



Population Action  
INTERNATIONAL



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

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# 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

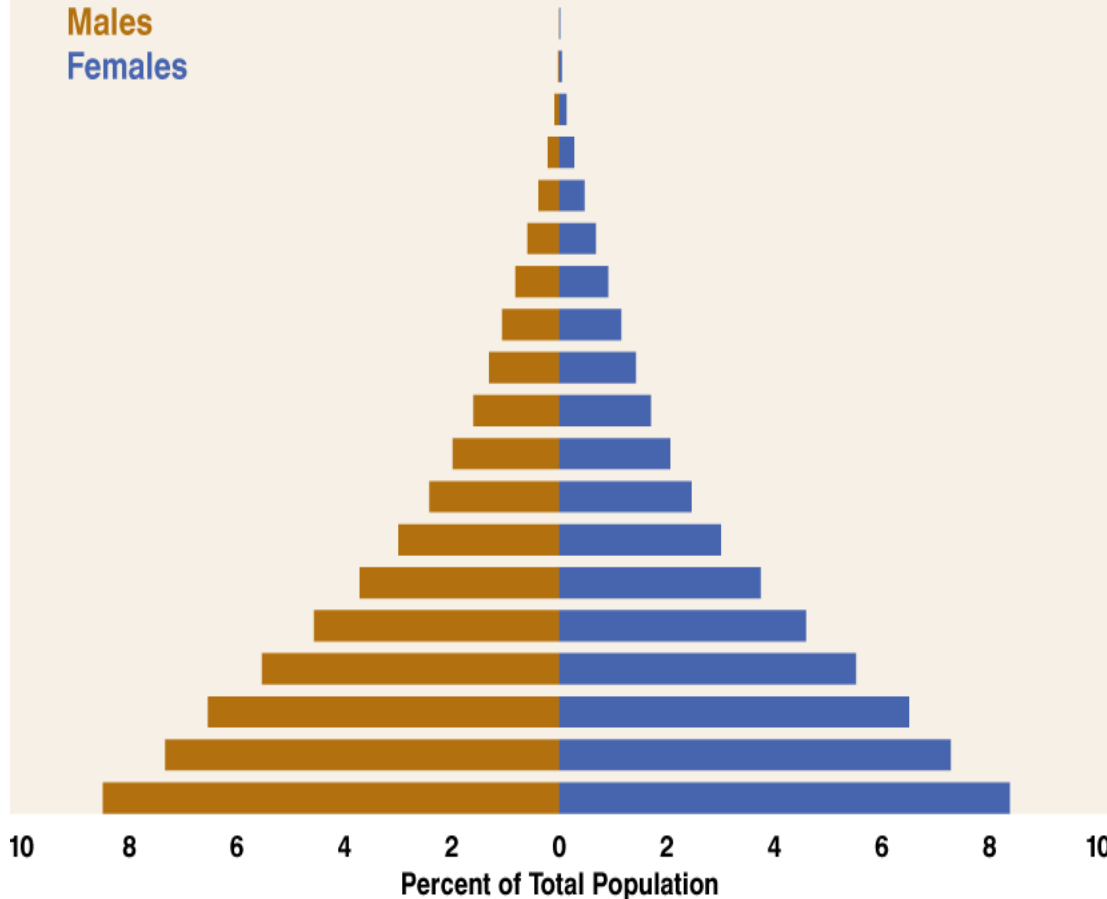
- Share of people younger than 30 in a population compared to share of people age 60+
  
- Each country fits into one of 4 major types of age structures:
  1. Very Young (>67% under 30)
  2. Youthful (60-67% under 30)
  3. Transitional (45-60% under 30)
  4. Mature (<45% under 30)



