

The future of the family in Asia

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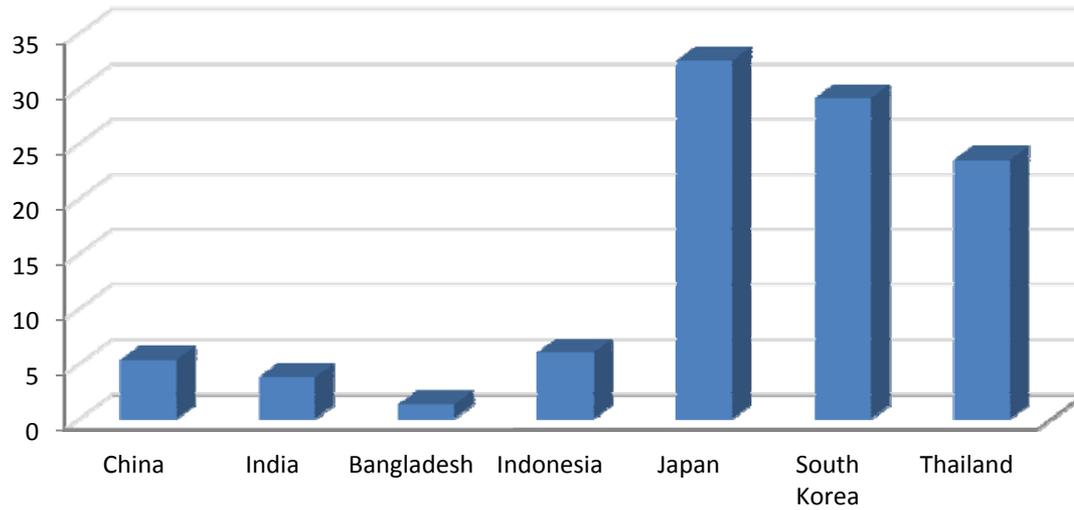
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Asian family systems

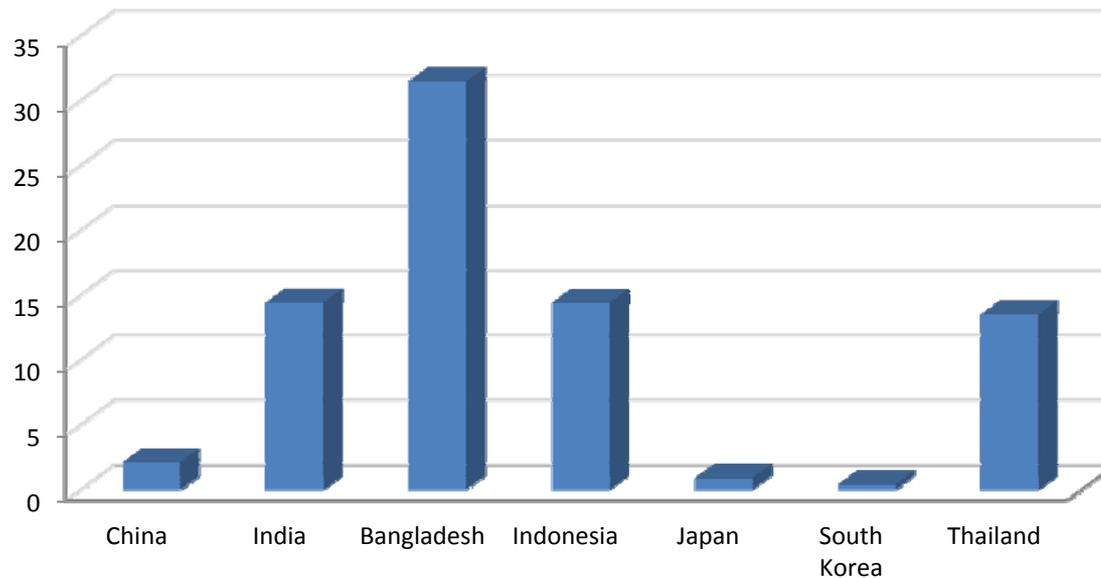
- East Asia – the Confucianist family
- South Asia – the Hindu and Muslim family
- Southeast Asia – bilateral kinship systems – a very different pattern

Enormous variation, not only between these broad systems, but between countries and regions within them

% Women Single at age 30-34, 2010



% of Women Ever-Married at age 15-19



How is the family changing in the face of massive economic, social and ideational change?

