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BLOOMBERG
SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC HEALTH

Family Demography

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Objectives of This Lecture

- At the end of the lecture and the accompanying readings, students will be able to:
 - Define a demographic approach to the study of the family
 - Consider demographic trends relevant to the family in more developed countries
 - Consider demographic trends relevant to the family in less developed countries



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Section A

What Is a Demographic Approach to the Family?

What Is a Demographic Approach to the Family?

- Interest in how vital rates and population distribution affect kinship structures
 - Use of demographic methods to study family behavior
- Interest in how kinship structure affects vital rates and population distribution

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Social Scientists: Two Perspectives on the Family

- A “macro” perspective
 - Study family and kinship structure
 - ▶ Co-residence
 - ▶ Timing of marriage, divorce, parenthood
 - ▶ Spacing of children
- Health researchers who take a macro perspective
 - Use family structure as predictors of health outcomes
 - ▶ Do children from single-parent families have poorer health?
 - Use health to predict family structure
 - ▶ Are healthy people more likely to marry?

What Are the Outcomes or Predictors?

- What are the outcomes or predictors in these macro studies?
 - Polygynous vs. monogamous marriage
 - Single-parent vs. two-parent family
 - Intergenerational exchange
 - ▶ Co-residence of parents and adult children
 - ▶ Extended vs. nuclear households

Defining the Outcomes or Predictors in These Studies

- How do the outcomes or predictors in these studies get defined?
 - Some model of what “families” and “households” are
 - ▶ Almost always implicit
 - ▶ When explicit, generally thought of as a normative scheme

Assumption (Implicit or Explicit)

- The group being studied has a culturally and historically specific set of kinship rules, which may be formal (written into the law) or informal, or a mixture, and which could be accurately described by any legitimate and competent group member under the right kind of questioning

This Is True, But ...

- There is a very complex relationship between a particular set of kinship rules and a particular schedule of fertility, mortality, marriage rates, and migration levels
 - Demographic rates affect kinship structure
 - Kinship structure affects demographic rates

