

The Demographics of Political Violence: Youth Bulges, Insecurity, and Conflict

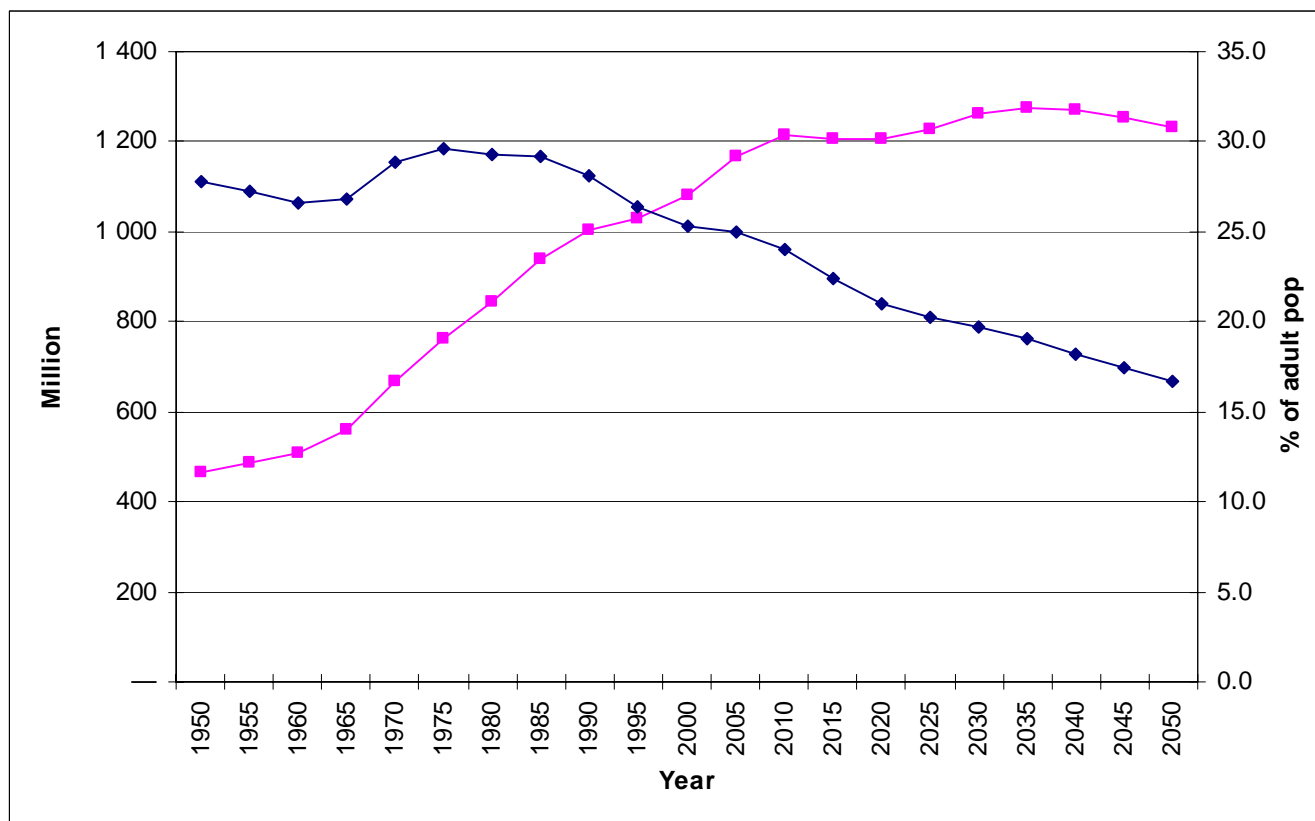
Henrik Urdal

Centre for the Study of Civil War (PRIO)

