WORKING PAPER

YOUTH COHORTS, POPULATION GROWTH
AND POLITICAL OUTCOMES

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Foreword

This working paper, written by a distinguished political scientist of Columbia University, was presented at a IIASA conference in Sopron, Hungary, October 18-21, 1988. It has been the subject of correspondence with us at IIASA since and has been extensively revised. As it stands it represents as good thought as is now available on a vitally important subject: the politics of youth. The restlessness of youth has been long talked about but the present demographic conjuncture gives it special saliency.

In most of the more developed countries (MDCs) the postwar baby boom led to large numbers of youth--large in relation to the older population of the time--during the late 1960s, and this demographic fact coincided with an explosion of protest around the world. In due course that explosion was contained, and most of the youth in question settled into middle class jobs. Only in countries of exceptionally rigid labor markets is there a residue of youth unable to insert itself into stable employment.

For the less developed countries (LDCs) the baby boom has been later, and was due more to the fall in death rates, especially infant mortality, than to a rise in births. In fact birth rates did rise in some places; elsewhere they remained constant or fell, but not enough to offset the fall in deaths. Youth cohorts of the LDCs at the present time are even larger in relation to the numbers of their elders than they were in the MDCs in the late 1960s.

Howard Wriggins writes from his knowledge of a number of Asian and African countries, showing the political effect of large youth cohorts, in the context of multi-cultural societies, with newly raised standards of education, where economic progress is indeed occurring but not fast enough to satisfy aspirations. I can corroborate some of what he says from my own knowledge of Indonesia, where youth was the spearhead of the 1965 events that eventually terminated the Sukarno regime.

Wriggins has helped me understand the Indonesian youth cohort by putting it in a larger framework. Because I hope he can do the same for others concerned with problems of the LDCs, IIASA is putting out this working paper preliminary to what we hope will be a book on the subject.

Nathan Keyfitz

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper considers possible connections between the rapid expansion in the youth cohorts and political outcomes. How do changes in the rate of growth and the size in relation to the balance of the population of the youth cohorts, most particularly those between 15 and 24, affect the political life of nations? Can one argue that whenever there are rapidly growing youth cohorts, there one can expect to find political unrest at the least and possibly political upheaval? Could one use demographic data to warn political leaders well ahead of time that serious political troubles probably lie ahead?

To take one example, in the early 1970's, 15,000 Sri Lankan young people sought, through a one-night rising, to seize leading political figures, capture police stations and take over the government of Sri Lanka. There were many factors at work, as careful analysis showed.[1] It was a romantic, "Left-wing infantile" enterprise. Surely it was not mere coincidence, however, that some 25 years earlier Sri Lanka's youth cohorts had begun to grow rapidly and that the overwhelming bulk of the activists arrested or killed had all been between the ages of 15 and 24. Similarly, could it be entirely coincidence that the surge in the growth of Tamil youth cohorts came somewhat later than among the Sinhalese, and dramatic Tamil youth militancy gained prominence 8 to 10 years later.[2]

Apart from coups d'etat by older members of the military, such as Pinochet, it is characteristic of political instability that youthful militants are at the forefront of events. One is reminded of the role of young activists in the Cuban revolution in the mid-1950's. Prolonged rioting by anti-Marcos youths in the Philippines led him to impose martial law in 1972 and brought about the overthrow of his government in 1987. In Turkey in 1960, the end of the dramatic rule of Adnan Menderes began with huge numbers of student rioters who were eventually joined by thousands of others in the streets. In Iran in 1979, egged on by elderly religious zealots, it was the masses of angry youths who challenged the Shah's regime in ways his troops – and he himself – were unwilling to repress. Since 1980 in Sri Lanka, youthful secessionist Tamil militants known as "the boys" succeeded in halting a promising program of economic growth and bringing about a virtual civil war which led to a massive Indian military intervention at the "request" of the Colombo government. In India, young Sikhs turned weapons against the representatives of New Delhi, seeking secession in India's strategically important Punjab. In South Korea, student protests sparked such riots that in 1960, the old Syngman Rhee had to step down sooner than he wished. More recently their successors challenged a strong and prosperous police state until in 1988 Korea's leaders reluctantly conceded elections. In Burma, student disorders brought Ne Win down although the army was able to retain power by harsh repression. In Algiers in 1988, an explosion of youthful anger challenged the role of the ruling party, the FLN, and brought about an increase in the powers of the National Assembly at the expense of the entrenched single party. In the People's Republic of Chi-

na, a mass but non-violent youth uprising challenged the government of Deng Xiaoping in 1989. In the United States, as the cohorts of the first baby boom came of age at a time of acute political controversy over Vietnam, unprecedented riots and political eruption occurred in many American cities and shortly thereafter on American campuses.

No doubt, there are other instances where sharply enlarged youth cohorts have affected political life, sometimes in dramatic ways. Their disruptive potential and the many ways political outcomes appear associated with these larger youth cohorts invite comparative analysis. To explore these connections is no easy matter, however.[3]

Firstly, these connections are "complex", not simple. Numerous intervening variables connect demographics to specific political events, and their roles as connectors change over time, often rather abruptly. Each is likely to have a dynamic of its own, and their interactions are hard to capture.[4]

Secondly, most of these intervening variables are difficult to state in quantitative terms, since much of importance in political life relates to subjective matters such as people's identifications, perceptions, expectations and fears. Quantitative measures can accurately report head counts, but in themselves they may tell us little about the political significance of the quantitative measure.

