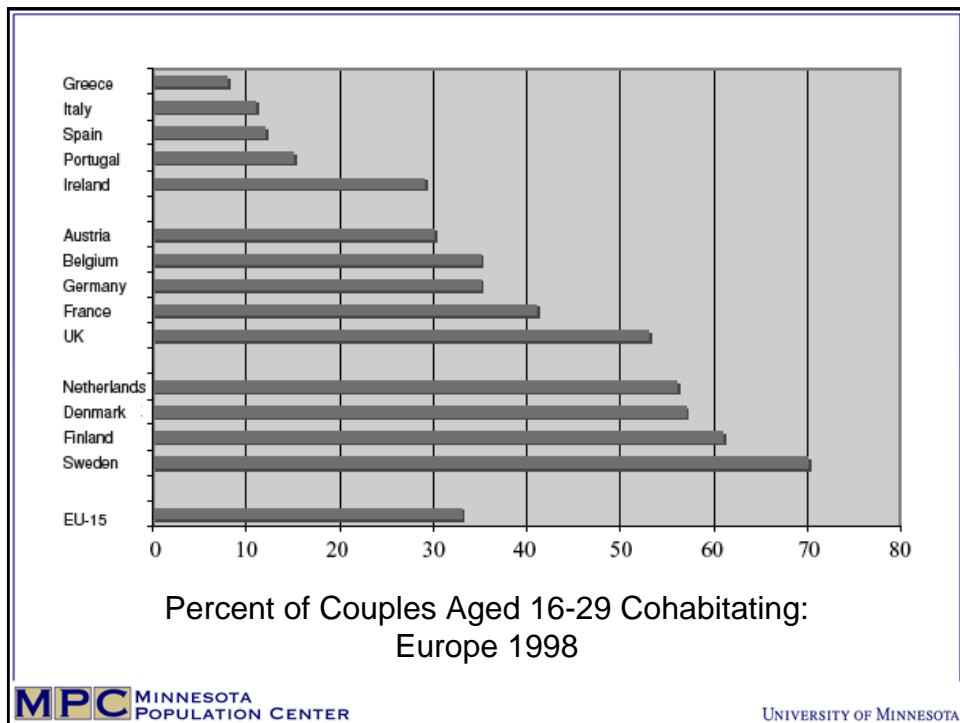
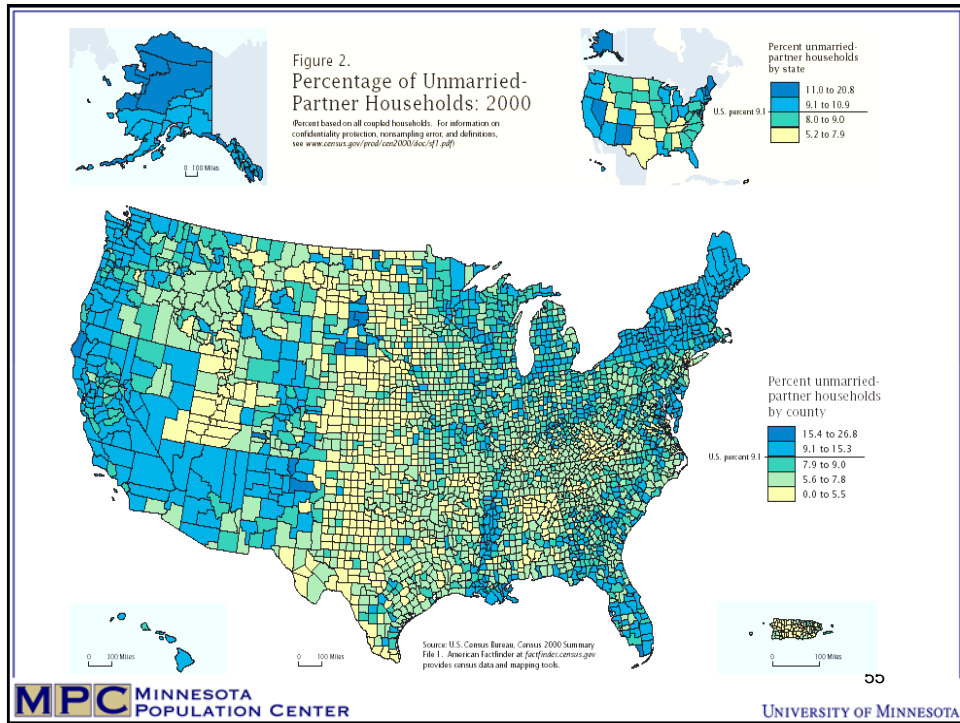
Increase in Median Age at First Marriage, 1980-2000
(years)