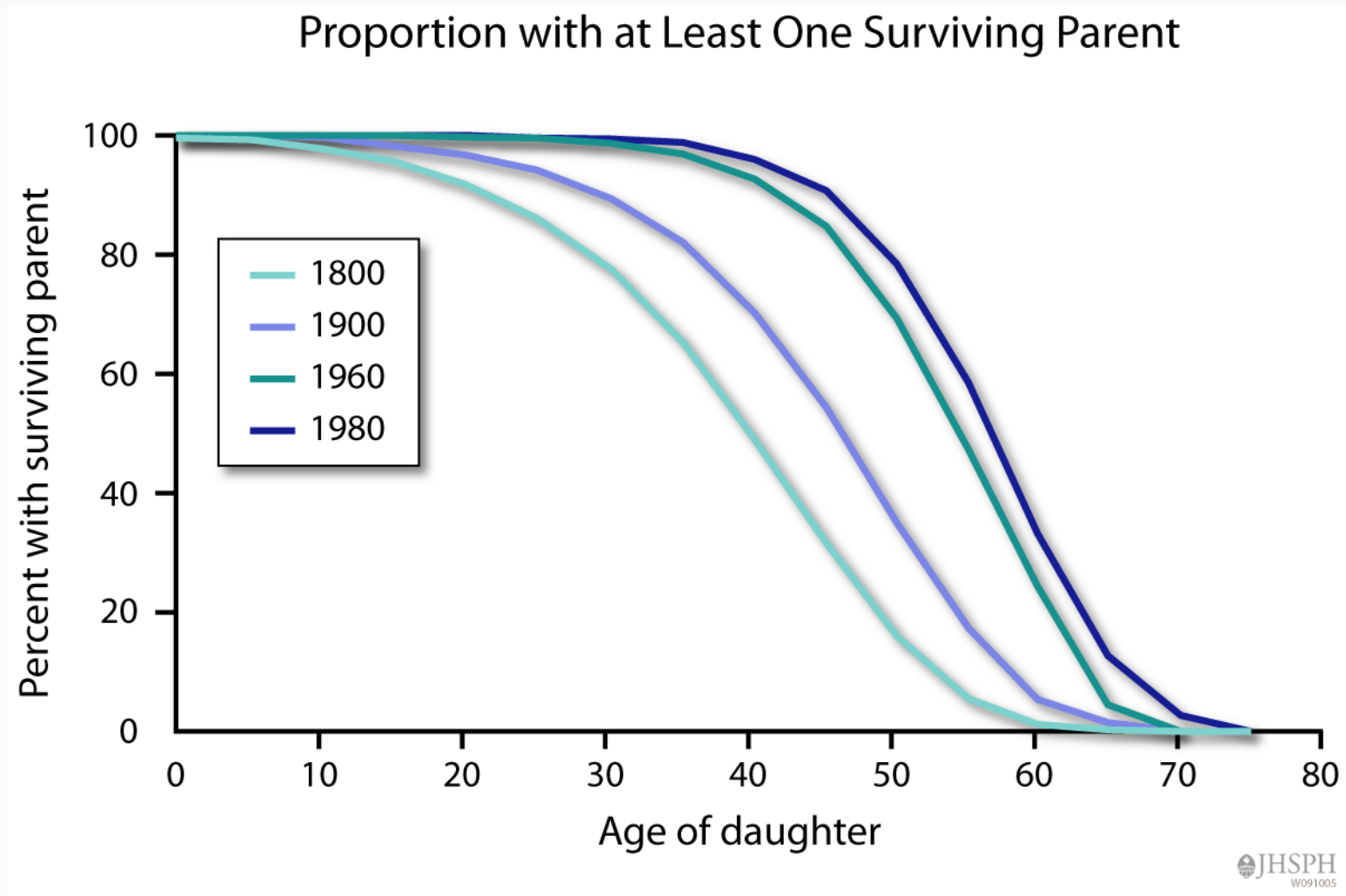
How Demographic Behavior Affects Kinship Structures

- Changes in demographic rates (fertility decline, epidemiological transition, rural-to-urban migration, immigration) can put kinship systems under intense pressure and can bring about social change