Thirdly, in many polities, particularly in a number of Less Developed Countries (LDC's) political institutions and conventions are not well-established and mutual accommodation often proves impossible. Governments often try to set limits to disputes and to define what is, at least for the time being, the official, authoritative resolution of these differences. In such cases, much political life goes on beneath the surface, to break out suddenly in unforseeable ways.

Finally, throughout we speak of "cohorts" as if each year's youth cohort was different from all the others and homogeneous within itself. Everywhere this is a serious exaggeration. Peasants will have different interests than graduates of high schools and universities. Particularly in parts of Africa and South Asia, cohorts are segmented by particularistic affiliations, based on ethnic, linguistic or other identifications. Nevertheless, with this obvious caveat, we use the age cohort as the principal unit of demographic analysis.

With these introductory comments, we first consider underlying demographic trends.

II. UNDERLYING DEMOGRAPHICS

There are three demographic phenomena that underlie these concerns. The first is the *increase in sheer numbers* in successive youth cohorts, and the larger and more abrupt the rate of their increase, the more disruptive they are likely to be. A second dimension is the *change in proportions of the population*. It has been proposed that should these younger cohorts come to represent some 20% or more of the total population, they often begin to assert themselves in the political arena more forcefully.[5] Thirdly, related to these phenomena, the *pace of urbanization* is likely to add to their impact on political affairs, since politics is often driven by what happens in the cities. It is disproportionately males in this age group who flock to the cities. For reasons to be explored below, they are the most readily available for political mobilization.

In many LDC's since the end of World War II or following the eventual success of independence struggles, the total population has grown at historically unprecedented rates. In the sixty years between 1950 and 2010, India and Indonesia are expected to double, Egypt, the Philippines, and Turkey to triple, Pakistan and Mexico to quadruple and Kenya to increase eight-fold.

More consequential, in most polities, the young population grew even more rapidly. Between 1960 and 1970, the total populations of Brazil and Colombia, grew at a rate of 2.9 and 2.16 per year respectively, enough to double every 25 years. However, the two sets of youth cohorts grew at a rate of 4.2 and 4.7 respectively, which would have led to a doubling of the size of the youth cohorts in only 15 years! Similarly though less dramatically, in South Asia annual rates of overall population increase averaged 2.35 between 1970 and 1975 but in Pakistan, for instance, the youth cohorts grew at a rate of 4.9 while the general population grew at "only" 2.57.[6] Put another way, the Philippines, Colombia and Venezuela doubled their youth cohorts in only 15 years between 1960 and 1975. Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia and Kenya in 20 years, from 1960-1980; Algeria a bit later, from 1965 to 1985.

Each year, then, unprecedented numbers of young people have been knocking at the door of an adult world already hard pressed by the increase in sheer numbers; most polities experiencing marked poverty and shortage of capital. These young people are seeking opportunity, hoping to make real for themselves the aspirations they have embraced as they have been growing up.

One way to assess the challenges they are likely to pose to political systems is to note how the rates at which these cohorts grow have changed over time and the direction of these changes. It would be useful to note whether that growth had reached the maximum or is still rising, and whether a decline was followed by a second-order increase as one generation of baby boomers produces it successors 15 to 20 years later.[7] While growth rates are slowing in a number of countries, particularly in Asia, that is not so true in much of black Africa and parts of Latin America. Appendix II reports the annual rate of growth of Youth Cohorts from 1950 through 2000, and shows how much they have varied over the years. The presumption here is that beyond a certain minimum, the higher the rate of growth, the more difficulties these cohorts pose to the political system.[8]

Another way to consider the matter is to note the size of the 15-24 year cohorts in relation to the total population. The larger the proportion in these politically critical years, it has been proposed, the more likely they are to influence political events directly. Gary Fuller has plausibly argued to use 20% as a hypothetical threshold. We found that in 1985 the ten polities in our sample showing the largest proportion in the youth cohorts in relation to the rest of the population, in order of magnitude, were Vietnam, China, Thailand, Colombia, South Korea, Morocco, Mexico, Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan. Each of these, in different ways, has experienced political destabilization driven to an important degree by youthful militants.

An argument can be made that after all it is the over 25's who manage the state and the larger the numbers in the youth cohorts in relation to these adults, the greater the challenge they are likely to pose to any government. Indeed, one can find sharper differentiations between states if one orders them according to the size of the youth cohorts in relation to those who are 25 and over. Using 1985 data, this mode of measurement suggests the following states may face political difficulties in the near term: Algeria, Vietnam, Mexico, Nigeria and Iraq.

Comparing these ratios over the five year period 1980 to 1985 showed that China's, Nigeria's, Burma's and Algeria's ratios all increased in the five year period. Could it be merely coincidence that China's showed the largest increase, of some 8%, and it was Chinese youth more than any other, who by their activities, shortly thereafter, challenged their government in ways the leaders could not accept? In Burma (3.7% increase) and Algiers (2.92%), two other high scorers, youth cohorts also have erupted in the past few years (see Appendix IV for details).

