



# Gender, Generations and Family Policies: Challenges for Equality

Conference „Gender and Generations“  
Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence &  
University of Wisconsin-Madison European Union Center of Excellence

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Gerda Neyer  
Stockholm University

# Demographic concerns in Europe




## population ageing:

life expectancy > 80 Nordic, Western, Southern Europe  
life expectancy in 70s in Eastern Europe



## low fertility

below replacement level (2.1)  
very low (below 1.5 exc. )  
Western, Northern Europe)



# Fertility and Policies in Europe

→ **low fertility (TFR) in Europe:**  
increasing political concern

→ **majority of European countries:**

regard fertility as too low  
political measures to increase fertility

→ **European Union**  
demographic concern




# Fear of Low Fertility – Shift in Perception



## Economic concerns:

- shrinking labor force
- economic decline
- loss of productivity & technological advancement
- loss in economic competitiveness
- welfare-state decline (pension, care, healthcare needs)



**Shift in the perception of fertility issues** from a **”women’s/gender issue”** addressed by **feminist movement** to an **”economic issue”** addressed by **mainstream institutions**

# Political Answers to Fertility Issues

- ➔ **Expansion of family policies** (≠ cuts & restrictions in classical welfare-state areas: unemployment, pension)
  - extension or introduction of **parental leave**
  - introduction of **care leave**
  - expansion of **childcare**
  - promotion of **part-time work**
  
- ➔ **Recognition of care** (feminist request)
  
- ➔ **Prevalence of ideological path** (path-dependence)
  - Shift towards “conservative”/family care options** (care leave)
  - Shift towards “neo-liberal” options** (layering of policies)
  - Focus on mothers’ reconciliation of work and care** (father’s care less rigorously)

# Political Answers to Fertility Issues

➔ Family/fertility policies: **employment – care – gender policies**

➔ Shift in perception of fertility issue as a "women's/gender issue" to an "economic issue" & "reconciliation of work & care"

- opportunity to achieve greater gender equality?
- creation of new inequalities through family policies?
- family policies sufficient for fertility & for gender equality?

# Questions for Research and Policy Making

- ➔ Which aspects of family policies support fertility?  
Which effect do they have on women's employment?  
Which effect do they have on gender equality?
  
- ➔ Which policies should we focus on to address fertility-employment-gender equality nexus and to promote gender equality?

# Examples of effects of Family Policies on fertility

- ➔ Parental Leave Policies & Income Support
- ➔ Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women
- ➔ Part-time work and equality
- ➔ Men/father and family policies



