

Fertility Prospects in China

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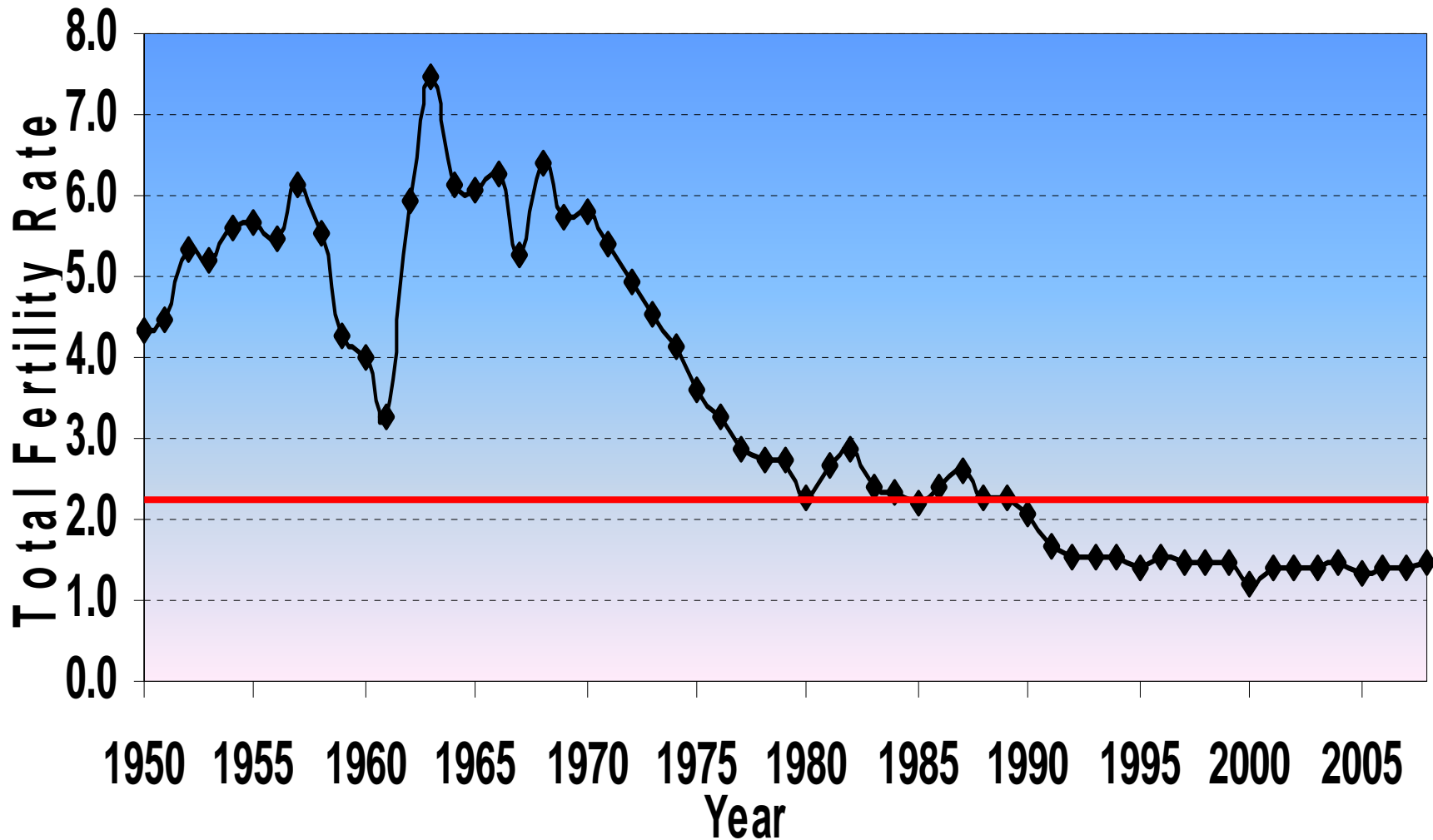
Issue of Fertility Estimation

- **WPP 2009: 1.77 (China)**
- **From “official estimate”**
- **NPFPC versus NBS**
- **Review the trend since 1990s**
- **Explain reasons behind**
- **Discuss the implications**

Fertility Trend in China

- 1950s: Women's emancipation
- 1970s: "Later, Sparser, Fewer"
- TFR from 5.81 (1970) to 2.72 (1978)
- 1980: Open Letter for one child
- Early 1990s: below replacement
- Now: about 1.5, among the lowest

Total Fertility Rate in China: 1950 - 2008



Evolution of Fertility Policy in China

- Resistance to one-child policy
- Compromise by exceptions in mid-1980s
- Localization of policy in the 1990s
- Three groups for two children:
 - First child is a girl in most rural areas
 - Member of ethnic minorities
 - Two-child policy experiment areas

