

# *Educational attainment and fertility declines*

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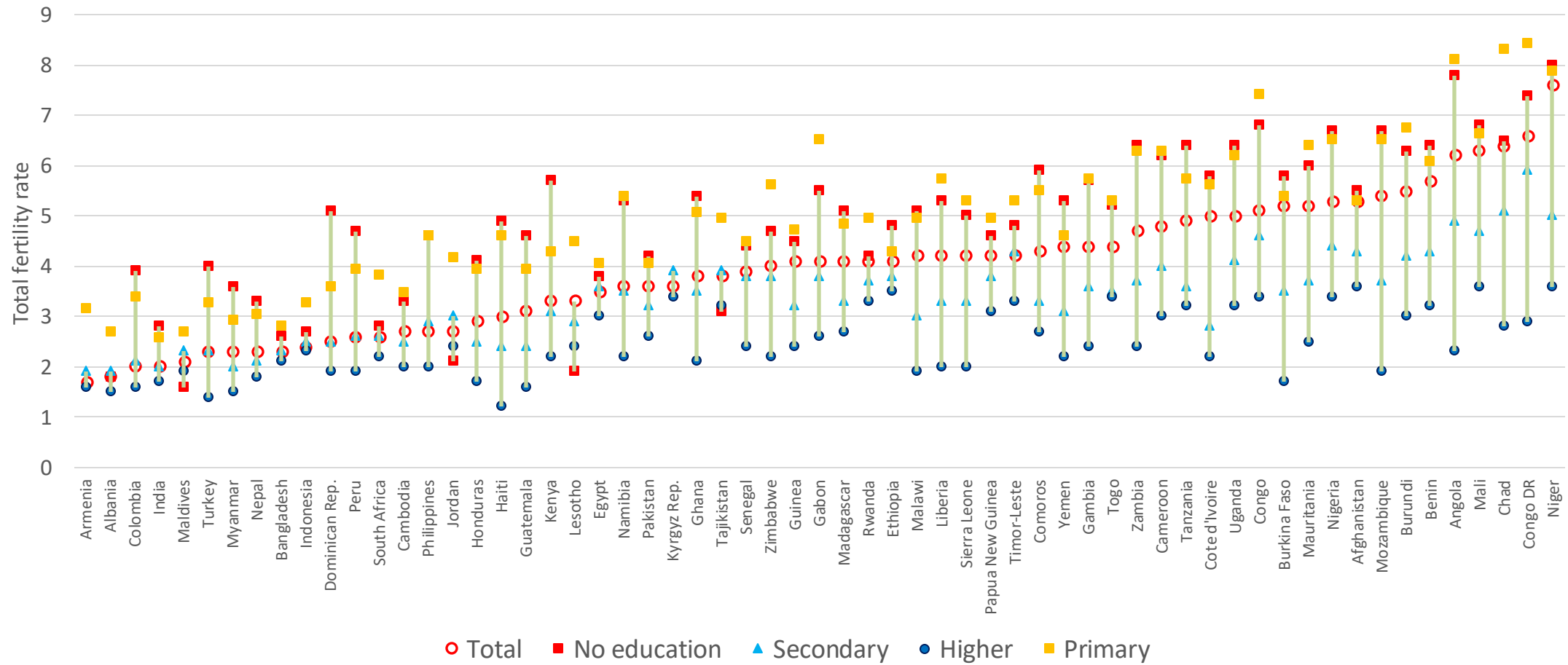
Expert Group Meeting on Population,  
Education and Sustainable Development,  
6-7 September 2022

# Main messages

- Education has played a role in the fertility decline in high fertility countries and will most likely continue to do so.
- The link in sub-Saharan Africa is present, potentially weakened by slow increase in the quantity of schooling.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the expansion of the quantity of education at the expense of quality may interfere with the association between women's education and fertility.
- What future? In low fertility countries, the gradient is still present at relatively lower level. Expectation of a cross-over or not?