In these and other similar polities it is the size and rate of growth of the youth cohorts which appear to pose a serious challenge to incumbent governments.

A third demographic perspective focuses on the pace and extent of urbanization.[9] Rapidly growing cities pose grave problems of water and food supply, and sewage disposal. It usually means a population that is disproportionately young and male, since it is the young men who leave rural homes first, without family or responsibilities. They may have little choice in the matter, since growing rural populations mean less land for each. Instead of the nurturing and restrictive family which has shaped their lives in rural areas, the city provides wonders and excitement, and a release from familial constraints. With luck it may also provide opportunity. But given the numbers pouring into many Third World cities, there may be long desperate periods before a job is found or a tolerable private life begun. Many large cities have been growing very fast. For example, Bombay and Manila doubled between 1960 and 1980, Karachi between 1960 and 1975 and will more than double again by 2,000. Seoul grew nearly 2 and 1/2 times between 1966 and 1983 while Bangkok quadrupled between 1965 and 1985.[10] Lagos will double again by 2000 as will Mexico City, moving from 17 million in 1985 to an expected 30 million by the end of the century.

III. EFFECTS OF UNDERLYING DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

An increase in sheer numbers adds obvious loads to any polity. More people must be fed, clothed and housed. When arable land is scarce, competition for possession of or the right to work it will intensify. Life giving water may fall short when the rains fail. If forests are the principal source of fuel, deforestation raises the cost of fuel to city dwellers and lengthens the time every rural family must devote to collecting fire wood. Even more serious, it brings rapid erosion and typically speeds flooding and a silting up of irrigation and hydroelectric systems and may alter climates permanently.

To be sure, when youth cohorts rapidly expand, they may bring gains to a polity. They add strength to its military or productive manpower pool. Their creative energies may encourage innovation; their impatience with old ways may induce and accelerate needed change.

On the other hand, when successive youth cohorts are larger than their predecessors, such demographics first increase pressures within the political system. As numbers in specific cohorts grow and age group proportions change, priority for governmental expenditures usually must also change. This is particularly disturbing when the numbers increase rapidly, since established ways of dealing with their needs are no longer sufficient.

At the outset, the years of dependency call for specialized attention to the care of the young, then to their education and training in order to prepare them for shaping their lives and for constructive participation in adult society. During these dependency years their needs may absorb financial and administrative resources that might otherwise be used for alternative purposes. School budgets may need to be doubled and even trebled if polities are to increase the proportion of school-aged children who attend, to extend the years they study and improve the skills they learn. Low budgets may mean large classes, student passivity, learning by rote and early drop outs.

The politically most important time is just beyond the years of dependency, when the young begin to conceive of themselves as ready to enter the work force and typically are impatient to take up their own lives as adults. That is why the 15 to 24 year olds form the most critical cohorts for our purposes. This group can become far more politically consequential should its members believe they have interests that conflict with the concerns of those who have preceded them. Reflecting the perhaps special aspirations and resentments they acquire during these years of transition from youth to adulthood, they may demand changes in the institutional structures their predecessors have created. In democratic systems, when the voting age is dropped from 21 to 18, as has occurred recently in India, their increased numbers may give them more political power than the young ever had before. Unattached, they are the more susceptible to political, ethnic or religious

appeals that give them a sense of solidarity with some and feelings of hostility toward still others. Capital cities like Djakarta, New Delhi, Kinshasa, Manila or Algiers, are the magnets that draw the unattached and ambitious young.

If the population of any polity is homogenous, speaking the same language, drawn from similar ethnic backgrounds, following similar religious practices and life styles, the pressures from population growth and concentration may not prove to be so explosive. However, most states of Asia and Africa are "mosaic," multi-ethnic societies.[11] As a result, the cities are filled with people coming from different tribes or castes; they may speak different languages and follow different religious and eating practices. Crowded pell-mell into city slums, they compete for jobs, for scarce living space, for necessities such as water and food. Such a "mosaic" society, divided by a complex cleavage structure, is prone to bitter antagonisms, ethnic eruptions and periodic riots, as could be seen in Djakarta in the 1960's, in Kuala Lampur in 1969, in New Delhi and Bombay periodically, in Colombo in 1983 and Karachi in the late 1980's. It is little wonder that the city is the center of political disorder.

In many societies there can be a visible difference between generations, a generation gap so to speak, deriving from different life experiences or sharply different conditions that have faced one generation compared to the next. In a number of the Less Developed Countries, there are two notable and pernicious forms of this generation gap. A special "opportunity structure" has had harmful side effects over the longer run.[12] In many of the states that gained independence shortly after World War II, there was a sudden burgeoning of opportunity for those with high school and college education to move into highly responsible governmental positions, replacing the colonial officials who for the most part went back to the metropoles. Those who graduated from colleges and university soon thereafter easily entered into lesser bureaucratic positions that also carried high status, career security and numerous opportunities to supplement public service pay with various forms of "speed money." Unless the economies were rapidly expanding and public service positions are growing commensurately, at some point within the next two decades governmental positions became fully staffed and such opportunities became more scarce just as the successive maturing cohorts became more heavily populated. For the thousands who came later, it would be a long wait before these early recruits would retire and make room for those who arrived later on the scene. In the United States, the post war baby boomers have been similarly disadvantaged by comparison with their parents.