Issue of Underreporting

- Economic and social liberalization
- Continue draconian birth control
- Concern of births underreporting

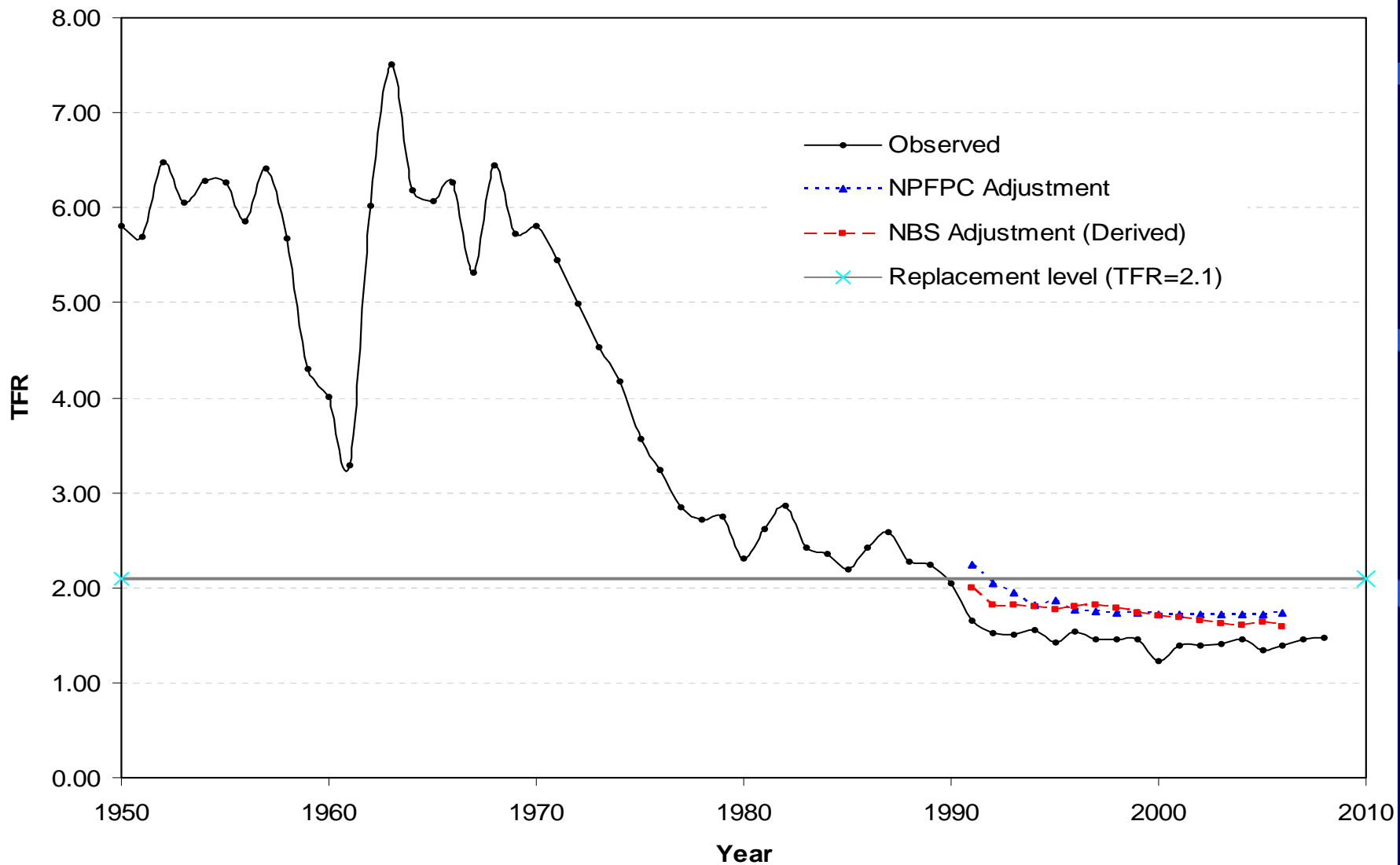
Births Underreporting

- 1992 survey: TFR at 1.52
- Raise serious questions
 - Low development level
 - Fertility stagnated in the 1980s
 - Tighten-up in implementation

Retrospect Examinations of TFR in 1992

- 1997 fertility survey: 1.57
- 2001 fertility survey: 1.59
- 2000 census (NBS & EWC): 1.67
- 2000 census (Guo): 1.68
- Real decline to below replacement
- Even taking account of underreporting

