



The Shape of Things to Come: Why Age Structure Matters to a Safer, More Equitable World

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October 2, 2007



The Demographic Transition

- Gradual shift from high death and birth rates to smaller families and longer lives
- Affects share of young people, working-age adults, and seniors in a population
- Already completed in most highly developed countries, where populations are aging
- Developing countries at various stages – some just beginning demographic transition

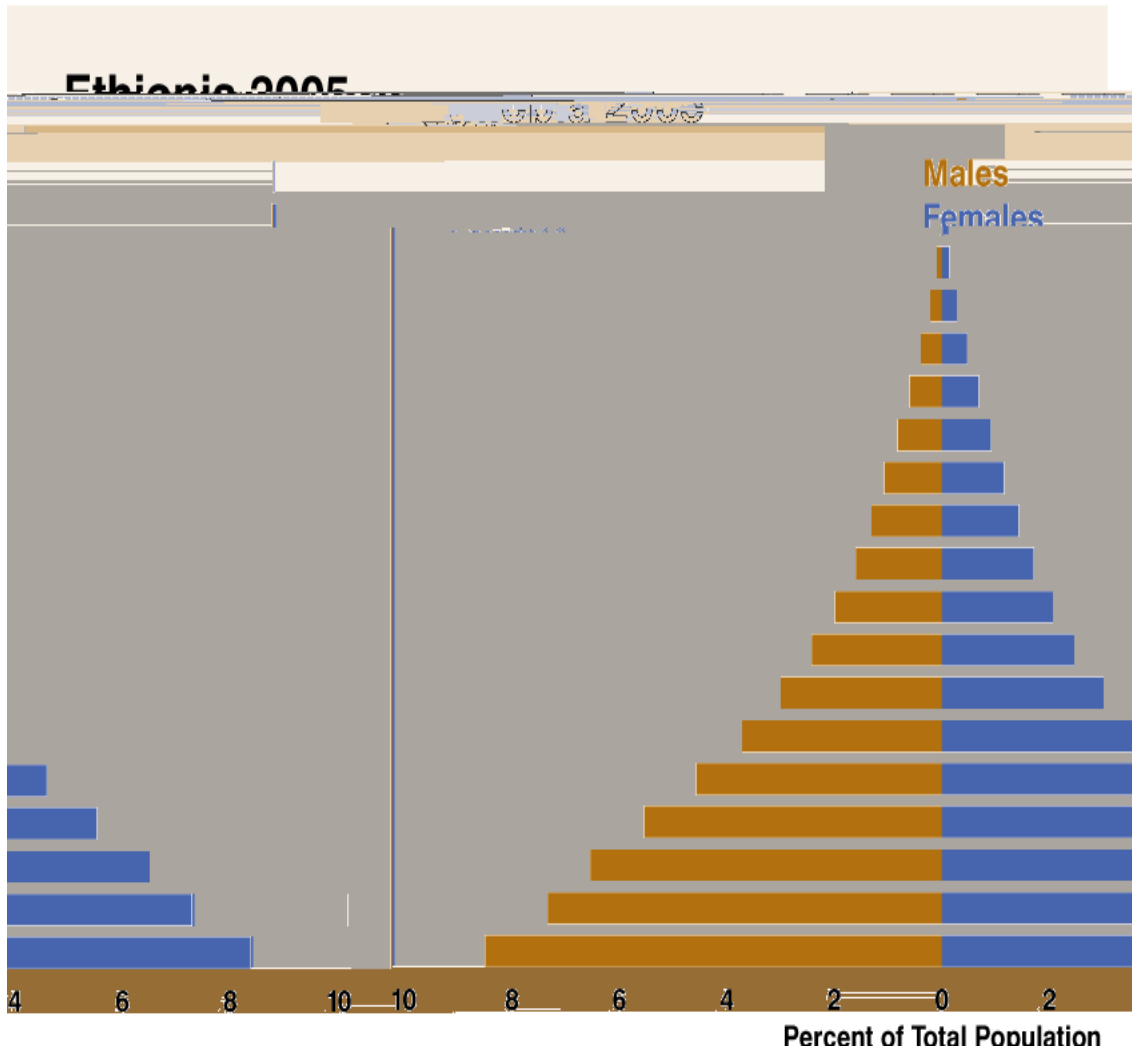


Age Structure Defined





Very Young Age Structures



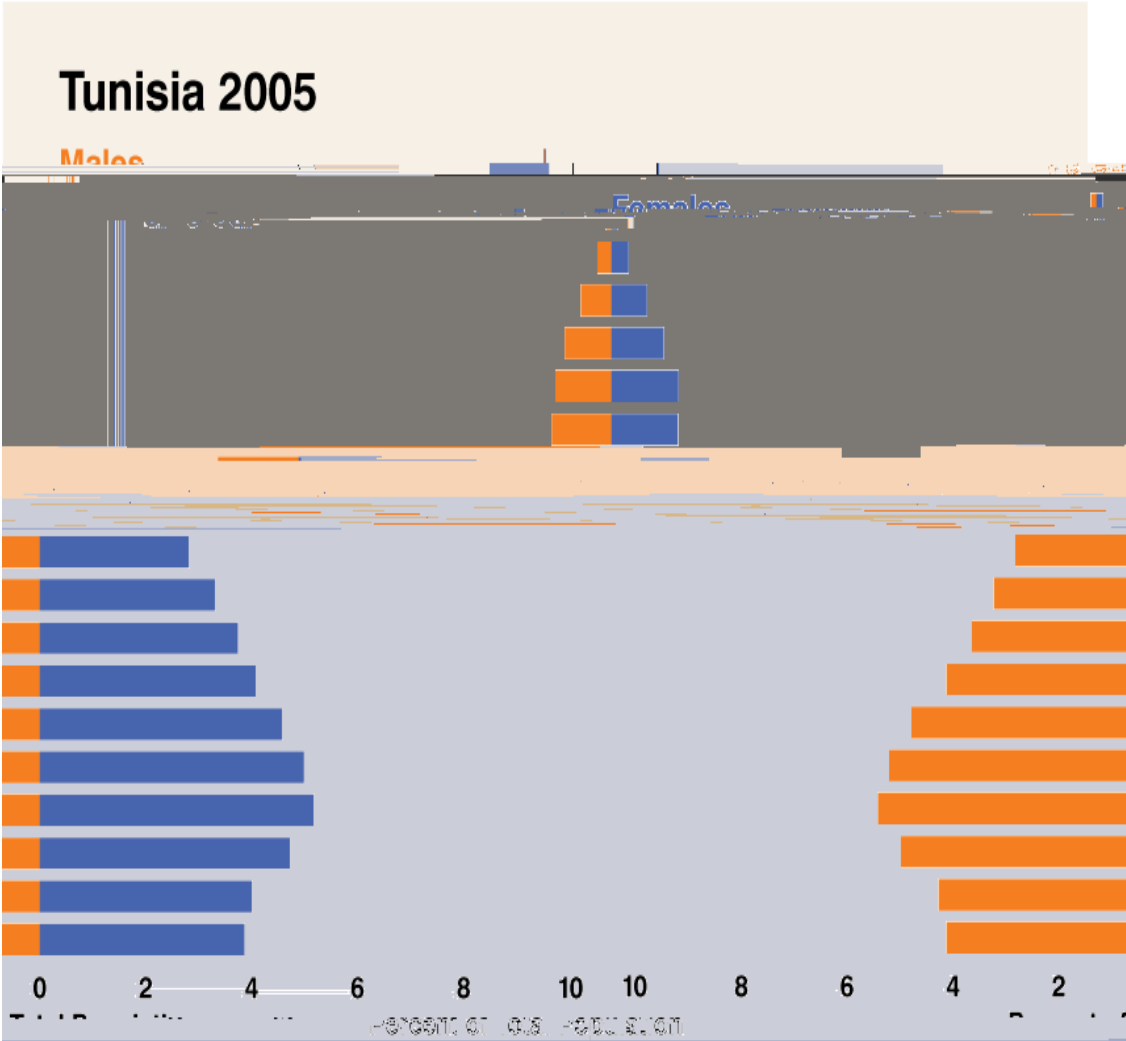
61 countries:
Including
Afghanistan,
Cambodia, Haiti,
Syria, some of
Central America,
most of sub-
Saharan Africa

