



Tectonic Changes 1960-2025: U.S. in Global Perspective

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Tectonic changes 1960-2025: U.S. in global perspective

Growing economic inequality in the U.S.

Fracturing families in the U.S.

U.S. general education

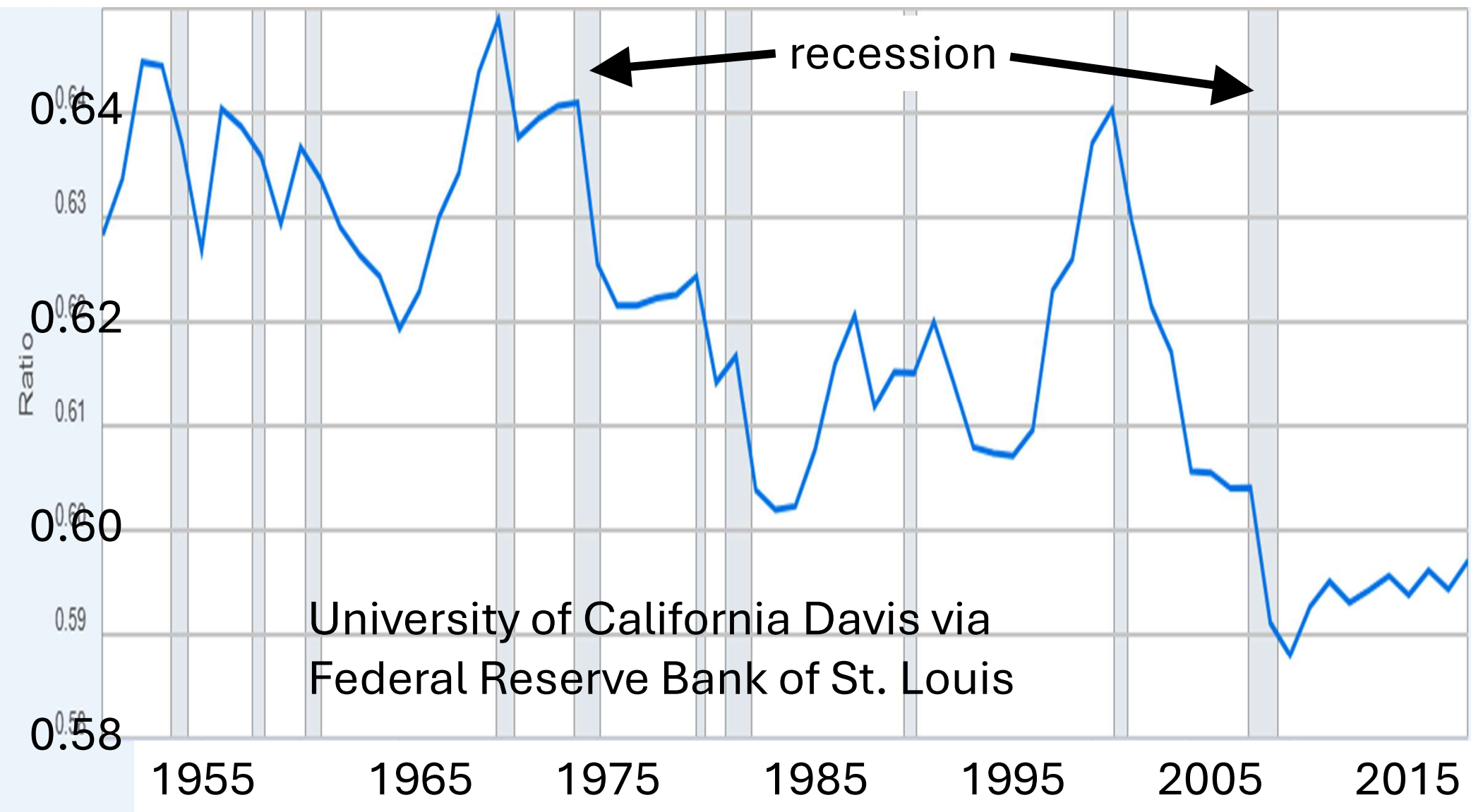
in international perspective

U.S. health & survival

in international perspective

Growing economic inequality in the U.S.

Share of labor compensation in GDP at current national prices, U.S., 1950-2019



University of California Davis via
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

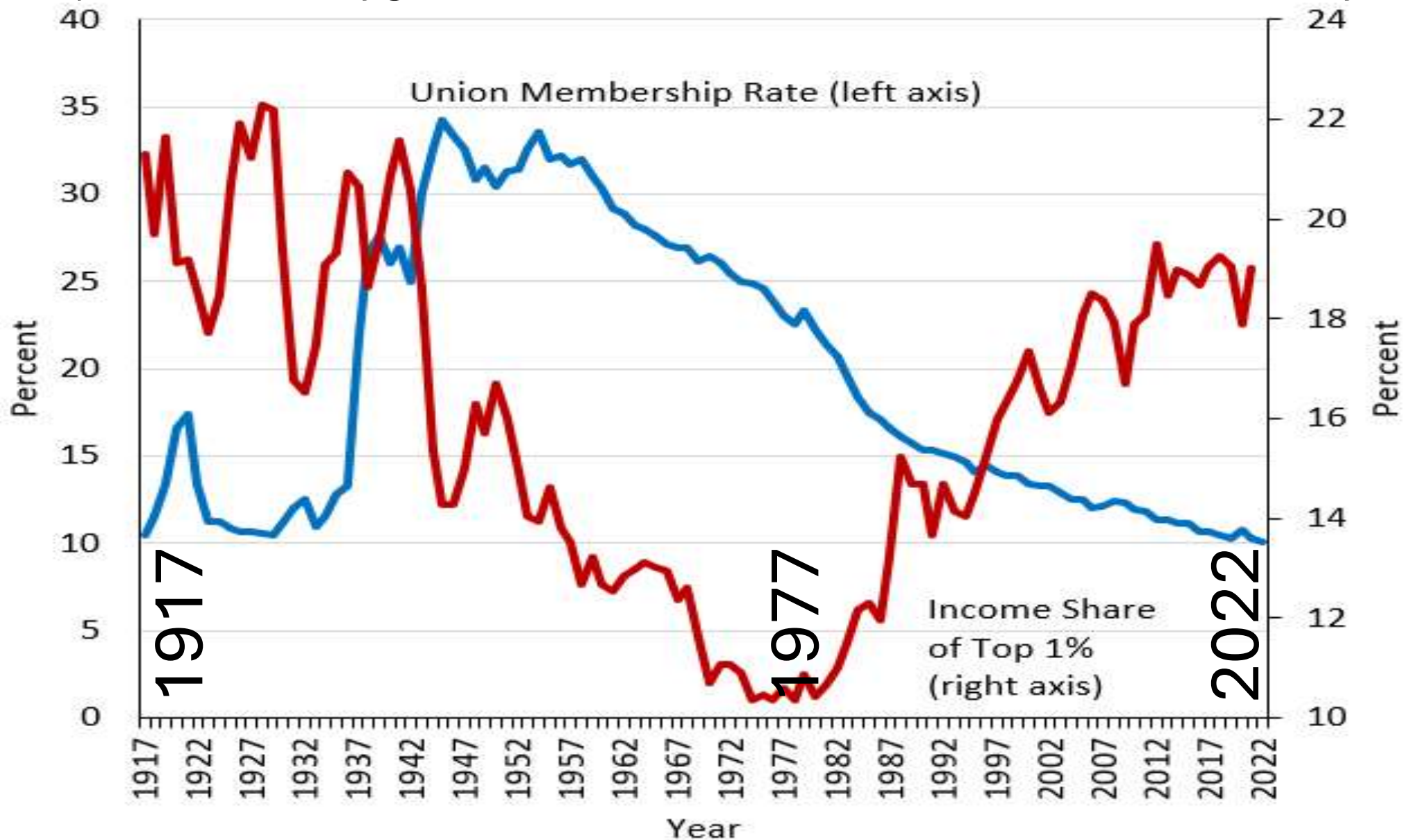
Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

Sources: University of California, Davis; University of Groningen via FRED®

fred.stlouisfed.org

% of employed civilian labor force aged 16+ who belong to a union & income share of top 1% of people, U.S., 1917-2022

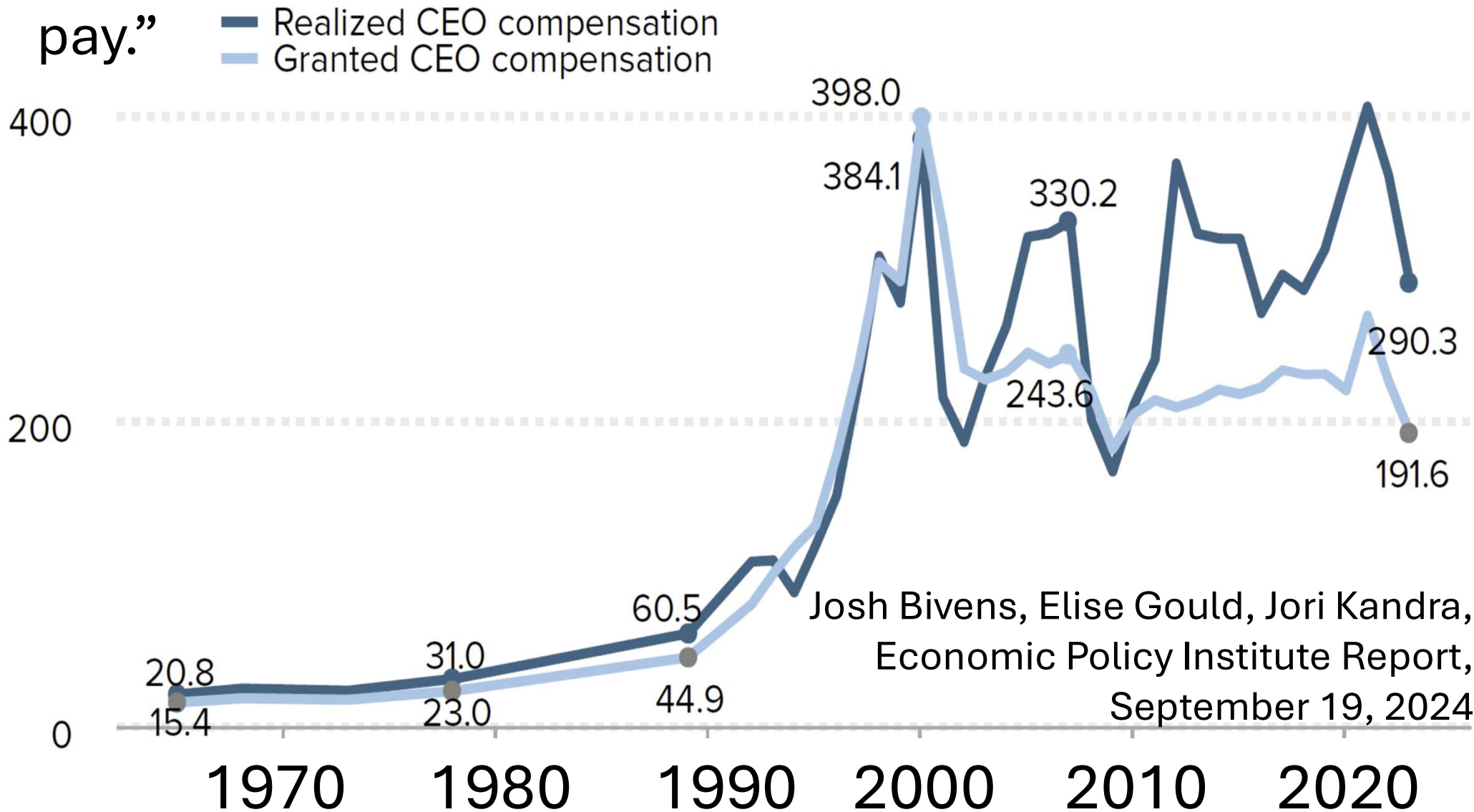
<https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/labor-unions-and-the-us-economy>



CEOs make 290 times as much as typical workers

CEO-to-worker compensation ratio, 1965–2023 U.S.

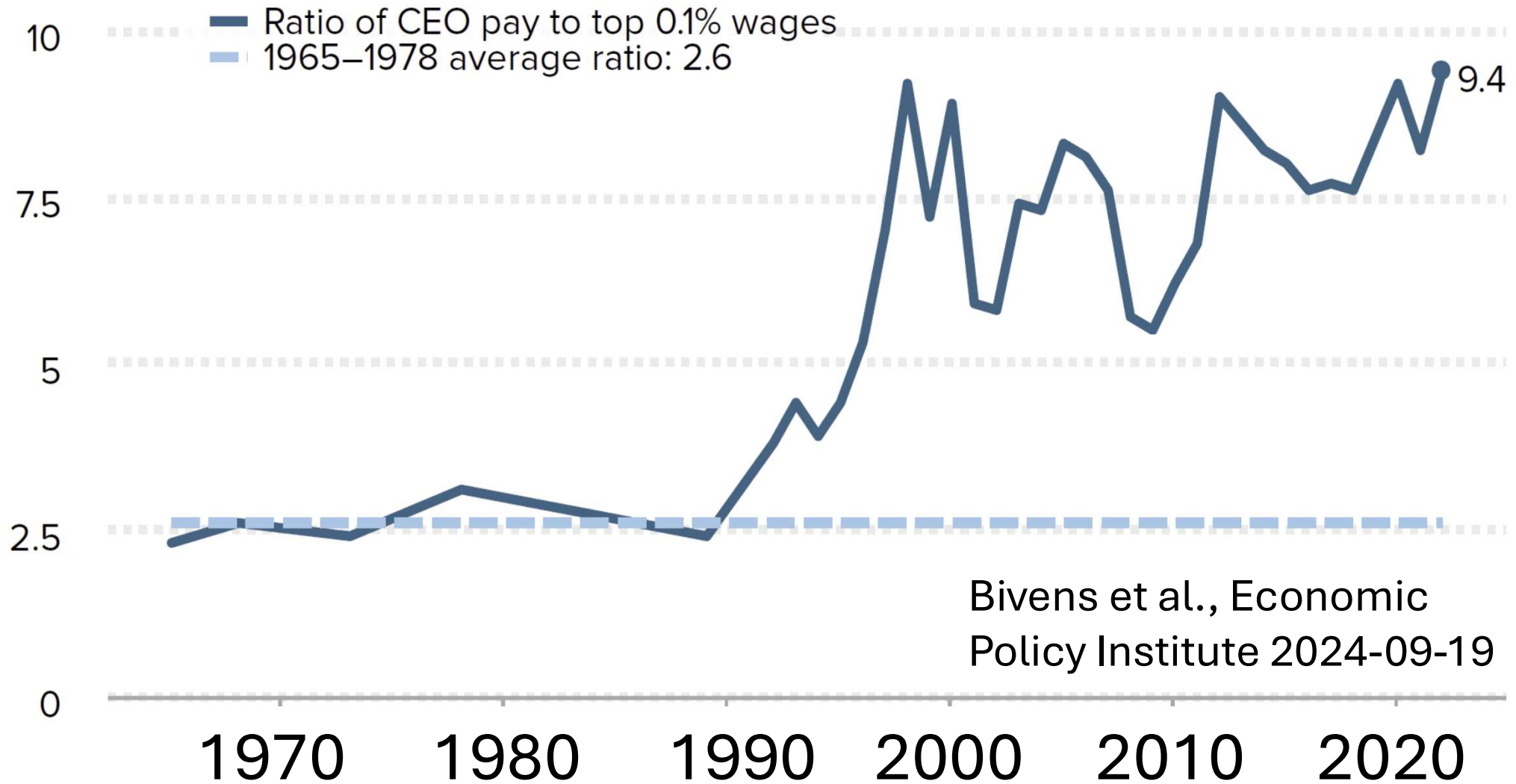
“CEO pay declined in 2023. But it has soared 1,085% since 1978 compared with a 24% rise in typical workers’ pay.”