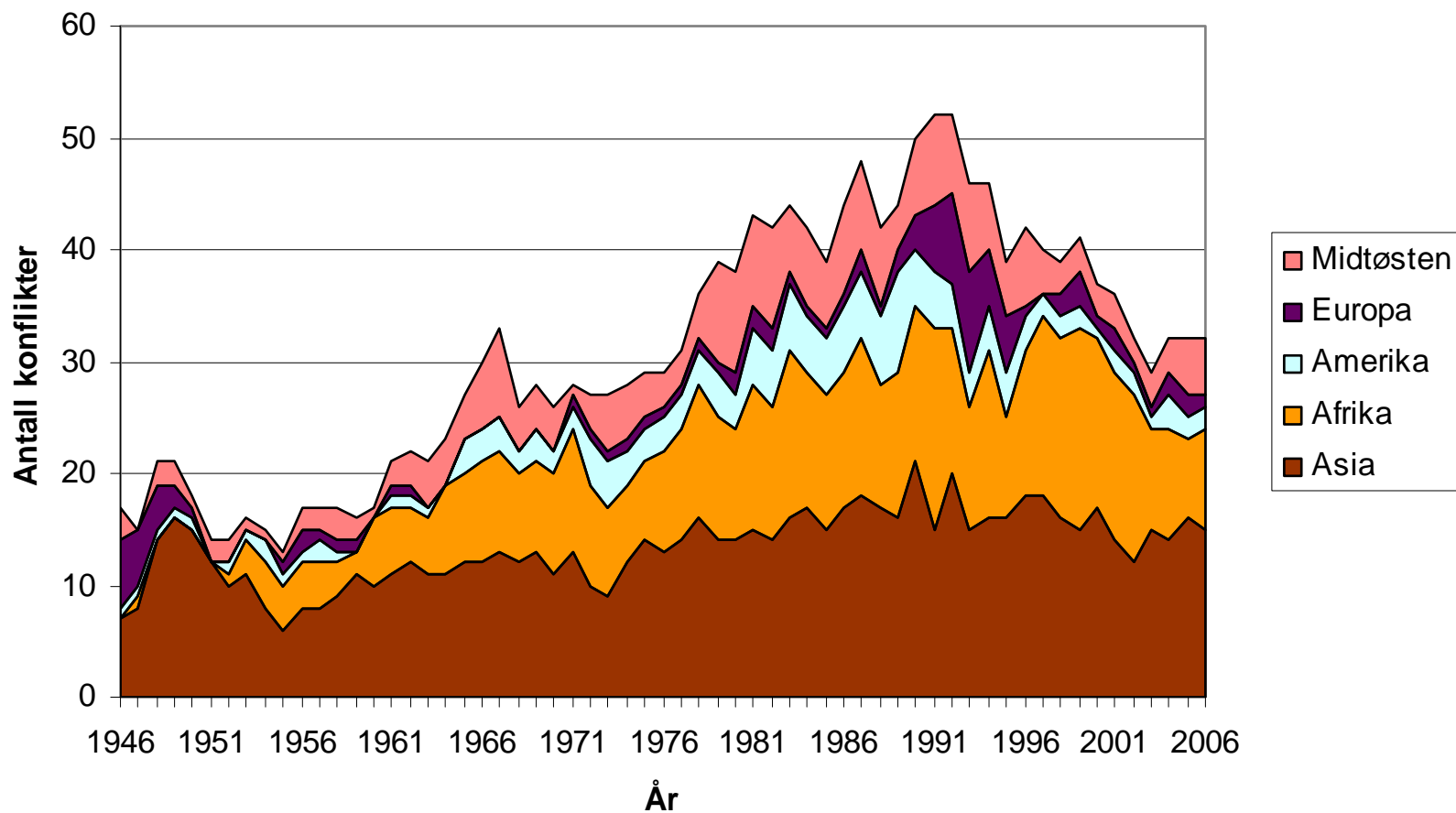
'Too Poor for Peace?'