# Very Young Age Structures

## Ethiopia 2005

Males  
Females



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

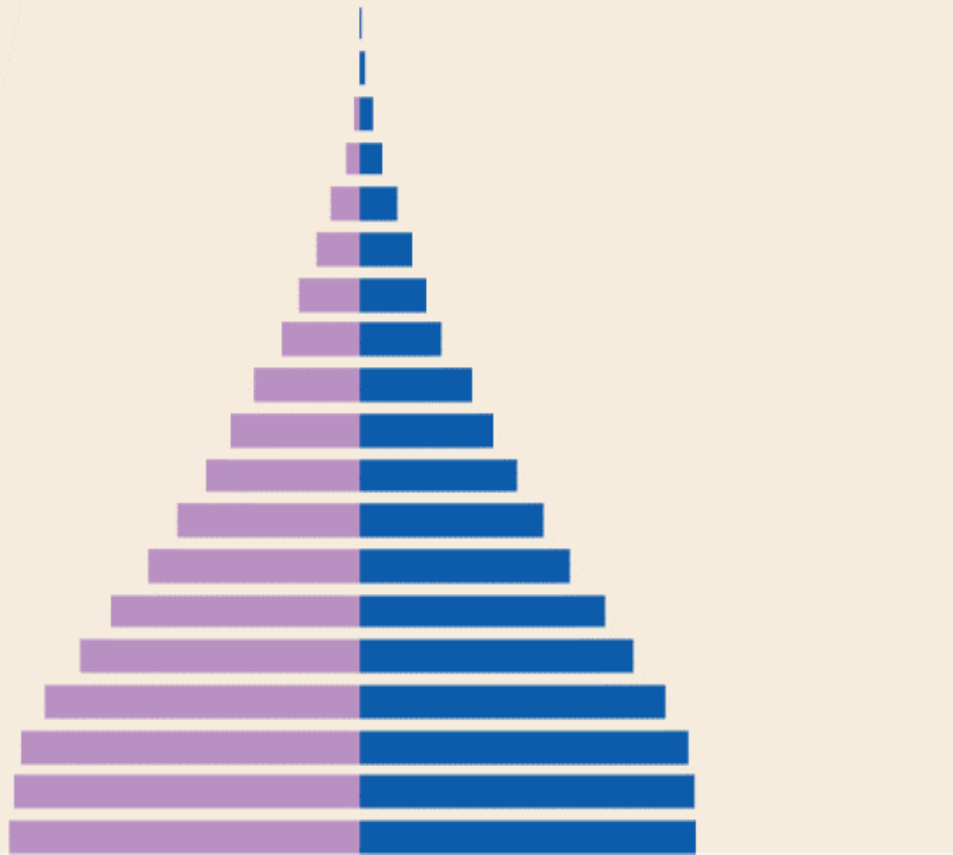
***High mortality  
and fertility  
rates***



# Youthful Age Structures

Philippines 2005

Males  
Females



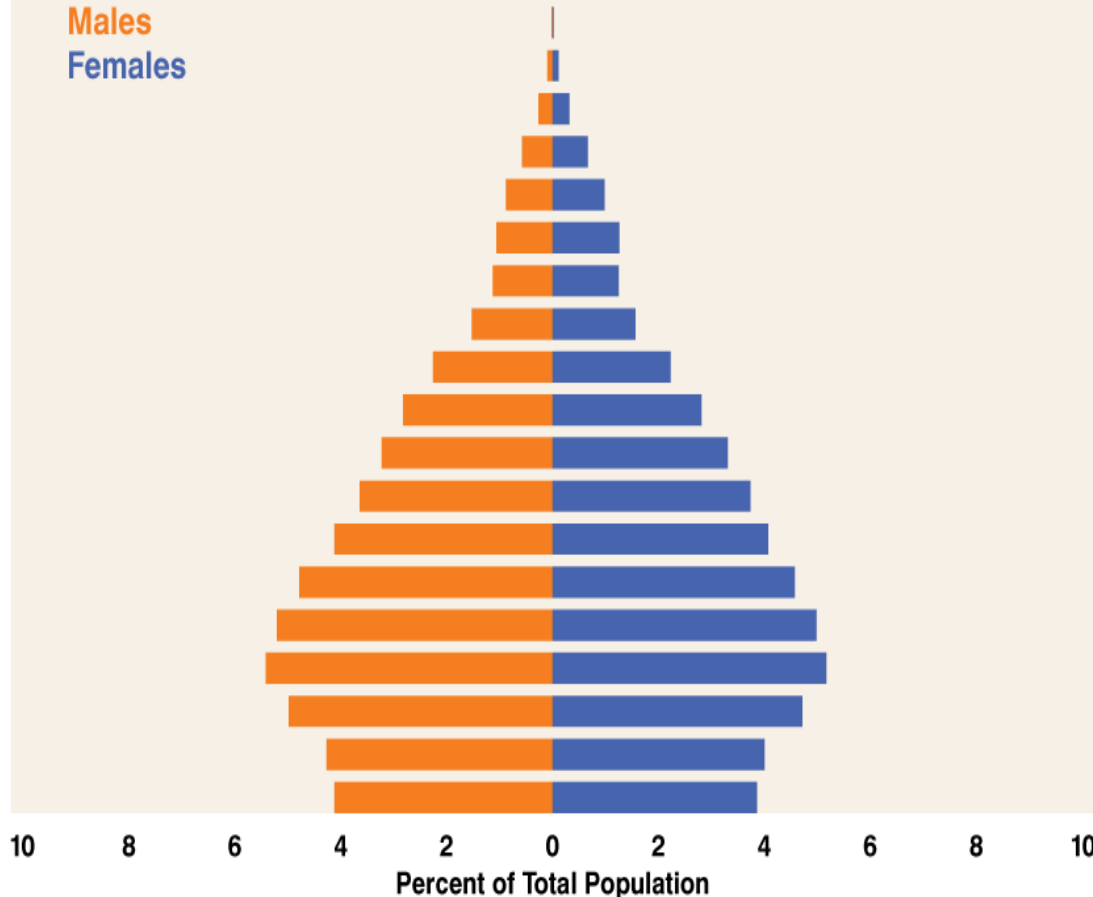
**28 countries:**  
Including  
Bangladesh,  
Egypt, India, Iran,  
Morocco,  
Pakistan,  
Saudi Arabia,  
South Africa  
***Fertility rates  
declining, but  
still above  
replacement level***