- The key economic and social changes:
 - Higher incomes
 - Female educational advancement
 - Changing labour market opportunities for women
- Key aspects of family change:
 - Age at marriage
 - Who chooses spouse?
 - Ability and motivation to terminate marriage
 - Decision-making within the family
 - Role of the elderly in the family
 - Role of the unmarried in the family

Key area of stress for the family throughout Asia

- Changing opportunities for women in the face of resistance to change in ideologies about women's roles

Elements of family change and continuity that we've been observing in Asia

EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

- Smaller family size
- Shift to self-choice in marriage
- Some of the highest rates of singlehood in the world, but also some low rates
- Non-marriage especially concentrated amongst highly educated women
- Some increase in cohabitation
- Rising divorce rates
- The “marriage package”
- Limited involvement of the husband in housework and child-rearing

SOUTH ASIA

- Only slow movement toward the conjugal family
- Arranged marriage persists
- Urban middle class youth the vanguard of gradual change

How will the family evolve over coming decades?

EAST ASIA

- Fertility will remain very low, and marriage prevalence will decline further
- Cohabitation will increase
- Japan and Korea will necessarily develop into multicultural societies

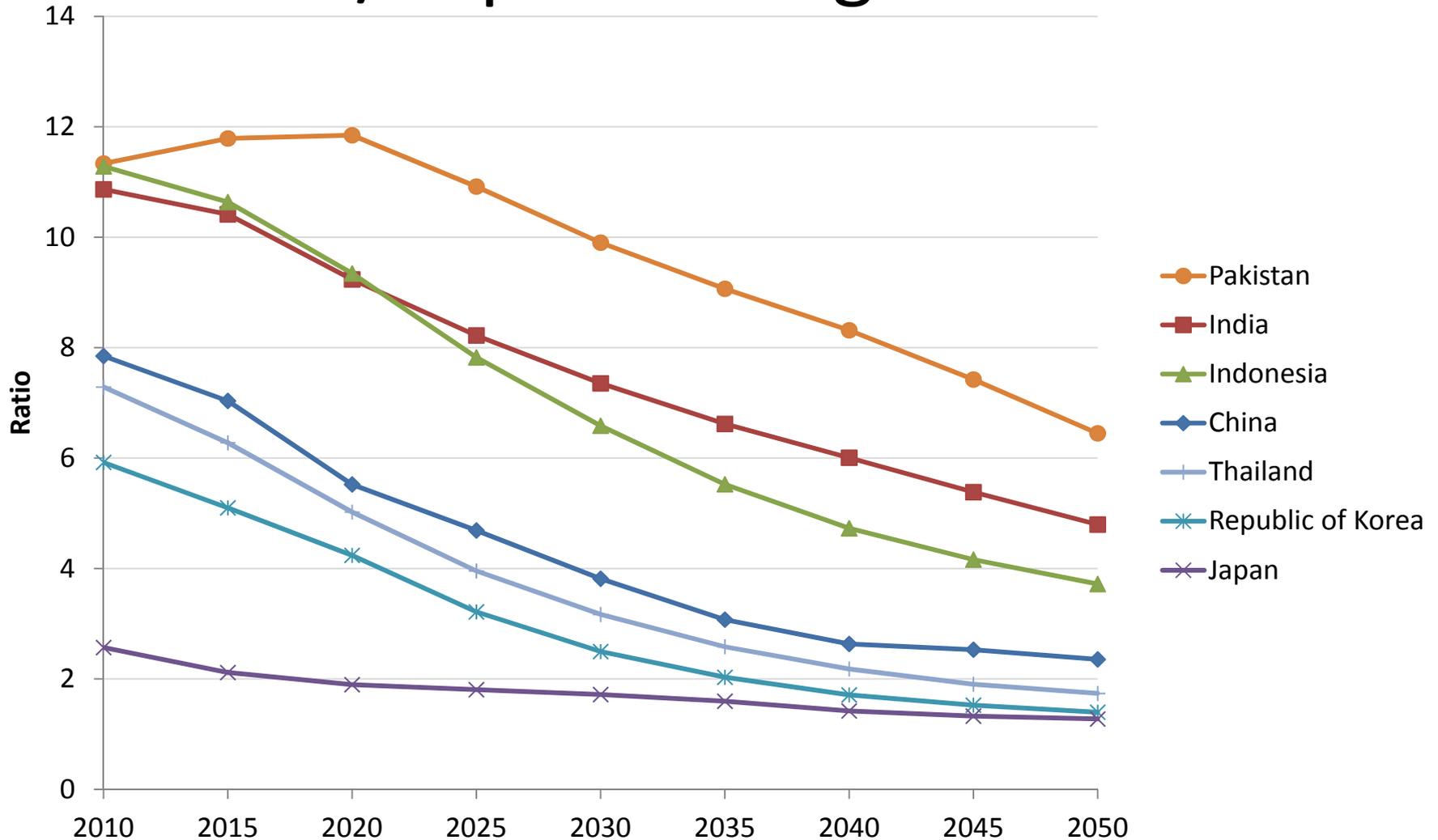
SOUTH ASIA

- Only slow change in family system
- But some more radical changes possible

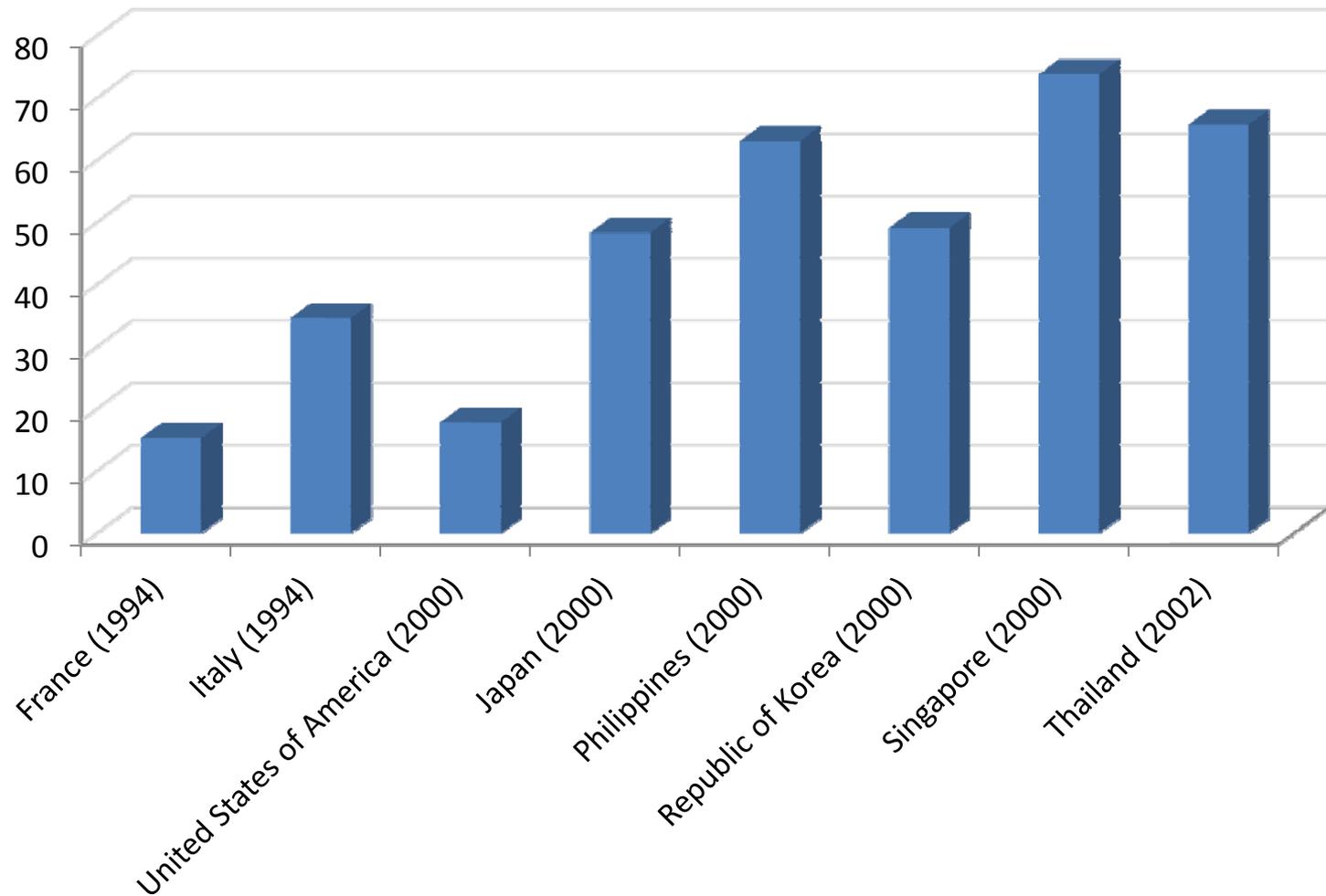
Place of elderly in the family

- The demographic trends are clear
- Their implications for the role of the elderly in the family are less clear
- Comforting image of respect for the elderly and strong family support not totally borne out by the evidence
- Many challenges when share of elderly doubles in China, Thailand, etc.
- Particular challenges when today's working age singles reach old age

Trend in Ratio of Population aged 20-64/Population aged 65+



Percentage population aged 60 years or older living with child or grandchild



Future of those outside traditional family system

- The never married
- The LGBT population
- Current discourse – letting the society down by not contributing to the fertility rate.
- Asia of the 2030s – more inclusive society?

Thank you!