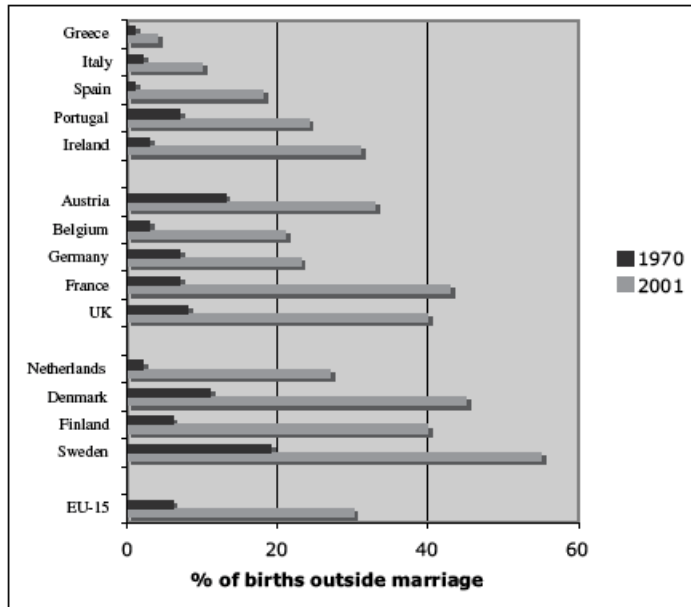
	Men	Women
France	5.5	5.6
Germany	5.1	5.0
Netherlands	5.6	6.0
Sweden	4.1	4.2
UK	5.1	5.3
US	2.1	3.1

Source: Jeffrey Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood in Europe" (2006)

5. Cohabitation prior to marriage has become the norm, and in many countries cohabitation is beginning to replace marriage.







6. The transition to adulthood—leaving school, leaving parental home, getting work, getting married, having children—is getting stretched out and occurring later:
 society is becoming less “age graded.”

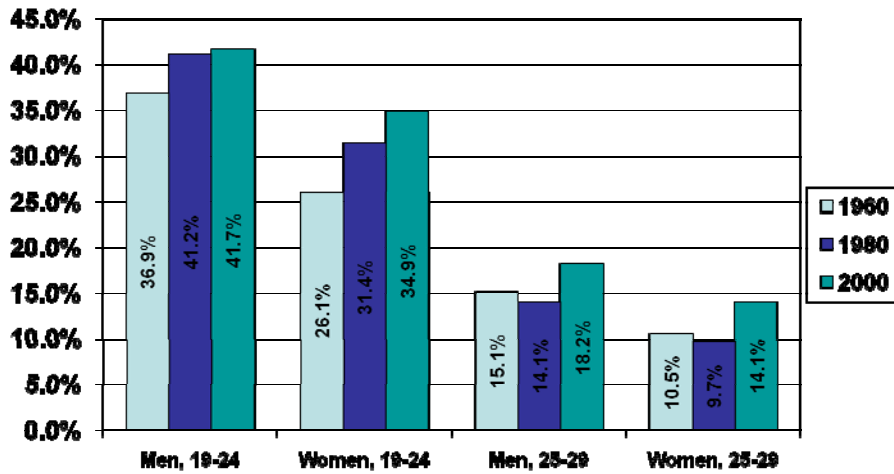
College is taking longer.

	1970	2000
Median years to completion	4	5
6+ yrs to completion (%)	15%	23%
Students 21 and older (%)	25%	45%
Pell grant recipients 24 and older (%)	30%*	58%**

