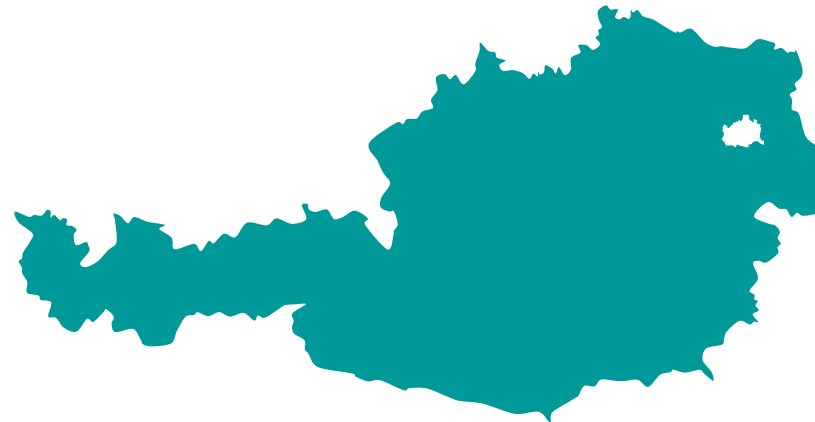


Birth Barometer

Monitoring Fertility in Austria

Fertility Timing