# TFR by levels of educational attainment

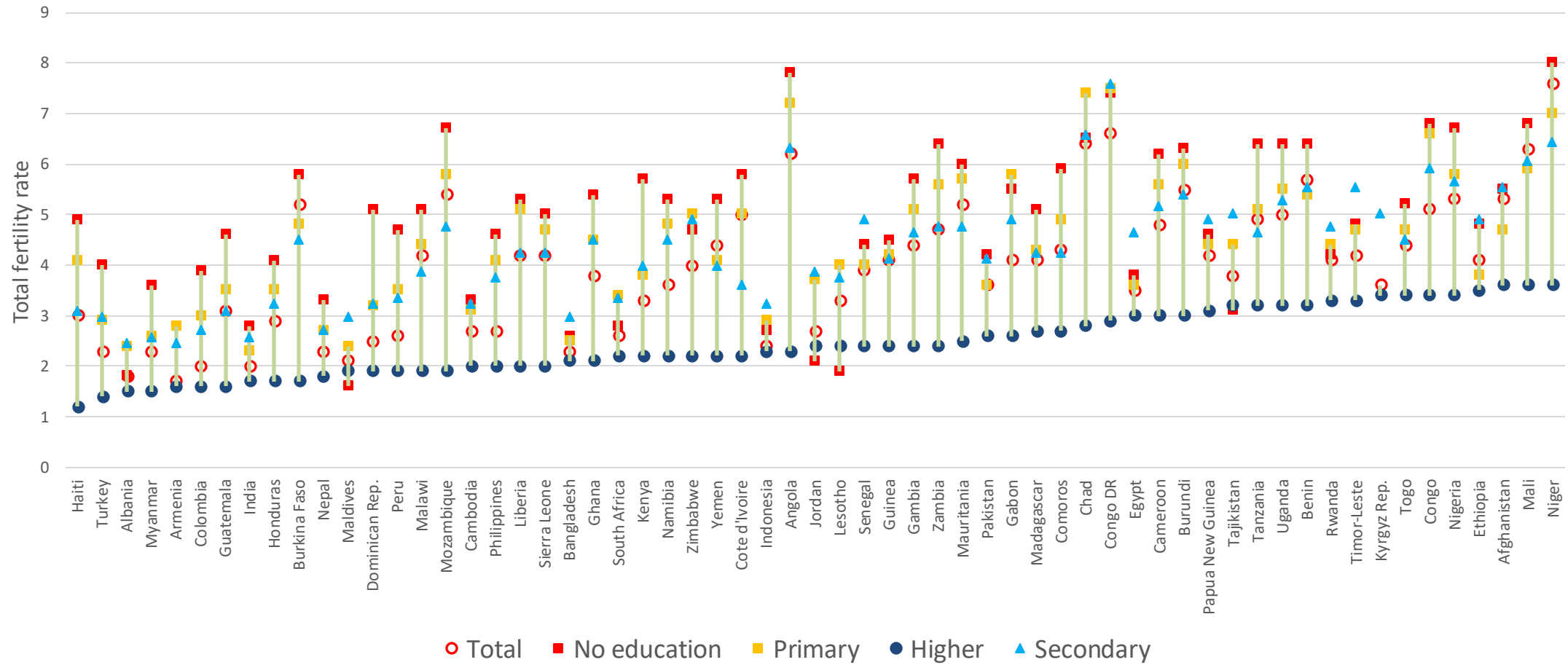
Sorted by total fertility rate (all women)



Note: Total fertility rate for the three years preceding the survey for age group 15-49 expressed per woman; Including all countries with a survey since 2010 (only the latest survey is included). Source: ICF, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID.