Environmental Change and Security Program, WWICS
Washington D.C., October 5 2007

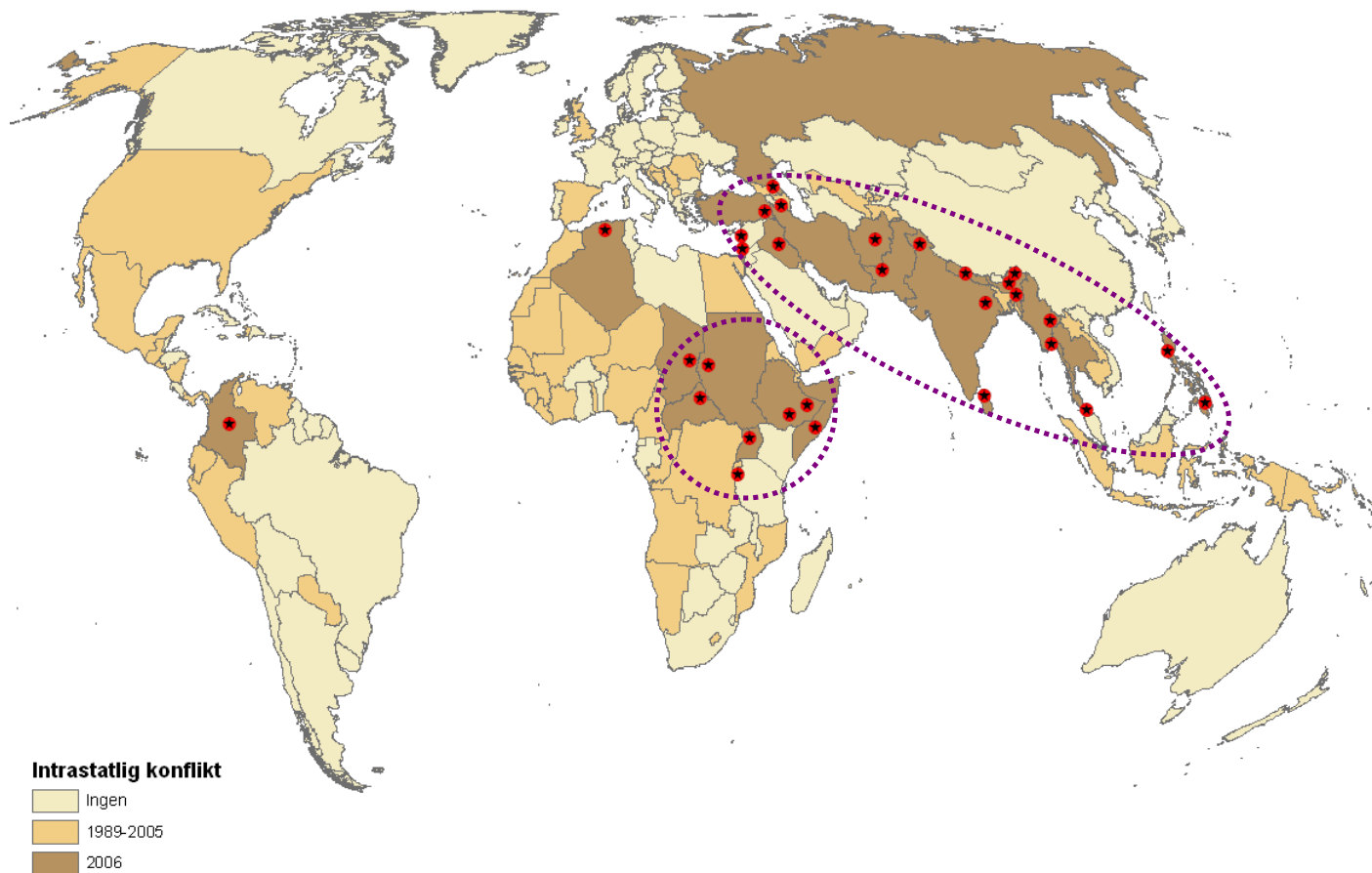
World Youth Population



Armed Conflict by Region 1946-2006



The Location of Armed Conflict, 2006



Source: Harbom & Wallerstein, 2007. Map produced by Halvard Buhaug.

Youth Bulges

- The opportunity perspective
 - Low opportunity cost
 - Relative cohort size
 - Economic growth
 - Education



Youth Bulges

- The grievance perspective
 - Unemployment
 - Education
 - Democracy
 - Urbanization



Youth and Conflict: An Empirical Analysis

Age composition and political violence 1950–2000

	Armed conflict onset	Terrorism	Riots and violent demonstrations
Youth bulges	Higher risk	Higher risk	Higher risk
YB * Economic growth	Not significant	Higher risk	Not significant
YB * Dependency ratio	Not significant	Not significant	Higher risk
YB * Regime type	Higher risk	Not significant	Not significant
YB * Tertiary edu growth	Not significant	Higher risk	Not significant

Based on Urdal, Henrik 2006. 'A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence', *International Studies Quarterly* 50(3): pp–pp.