***High mortality
and fertility
rates***





Transitional Age Structures



48 countries:
 Including Brazil,
 China, Ireland,
 Israel, Indonesia,
 Lebanon, Mexico,
 Sri Lanka,
 Thailand, Turkey

*Middle of
 demographic
 transition*

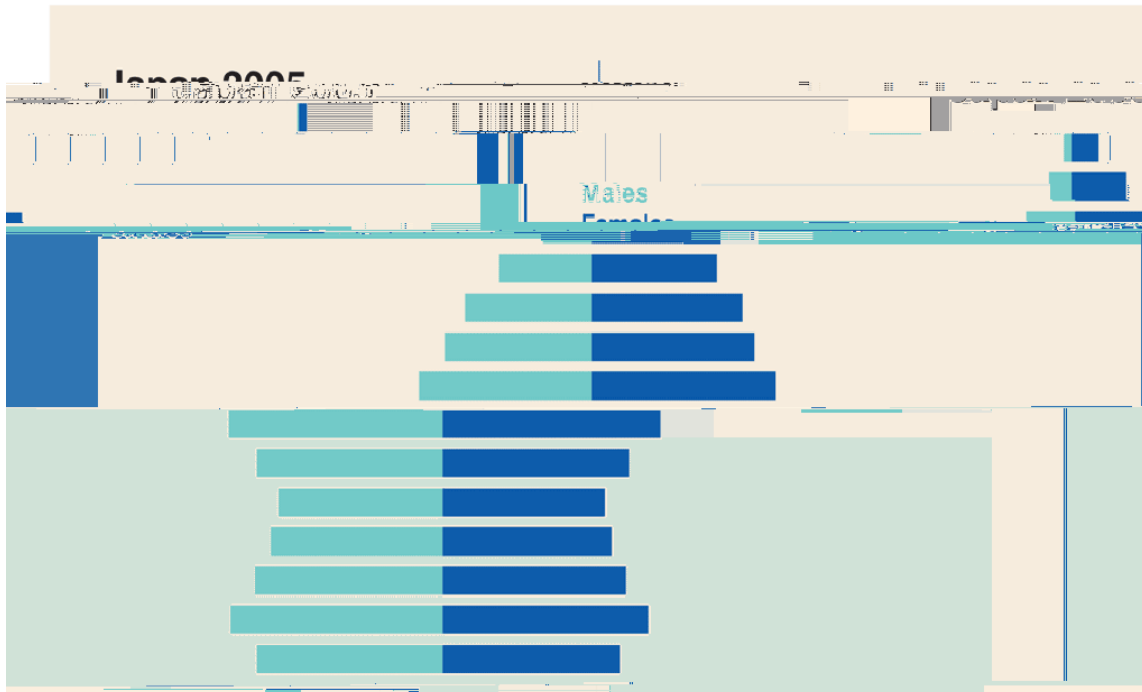


The Demographic Dividend

- Fertility decline creates economic opportunities through lower dependency ratios
- Greater per capita spending and savings
- Higher wages and increased capital investment
- “Window of opportunity” lasts 40-60 years
- Countries with transitional structures are nearing end of window of opportunity; youthful structures at beginning