# Examples of effects of Family Policies on fertility



Parental Leave Policies & Income Support



Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women

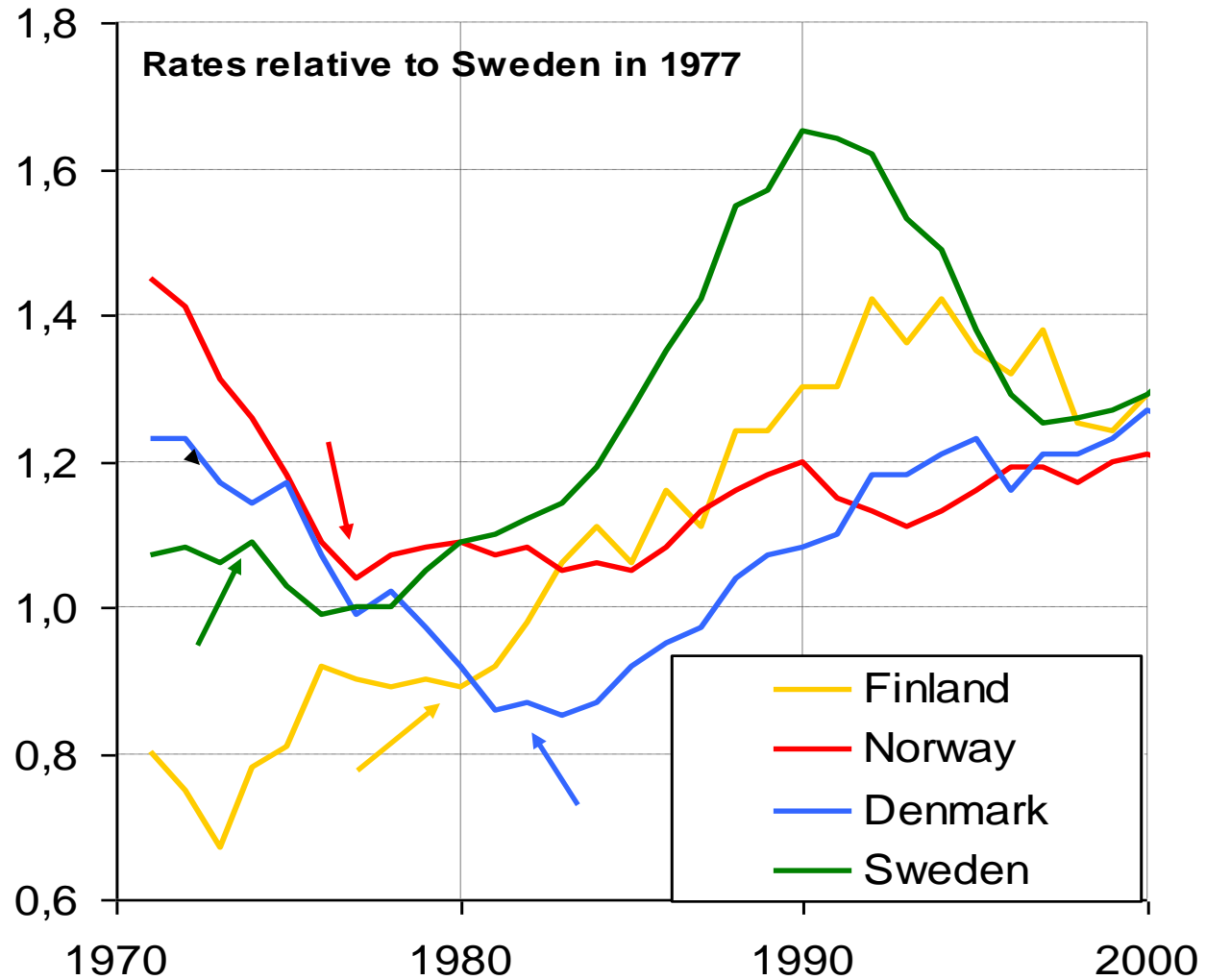


Family policies, welfare-state policies and inequality



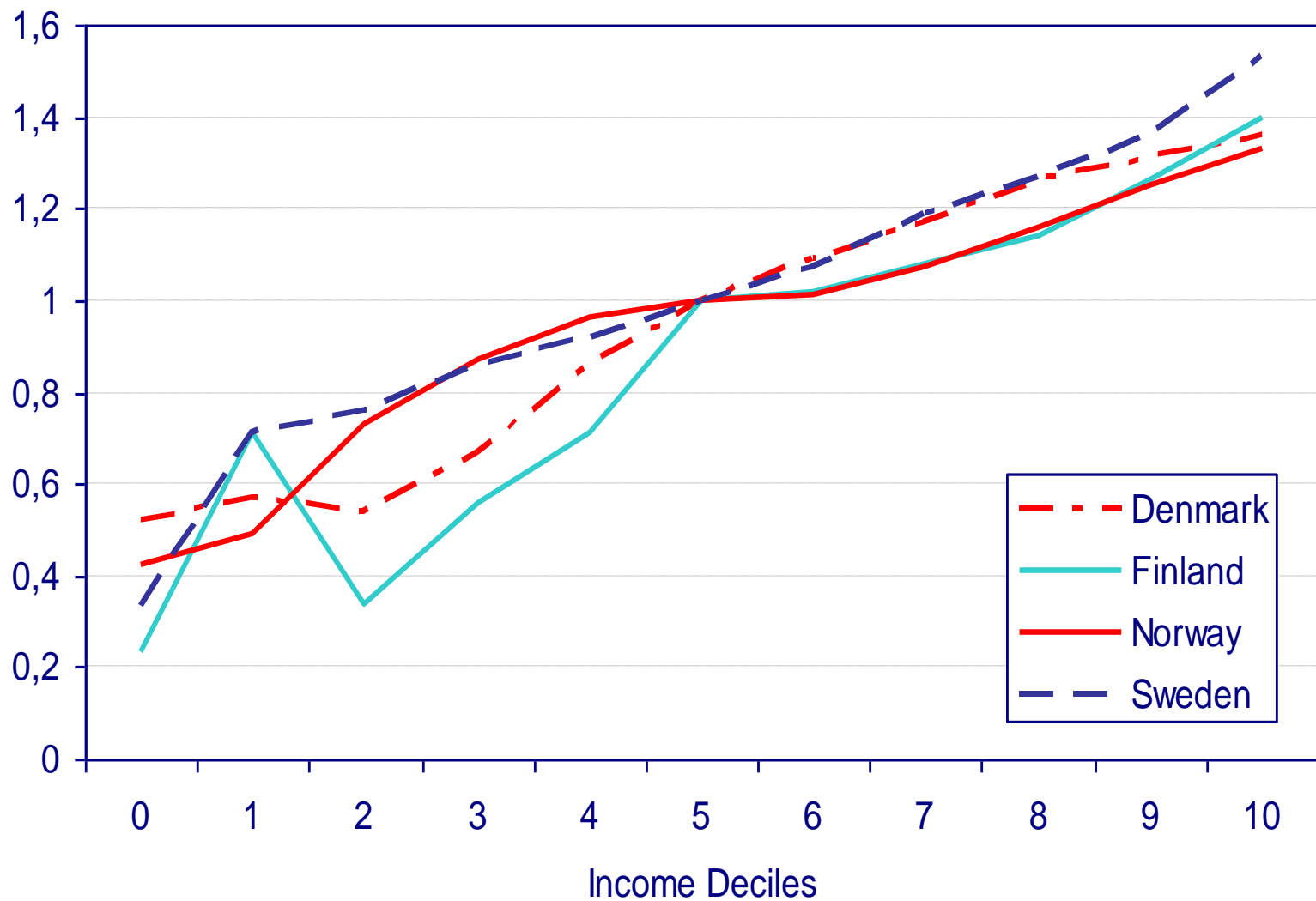
Part-time work and equality

# Effects of Income-related Parental-leave Benefits on Second-birth Intensities



# First-birth Rates by Women's Income

## Childless Women Aged 30 to 45



# Examples of effects of Family Policies on fertility



Parental Leave Policies & Income Support



Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women

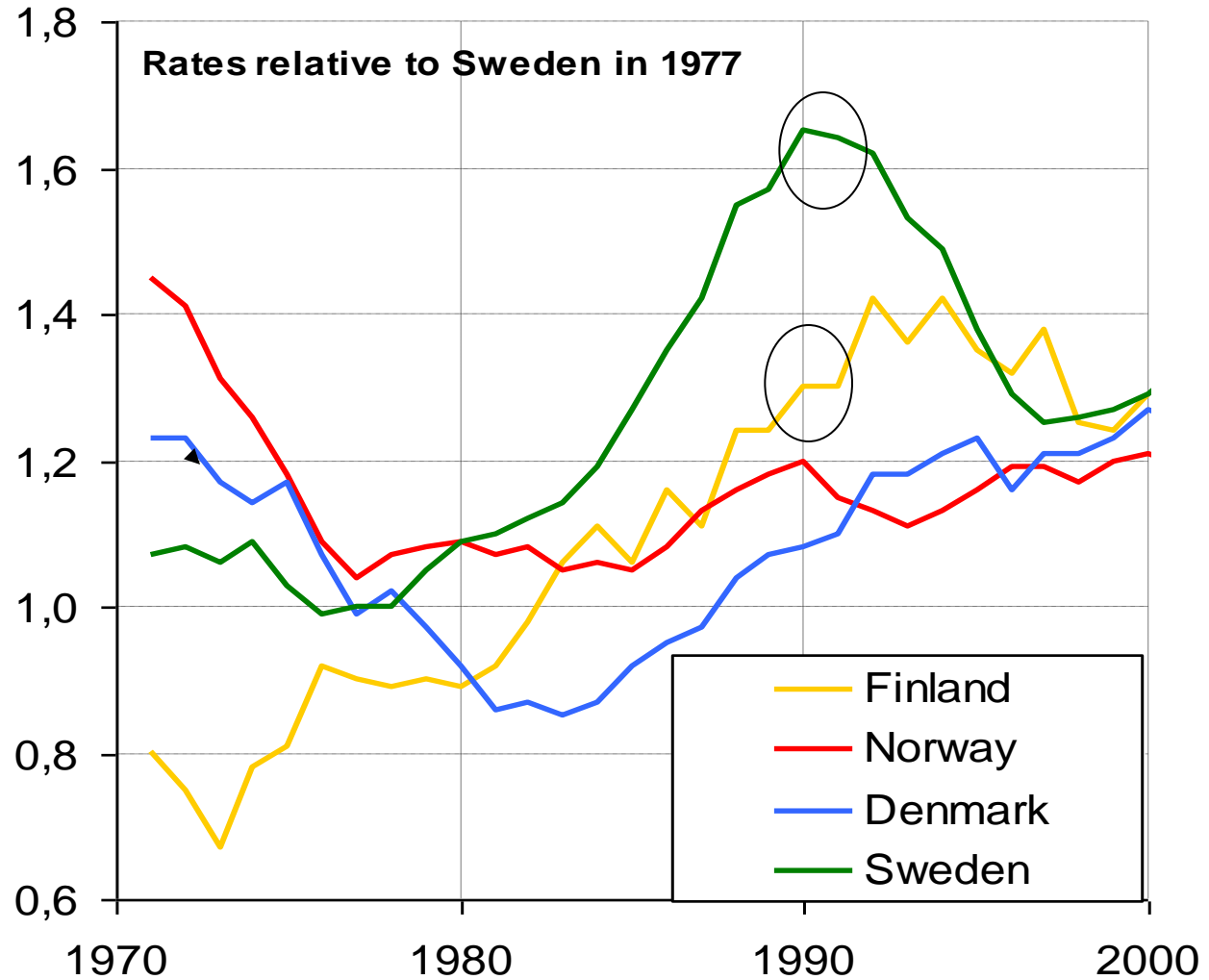


Part-time work and equality



Men/father and family policies

# Impacts of Family Policies & Economic Development on Second-birth Intensities



# Examples of Effects of Family Policies



Parental Leave Policies & Income Support



Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women

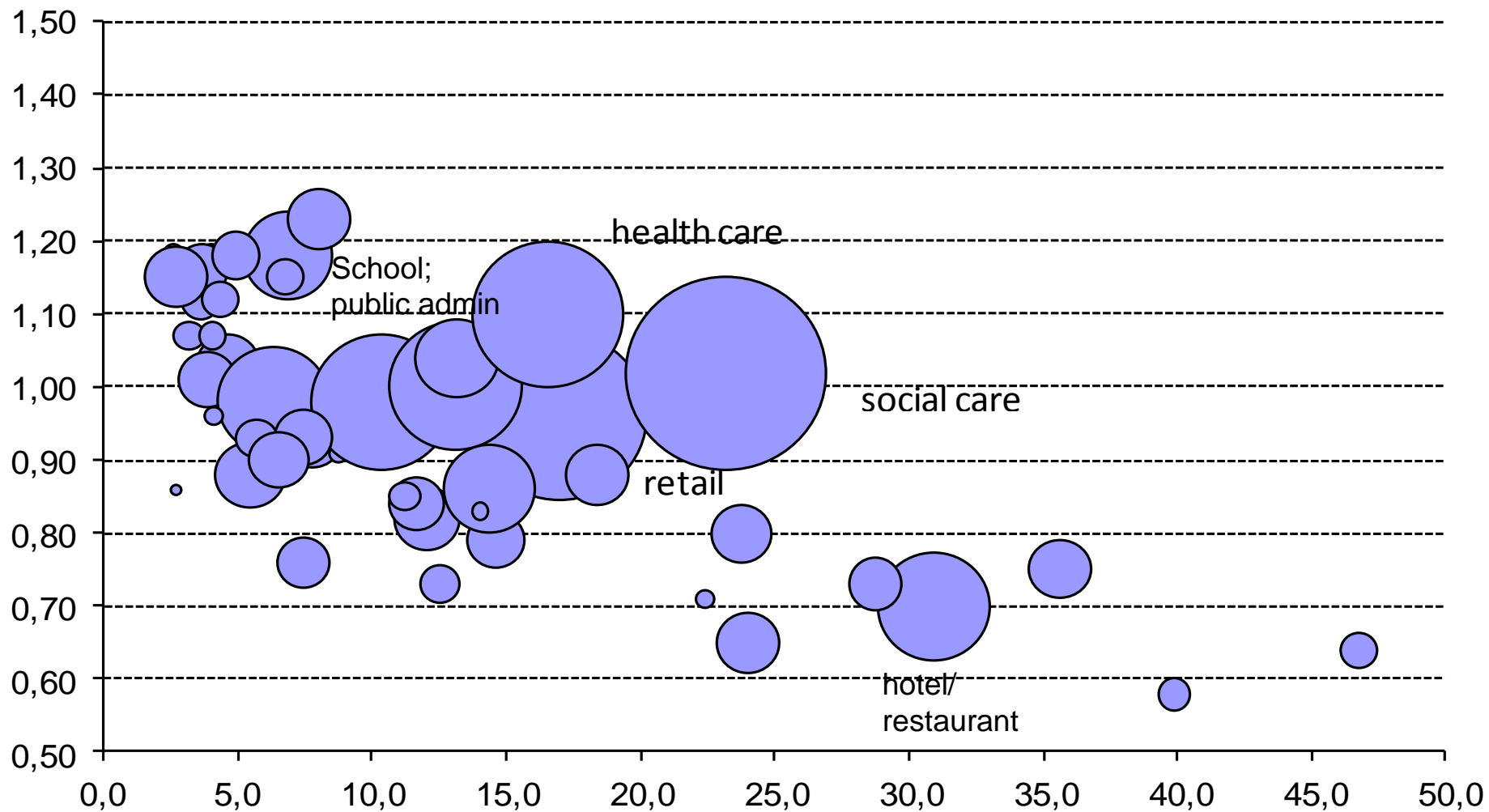


Part-time work and equality

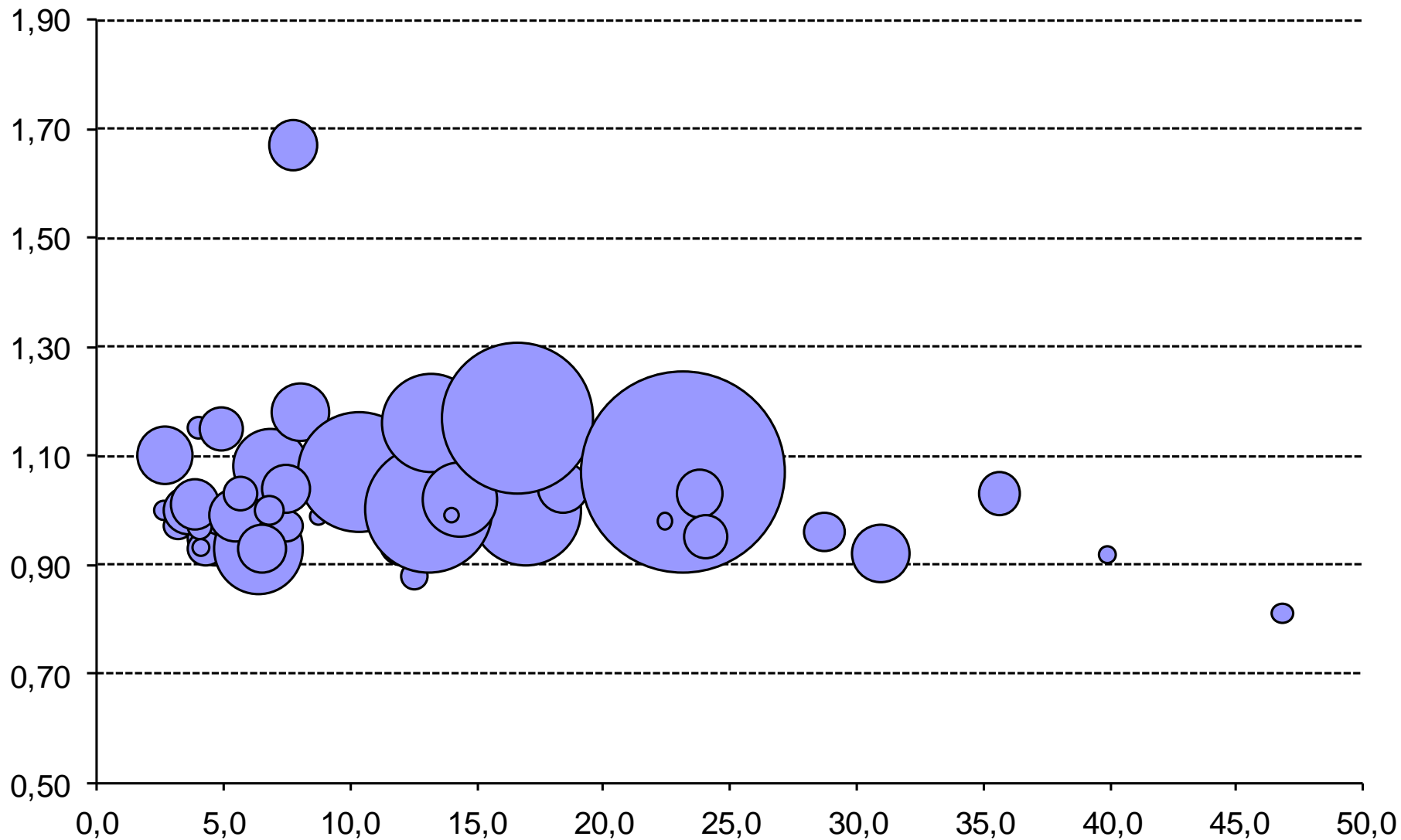


Men/Fathers and family policies

# Becoming a mother vs % part-time work (Denmark)



# Further mothering vs % part-time work (Denmark)





# Examples of Effects of Family Policies



Parental Leave Policies & Income Support



Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women



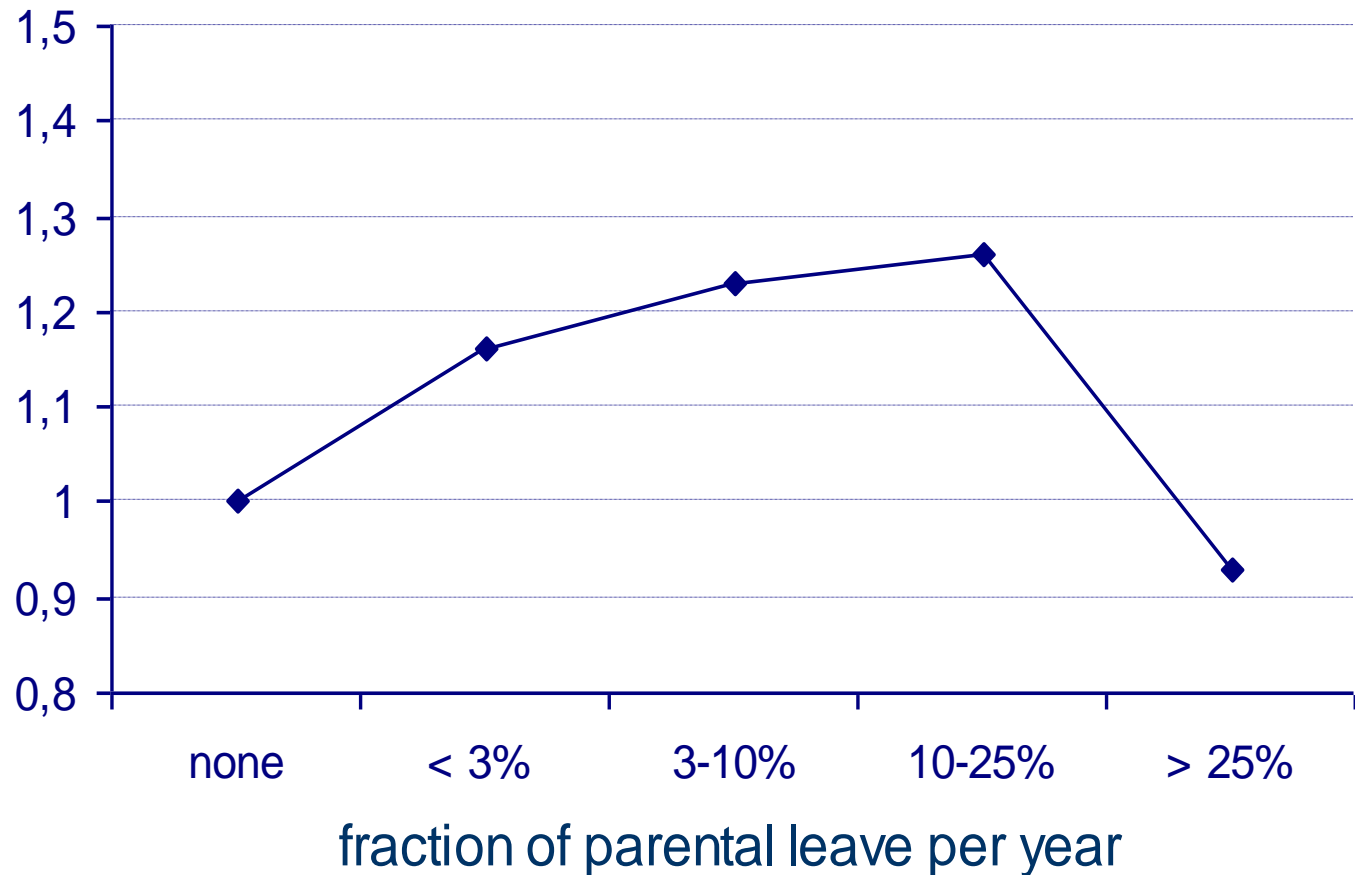
Part-time work and equality



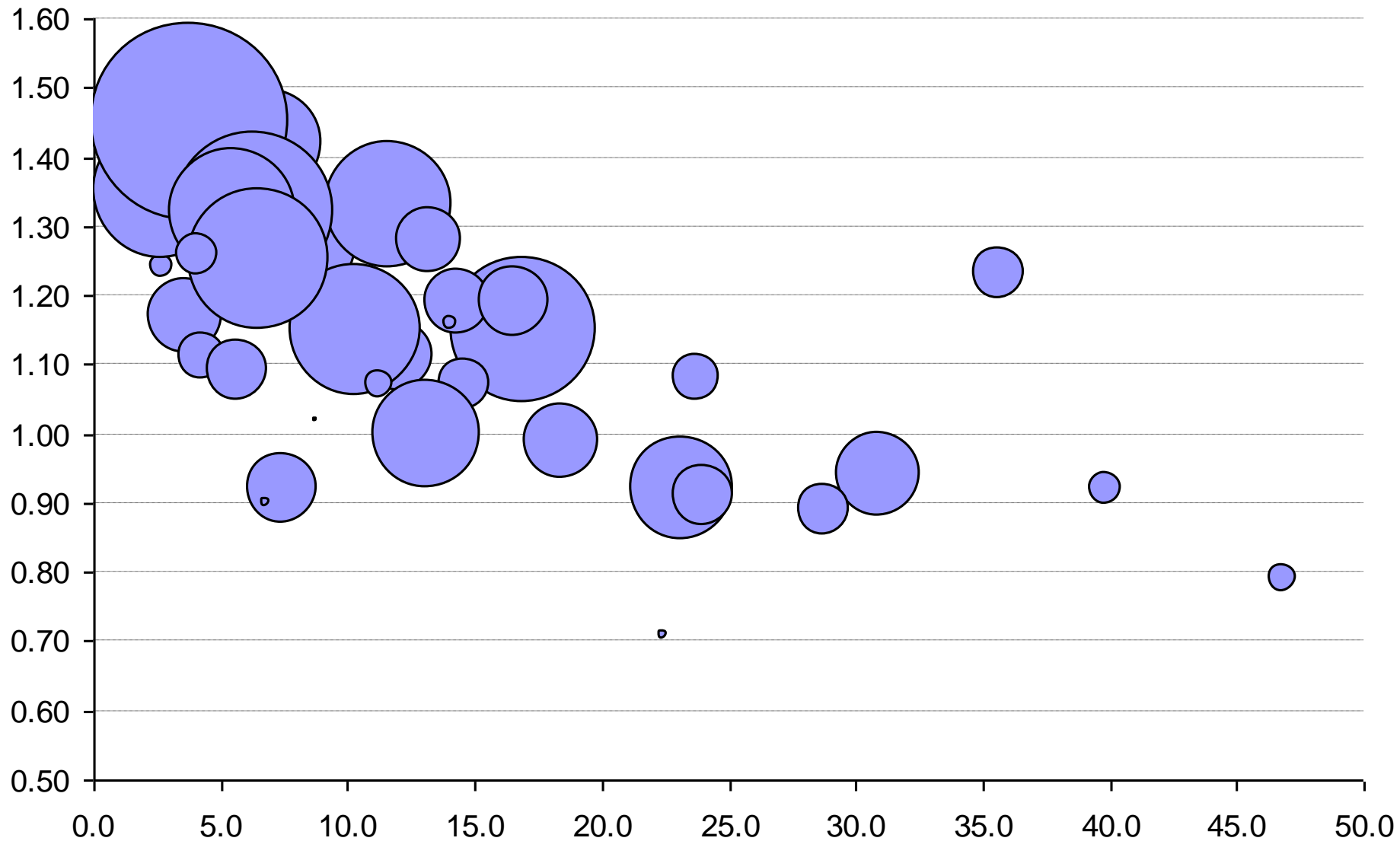
**Men/Fathers and family policies**

## Equality in caring

2-child intensities by father's uptake of parental leave at the first birth



# Becoming a father vs % part-time work (Denmark)



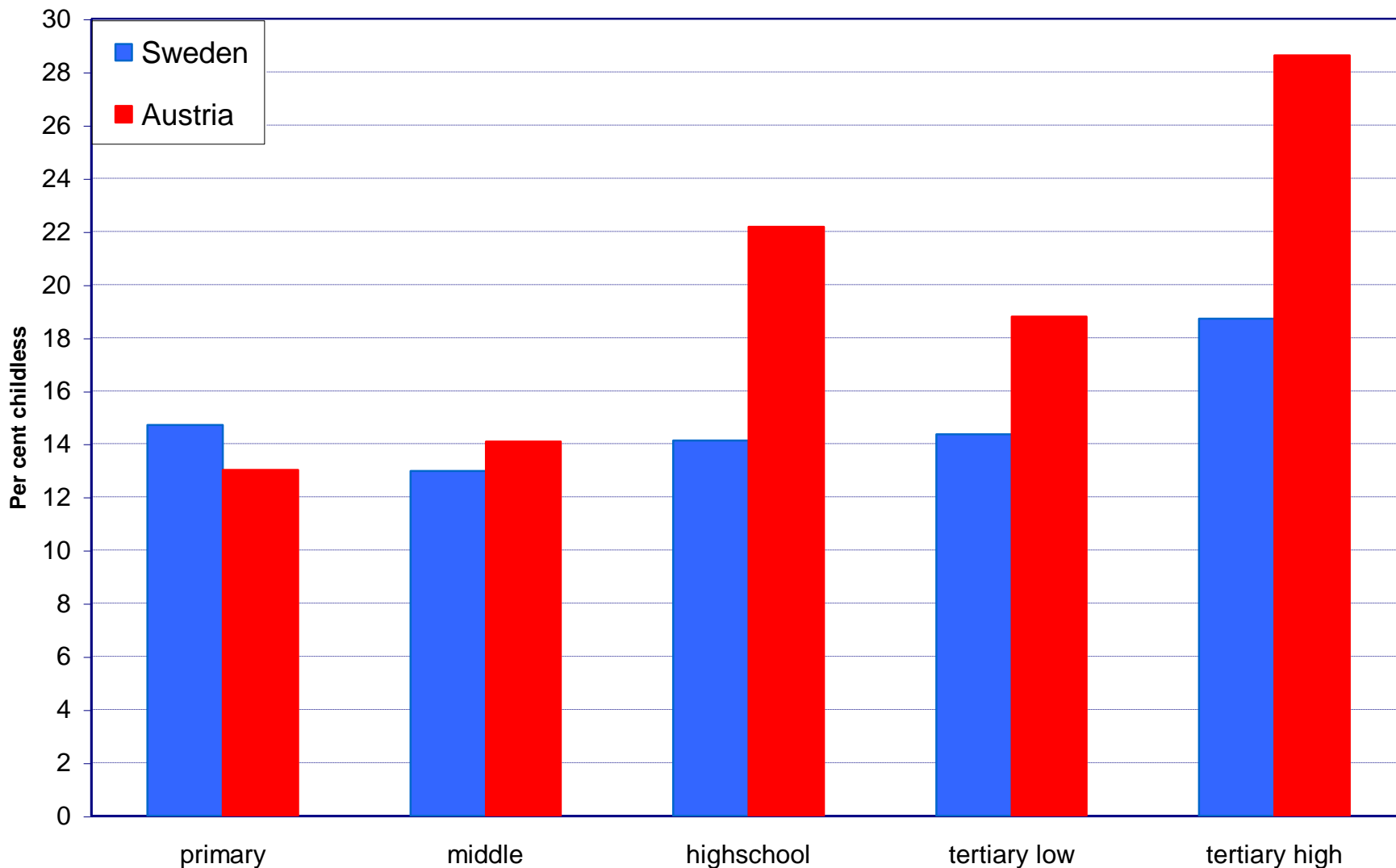
## Gender equality through family policies?