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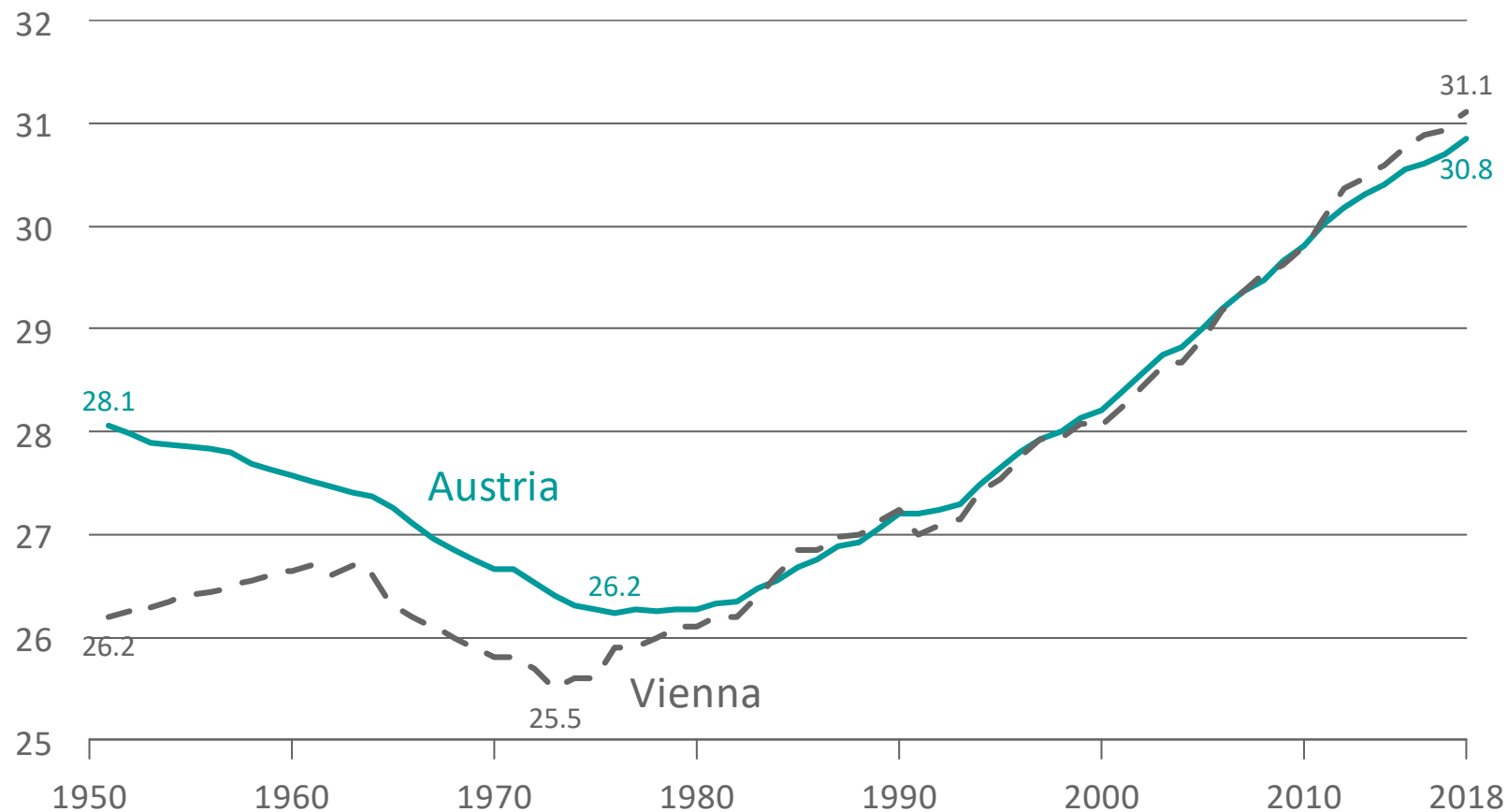
Maria Winkler-Dworak