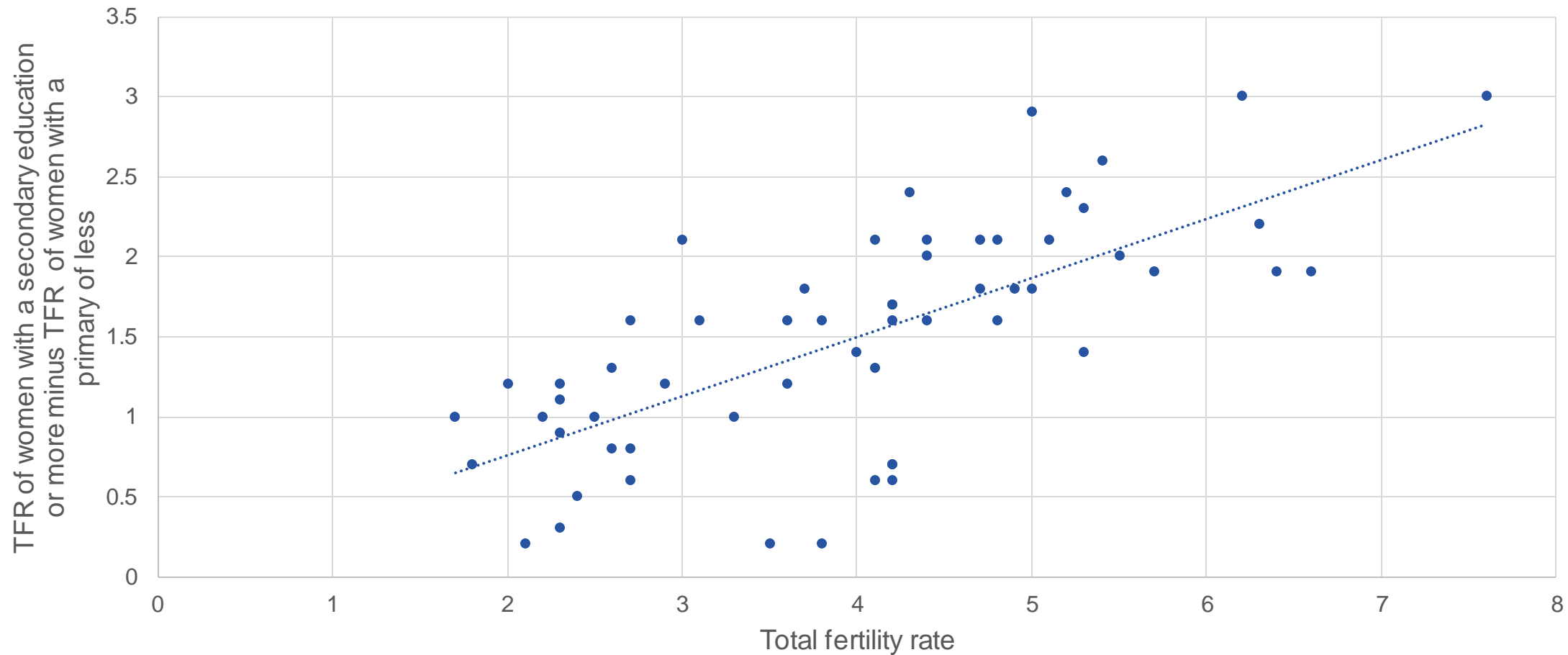
# TFR by levels of educational attainment

Sorted by total fertility rate for women with a higher education



Note: Total fertility rate for the three years preceding the survey for age group 15-49 expressed per woman; Including all countries with a survey since 2010 (only the latest survey is included). Source: ICF, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID.