# Transitional Age Structures

## Tunisia 2005

Males  
Females



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

***Middle of  
demographic  
transition***

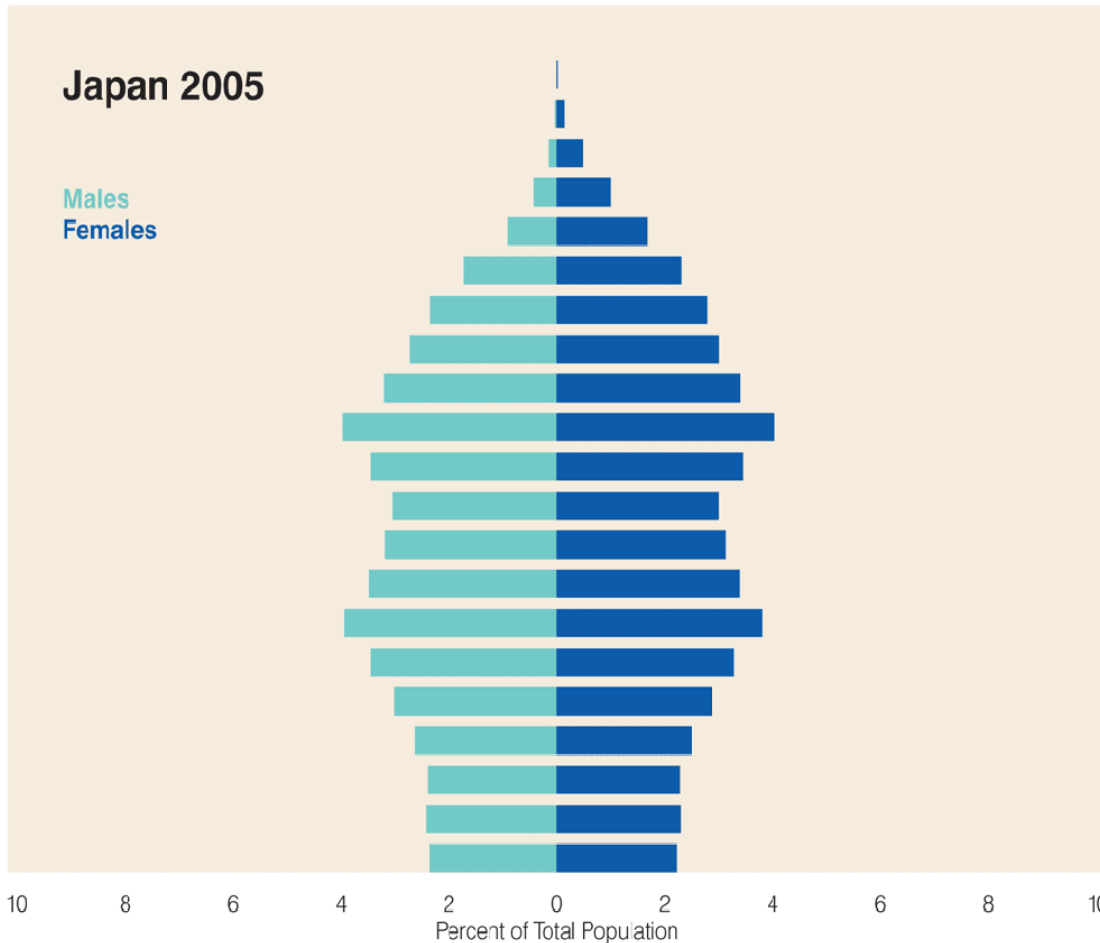


