Recent trends in Latin American fertility

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Main points

•Latin American countries are crossing fertility replacement levels. First birth rates are increasingly important.

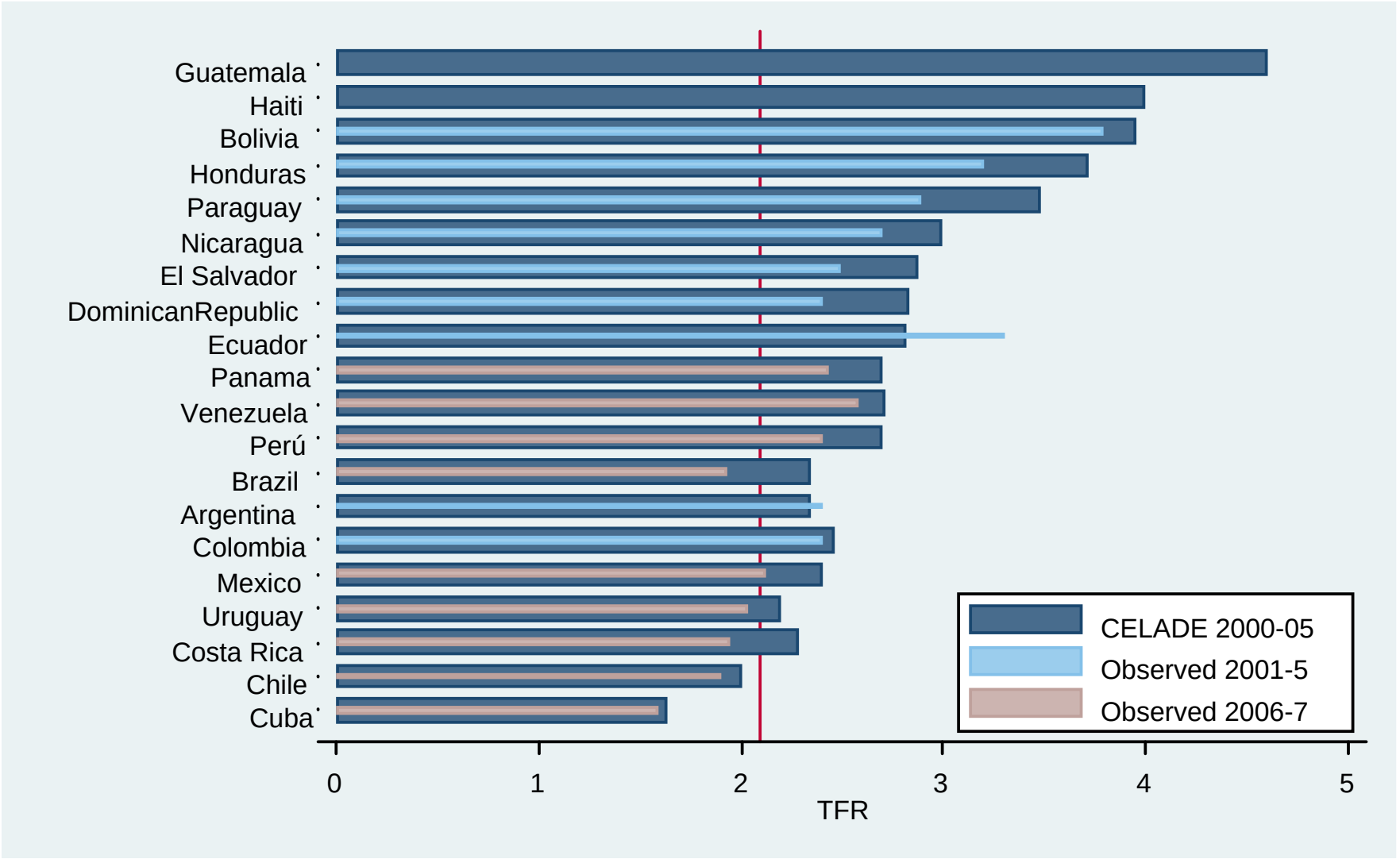
•LA entered into a new phase of the fertility transition in the 1990s.

•BEFORE, it was about adoption of fertility control and meeting the goal of a small family. NOW, it might be about whether or not, and when, to become a mother; transition to motherhood rates have started to fall.

Most recent TFR estimates and their sources in LA countries

Country	Year	TFR	Country	Year	TFR

UN/CELADE TFR estimates for Latin America are outdated and too high



Fertility in LA countries is quickly going below replacement levels

At those low levels, childlessness may be an important determinant

Most tempo-adjustments (distortions) in period-TFR come from changes in first birth rate schedules

Rosero-Bixby, L., Castro-Martin, T. & Martin-Garcia, T. (2009)

"Is Latin America starting to retreat from early and universal childbearing?"