CEO compensation relative to top 0.1% earners is much higher than it was in the 1965–1978 period

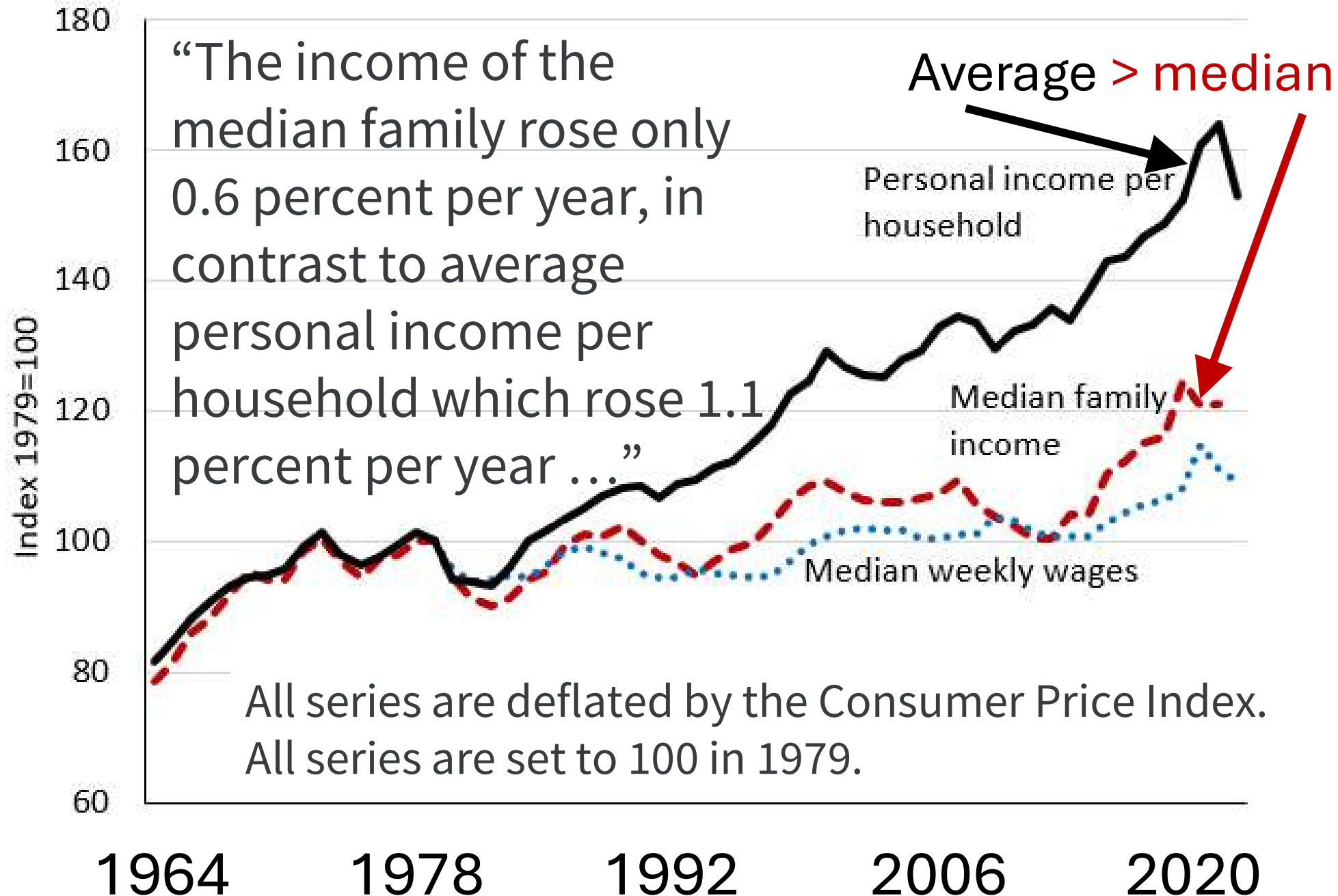
Ratio of CEO compensation to top 0.1% wages, 1965–2022

U.S.



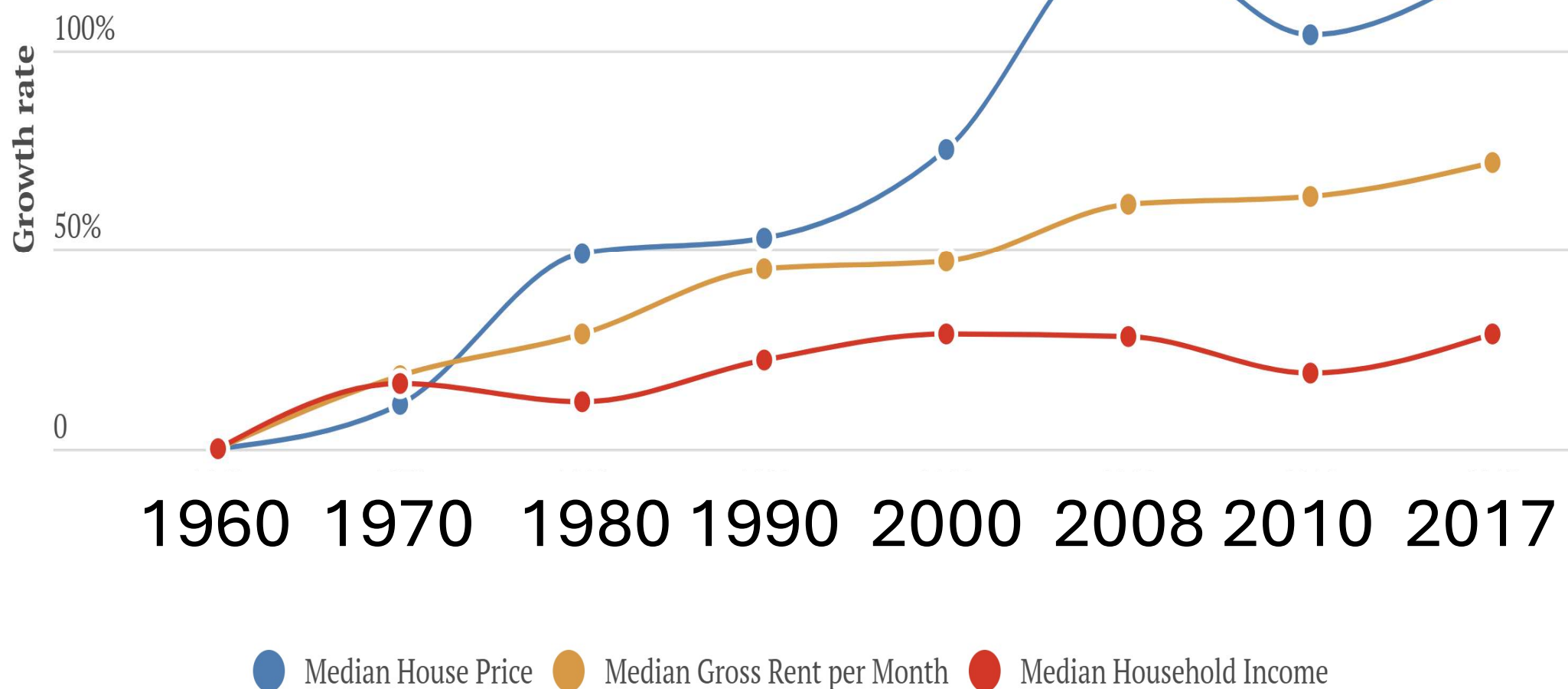
Income & wage growth, U.S., 1964-2020

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/labor-unions-and-the-us-economy>



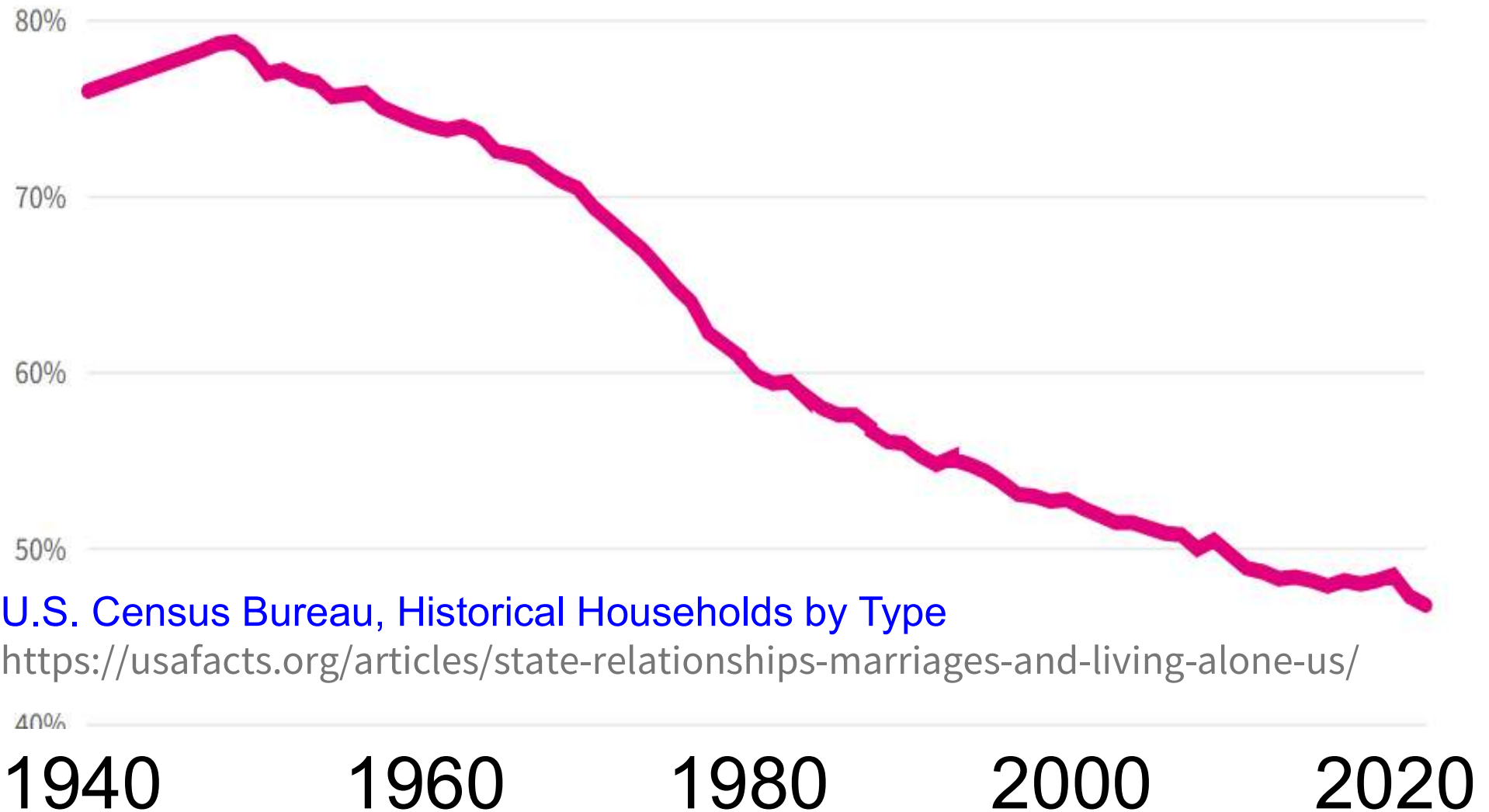
Growth rates: median house price > median rent / month > median household income, U.S., 1960-2017

<https://listwithclever.com/research/home-price-v-income-historical-study/>
All values are indexed to 1960. Source: 1960-2000 Decennial Censuses and 2008, 2010 and 2017 American Community Surveys



Fracturing families in the U.S.

Married households fell from 79% to 47% of households, U.S., 1949-2022.