Mature Age Structures



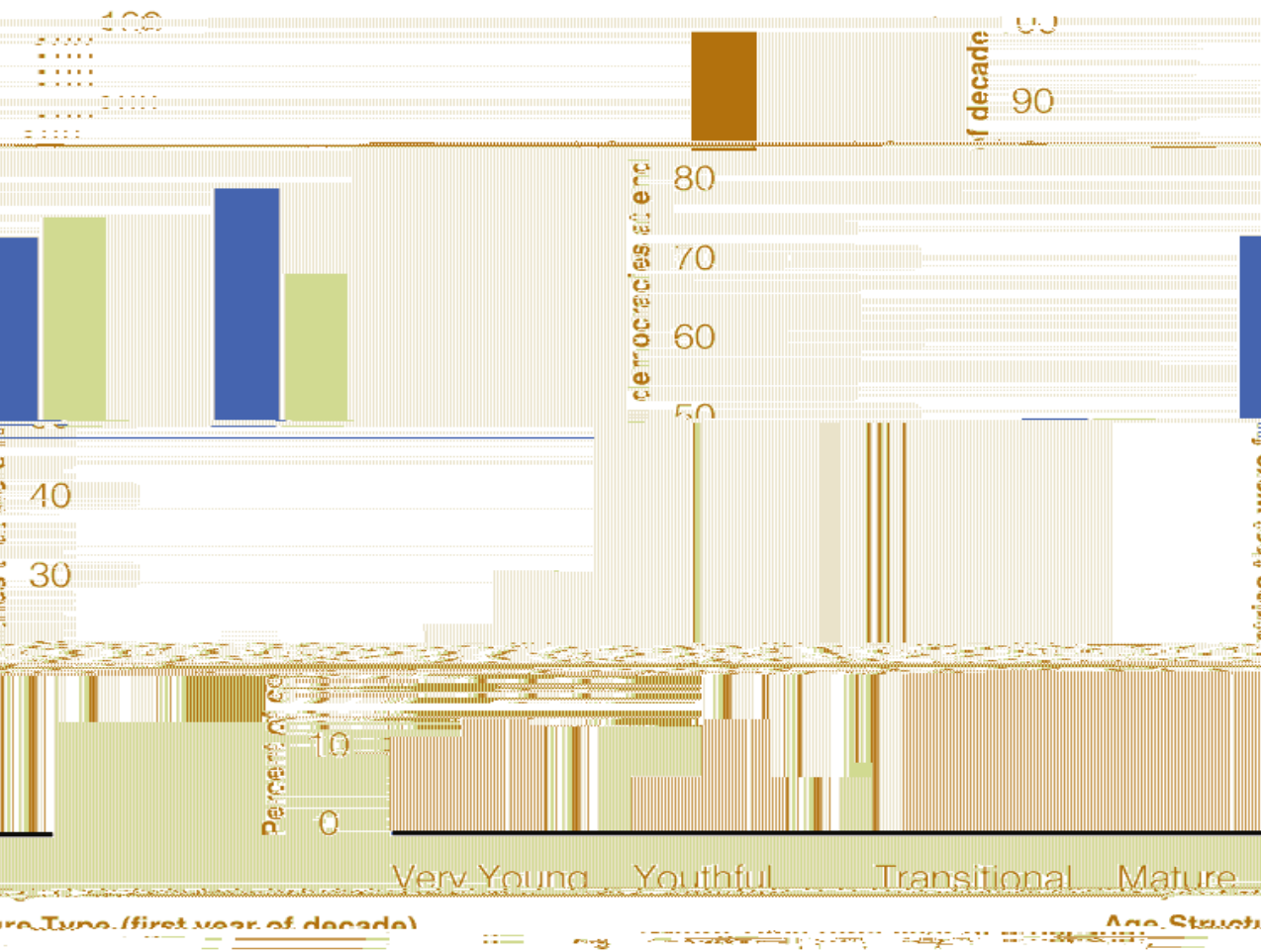
49 countries:
Including
Australia,
Canada, Cuba,
Russia,
South Korea,
nearly all of
Europe, U.S.

***Low mortality
and fertility
rates***



Age Structure and Governance

1970s 1980s 1990s



Nearly 90% of countries with very young structures had autocratic or weakly democratic governments.

More than 80% of countries with mature age structures were fully democratic.