Demographic Research 20(9): 169-194

LA fertility transition up to 1990

- Marriage (and 1st birth) patterns were not a factor in the fertility transition
- There were no clear regional trends to increase or reduce age at marriage (and/or 1st birth)
- Socioeconomic changes did not modify marriage patterns (puzzling)

Two components of fertility

$$F = M\,(G + 1)$$

F = Cumulative fertility (children ever born)
M = Motherhood proportion
G = Cumulative fertility of mothers

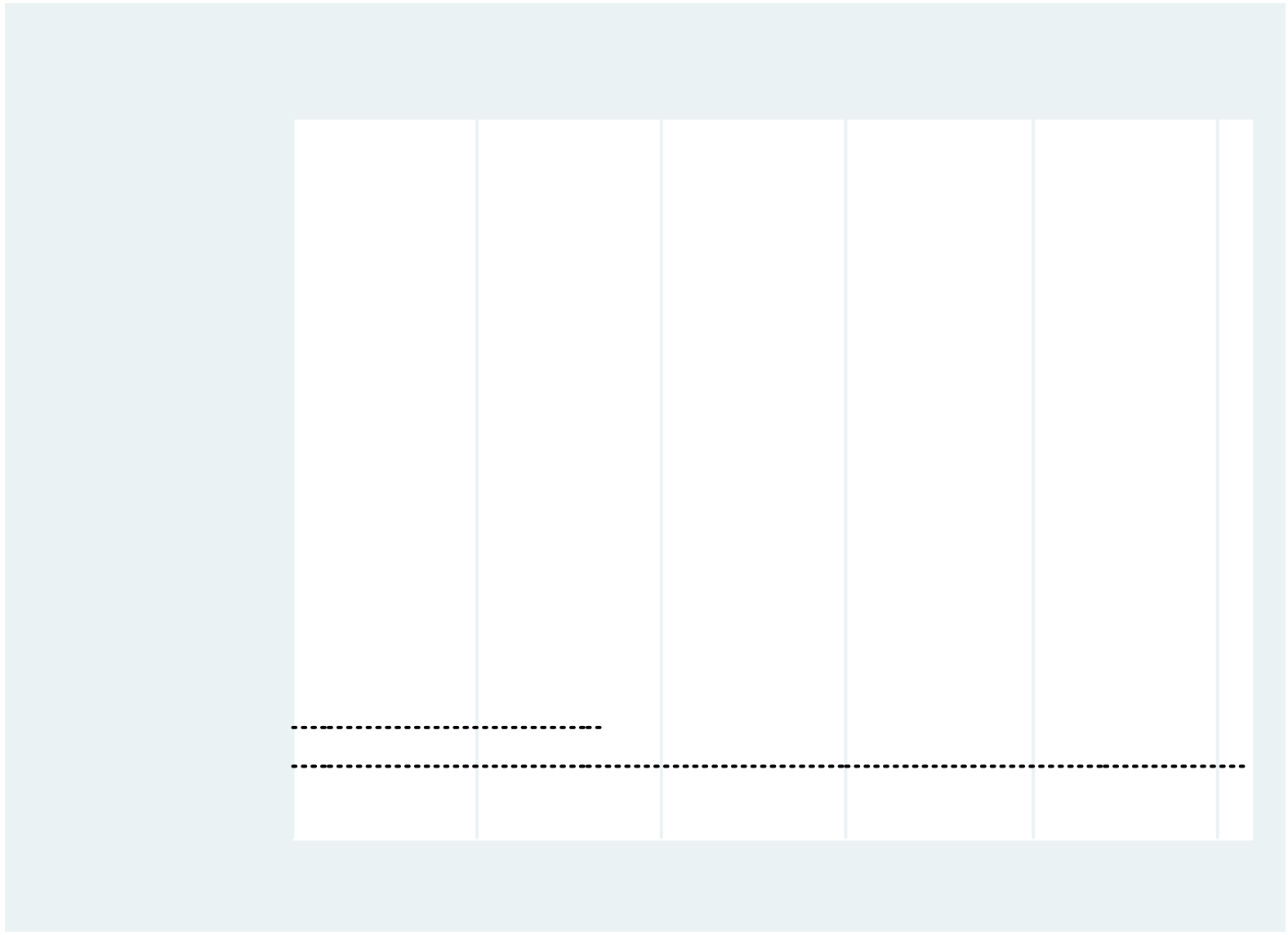
F & ***M*** from census data, ***G*** from the identity