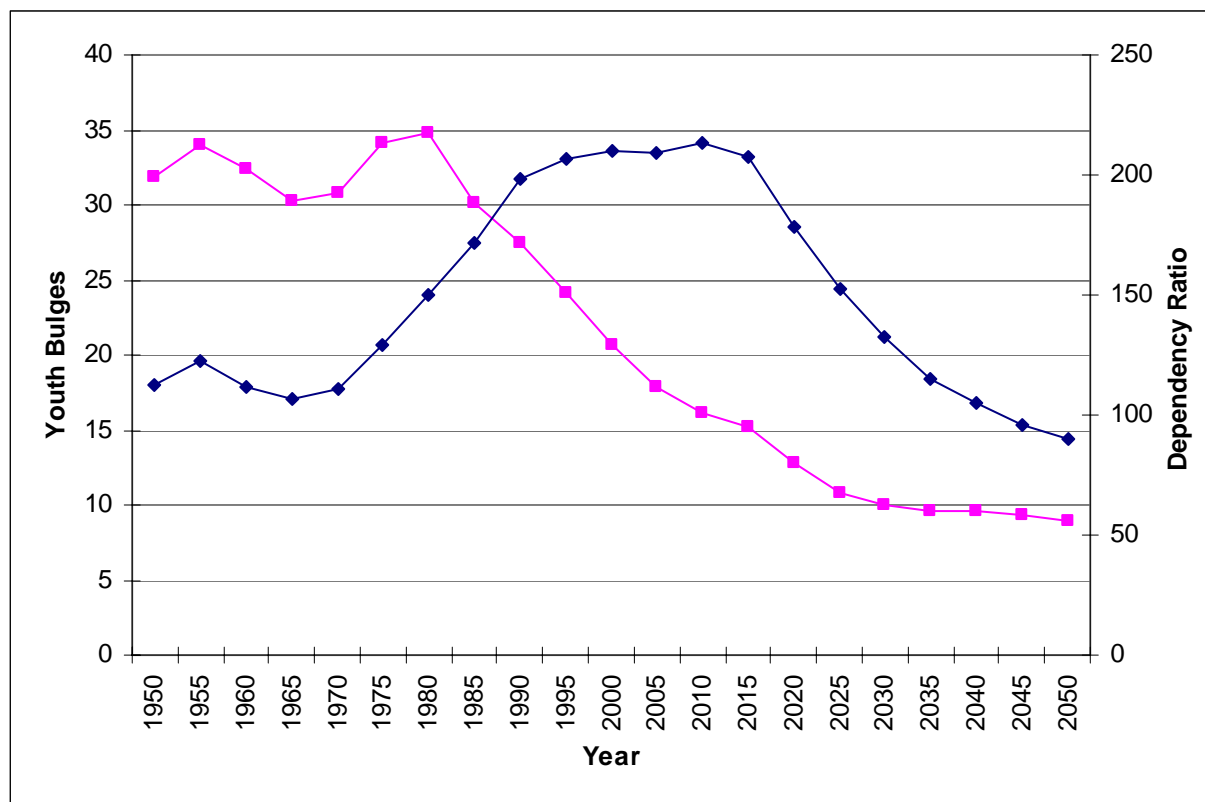
Qualifications

- No threshold values
- Robust for low-intensity conflict, not wars
- Demography is not destiny
- Governments hold the key
- Challenges: the evidence base is limited; lack of competent government