Watkins and Her Colleagues

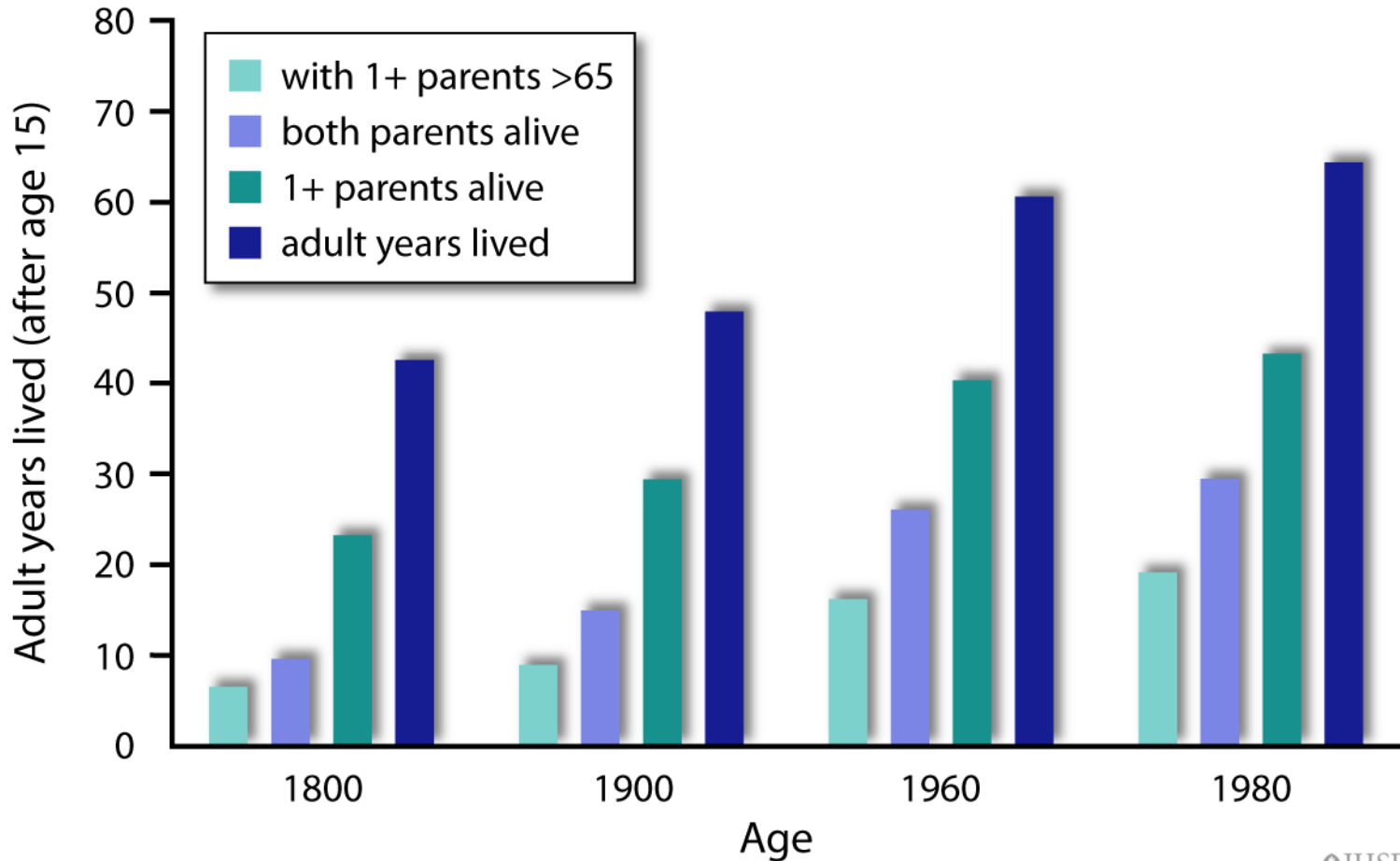
- Life table methods
 - Multiple increment-decrement life tables
 - Took schedule of mortality, fertility, marriage, divorce, and re-marriage rates for 1800, 1900, 1960, and 1980
 - ▶ Assuming they held for a cohort of 100,000 born
 - ▶ Calculated various life table quantities (average number of years lived in different states (e.g., daughter) under these different rates

