

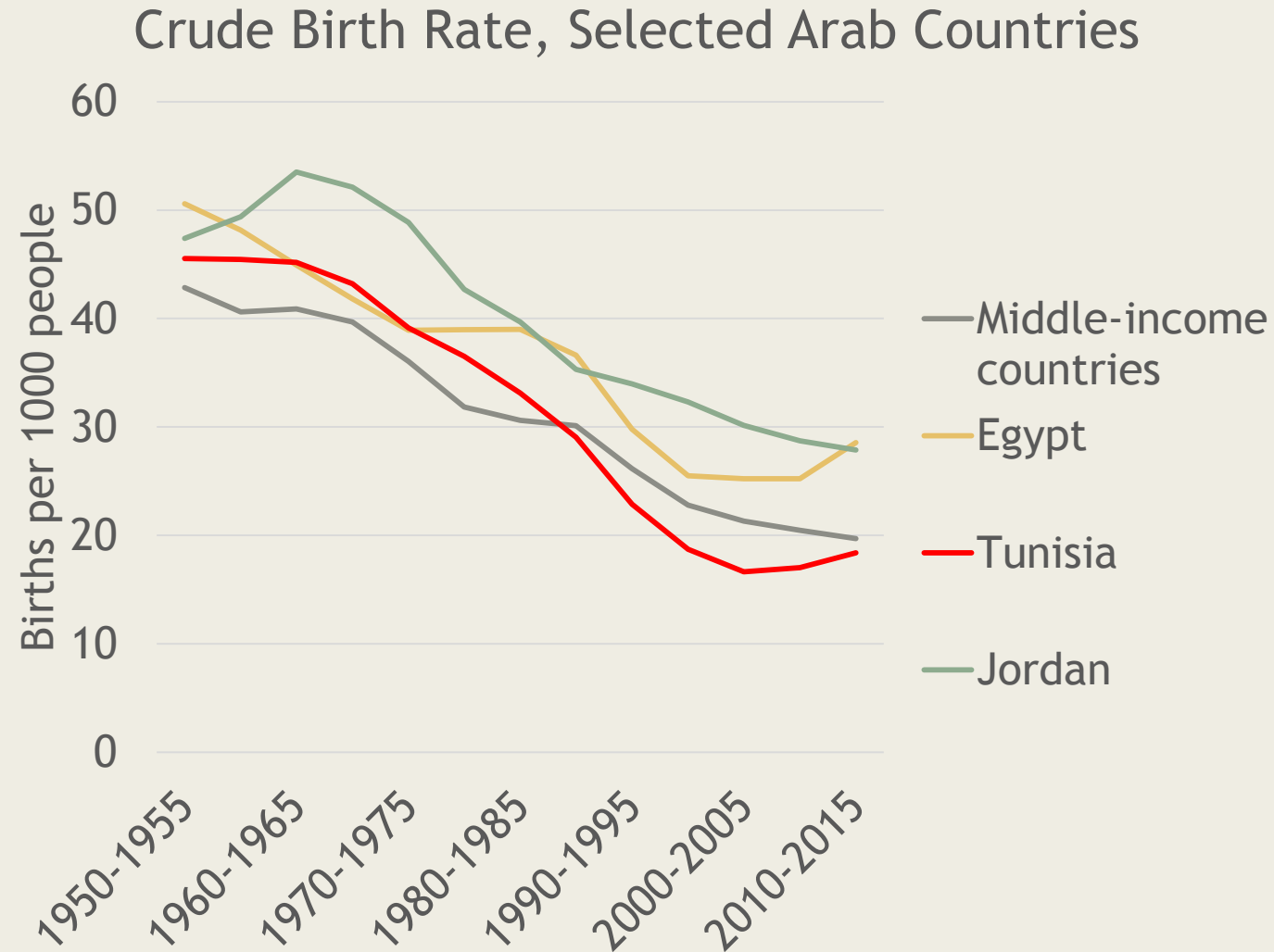


BEWARE OF THE ECHO

THE YOUTH BULGE AND FERTILITY IN SELECTED ARAB COUNTRIES

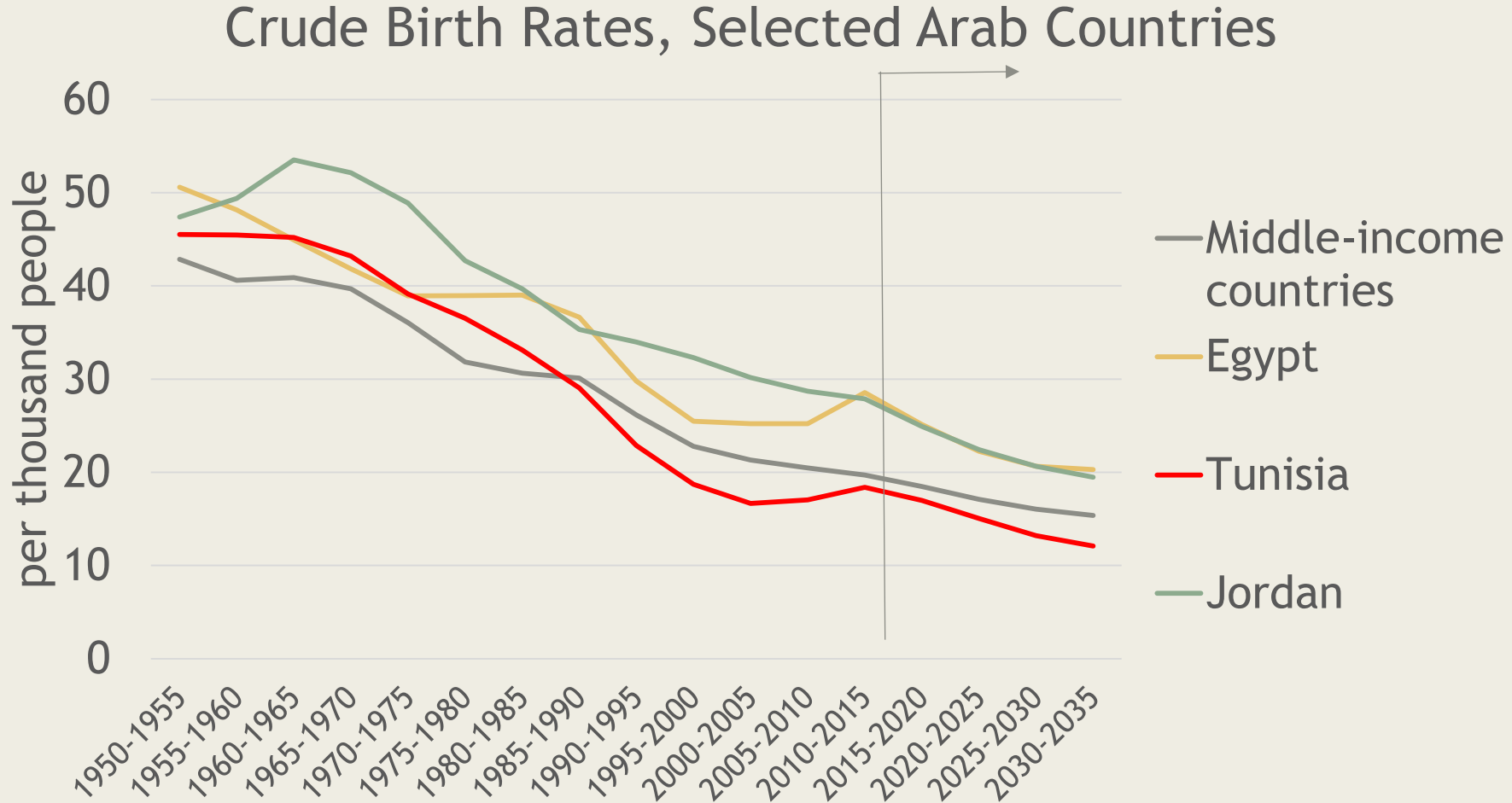
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Echo of the youth bulge is starting to