



PRIO

Breaking the waves: Youth bulges, education and the realization of demographic dividends

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UNU-WIDER conference

The puzzle of peace – towards inclusive
development in fragile contexts

Helsinki, 16th May, 2022

'A time of unprecedented demographic change'

- Demographic changes will have fundamental development, political, and security consequences
 - *Shifting demographic weights globally*
 - *Population aging in the global north*
 - *Age structure transitions in the global south*
 - *Rapid urbanization*

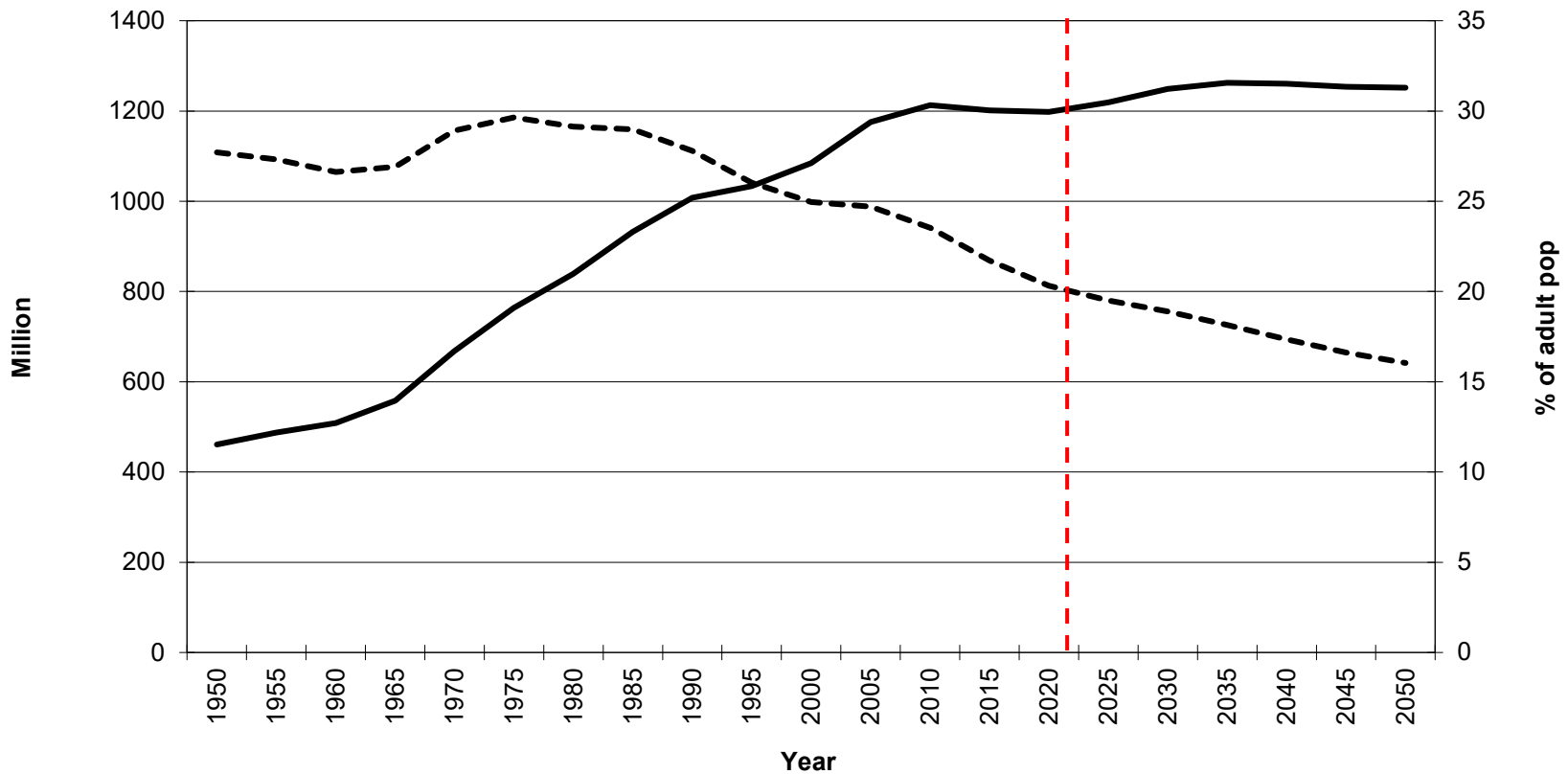
Jack Goldstone (2010) *The New Population Bomb: Four Population Megatrends That Will Shape the Global Future*, *Foreign Affairs*