Fertility Trends in China 1950 - 2008



Fertility Decline in China

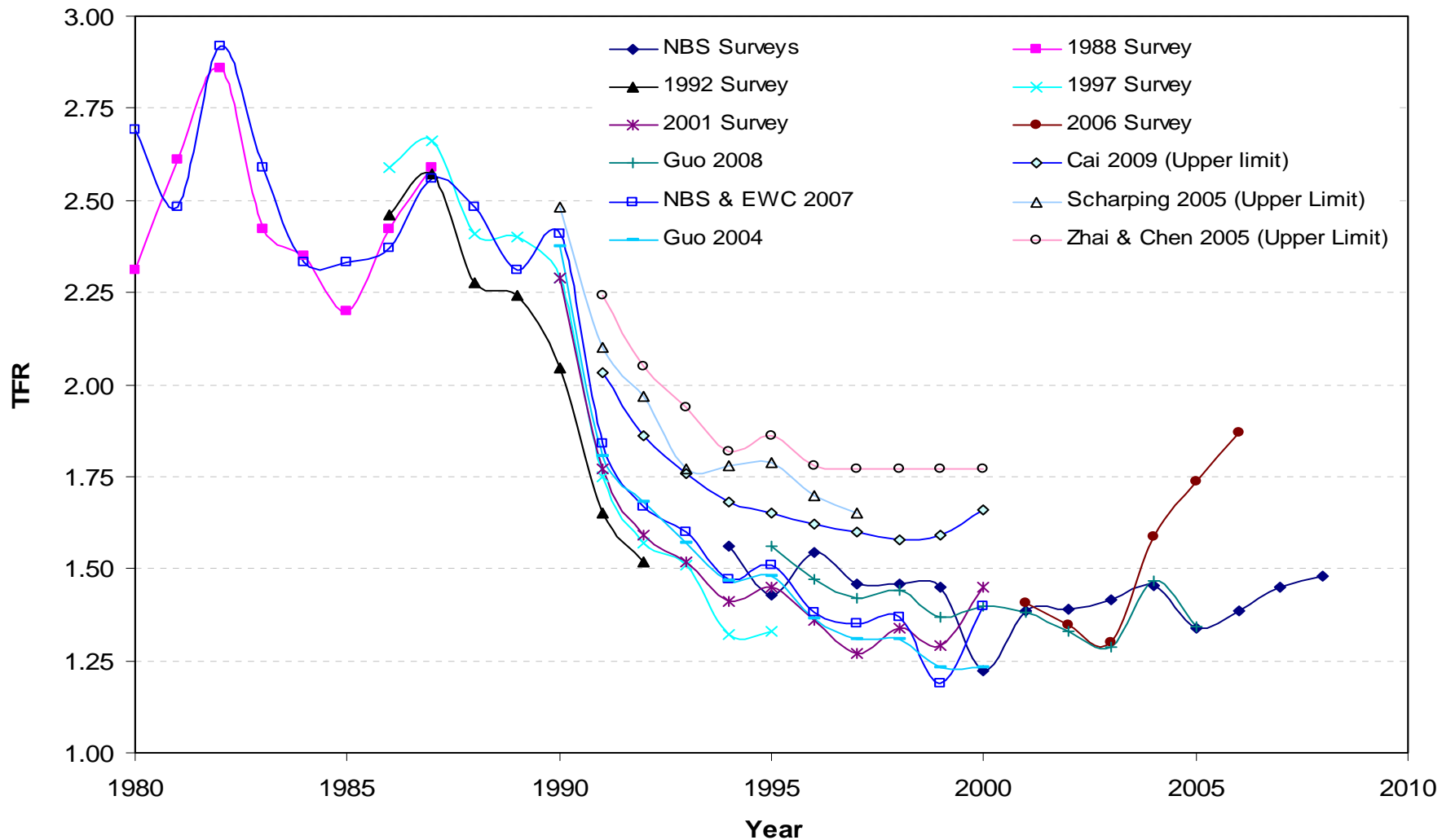
- 1970s: sustained rapid decline from 6
- 1980s: fluctuated around 2.5
- 1990s: further decline to well below 2.1

Fertility Estimates by Different Sources

- NPFPC surveys: 1988, 1992, 2001, 2006
- NBS censuses and annual surveys
- Retherford et al: 1990 and 2000 censuses
- Guo: 2000 census, 2005 mini-census
- Cai, Scharping, Zhai-Chen: school enrollment

Fertility Trends in China, 1980-2008

based on Various Sources



Fertility Estimate by Different Sources

- Higher estimate by school enrollment data: due to over estimate induced from economic incentives, increasing migration, change in education system and age structure
- Upward result in 2006 survey: due to under-sampling of young-unmarried