become apparent in rising birth rates in Egypt and Tunisia



Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision

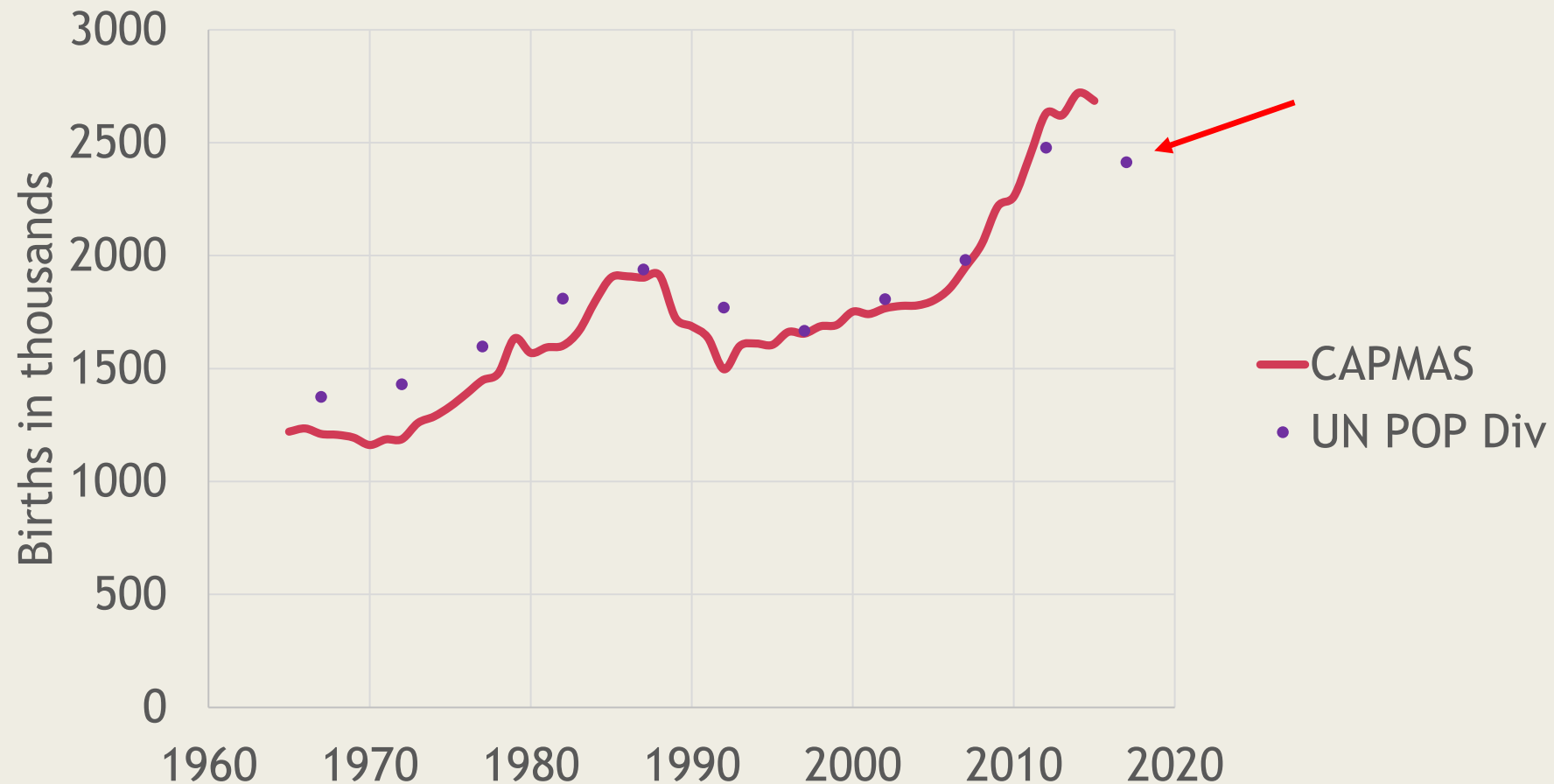
Medium variant projections show resumption of decline, but is that really likely to happen?