# The Demographic Dividend

- 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



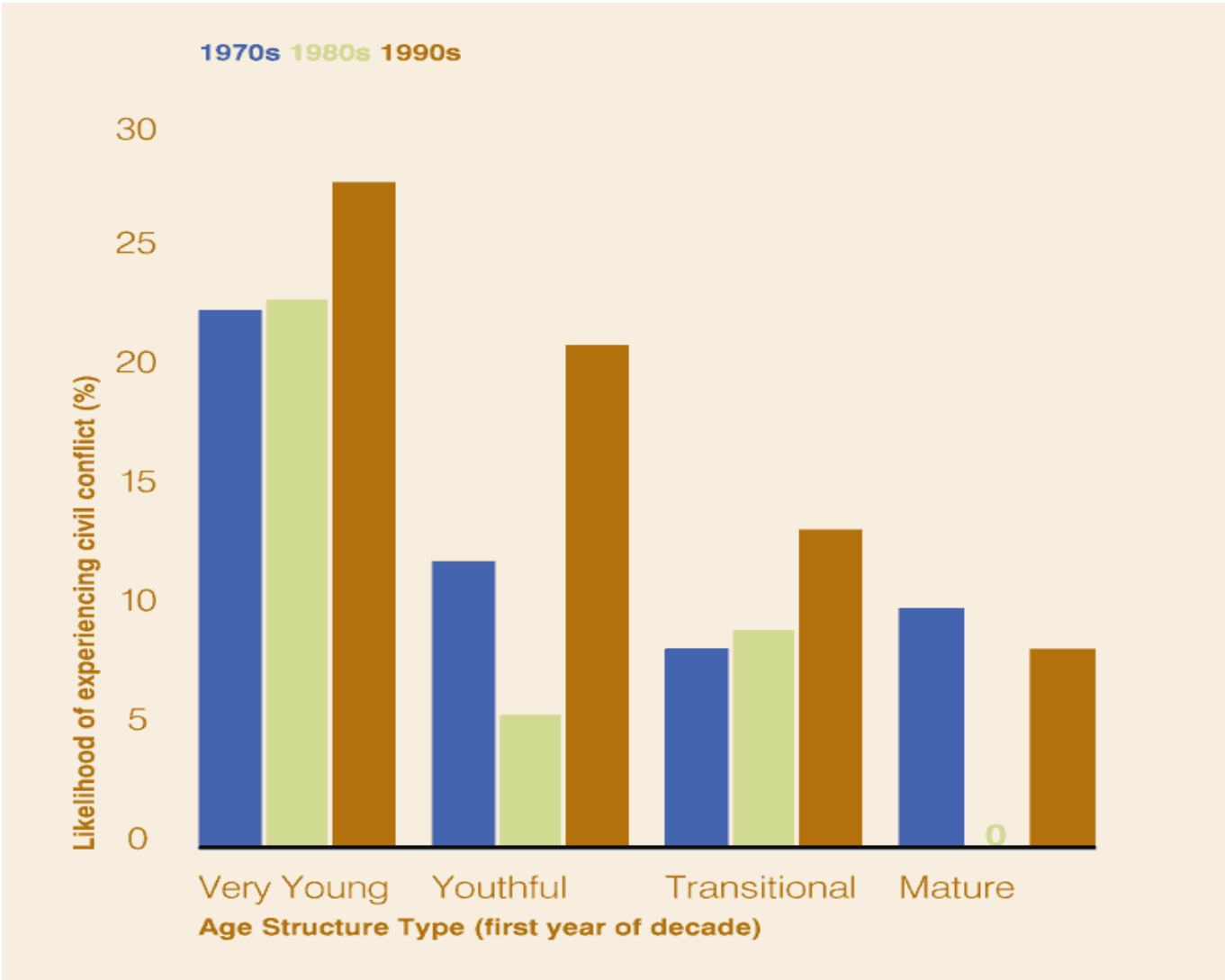
**49 countries:**  
Including  
Australia,  
Canada, Cuba,  
Russia,  
South Korea,  
nearly all of  
Europe, U.S.