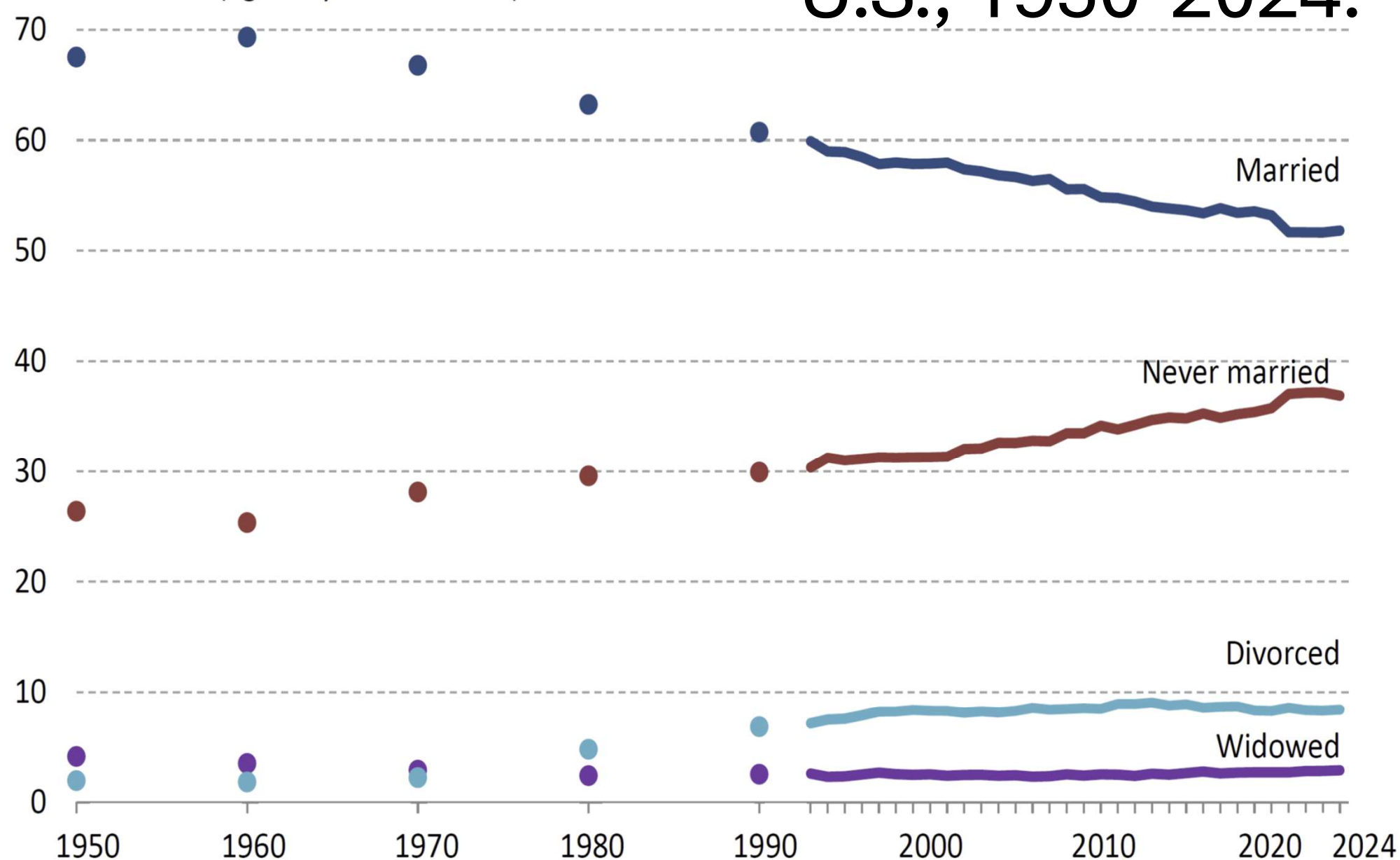


U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Households by Type

<https://usafacts.org/articles/state-relationships-marriages-and-living-alone-us/>

% of men 15+ who never married rose, U.S., 1950-2024.

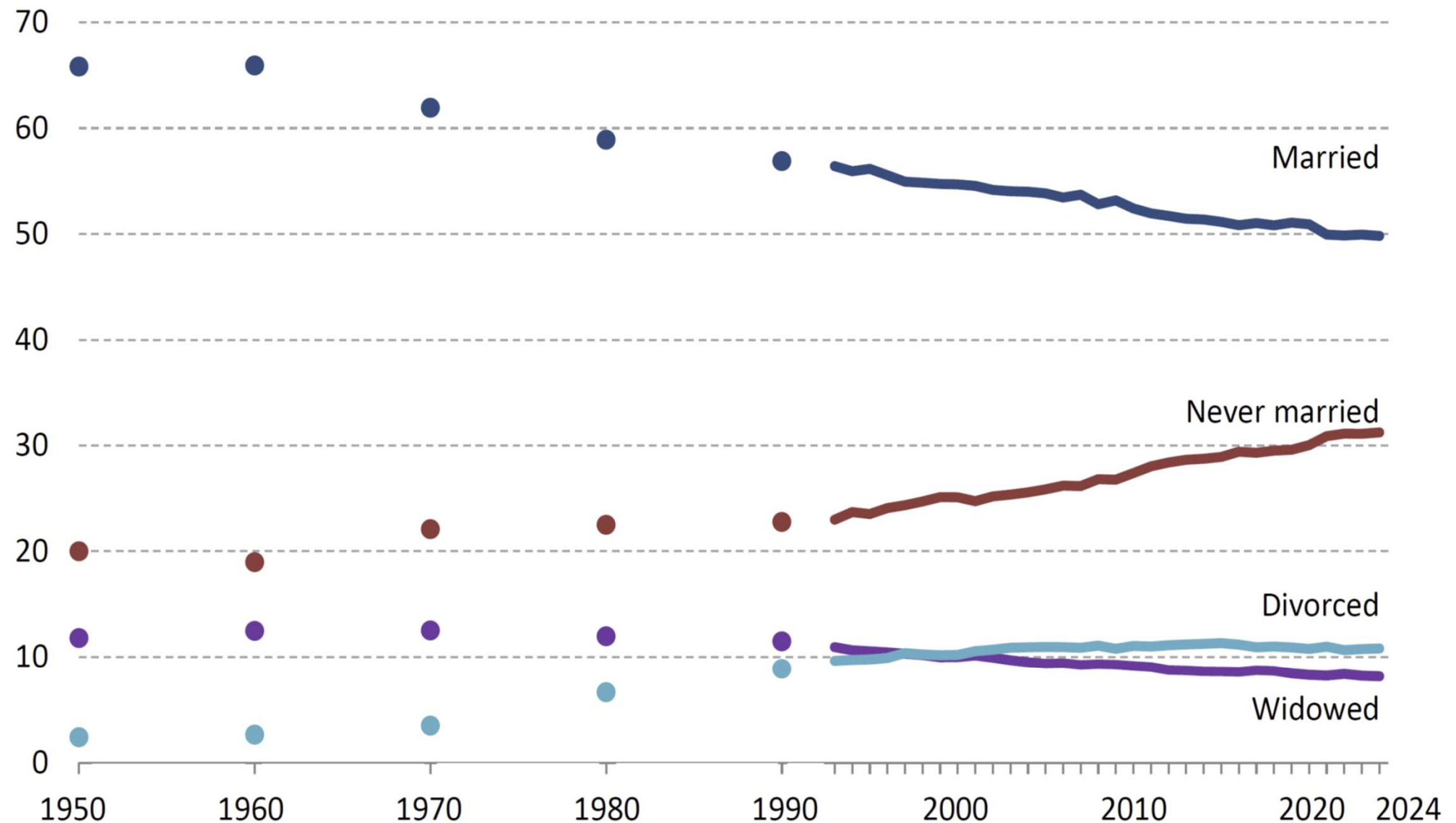
Percent of men (age 15 years and over)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1950 to 1990, and Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1993 to 2024.

% of women 15+ never married rose, U.S., 1950-2024.

Percent of women (age 15 years and over)

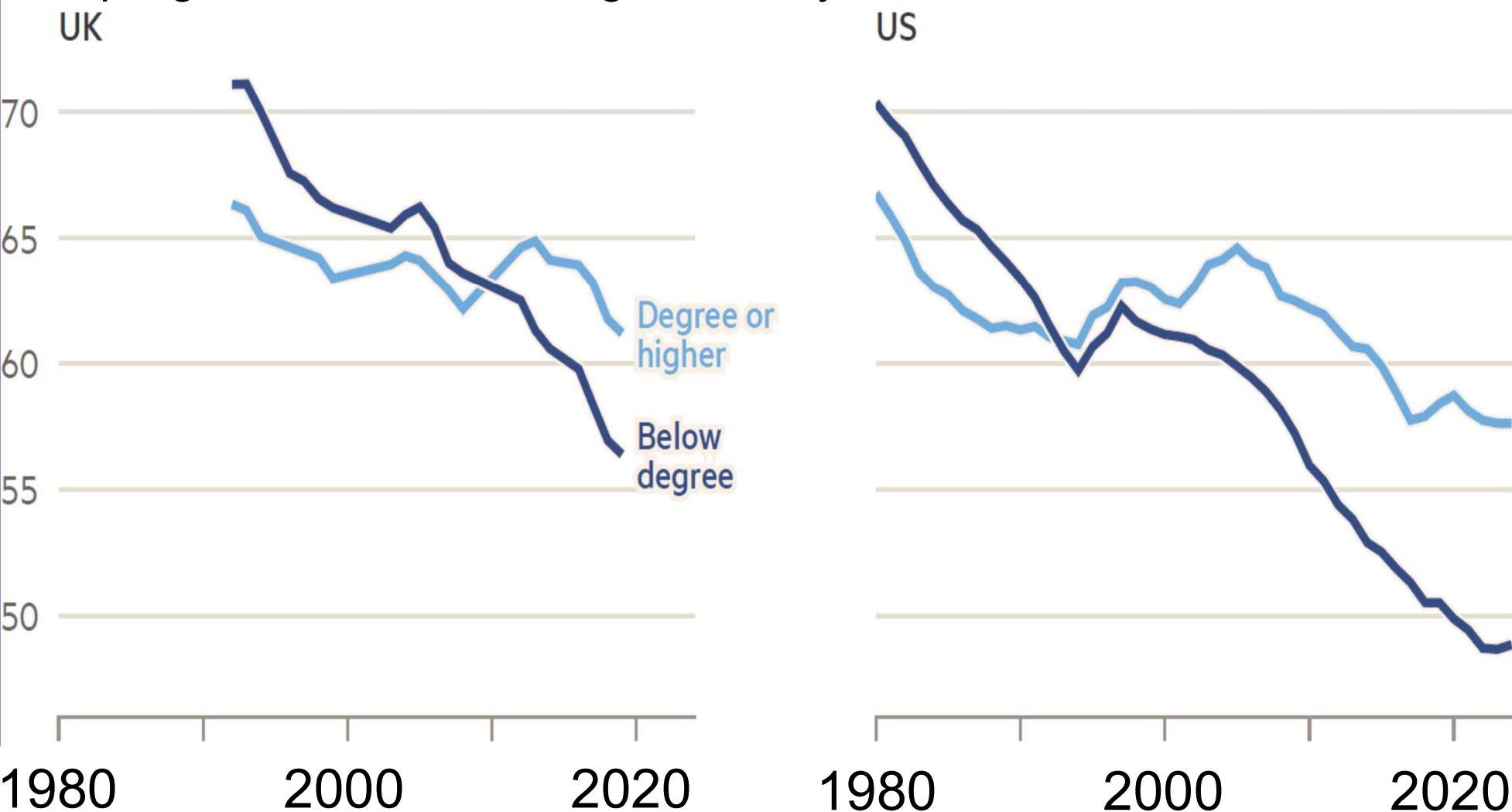


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1950 to 1990, and Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1993 to 2024.

The decline of coupling has been steepest among people without a degree

% of 25- to 34-year-olds in couples, by education

Coupling rate = % of adults aged 25-34 years who are married or cohabiting

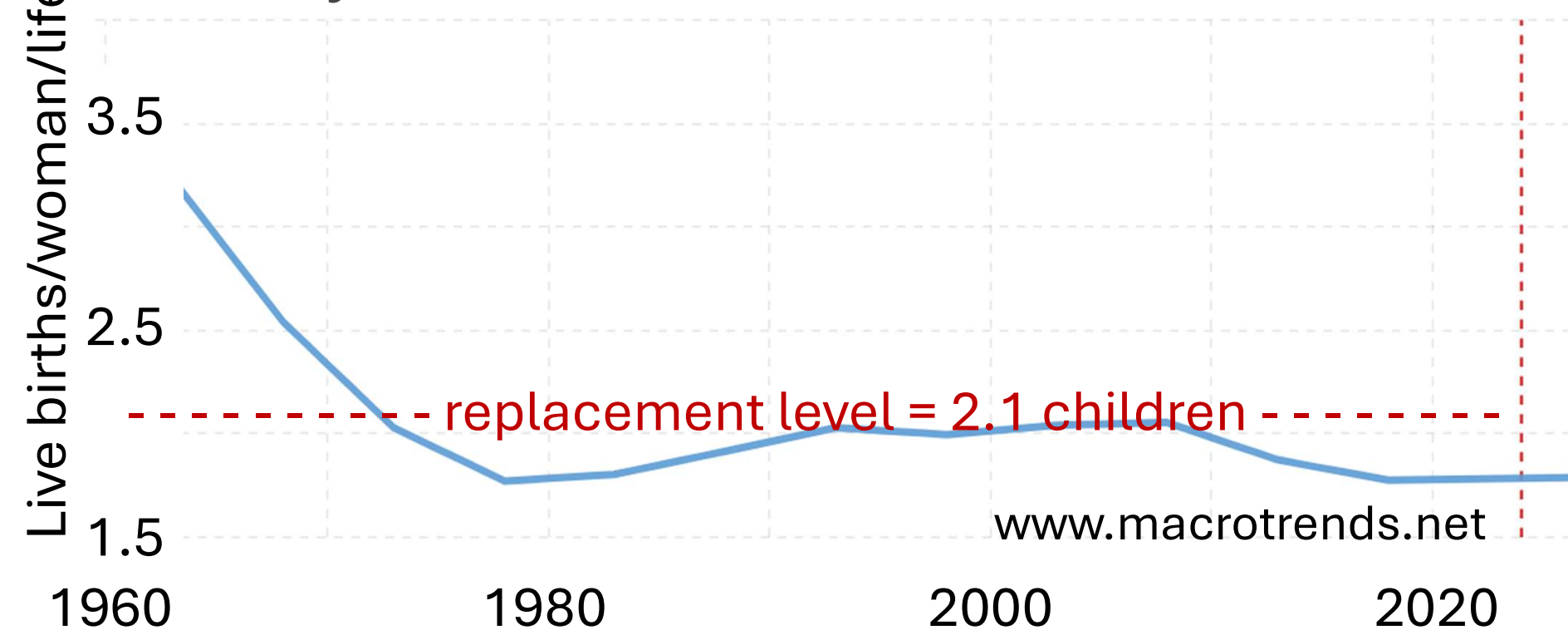


Source: FT analysis of UK Household Longitudinal Study, UK Family Resources Survey and US Current Population Survey

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

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U.S. births per woman per lifetime (TFR)
fell by 1/2, from 3.4 to 1.7, in 1960-2024.