Age Structure and Failed States

- 51% of countries with a very young age structure ranked as “critical” or “in danger” by Failed States Index
- No countries with a very young age structure were ranked as “stable” or “most stable”
- 73% of countries with a mature structure were considered stable or most stable
- Every country ranked as “most stable” has a mature age structure

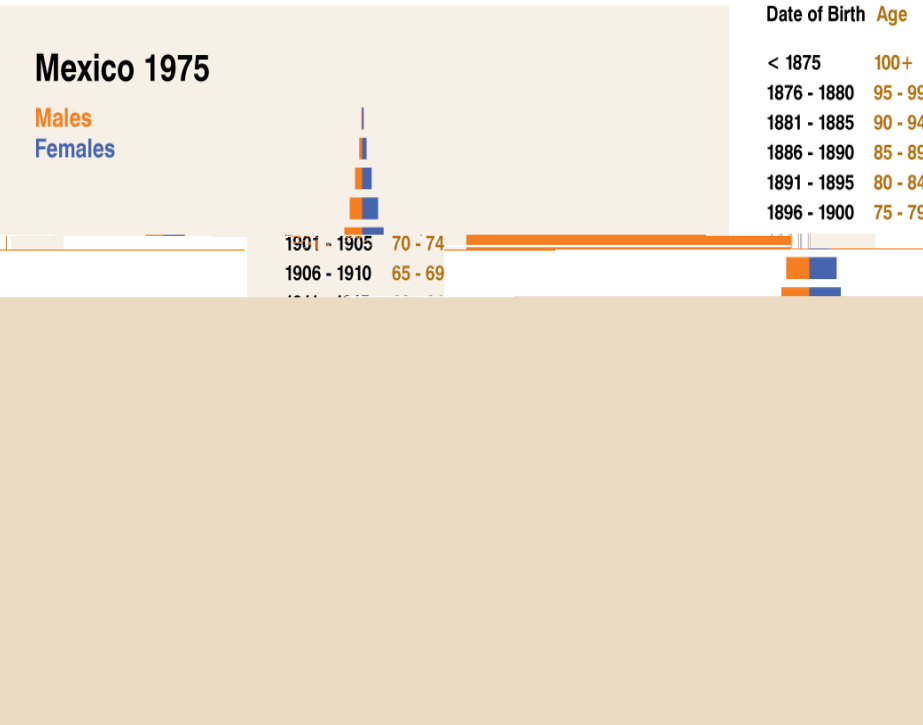


Key Findings

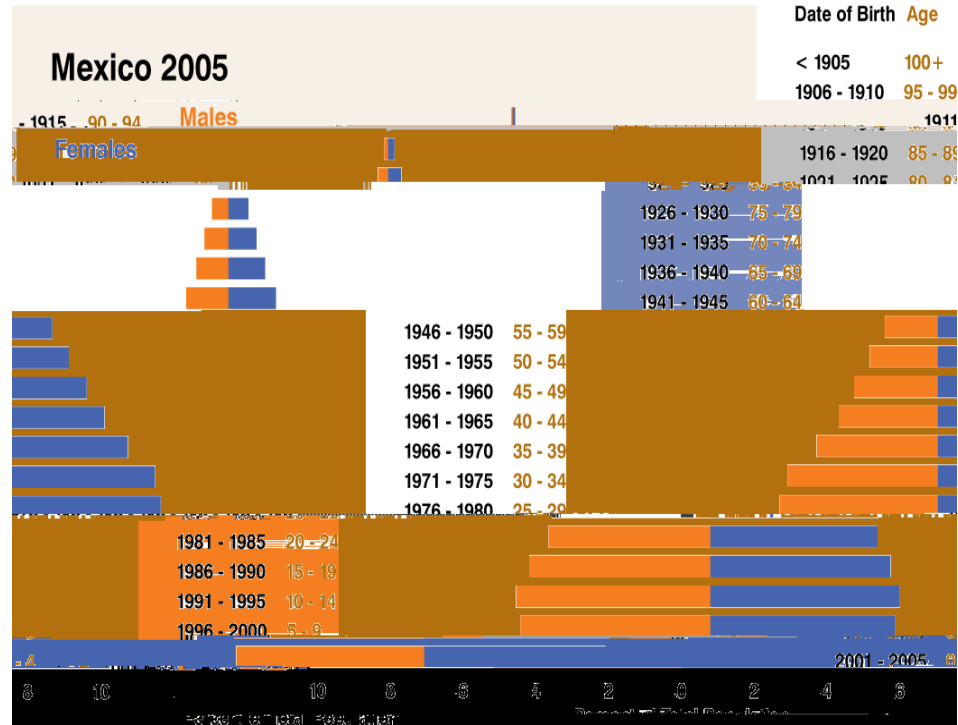
- Population age structure impacts countries' stability, governance, economic development
- Very young and youthful age structures present greatest challenges to development
- Mature structures have been most stable
- Age structures are dynamic and can be influenced through health and education programs
- Important to invest in opportunities for youth