Cohort fertility measures only

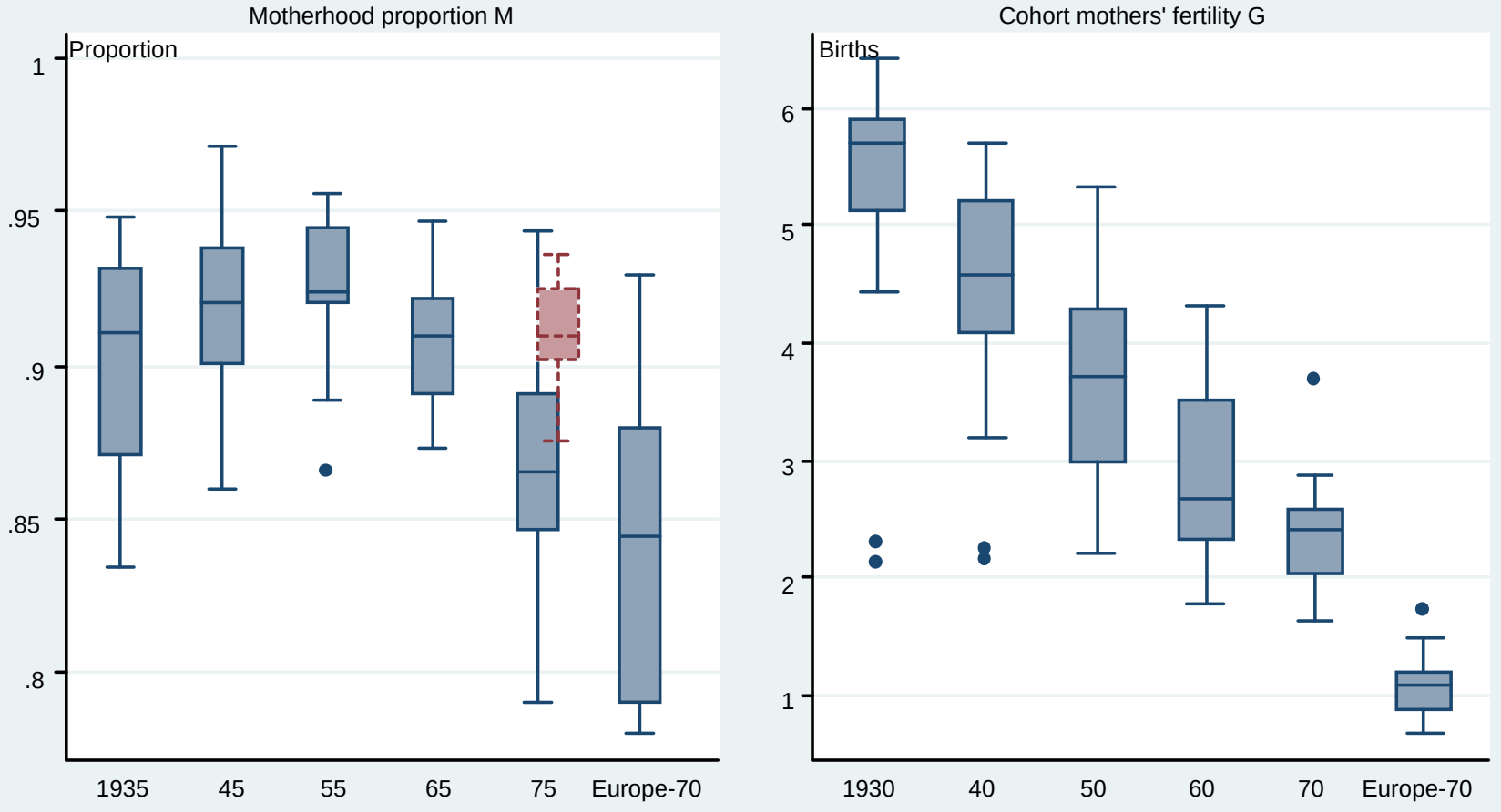
The data

- The four waves of census 1970-2000 (UN Demographic Yearbook, and census online: IPUMS and CCP)
- 16 LA countries with at least two censuses and the datum on children ever born
- Surveys in 14 LA countries in 2006, Barometer of the Americas project at Vanderbilt University
- Total F & M in 22 European countries ~1970 cohort (INED Demographic Observatory)