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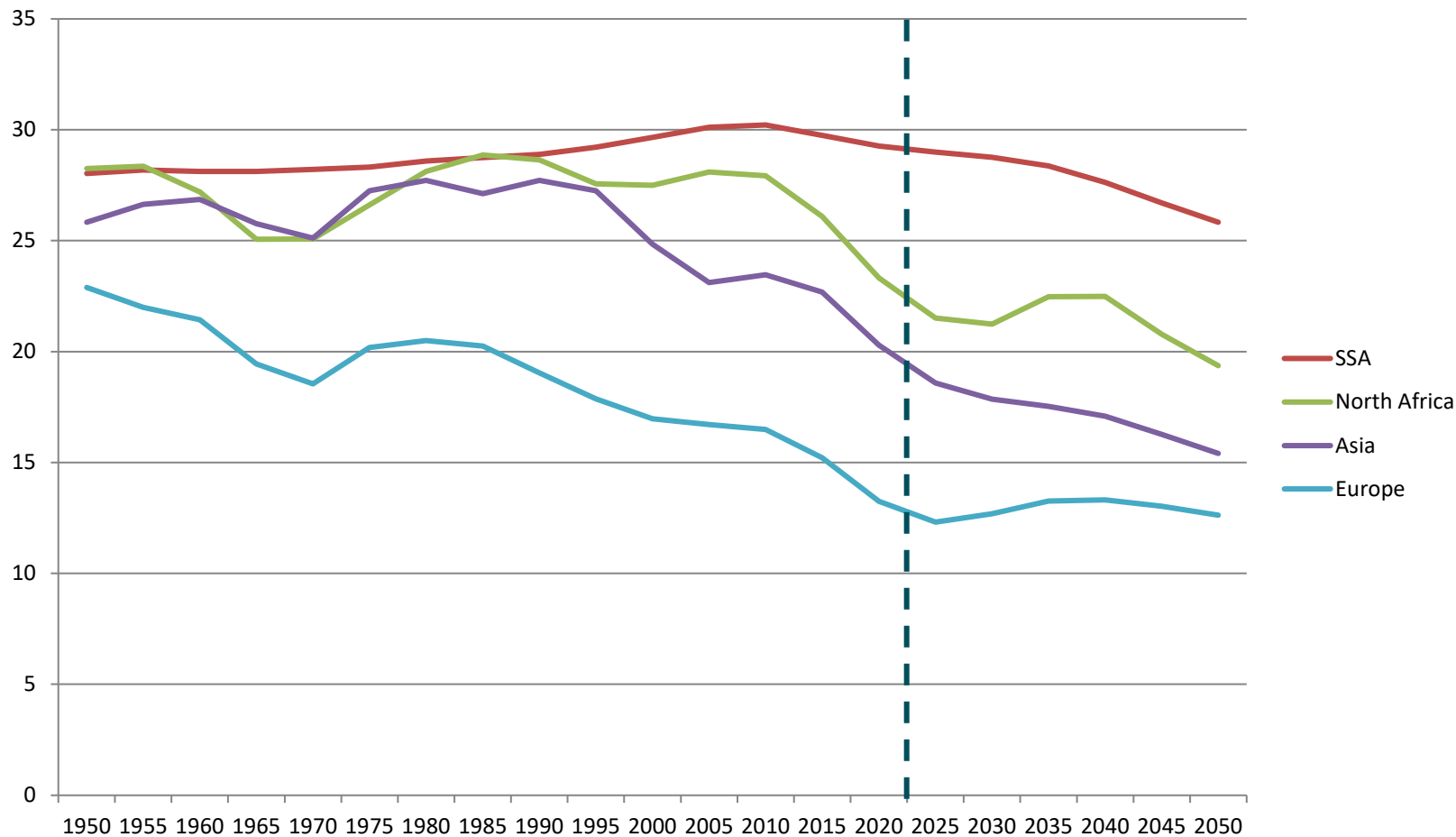
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Age structure transitions: 'Youth bulges'



Source: United Nations Population Division (2011). Youth bulges: % aged 15-24 of adult population (15+)

