

## CHINA'S SOCIAL KALEIDOSCOPE

# China's Changing Demographics

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2017 TEACHERS WORKSHOP  
Redwood City, July 27, 2017





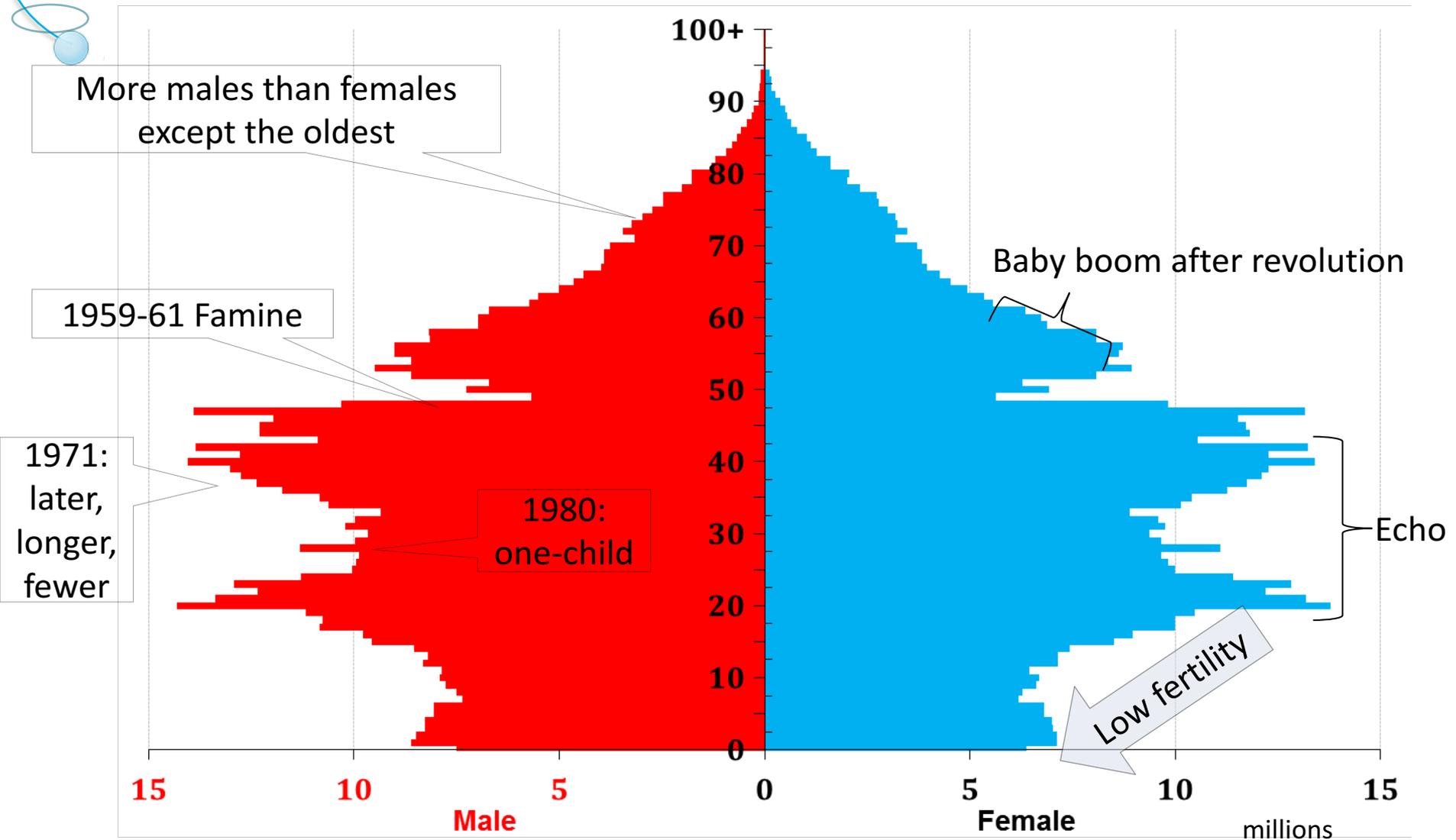
# Outline

- China's main demographic features
- The one-child policy and low fertility in China
- China's main demographic challenges and policy implications



# Population is a history book:

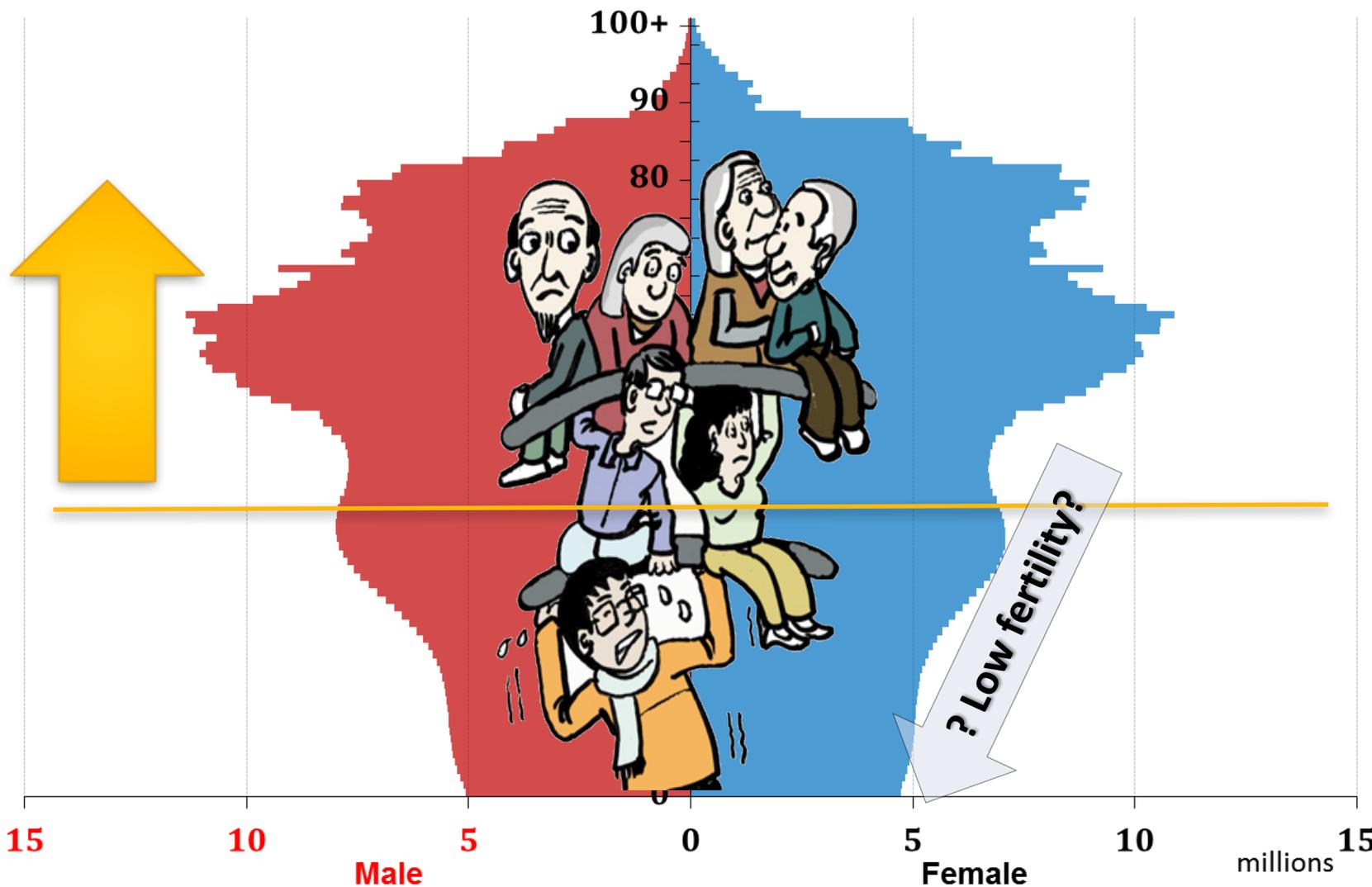
## China's population sex-age structure 2010 (Census)





