

PG / R+D
Rm 7607 HQS

W

Page Denied



Directorate of
Intelligence

~~Secret~~



25X1

RECORD COPY
Return to OCO/IMD/CB
Classified by:



25X1

The Youth Bulge: A Link Between Demography and Instability



25X1

A Research Paper

~~Secret~~

GI 86-10015
March 1986

Copy **648**

Page Denied



**Directorate of
Intelligence**

Secret

25X1

The Youth Bulge: A Link Between Demography and Instability

25X1

A Research Paper

25X1

Comments and queries are
welcome and may be addressed to the Chief,
Geography Division, OGI,

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret
*GI 86-10015
March 1986*

Secret




25X1

**The Youth Bulge:
A Link Between Demography
and Instability** 

25X1

Scope Note



This study is part of a continuing effort within the Directorate of Intelligence to develop indicators of political instability and insurgency. It provides a preliminary look at the relationships between population age structure and political unrest, focusing on growth in the size of the young adult population. We recognize that political instability is not caused by any single factor, and, through a series of country profiles, we examine how political and economic policies have either constrained or exaggerated the role of the "youth bulge" in instability. 

25X1

25X1

Secret

25X1

The Youth Bulge: A Link Between Demography and Instability

25X1

Summary

Information available
as of November 1985
was used in this report.

Social scientists have long postulated a relationship between the size of a nation's youth population and its degree of social instability. Although hampered by the lack of high-quality data and by the difficulty of differentiating between the effects of population and other destabilizing factors in specific cases, political scientists, historians, and journalists have sought to link population age with everything from street crime to revolution. The value of such a linkage, if it could be proved, to the Intelligence Community is that it could provide early warning of when and where to expect political strains. Whether or not such strains erupt into regime-threatening instability would depend on the ability of the government to achieve constructive mobilization of its youth, as well as on other societal factors.

On the basis of a preliminary examination of 49 countries and a more detailed study of 12 selected from the 49, we have established a relationship between the emergence of a "youth bulge" (20 percent or more of the population in the 15 to 24 age group) and political instability in a number of Third World countries. Political instability, ranging from riots to insurgency, tends to break out as the youth bulge emerges and to taper off as it subsides. This appears to be true not only of nations but of regions and ethnic groups within nations. Although significant instability can occur where no youth bulge is apparent, the youth bulge is almost always accompanied by some form of instability.

25X1

We have noted a number of countries that have recently developed youth bulges or will develop them in the next 10 years. All other things being equal, we would expect a significant increase in political instability in these countries:

- *Indonesia*, whose previous youth bulge was associated with the overthrow of the Sukarno regime, is now developing a second bulge that will peak around 1995.
- *Mexico's* youth bulge, which emerged in 1980, is projected to peak around 1990 at a very high level.
- *Nicaragua's* small youth bulge is projected to expand slowly but steadily over the next 20 years.
- *Bangladesh*, currently without a youth bulge, will develop one by 1990; by 1995, it will have the world's highest proportion of young adults.
- *Iraq, Egypt, Nepal, and El Salvador* are also expected to develop youth bulges by 1995.

Secret

GI 86-10015
March 1986

Secret



25X1

In general, however, the 1995 picture appears brighter than that of today. ~~Of the 49 countries studied, the number with youth bulges will drop from 24 in 1985 to 10 in 1995. The decline will be slow in countries such as India, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, the Philippines, and Algeria—possibly portending lingering instability—but will be rapid in Sri Lanka, South Korea, and Turkey.~~



25X1

Secret

Secret

25X1

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Scope Note	iii
Summary	v
Demography and Political Instability	1
Countries Selected for Analysis	1
Sri Lanka: Two Bulges, Two Insurgencies	2
Lebanon: Where Emigration Increases the Youth Bulge	2
Mexico, Peru, and Panama: The Slowly Emerging Threat	6
The Philippines: The Changing Location of the Youth Bulge	7
Iran and Nicaragua: The Never-Ending Bulges	8
Indonesia: The Generation Gap	9
Chile, Mozambique, and Nigeria: Bulgeless Instability	10
Policy Implications	12

Secret

Secret

25X1

The Youth Bulge

The analysis used in this research considers the fourth and fifth age cohorts, as commonly used by demographers, to constitute the young adult population. Census data on population age structure are most often reported in five-year age cohorts (ages 0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14, and so on). Demographers usually consider the fourth of these age cohorts (ages 15 to 19) to be the first that is nondependent—that is, the younger ages are not considered to be members of the labor force and are dependent on society for their survival. In all modern societies, some proportion of the young postpone their entry into the labor force to undertake secondary and postsecondary schooling; they would normally enter the labor force as members of the fifth age cohort (ages 20 to 24). By combining the fourth and fifth age cohorts, the analysis captures a large proportion of all those entering the labor force for the first time, often the first generation of those who are seeking their places in a modern national society instead of playing traditional roles in village society.

modernization, specifically from the importation of Western medical and public health technology leading to sharp declines in death rates. Initially, deaths prevented are most heavily concentrated among the newly born and young children so that demographic stress is placed first on institutions, such as primary schools, which provide services to the young. When this bulge reaches young adulthood, however, stress is exerted on the entire national social, economic, and political systems as young adults seek employment, educational opportunities, housing, or land.

Scholars describe the activities of the young adult cohorts as “mobilization” when they seek integration into the national framework. Unfortunately, an excessive youth bulge thwarts mobilization by outstripping the ability of most Third World societies to provide the desired integration. Above all else, young adults want to participate in active roles, and casting a ballot does not give the same feeling of participation as marching with a rifle.