Proportion with At Least One Surviving Parent



Years Lived: One Parent, Both Parents, Parent over 65

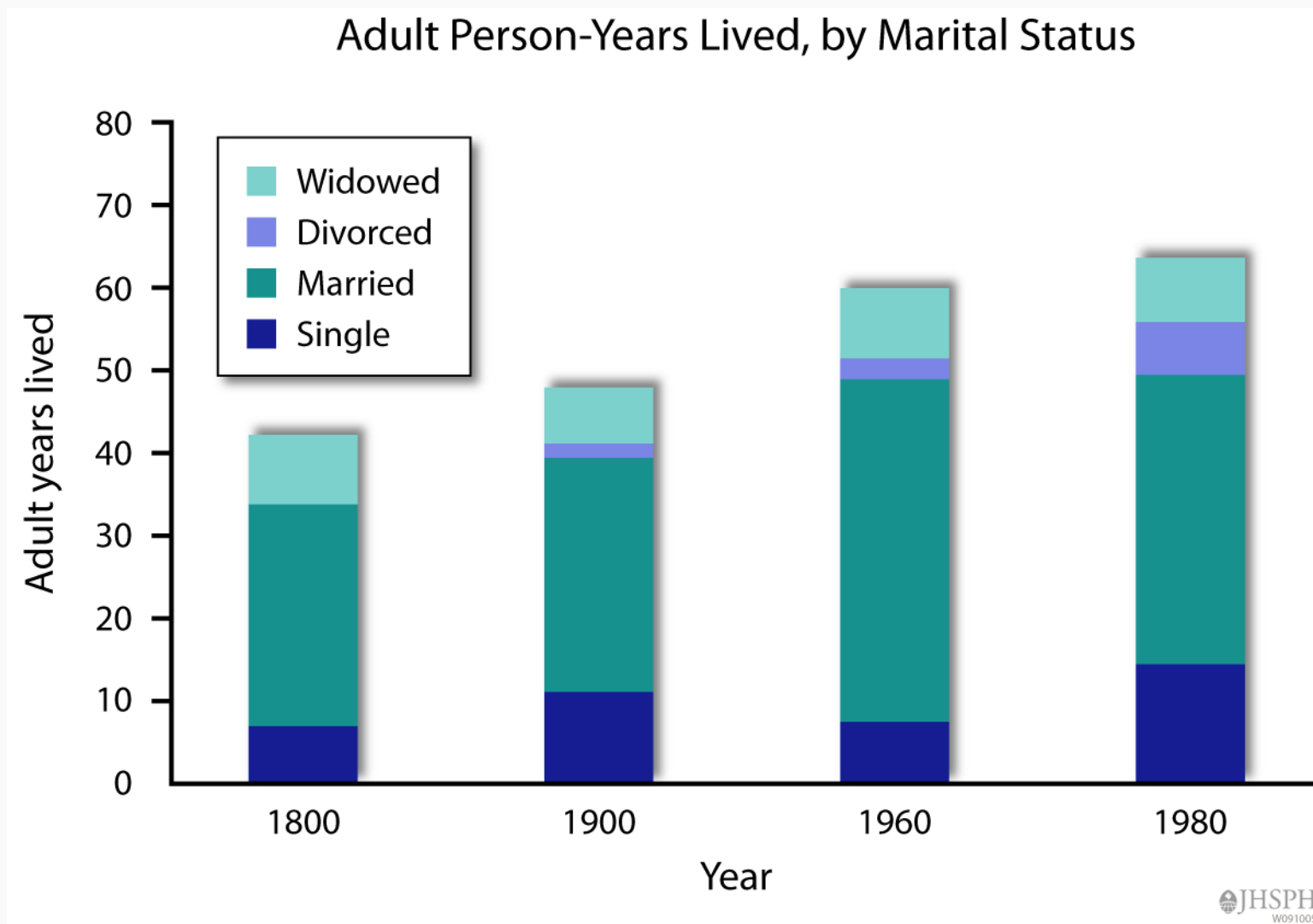
Adult Years Lived: Total, with at Least One Surviving Parent, with Both Parents Alive, and with at Least One Parent Over 65



Changed Role of Being an “Adult Child”

- Obligations (on both sides) go on much longer
- Benefits (on both sides) go on much longer
- Happened simultaneously with a decline in fertility, so obligations on parent side reduced and on child side increased

Adult Person-Years Lived, by Marital Status



Changes in Marital Behavior

- Number of years married rose from 27 to 42 and then declined to 35
 - Rising age at marriage and increase in divorce totally overcome by declining death rates
- Puts enormous strains on married couples
 - In 1800, a certain number of “bad” marriages ended by death before they could consider divorce

- Observed changes in co-residence between elderly parents and children in three Asian societies
- Interpreted as change in norm of co-residence
 - Actually, no change whatever in propensity of widows (male or female) to live with children
 - Declining mortality meant elderly were living longer as married couples and being widowed at older ages

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How Does Kinship Structure Affect Demographic Rates?

- Late marriage in Europe caused low natural fertility

How Does Kinship Structure Affect Demographic Rates?

- Polygyny lowers fertility



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Section B

Trends in More Developed Countries

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“Second” Demographic Transition

- Obviously is actually the “nth” demographic transition, however ...
- Refers to a set of changes in sexual behavior, contraceptive behavior, living arrangements, marriage, fertility, and employment that results in:
 - Delays in fertility and marriage
 - Increases in cohabitation, divorce, and nonmarital childbearing
 - Increases in the employment of mothers, particularly the mothers of very young children (i.e., under age 3)

Reasons?