Analysis based on data from
Statistics Austria covering the
period until 2018

3 September 2019

Mean age of mother

Mean age of mother at childbirth in 1951–2018

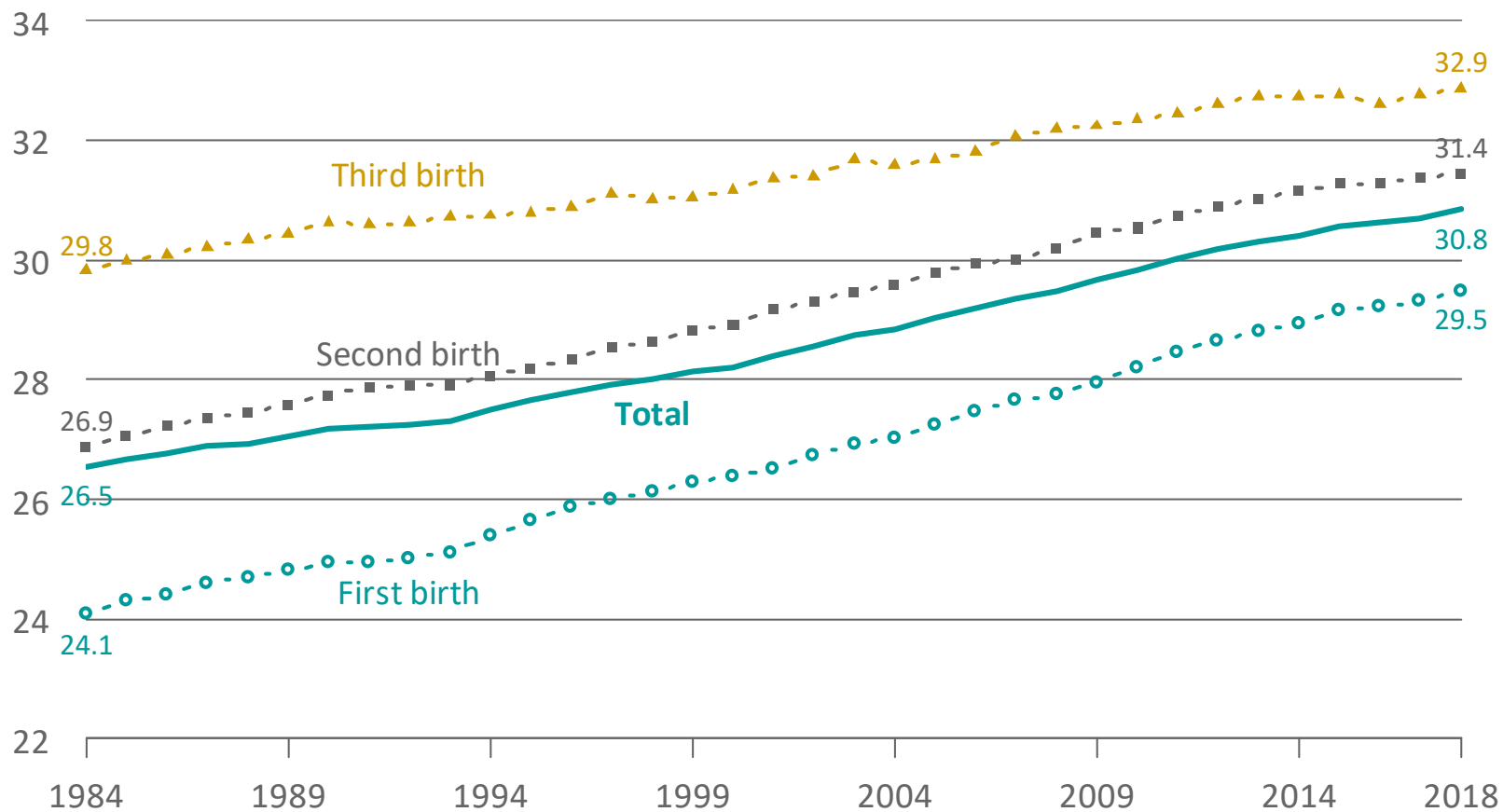


The mean age of mother at childbirth (MAB) is computed from fertility rates by single years of age and therefore it is not affected by changing age structure of women in reproductive age

- The mean age at birth among mothers in Austria and Vienna has increased continually during the last four decades, reaching around 31 in 2018, up from a minimum of 26 in 1976
- The decline in MAB in the 1950s and 1960s had been related to higher and earlier fertility during the “golden age of the family”
- MAB had been lower in Vienna until the early 1980s because a lower share of Viennese women had third or fourth births, which usually take place at higher ages