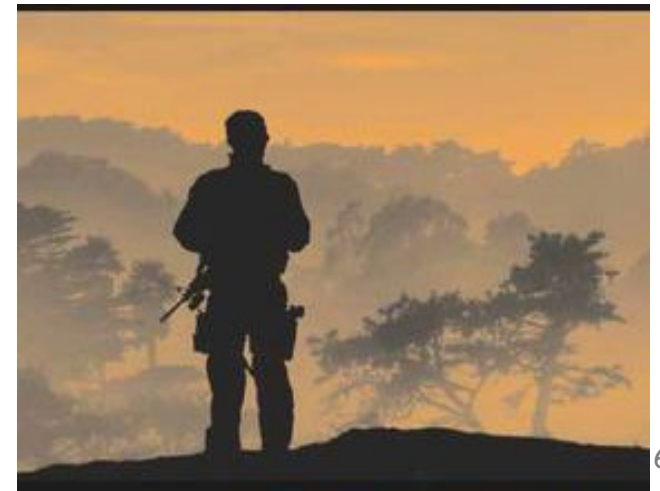
Youth bulges by region



Source: UN World Population Prospects.

Youth bulges and instability

- Youth bulges affect both motives and opportunity for conflict:
 - *Low opportunity cost, facilitating rebel recruitment*
 - *Relative cohort size: unemployment, wage pressure*
- Urdal (2006): increased risk of armed conflict onset
- Weber (2010): greater political instability
- Nordås & Davenport (2012): increased repression
- Pacifying effect of demographic maturing
 - *Fertility decline (Malmberg & Urdal, 2016)*