Fertility Estimate by Different Methods

- Around 1.6 in 2000 (Zhang-Zhao)
- 1.47 in 1997-2000 (Retherford et al.)
- 1.5-1.6 in the 1990s (Cai)
- Similar conclusion: Guo, Guo-Chen,
Morgan-Guo-Hayford

Current Fertility in China

- **Studies: around 1.5**
- **NBS: 1.6**
- **NPFPC: 1.7-1.8**
- **Why is fertility so low?**

Reasons to Be So Low

- Fertility policy - not always work
- Social change - to encourage fewer
- Tempo effect – period lower than cohort
- Changes in attitude and behavior
- Modern contraceptive services

Fertility Intention and Behavior

- **Jiangsu Study: 6 counties, 525 million**
 - **Choose one: 57 %**
 - **Choose two: 42 %**
 - **Average ideal: 1.44**
- **2006 National survey: 1.73**

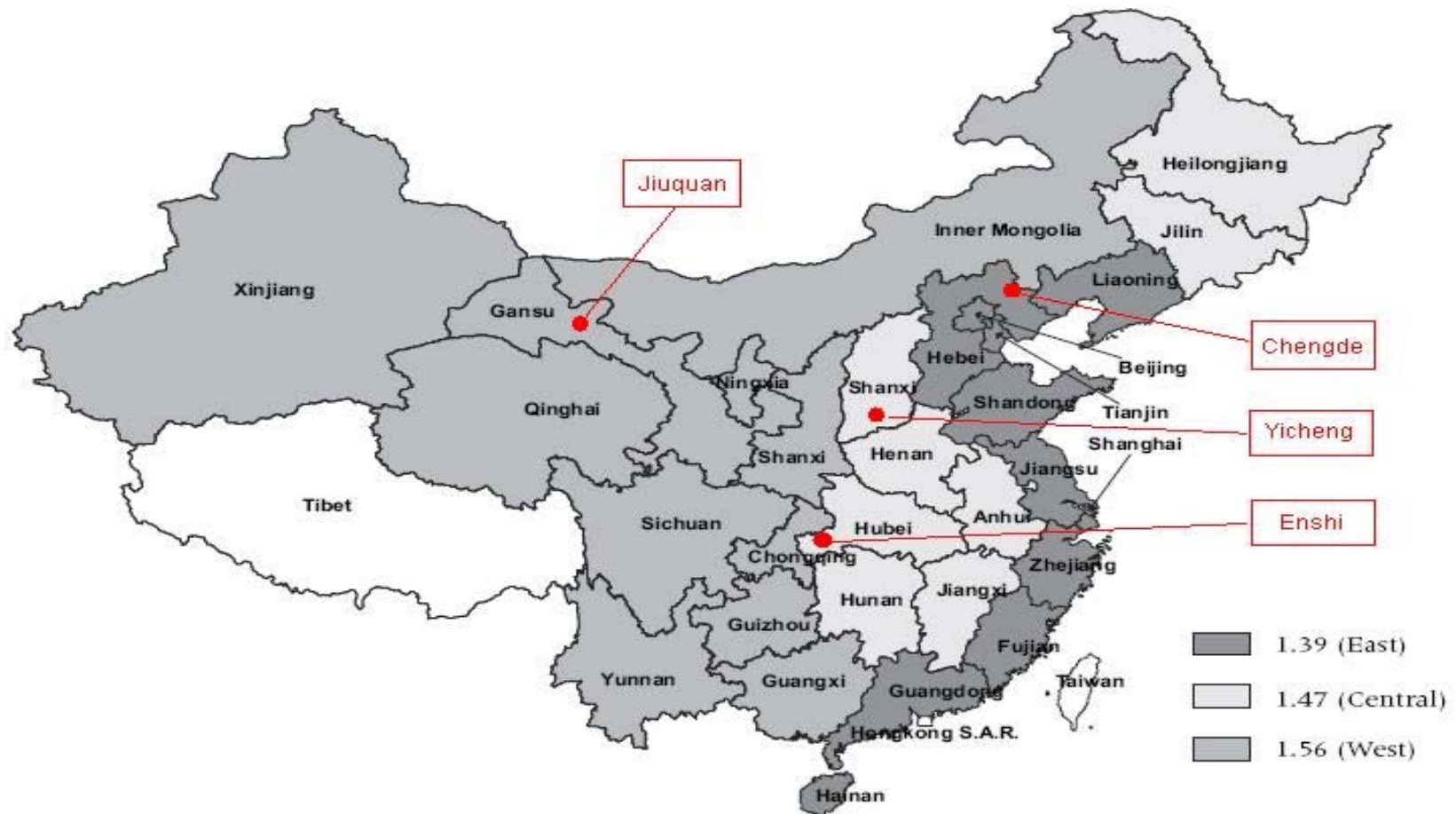
Fertility Intention and Behavior

Among allowed for two in Jiangsu Study

- Have two: 10 %
- Consider for two: 1/3
- One as ideal: 55 %
- Average ideal: 1.46