***Low mortality  
and fertility  
rates***





# Age Structure and Conflict

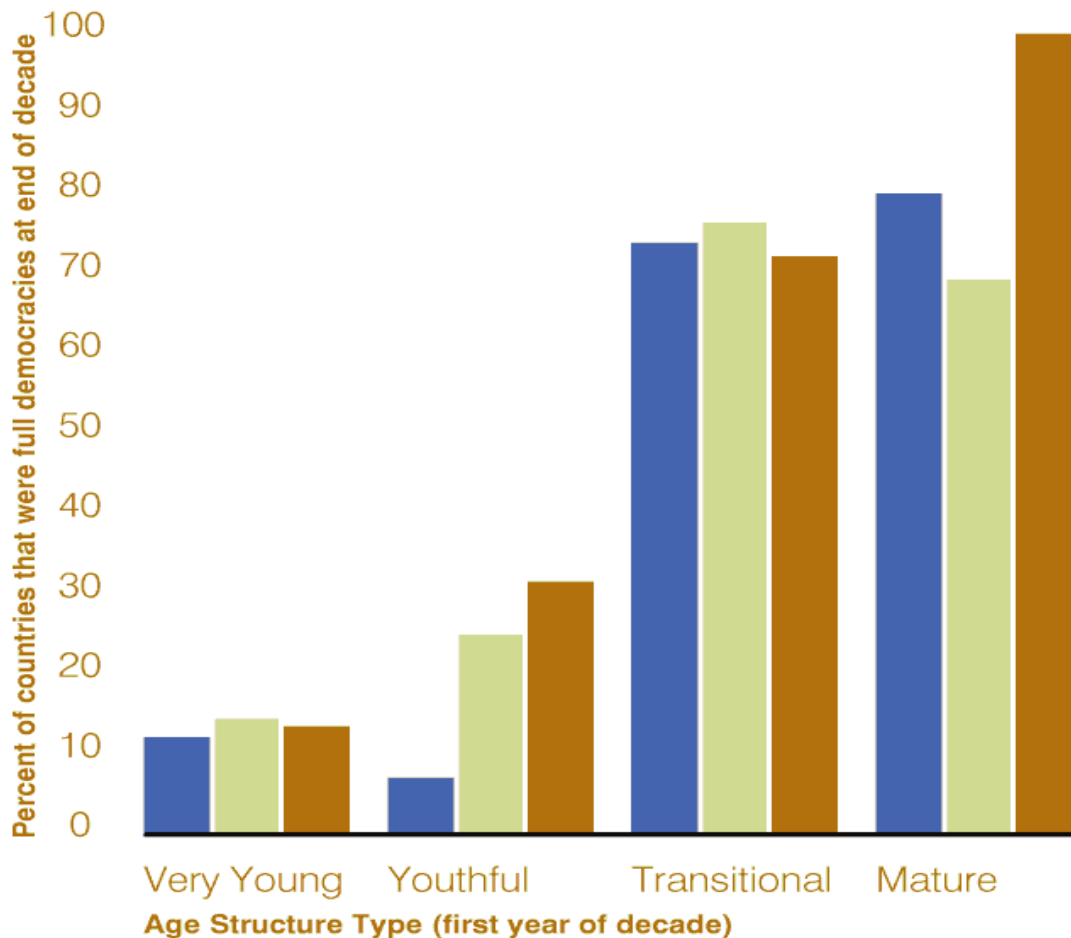


80% of all new conflicts occurred in countries in which at least 60% of the population was under age 30.