- Many have been put forth
 - Individualism
 - Secularism
 - Feminism
 - Contraceptive technology
 - Decline of manufacturing
 - Policies about public provision for the poor

Result of the Nth Demographic Transition

- Very large changes in children's living arrangements
 - No indication that this is good for children (although data that it is bad for children might be questioned)
 - Changes highly associated with low socioeconomic status

The “Now” or “Ever” Issue

- Cohabitation in the United States
 - No good estimate using standard surveys that measure household composition at time of interview
 - Why?
 - ▶ Cohabitations are typically very short
 - ▶ Half-life is 18 months
 - Marry
 - Break-up

Prevalence of Cohabitation in the U.S.

- Point prevalence in 1987: 4%
- Ever cohabited as of 1987: 25%

Estimates of the Prevalence of Cohabitation, 1987

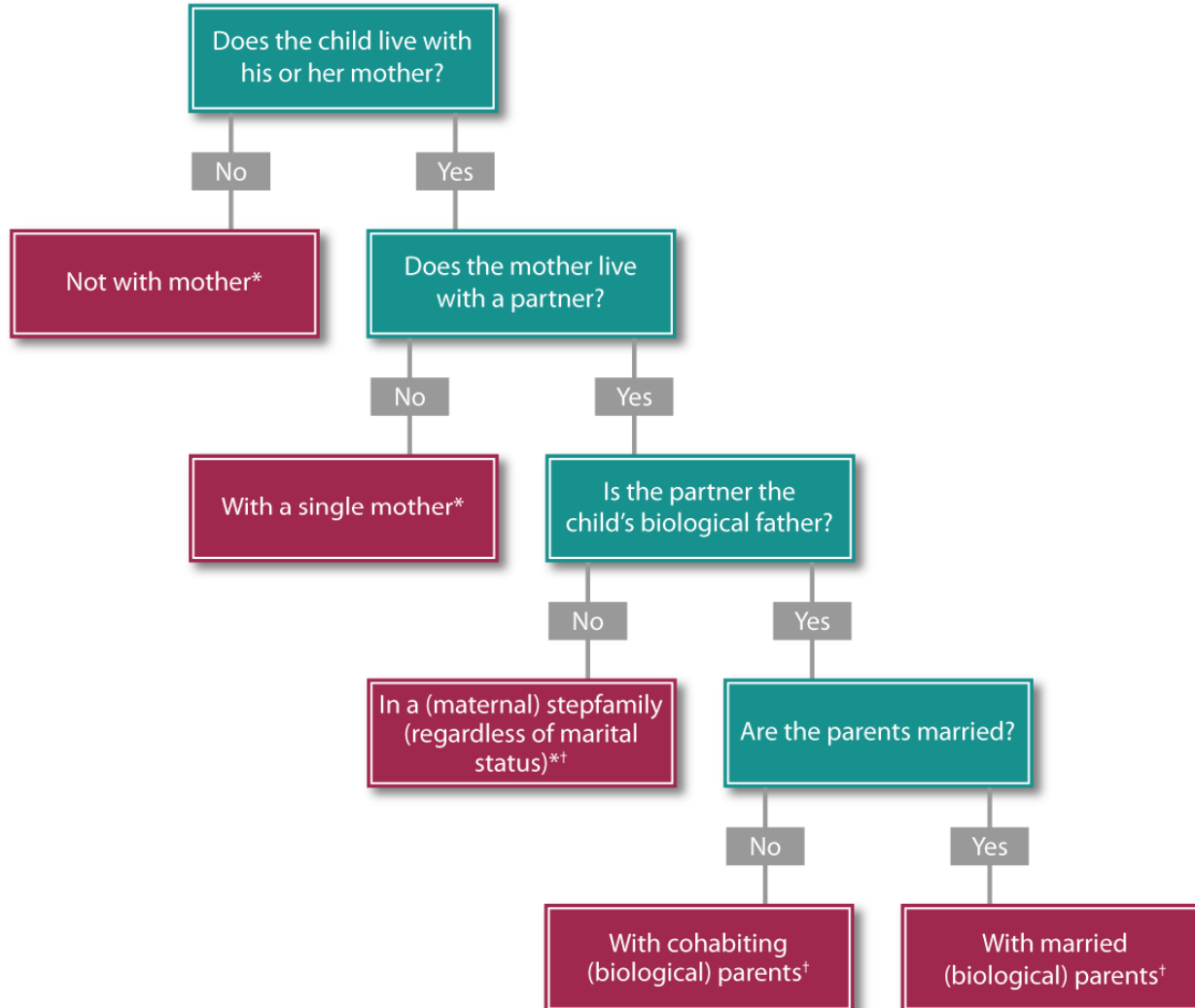
- Life table estimates of the prevalence of cohabitation, 1987