25X1

25X1

25X1

The youth bulge comes from explosive population growth rates, which in the Third World derive from

Secret

viii

Secret

25X1

**The Youth Bulge:
A Link Between Demography
and Instability**

25X1

Demography and Political Instability

We believe that there is a clear, though indirect, relationship between the emergence of a "youth bulge" (defined as when 20 percent or more of the population occurs in the 15 to 24 age group) and political instability. The general linkages between the youth bulge and unrest have been established in numerous academic studies dealing with three important characteristics of the Third World: mobilization of the young to encourage national integration and identity, the revolution of rising expectations, and explosive population growth. Rapid population growth creates a bulge in the age structure of the population, and, when members of the bulge reach young adulthood and enter the labor force, they find limited opportunities in education, employment, and land-ownership. Resulting frustration and discontent among the young frequently are translated into demonstrations, riots, or insurgencies.

Not all causes of instability are population related, and some particularly strong or fortunate nations are able to survive the youth bulge with minimal conflict. Instability arising from external factors, such as foreign intervention, or from military coups may be unrelated to the youth bulge. Even when a particularly large bulge is present, resulting instability may be trivial if the means of dealing with the threat are available. Mauritius, for example, dealt with an exceptionally large bulge of young adults in the early 1960s by encouraging emigration to Britain, Australia, and Canada. Some economic systems may absorb additional labor even when new workers contribute little ("hidden unemployment"); a practice similar to featherbedding. For most Third World countries, however, neither out-migration nor hidden unemployment are adequate safety valves, and outbreaks of political instability are common outcomes.

Because of the relationship between population growth and political instability, demography gives us

a method for the long-range forecasting of political unrest. The stress exerted by the youth bulge is predictable as to duration, intensity, and location to the extent that demographic data are reliable, and the instability potential of other factors, such as ethnic, racial, or class tensions, is most likely to be realized during such periods of demographic stress.

25X1

25X1

Countries Selected for Analysis

We based our analysis of the youth bulge and instability on a preliminary study of 43 non-Communist developing countries with projected populations of 10 million or more by 1995. To this list were added Guatemala, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, and Ethiopia because of special US policy interests. Twenty-four of the 49 countries analyzed had youth bulges in 1985 (figure 1). Twenty-two of these 24 countries showed significant symptoms of instability, either current or recent, while those countries with low proportions of young adults (below 18.5 percent) were among the most stable in their regions of the world (Ivory Coast, Saudi Arabia, and Burma). As we expected, since not all instability stems from demographic factors, those countries with proportions of young adults between 18.5 and 20.0 percent offered a mixed pattern. Some (for example, Nigeria, Mozambique, and El Salvador) show clear evidence of instability, while others (for example, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Ecuador) are relatively stable. Mexico, one of the two cases of a youth bulge without associated instability, although currently exhibiting only sporadic and vague signs of unrest, has been targeted by previous instability reporting as an area of major concern during the 1983-93 period. Indonesia, the other exception, has just acquired a youth bulge, and it is too early to assess the relationship there between the current bulge and instability. Indonesia, however, experienced an earlier youth bulge related to a major episode of instability.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret



25X1

Twelve countries, nine of which have current youth bulges, were selected for detailed analysis according to several criteria:

- Current or continuing interest to US policymakers.
- The presence of clear evidence of political instability.
- Regional variation, so that the major areas of the Third World are represented in the analysis.
- Patterns of youth bulge development that are reasonably representative of youth bulges throughout the Third World.

have traditionally depended on the civil service and the professions for upward mobility, found themselves in the less favored position.

25X1
25X1

The Tamil youth bulge will fade after 1990 and will disappear by about 1995, although the communal hostility that has been aroused may fade more slowly. Recent violence, including Tamil terrorist acts against Sinhalese and the massacre of Tamil civilians by Sinhalese soldiers, has created a situation where the easing of demographic pressure may not be sufficient to defuse the conflict.



25X1
25X1
25X1

Sri Lanka: Two Bulges, Two Insurgencies

Sri Lanka's two major ethnic groups, dominant in separate areas of the country, experienced youth bulges at different times, and these bulges are associated with separate Sinhalese and Tamil insurgencies. The Sinhalese, concentrated in the southwest, produced a youth bulge that peaked about 1970; the bulge of the Tamils, dominant in the northeast, emerged in the late 1970s and will reach its highest point in 1990 (figure 2). The Sinhalese insurgency occurred in the southwest and peaked in 1971; the current Tamil insurgency is concentrated in the northeast. An academic study showed that Sinhalese insurgents consisted entirely of youths between the ages of 17 and 25.

Lebanon: Where Emigration Increases the Youth Bulge

Lebanon's youth bulge, which developed between 1975 and 1980, will increase until 1990, at which time more than 22 percent of the population may be in the 15 to 24 age group (figure 3). Although there is no recent official demographic data for Lebanon, we believe that our estimates—based on contract studies—are conservative. The out-migration of many Christians implies that, if only Muslims in the Lebanese population are considered, the bulge would be even greater—perhaps as much as a third of the Lebanese Islamic population by 1990, a figure more than 50 percent greater than that for any other national population.

25X1
25X1

Government policy that favored one ethnic group over another amplified the effect of the youth bulges. The initial Sinhalese bulge, occurring at a time when relict British influences seemed to favor Tamils, created a situation where unprecedented large numbers of Sinhalese young adults felt discriminated against. Lacking access to the best English-language secondary schools, they found higher educational opportunities elusive, and thus were denied access to the professions and middle-range civil service positions. The insurgency led to policies—such as preferences for Sinhalese for university admission and public employment and the establishment of Sinhala as the official language—that accelerated movement toward a Sinhalese-dominated society. By the time the second bulge, concentrated among the Tamils in the northeast, developed, laws and public policies favoring the Sinhalese were in place. This time, the Tamils, who

According to UN estimates, Lebanon's total population declined between 1975 and 1985, while the number of youths in the population increased, producing a substantial rise in the proportion they constitute of the total population. Population decline occurred because emigration, since 1975 averaging about 50,000 per year (about 80 percent of whom are Christians), exceeded additions to the population arising from high birthrates among the Islamic elements. The number of both men and women between 40 and 49 and of children under 15 declined markedly in the Lebanese population between 1975 and 1985, a pattern that suggests the emigrants were predominantly older adults accompanied by their young children (figure 4). Their departure from the country reinforced the tendency toward a young adult bulge already present.