Studies on Two-child Policy Areas

Since mid-1980s, a pop of 8.4 million



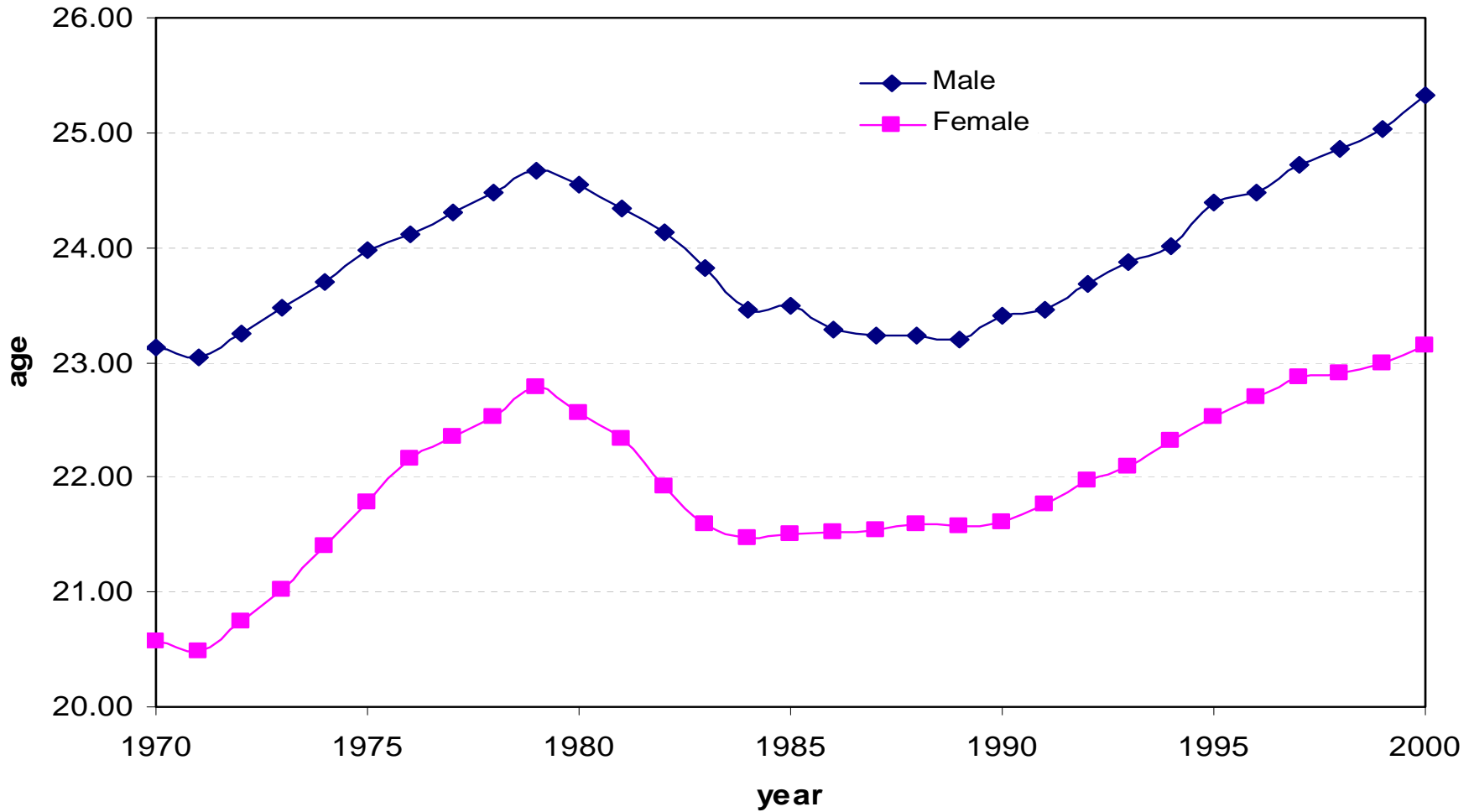
Reasons for Limiting to One Child

- Uncertain future
- Cost of having children
- Unfriendly environment to reproduction
- Rising demand for “human capital”
- Retrenchment of public support
- Concentrate for few but successful

Low Fertility Proximate Determinants

- Relatively low “unwanted fertility”
- Son preference via sex-selective abortion
- Infecundity and sub-fecundity
- Delayed marriage and childbearing