- employment & income  
strongest factor for first birth across Europe  
also: for individual social security
- maintenance of income („maintaining a household“)
- family policies to ease care at family level?
- employment policies – internal structures?
- labor-market policies – to incorporate leave as norm?

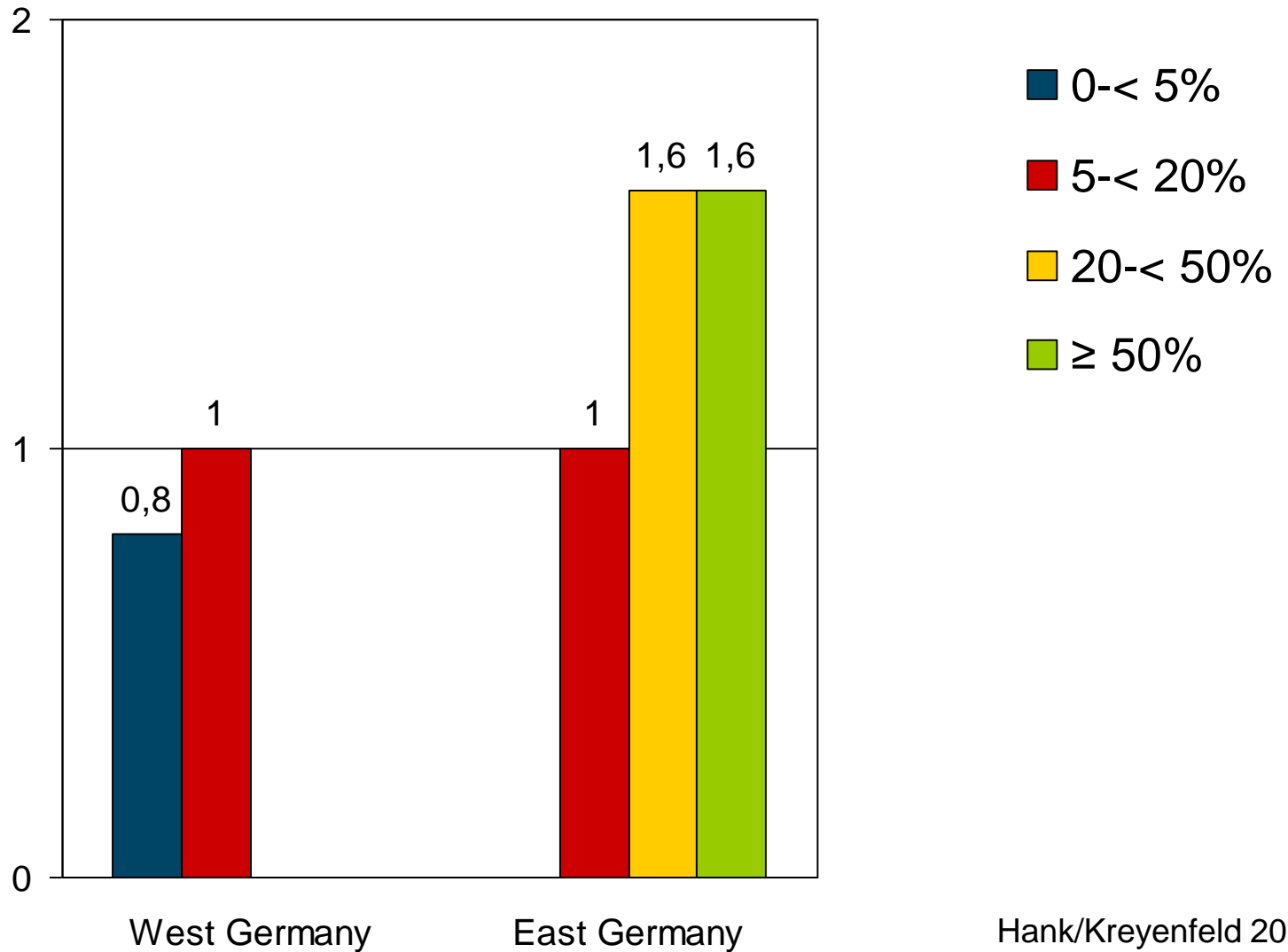


**Tack!**  
**Thank you!**

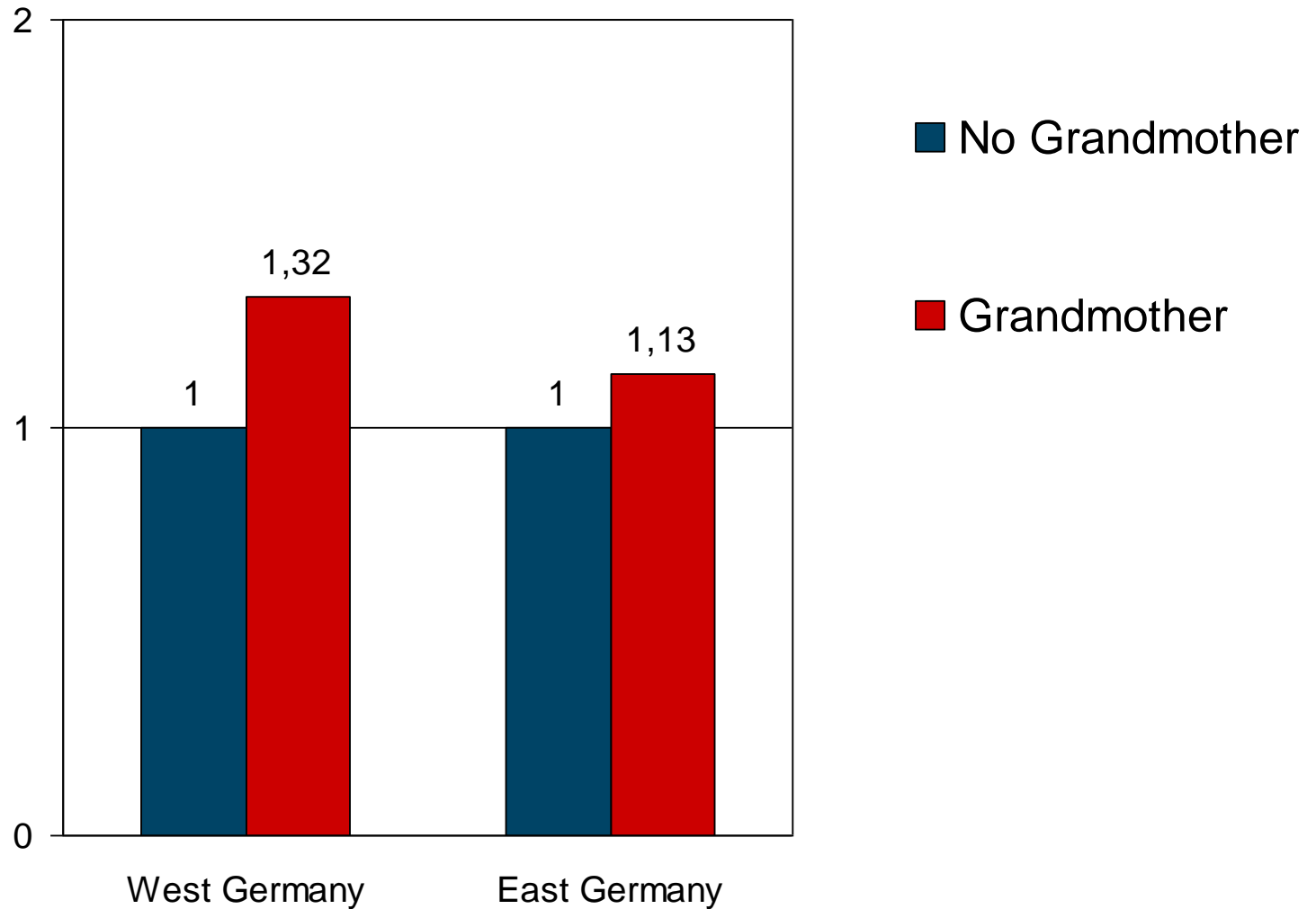
# Childlessness (of women aged 40+) by Educational Level Swedish and Austrian Women, cohort 1955-59