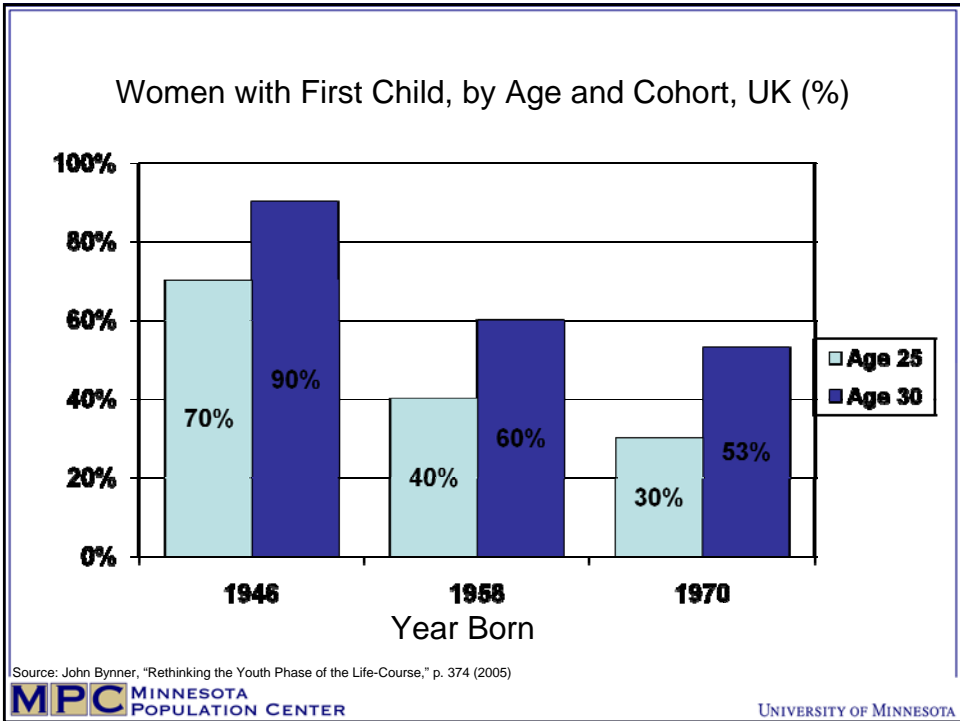
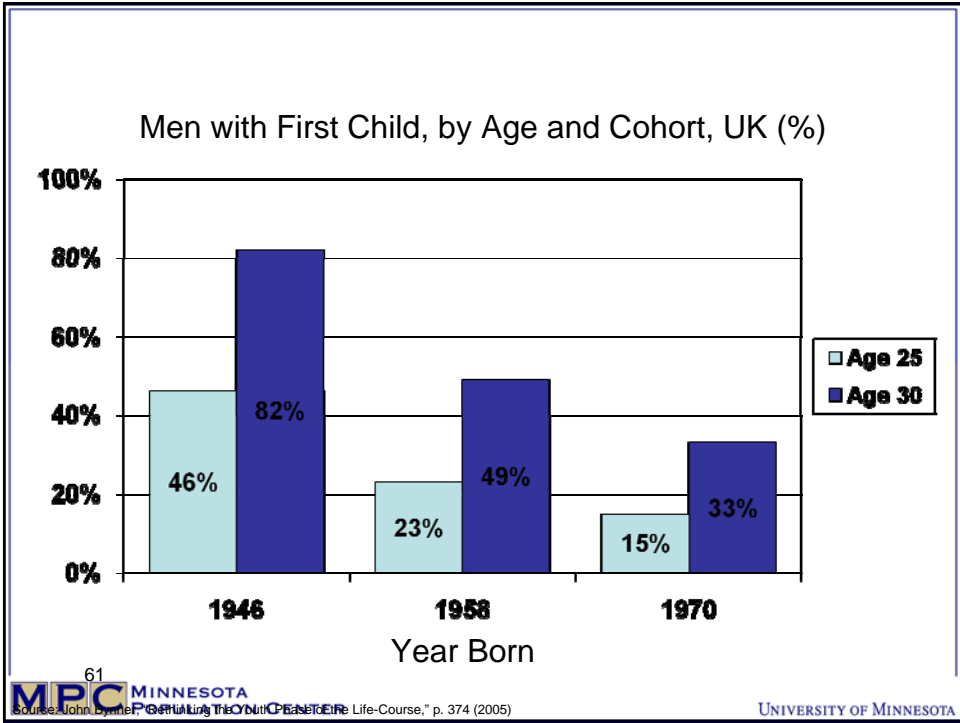
*1975 **2003

Source: Network on Transitions to Adulthood, Policy Brief #34 (2006)

Young Adults are Living Longer with Parents



Source: Jordan Matsudaira, "Jobs, Wages, and Leaving the Nest" (2006)



Six big changes

1. There is an emerging gender gap in education of young adults.
2. After a dramatic post-war increase, workforce participation of young women has leveled off, and the participation of young men is slowly declining.
3. Earnings for young men continue to decline rapidly, except for those with education, and earnings for young women may be leveling off or declining too.