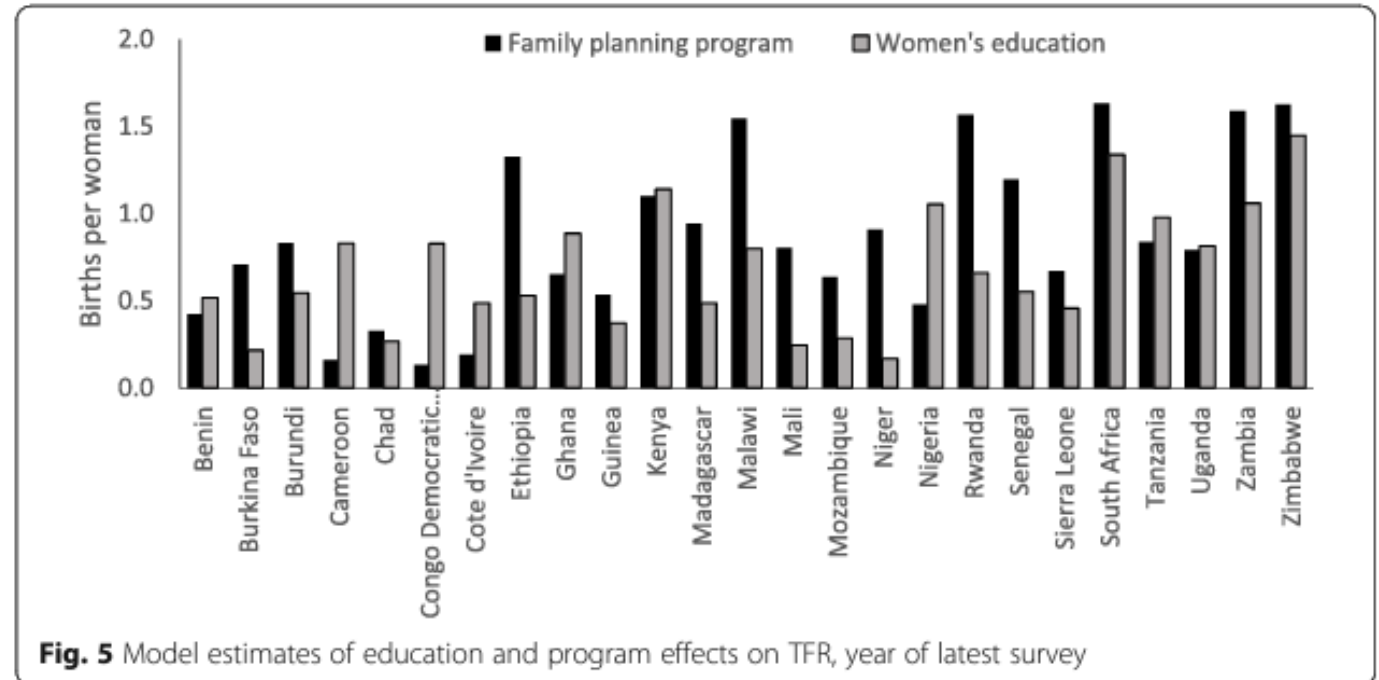
# Relationship between TFR & TFR by education since 2010



Note: Based on the total fertility rate for the three years preceding the survey for age group 15-49 expressed per woman; Including all countries with a survey since 2010 (only the latest survey is included). Source: ICF, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID.

# Evidence on the education-fertility link in Africa

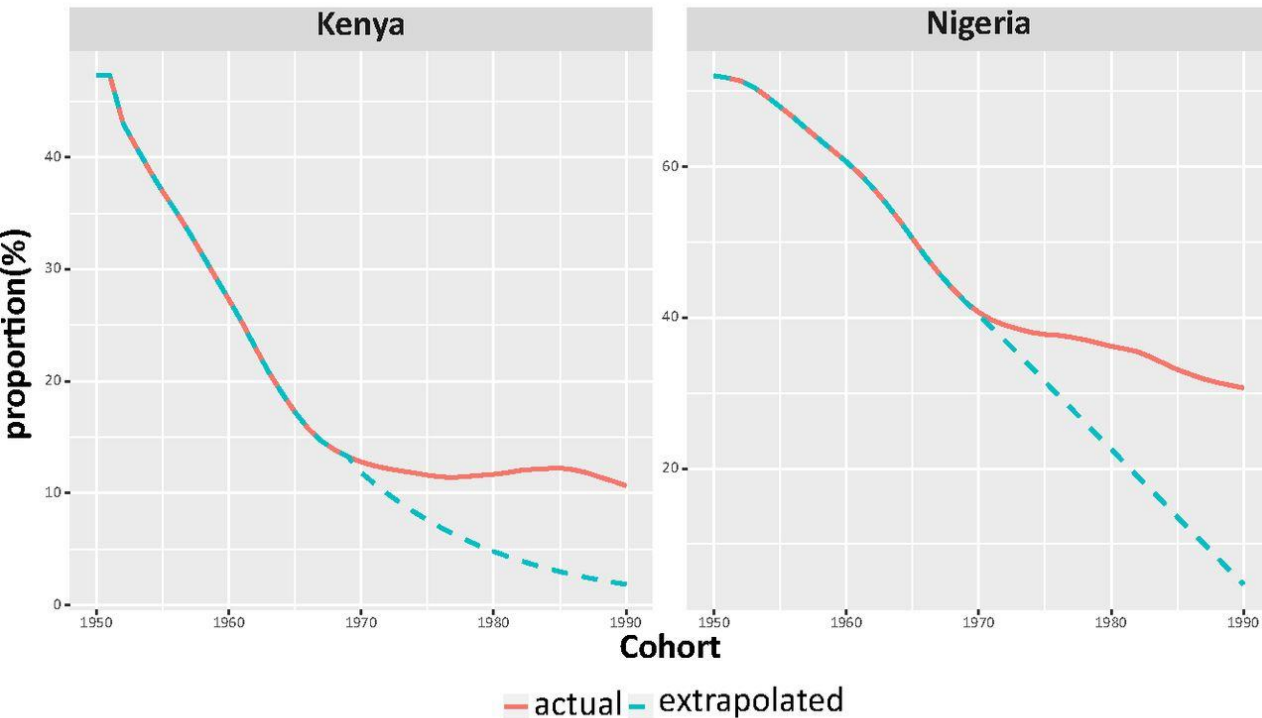
- Bongaarts (2020): “Women’s education and family planning programs are found to be the dominant determinants of fertility decline and their effects operate by reducing both wanted and unwanted fertility.”
- Corker et al. (2022): While women in the upper social group are nearing the end of the fertility transition, we need to “shifts attention to understanding the intragroup differentials and diffusion processes that will impact the future path of fertility declines in the region.”