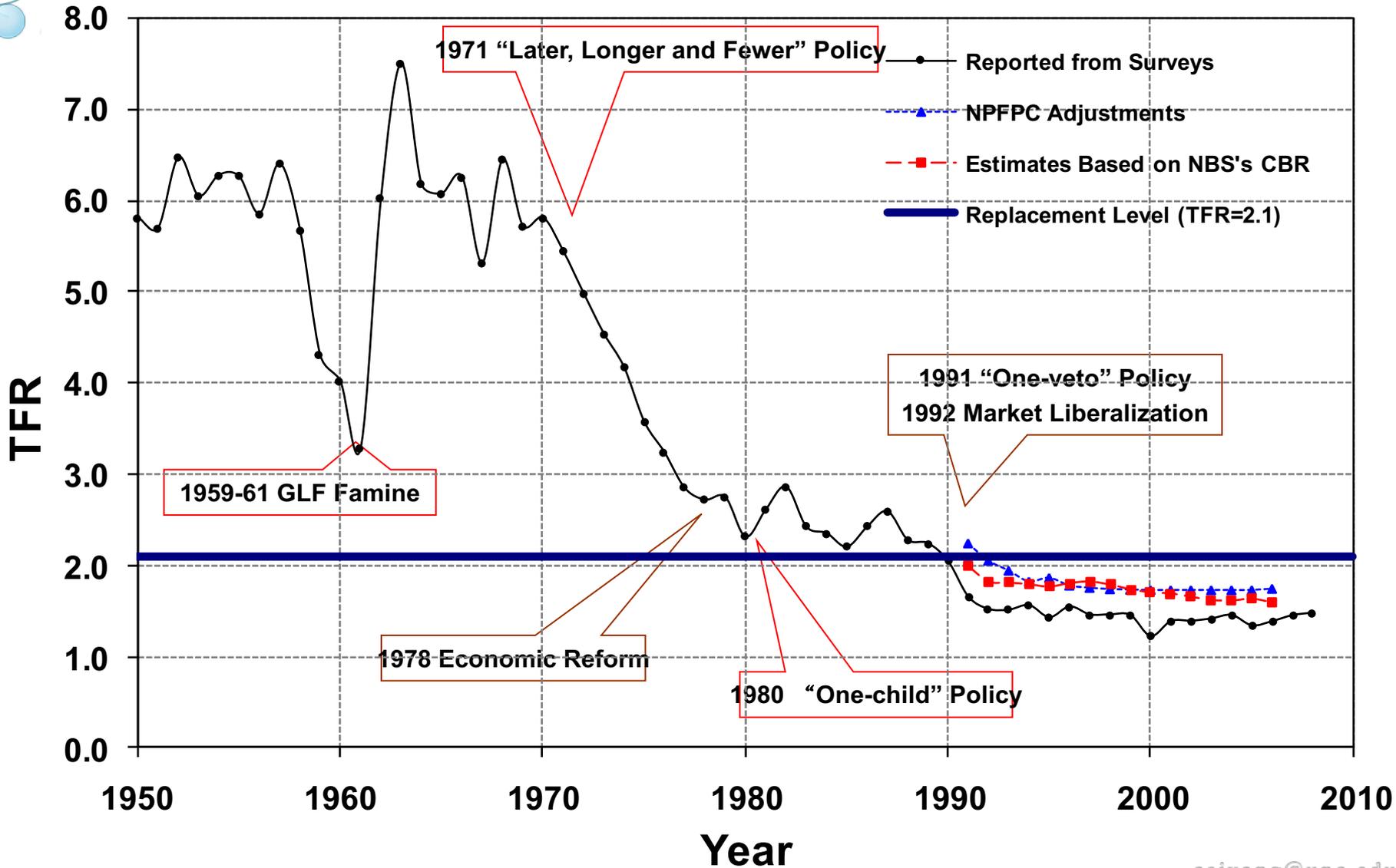
“Demography is destiny”:

China’s population sex-age structure 2050 (Projection)