Secondly, the life experiences of the "independence" generation and those who have come later have been very different. The first had heroic deeds to perform, a sense of great achievement with independence; subsequently many became complacent with the post-independence arrangements they had done so much to shape; after all, these institutions were their creations. By contrast, succeeding generations who experienced the hard realities of the post-independence "awakening" often felt frustration or even anger at the complacent older generation.

These and other demographic phenomena are linked to political outcomes through a number of intervening variables.

IV. INTERVENING VARIABLES

A) THE LOADS/CAPABILITIES EQUATION:
PERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY AND JOBS
FOR YOUNG ADULTS

These additional loads that a system must be able to bear are weighed against a government's or political system's capabilities for carrying these loads. Ideally, the system should be able to supply these additional goods and services that are required during the years of dependency. It should also provide the openings and opportunities that alone can ease the transition to productive adulthood as the young reach an age when they begin to contribute to a government's capability. The performance of the economy is of fundamental importance – how it affects the standard of living, the hopes of people and their ability to shape the kind of life they aspire to.

JOBS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Perhaps the most important single "capability" required as the larger cohorts proceed up the population pyramid, is the ability to provide jobs for those now ready to enter adulthood. In previous generations, when youth cohorts grew only slowly, it was not so difficult to absorb the young in useful and satisfying occupations. They often continued to do what their fathers had done. But when over a period, successive cohorts are each larger than their predecessors, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide worthwhile employment to a significant proportion of the now much more numerous and often better educated young if the economy is not growing proportionately and becoming more diversified.

One could consider the problems posed to governments by assessing the average number of young people who become potential entrants into the labor market in specific countries for any chosen period.[13] Between 1960 and 1990, for example, Iraq's and Zaire's new entrants will have doubled; Kenya's, Algeria's, Nigeria's, Bangladesh's and Indonesia's nearly trebled, China's quadrupled and Morocco's quintupled. India's grew by "only" 24% in thirty years while Malaysia's expanded only 10%. It is doubtful that there would be direct correlations with identifiable political episodes, but such data might provide indicators of at least one among a number of significant variables.

While data on unemployment are notoriously unreliable and non-comparable, joblessness and severe underemployment is one of the indicators of probable trouble ahead. Before the overthrow of Marcos, it was estimated that some 16% of the work force was unemployed and over 40% were severely underemployed. Prior to the 1971 youth rebellion in Sri Lanka, nearly 40% of the 15 to 25 year-olds were reportedly without work.[14]

Political stability can be upset by large numbers of un- or underemployed youths if they remain unabsorbed into the political-economy. Put simply, young people without employment are easily led to be politically disruptive. Understandably, they resent having to postpone forming a new family; they can be bitter as they see others ahead of them are already established. They can see the contrast between the rich and poor in societies where wealth is often flouted. They lack the life shaping discipline that regular employment – rural or urban – provides. They have little to lose; they are prone to take risks. Youth enjoys the thought of quick transformations; by a bold stroke, the world can be made much better. Having had little experience of the complexity of these affairs, they are often overconfident that they have all the answers. All the more reason then, that unemployed youth should have a propensity to political disruption.[15]

Moreover, where life's chances are perceived as unrewarding and not likely to improve, competition between groups of the young is likely to intensify. Individual competition in the upper schools and universities may become more severe. More individuals contend for what may be a limited number of places on the land, for urban jobs, for housing. Youths who earlier were tolerant and mutually accepting can become antagonistic prota-

gonists, contending against each other to better their own life's chances. Under such circumstances, families, neighbors, clans, tribes, castes and ethnic communities may become more aware of their distinctness from one another and increasingly see each other as rivals.[16] There is little doubt that Sri Lanka's ethnic strife was intensified by a growing perception among Sinhalese that what they saw as unfair Tamil prosperity had been achieved at the cost of the Sinahelse and in turn, Tamil's saw their difficulties as the result of Sinhalese government policy. Religious differences may sharpen competitive rivalries, lending an aura of righteousness to what may be otherwise understandable mainly as the very worldly search for jobs.

When such social identifications become associated with demographic numbers, particularly when differing family practices mean that some communities produce visibly more children than others, deep primordial fears become more salient. Individuals who before were seen simply as individuals, perhaps even friends, often become transformed into representatives of the "other" ethnic community, tribe or faith. As suspicion and mutual hostility displace friendship, disorders are likely to increase and more police may be needed to maintain civic order. A "load" of sustaining public order may be added to the debit side of the load/capability equation.[17]

People with employment, who can meet their own needs, may also be challenged by the work that also serves their own interests; they may be tired after their daily labors; they are less likely to risk their small stake in life's chances by engaging in significant political protest; they are more likely to avoid violence. Those who find their way into constructive participation, by their very youth can contribute their energy, their flexibility and a readiness to innovate that their less flexible elders may have long since lost.

These perspectives have been neatly synthesized by Nazli Choucri in the following proposition:

> "The higher the proportion of youthful population and the greater the unemployment, the greater the possibilities of dissatisfaction, instabilities and violence."[18]

It is therefore understandable that there is an association between political stability and economic growth. Up to a point they are mutually reenforcing. On the other hand, a marked rise in incomes per capita over a period of sustained prosperity, as in South Korea, may provoke impatience with authoritarian regimes whose political constraints are no longer seen as necessary,.