Source: Bongaarts in Genus (2020)

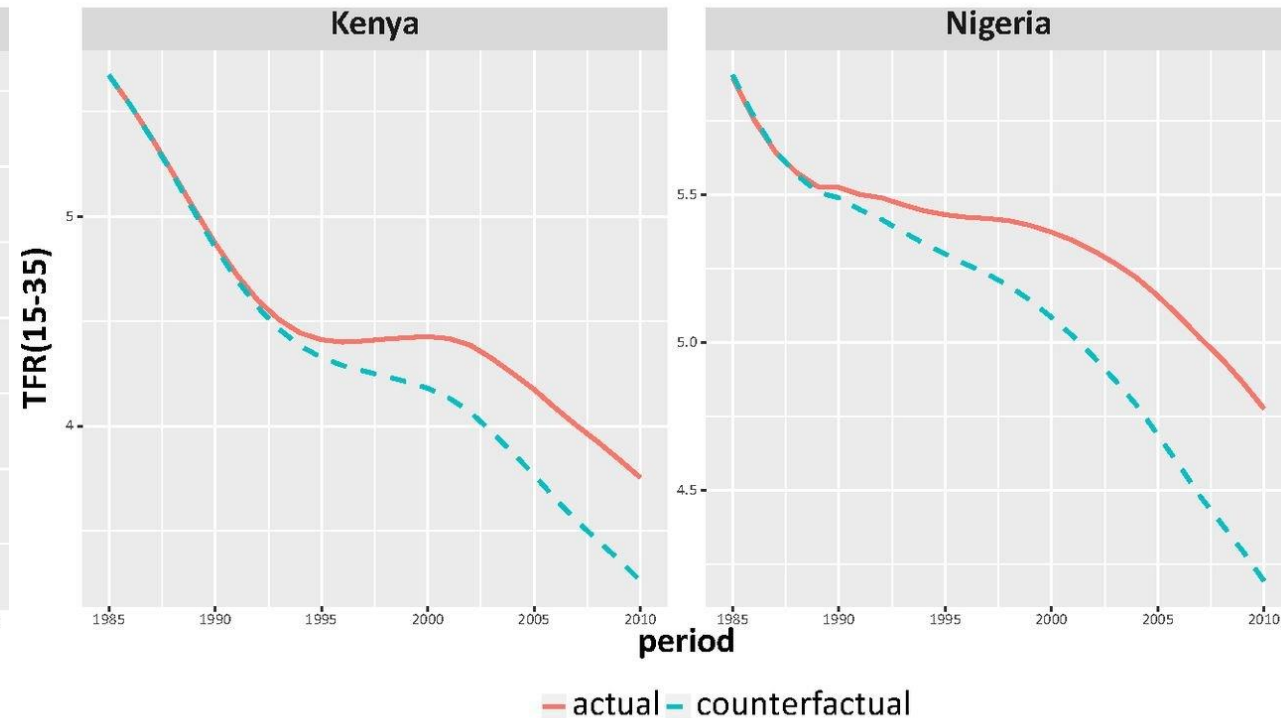
# Stalls in fertility decline and education increases