# First-birth Risks and Availability of Childcare (0-3 Jahre) in Germany

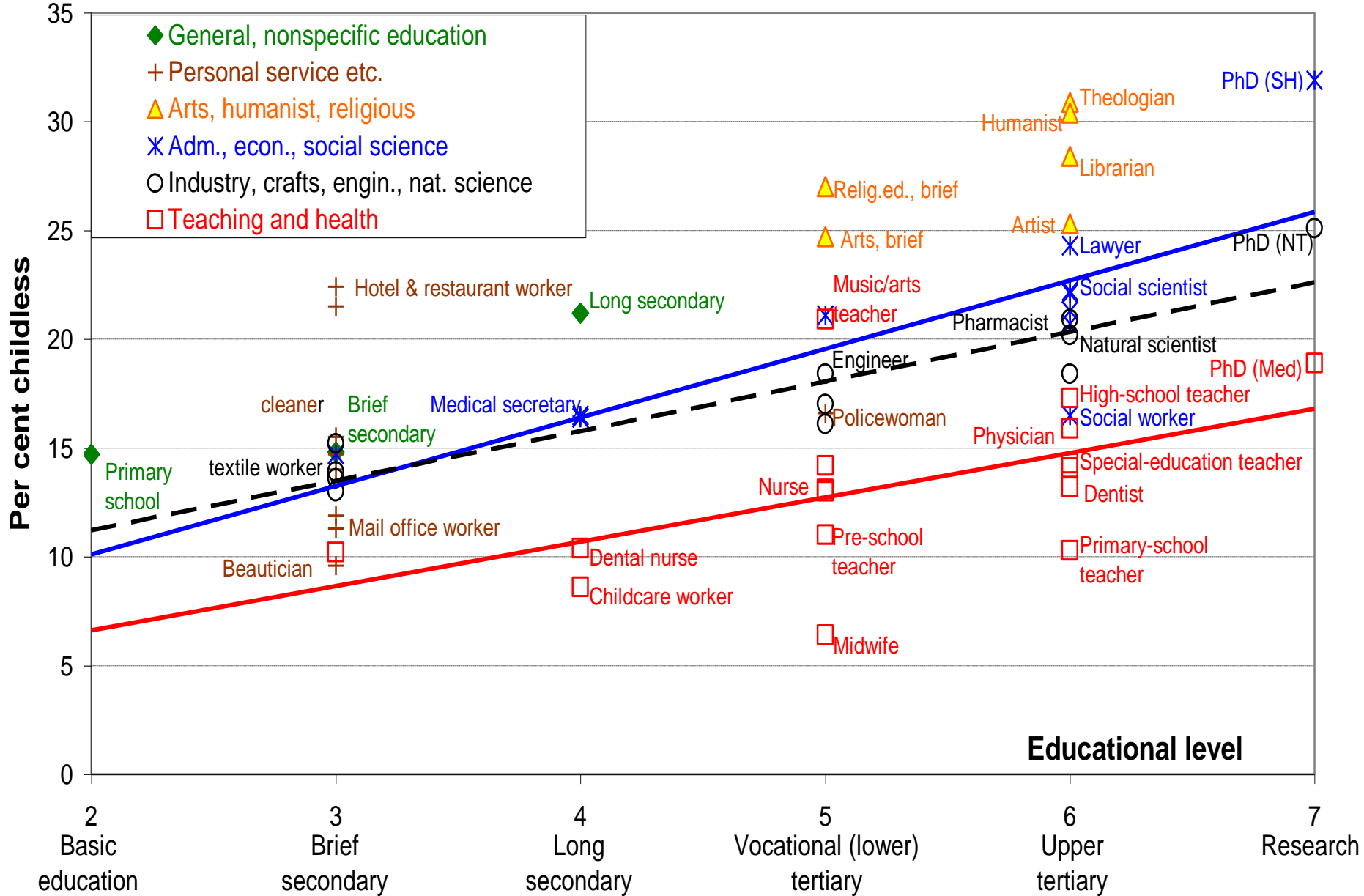


# First-birth Risks and Availability of Childcare (0-3 Jahre) in Germany

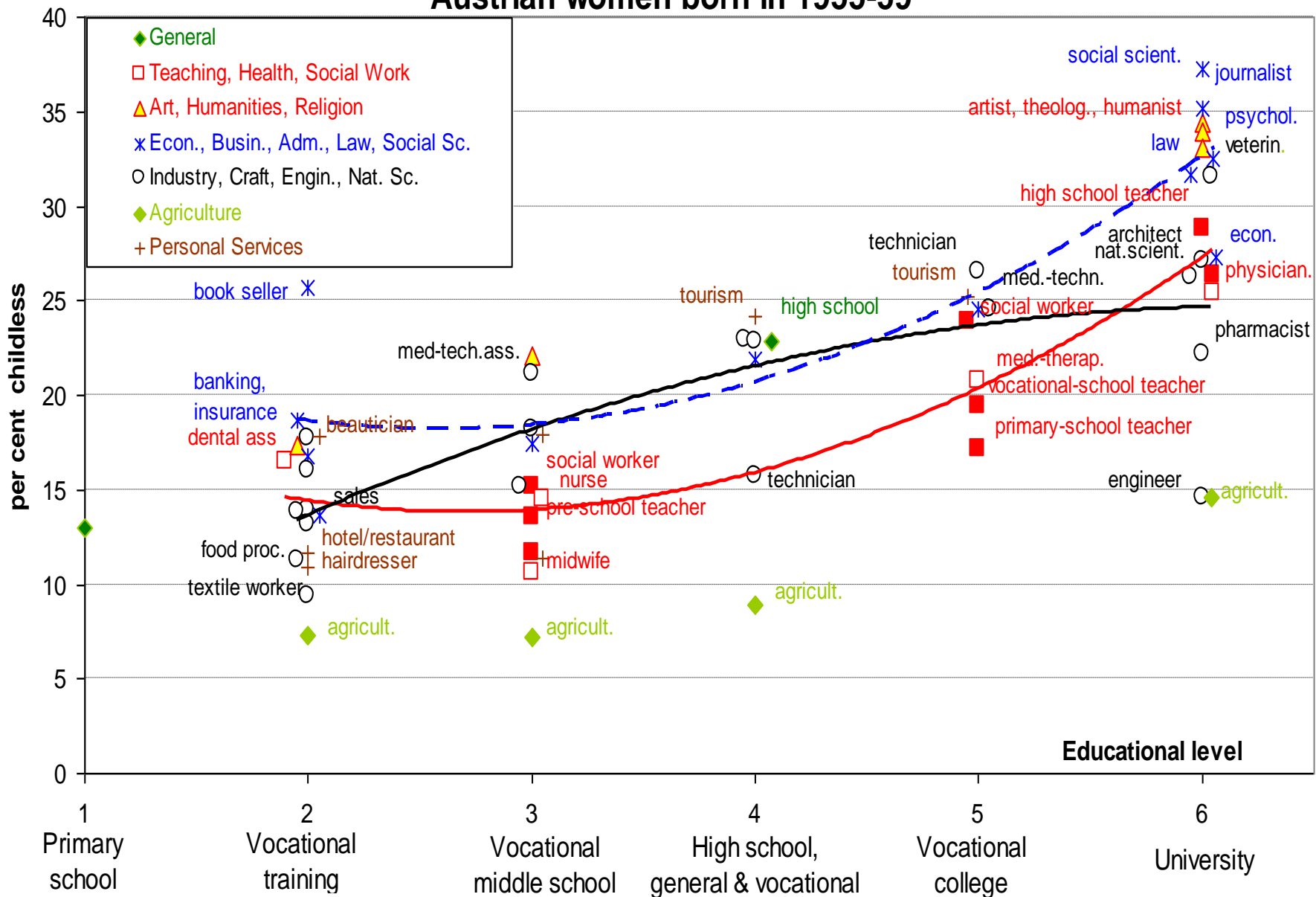




# Per cent permanently childless, by educational group; Swedish women born in 1955-59



# Percent permanently childless, by educational group; Austrian women born in 1955-59



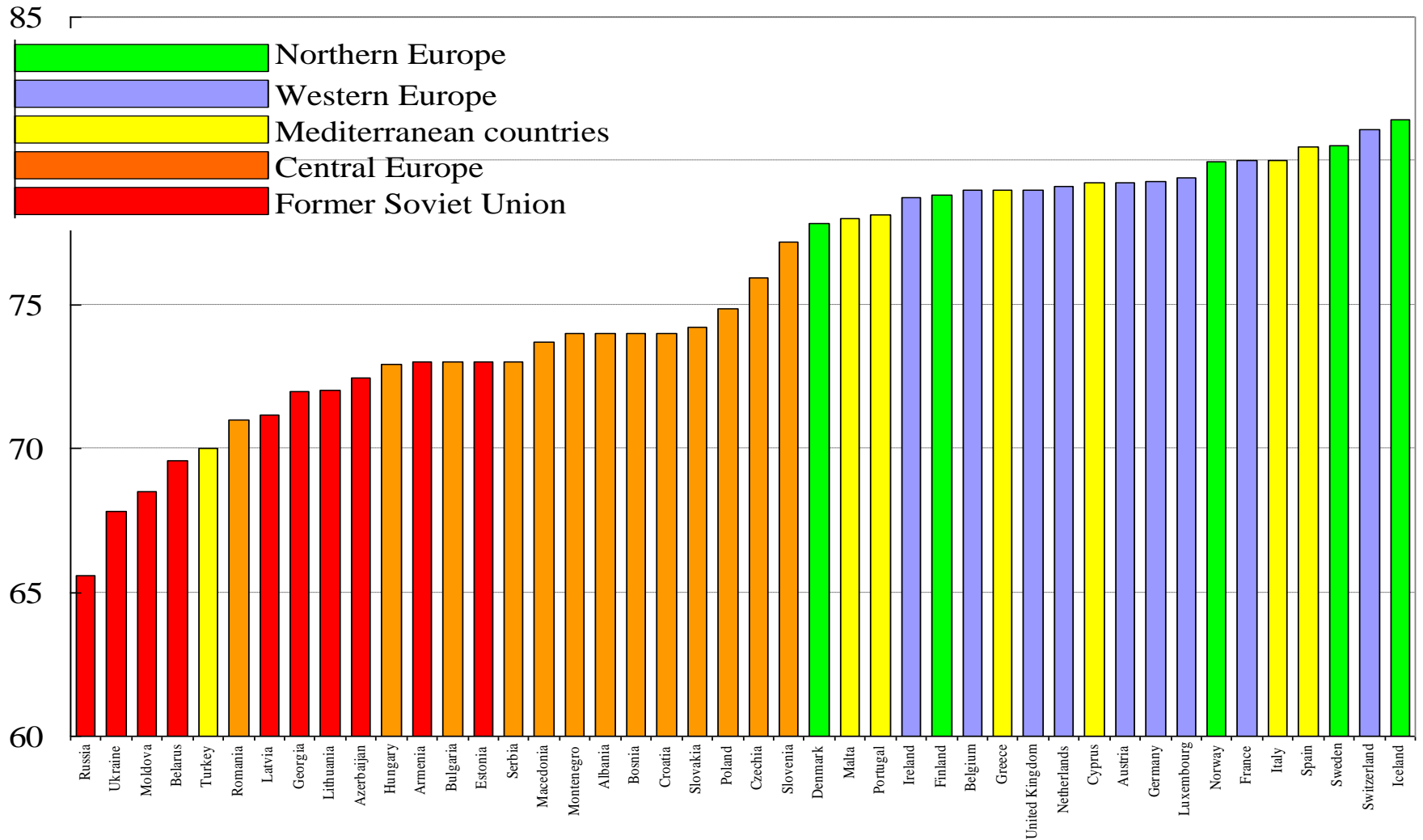
# Do Family Policies Affect Fertility?

➔ positive correlation female labor-force participation and total fertility rate (macro-level)

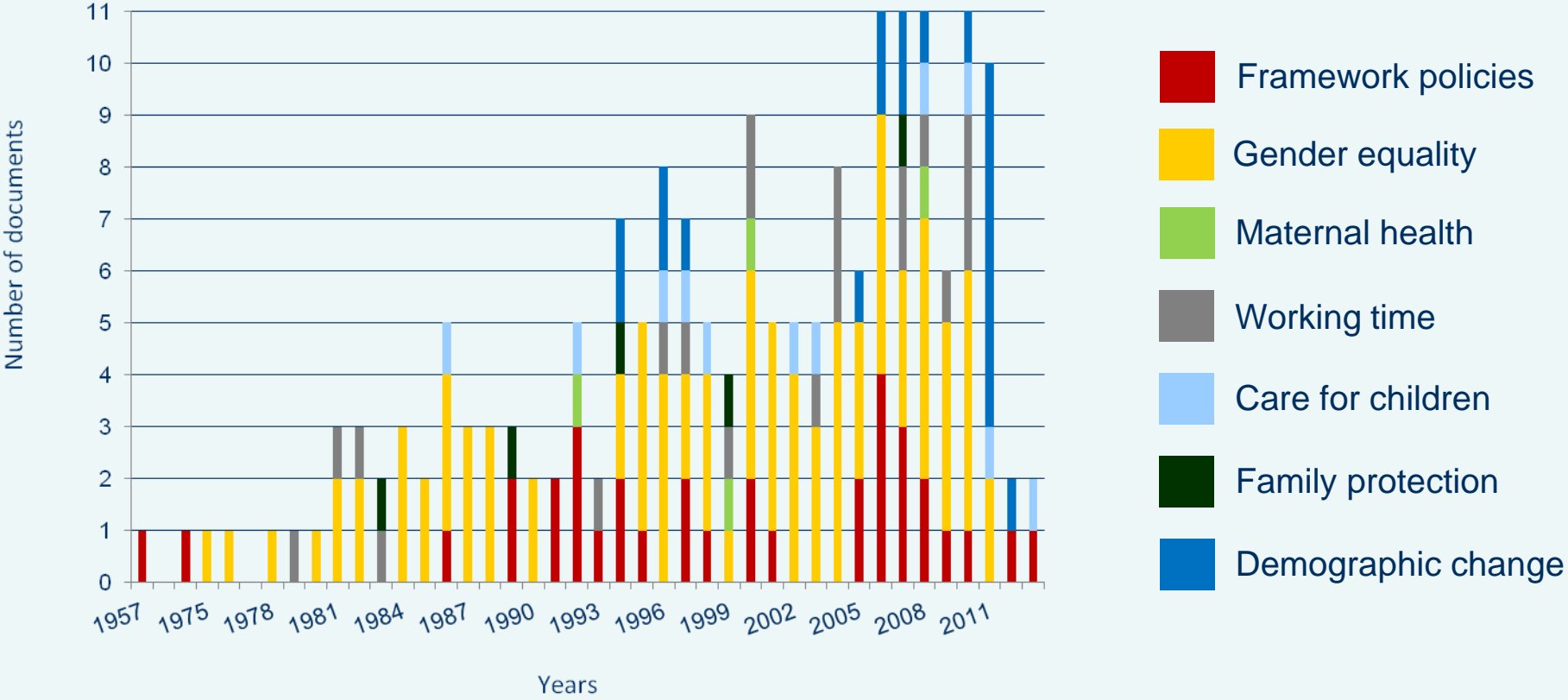
➔ inconclusive results (macro-level studies)

timing of births (?)  
quantum of fertility ?  
structure of fertility?