Mean age of mother at birth

By birth order, 1984–2018

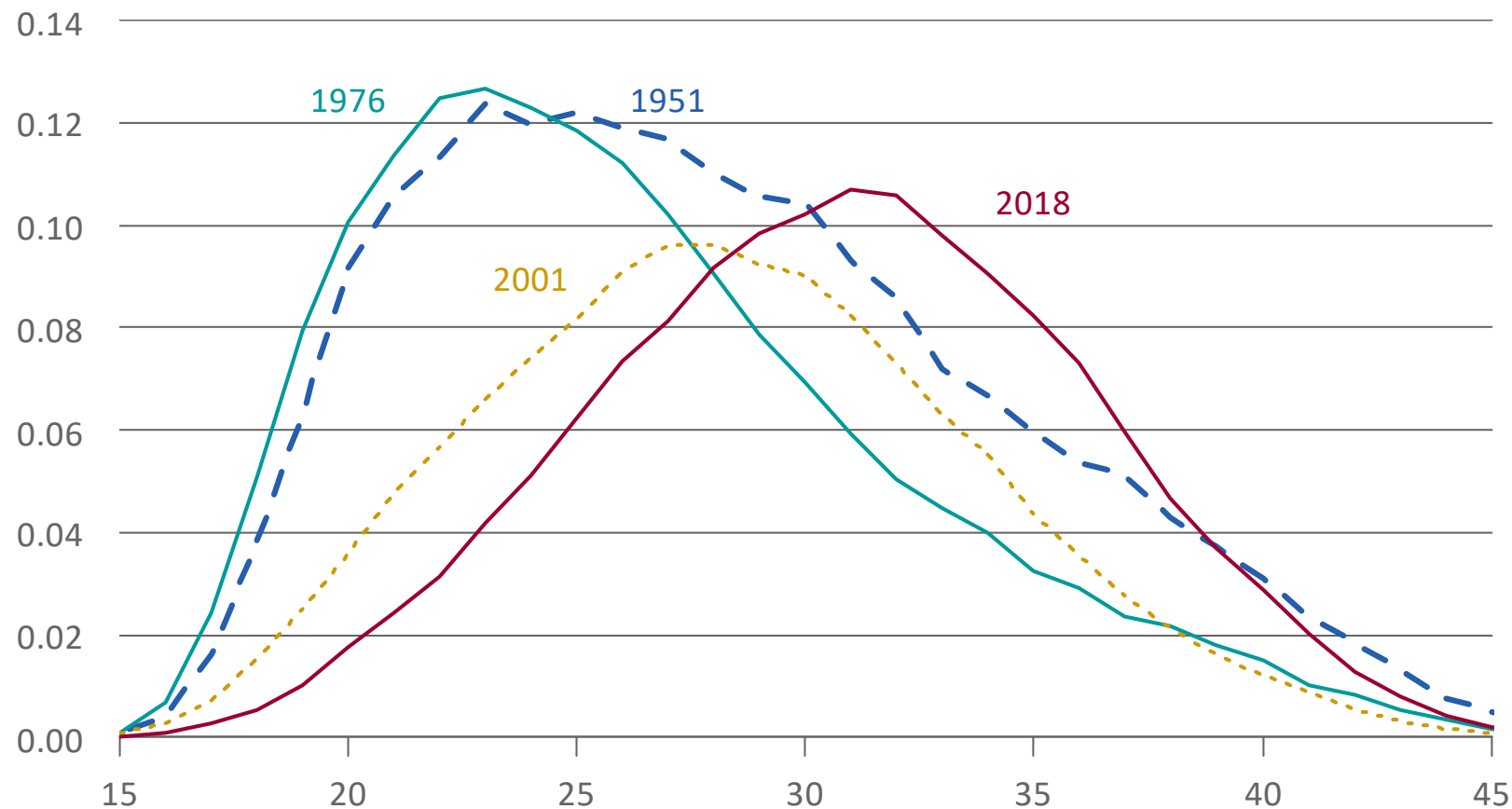


The mean age of mother at first birth is the key indicator of fertility timing

- The main driver of the rising age at birth has been the continuing shift of first births to ever later ages
- The mean age at first birth has been increasing continually since the early 1970s (not shown here). Between 1984 and 2018, first-time mothers have “aged” by five years, from 24 to over 29 years on average
- In 2018, Austrian women gave birth to their first child at age 29.5 years on average, to a second child at age 31.4 years and to a third child at age 32.9