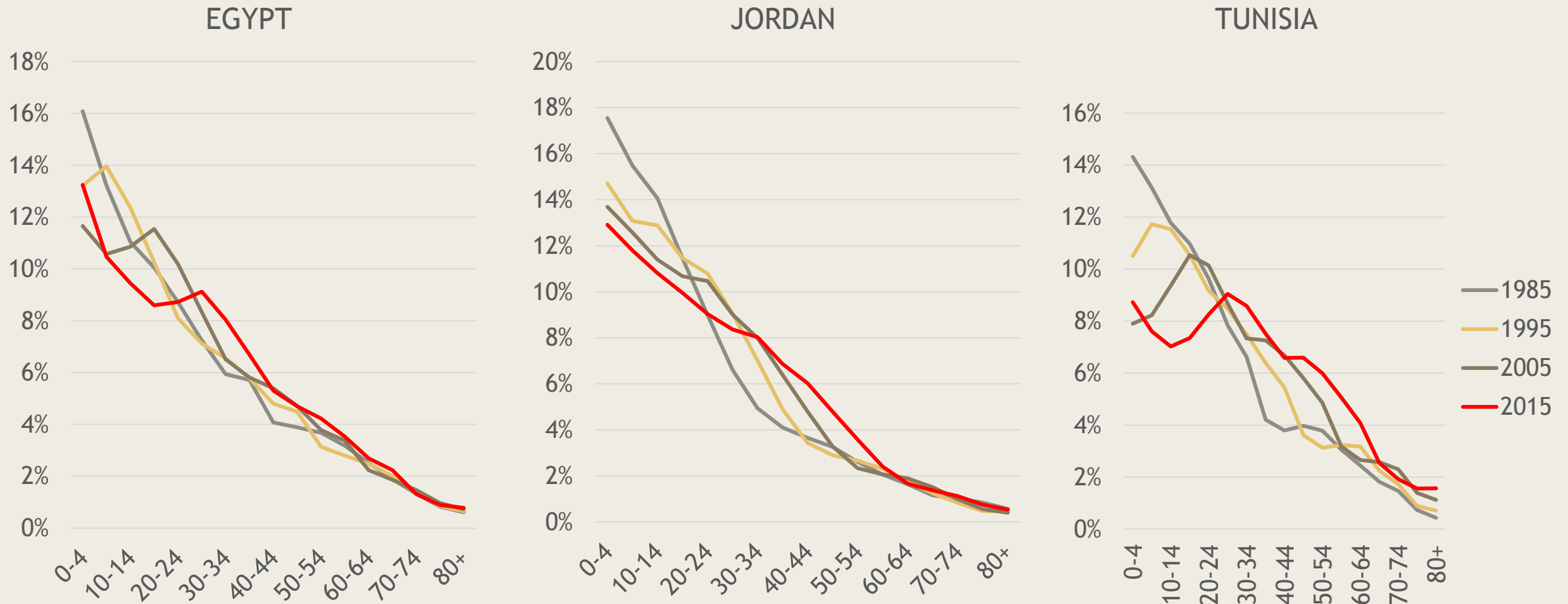
Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision, Medium Variant

Data from Egypt reveal a pronounced baby boom in recent years. Again, medium variant projections may be understating the durability of this boom