Birth cohort	Percent who ever cohabited by age 25
1940-1944	3
1945-1949	7
1950-1954	16
1955-1959	26
1960-1964***	37***

- Life table analysis of children's living arrangements for 17 countries either in Europe or with large European-origin populations

Heuveline and Colleagues

Heuveline and Colleagues



*With parents apart, also (currently or previously) experienced living with a single parent

† In a two-parent family

- How do children end up in single-mother families?
 - Predominantly, by means of parental separation rather than by being born to a woman whose household does not include a sexual partner
 - Marital status of mother not irrelevant (except perhaps in Sweden) since nonmarital unions are more unstable

- How do children who spend some time living apart from both parents spend their time?
 - Mostly in single-parent families
 - “Re-partnering” of single mothers varies in prevalence (high in the U.S., for example)

- Women with the most resources who opt to have children are largely doing so within stable formal marriages, and by so doing are endowing their children with older mothers, two custodial parents, involved fathers, and more money—the latter in part due to maternal employment outside the home

- Women with the least resources who opt to have children are largely doing so either outside co-residential unions entirely or in less stable unions (e.g., unmarried cohabitations) and in so doing are endowing their children with younger mothers, a lower probability of residing with their fathers, less involved fathers when the fathers are co-residential, and less money—the latter in part because the mothers themselves are less likely to be employed

- Other demographic transitions have led to public policy responses to the stresses placed on social institutions
 - Old age pensions (epidemiological transition)
 - Family planning programs (fertility decline)
 - Public housing (urbanization)

- Policies that increase the returns to work in the low-wage sector
 - Earned income tax credit
 - Subsidized child care
 - Pre-school
- Policies that increase private transfers from noncustodial parents
- Means testing based on individual rather than family resources
 - Co-residence of parents not penalized