B) A SUBJECTIVE VARIABLE:
THE EXPECTATION – REALITY CONTRAST

The real magnitude of the loads imposed upon the community and government by the expanded youth cohorts, depends also upon highly subjective variables.

The intensity of youth demands is defined in part by expectations among the young, subjective realities that evoke for the energetic, restless young people images of what they can legitimately anticipate, at whatever age they leave educational and family institutions to enter the adult world. Cohorts with expectations that go far beyond what the real world can offer impose an added burden; they often pose a severe challenge.

If individuals expect little from their circumstances, then an increase in the size of the youth cohorts will not make much difference beyond the practical pressures and strains already noted. But should the increased numbers have among them individuals whose expectations about the future are for something considerably better than the reality that seems to be within their reach, added numbers of such young people can be a source of political restlessness and perhaps disruption.

Expectations are shaped by many aspects of their lives. The experience of those close to them, their family's place and traditions, these help shape the values and aspirations they make their own along the way. The educational system is of profound importance in affecting expectations. As Keyfitz pointed out in the case of Indonesia many years ago, in many LDC's the school and university system has expanded very rapidly. Where the proportion of the young who go to school has been rapidly increasing, what is taught in class and what is otherwise learned in the school environment make a profound difference to what students come to expect when they leave schools and universities. Out of all this they fashion an image of what it is reasonable to expect. In addition, what political leaders – or counter-elites – publicly promise or allege, what the media stress or downplay, what young people hear or see about lives in other parts of the world, all these can affect expectations.

To the extent that their "real" world comes close to their expectations, it is likely, other things being equal, that these successive cohorts will move forward without politically disruptive resentments. But should there be a marked gap between expectations and reality, between goals and plausible achievement, one can expect unrest, resentment and possibly politically disruptive behavior. Indeed, in urban disturbances, it is often the educated unemployed who form the core of the activists.[19]

C) CHARACTER OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The character of the political system, its structures for representation, political control and mobilization, its ideology, its accommodative processes – all these influence the way particular age cohorts affect the polity.

A representative system that opens participation through the vote may draw many of the most ambitious youth into the political mainstream. They may use their numbers and energies to promote their special interests. More likely, however, they will be drawn to follow older leaders who will use them for their own purposes. Such systems may appear disorderly and unstable as interest contends against interest in efforts to have its special needs answered. But the system's openness may warn early of deep dissatisfaction and possible troubles ahead, permitting timely adjustment of policy or access to sufficient influence to assuage rebellion.

By contrast, a repressive state can contain popular hostility and appear to be stable for a long time. Particularly where most roads to opportunity can be traveled only through one's relation to officialdom and opposition can only be voiced at serious personal risk, resentments will be silently nursed, awaiting the opportunity. Pent up resentment can turn the young into implacable antagonists and tempt the bitter to revolution. It is often remarkable how long resentments can be repressed. But when they do explode, they can disrupt and even overturn regimes.

In almost all political systems, there will be individuals and factions who see in the younger cohorts important political assets in the pulling and hauling of domestic political rivalry. Secessionist movements can also draw on the large numbers, often un- or under employed, who provide enthusiastic, zealous lieutenants and foot soldiers, so to speak, for political leaders seeking secession or threatening secession as a bargaining ploy. Examples can be seen in Eritrea, in Tamil speaking areas of Sri Lanka, in the Indian Punjab, Pakistan's Baluchistan, or Iraq's Kurdish areas. Before a movement turns violent, the unabsorbed youths can be activists mobilizing opinions in favor of stronger opposition to central governmental rule. Should the movement go further to symbolic riots or beyond that to guerilla resistance, large numbers of young zealots enhance the military power of the secessionist movement.

Through these and other mobilizational activities, youth cohorts may gain a sense of their own numbers and their distinctness from those who have come before. Once they become aware of themselves as a numerically significant element in the polity they are likely

to see themselves as rightfully deserving more influence.

Political ideologies may glorify the nation's tradition, enlisting the young to identify with the nation's leaders, possibly helping to overcome the divisiveness of narrow communal or ethnic identifications. More often, solidarities are more particular, fragmenting the polity, alienating one group from another and tempting to secession. Plausible-sounding visions of a better future may induce rejection of the "establishment" and invite an overturning through revolution of what has existed but could not accommodate to necessary change. They may also set standards of perfection that no real government could possibly realize.

Accommodative processes may facilitate discussion, the exploration of alternatives, the civil discourse that induces disagreeing parties to emphasize the interests they share, and uncover together ways to meet their different though not necesarily mutually exclusive needs. If spokesmen for the young have the right to participate in this process and they are persuaded those who rule face up to the responsibility of accountability, youth cohorts are more likely to work within given institutions than to try to overturn them.

Regular modes for generational change are helpful. Traditional western democracies allow a recognized political "opposition" to organize. Elections are the occasions that impose accountability on those who rule and when dissatisfactions are most systematically articulated and often intensified. In the absence of competitive elections, changes in leadership generations are often very difficult; they will have to be managed within official structures, where incumbents, all-too humanly cling to office, as during the Brezhnev era. Without such changes, the restless young may despair of improving their life chances within established systems. Coups d'etat by younger officers are the more typical route for accelerated generational changes where civilian structures are not well established or cannot accommodate to changing political pressures from below.

D) LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

The three intervening variables we have identified – the employment/unemployment ratio, the expectation/reality gap and the character of the political system – are themselves affected by both leadership and policy.

An inspiring leader, such as the early Sukarno or Nkrumah, up to a point can materially alter the capability of a political system to respond to the demands and grievances of youth cohorts. Even where there are many jobless and expectations have been profoundly contradicted by a harsh reality, resentment can be assuaged by a Franklin Roosevelt who can induce hope in the despairing and energize a lethargic bureaucracy into innovative ways of tackling unprecedented problems. A Tito inspired a diverse population and drew multi-ethnic youth cohorts forward in collaborative activities.

To touch the springs of loyalty in the disaffected young requires special skills, and these will change with time. What evokes a response in one generation of youth cohorts leaves subsequent cohorts unmoved, or positively repelled. Leaders who stay in place too long usually discover that formulae that worked at the beginning of their rule fall flat and set up a distance between themselves and the new young people who take the place of those who cheered the leaders when they first came to power, as Deng Xiaoping discovered.

Where competition is intensified by growing numbers cramped by a stagnant economy, with its contracting opportunity for each individual, there may be individuals who find it politically expedient to exaggerate the contrast between one group's advantages and another's. Such invidious comparisons intensify group rivalries and mutual bitterness. When attacks on specific groups or more general riots are being organized, or when they erupt virtually spontaneously in say New Delhi, Colombo, Karachi, Rangoon or elsewhere, these young men are quick to participate with zeal, greatly complicating the

"load" on governments to maintain public order and to protect minorities.

The policies a government chooses – or may be 'forced' – to follow can also make a difference. These are the least predictable. Understandably, policies toward expanding educational opportunities, toward university entrance, toward examinations, graduation and job assignment afterwards are particularly sensitive.

Youth cohorts, however, do not care only about their own particular interests. Notions of appropriate political behavior can also become issues of importance. Persisting authoritarian practices that once were acceptable, but may have lost their public legitimacy can intensify resentment as in South Korea, Algeria, Poland or the People's Republic of China. Government policies appearing to contradict cherished traditional political practices can trigger the ire of youth cohorts. For example, policies that encourage the migration of one ethnic group into lands that another considers its traditional territory can turn whole communities against a government, as in Sri Lanka. The egregious misuse of police power beyond what is thought in that society to be legitimate or the assassination of a popular opposition leader can be the trigger for political upheaval, as in the Philippines.

It is not necessary for the young themselves to be the ones who invariably define the issue and set the strategy, nor is it only the unassimilated youth cohorts who make up the protesters, as we have seen in Poland, where organized shipyard workers have been in the forefront of truly consequential unrest. But where numbers willing to run severe risk are needed, typically it is the cohorts of unassimilated young who are the foot soldiers who mount the challenge that governments find difficult to overcome.

Leadership and policy thus can affect the other variables, contributing to either continuing stability or increasing the chances of eruption.

These are among the important intervening variables that stand between the fundamental demographics and probable political results. No wonder the political side effects of larger youth cohorts are difficult to predict with precision.

V. DEMOGRAPHICS PROVIDE THE BASIC PRE-CONDITIONS

All this being said, it should be clear nevertheless that the underlying demographics provide important – and sometimes critical – conditions leaders must contend with. The intervening variables discussed above contribute to the magnitude and intensity of the problems leaders will face. They also provide some of the tools they will have at their disposal or might be able to shape to their purposes. Demographic factors in turn intensify the difficulties imposed on polities by inadequate performance of the institutions and processes that are here considered intervening variables.

In sum, demographics in themselves are not likely to provide sufficient explanations for social eruption and violence. But they do generate fundamental aspects of these problems. They can be of more significance than is usually attributed to them since yesterday's or today's demographics define parameters for tomorrow's administrative or political agenda. Demographics can raise warning flags well ahead!

VI. FURTHER ANALYSIS

There are three ways to carry the analysis further.

One can organize a series of case studies of political instabilities, such as the overthrow of President Marcos in the Philippines, the effort to unseat Ne Win in Burma, the tragic ethnic riots in Malaysia in 1969, the secessionist movements in Sri Lanka or Ethiopia in the 1980's. Many others await analysis. Each can be examined in order to assess the role that population pressures played as a causal factor in these episodes.

A second approach would be to test specific threshold propositions, such as Fuller's earlier proposition that when youth cohorts represent over 20% of the overall population political instabilities are very likely.

One could test such a hypothesis by looking back to see whether past periods of unrest are correlated with the years of maximum proportions. One can also identify polities facing possible trouble ahead by noting which are facing 20% or over in these politically critical age groups in the next decade. Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda are among those where the 20% threshold is likely to be passed in the 1990's. One could suggest similar probabilities when these cohorts are growing at a rate of 3.8% to over 4% per year over a number of successive years.

A third, and more ambitious approach would be to shape a multi-variate study, such as is here roughly sketched, and develop a sophisticated cross-country comparison matrix, focusing attention on the role of the youth cohorts in different demographic conditions and political circumstances. A useful, pioneering model, is Population Pressures: Threat to Democracy, by the Population Crisis Committee. It identifies five demographic characteristics and five problems of governance and assesses their interactions by careful quantification and correlations.