Egypt: Number of Births per Year (in thousands)

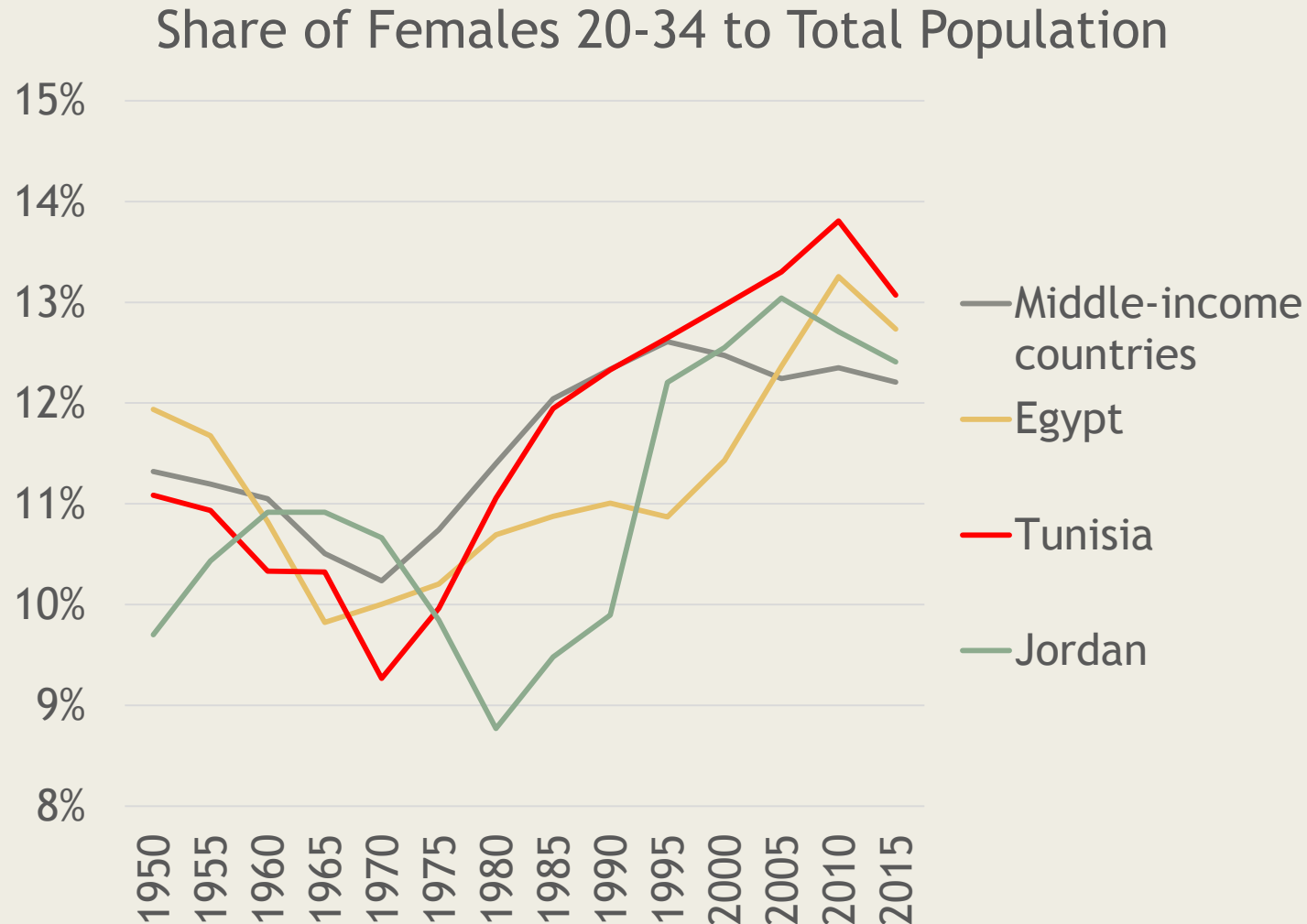


Some of the boom is clearly due to the youth bulge aging into the peak childbearing years.