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Section C

Trends in Less Developed Countries

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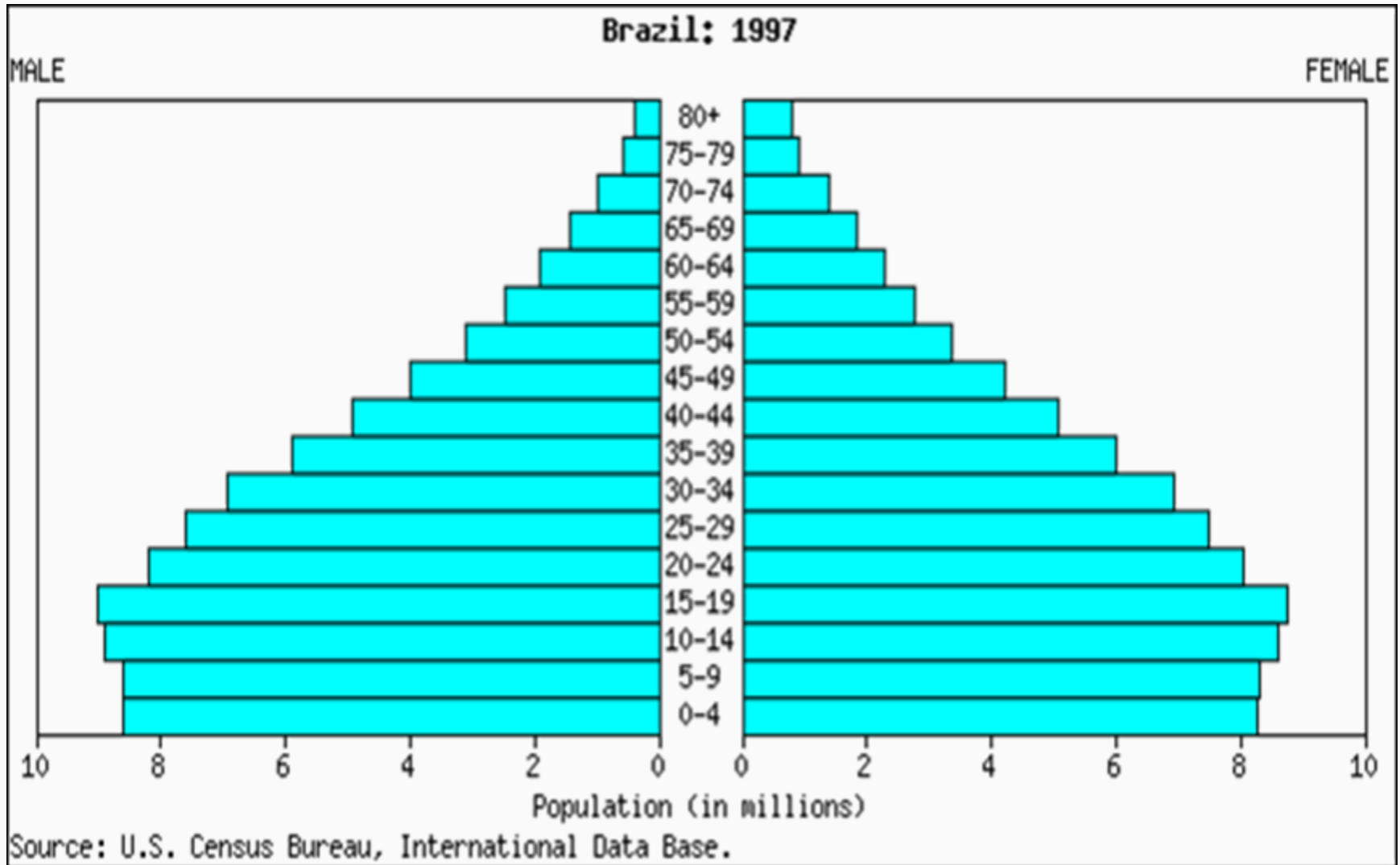
Rise in the Age at Marriage

- Has occurred everywhere except Latin America, where it was quite high to begin with
 - Duration between puberty and marriage increasing everywhere
 - Difficult to know what the reasons are
 - ▶ Education? Not actually very plausible, at least in terms of conflict between the student/spouse roles
 - In some countries age is so late as to be of concern