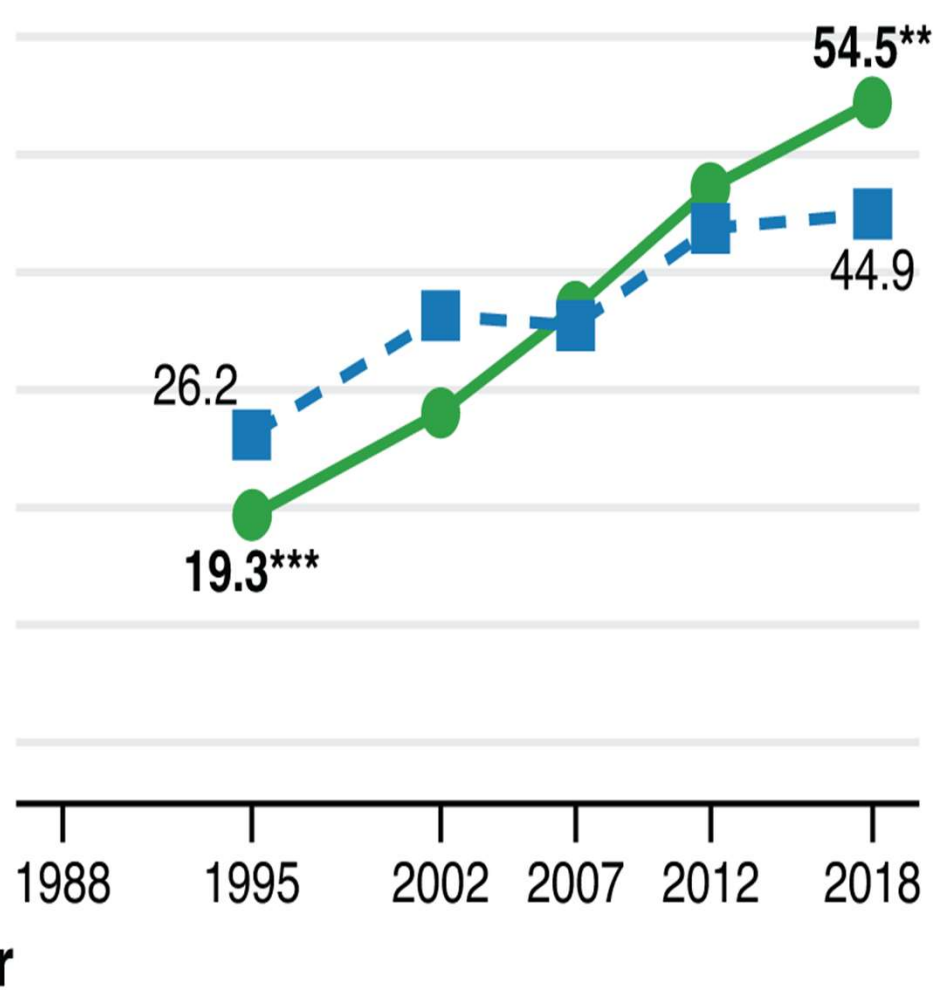
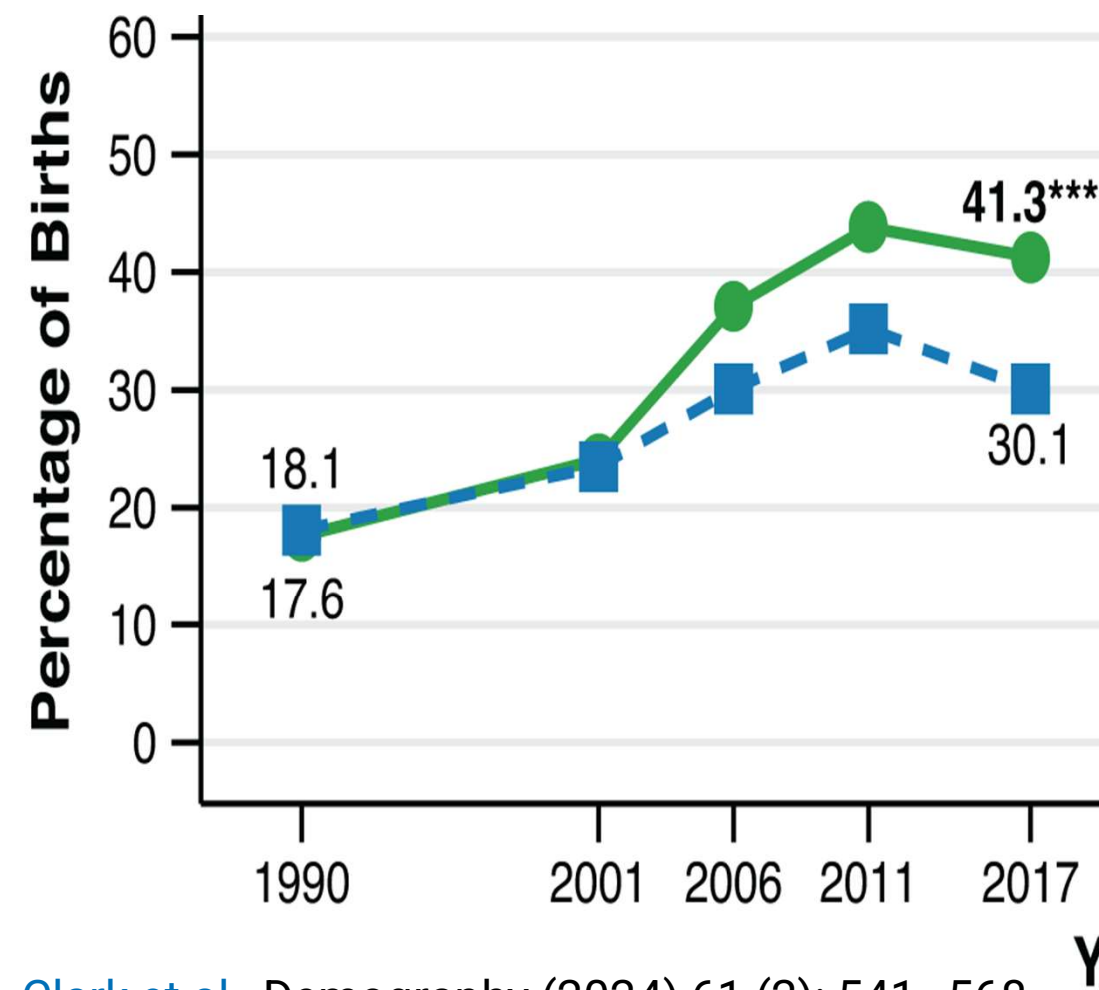


Since 1972, U.S. total fertility rate (TFR) has been
below replacement level of 2.1 children per
woman per lifetime.

54.5% of rural births, 44.9% of urban births were outside of marriage in 2018, U.S.

Canada

U.S.



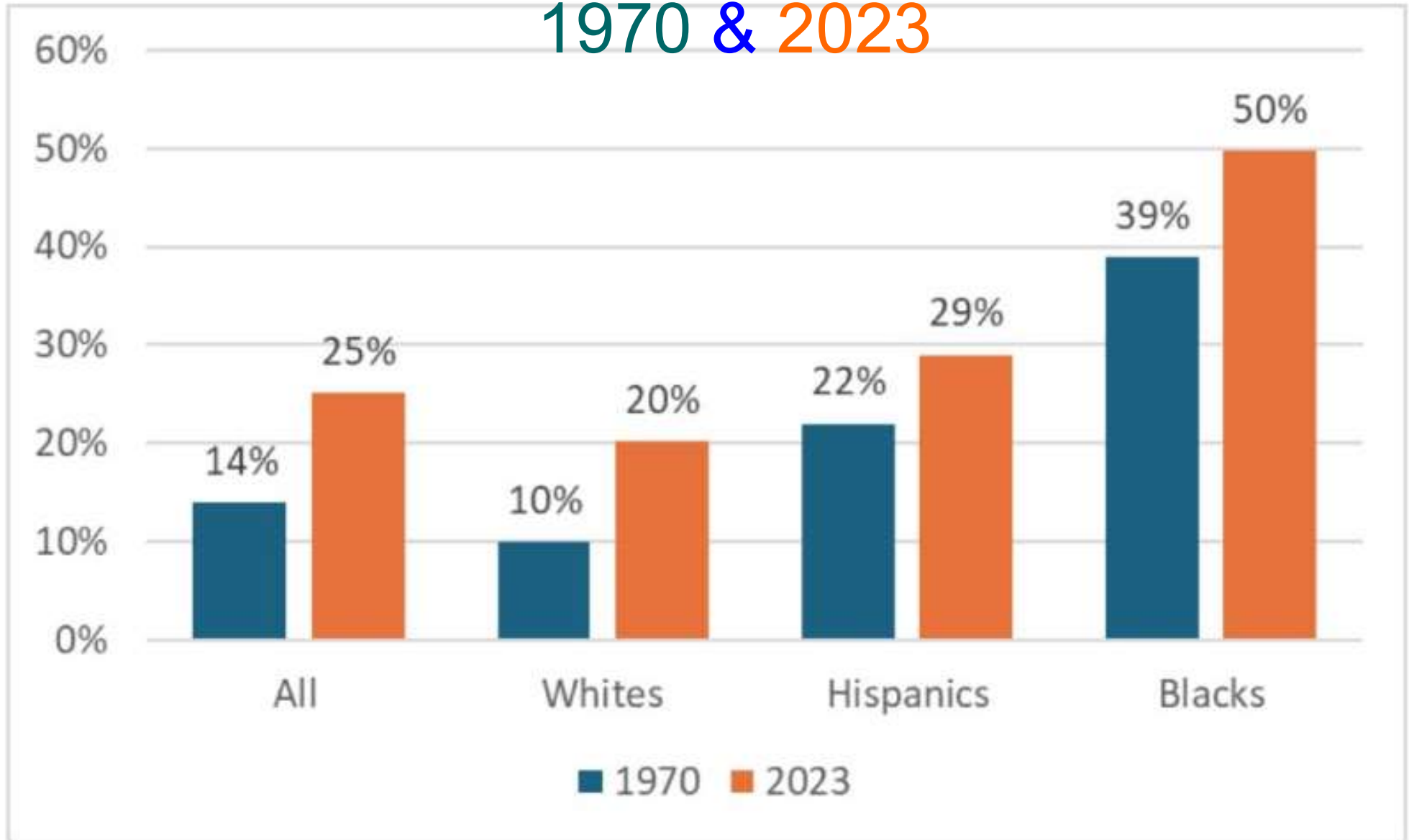
Rural



Urban

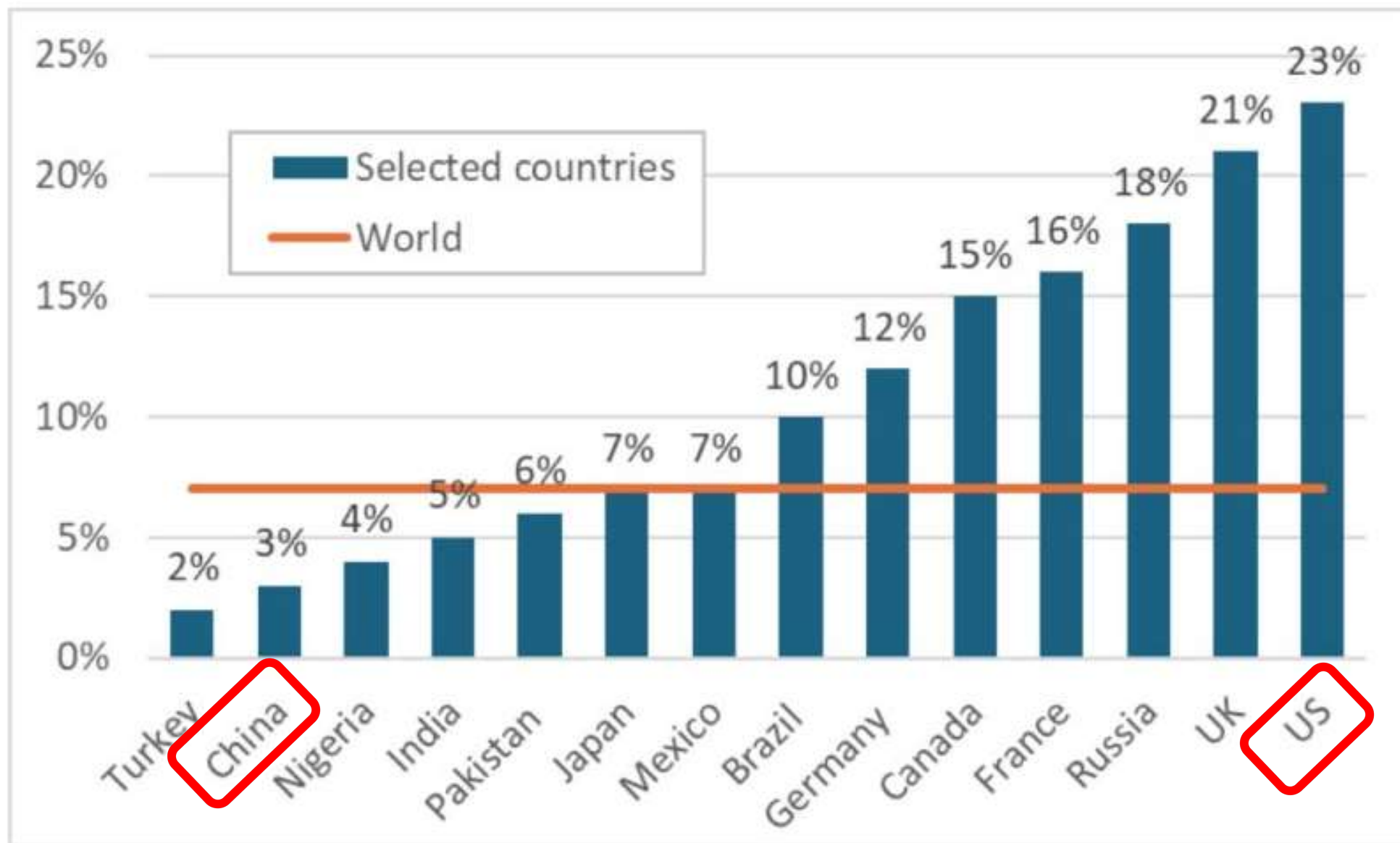
Clark et al., Demography (2024) 61 (2): 541–568.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-11237867>