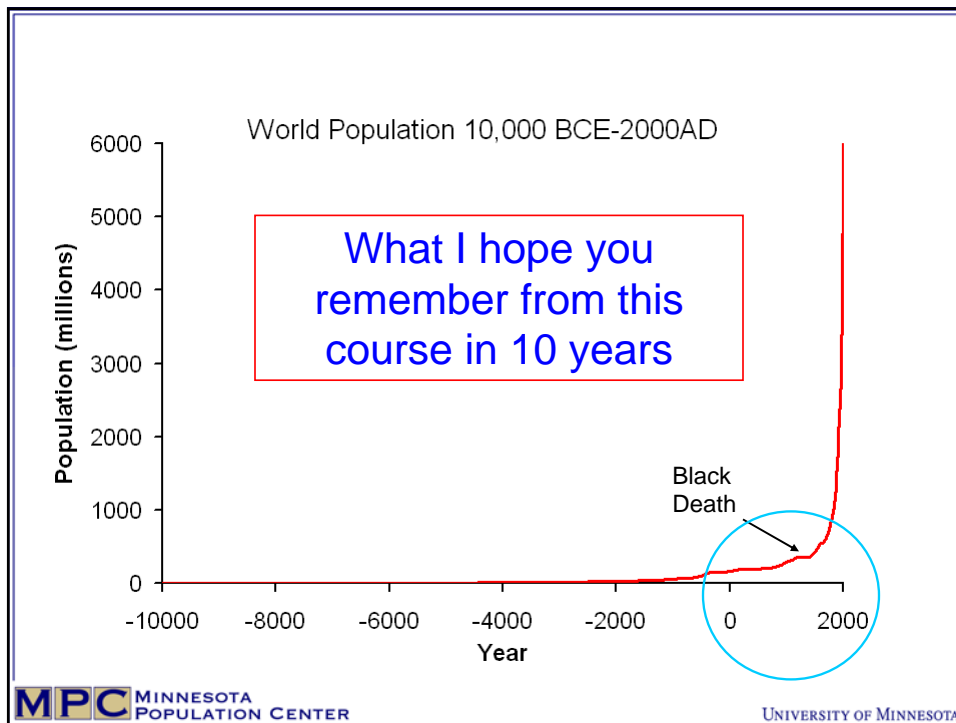
Six big changes

4. Young people are delaying or abandoning marriage throughout the developed world.
5. Cohabitation prior to marriage has become the norm, and in many countries cohabitation is beginning to replace marriage.
6. The transition to adulthood—leaving school, leaving parental home, getting work, getting married, having children—is getting stretched out and occurring later