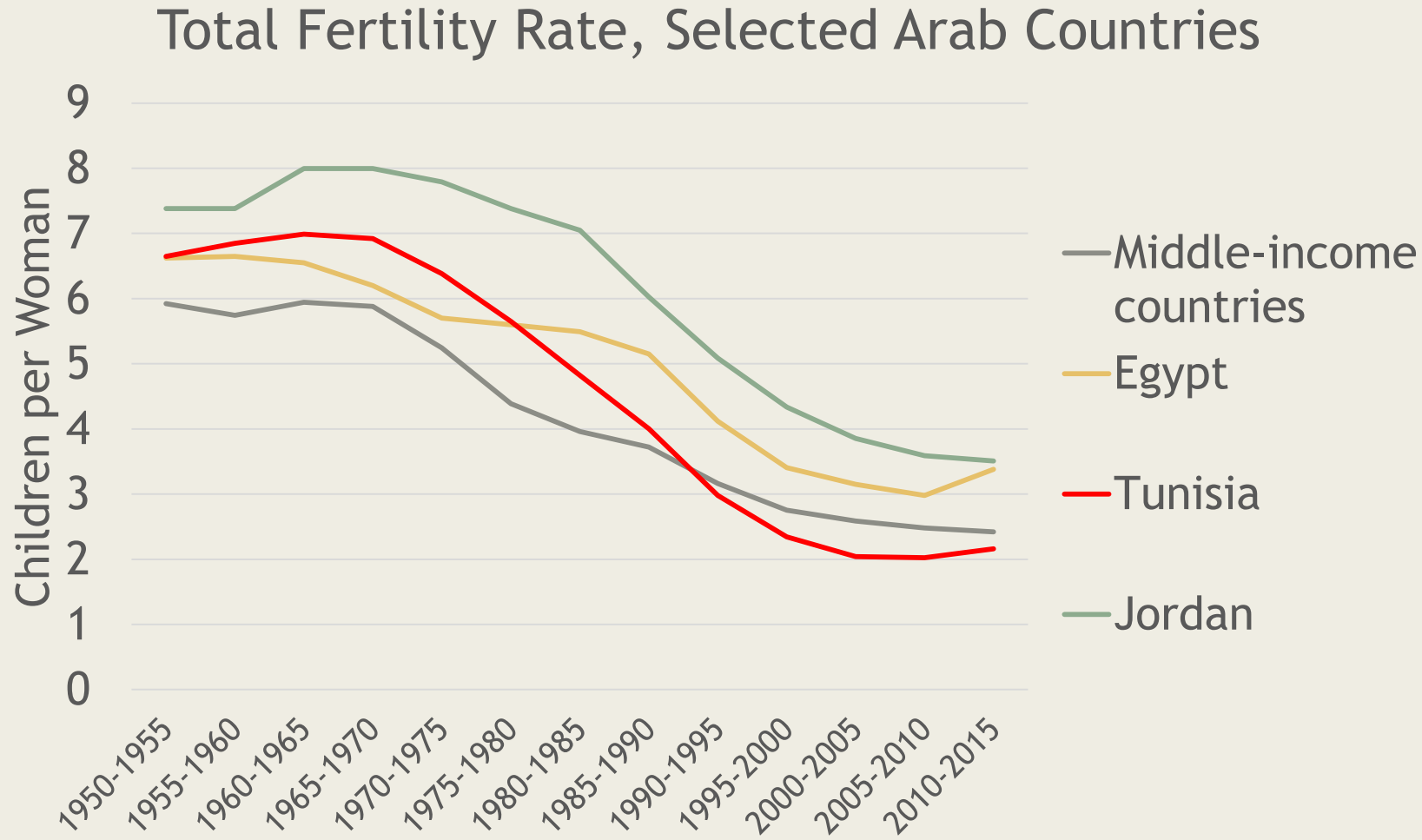
Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision

Share of females in peak child bearing years has increased substantially in past two decades



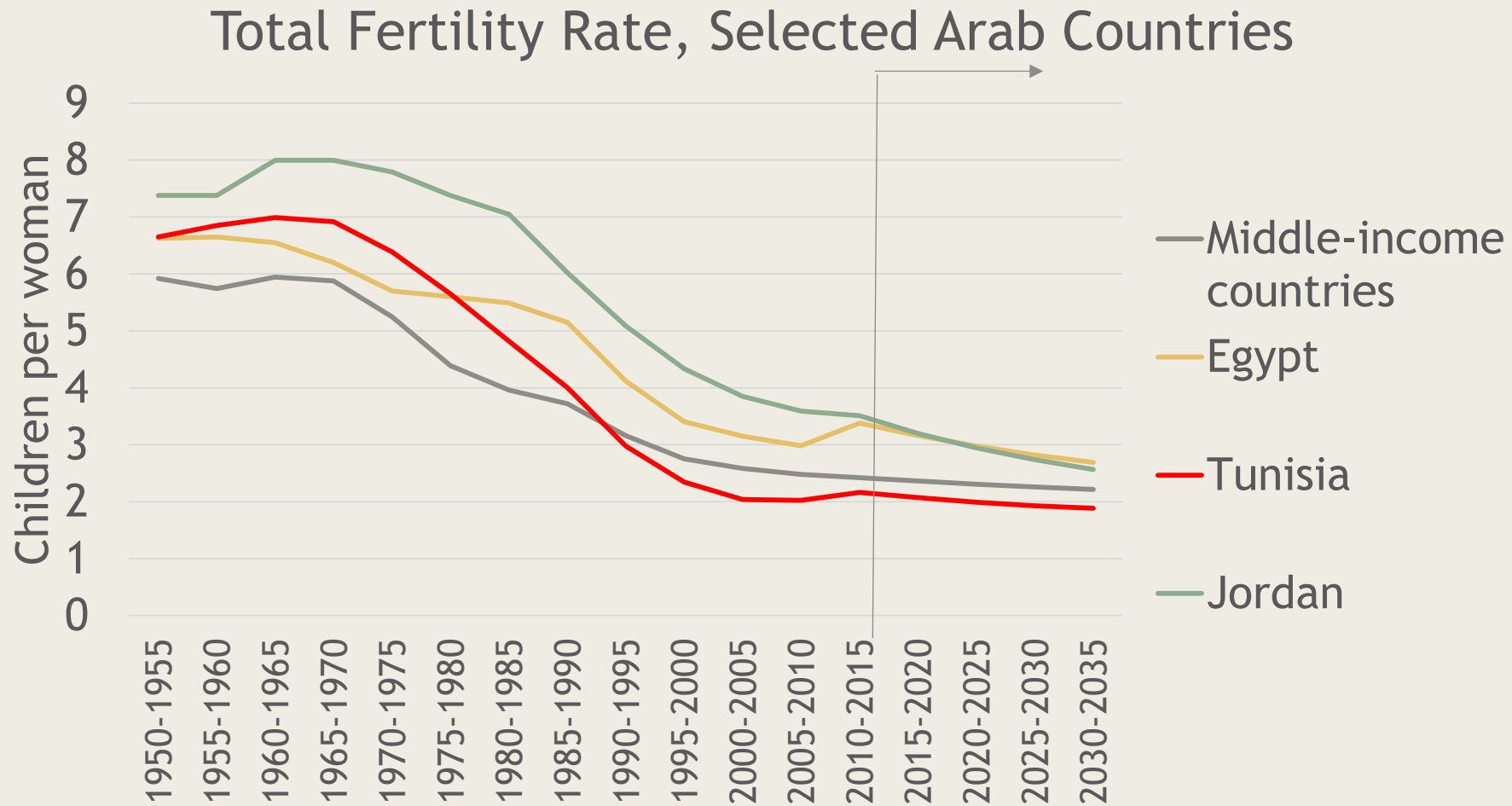
Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision