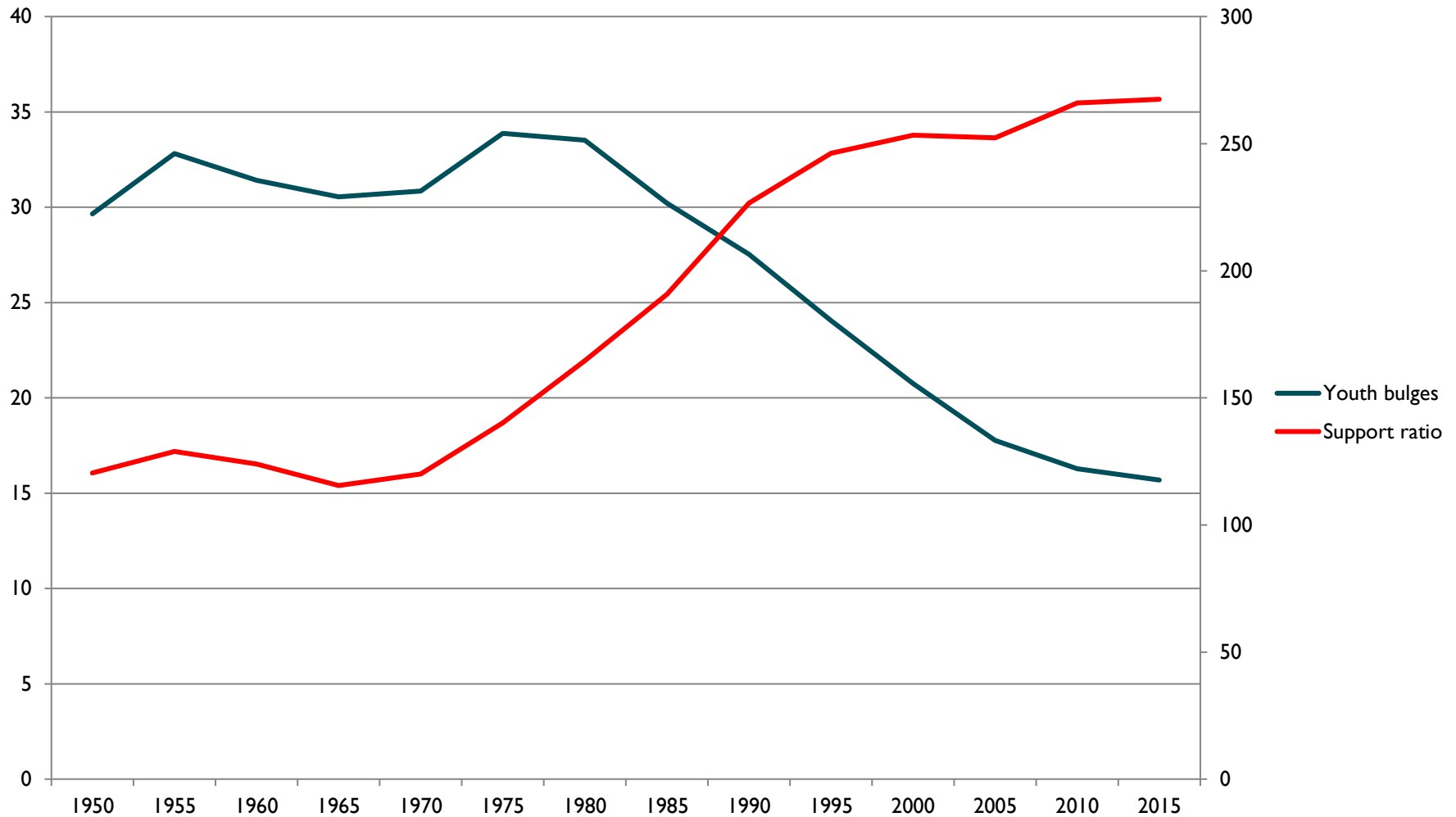


The 'demographic dividend'

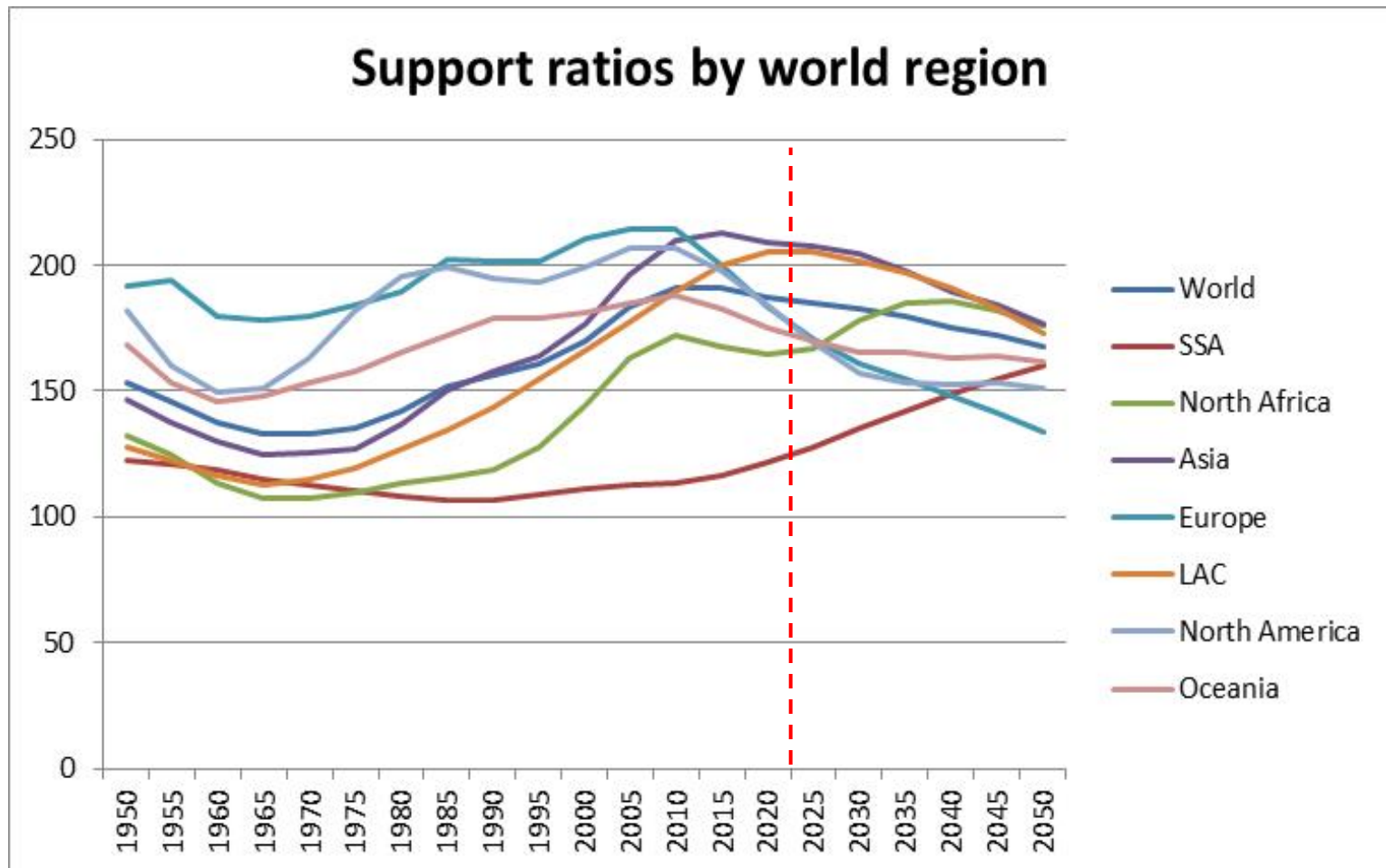
- Youth bulges: 'demographic bonus'
- Declining dependency ratios coincide with increasing labor supply
 - *Investments shifted away from schooling and health care*
- The demographic dividend estimated to have contributed a third of the economic growth of the Asian 'Tiger Economies'
- Conditional on labor market; human capital investments
 - *Demographic 'window of opportunity'*
 - *Education*