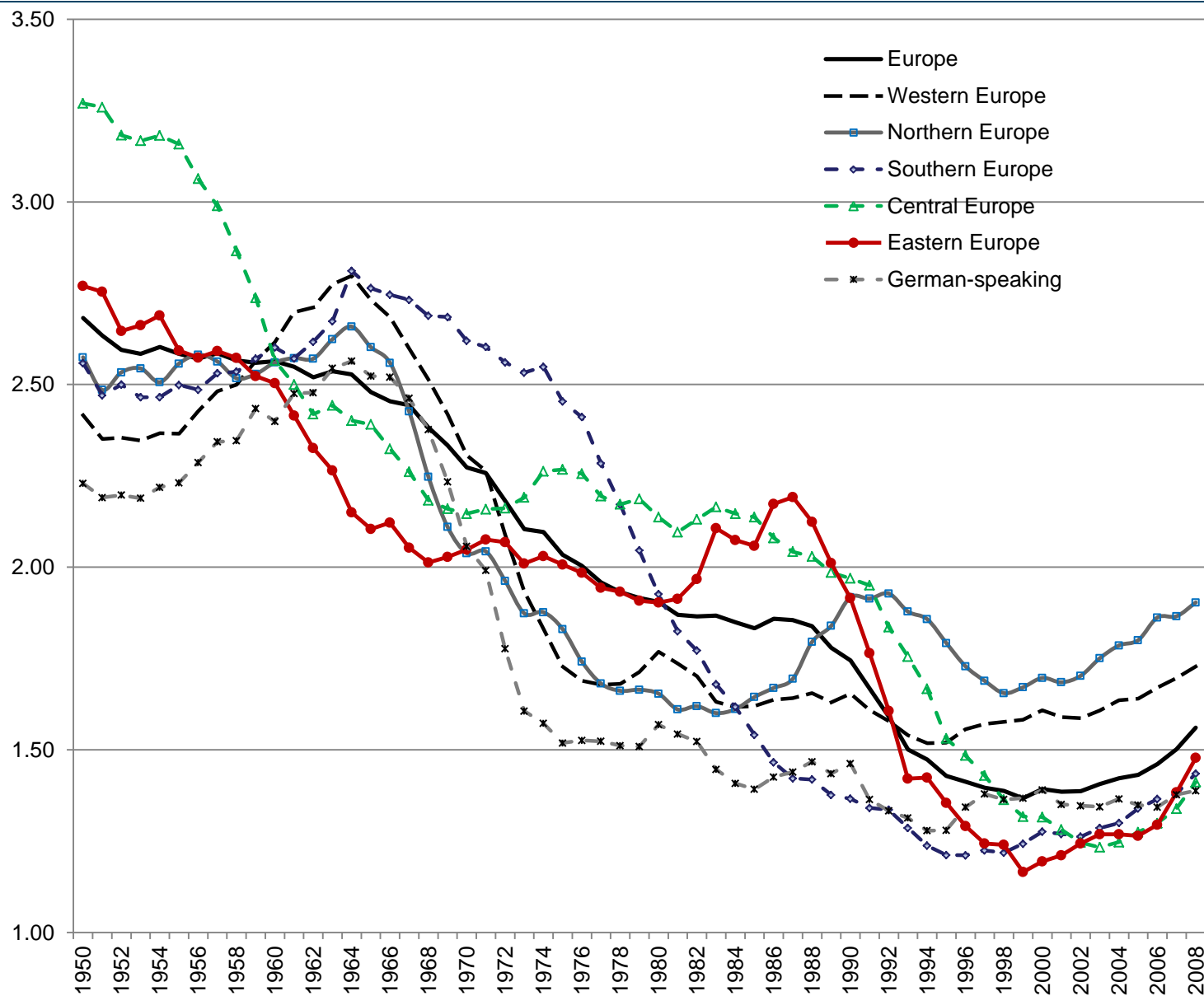
# Life expectancy in Europe



# Policy areas related fertility in EU documents



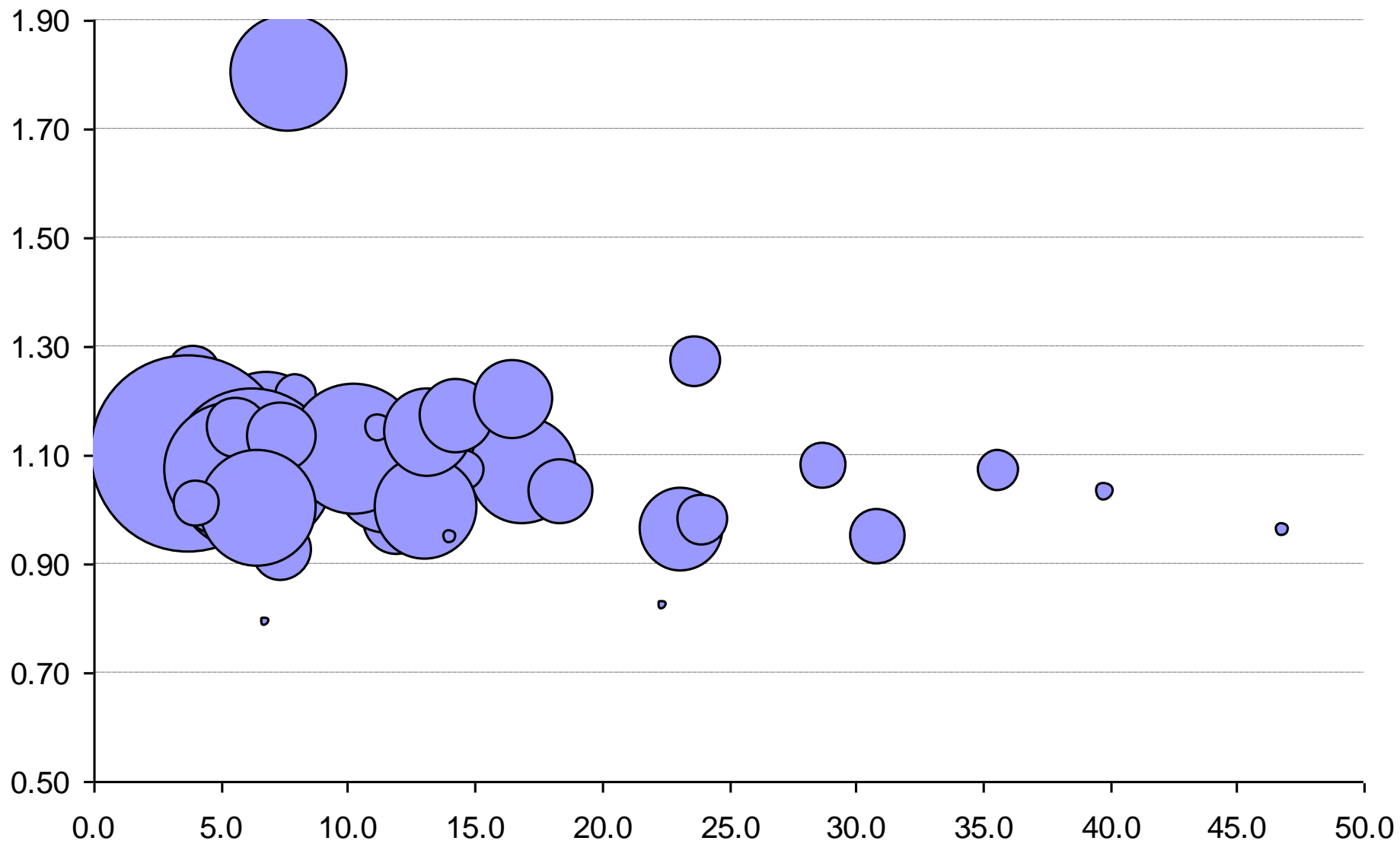
# Fertility Development in Europe: Total Fertility Rate 1950-2008