But, it is not simply population momentum. TFR has actually increased in some cases



Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision.

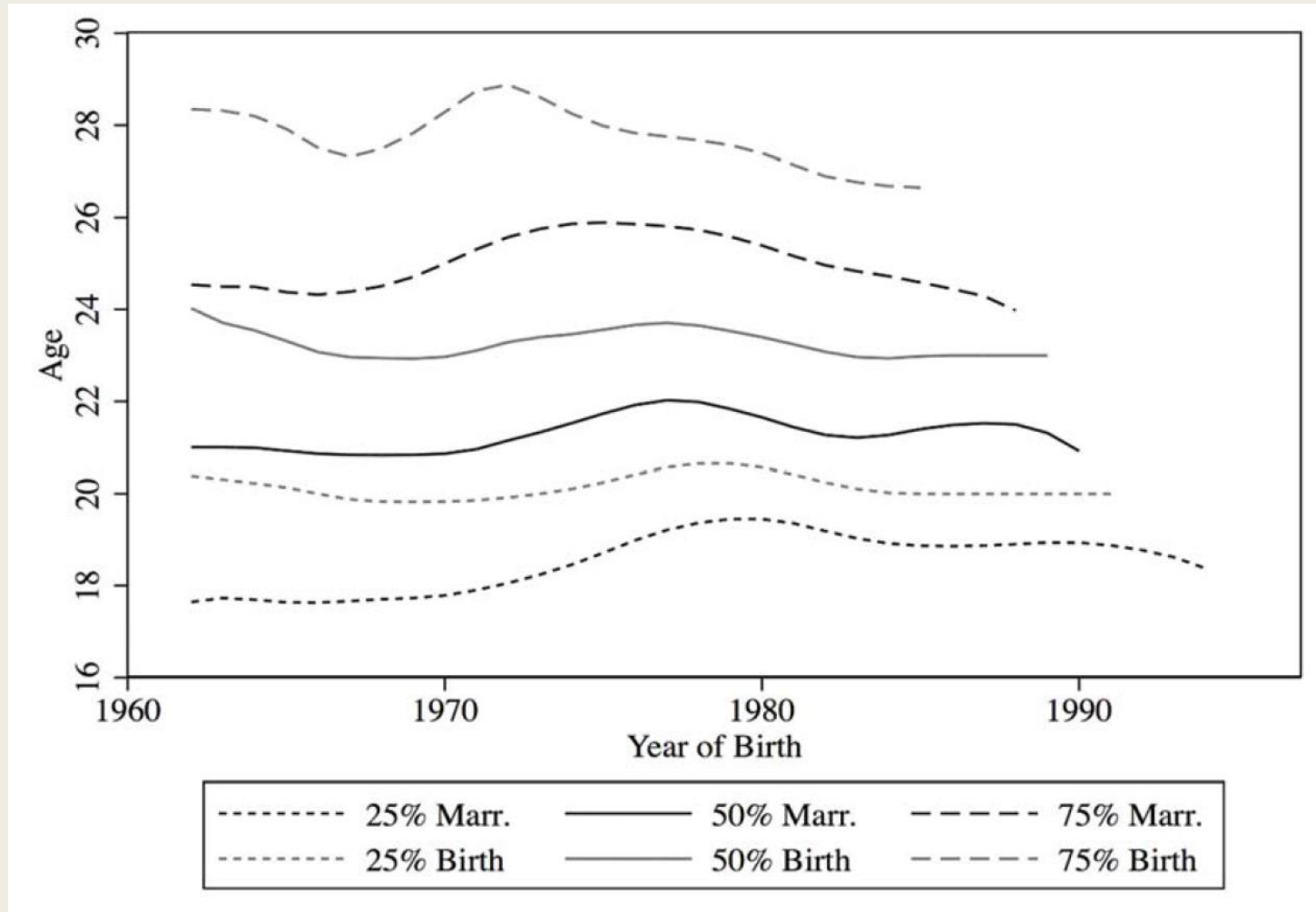
Again, the medium variant projections assume that the increase is a mere blip, but is that really the case



Source :UN Population Prospects, 2015 Revision, Medium Variant.