Baby Nuclear Blast

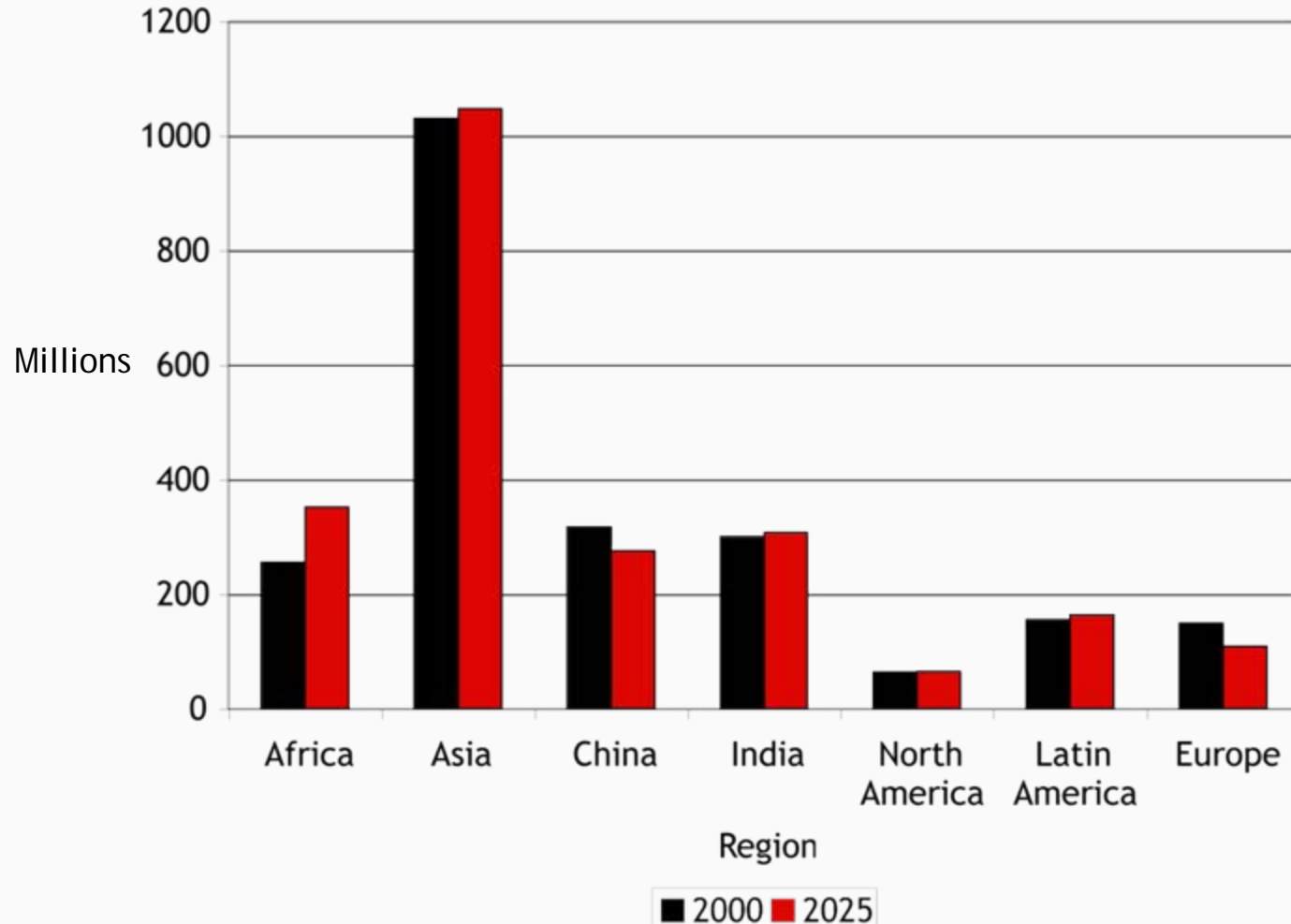
- Relatively high infant, child mortality in past
- Only moderately low old age mortality currently
- Very high fertility/declining infant and child mortality in recent past

Consider Latin America in the 1990s



Population between Ages 10 and 24

- Population (in millions) between ages 10 and 24, by region and year (2025 projected)



Rising Age at Marriage and Large Cohort of Adolescents

- Implications for public health of the rising age at marriage and large cohort of adolescents
 - Good news
 - ▶ Opportunities for human capital development
 - ▶ “Demographic gift”
 - Very, very low dependency ratio
 - ▶ Delay of first birth
 - May be good in and of itself and, other things equal, will lower total fertility

Rising Age at Marriage and Large Cohort of Adolescents

- Implications for public health of the rising age at marriage and large cohort of adolescents
 - Bad news
 - ▶ Unmarried post-pubescent people are at high risk for negative reproductive health outcomes
 - Longer period of exposure (slightly lower age at menarche and rising age at marriage) and huge increase in the size of the population at risk means higher levels of problems even in the face of stable or improving behavioral risk factors
 - ▶ Huge cohort for the labor force to absorb
 - Violence