% of children in father-missing households by group, U.S., 1970 & 2023



Source: US Census Bureau 2023. Joseph Chamie NIUSSP 2025

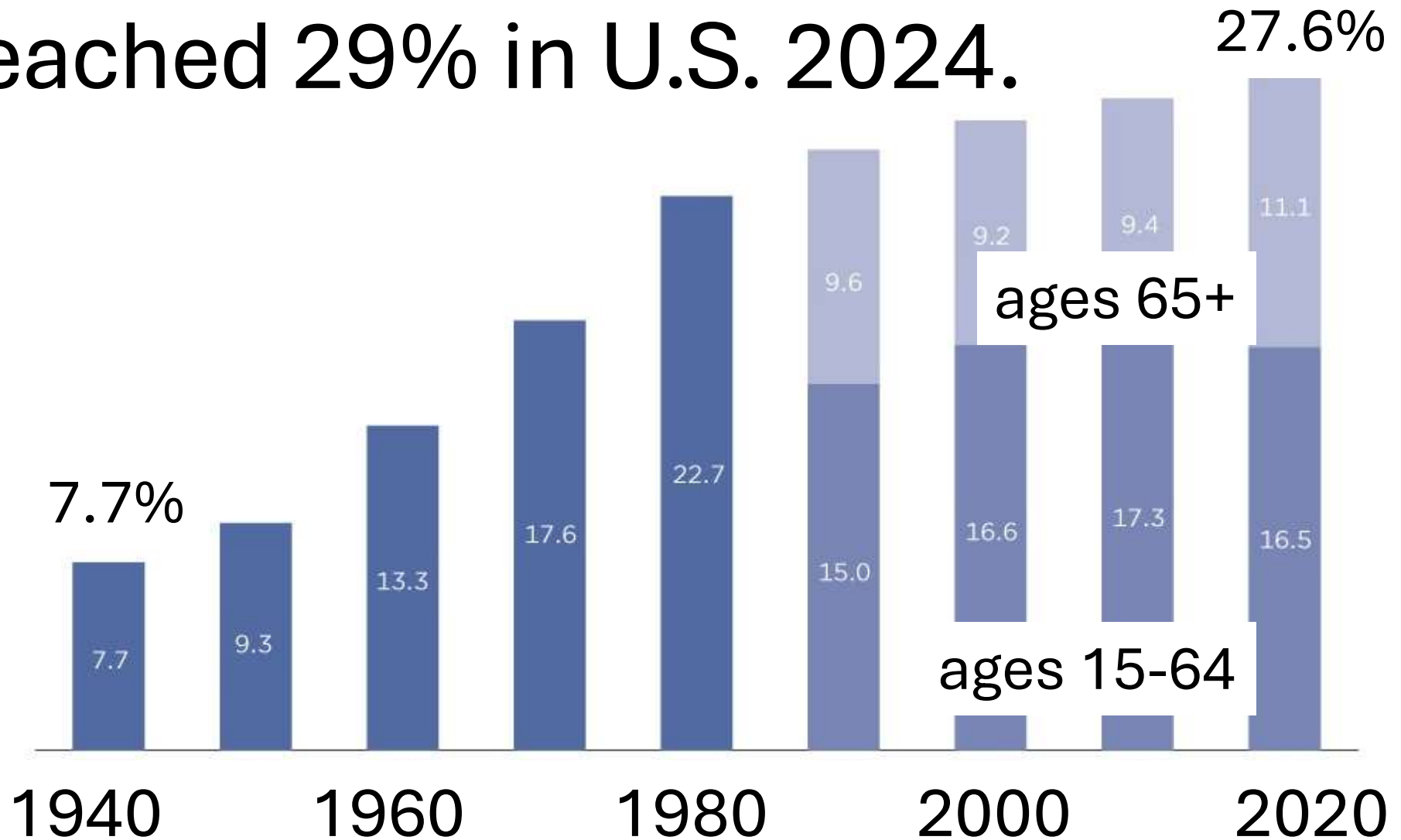
% of children in single-parent households, world & selected countries, 2019



Source: Kramer (2019).

Joseph Chamie NIUSSP 2025

% of 1-person households grew 3.6 x,
7.7% → 27.6%, 1940-2020;
reached 29% in U.S. 2024.

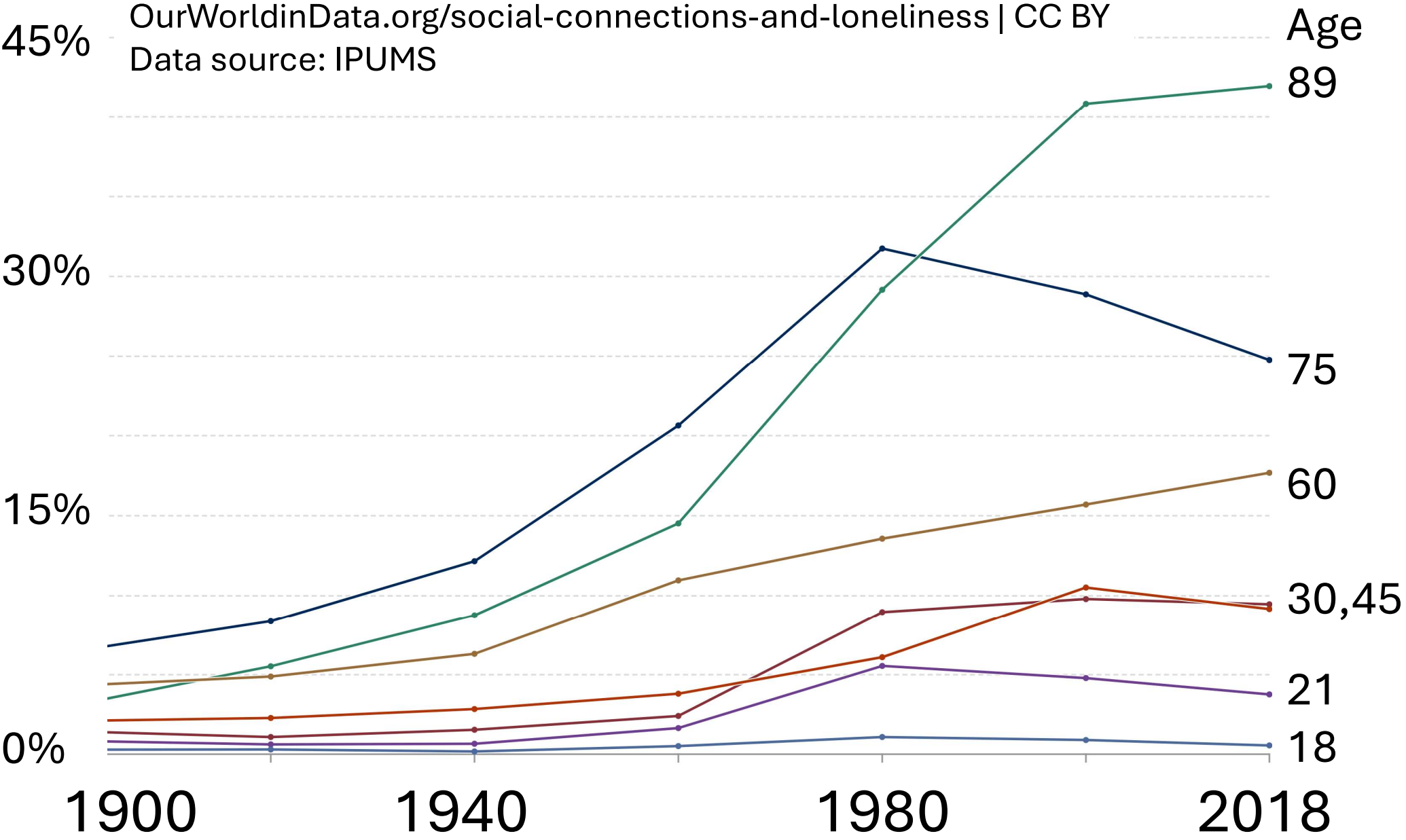


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-1990 Censuses; 2000 Census Summary File 2; 2010 Census Summary File 1; 2020 Decennial Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC).

Percentage of Americans who live alone, by age 1900-2018

An individual is defined as living alone when there is one person in the household and does not live in group quarters.

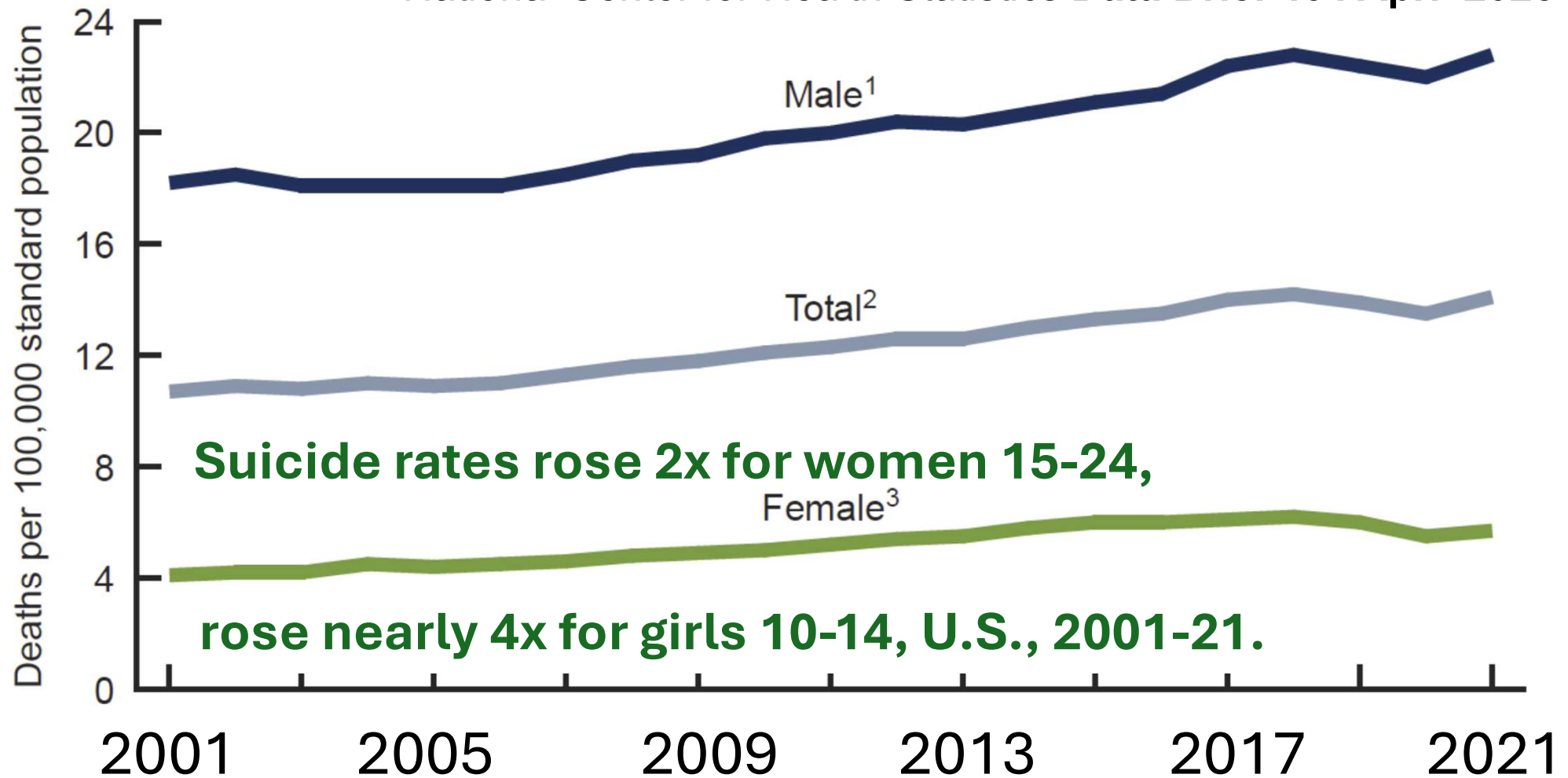
OurWorldinData.org/social-connections-and-loneliness | CC BY
Data source: IPUMS



“From 2001 through 2021, suicide rates increased most years for males and females.” CDC-NCHS

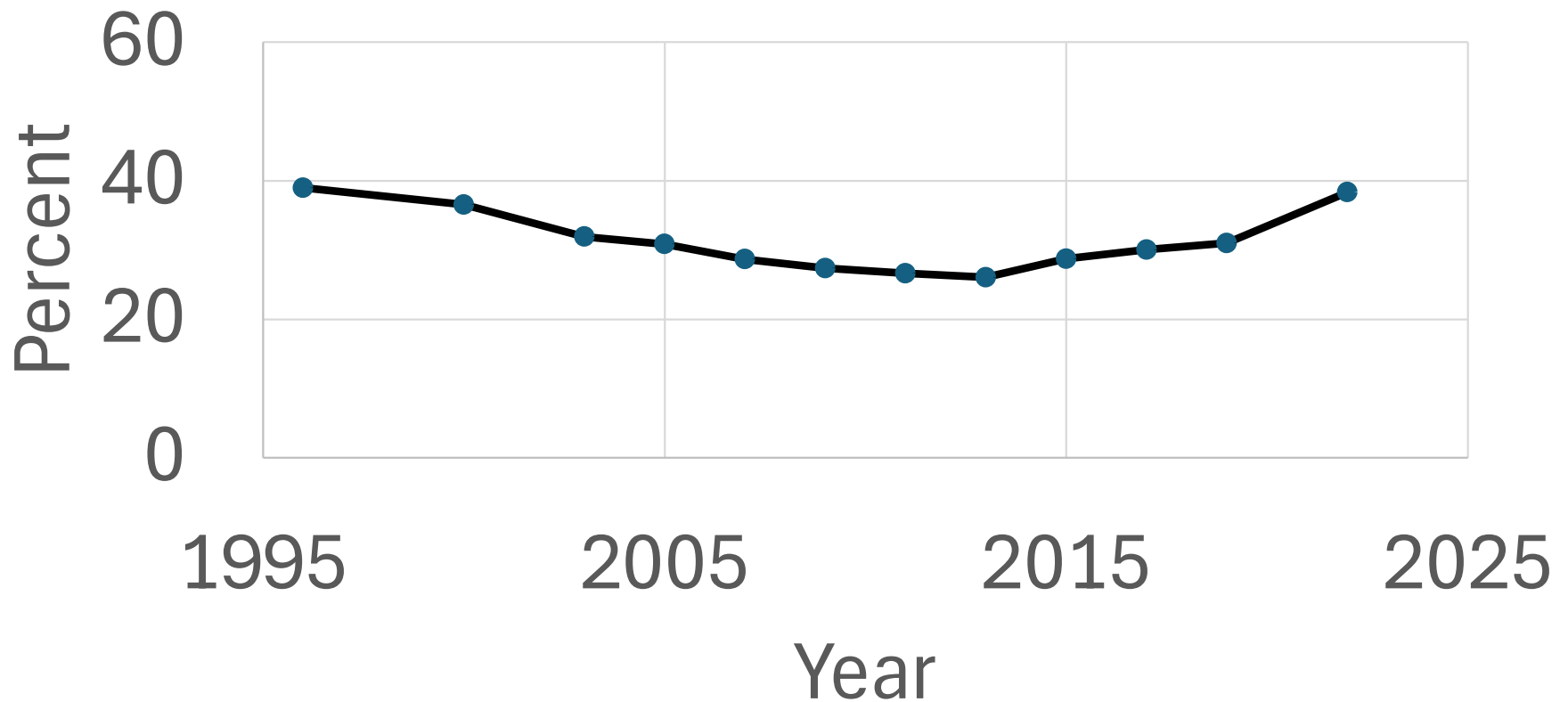
Figure 1. Age-adjusted suicide rates, by sex: United States, 2001–2021