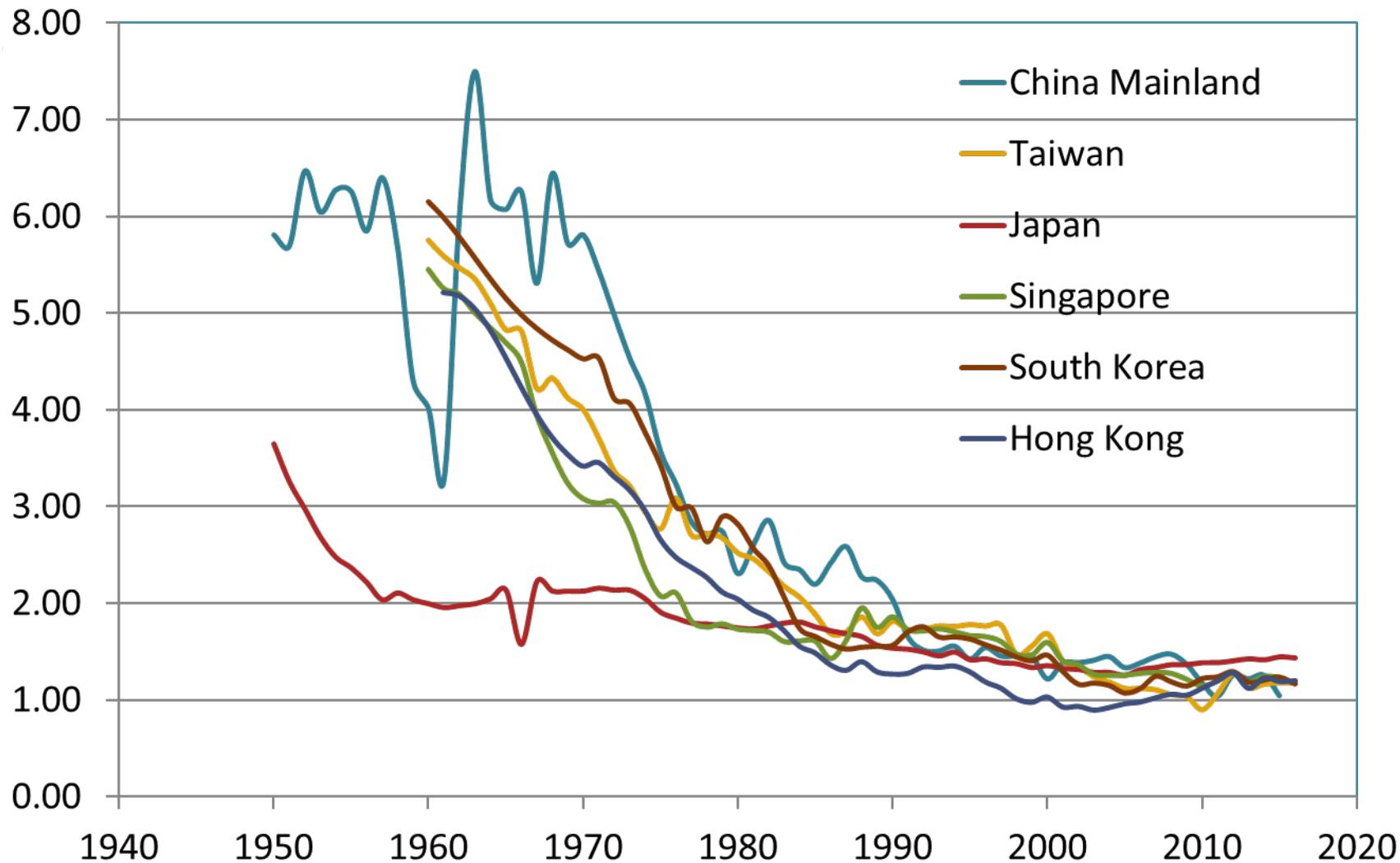


# China's route to low fertility



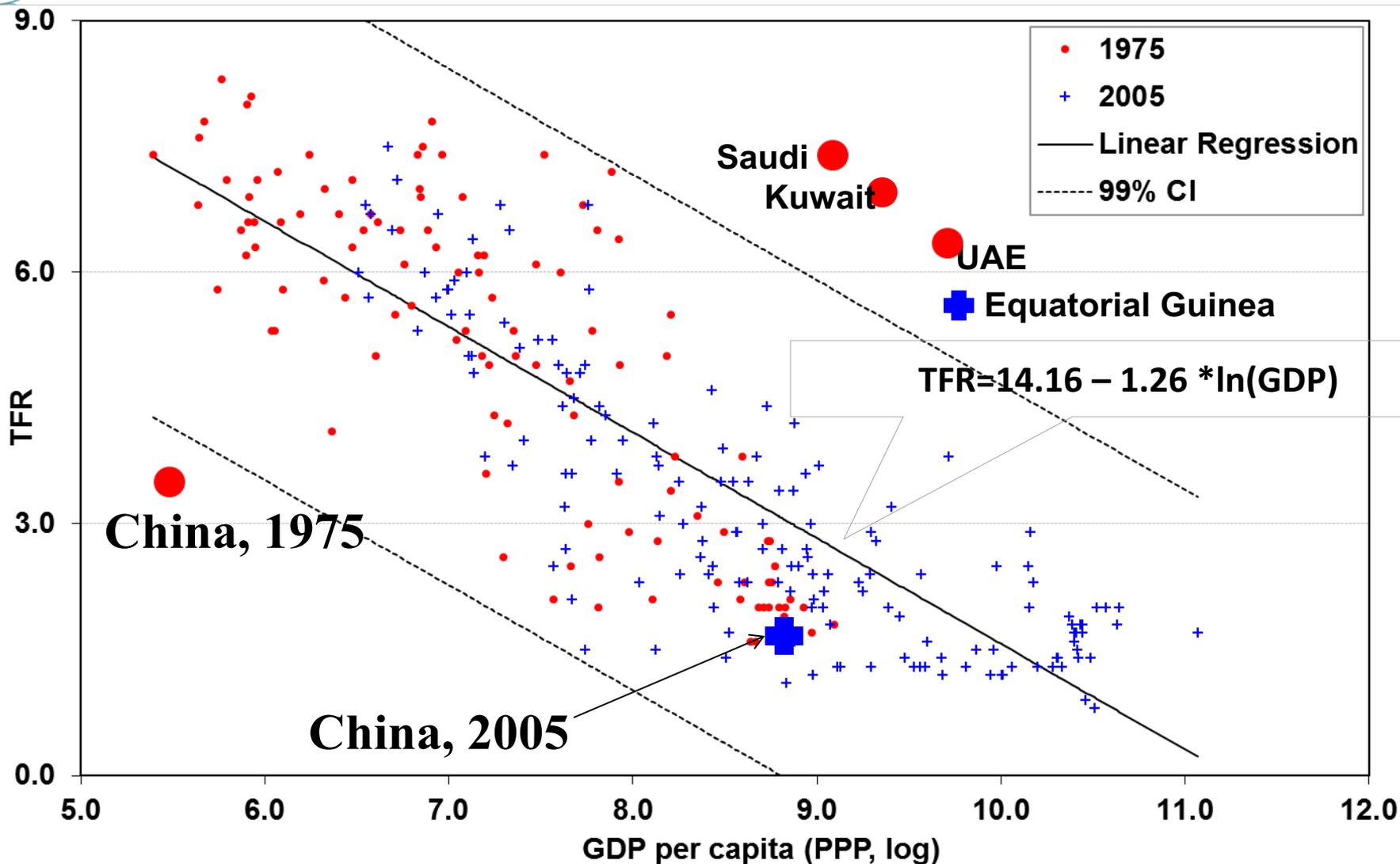


# Fertility: China and neighboring regions



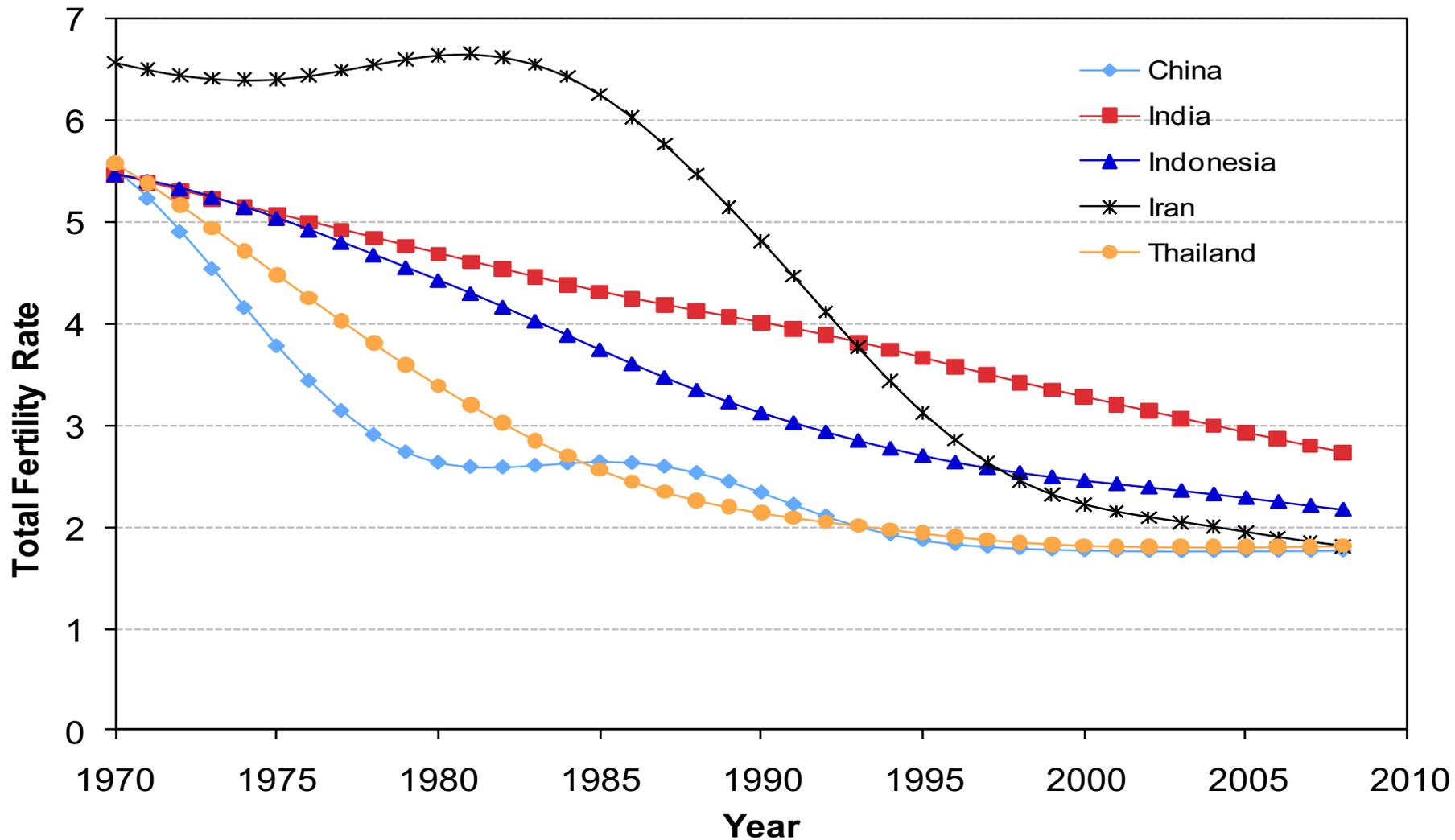


# “Development is the best contraceptive”





# Fertility decline, China and selected few





# The One-child Policy

- Motivation: quadruple GDPPC from \$250 to \$1,000 in 20 years.
  - The population must be limited to 1.2 billion by 2000.
  - The only way to achieve this goal was “one child per couple.”
- Justifications for unusual measure
  - Large population is an obstacle to economic development
  - Cultural preference for large family and male descendants
  - Labor needs in an agriculture-based economy
  - Temporary collective sacrifice for collective goods
- Almost a “perfect” policy?
  - Articulated motivations and clear goals
  - Fair and transparent
  - Government commitment
  - Social mobilization
  - International support
- Implementation: resistances and modifications -- about two-thirds of all Chinese population lived under the one-child rule circa 2000 (Policy TFR= 1.47)



# Was it a Success?

- Chinese government: reduced births by 400 million.
  - A major factor behind China economic success.
  - China's contribution to the battle against the global warming

## The real inconvenient truth

The whole world needs to adopt China's one-child policy

Diane Francis, Financial Post

Published: Tuesday, December 08, 2009



Liu Jin/AFP/Getty Images

Ironically, China, despite its dirty coal plants, is the world's leader in terms of fashioning policy to combat environmental degradation, thanks to its one-child-only edict.

### To slash or to trim

Emission reductions by policies/actions, bn tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent

Policy/Action	Cumulative emissions	Period	Annual emissions*
Montreal protocol <sup>1</sup>	135.0bn	1989-2013	5.6bn
Hydropower worldwide <sup>2</sup>	2.8bn	2010	2.8bn
Nuclear power worldwide <sup>2</sup>	2.2bn	2010	2.2bn
China one-child policy <sup>3</sup>	1.3bn	2005	1.3bn
Other renewables worldwide <sup>2</sup>	600m	2010	600m