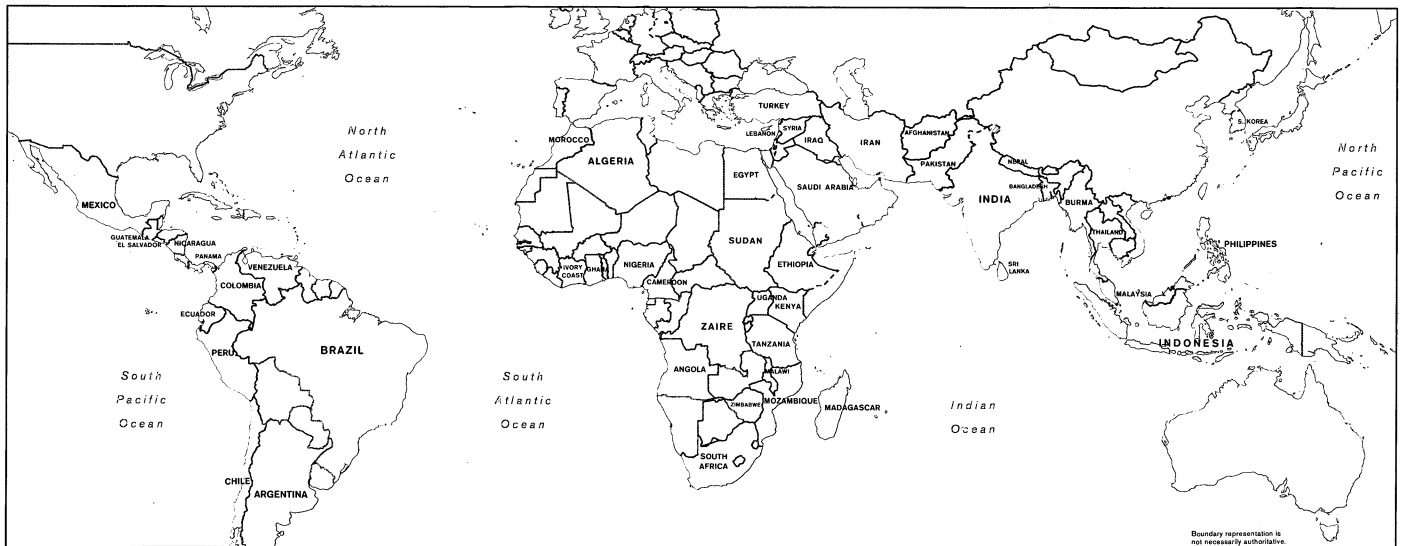
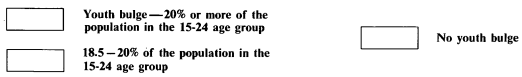
25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

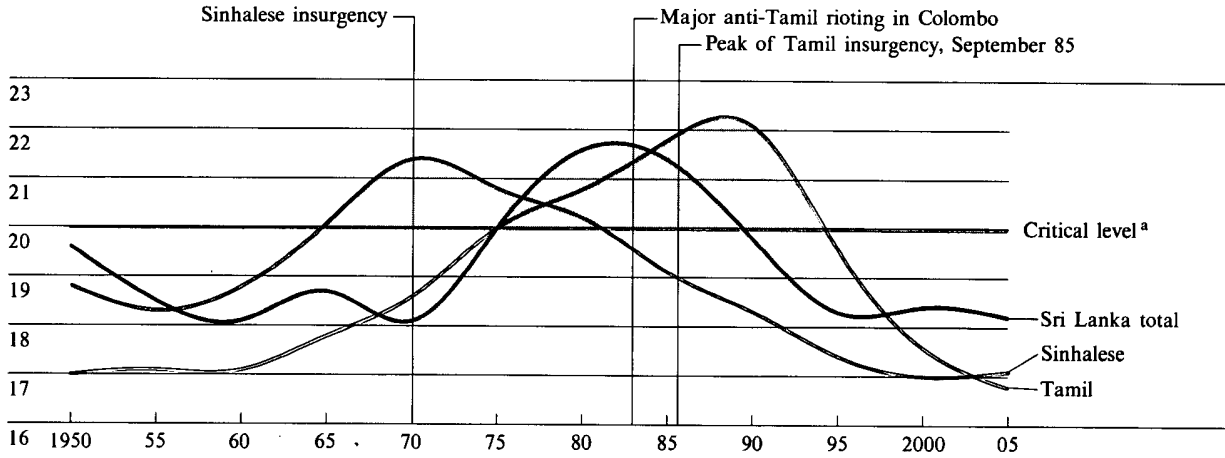
Figure 1
The Youth Bulge, 1985



Secret

Figure 2
Sri Lanka: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



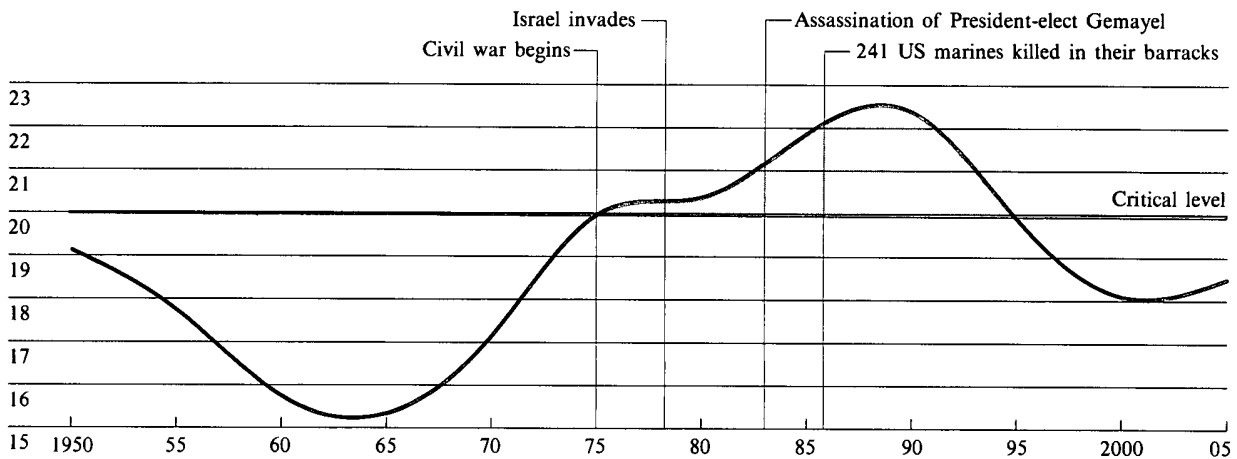
^a The critical level is the point at which youths make up 20 percent or more of the population.