Predictions

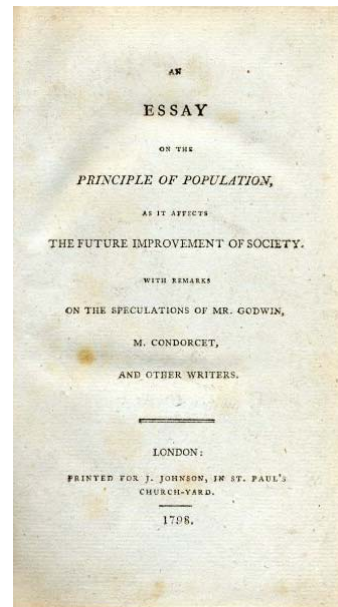


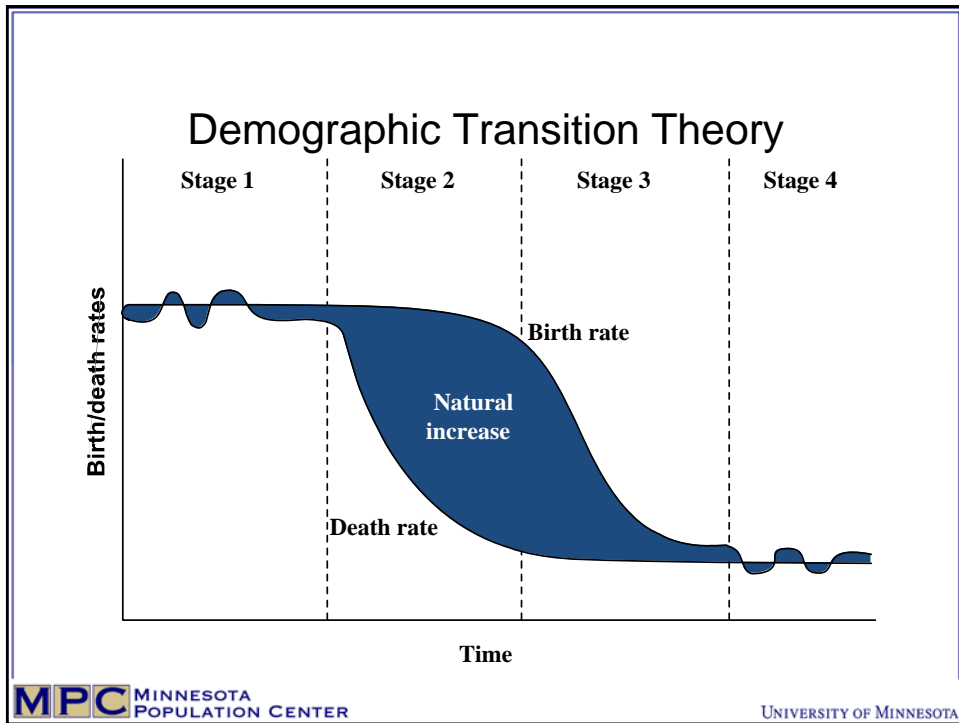
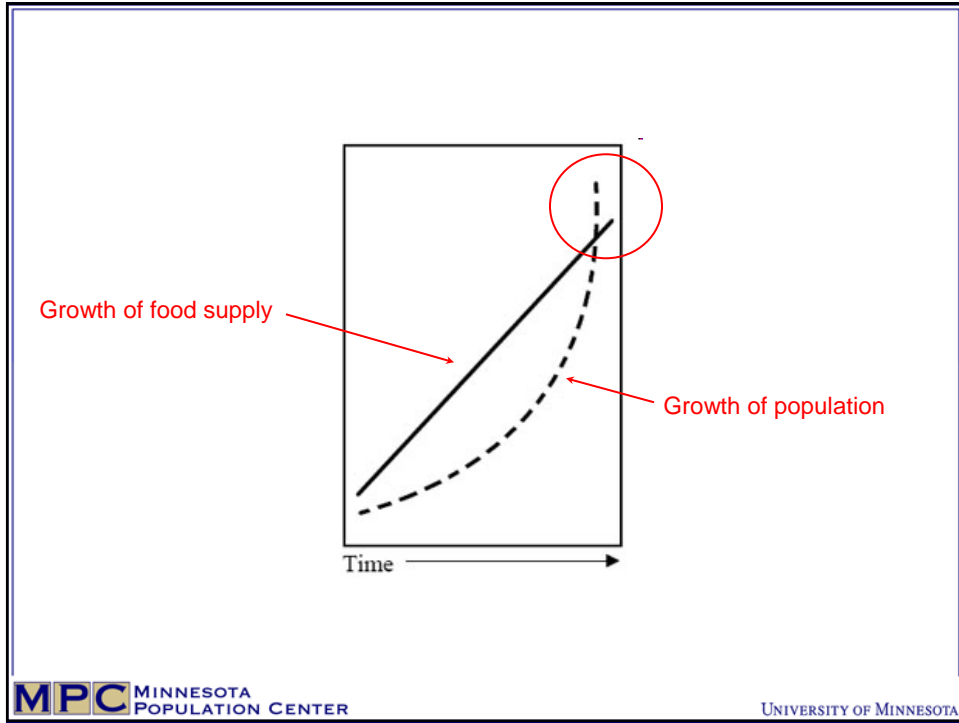
- Average earnings for full-time women in their twenties will exceed those of men by 2015.
- Entry level wages will soon begin their first sustained increase for four decades, and it will last from 2012 to 2025.
- Marriage rates will continue to decline for at least another decade.
- Cohabitations among young adults will exceed marriages by 2020.