US vehicle emissions & fuel economy standards <sup>†4</sup>	6.0bn	2012-25	460m
Brazil forest preservation <sup>5</sup>	3.2bn	2005-13	400m
India land-use change <sup>6</sup>	177m	2007	177m
Clean Development Mechanism <sup>7</sup>	1.5bn	2004-14	150m
US building & appliances codes <sup>4</sup>	3.0bn	2008-30	136m
China SOE efficiency targets <sup>8</sup>	1.9bn	2005-20	126m
Collapse of USSR <sup>9</sup>	709m	1992-98	118m
Global Environment Facility <sup>10</sup>	2.3bn	1991-2014	100m

The Economist

September 20, 2014



# Critics: an unnecessary and failed policy

- China's fertility was already low before the policy, TFR=2.7. Fertility decline is not unique to China. The 400 million number is a total exaggeration.
- The policy was based on false assumptions, pseudo-science.
  - The policy was a failure by its own measure: Chinese population was 70 million more than its controlling target (1.2 b) in 2000.
  - The extra 70 million did not hinder economic development
  - "Science" focused on wrong indicators
  - Chinese always want to have as many children as possible? Current ideal family size = 1.7, many are forgoing of their opportunities to have a second child.
- A blunt violation of reproductive rights, with tremendous social costs. It has created more problems than it tries to solve: flood of abortions, rapid aging, sex imbalance ...



# The ending of the one-child policy

- Three step process:
  - March 2013: merging the National Population and Family Planning Commission with the Ministry of Health to create a new National Health and Family Planning Commission.
  - November 2013: a partial policy relaxation that allowed couples to have two children if one parent is an only child.
    - Among the estimated more than 11 million couples eligible under the new rule, only 1.69 million had applied as of August 2015, and only about a third of its applicants had a second child so far.
  - October 2015: to allow all couples to have two children in 2016.
- Population policy making in China
  - Political decision: a top-down authoritarian political system
  - Utilitarian approach: for the purpose of economic development
  - Statist tradition: one size fits all