National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief 464 April 2023

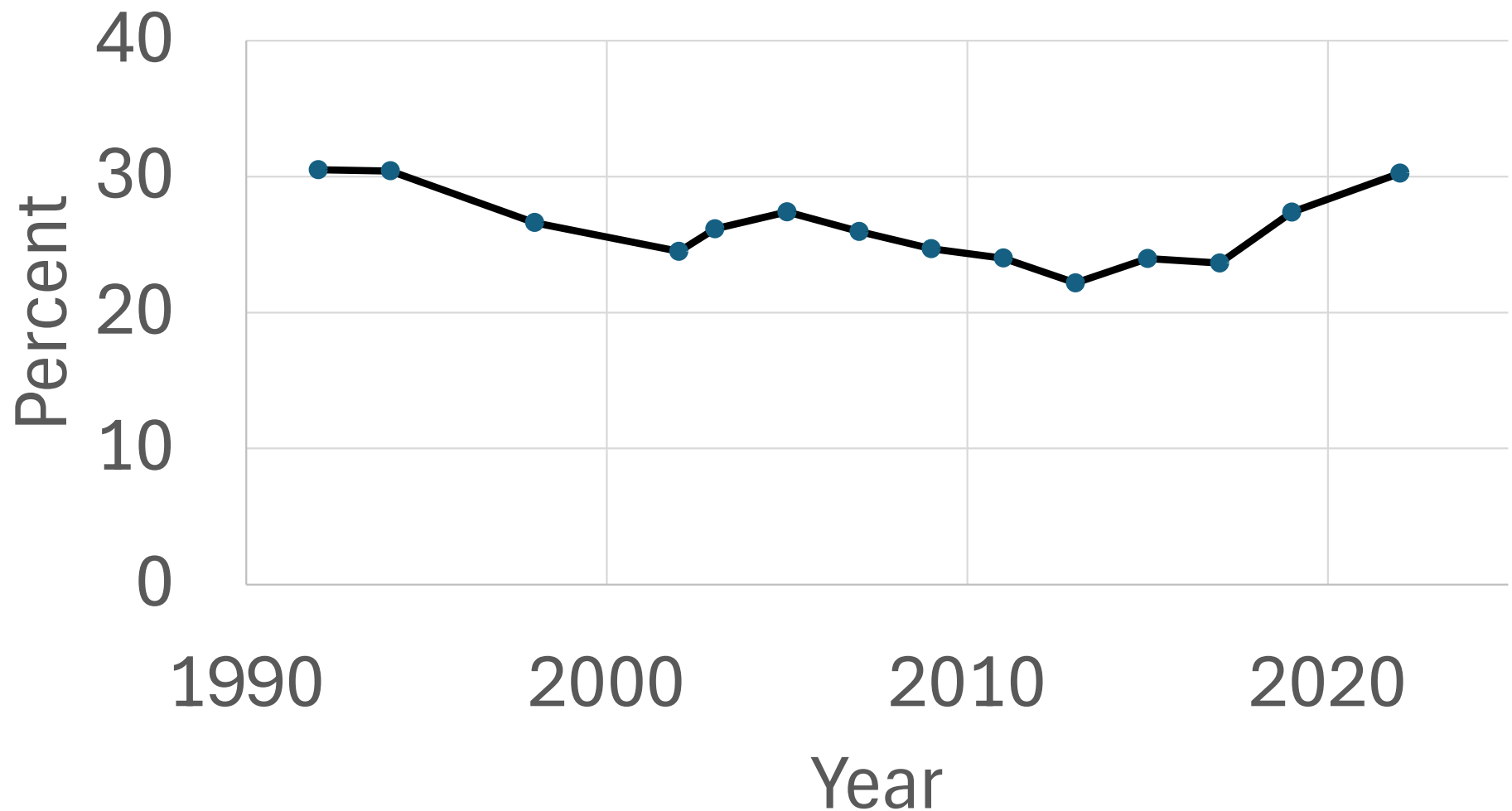


U.S. general education in international perspective

% of 8th graders who are “below basic” in **mathematics** according to National Assessment of Educational Progress, U.S., 1996-2022

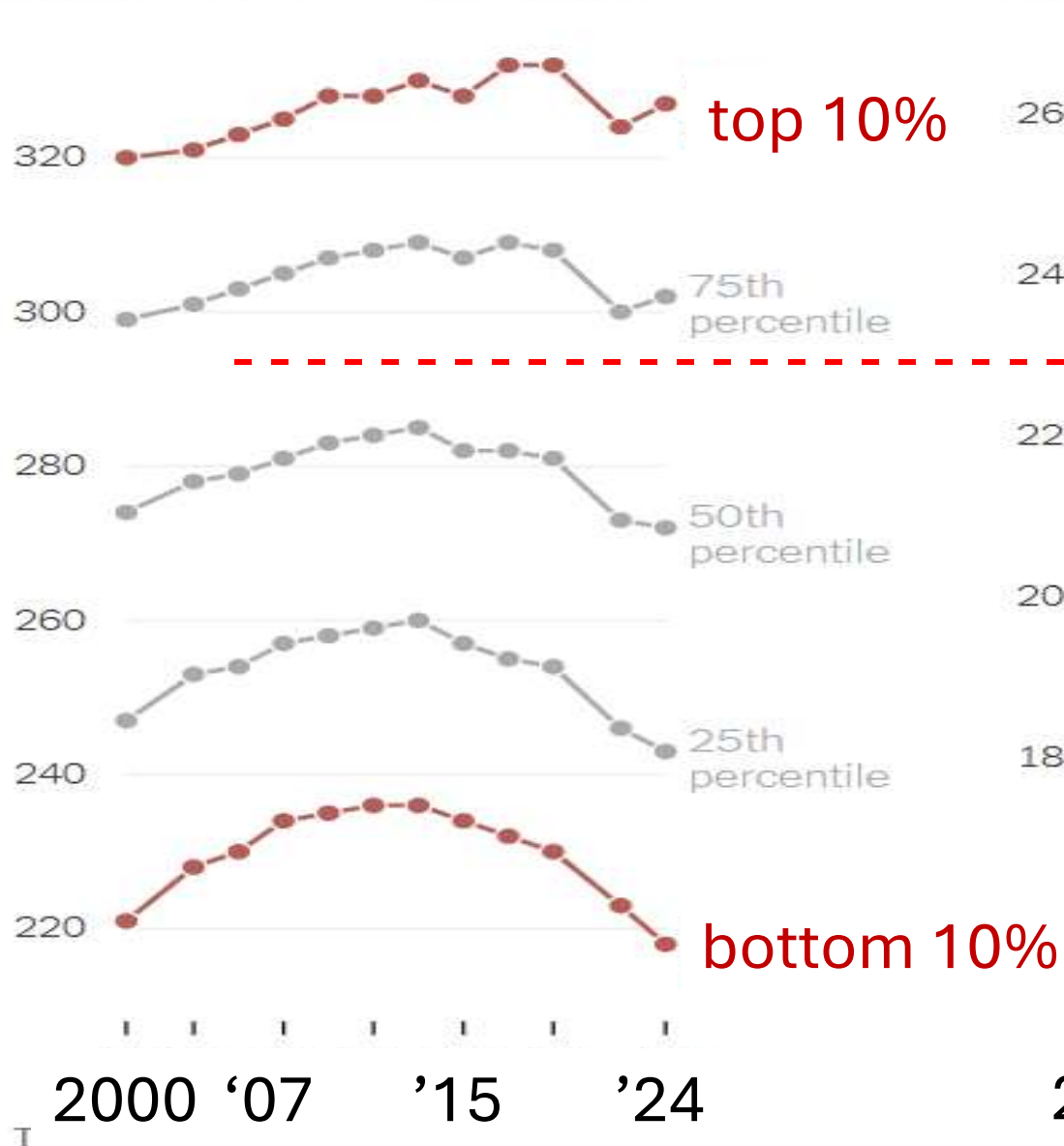


% of 8th graders who are “below basic” in reading according to National Assessment of Educational Progress, U.S., 1992-2022

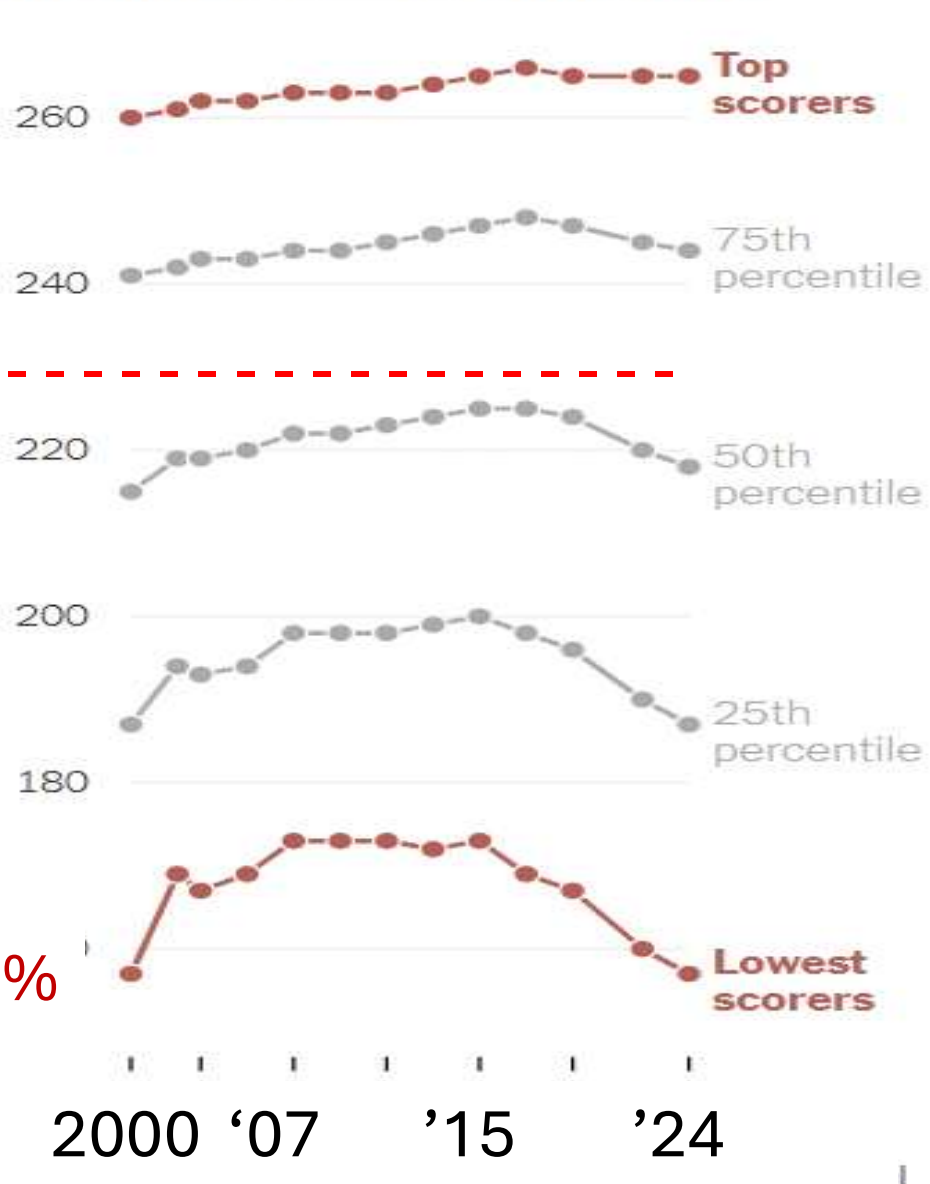


Math & reading scores of **bottom half** of U.S. students fell since 2011 in NAEP.