308168 2-86

25X1

Figure 3
Lebanon: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



308169 2-86

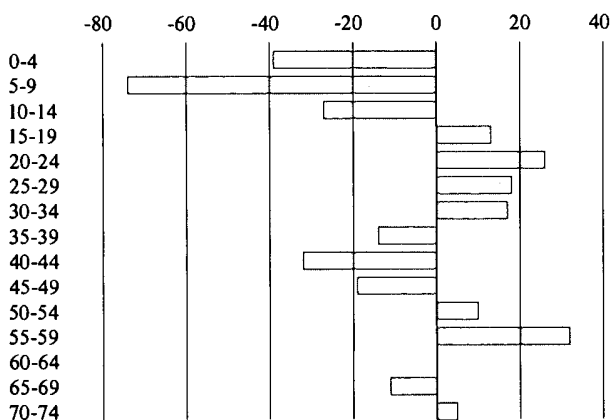
25X1

Secret

Secret

Figure 4
Lebanon: Change in Age Groups,
1975-85

Thousand persons (net change=-19,000)



[Redacted]

308170 2-86

The composition of Lebanon's youth bulge portends continued grim prospects for political stability because it appears to have been largely the product of a single ethnic group, the Shia Muslims. The Shia young adults, who are at the bottom of the economic ladder—less well educated, housed, and clothed than their Christian, Druze, or Sunni countrymen—offer a huge unskilled labor supply to an economy that cannot absorb it. The presence of a labor surplus, moreover, will tend to depress the wages of those fortunate enough to find employment. The alienation of Shia youth, along with their growing numerical dominance of Lebanon, contributes to a situation ripe for continued outbreaks of unrest.

Scattered data from Palestinian refugee areas suggest the possibility that Palestinians have developed a separate youth bulge that peaked around the 22-percent level between 1980 and 1985. However that

may be, the presence of an estimated 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon—not included in the calculation of Lebanon's youth bulge—directly promotes political instability. The presence of a foreign group, equal to nearly 20 percent of Lebanon's population, creates yet another obstacle to national integration.

[Redacted]

25X1

National policy has contributed to the frustration felt by the Islamic youth bulge by institutionalizing census procedures that produce an apparent Christian majority and justify a proportionate participation in government far outweighing the Christian share of the actual in-country population (now estimated at about 25 percent).

25X1

25X1

Mexico, Peru, and Panama:
The Slowly Emerging Threat

Several Latin American countries exhibit a similar pattern of emerging youth bulges: a slowly expanding young adult population beginning in the early 1960s, reaching the 20-percent level during the 1980s, and disappearing by the late 1990s. There are early indications that instability may be growing in all these countries.

25X1

25X1

The languid pace with which the youth bulge has emerged in Mexico probably promotes less destabilization than would a smaller bulge that emerged more rapidly (figure 5). Mexico's political system—essentially a single party encompassing a broad political spectrum—is remarkably resilient and, given the ample response time provided by the gradual expansion of the youth bulge, is in a favorable position to respond. The most salient feature of the response is the continuing migration of a portion of the youth bulge to the United States, which provides Mexico with a demographic "safety valve." In this case, mobilization of the youth bulge so as to minimize instability has been accomplished not so much by policy as by the absence of policy; the de la Madrid government, and its predecessors, have treated substantial northward emigration with benign neglect.

25X1

25X1

25X1

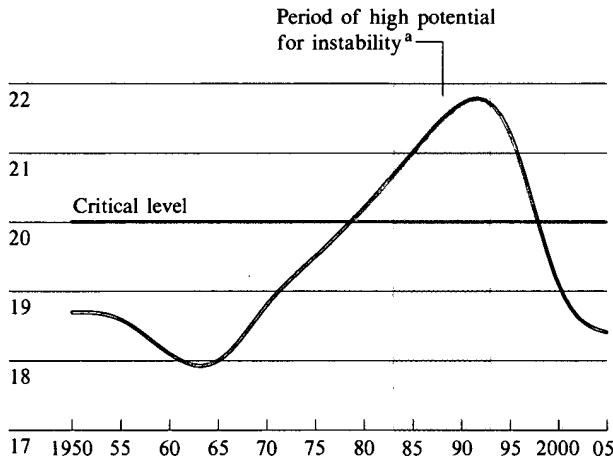
[Redacted]

Secret

Secret

Figure 5
Mexico: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24

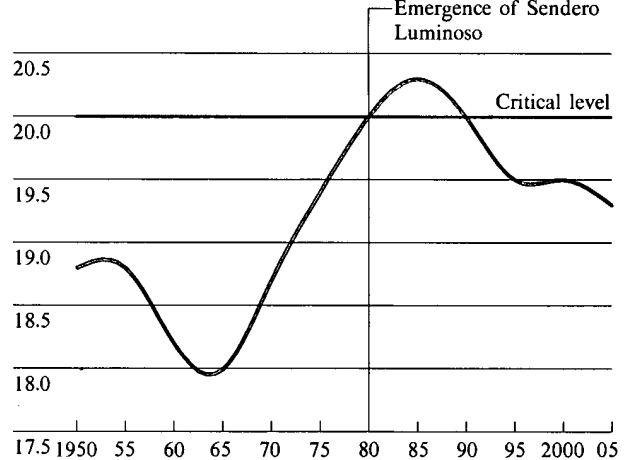


^a See National Intelligence Estimate 81-84 (Secret NF NC OC), 25 April 1984, *Outlook for Mexico*.