South Korea's demographic dividend



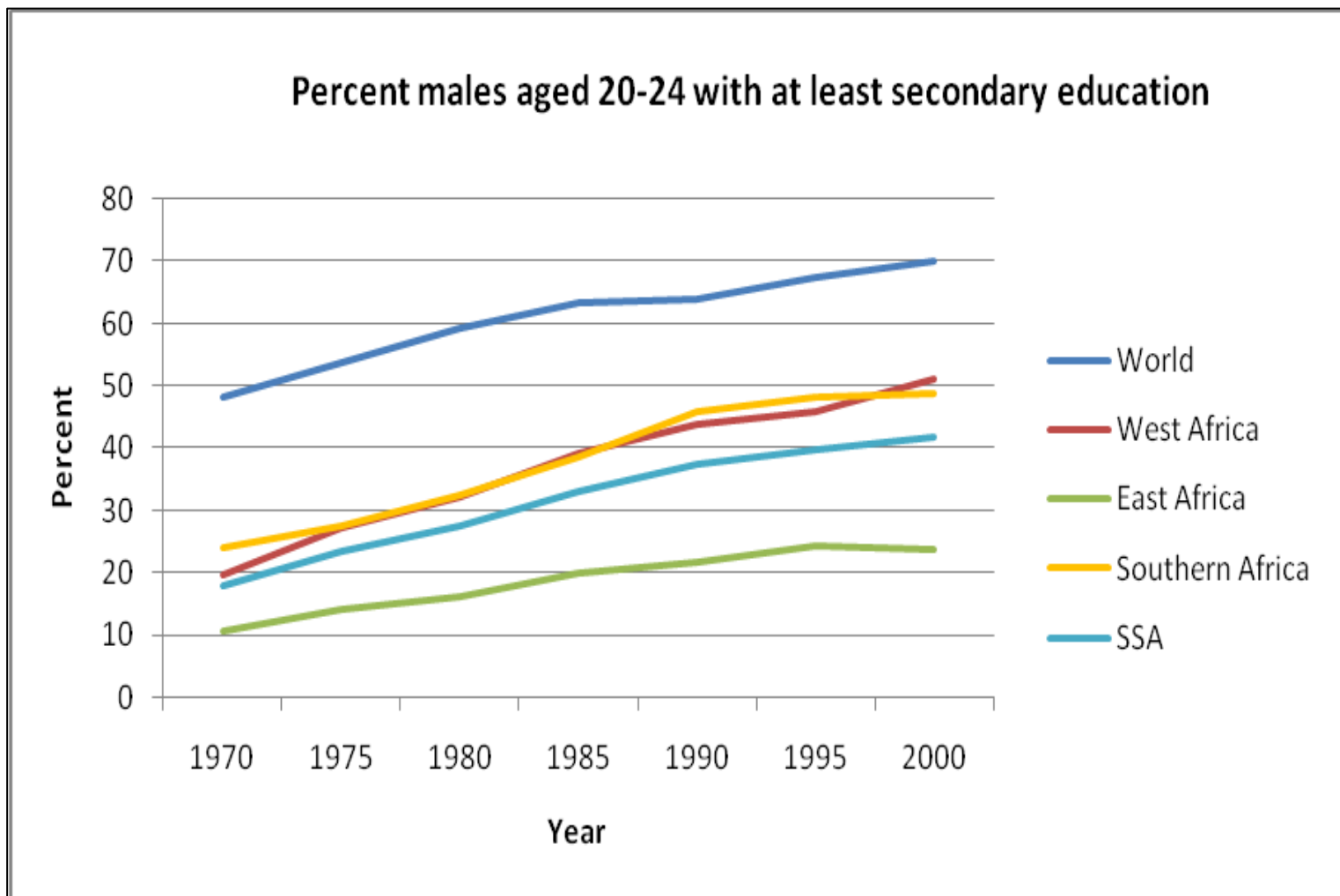
Support ratios | 1950-2050



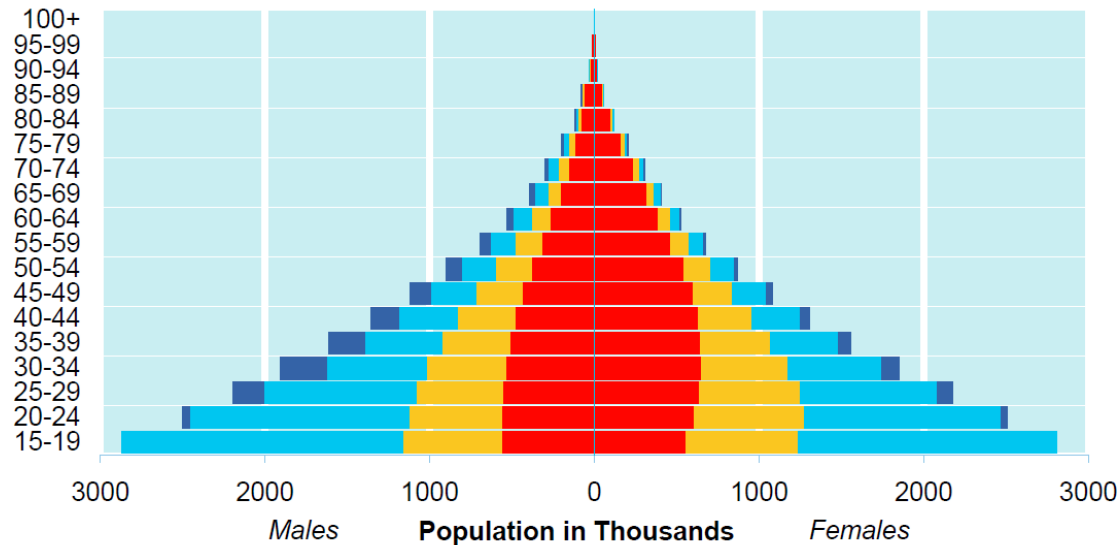
Youth, education and conflict

- Education increases economic opportunities
 - *Contingent on the labor market*
 - Concerns over rapid expansion
 - Concerns over relevance, quality
-
- Projection of populations by level of educational attainment, age, and sex for 120 countries for 2005-2050
 - *Samir KC et al. (2010) Demographic Research*

Male secondary education, SSA 1970-2000



Providing opportunities: Two Nigers (2050)



Youth, education and conflict onset

Findings (global study of 120 countries, IIASA education)

- Provision of male secondary education reduces conflict
 - *Effect of youth bulges restricted to low-education domains*
 - *Youth bulges and low education strong effect in LMICs*
- Rapid expansions in education do not elevate risks
- Gender parity in education lowers risk

Source: Barakat, B. & Urdal, H. 2009. 'Breaking the Waves? Does Education Mediate the Relationship Between Youth Bulges and Political Violence?', *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5114*.

Realizing demographic dividends for the SSA

How may SSA states position themselves for demographic dividends?

- Understanding the effect of education on realizing dividends
- *Social dividends: How do age cohorts in Sub-Saharan Africa differ on attitudes and norms regarding social inclusion?*
- *Political dividends: What are the forms and drivers of political participation, inclusion among youth in Sub-Saharan Africa?*
- *Economic dividends: How can human capital expansion contribute to youth inclusion in the economy in Sub-Saharan Africa?*

Thank you for your attention!