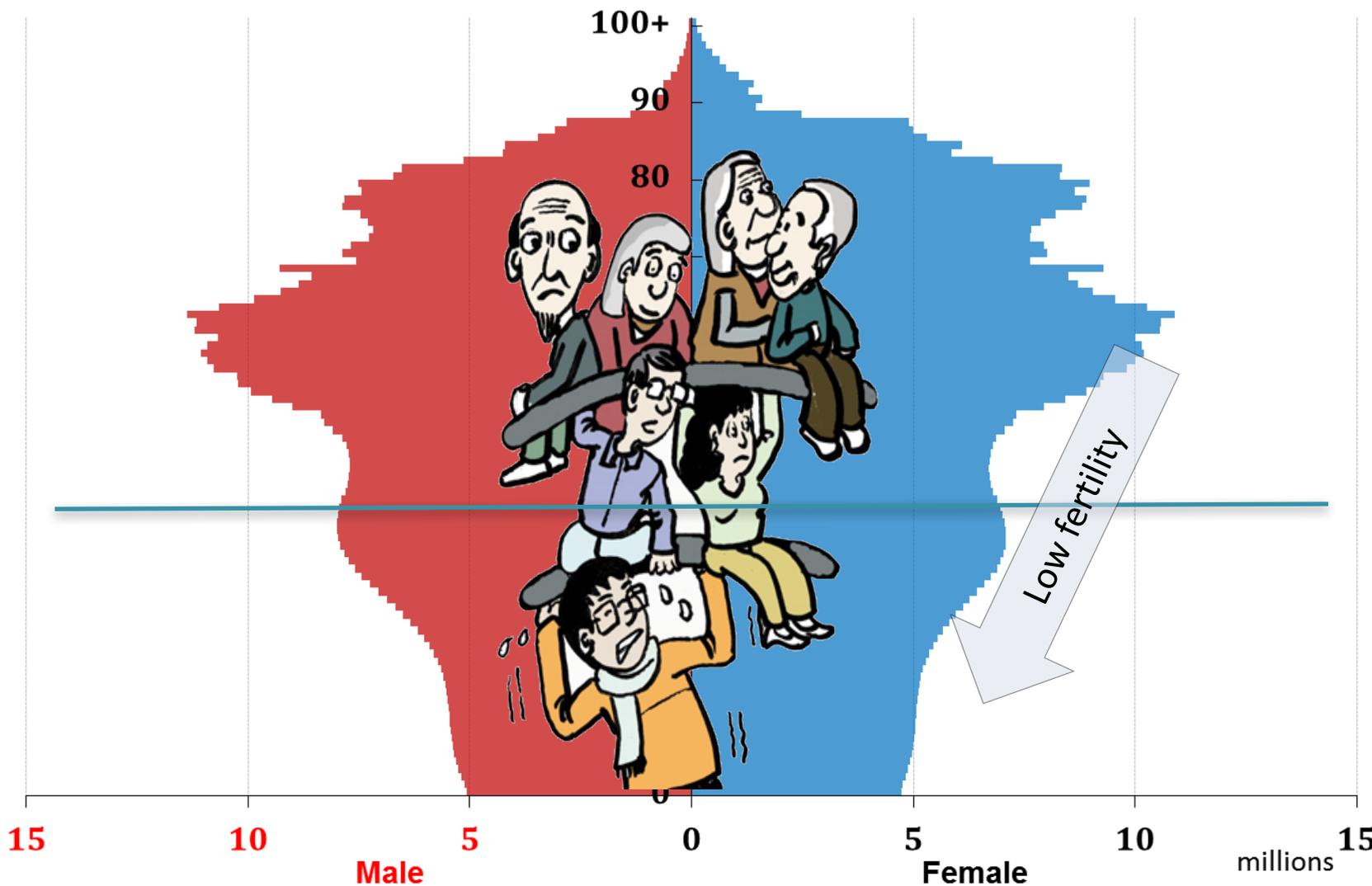
# Unmistakable parallels

	<b>Making (1979/80)</b>	<b>Scrapping (2014/15)</b>
New Political Leadership	Deng	Xi
Economic Challenges	Shortages: capital, resources...	Slowdown, inequality
Demographic Challenges	Rapid growth	Structural imbalance
Global Population Discourse	Population Bomb	Aging, Low Fertility Trap
Policy Goals	Short term: slow down growth Longer term: reduce population size (?)	Short term: stimulate consumption Longer term: labor supply, aging ...
Immediate Effects	Small drop in fertility in 1980	Small increase in fertility in 2016
Long term Effects	Limited directed effects on fertility, but more profound on social/political...	? Unlikely to boost fertility in major way



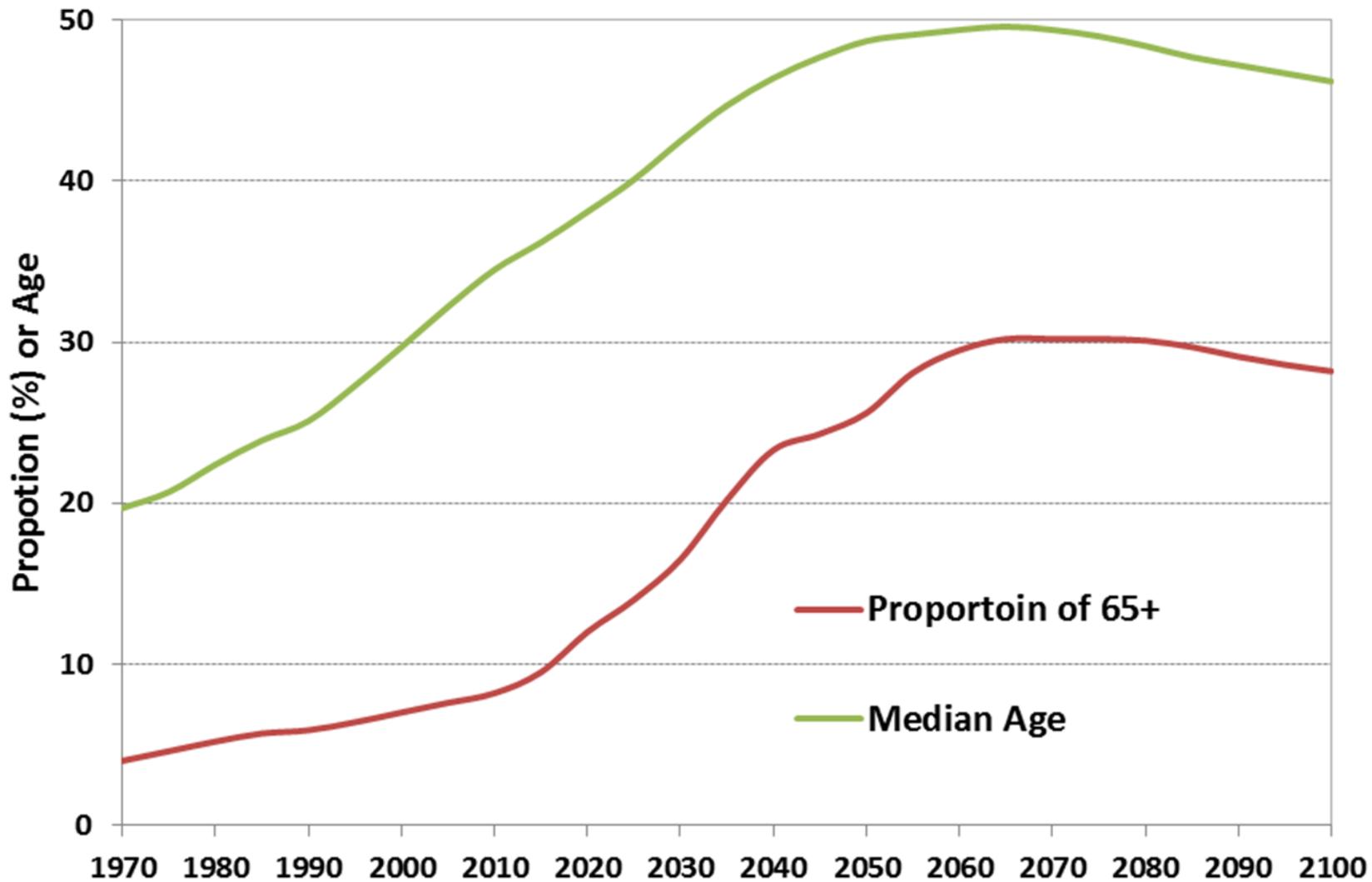
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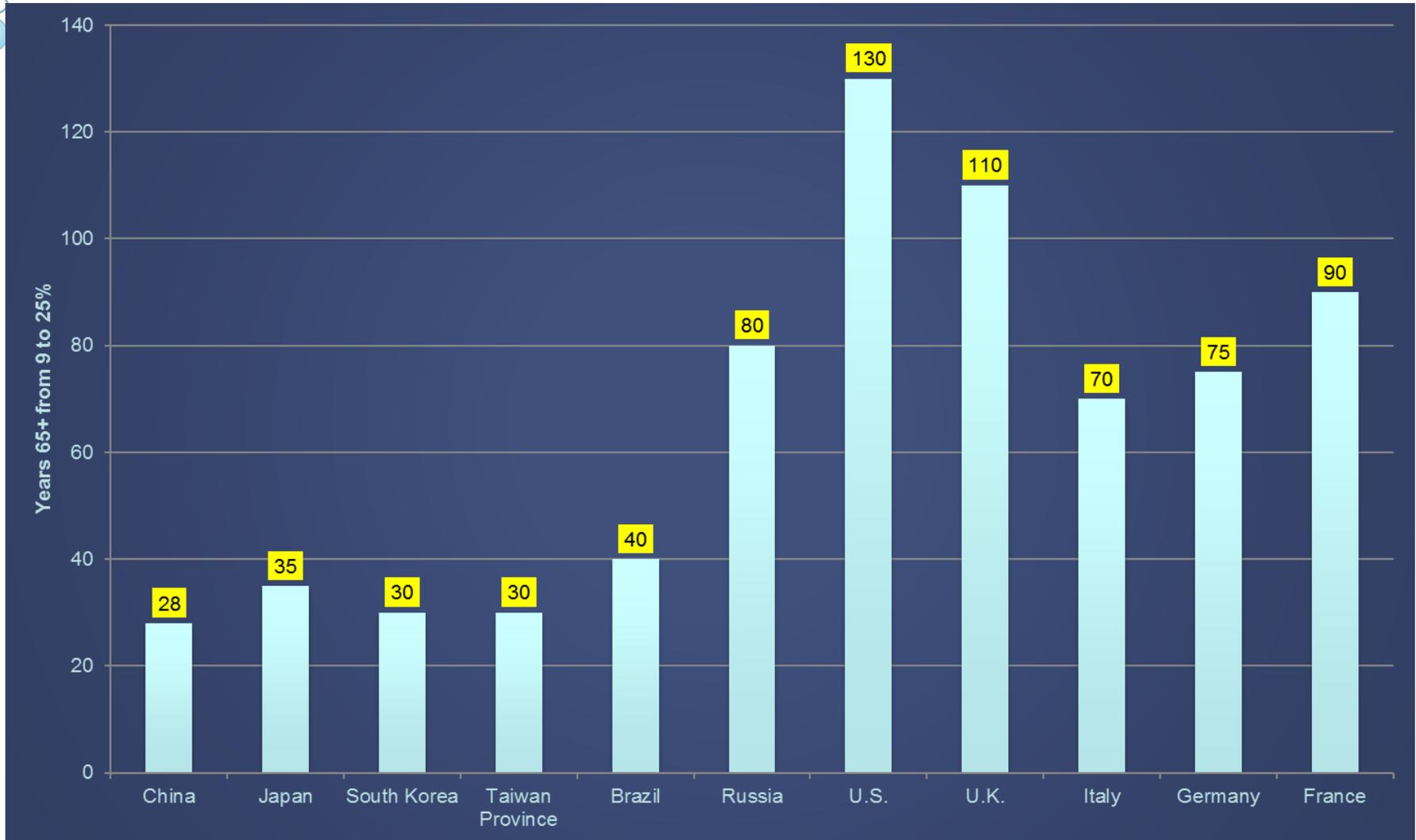