308171 2-86

Figure 6
Peru: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



308172 2-86

Peru's small youth bulge emerged in 1980, at the same time as the emergence of the Sendero Luminoso (SL), Peru's principal insurgent group, and will disappear after 1990 (figure 6). SL activity shows a steady increase from 1980 through 1984, corresponding to the expansion of the youth bulge. Embassy reporting indicates that the SL is an almost ideal example of an insurgent group spawned by the youth bulge. Its members are 15 to 25, often with above-average education. Captured members cite frustration with their inability to obtain employment commensurate with their educational levels as a principal reason for joining.

Panama's youth bulge, which peaked at about 21 percent in 1985, appears to coincide with a degree of political instability (figure 7). Press and US Embassy reporting since 1980, corresponding to the emergence of the youth bulge, shows a gradual escalation in demonstrations, political killings, and other indications of instability. The September 1985 ouster of President Barletta, though coinciding with the youth

bulge peak, appears to have been largely unrelated to demographic pressure, while street demonstrations in the wake of the ouster bear the mark of the youth bulge in action.

The youth bulge in Panama will begin to diminish by 1990, and by 2005 the young adult population will reach the norm for developed countries. Such a steep decline, shared only by Indonesia among the countries analyzed for this study, will sharply reduce demographic pressure generating instability.

The Philippines: The Changing Location of the Youth Bulge

The increase in the proportion of the Filipino young adult population has been dramatically sudden, and the speed with which it made its appearance has left the government and the economy unable to cope effectively with it (figure 8). As recently as 1965, the proportion of youths in the Philippine population was

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

Figure 7
Panama: Youth Bulge

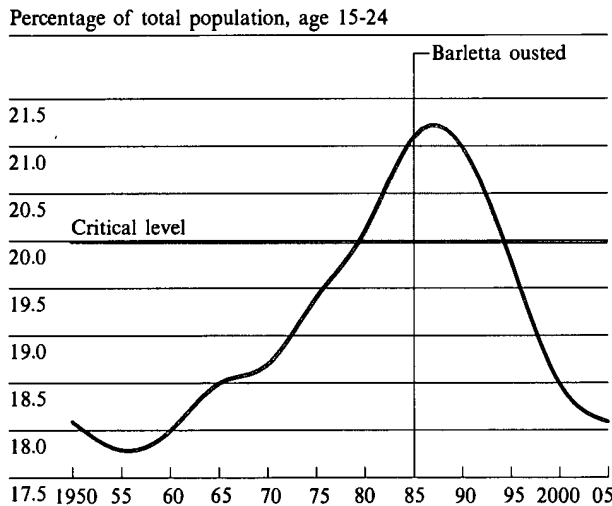
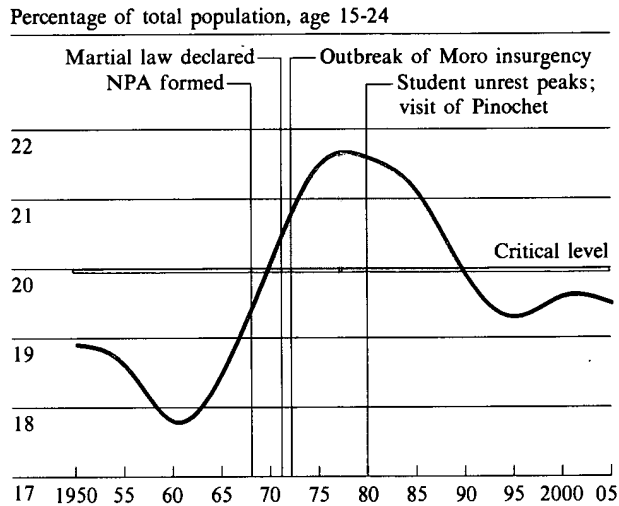


Figure 8
Philippines: Youth Bulge



308173 2-86

only slightly larger than the norm for a developed country. By 1970, however, more than 20 percent of the population was made up of young adults, and their impact had become apparent. Today's insurgent leaders are predominantly former students from the early 1970s, recruited to membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or in the New Peoples' Army (NPA) from a societal context in which unemployment rates grew increasingly great and the opportunities for social mobility ever more elusive. The emergence of the youth bulge coincided with the declaration of martial law by the Marcos regime, and the bulge reached its maximum around 1980, corresponding to increasing Communist domination of the countryside and student unrest.

The youth bulge will start to dissipate by 1990, but the threat to stability will probably continue beyond that date. Unlike the age structure patterns of Latin American countries, where the typical bulge quickly evaporates, the bulge in the Philippines has been more protracted (20 years, versus 10 to 15 years in most of Latin America). This sustained demographic pressure has been one factor, along with government policy restricting political opposition to the Marcos regime,

308174 2-86

in creating a favorable environment for insurgent groups to organize, recruit, and gain control over a substantial portion of the country.

The youth bulge, which was predominantly urban based before 1984, is now becoming increasingly rural, a transformation that may reduce the quality of the leadership within insurgent groups (figure 9). Although insurgent operational bases are located in rural areas, a substantial proportion of leaders, and perhaps a significant number of trained personnel generally, are educated urbanites who have "taken to the hills" in opposition to the government. The potential pool of support among young urbanites in the Philippines is now drying up and will be substantially reduced in 20 years.