Fertility rates by age

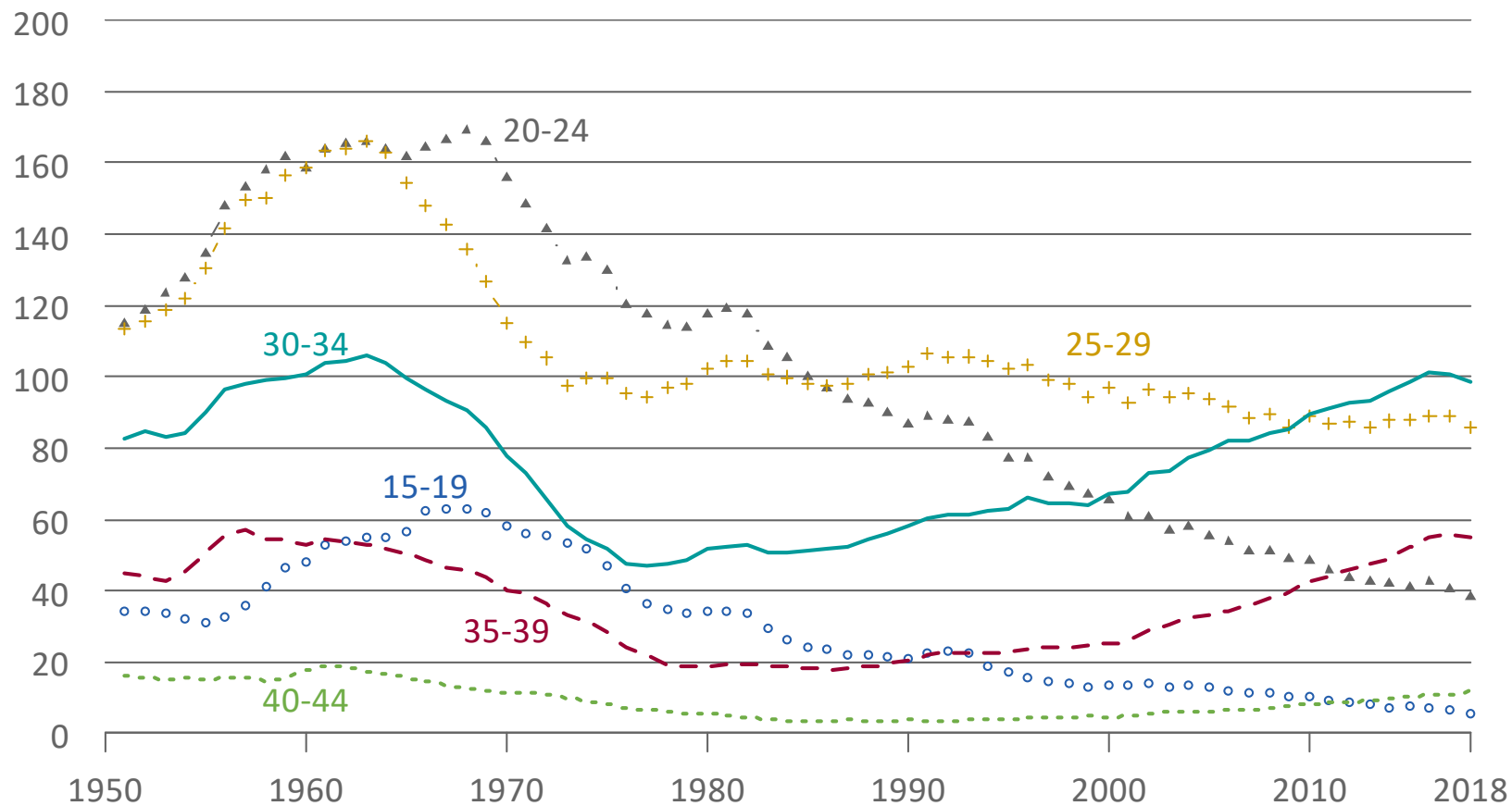
Austrian women, selected years in 1951–2018



- In 1951 many women had a child at a young age, often as teenagers. High fertility rates prevailed among women from their late teens to their early 30s
- In 1976, when fertility rates in Austria were falling, fertility became more concentrated at younger ages, peaking among women in their early 20s
- By 2001, when Austrian fertility reached its lowest level, childbearing dropped sharply among young women and was shifted to higher ages
- By 2018, the fertility schedule was further postponed to later ages, with fertility rates increasing fast among women aged 30 and over