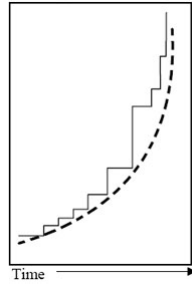


Lessons of Population History

- Theory



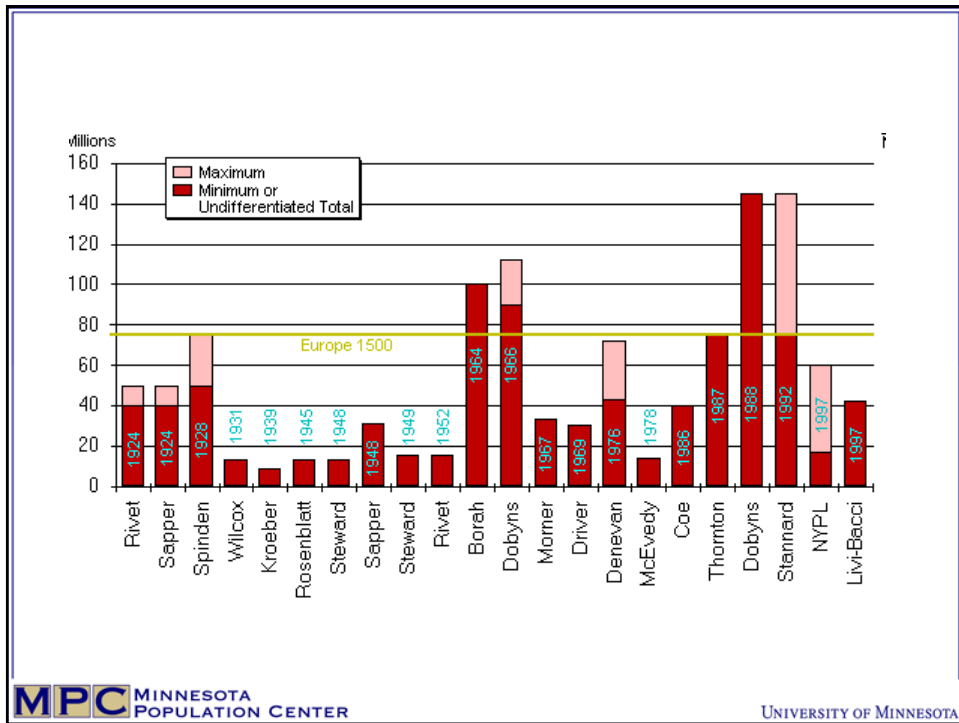
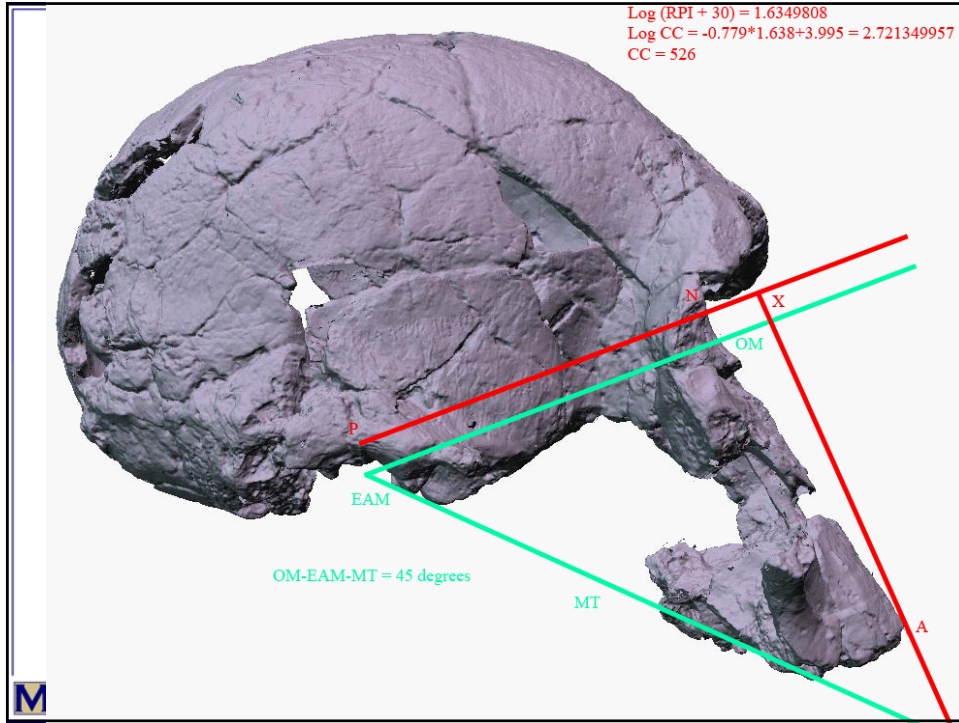