Proportion of women with no formal education



Source: Own Computation

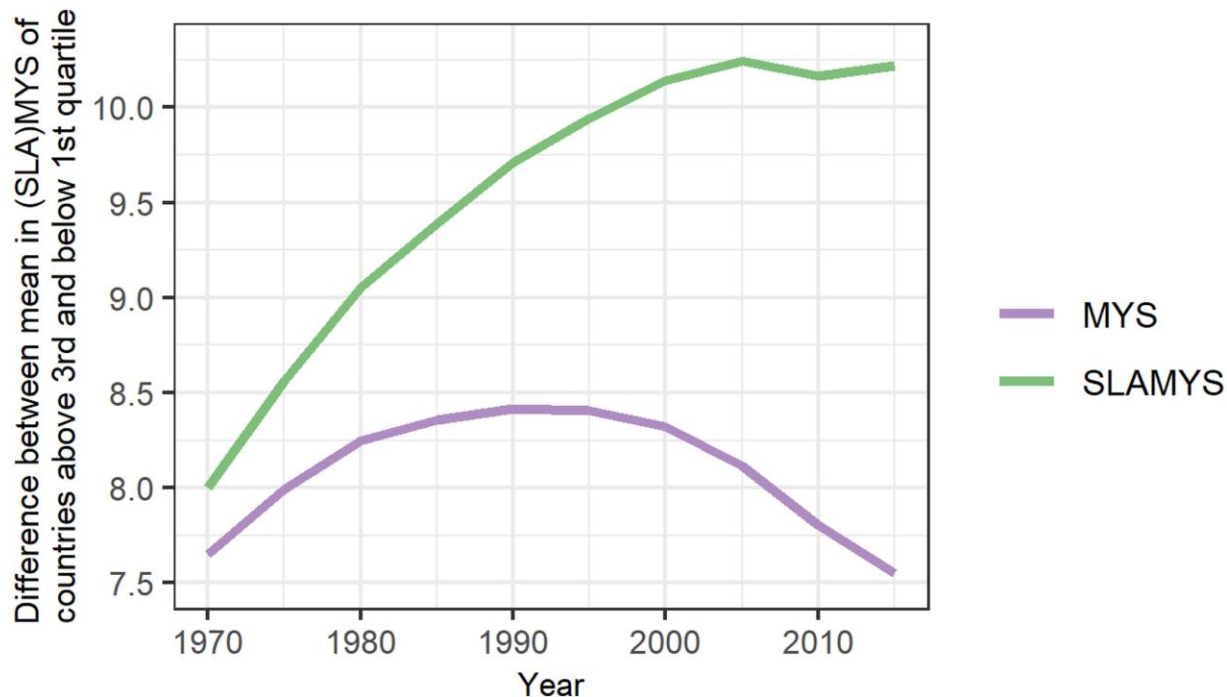
Period TFR with and with-out educational disruption



Source: Own Computation

Source: Kebede, Goujon & Lutz in PNAS (2019)