Fertility rates by age

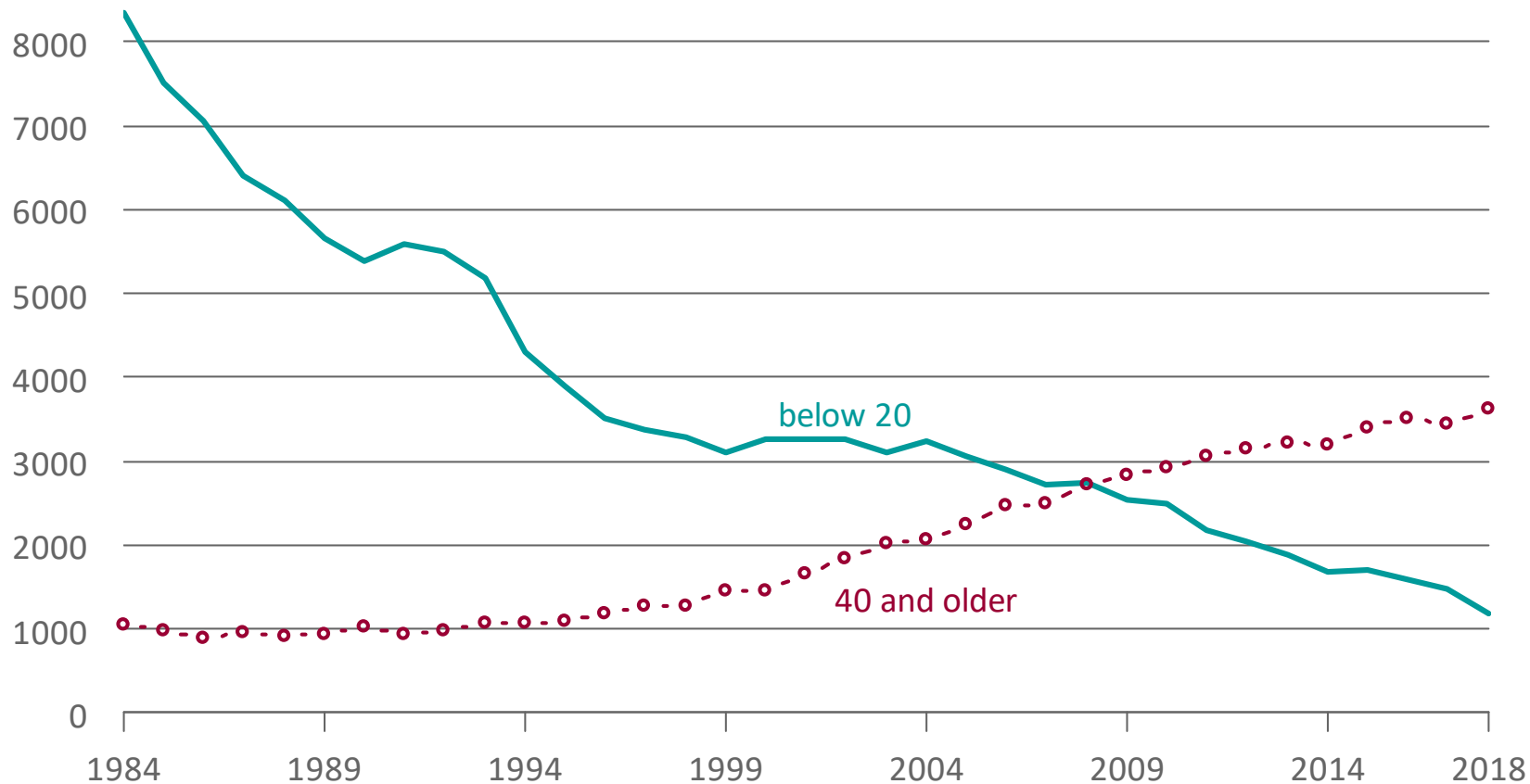
5-year age groups, per thousand women, 1951–2018



- Since the 1980s, fertility trends are driven by the ongoing process of fertility “postponement” at younger ages and the recovery of fertility at higher childbearing ages
- Fertility rates have been plummeting among women below age 25 during the last half a century
- By contrast, fertility rates among women aged 30 and older have been rising since the mid-1980s
- Since the 2000s fertility has been rising fast also among women in late reproductive ages (aged 40+)
- The contrasting trends among women of younger (<25) and older (>30) reproductive ages resulted in cross-overs in fertility rates between these groups