Our analysis, therefore, represents an early sketch of significant dimensions and useful ways of thinking about the interconnections between rapid growth of the youth cohorts and the political problems of governance in many Third World nations. The papers in a forthcoming volume explore more specific, illustrative examples. We hope these will lead others to undertake further explorations of these important matters.

VII. TO SUMMARIZE THE ARGUMENT

We have identified the abruptness and magnitude of the changes in the cohort size as a primary condition, imposing new "loads" on the politico-economic system. This condition can be assessed by comparing the rate of population growth of the entire population and of the youth cohorts, the proportion in the youth cohorts as compared to the rest of the population or to those over twenty five and how these rates change over time. The geographical concentration of these cohorts also makes a difference, and urbanization is one way of recording that.

The following intervening variables link these conditions to political outcomes:

(1) the "loads/capabilities" equation, is affected by (a) the size and abruptness of the new loads and (b) the economic performance of the polity, particularly its ability to generate productive and satisfying jobs for young adults.

(2) The employment/unemployment ratio is one of the most important intervening variables, yet it is not easy to assess since reliable and comparable data are not readily available. Where large percentages find few opportunities, competition becomes more severe, intensifying class, ethnic, tribal and possibly religious rivalries.

(3) Among the more "subjective" variables, expectations are important. They are induced in any cohort by family and community life, the educational system, by established political practises, by experience and by public discourse. How these expectations compare to the opportunities that are in fact available does much to shape the "satisfaction/resentment" equation.

(4) The character of the political system, its structures and modes of political mobilization, its ideology and its accommodative processes all affect the way particular age cohorts affect the polity.

(5) Finally, the qualities of leadership and the policies governments pursue also affect the way youth cohorts contribute to stability or to political upheaval.

It hardly needs saying that each of these variables has a quasi-independent dynamic of its own and that there will be much "randomness" in the responses of large numbers of human beings to the circumstances they face.

Yet there is also little argument that the underlying demographics provide helpful or baleful conditions with which statesmen and ordinary people must cope.

The paper suggests three ways of pursuing these matters – a series of case studies of significant political episodes in which youth cohorts played a particularly consequential role, further "threshold" studies analogous to Gary Fuller's explorations and a complex multivariate matrix analysis, along the lines of the Population Crisis Committee's model study of 1989.

Notes

[1] Wriggins and C.H.S. Jayewardene, "Youth Protest in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)" in Wriggins and Guyot, eds., *Population, Politics and the Future of Southern Asia* (Columbia University Press, 1973); G. Obeysekera, "Some comments on the social backgrounds of the April 1971 insurgency in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 33, May 1974), 376-384.

[2] See Exhibit A for a suggestive chart prepared by Gary Fuller of the University of Hawaii Department of Geography.

[3] For a list of the 25 sample countries whose data we have considered, see Appendix I. This "sample" should not be construed as scientifically representative of all polities, but includes the states we thought would provide useful illustrative data. A more systematic data analysis would be required to "test" our points. The Population Crisis Committee of Washington, D.C. has completed such an analysis, entitled "Population Pressure: Threat to Democracy", (Washington, D.C., 1989).

[4] For early discussions of these problems, see Myron Weiner, "Political Demography: An Inquiry into the Political Consequences of Population Change", in Roger Ravell, ed. *Rapid Population Growth* Vol. 2; (National Academy of Sciences/Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 576-581; Neil Chamberlain, *Beyond Malthus: Population and Power* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1970); Nazli Choucri, *Population Dynamics and International Violence* (Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1974); Nazli Choucri (ed.) *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Population and Conflict* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1984).

[5] Gary Fuller of the University of Hawaii Department of Geography has been exploring these demographic relationships. See for instance, Exhibit A July 1986, and, as an example for S. Korea, G. Fuller and Forrest Pitts, "Youth Cohorts and Political Unrest in South Korea", *Political Geography Quarterly*, Autumn, 1989.

[6] These demographic data are from United Nations, *World Population Prospects: Estimates and Projections as assessed in 1984* Population Studies No. 98 (New York, United Nations, 1986).

[7] See the writing of Nathan Keyfitz, particularly "The Profile of Intercohort Increase", unpublished manuscript.

[8] See Appendix II for details "Annual Rate of Youth Cohort Growth", averaged per year within each reported period.

[9] Recording note merely concentration in huge cities but also in lesser cities and market towns.

[10] Data from a series *Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities*, published by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. Population Policy Paper Series, ST/ESA/Series R.

[11] The suggestive term of "mosaic society" is Carlton Coon's, from his classic study, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East*, (New York, Holt, 1958).

[12] The term is Jason Finkle's. Donald K. Emmerson's essay, "Students and the Establishment in Indonesia: The Status-Generation Gap," early pointed to this form of the generation gap, in Wriggins and Guyot, *op.cit., Ch.8.*

[13] Department of International Economic and Social Affairs,rld Demographic Estimates and Projections, 150-2025 (New York, United Nations, ST/ESA/SER.R/79, 1985). Data are reported decade by decade for ages 15 to 24, the annual entrants being considered the actual increase (or decrease) averaged for each 10 year period. Unfortunately – and understandably – reliable data on unemployment or underemployment have not been found.