# 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

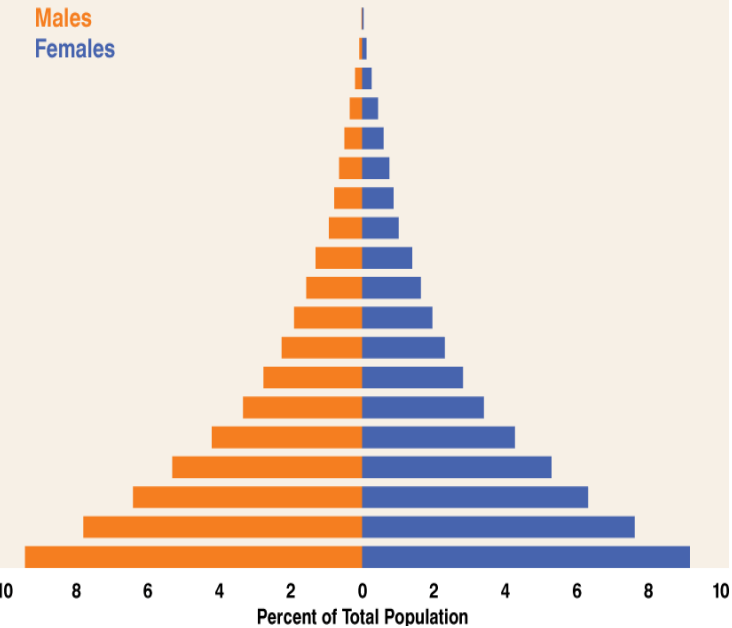
- Population age structure impacts countries' stability, governance, economic development
- Very young and youthful age structures present greatest challenges to development
- Mature structures have been most stable
- Age structures are dynamic and can be influenced through health and education programs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



# Mexico 1975 - 2005

Mexico 1975

Males  
Females

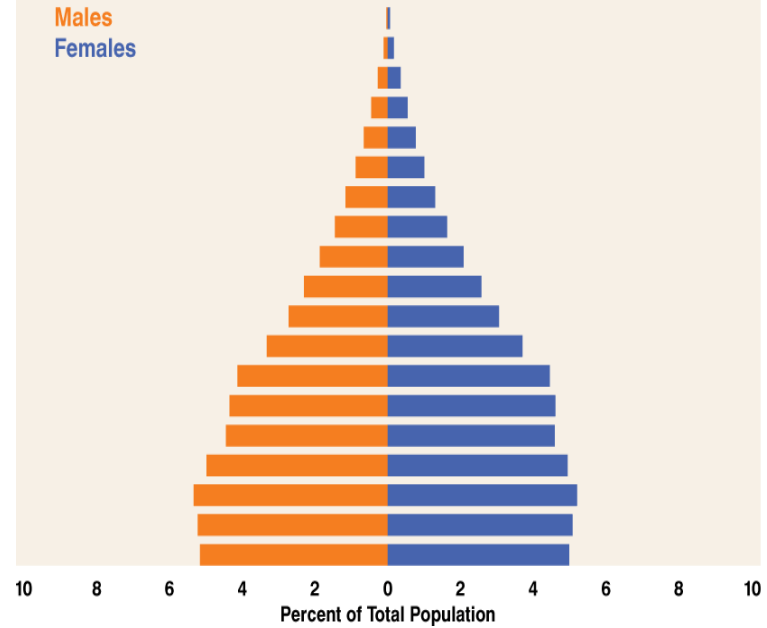


Date of Birth Age

< 1875	100+
1876 - 1880	95 - 99
1881 - 1885	90 - 94
1886 - 1890	85 - 89
1891 - 1895	80 - 84
1896 - 1900	75 - 79
1901 - 1905	70 - 74
1906 - 1910	65 - 69
1911 - 1915	60 - 64
1916 - 1920	55 - 59
1921 - 1925	50 - 54
1926 - 1930	45 - 49
1931 - 1935	40 - 44
1936 - 1940	35 - 39
1941 - 1945	30 - 34
1946 - 1950	25 - 29
1951 - 1955	20 - 24
1956 - 1960	15 - 19
1961 - 1965	10 - 14
1966 - 1970	5 - 9
1971 - 1975	0 - 4