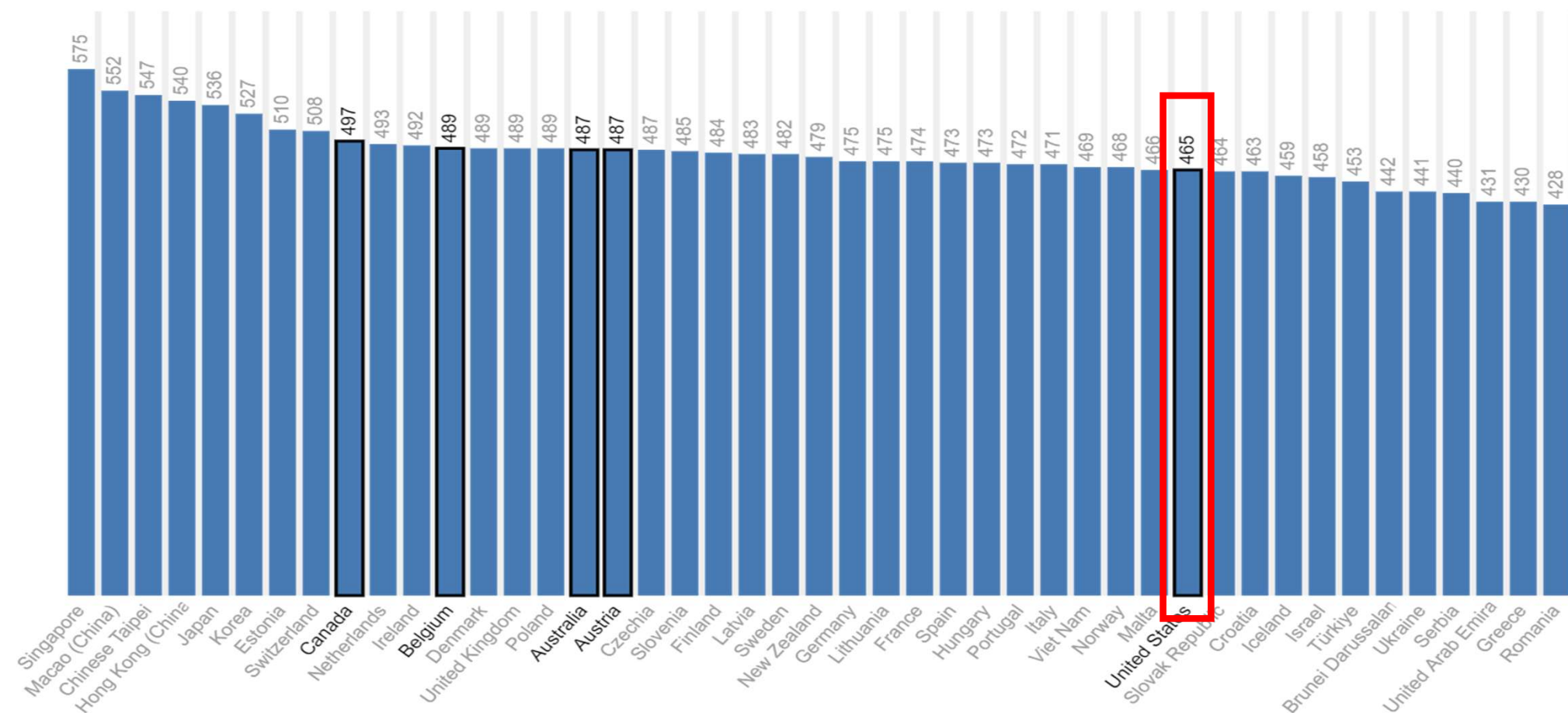
Math scores for 8th graders



Reading scores for 4th graders

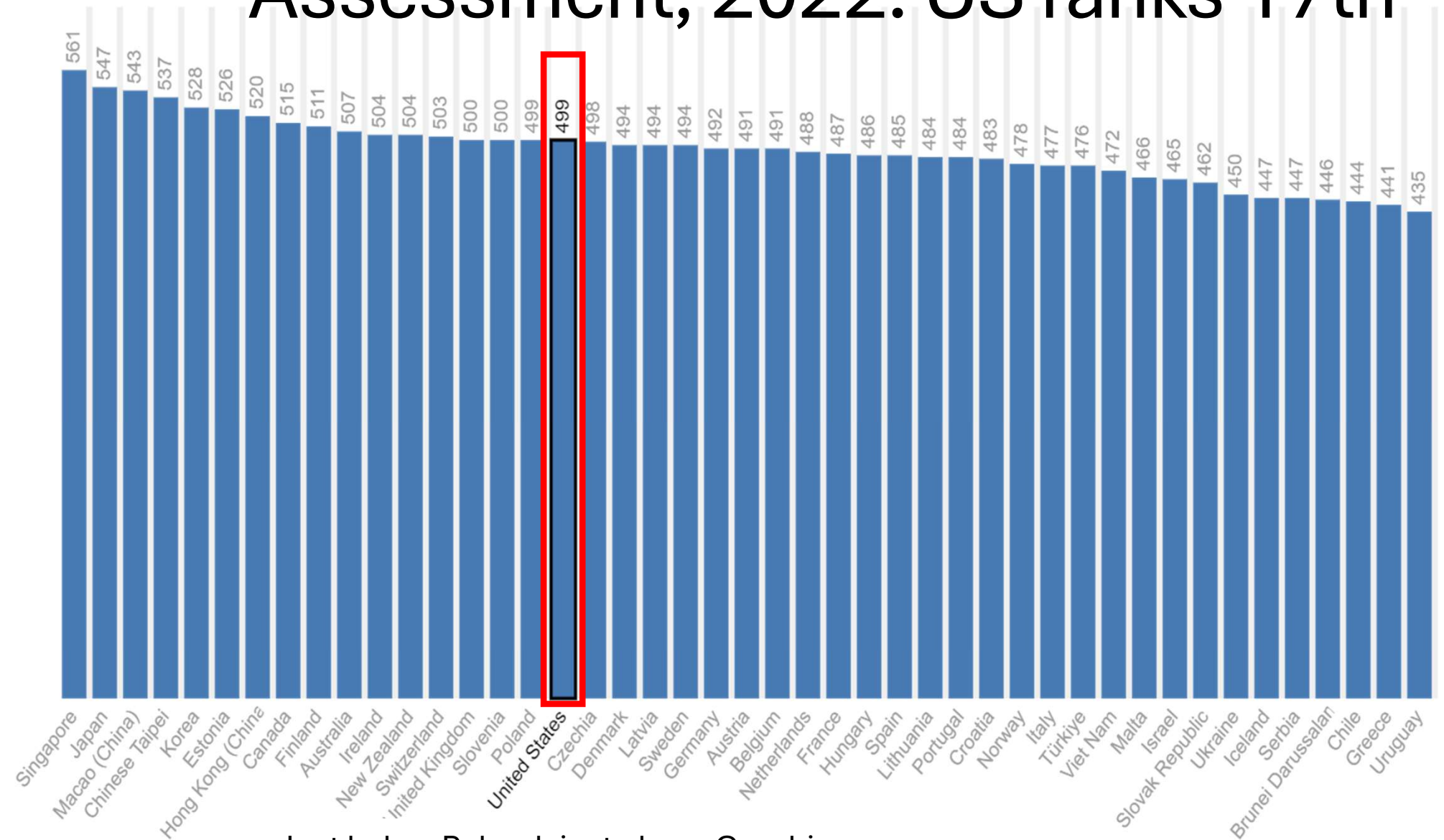


Mathematics average score of 15-year-olds in Program for International Student Assessment, 2022: US ranks 34th



Just below Malta, just above Slovak Republic

Science average score of 15-year-olds in Program for International Student Assessment, 2022: US ranks 17th



Just below Poland, just above Czechia

**“If you think education is expensive,
try ignorance.” – Derek Bok**

U.S. health & survival in international perspective

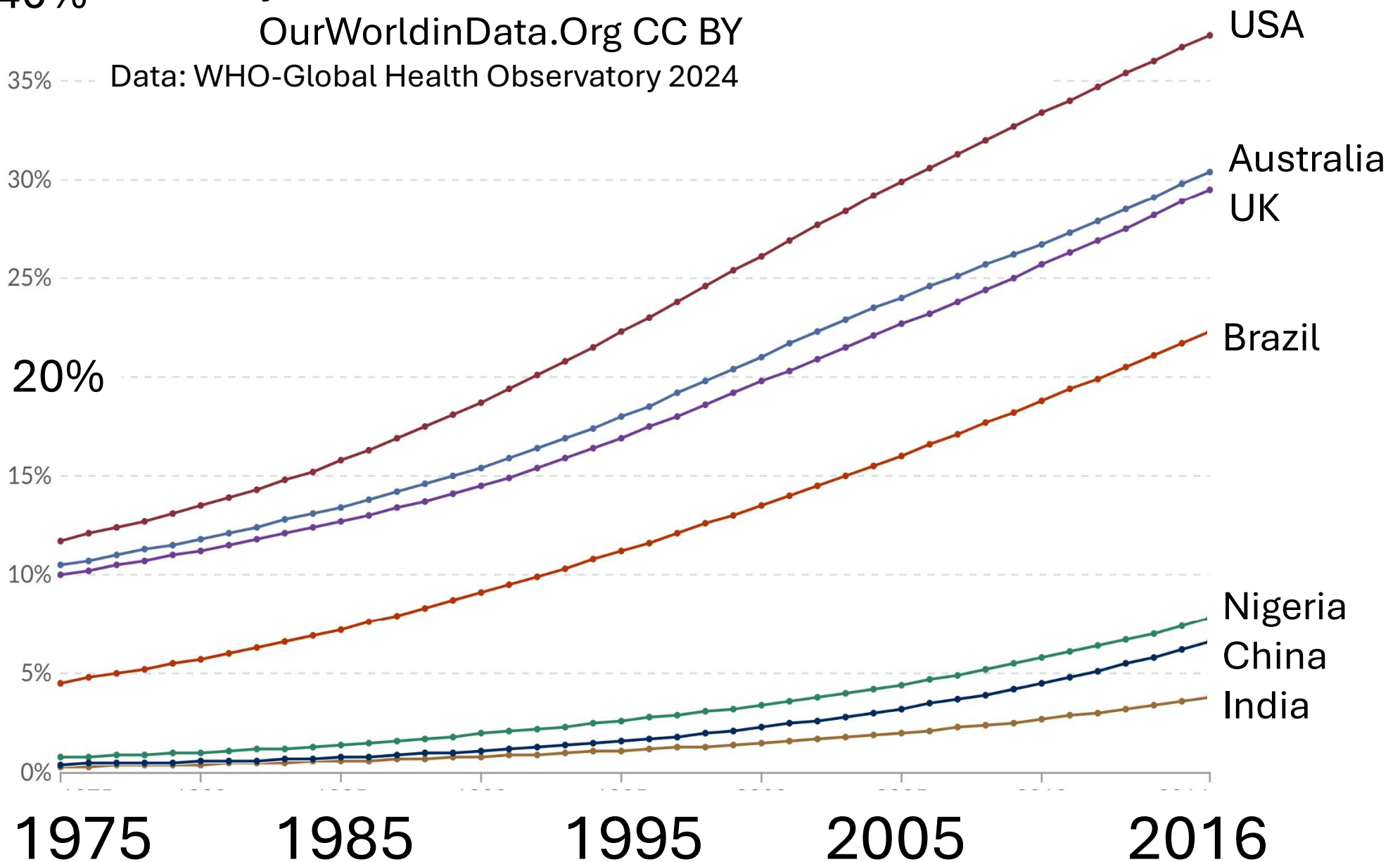
Adult obesity rose 12%→37%, U.S., 1975-2016.

risk fact “Obesity is one of the leading risk factors

40% for early death.”

OurWorldinData.Org CC BY

35% Data: WHO-Global Health Observatory 2024



Among 45 countries with highest life expectancy at birth for total population, U.S. fell from 20th in 1960 to 40th in 2015.

U.S. Census Bureau, “Living Longer: Historical and Projected Life Expectancy in the United States, 1960 to 2060: Population Estimates and Projections” 2020

1960			2015		
Rank		Life expectancy	Rank		Life expectancy
1	Iceland.....	73.5	1	Japan.....	83.3
2	Sweden.....	73.5	2	Switzerland.....	82.7
3	Norway.....	73.5	3	Spain.....	82.5
4	Netherlands.....	73.5	4	Singapore.....	82.3
5	Denmark.....	72.4	5	Italy.....	82.3
6	Switzerland.....	71.6	6	Australia.....	82.3
7	Canada.....	71.3	7	Iceland.....	82.2
8	New Zealand.....	71.2	8	Israel.....	81.9
9	United Kingdom.....	71.0	9	Sweden.....	81.9
10	Israel.....	71.0	10	France.....	81.9
11	Channel Islands.....	70.9	11	Canada.....	81.8
12	Australia.....	70.9	12	Norway.....	81.6
13	France.....	70.7	13	New Zealand.....	81.3
14	Slovakia.....	70.6	14	Netherlands.....	81.3
15	Cyprus.....	70.4	15	Republic of Korea..	81.3
16	Czechia.....	70.4	16	Martinique.....	81.2
17	Belgium.....	70.3	17	Luxembourg.....	81.1
18	Bulgaria.....	70.3	18	Austria.....	81.0
19	Ireland.....	70.1	19	United Kingdom...	81.0
20	United States.....	70.1	20	Ireland.....	80.9
21	Latvia.....	70.1	21	Finland.....	80.7
22	Germany.....	70.0	22	Greece.....	80.6
23	Spain.....	69.9	23	Channel Islands....	80.6
24	Lithuania.....	69.9	24	Guadeloupe.....	80.5
25	Ukraine.....	69.7	25	Belgium.....	80.5
26	Italy.....	69.7	26	Portugal.....	80.5
27	Austria.....	69.7	27	Germany.....	80.4
28	Estonia.....	69.4	28	Slovenia.....	80.3
29	Malta.....	69.3	29	Malta.....	80.3
30	Greece.....	69.2	30	Denmark.....	80.1
31	Japan.....	69.2	31	Cyprus.....	79.9
32	Slovenia.....	69.2	32	Réunion.....	79.5
33	Luxembourg.....	69.1	33	Mayotte.....	79.3
34	Puerto Rico.....	69.1	34	Puerto Rico.....	79.2
35	Belarus.....	69.1	35	French Guiana....	79.2
36	Finland.....	69.1	36	Cuba.....	79.2
37	Hungary.....	68.8	37	Costa Rica.....	79.2
38	Uruguay.....	68.3	38	U.S. Virgin Islands..	79.1
39	Poland.....	68.3	39	Lebanon.....	78.9
40	Russian Federation..	67.9	40	United States.....	78.9
41	Romania.....	67.8	41	Guam.....	78.8
42	Armenia.....	67.0	42	Chile.....	78.8
43	U.S. Virgin Islands...	66.8	43	Czechia.....	78.2
44	Aruba.....	66.6	44	Curaçao.....	77.8
45	Curacao.....	66.5	45	Qatar.....	77.7

Age-standardized mortality fell more in 21 other rich nations than in U.S., 1933-2021.