Iran and Nicaragua: The Never-Ending Bulges

Iran and Nicaragua are unusual cases because their youth bulges have emerged since 1975 and will continue to grow slowly through the entire period projected by current population studies (figures 10 and 11). Only catastrophic events, such as the decimation of young males in combat, could reduce the youth bulge below the 20-percent level before 2010.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

Figure 9
Philippines: Rural and Urban Youth Bulges

Youths age 10-25 as a percentage of total population

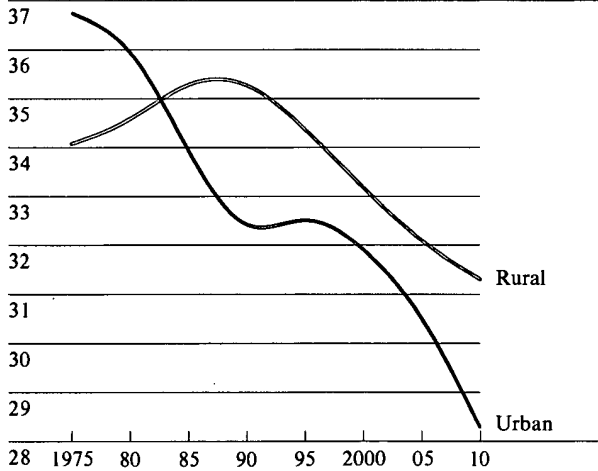
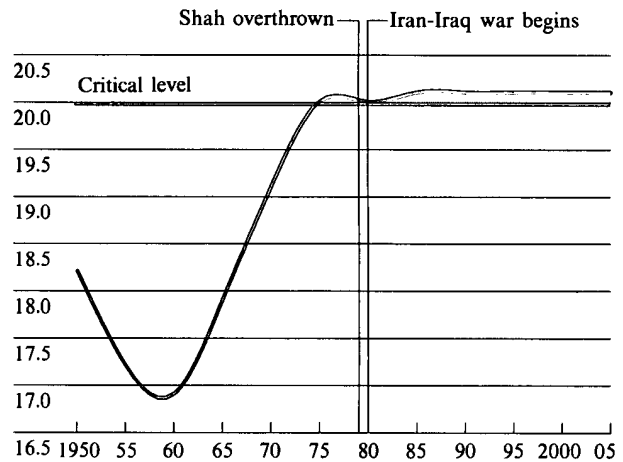


Figure 10
Iran: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



[Redacted]

25X1

308175 2-86

It appears that both countries have turned the youth bulge to the task of eliminating perceived "enemies of the state" in conflicts that seem interminable. While it is clear that neither the Iran-Iraq war nor the Sandinista-Contra conflict was initiated with the idea of absorbing the youth bulge, both accomplish that end. The wholesale conscription of young adults in Iran and Nicaragua accomplishes the absorption of youth into the national fabric. While new regimes always target the young for indoctrination, in both Iran and Nicaragua more than education or mere symbolic involvement is involved. Mobilization of the youth bulge was central to the uprisings that brought both Khomeini and the Sandinistas to power, and both regimes probably fear that at least a portion of their volatile youth could turn against them.

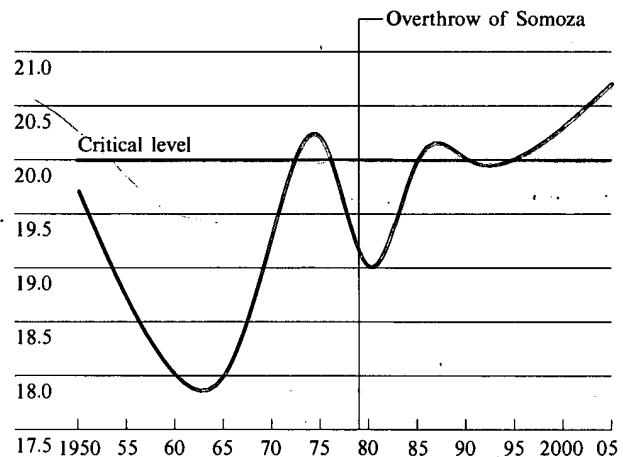
Indonesia: The Generation Gap

Indonesia's youth bulge first developed in 1950, reached its maximum around 1967, disappeared, re-emerged in 1985, and will reach a new—and considerably higher—peak around 1990 (figure 12). The original appearance of the youth bulge in the early independence period created a problem for the Sukarno regime, which was unable to provide employment

308176 2-86

Figure 11
Nicaragua: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



25X1

25X1

Note: The 1975 bulge is associated with the ouster of Somoza in 1979, but was immediately followed by the outmigration of youth as reflected in the trough of 1980.

308177 2-86

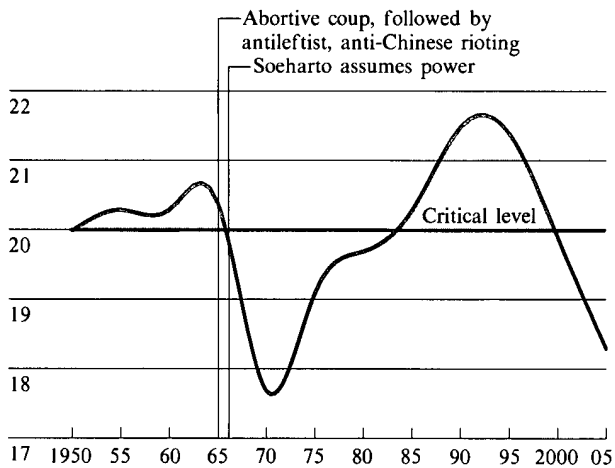
25X1

Secret

Secret

Figure 12
Indonesia: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



308178 2-86

and education for hundreds of thousands of youths. Sukarno attempted to mobilize this group with the idea that their role was to protect the country from foreign and domestic enemies. It is doubly ironic that it was members of the youth bulge, both students and military, who overthrew Sukarno and were themselves decimated by the purges that followed. By 1970 young adults were sparse in the Indonesian population, in part because of nearly 600,000 deaths in the anti-Chinese, antileftist riots occurring in the wake of Sukarno's ouster.