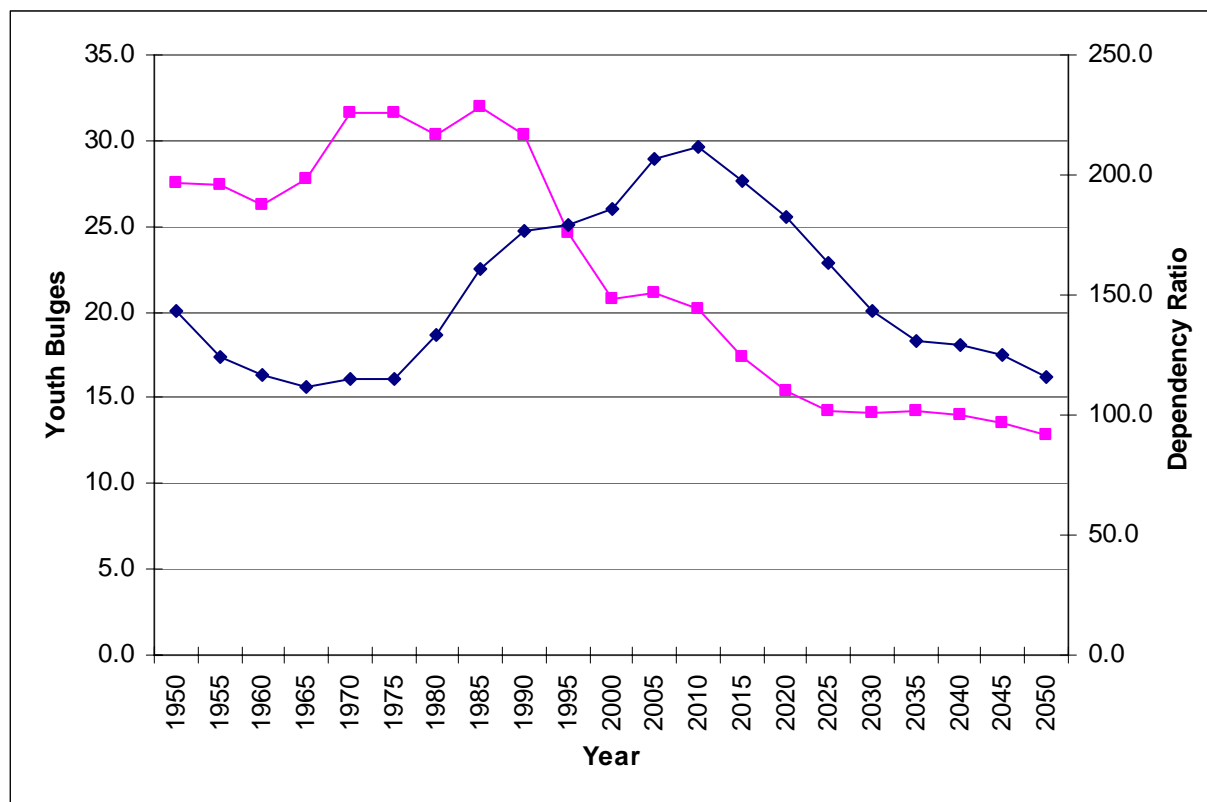
The Future of Youth Bulges

- Fertility and youth bulges decline universally
- As fertility declines, a demographic window of opportunity opens
- The realization of this opportunity is not given
- Many countries and regions will face a significant demographic challenge for decades to come