# Branch of occupation and fertility

Percent part-time workers in sector and fertility

# Further fathering vs % part-time work

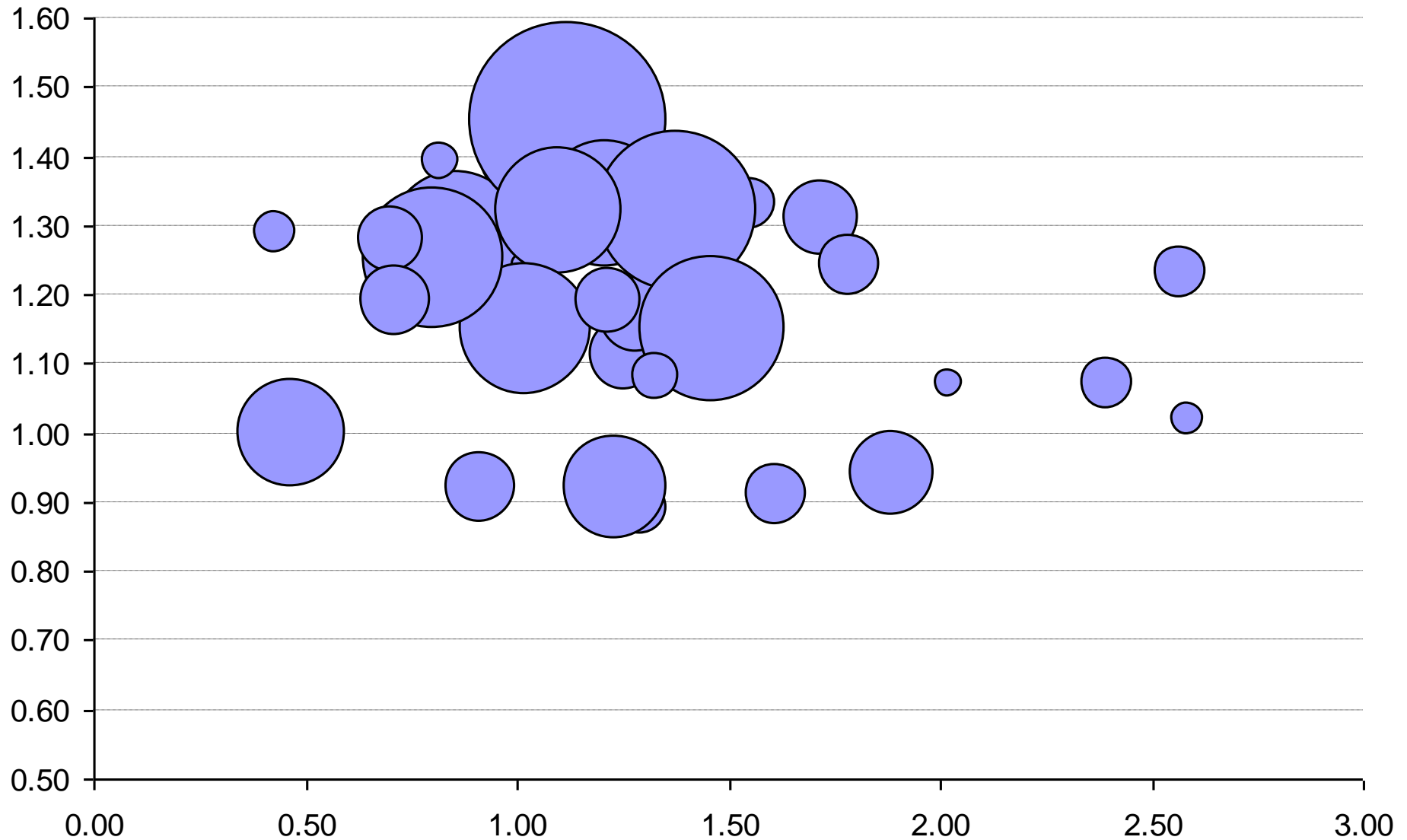




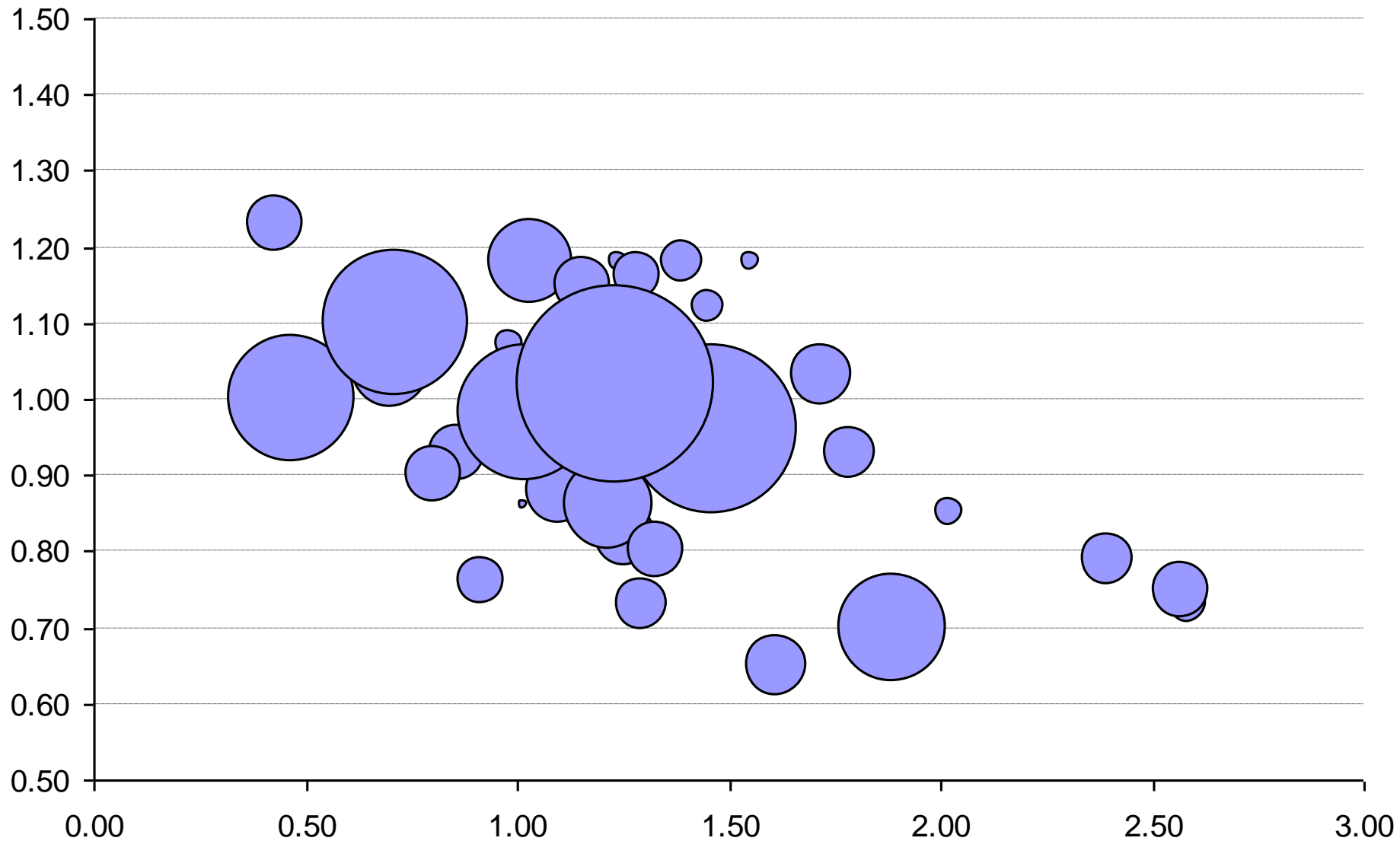
# Branch of occupation and fertility

Expansion of sector and fertility

# Becoming a father vs % increase in branch



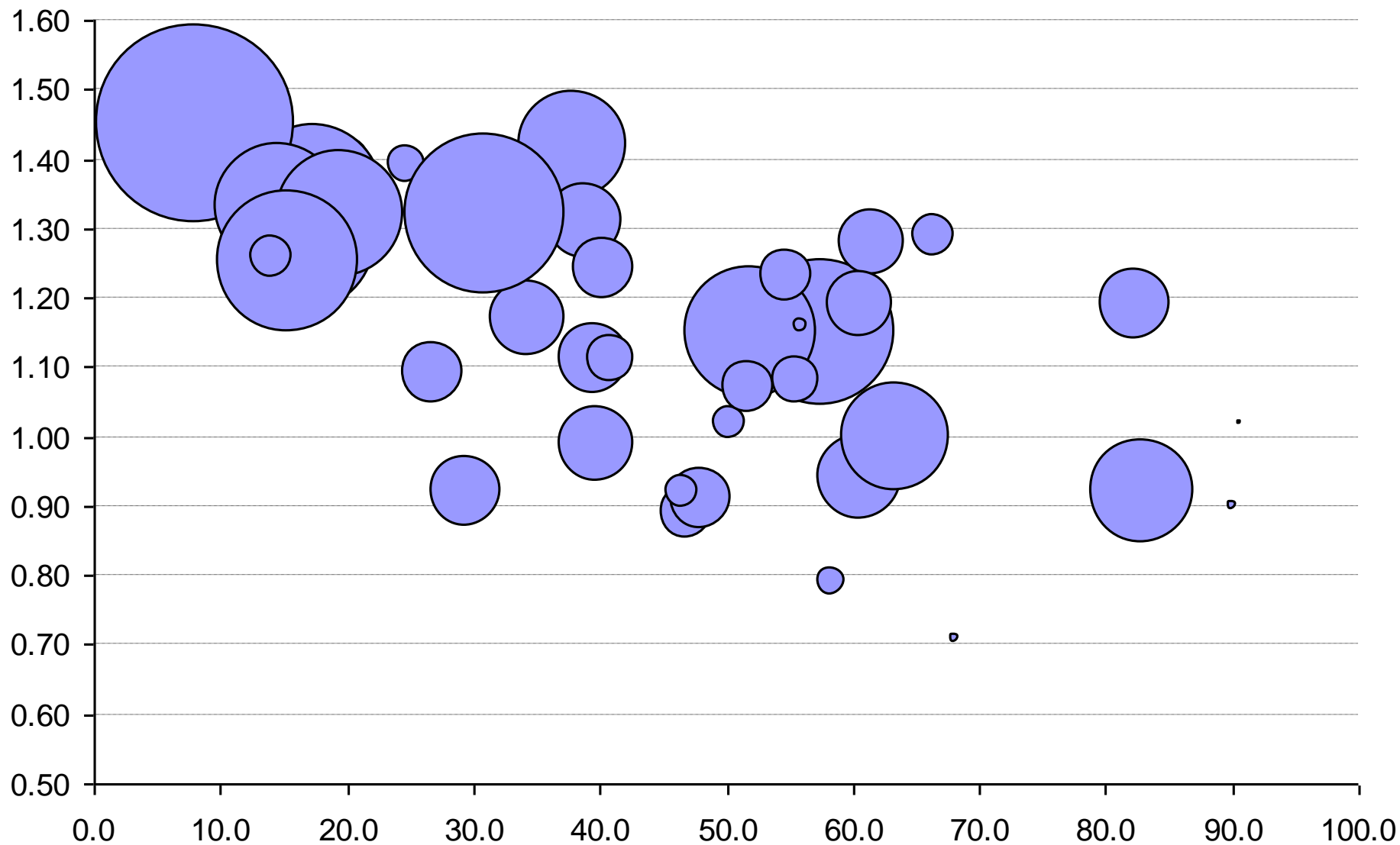
# Becoming a mother vs % increase in branch