Mexico 1975 - 2005



Very Young
 72% under 30



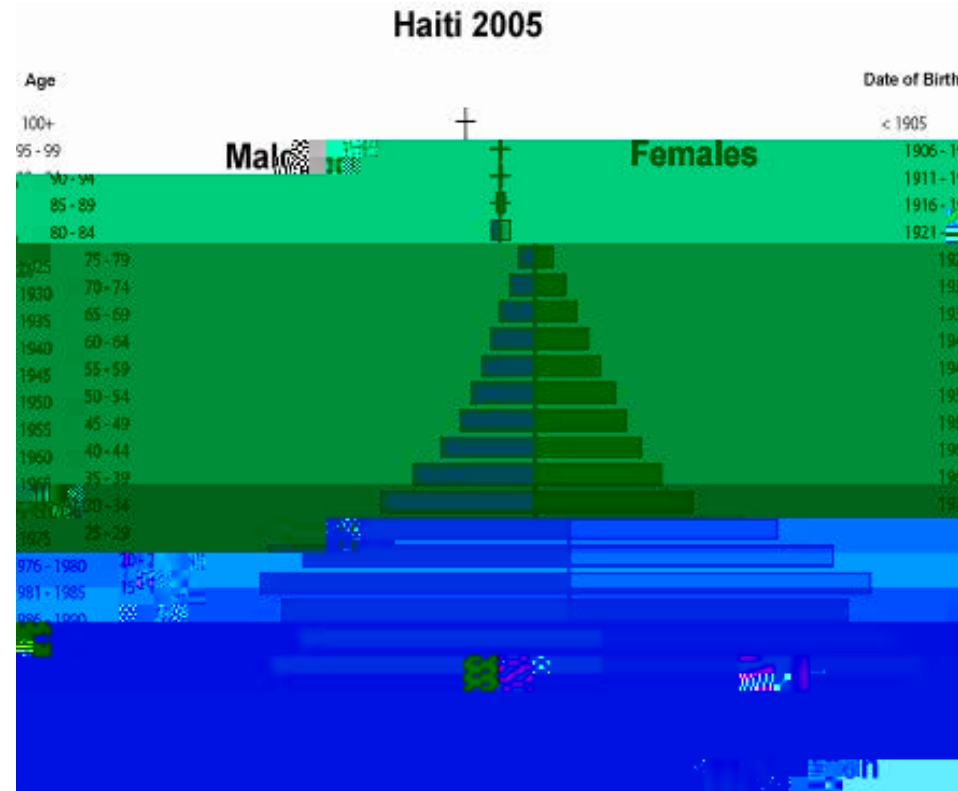
Transitional
 57% under 30



Haiti 1975 - 2005



Very Young
 67% under 30



Transitional
 68% under 30





Policy Recommendations

- Governments and international partners should support programs to foster more balanced age structures
- Comprehensive family planning and reproductive health programs
- Girls' education and legal protections for women
- Investments in health, education and employment opportunities for young people