Mexico 2005

Males  
Females



Date of Birth Age

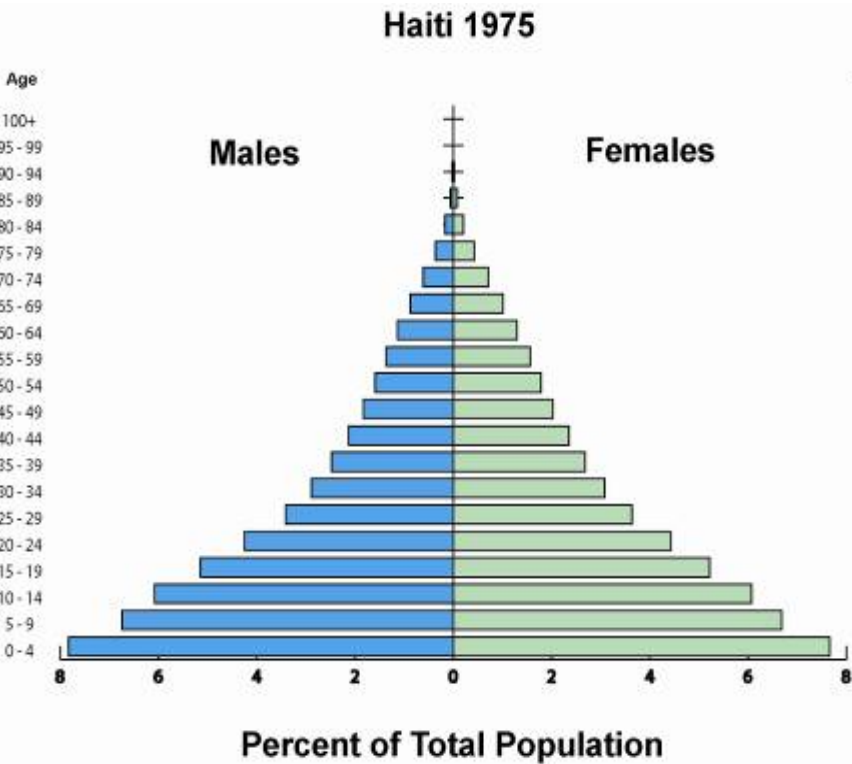
< 1905	100+
1906 - 1910	95 - 99
1911 - 1915	90 - 94
1916 - 1920	85 - 89
1921 - 1925	80 - 84
1926 - 1930	75 - 79
1931 - 1935	70 - 74
1936 - 1940	65 - 69
1941 - 1945	60 - 64
1946 - 1950	55 - 59
1951 - 1955	50 - 54
1956 - 1960	45 - 49
1961 - 1965	40 - 44
1966 - 1970	35 - 39
1971 - 1975	30 - 34
1976 - 1980	25 - 29
1981 - 1985	20 - 24
1986 - 1990	15 - 19
1991 - 1995	10 - 14
1996 - 2000	5 - 9
2001 - 2005	0 - 4