# UN's Projection: Aging





# Pace of Aging, Years 65+ from 9% to 25%



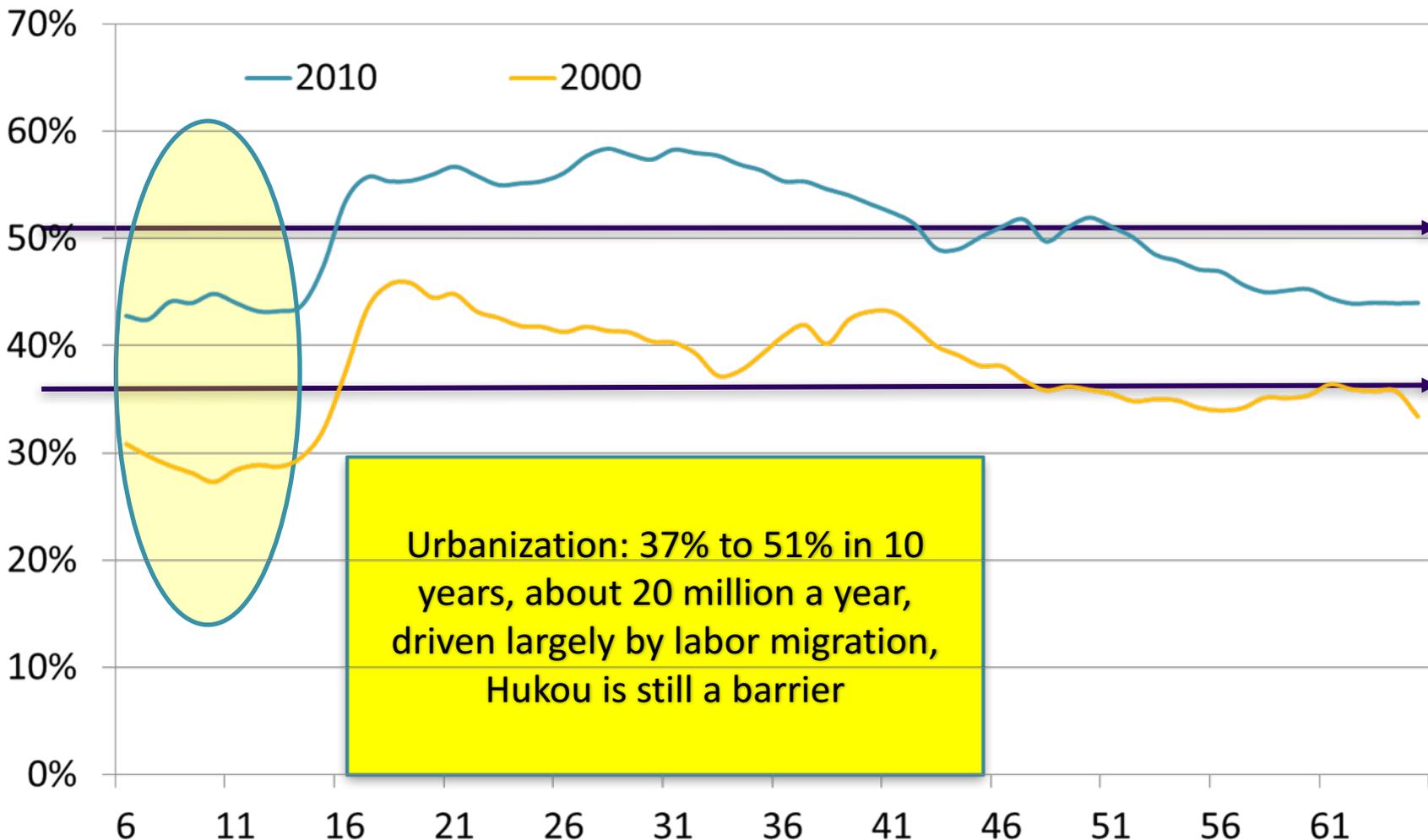


# The Future of China's Population



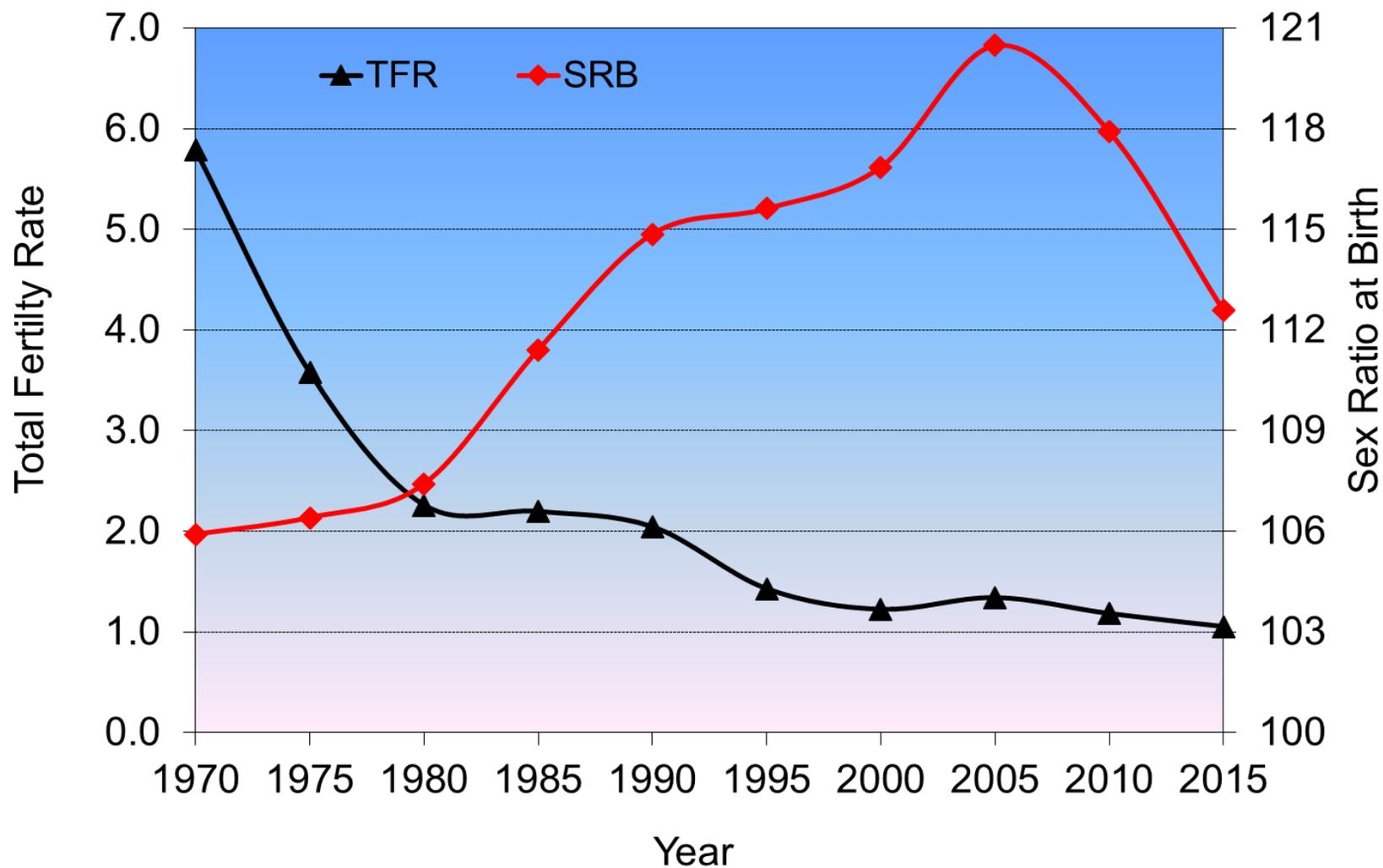