# Quality of education

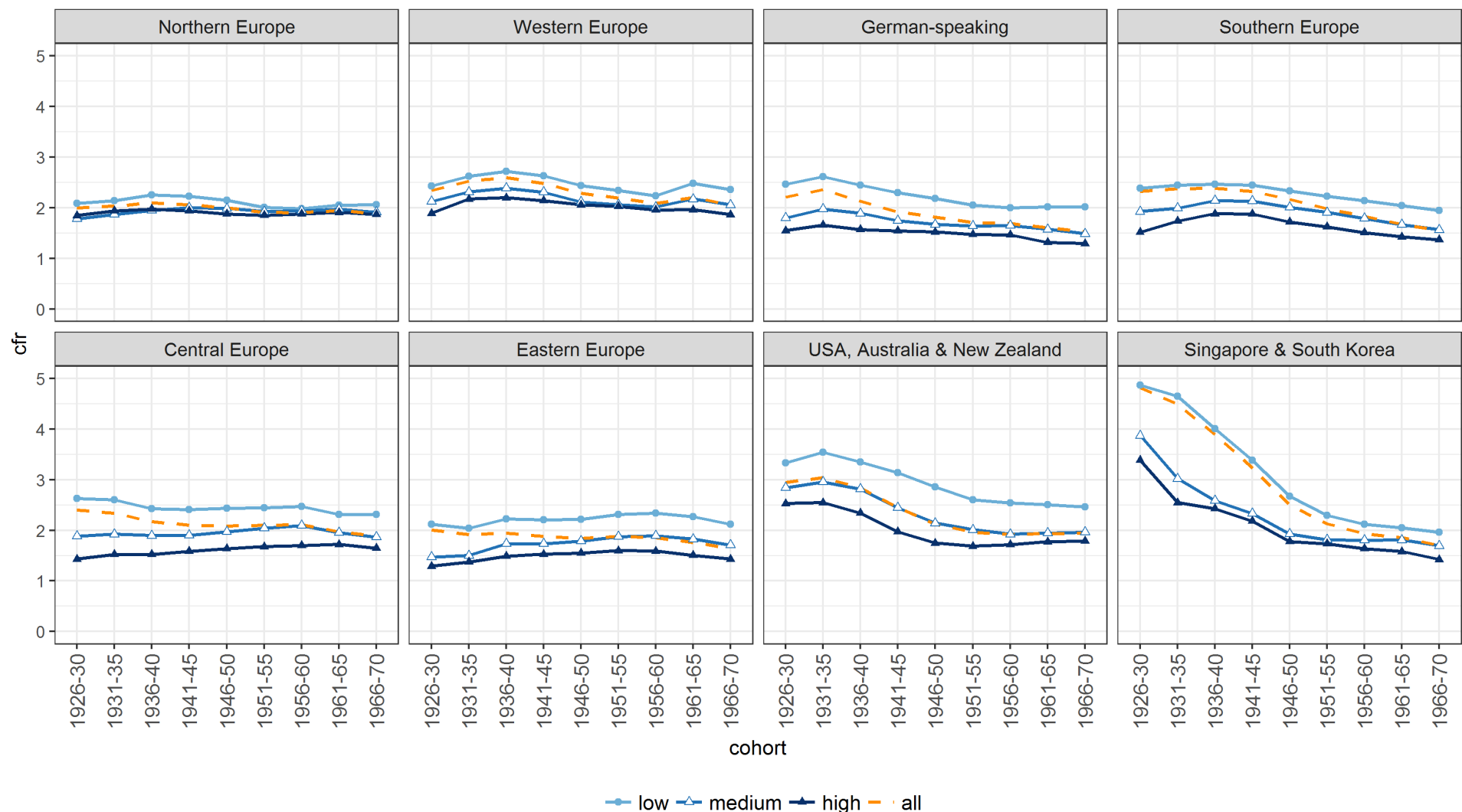


Source: Lutz, Reiter, Özdemir, Yildiz, Guimaraes, Goujon in PNAS (2021)

- Increase in school quantity at the expense of school quality: increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, decline in skills, etc.
- Kebede (2022) found “positive effects of the primary school reform program [in Ethiopia] through the unidentified mechanisms” on timing to 1st birth and the number of children at age 25.
- Development efforts in accelerating fertility declines in sub-Saharan Africa must look beyond expanding primary education for all.



# The future? Education gradients in completed fertility in low fertility countries



Source: Sobotka, T., Beaujouan, É. and Van Bavel, J., 2017. Introduction: Education and fertility in low-fertility settings. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research* 2017, 15, pp. 1-16.

Thank you for your time.

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