[14] Wriggins and Guyot, eds., *Population, Politics and the Future of Southern Asia*, pp. 339-340.

[15] Neil Chamberlain, *op.cit., p.55.*

[16] For a vivid evocation of how ethnic awareness develops, see Harold Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1975/1989) also Stanley Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[17] For a discussion of the effects of growing competition in a developed society as economic growth slows, see Lester Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society* (New York, London, Penguin, 1981).

[18] Nazli Choucri, *Population Dynamics and International Violence, Propositions, Insights, and Evidence*, (Lexington, Mass, Lexington Books, 1974) p.72.

[19] Ted Gurr's discussion of "relative deprivation", where optimistic expectations of improvement are disproved by a reality that is worse than expected, with little apparent hope of improvement, is a particular form of this gap. See Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel.* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970).

APPENDIX I

The states in our sample were:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela and Vietnam.

APPENDIX II

Annual Rate of Youth Cohort Growth

(averaged per year within each recorded period)

	1950-1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Algeria	2.1	2.2	4.5	4.7	4.3	3.5	2.9	0.3
Bangladesh	2.0	2.5	4.9	4.5	3.1	3.7	3.3	2.6
Brazil	2.5	4.2	3.7	3.1	1.6	0.8	1.6	1.7
Burma	1.4	4.1	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.5	1.2	0.2
China	0.4	5.0	2.4	2.0	4.3	1.3	-2.5	-2.9
Colombia	2.6	4.7	3.7	3.3	2.1	0.2	0.7	2.0
Egypt	1.4	4.5	3.6	1.9	1.5	1.7	3.2	3.1
India	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5
Indonesia	1.6	1.5	3.5	3.7	2.5	2.8	1.3	0.4
Iran	3.2	6.1	4.2	3.3	3.3	3.0	2.4	2.3
Iraq	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.5	3.9
Kenya	4.5	3.4	3.9	4.7	4.7	4.9	5.0	4.9
Malaysia	2.9	4.6	4.9	2.5	2.2	1.6	0.9	1.8
Mexico	3.1	4.4	4.5	3.8	3.6	3.4	1.9	0.9
Marocco	3.0	1.4	5.9	3.8	3.3	3.3	0.1	1.3
Nigeria					4.1	4.0	3.1	4.8
Pakistan	1.4	4.2	4.9	3.4	3.4	1.8	2.1	3.2
Phillipines	2.8	5.2	4.3	1.6	2.5	2.2	2.4	1.7
S.Korea	2.4	2.1	6.4	3.4	0.49	-0.99	-0.36	-0.31
Sri Lanka	1.9	2.7	4.2	2.8	0.5	0.2	0.9	2.5
Thailand	2.3	5.4	3.1	3.5	2.9	1.7	-0.3	0.03
Turkey	0.57	4.4	4.5	2.2	2.7	1.8	0.48	0.71
Uganda					3.7	3.7	3.9	4.2
Venezuela	3.8	5.7	5.0	4.3	2.8	1.8	2.0	2.5
Vietnam	0.26	2.1	6.3	5.9	2.9	0.56	1.6	0.1

Calculated from: United Nations, *World Population Prospects* as assessed in 1984 (N.Y., United Nations, 1986).

APPENDIX III

Polities with Youth Cohorts over 20% of the total population in 1985:

Vietnam	22.9%	Pakistan	20.7%
China	22.4	Venezuela	20.5
Thailand	21.9	Iran	20.5
Colombia	21.8	Algeria	20.4
South Korea	21.8	Philippines	20.4
Morocco	20.9	Brazil	20.3
Mexico	20.9	Indonesia	20.1
Malaysia	20.9	Burma	20.1
Turkey	20.7		

Source: Calculated from *World Population Prospects* (op.cit.)

APPENDIX IV

Youth Cohorts in Relation to Adult Population,
25 years and older.

Country	1980 (1) %	1985 (2) %	1 to 2 %	Country	1980 (1) %	1985 (2) %	1 to 2 %
Algeria	65.1	67.0	+2.92	Thailand	59.7	57.6	-3.52
Vietnam	64.5	65.1	+0.93	Venezuela	59.4	56.0	-5.72
Mexico	64.0	63.3	-1.09	Malaysia	59.4	55.6	-6.40
Pakistan	63.8	62.2	-2.51	Brazil	56.7	52.2	-7.94
Bangladesh	63.3	62.9	-0.63	Ethiopia	56.6	48.6	-14.13
Morocco	62.8	59.2	-5.73	Egypt	56.3	51.5	-8.53
Colombia	62.4	58.5	-6.25	Turkey	56.3	53.6	-4.80
Iran	61.9	58.7	-5.17	Indonesia	54.7	53.7	-1.83
Uganda	61.6	62.6	+1.62	Burma	53.7	55.7	+3.72
Iraq	60.2	60.3	+0.17	SriLanka	53.3	47.9	-10.13
Nigeria	60.2	62.5	+3.87	India	51.1	50.3	-1.57
Philippines	60.0	57.1	-4.83	China	48.6	52.5	+8.02

Data provided by Nathan Keyfitz, from World Population Prospects (op.cit.)