Big declines in G

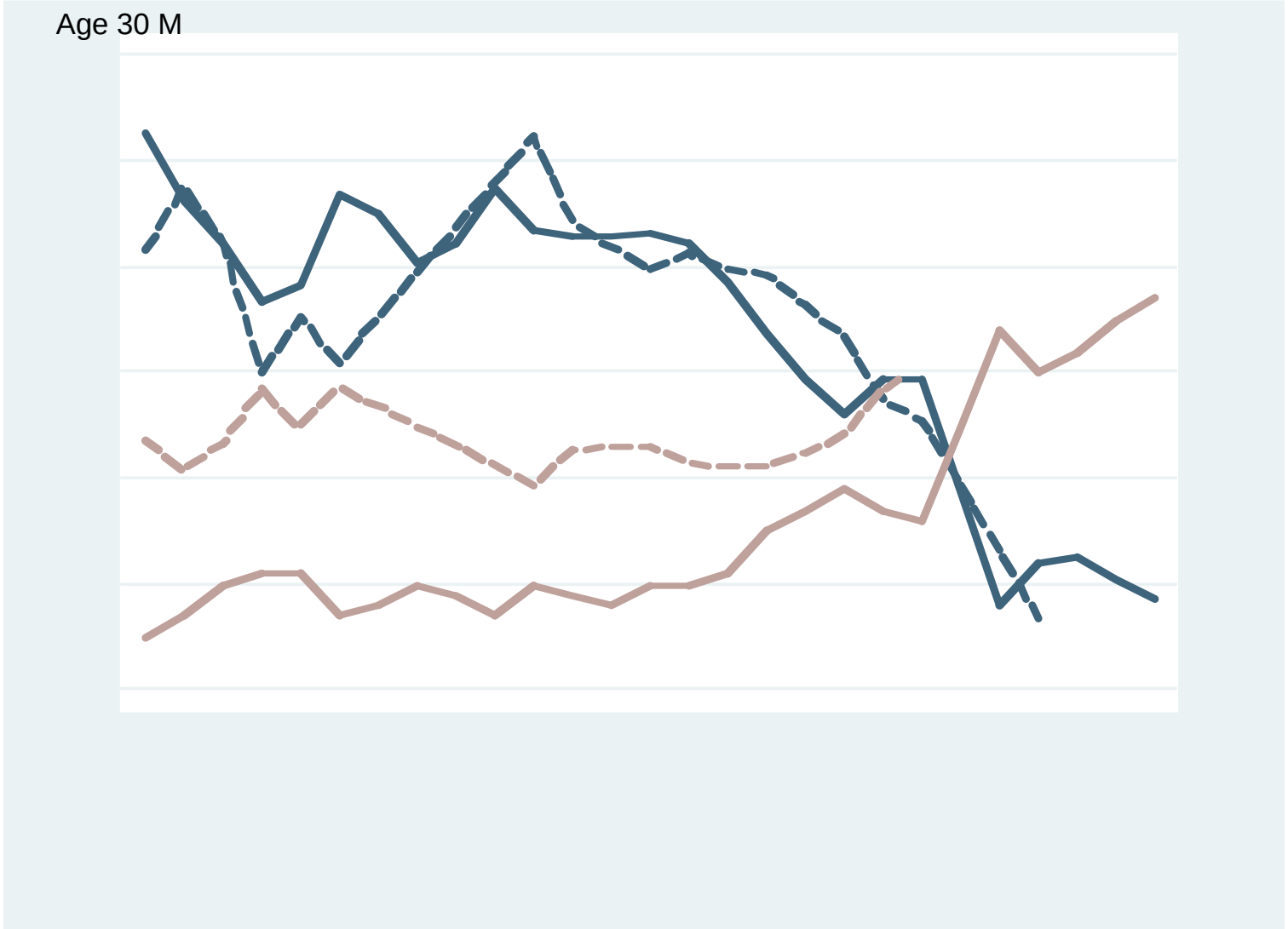


Trend in final M and G by cohort



Dashed, red box: M was completed assuming late childbearing as in Europe

Same trend in detailed, period estimates in Costa Rica and Chile



Logistic regression on the probability of being childless

- 2006 surveys in 14 LA countries, women 20-49 years, N ~ 600 per country
- SES variables: Urban, education, occupation and wealth.
- Religion, social capital, information access and satisfaction with life.
- Controlled by age, country, marital status

- Strong education effect on childlessness

Education	Odds ratio
Incomplete elementary	1.0
Completed elementary	1.4
High school	1.7
College	3.7

- Occupation effects only among young women
- No effects of urbanization, social capital, religion or church attendance;
- AndÉ

Significant interactions with age

Scales of:	Childless OR		
	20-29	30-39	40-49
Wealth	3.0	4.3	0.31
Satisfaction with life	2.2	1.6	0.71

Generational change in values regarding motherhood (or just ageing effect) ?

M(25-29) trend by education

Conclusions

- LA fertility has moved to a new stage in which M-trends seem important.
- Is the M fall: postponement, retreat or both?
- Causes: higher education and values and norms re. motherhood.
- A consequence: the possibility of very low fertility levels and/or tempo effects on TFR