**Very Young**  
72% under 30

**Transitional**  
57% under 30

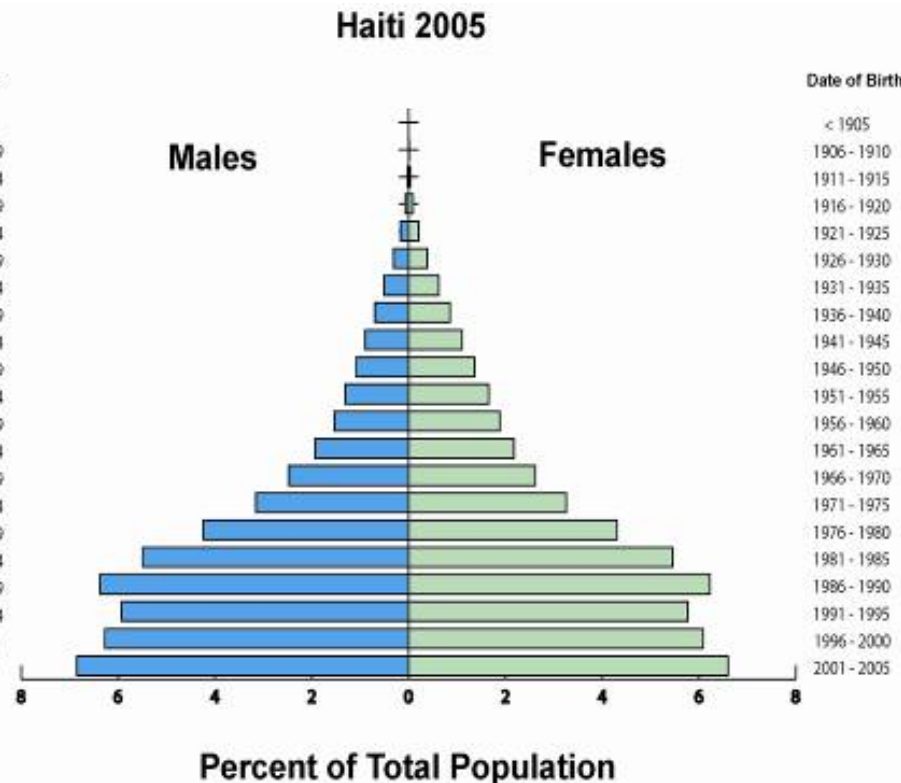


# Haiti 1975 - 2005



**Very Young**  
67% under 30

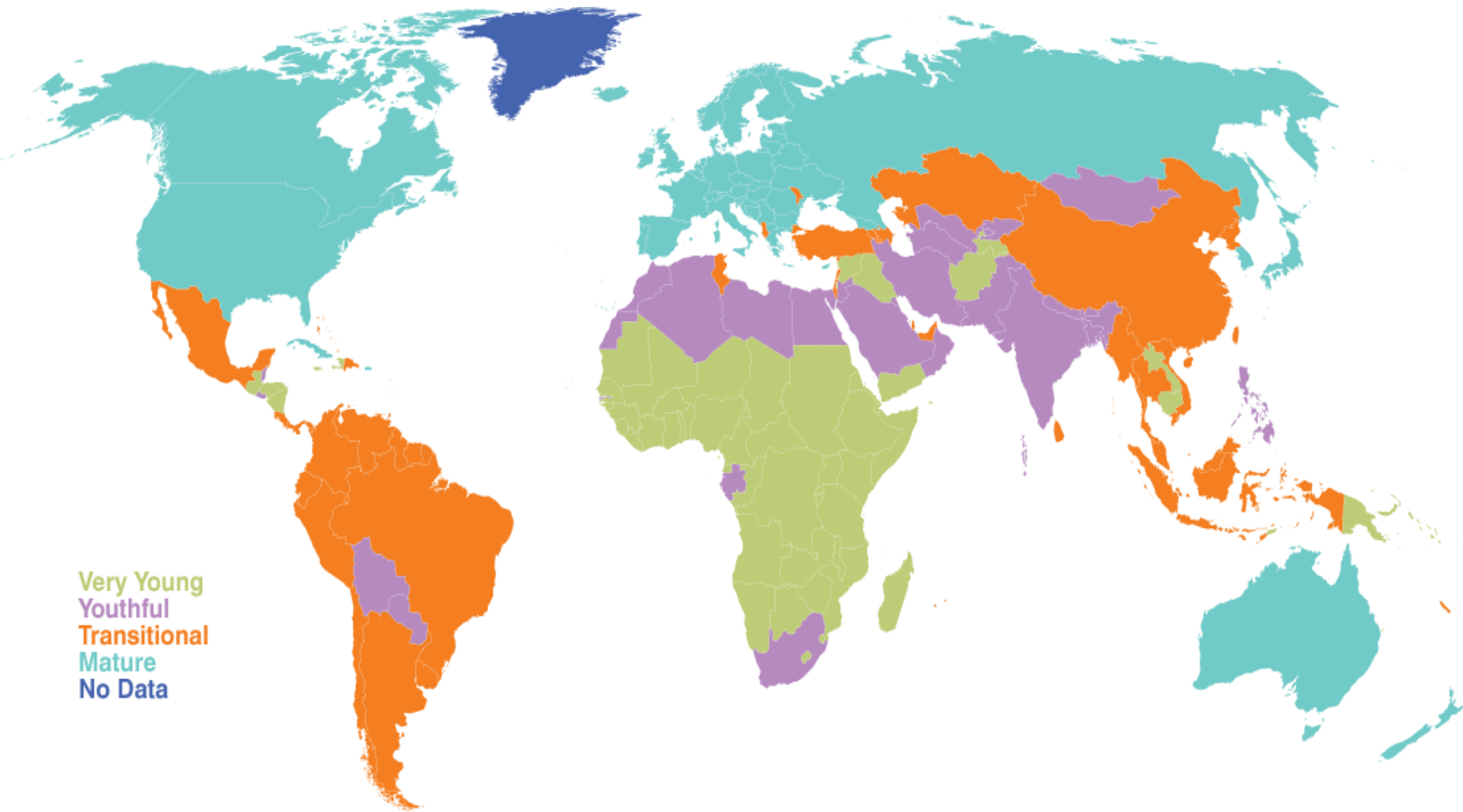
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1956 - 1960	15 - 19
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**Transitional**  
68% under 30



# World Age Structures 2005





## 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