The potential impact of Indonesia's second youth bulge, now entering the scene, is both aggravated and lessened by certain government policies and cultural traditions. Since independence, Indonesia has made education the linchpin of its policy for economic development. An important aspect of educational policy has been the introduction of Bahasa Indonesia, a language bearing little similarity to the many regional tongues of the country, as the medium of

instruction. The traditional languages of Indonesia are spoken with different inflections, according to the social status or authority of the person being addressed. Bahasa Indonesia ignores these distinctions, thereby helping to create an especially broad generational gap between members of the youth bulge, who use the new language, and older Indonesians, who use the traditional languages. Partially offsetting these tendencies is the existence of a centralist government in Indonesia that has developed as a result of previous popular rejections of threats from both the left and the right. Government political ideology, probably the most common target of youth protest worldwide, is not a major issue.

The reemergence of the Indonesian youth bulge in 1985 bodes ill for the country over the next decade. Since the Sukarno years, per capita income in Indonesia has more than doubled and the country has made major advances in creating a coherent state from disparate islands and cultures. Despite the gains, however, Indonesia remains a poor country, and its ability to absorb the new youth bulge without the outbreak of unrest is doubtful.

Chile, Mozambique, and Nigeria: Bulgeless Instability
The youth bulge appears always to result in at least some instability, but not all instability results from the youth bulge as demonstrated by the cases of Chile, Mozambique, and Nigeria. Chile maintained a long tradition of political stability—until the coup in 1973 that overthrew the Marxist regime of Salvador Allende—without a youth bulge present (figure 13). Opposition to the Allende regime came from the upper and middle class, as well as from the military, without any obvious participation by young adults. Classic military coups, such as Chile's, can occur without the support of youth; organized youth groups were evident in Chile during the 1960s and early 1970s, but in support of Allende or of causes embraced by the Allende regime. Chile experienced a small and short-lived youth bulge that seems to correspond with increasing pressure on the Pinochet regime.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

10

Secret

Figure 13
Chile: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24

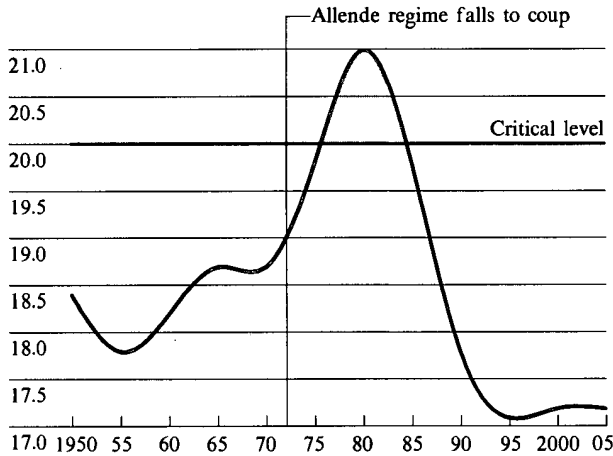
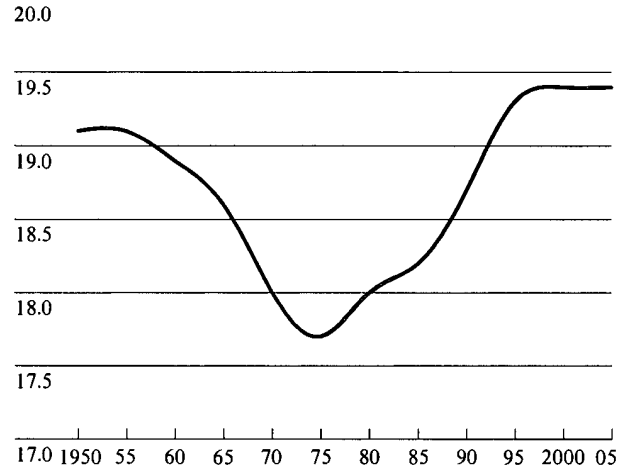


Figure 14
Mozambique: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



308179 2-86

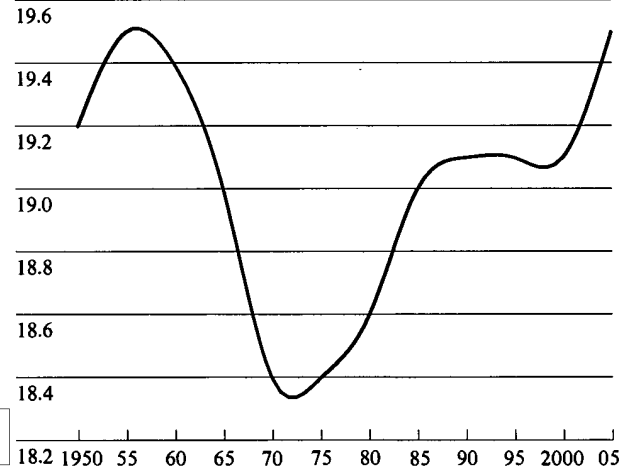
Mozambique and Nigeria, both currently experiencing high levels of political instability, have not developed youth bulges, nor are bulges projected for the future (figures 14 and 15). The percentage of young adults in the populations of both countries has remained consistently high since 1950, but below the 20-percent level. Given the heavy involvement throughout Sub-Saharan Africa in traditional agriculture and the corresponding lack of modernization, it is likely that the economic infrastructure throughout the region is so fragile that demographic pressure arising from the youth bulge may be applied well below the 20-percent level. Age structure data derived from most African censuses, moreover, are highly unreliable because traditional groups tend to measure the passage of time in ways unrelated to the Western calendar. Respondents to census forms often do not know their ages, and their answers may reflect a variety of influencing factors.