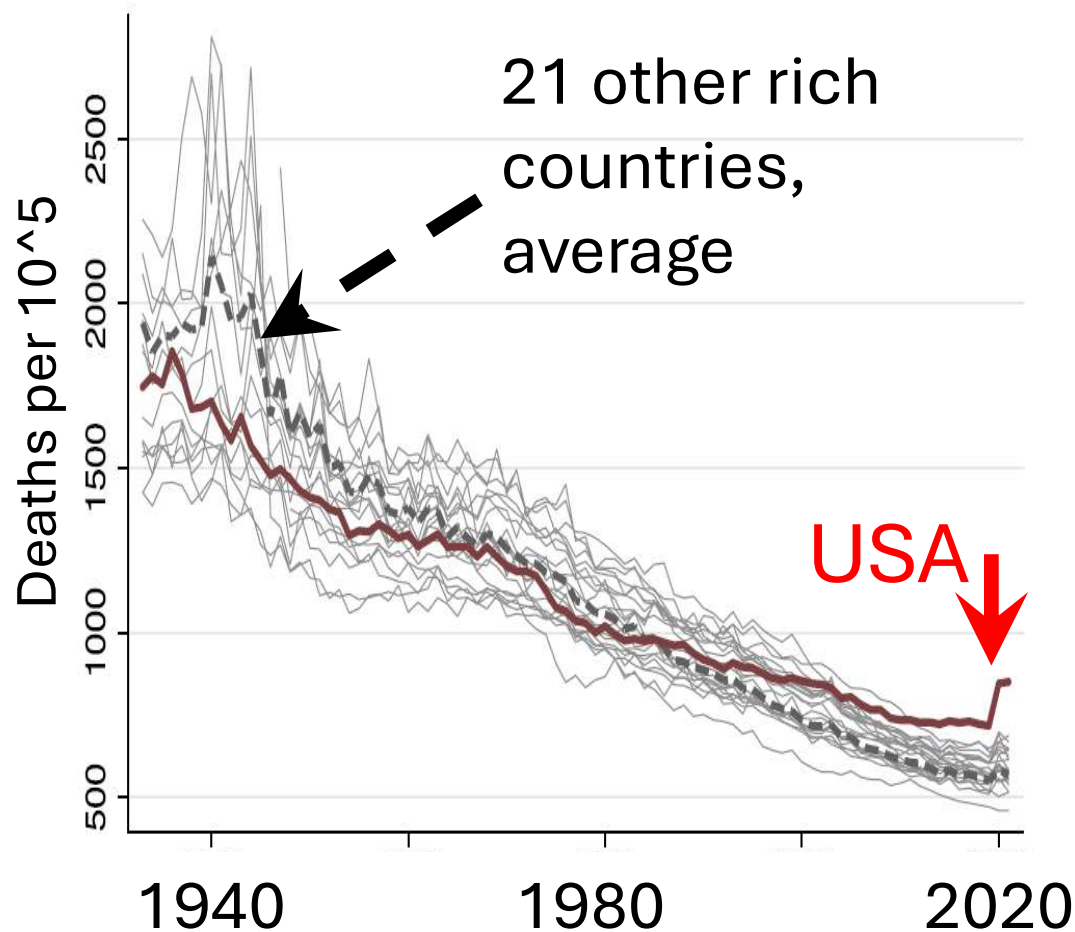
Dashed black line is population-weighted average of 21 other wealthy nations.

Thin grey lines are country-specific trends for each other nation.

Total mortality was age-standardized to the 2000 US population age distribution.

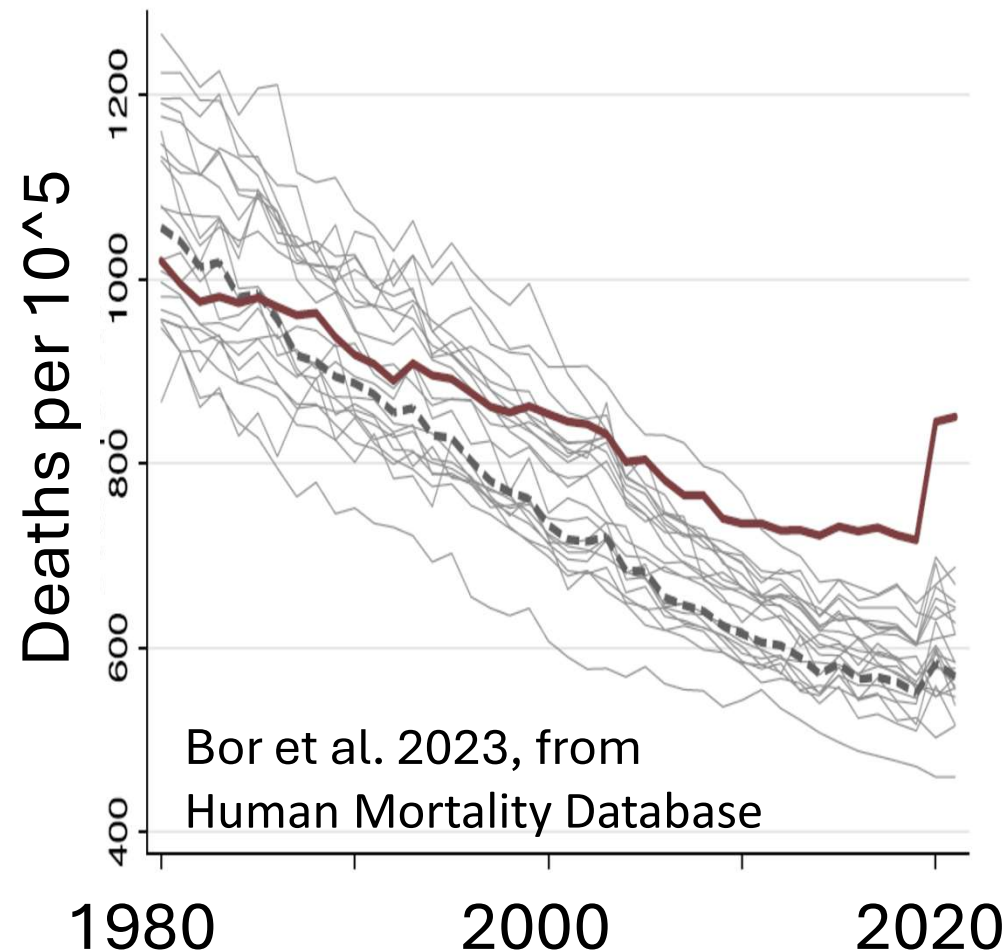
A

1933-2021



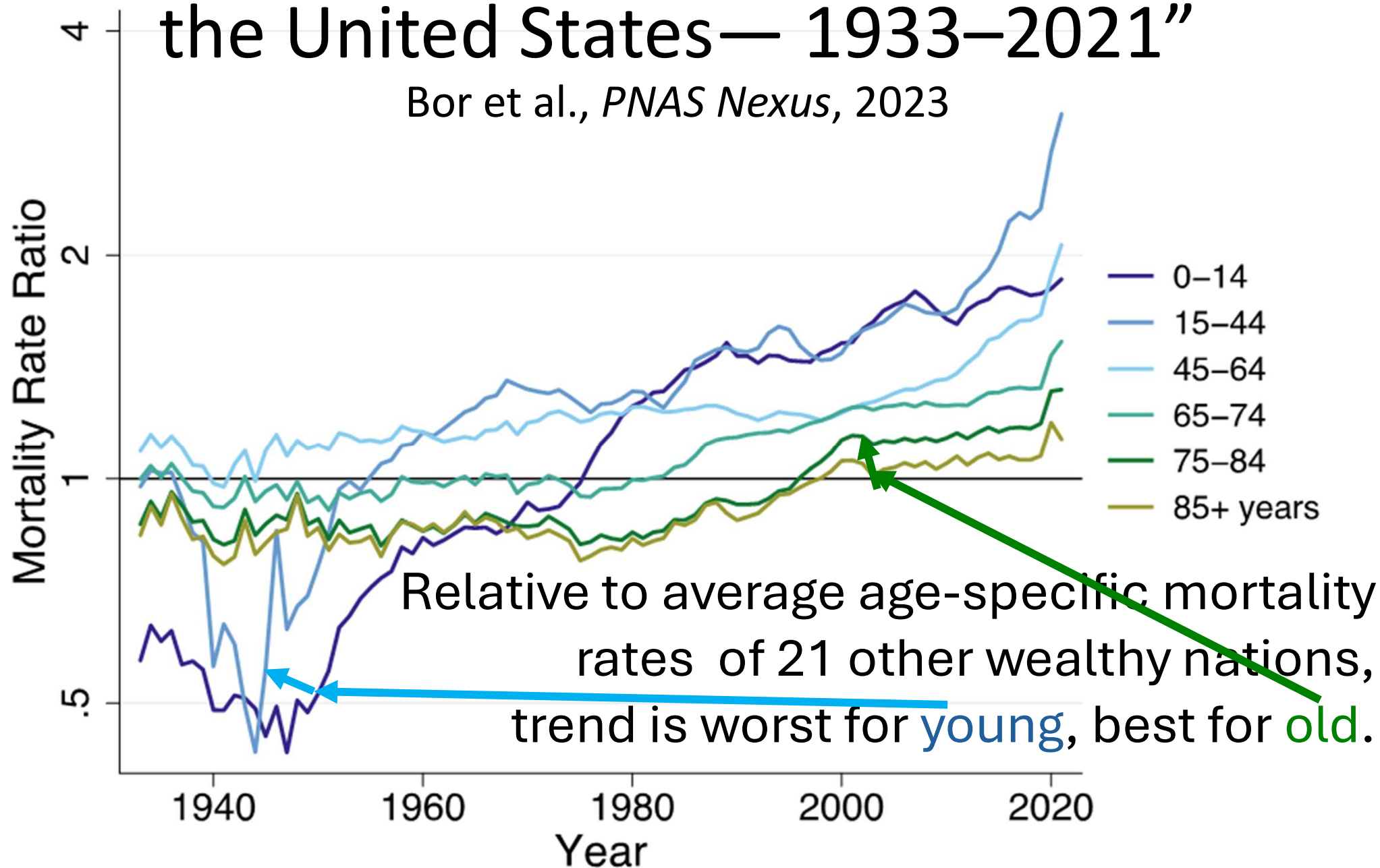
B

1980-2021



“Missing Americans: Early death in the United States— 1933–2021”

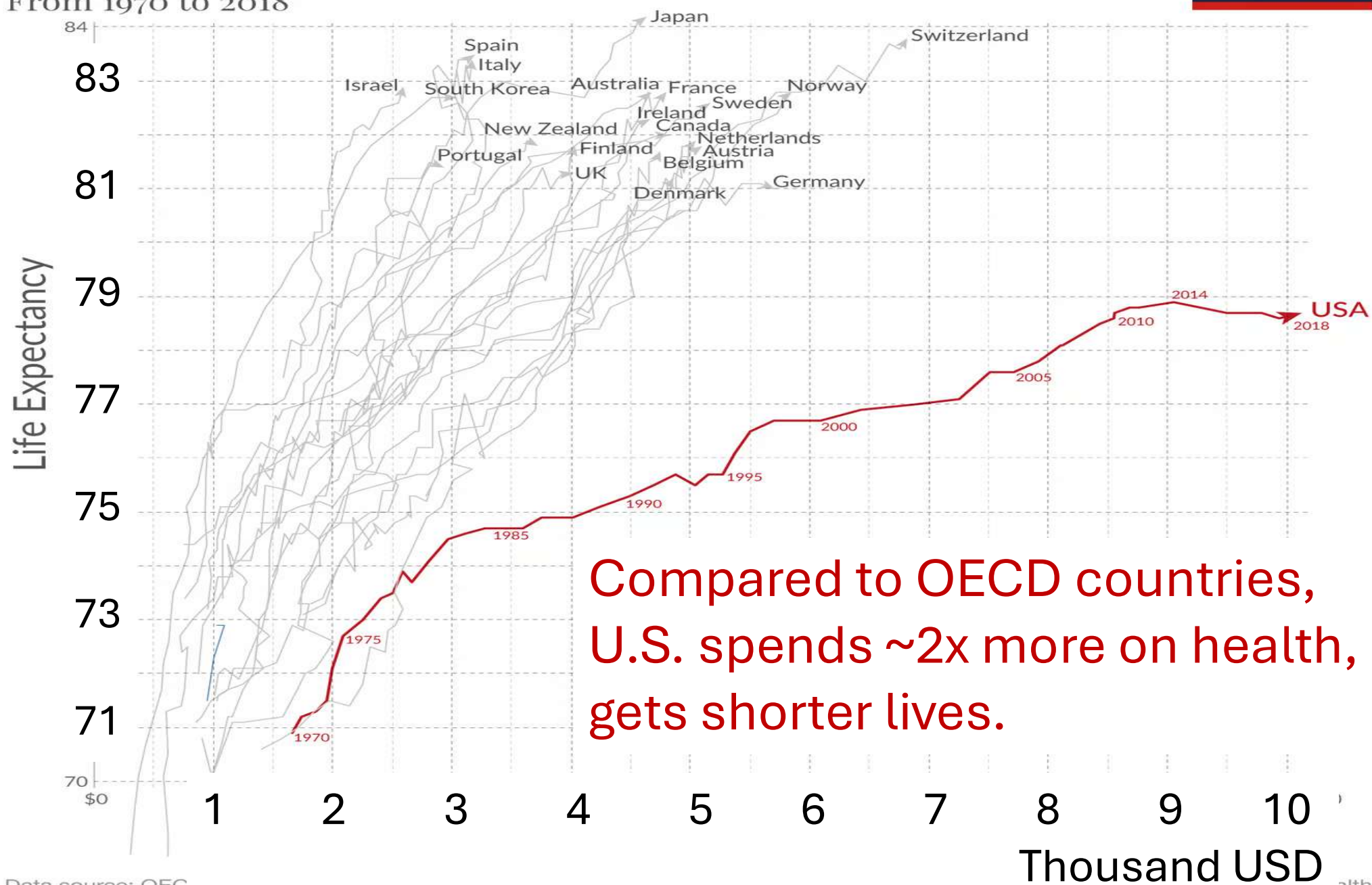
Bor et al., *PNAS Nexus*, 2023



Life expectancy vs. health expenditure

Our World
in Data

From 1970 to 2018



Data source: OEC

care (curative care, rehabilitative care, long-term care, ancillary services, and medical goods) and collective services (prevention and public health services as well as health administration), but excluding spending on investments.

Shown is total health expenditure (financed by public and private sources).

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[OurWorldinData.org](https://ourworldindata.org) – Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

Most of these trends have gone on for half a century or more:

Increased economic inequality;

Increased isolation, decreased
familial support;

General education falling behind our
peers;

Health & longevity falling behind our
peers.

Is this the country we want?