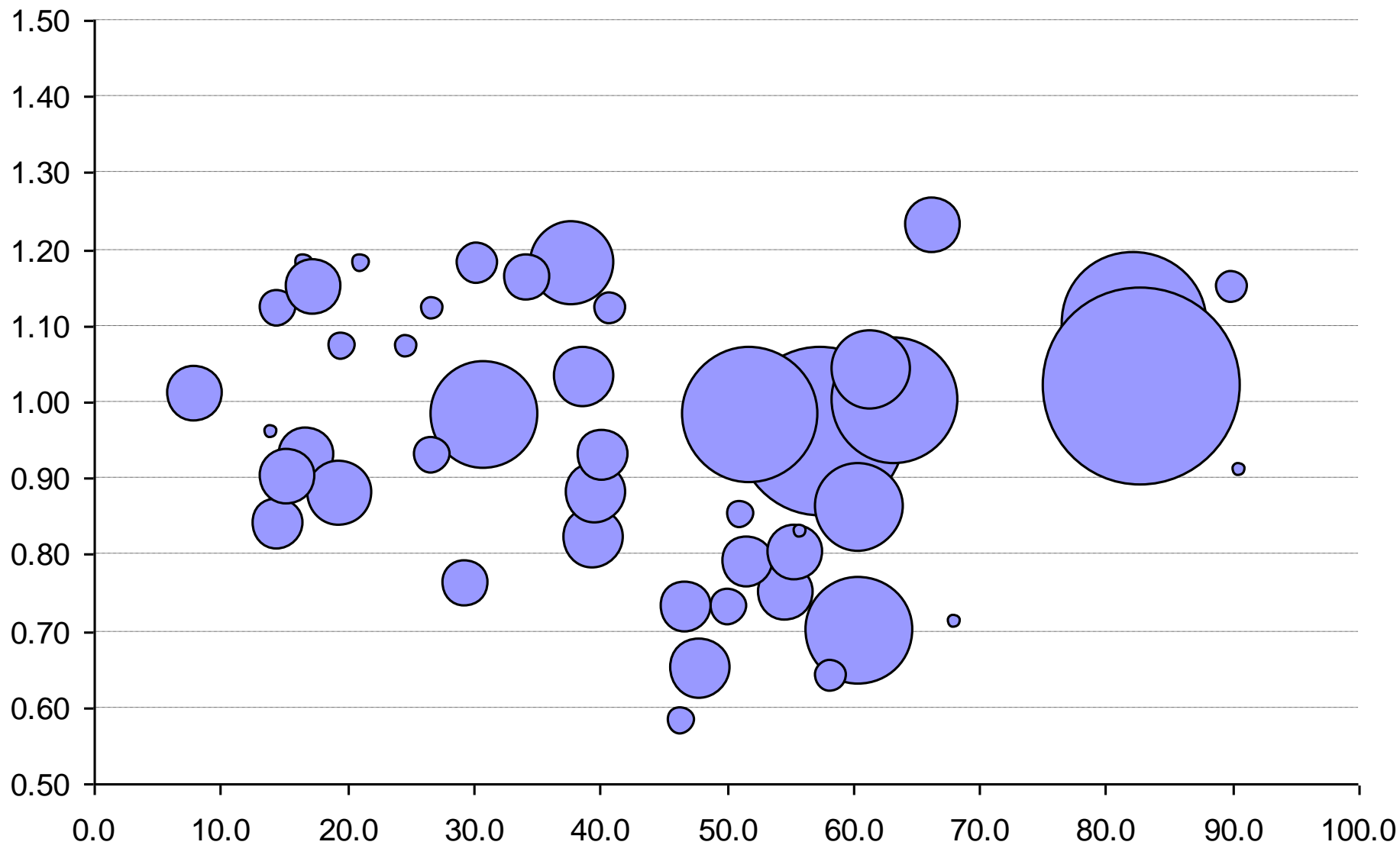
# Branch of occupation and fertility

Percent women in the sector and fertility

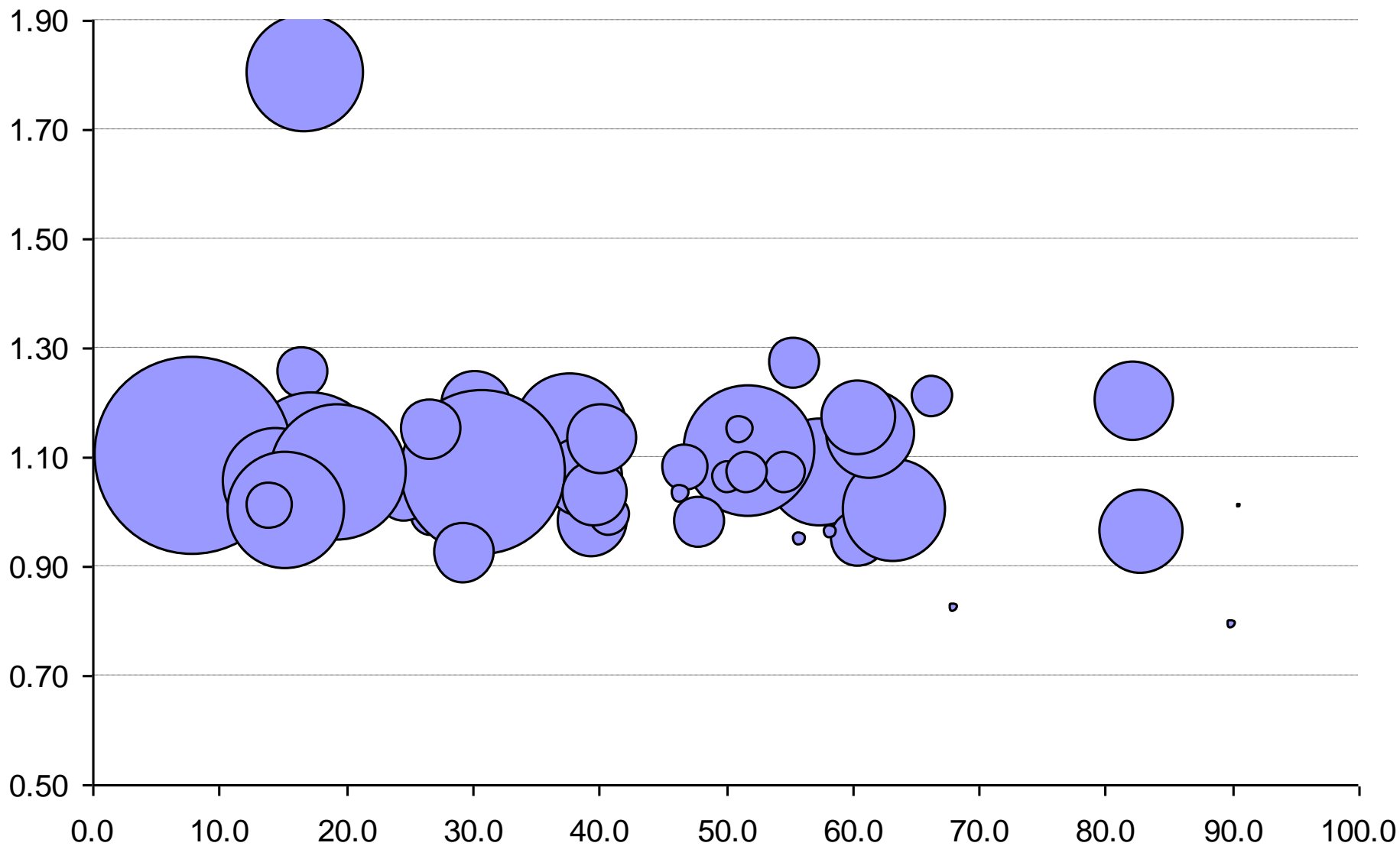
# Becoming a father vs % women in branch



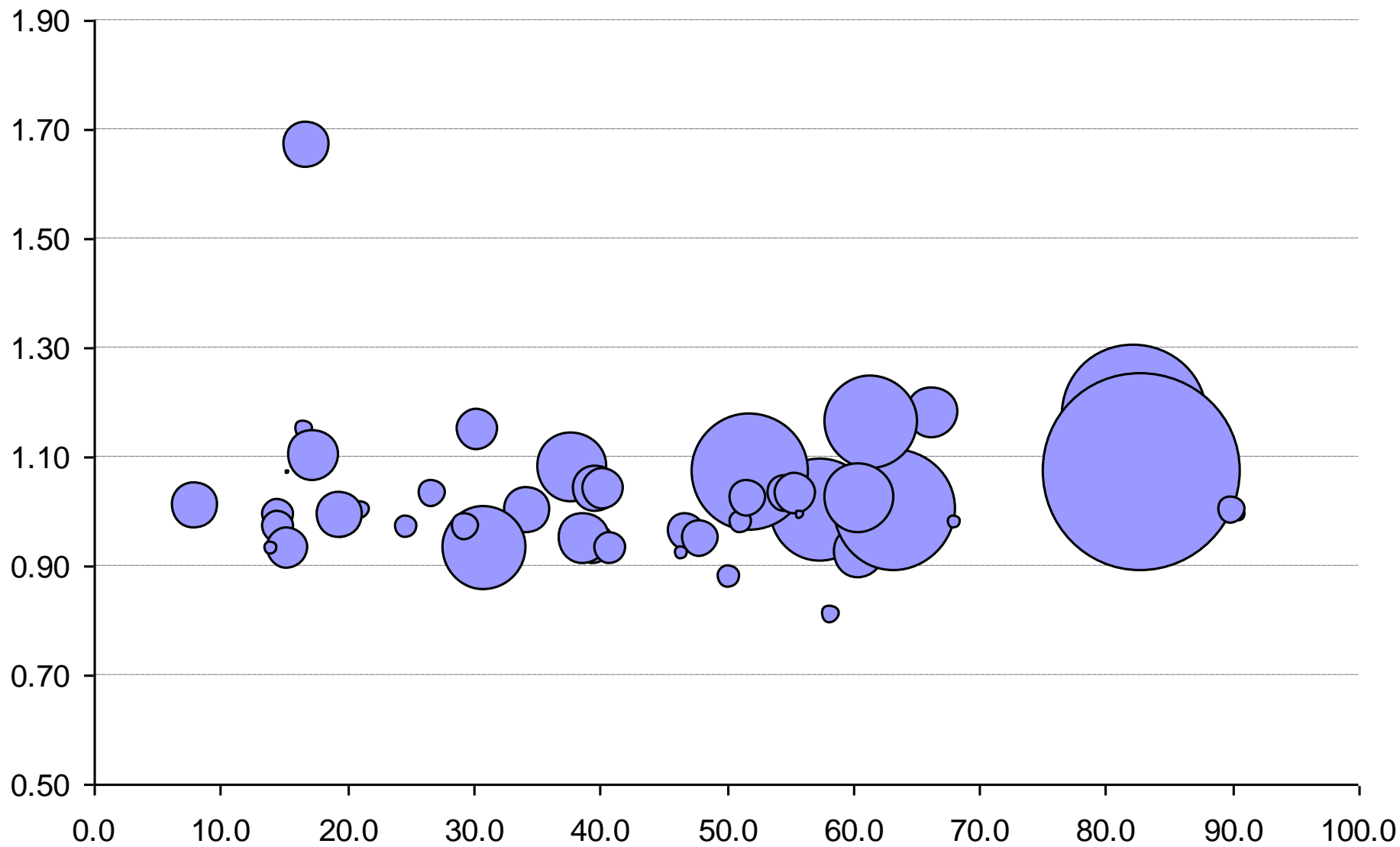
# Becoming a mother vs % women in branch



# Further fathering vs % women in branch



# Further mothering vs % women in branch





# Examples of effects of Family Policies on fertility

- Parental Leave Policies & Income Support
- Family Policies & Economic Development – Equality among women
- **Family policies, welfare-state policies, and inequality**
- Part-time work and equality

# Which Family Policies Matter?

## Policy Conclusions:

(research results not consistent across countries, but:)



„sufficiently high“ income seems to become a pre-requisite for parenthood



social equality seems to become a pre-requisite for „high“ fertility levels



no „childbearing penalty“ in employment and income



father's engagement in childcare (and household work) seems to become important for childbearing

# Which Family Policies Matter?

## Policy Conclusions:



availability of childcare (public or private) seems to be a pre-requisite for having a child



public childcare seems to have a greater effect than private/family childcare availability

# Which Family Policies Matter?

## **Income Policies, Social Equality, and Father's Care Policies**

# Conclusion



Policies can affect fertility behavior and development



Expansion of policies beyond „core“ family policies with focus on employment-gender-care



Focus NOT on fertility, but on promoting

- gender and social equality
- employment maintenance, equality in employment (anti-discrimination)
- income & income retention
- work-care reconciliation for all

# Which Family Policies Matter?

Policy Conclusions: Positive effects of policies which:



maintain women's (men's) income level during parental leave



support and maintain women's employment



women's/men's employment strongest factor for first-birth intentions and first birth