Mean Age at First Marriage by Sex, China 1970-2000



Implication of Low Fertility

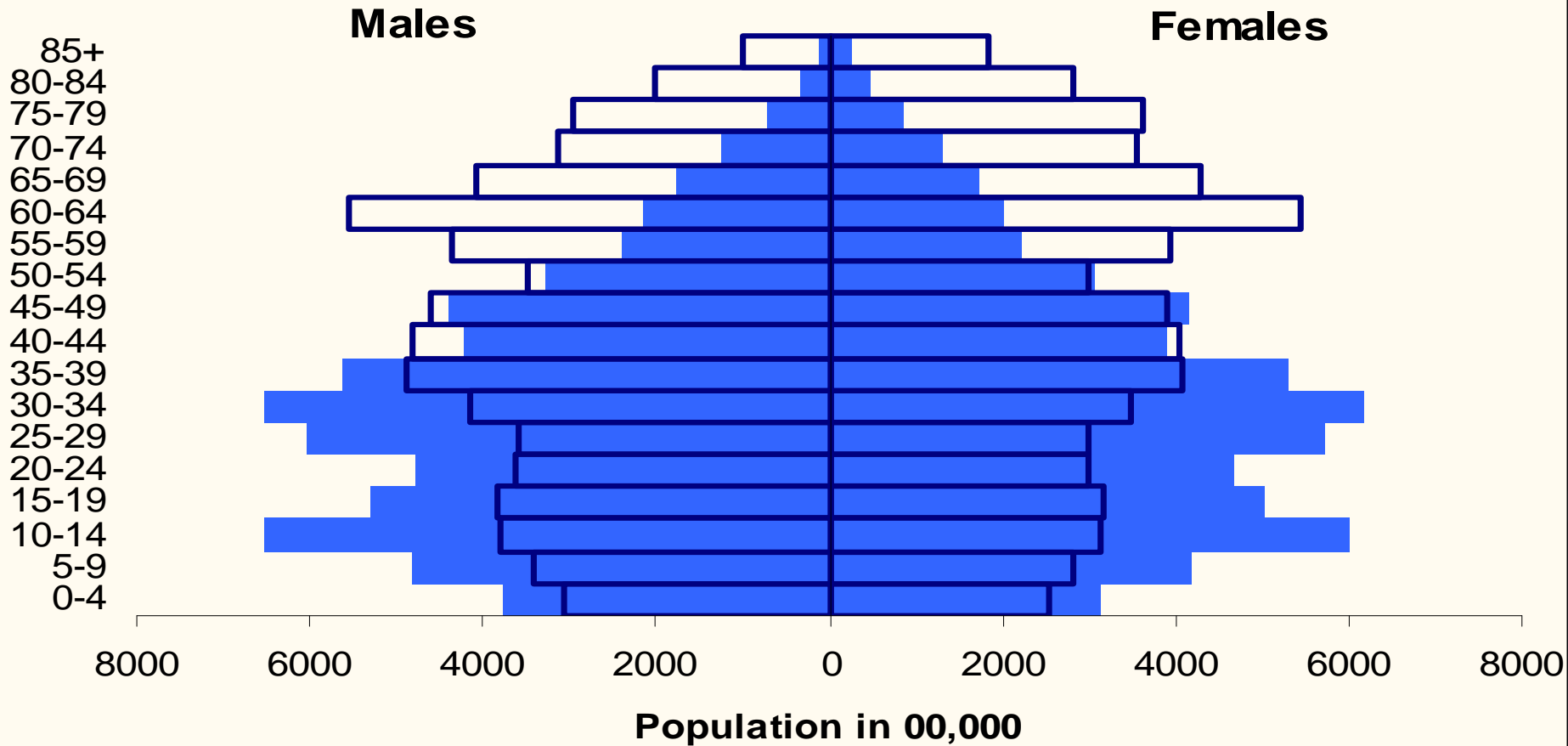
Population aging:

- By 2005, age 60+: 11%, 144 million
- “Get old before get rich”

By mid-century

- 1/3 population aged 60+
- > 100 million aged 80+
- Less than 2 labors support 1 elder

Population Structure of China, 2000 (Shaded) and 2050



Implication of Population Aging

- Children for elderly support: unfeasible
- Youths migrate to cities
- Rural aging is higher than urban
- More than an issue of elderly care
- Overall transformation of society
- Reconstruction of social structure

Implication of Low Fertility

Fragile families:

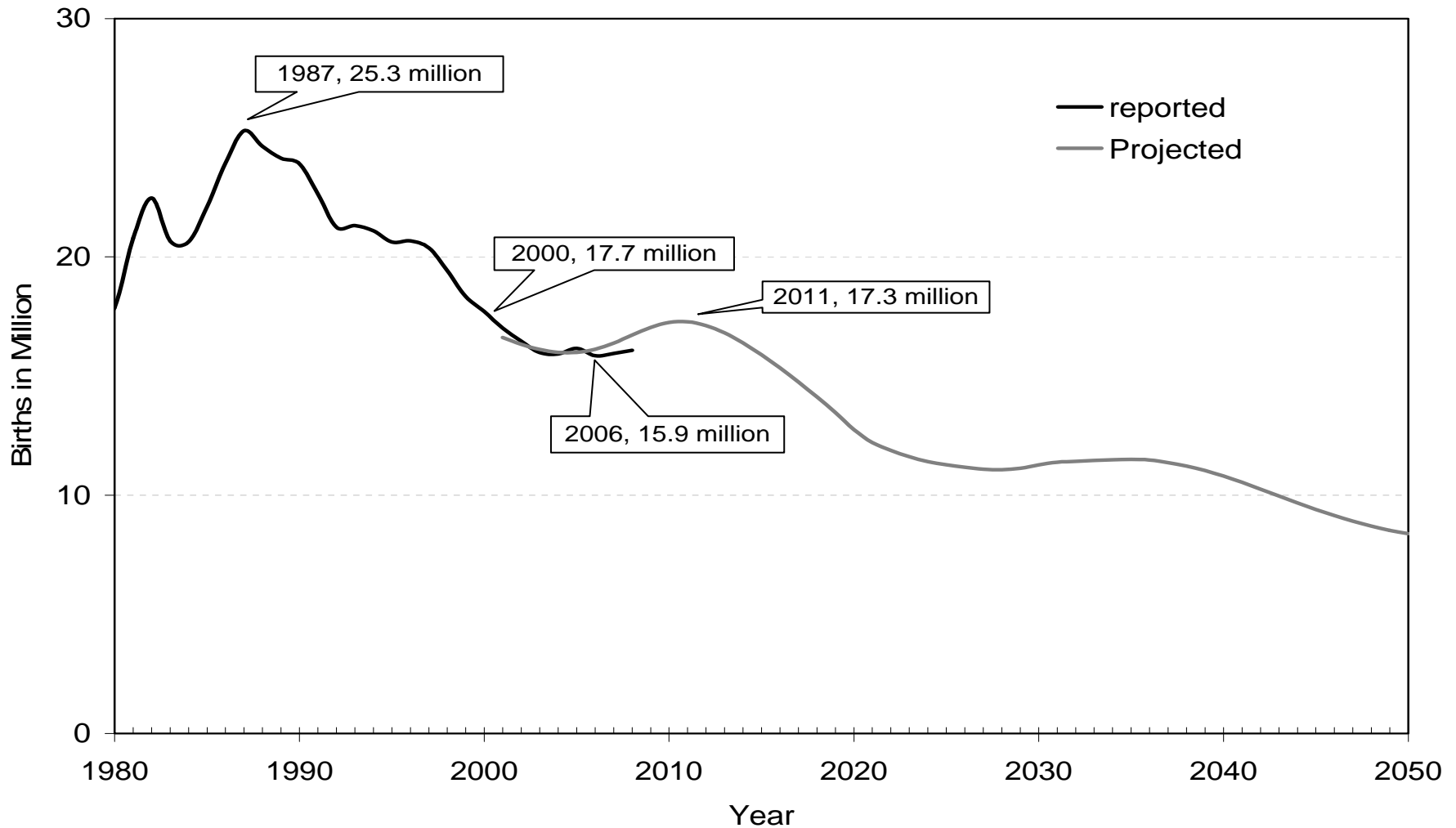
- Single children: 160 million
- Over 1/3 households with one child
- 50 % women 60+ with one child
- Tragedies seen in 2008 earthquake
- Fragility of the family system

Implication of Low Fertility

Population Decline:

- Intrinsic growth rate: 20 ‰ (mid-1970s) to -20 ‰ (2005)
- From doubling in 30 years to halving in 30 years
- Births reached historically low in 2006
- Sharp drop in births in next decades

Reported and Projected Number of Births, China 1980-2050



Implication of Low Fertility

Population Decline:

- Continue to decline for 50+ years
- Reduce by 220 to 300 million
- Median age to 50 by mid-century
- Reduce size by half at end-century

Implication of Low Fertility

Labor shortage:

