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How Families are Portrayed on Television

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How Families Are Portrayed On Television

Sociology 3053: Research Methods

Abstract

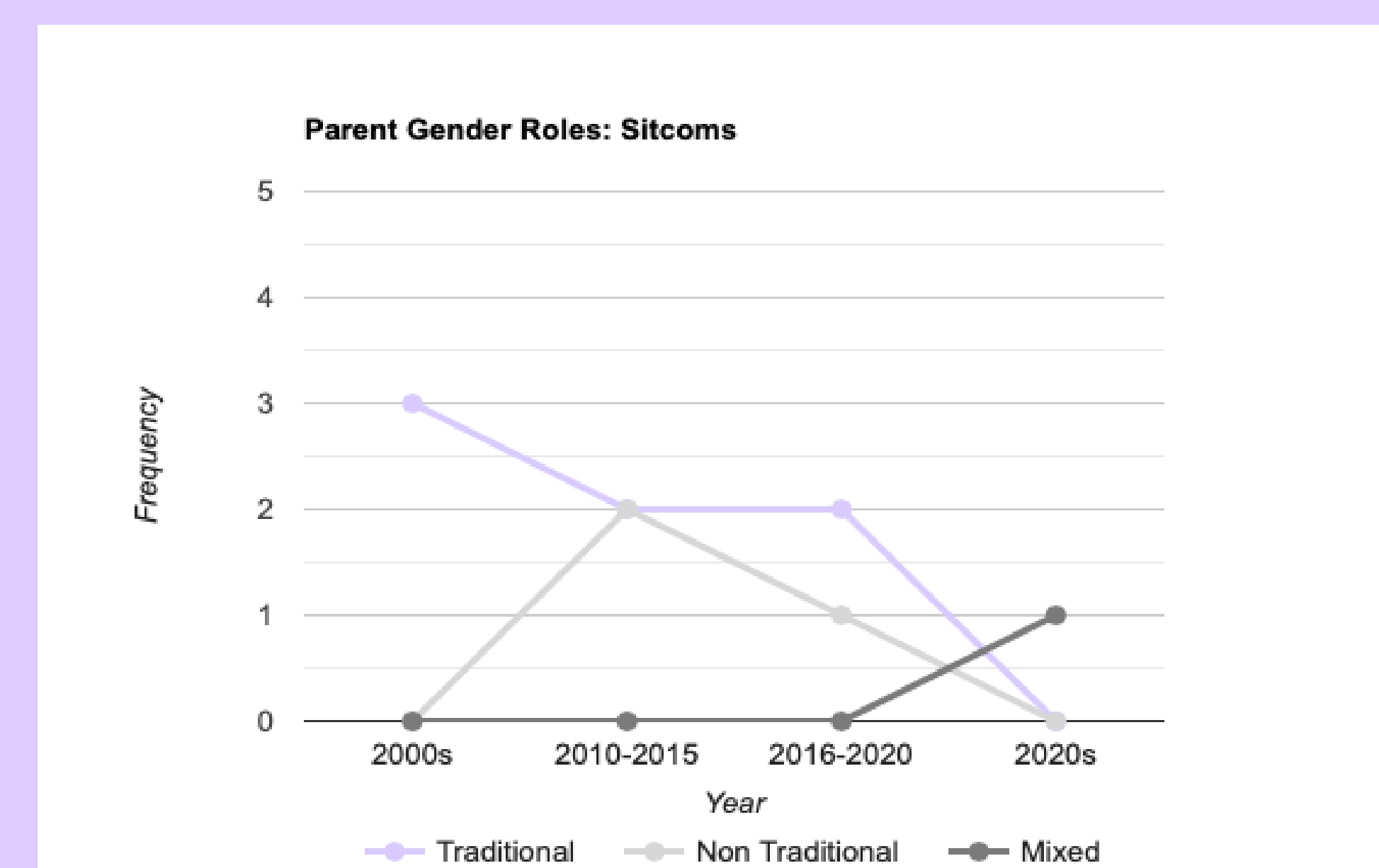
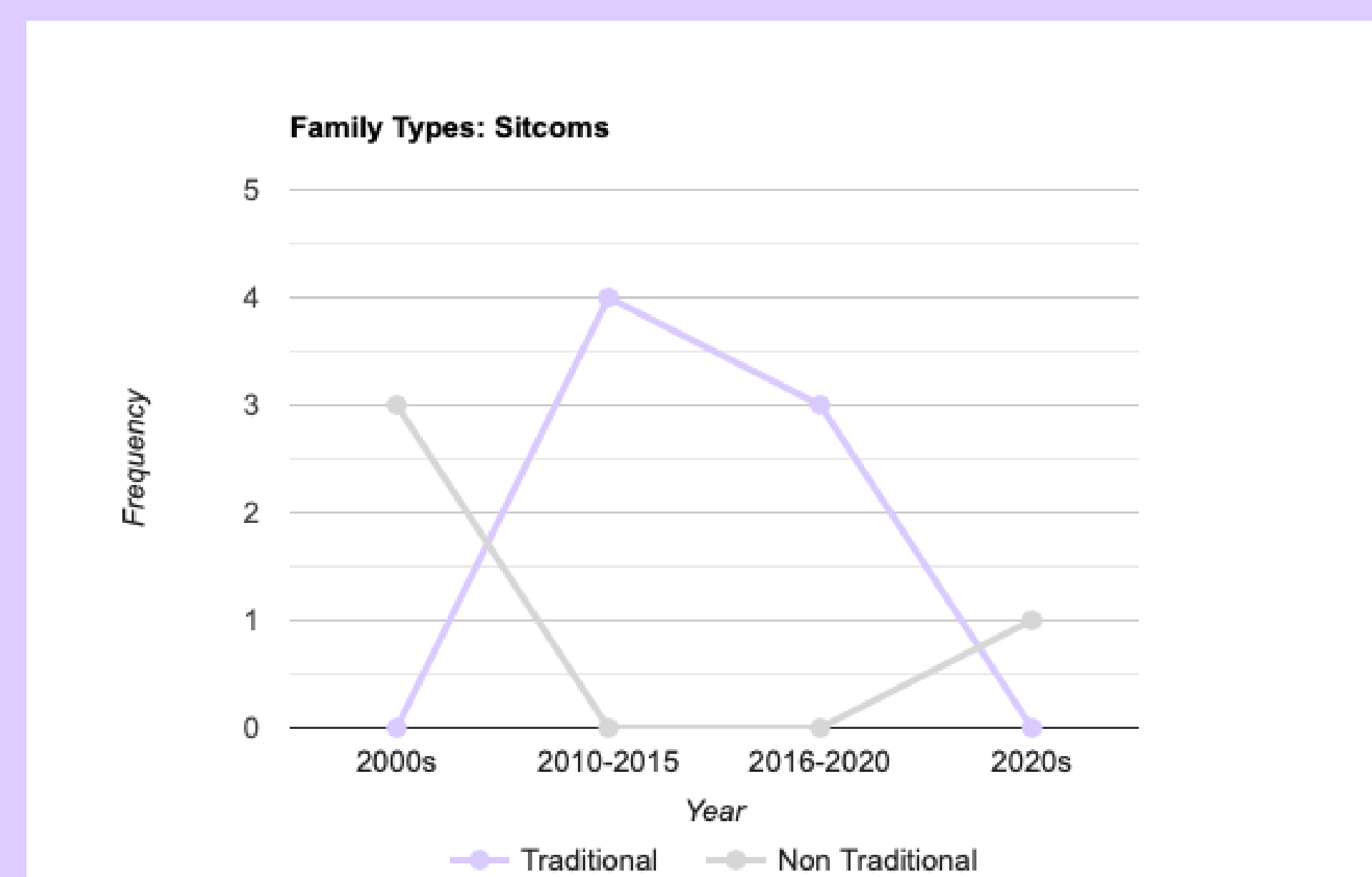
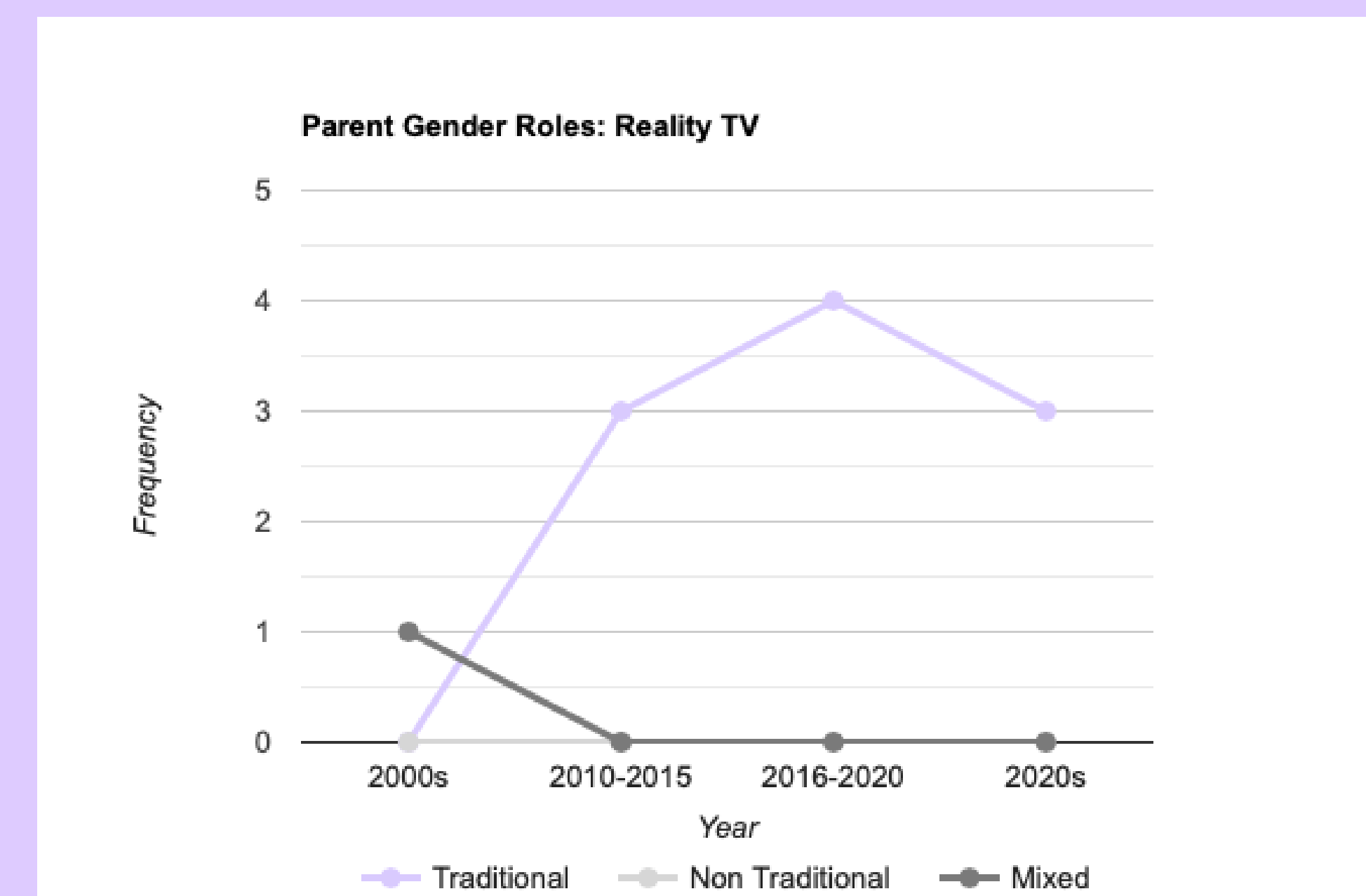
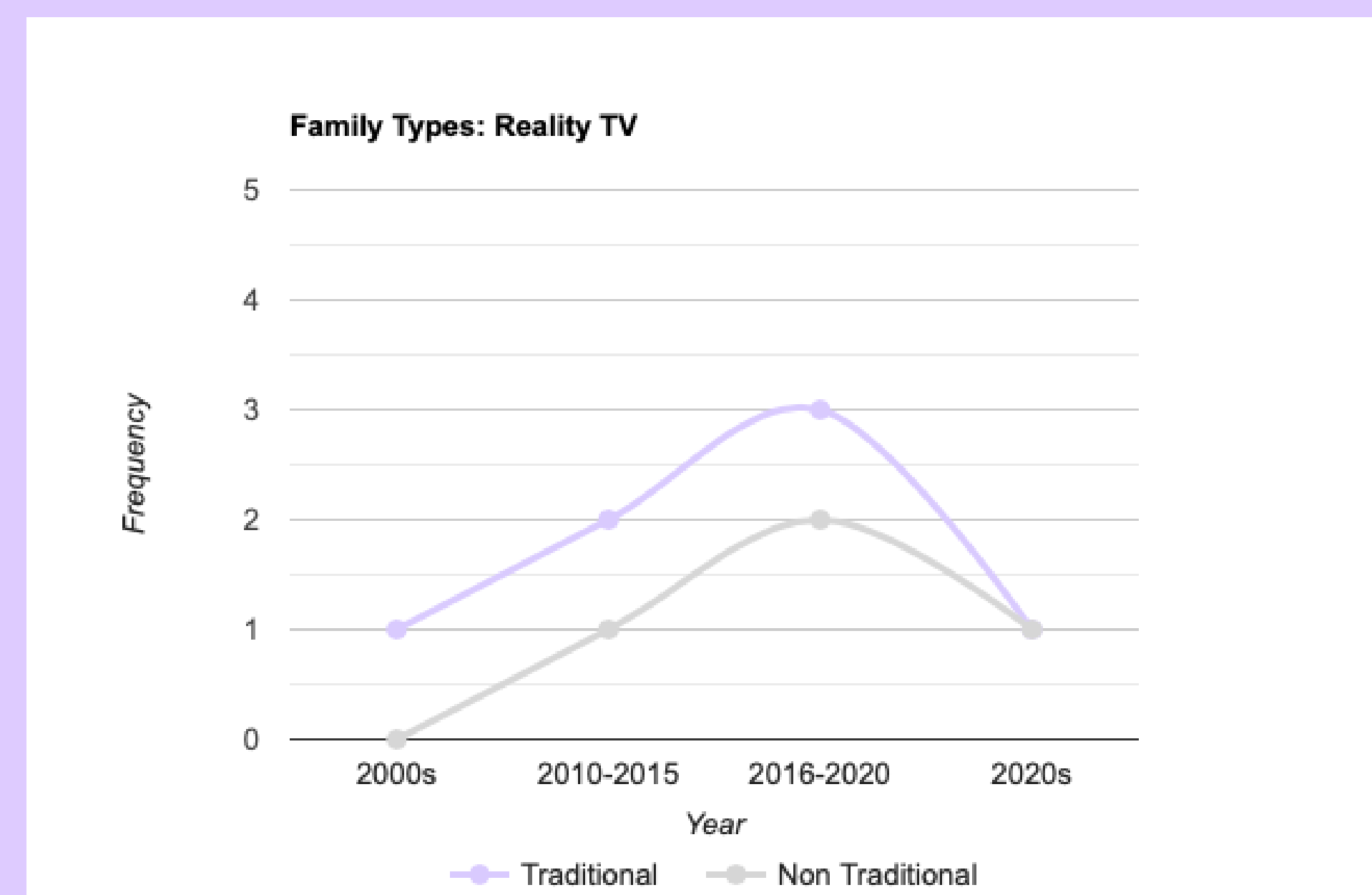
Television has served as a force of socialization for multiple generations of Americans. Many believe that media portrayal is playing a role in the shift of the idea of family. Overall, it is believed that media has portrayed families from traditional households, with two parents and their children, with each parent subscribing to traditional gender roles. Has this remained true over time, and how do reality television families compare to fictional, sitcom television families?

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that as time has progressed, traditional families have continued to be portrayed on television, however, the gender roles of parents have evolved to become less traditional.

Methods

I viewed eleven reality tv shows and eleven sitcom television shows, broadcasted between 2005 and 2023, and I conducted a qualitative analysis on whether the families portrayed represented traditional households, and if the parents depicted subscribed to traditional gender roles of their respective sex.



Results

While the results from this selection show that reality and sitcom television equally portray traditional families, sitcom television portrays more parents who subscribe to non-traditional gender roles (3>0). The sitcom television series that portray parents who do not subscribe to traditional gender roles aired in the 2010s decade. As for sitcom television, most of the non-traditional families were portrayed in the 2000s decade, whereas non-traditional reality families were found more near the 2020s decade.

Conclusion

Based on this selection of television series, my hypothesis was correct that mostly traditional families are portrayed on television. It also seems that as time has progressed, more television families subscribe to traditional gender roles less for sitcom television. In more recent years, there seems to be an increase in non-traditional families on reality television, with more traditional families being portrayed on sitcoms simultaneously.

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