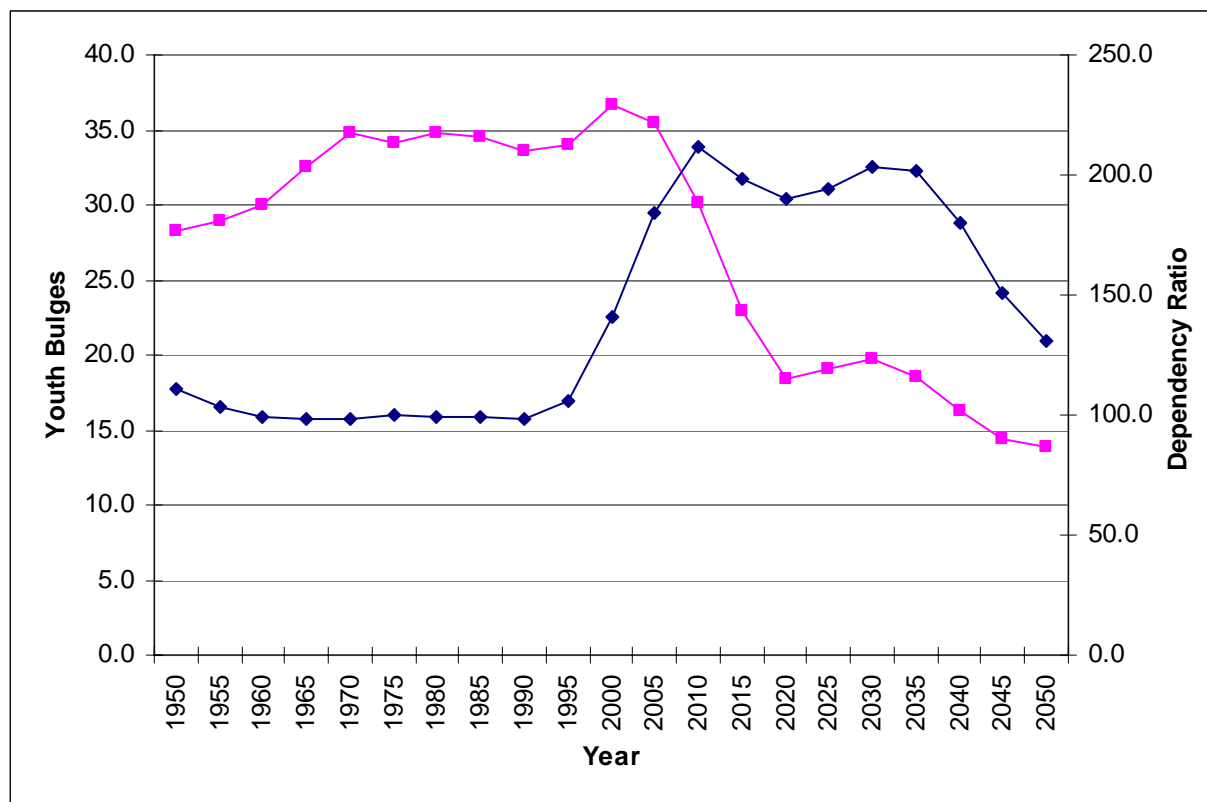
South Korea



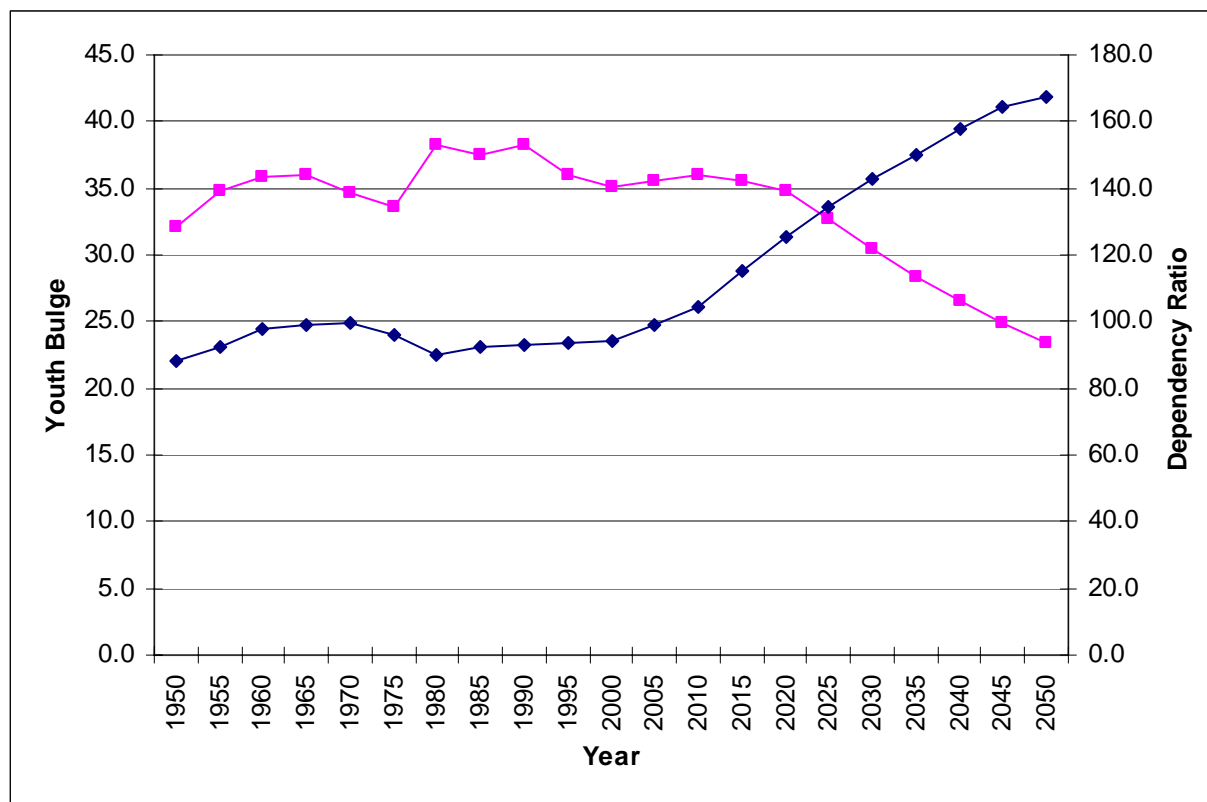
China



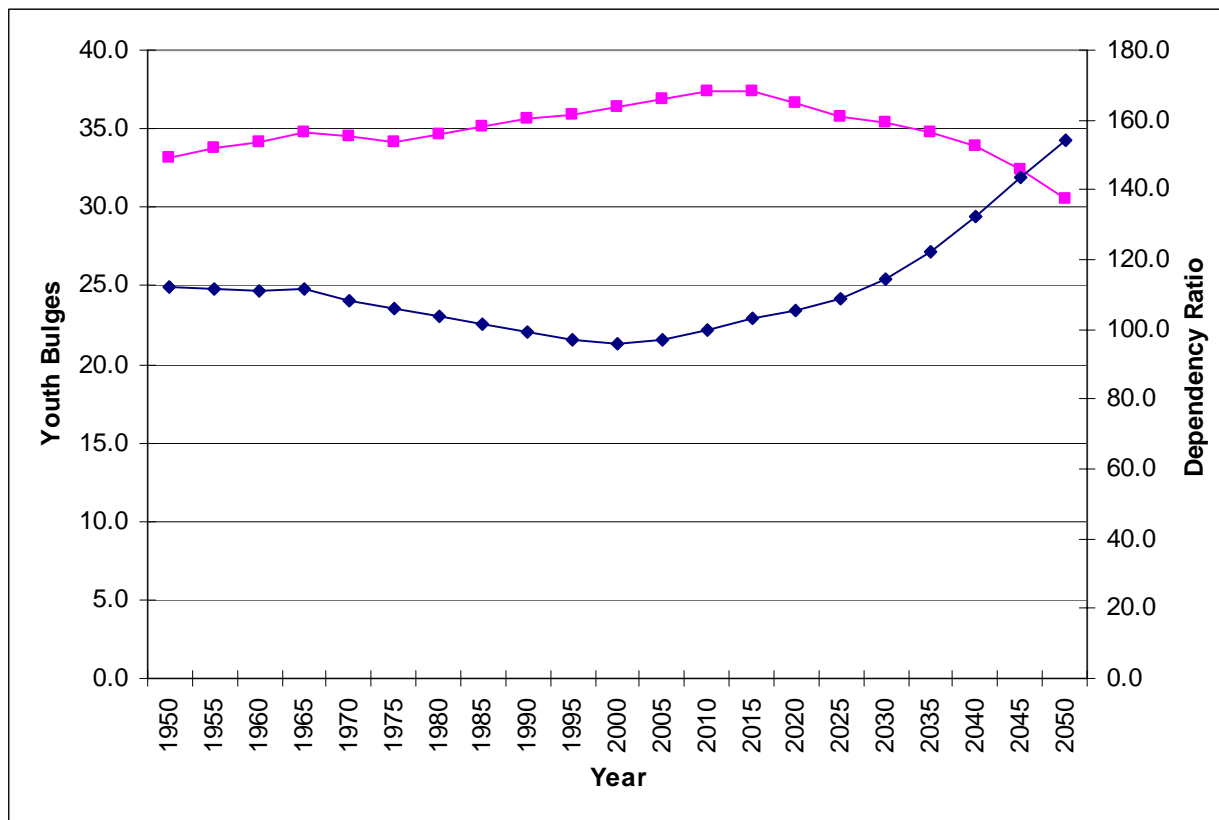
Iran



Palestine



Afghanistan



Future Research and Policy Priorities

- Youth and education
- Urban youth populations
- Youth and governance
- Assessments of youth programs