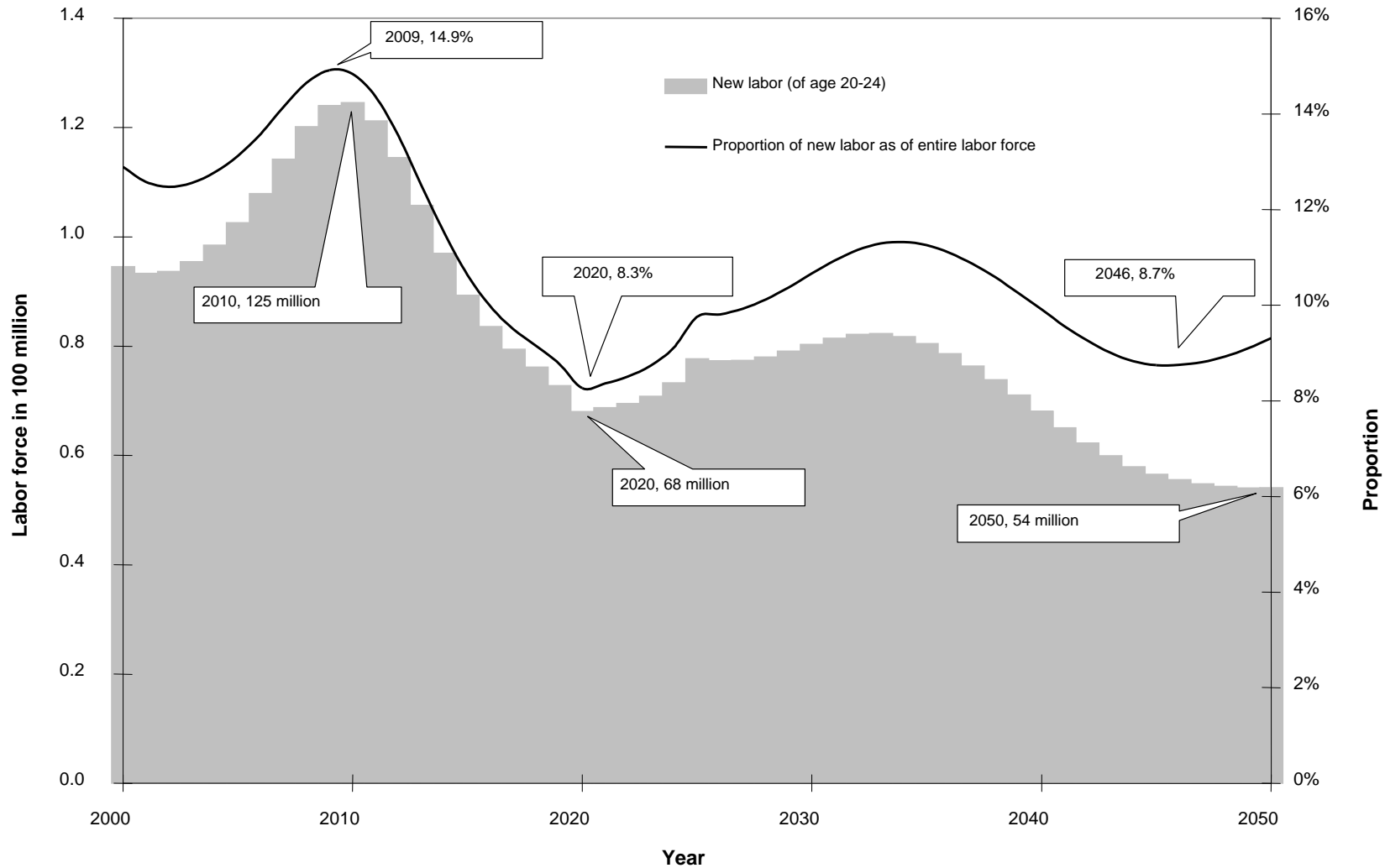
- Economic boom due to large labor force
- Demographic dividend: 15-25% growth
- Sharp decline in labor supply
 - From 966 million in late 2020s to 761 million in mid-century
 - Reduce 100 million per decade, 10 million per year

Implication of Low Fertility

Labor shortage:

- From “abundant supply” to “limited surplus”
- Young labor aged 20 to 24
 - Recently educated, more innovative, and active consumers
 - Reduce from 125 million in 2010 to only 68 million in 2020

Projected Trends in Young Labor Force, China 2000-2050



Concluding Remarks

To assess fertility in China:

- Effect of government policy
- Possible underreporting of births
- Empirical studies by various scholars
- Using various methods and data sets
- Reach similar conclusion of around 1.5

Concluding Remarks

Reasons to be low:

- Market oriented economy
- Massive rural-urban migration
- Changing attitude and behavior
- Delayed marriage and childbearing
- High prevalence of contraceptive use

Concluding Remarks

Implication of low fertility:

- Too new to be fully addressed
- Certainly tremendous or revolutionary
- Future will tell what discussed is only the tip of the iceberg
- “Below replacement”: a new global demographic norm

End