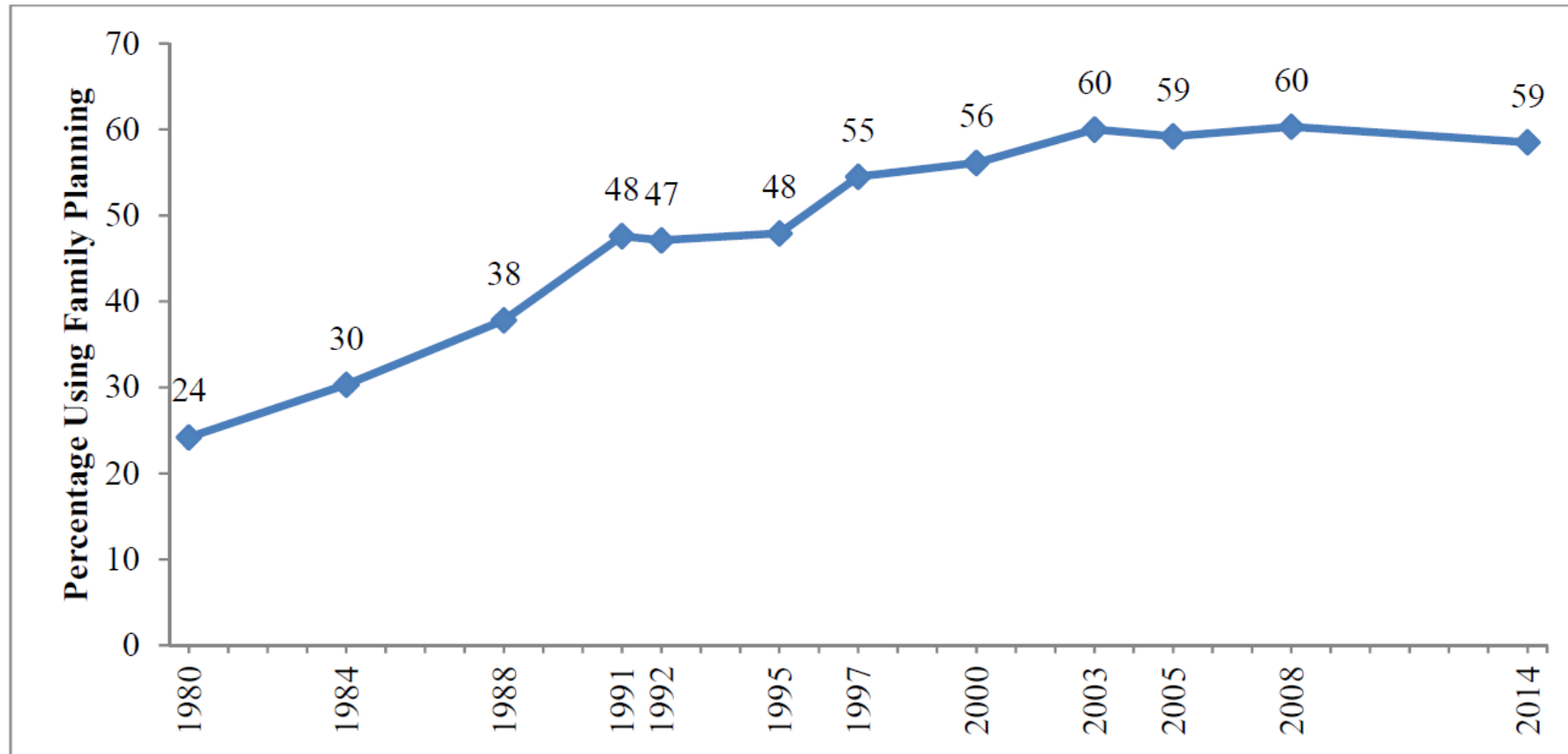
Why is fertility rising again in Egypt?

Explanation #1: Age of Marriage and First Birth are no longer rising



Source: Krafft, C. (2016). "Why is fertility on the rise in Egypt? The role of women's employment opportunities. ERF WP#1050. Economic Research Forum, Cairo, Egypt.