Early and late childbearing

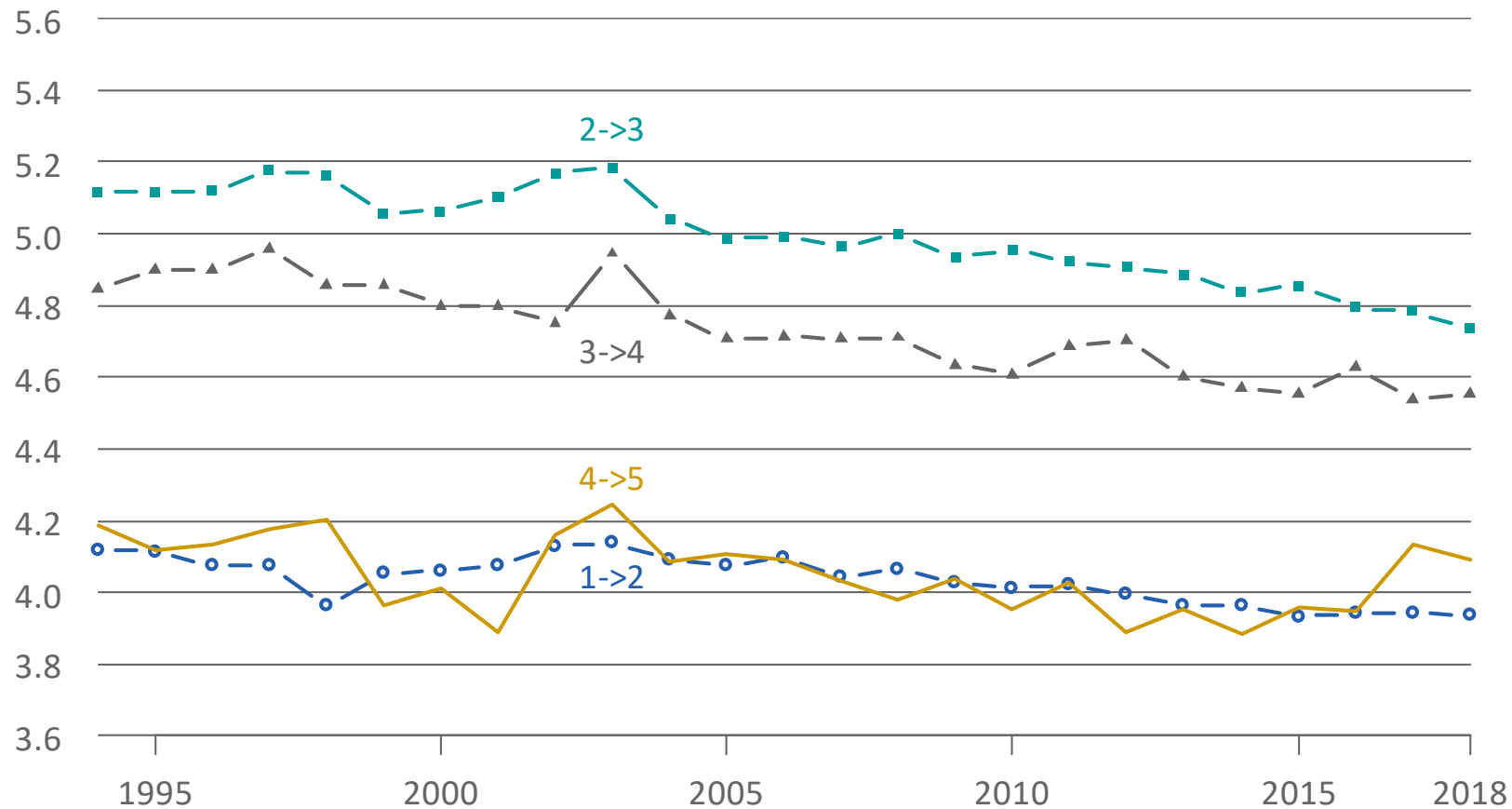
Births to teenage women and to women aged 40+, 1984–2018



- Births to women below age 20 fell during the last 50 years, with a brief interruption around the year 2000. The number plunged from over 8 thousand children born in 1984 to 4 thousand in 1994 and to 1,180 in 2018
- In 1984 one out of ten children were born to teenage mothers. In 2018 only one in seventy children were born to teenage mothers
- By contrast, the number of births to women at older reproductive ages has increased since the mid-1990s, surpassing the number of births among teenage women since 2009
- This trend is fuelled by the long-lasting shift of parenthood to later ages and is in part enabled by the spread of assisted reproduction

Mean birth intervals

Mean interval (in years) between the birth of first, second, and later children, 1994–2018



- Whereas first births have been continually delayed to higher ages, the time between first, second, third and subsequent birth (birth intervals) remained relatively stable
- Second children are born on average four years after the first ones
- Third kids are born more „slowly“ than second ones: women have a third child about five years after the second one on average
- Since the early 2000s, women were having their next birth at a slightly faster pace. Between 2002 and 2018, the mean interval between first and second birth got shortened by two months and the interval between second and third birth by five months

Birth Barometer: Monitoring Fertility in Austria

Data Source: STATISTICS AUSTRIA. Vital Statistics

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