While this analysis does not reveal the presence of a youth bulge in Nigeria, the government in 1983 took action that substantially reduced the size of the resident young adult population. The Shagari admin-

308180 2-86

Figure 15
Nigeria: Youth Bulge

Percentage of total population, age 15-24



308181 2-86

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret



25X1
25X1

istration ordered the expulsion of all illegal immigrants, most of whom were young adults from other West African countries, principally from Ghana. This action removed some 2 million people from Nigeria, one of the largest short-term migrations in modern history. Nigeria's reasons for the expulsion seem mainly to have involved concerns over the shortage of jobs for young Nigerians in Lagos and other urban areas, a common manifestation of a youth bulge. The extreme action taken by the Nigerian Government could not fail to alleviate demographic pressure from a youth bulge, if one existed, or to prevent its emergence.

institutions and demands policy response. Effective national family planning programs are likely to be a response to the youth bulge, and they have probably been a major factor in the reduction of the number of countries with youth bulges from 24 in 1985 to only 10 in 1995 (figure 16). The response, however, comes too late to avoid much of the demographic pressure associated with political unrest.

25X1

Policy Implications



There are no easy or universal solutions, but, if the explosive potential of the youth bulge is to be contained, new policies must address the successful mobilization of youth so that their integration into the national fabric can be achieved. Since World War II, attention of policymakers in the United States and more recently in LDCs has focused mainly on rapid population growth, and the policy outcome has been the creation of national and international programs aimed at reducing birthrates. Although family planning programs will avert longer range problems, they have no effect on existing Third World youth bulges; young adults making up the bulges have already been born. In Iran, Bangladesh, and Nicaragua, where the youth bulges are projected to continue indefinitely, the creation or expansion of family planning programs could have an effect on political stability arising from demographic factors, but this effect would not be felt before the year 2000.

Since 1980 Third World nations have increasingly developed population policies that deal with the relocation of people, rather than with birthrates, to the point where there are now more countries with explicit relocation policies than with family planning programs. This policy has potential for dealing with the youth bulge, but it also has limitations. In Indonesia, for example, policy favors the settlement of islands other than Java, and the policy can be seen as a means of mobilizing the youth bulge to the frontier, much like the notion of "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." The Indonesian scheme, and similar ideas in other countries, has achieved mixed success at best. Young people seek a role in the future of the country, and the sparsely occupied regions seem to offer little future.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Emigration by young adults can help to reduce the pressure exerted by the youth bulge, but it is doubtful that legal migration to foreign areas can play a significant role in most countries. Receiving countries favor the immigration of the older adults, particularly the more affluent and the better educated, and their young dependents, rather than those in the young adult ages. Immigration policies of this sort actually accentuate the effects of the youth bulge, as was the case in Lebanon. On the other hand, illegal immigration, such as the movement of Mexicans and Central Americans to the United States, directly reduces the pressure of the youth bulge in the source countries, but presents a dilemma to the receiving countries: does the benefit derived from the probable reduction of instability within the sending country outweigh the cost of absorbing these migrants within the receiving country?

25X1

The existence of the youth bulge carries with it, at least in part, the seeds of its own correction. Nations are unlikely to respond to problems until they have an impact at the national level. An increase in the number of infants and young children hits principally at the family level, and the increase may provoke only a limited policy response, or no response at all. When the increased number of "infants and children" grow older, producing the youth bulge, the burden of rapid population growth threatens the stability of national

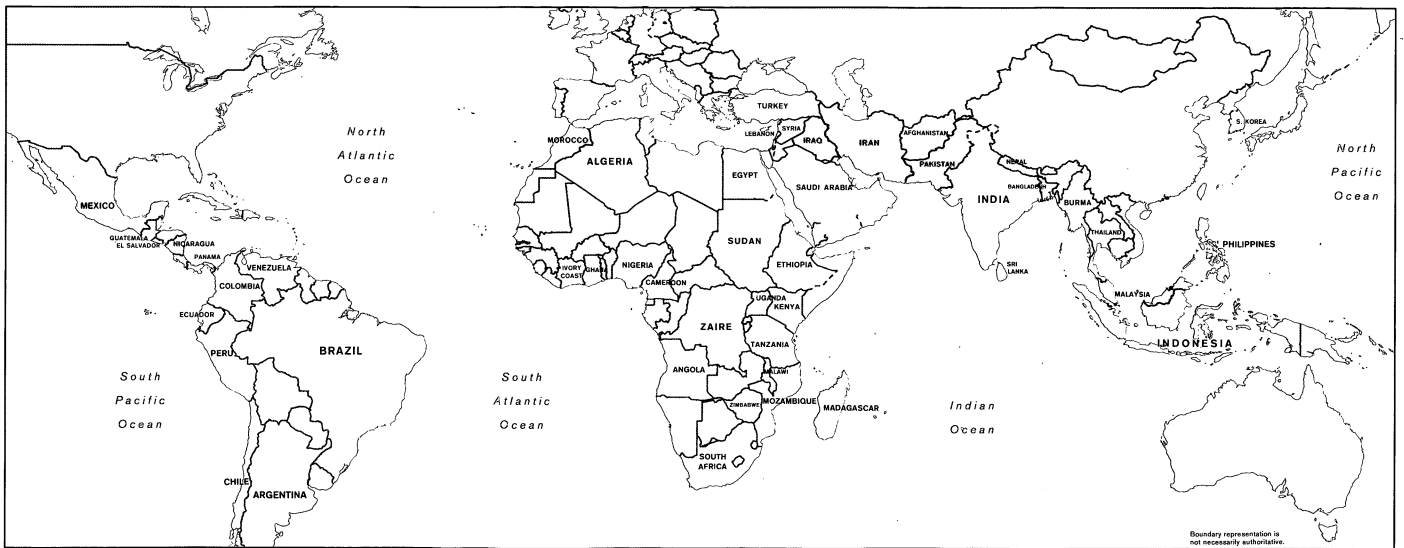
25X1
25X1



Secret

Figure 16
The Youth Bulge, 1995

- Youth bulge—20% or more of the population in the 15-24 age group
- 18.5—20% of the population in the 15-24 age group
- No youth bulge



Secret

Secret