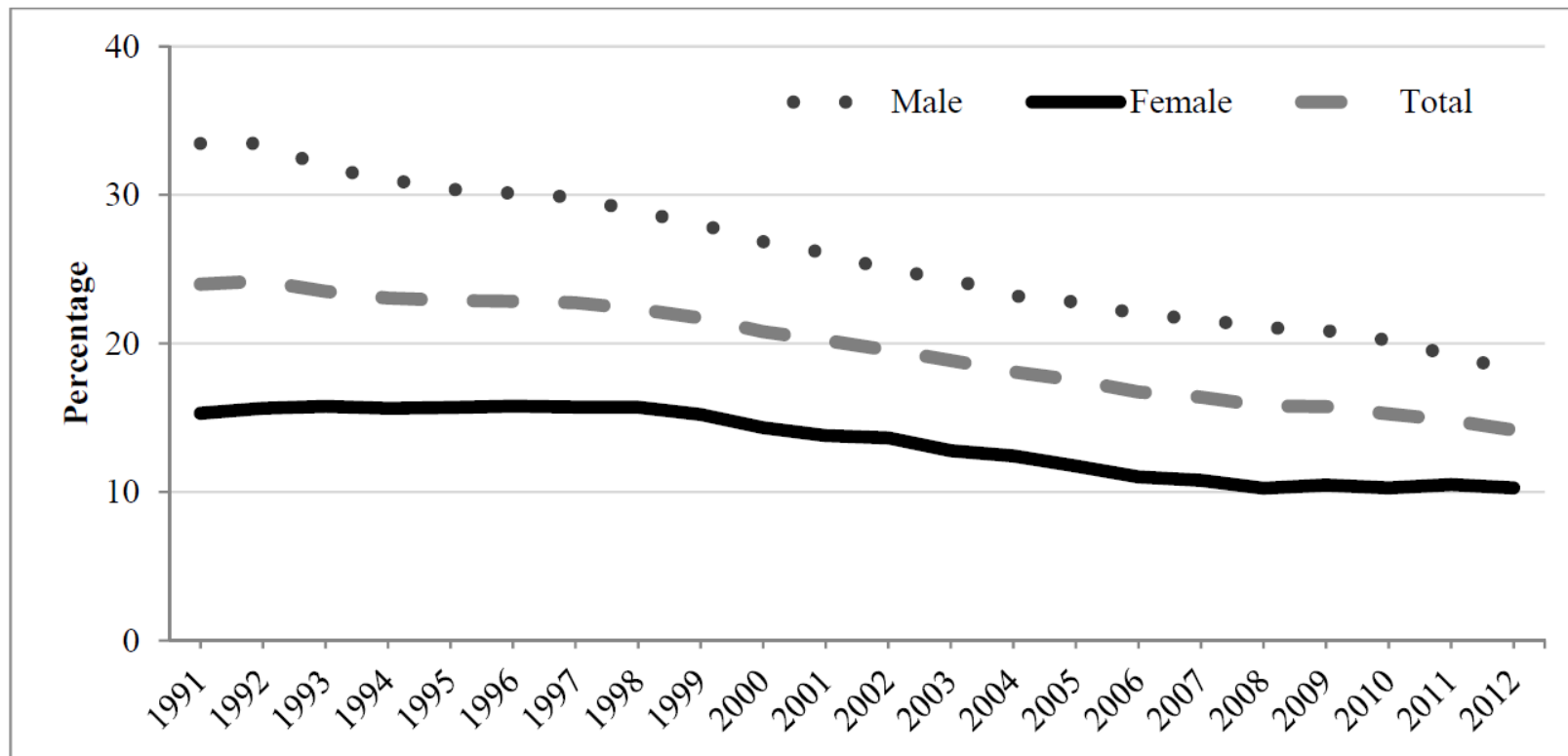
Explanation #2: stagnation or even decline in contraceptive use within marriage



Source: DHS surveys for Egypt (El-Zanaty & Way, 2009; Ministry of Health and Population, El-Zanaty and Associates, & ICF International, 2015).

More fundamentally, the increase in fertility in Egypt is attributable to the drop in married women's opportunity cost of time, resulting from falling public sector employment

Percentage of the Population employed in the Public Sector over Time by Sex, Ages 25-39



Source: Author's calculations based on ELMPS 2012.

Note: Age 25-39 sample is for the year in question, not necessarily the age in 2012.

Source: Krafft, C. (2016). "Why is fertility on the rise in Egypt? The role of women's employment opportunities. ERF WP#1050. Economic Research Forum, Cairo, Egypt.

Private sector wage employment is highly inhospitable to married women in Egypt. Most women leave it at marriage



Source: Krafft, C. (2016). "Why is fertility on the rise in Egypt? The role of women's employment opportunities. ERF WP#1050. Economic Research Forum, Cairo, Egypt.

Conclusion

- Increase in birth rates in some countries (Egypt and Tunisia) resulting from youth bulge reaching prime childbearing ages.
- Effect of population momentum is compounded, at the least in the case of Egypt, by an increase in fertility, which may or may not be sustained.
- This increase is likely to be sustained because it can be linked to a reduction in married women's opportunity cost of time, caused by a secular decline of the public sector as a major employer in the Egyptian economy.
- This has serious implications for education and health systems, and eventually for labor markets, which had a short reprieve from demographic pressures in the aftermath of the youth bulge generation