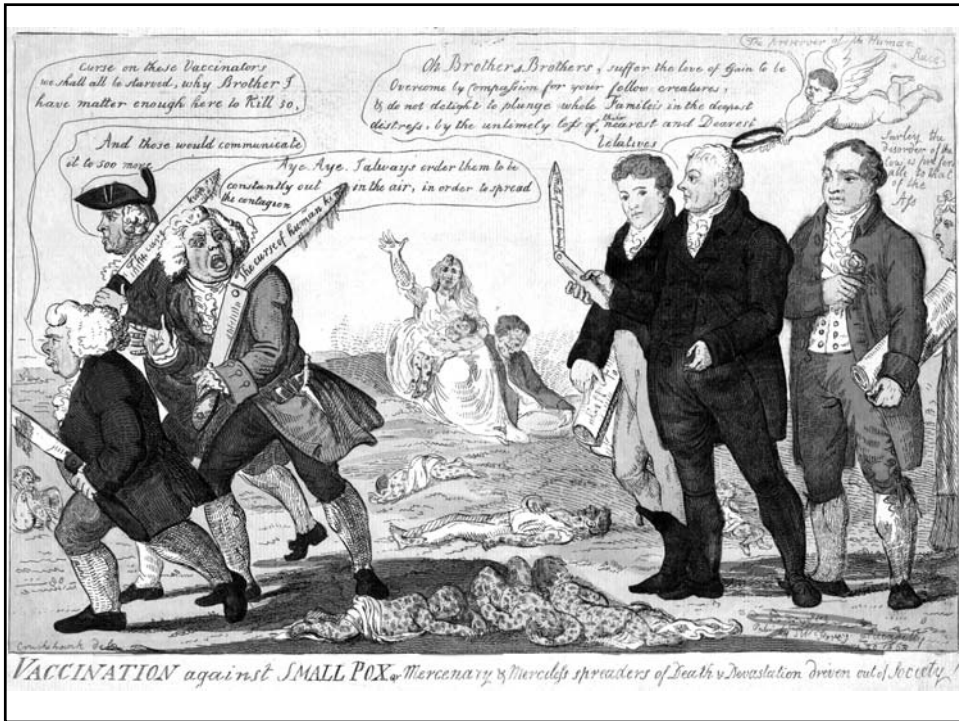


Ester Böserup (1910-1999)

Lessons of Population History

- Theory
- Controversy

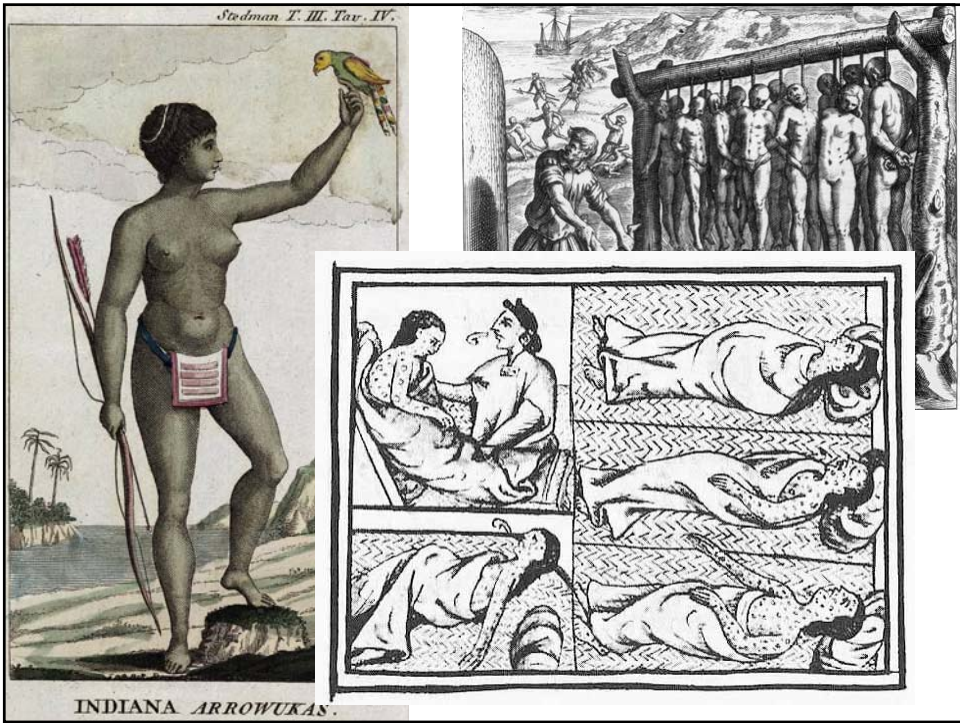
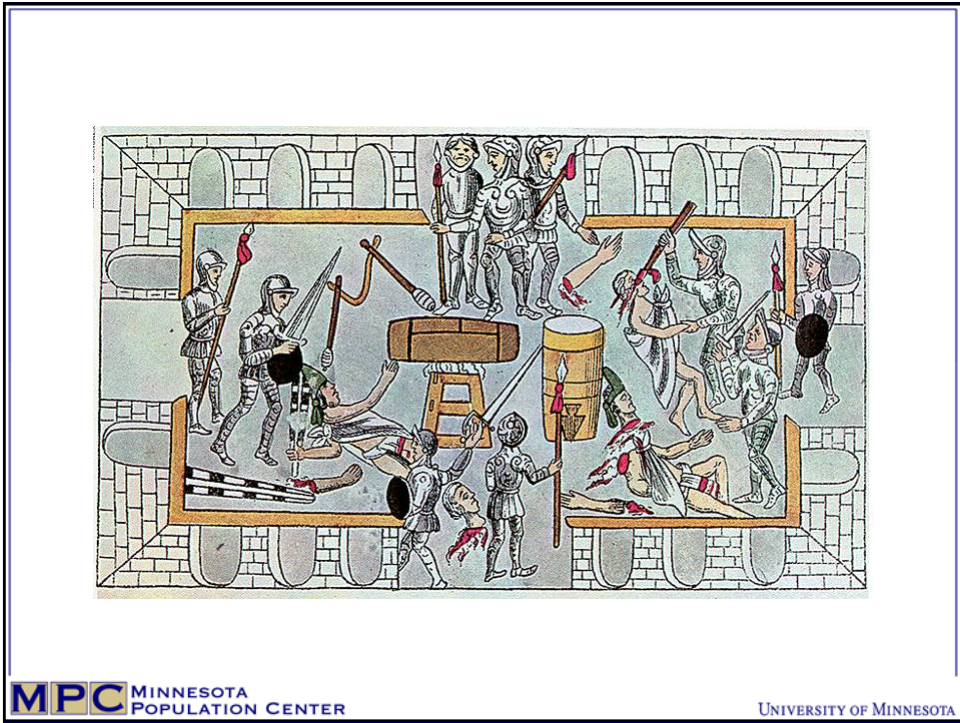