# Urbanization, aging, and left-behind Children





# Fertility and Sex Ratio at Birth



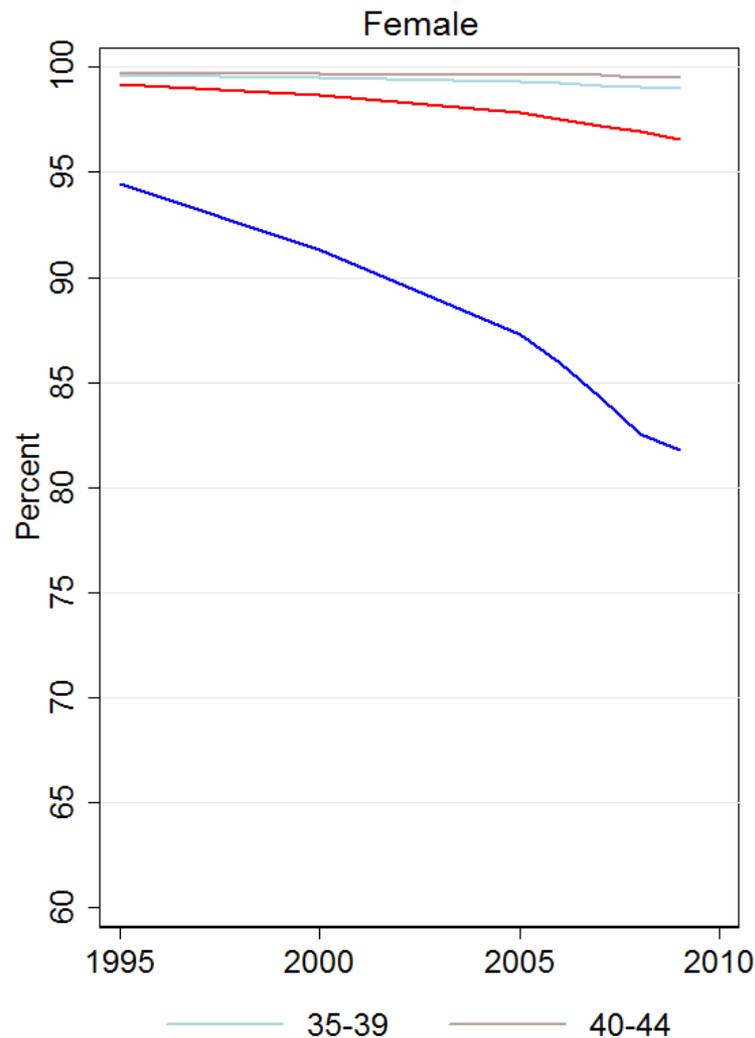
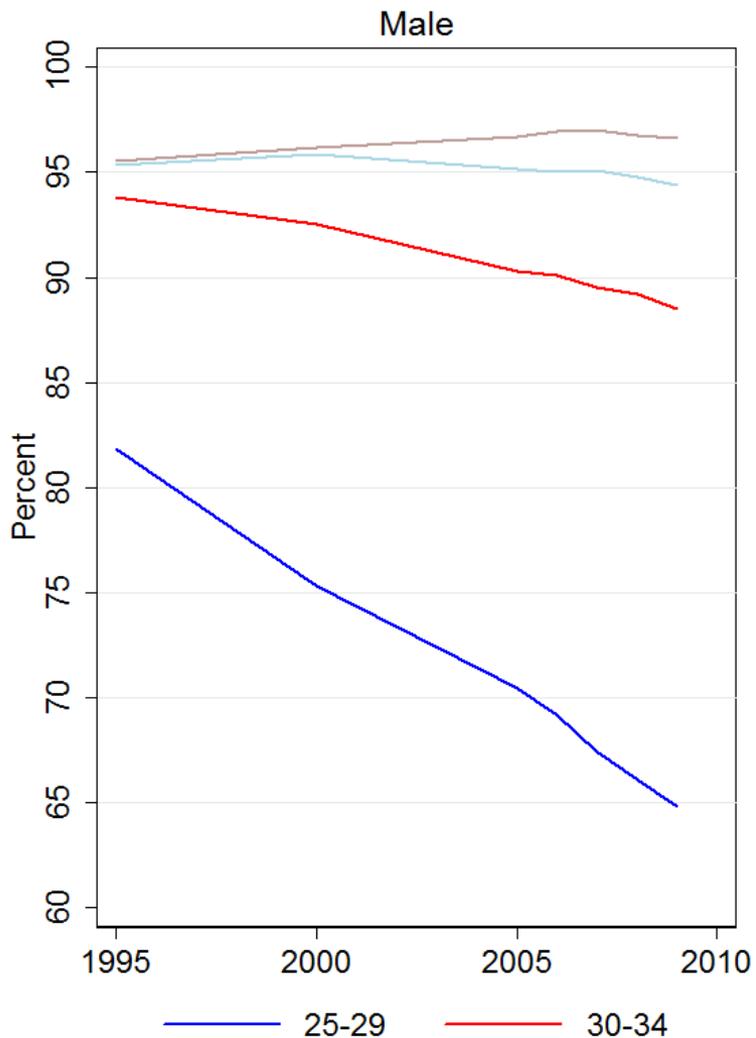


# Gender Imbalance





# Proportion of Ever Married by Sex and Age, China





# Forbes: The World's 56 Self-Made Women Billionaires



**Chloe Sorvino**, FORBES STAFF ✓

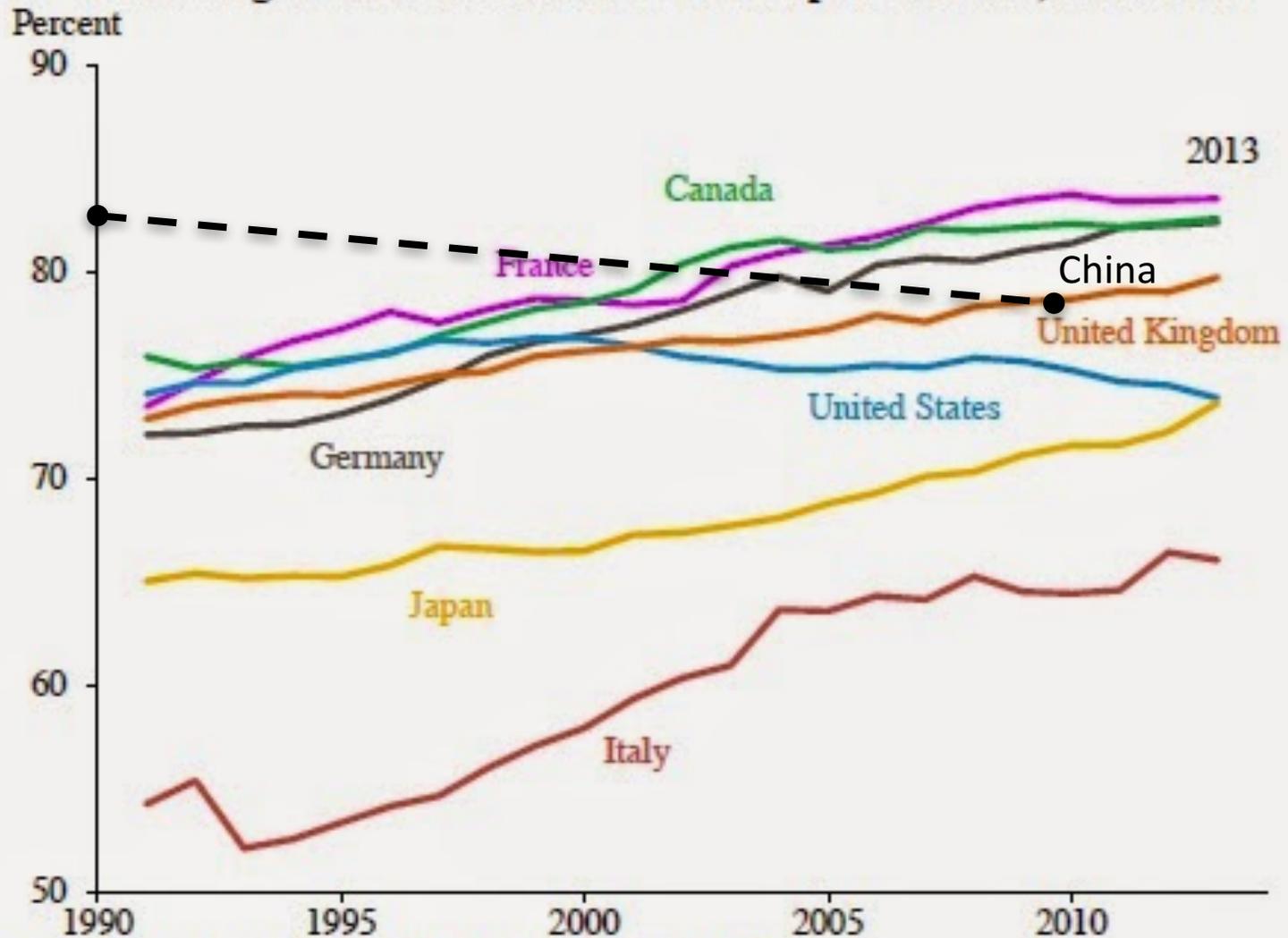
*I cover the world's most successful entrepreneurs.* [FULL BIO](#) ✓

- Country Breakdown:
  - 21 in China (37.5% of the list)
  - 17 in the United States (30%)
  - 5 in Hong Kong
  - 3 in the United Kingdom





Figure 1-10  
Prime-Age Female Labor Force Participation Rates, 1991–2013



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.



# What goes from here?

- Basic demographic features
  - Fertility: Sustained low fertility, risk of “low-fertility trap”
  - Mortality: declining mortality
  - Migration: Rapid urbanization
  - Demographic “momentum”: rapid aging
- Demographic dividend → Demographic burden
- Reform dividends:
  - Urbanization (Hukou reform)
  - Investment in education/human capital
  - Social welfare reforms
- Challenges: Social inequality / government capacity



# Reading the History: Population Pyramid, U.S. 2015