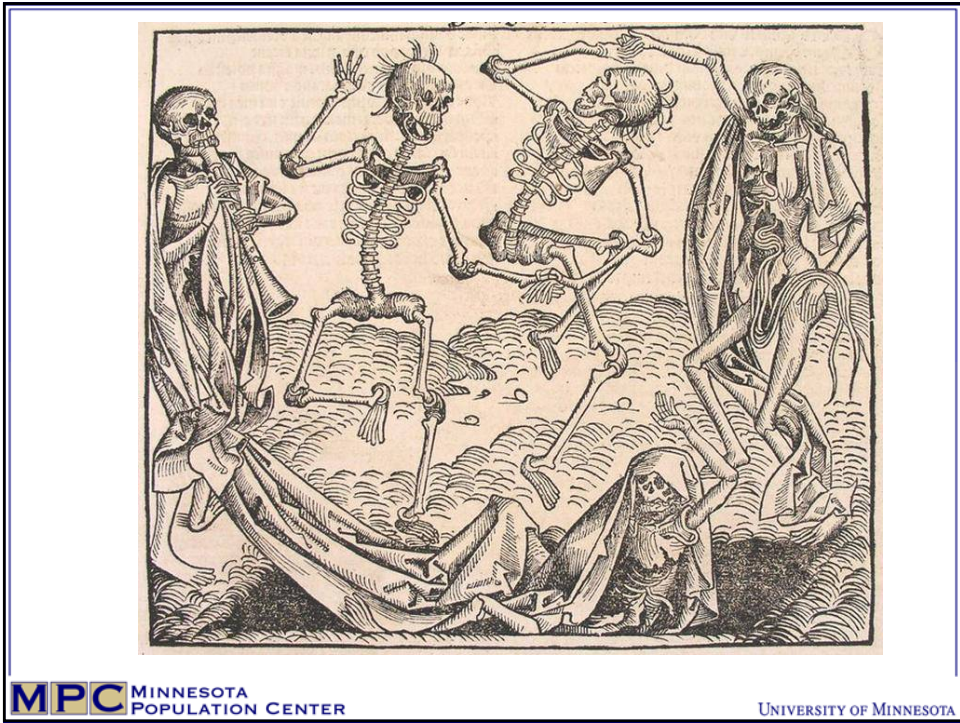


Lessons of Population History

- Theory
- Controversy
- Life in the past







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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



John Gray and family, Minnesota ca. 1860

Lessons of Population History

- Theory
- Controversy
- Life in the past
- Data

Historical Population Data

- We don't know much about population before 1650
- Knowledge of 1650-1850 fragmentary and often inaccurate
- For parts of the world, solid data are still lacking

Be skeptical of data

- Even estimates presented as authoritative by highly respected authorities (e.g. Cambridge Group) may be wrong
- All numbers before 1850 must be analyzed critically, but even current numbers produced by government agencies may also be wrong
- Figure out where numbers come from, and judge their plausibility carefully

Lessons of Population History

- Theory
- Controversy
- Life in the past
- Data
- Methods

Methodological lessons

- Demographic measures should be age-independent, like Total Fertility Rate, Life Table, or age-standardized rates
- Period and cohort measures are different
- Period measures ordinarily assume a synthetic cohort
- Synthetic cohorts are more volatile than true cohorts
- Fertility generally has a greater impact on age distributions than does mortality

Number one methodological lesson:

Watch your denominators

Always neglected, but they determine
just as much as numerators