Population policy

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Extra reading
Population and Society (SOCI 312)

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Outline

- Introduction
- World population conferences
- Policies affecting fertility
- Policies affecting mortality
- Policies affecting migration
- U.S. immigration policies
- Replacement migration

Population policy

- A population policy is a deliberately constructed arrangement or program “through which governments influence, directly or indirectly, demographic change”

- Population policies are usually understood to represent strategies for governments, or sometimes, albeit less frequently, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to attain specific goals

- Countries exhibiting demographic conditions of too high or too low growth will often develop policies whose goals are to try to restore the demographic balance

Governments and demographic processes

- Generally governments influence indirectly the demographic behavior
- Oftentimes, mere legislation or propaganda is insufficient to attain the intended goal
- Then governments will act directly to either raise or lower levels of fertility, or to force people to move or not to move

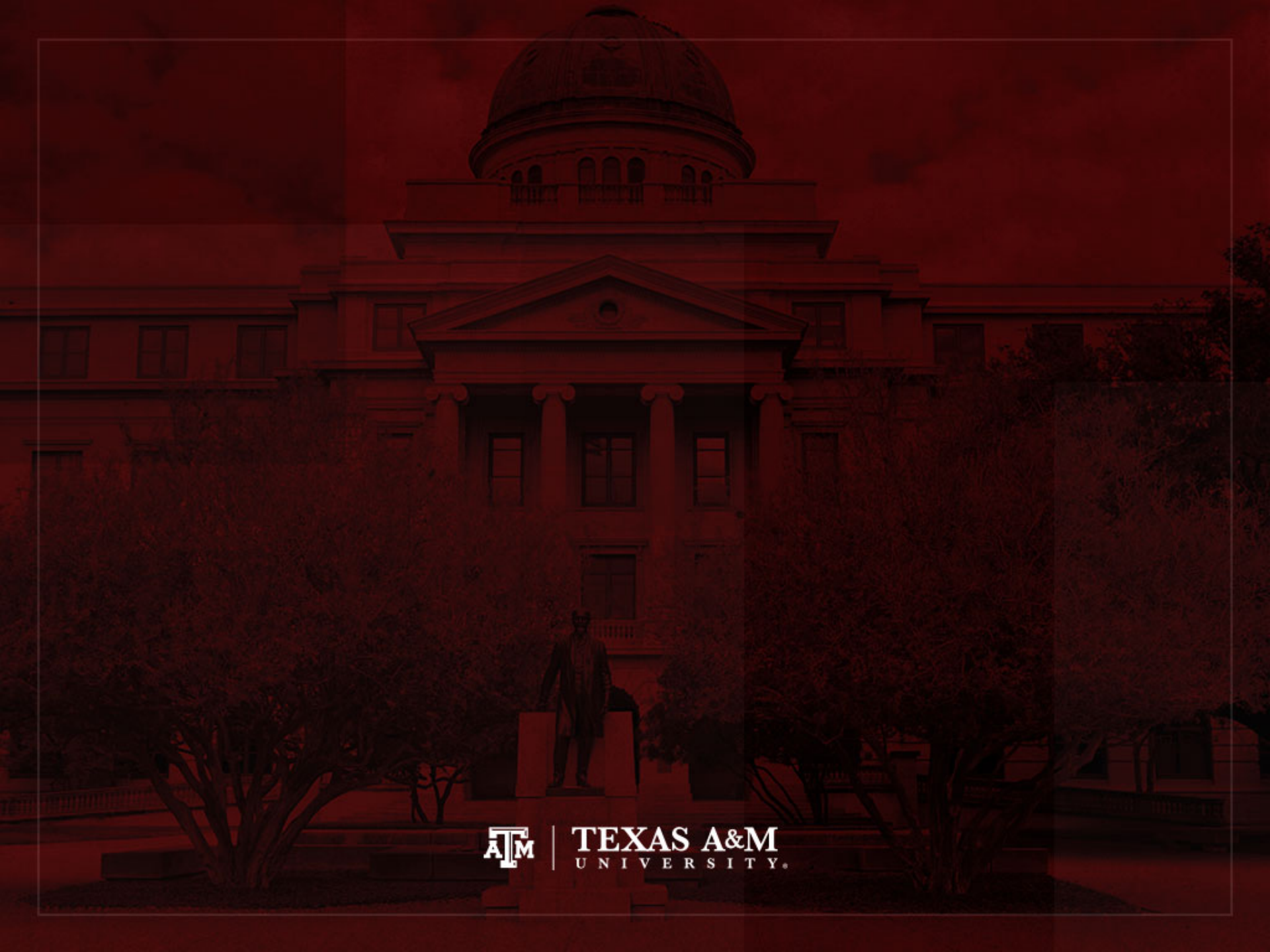
Policy formulation

- The task of formulating a population policy is complicated
- There may be some disagreement as to the magnitude of the problem (if indeed there is a problem) of population growth or decline

Issues of disagreement

1. Must there be an explicit statement by a government that a policy exists?
2. Does there have to be a planned course of action or program?
3. Must the goals of a policy be demographic, or may they be social and economic?

- The point of raising these questions is to illustrate that there are often no “correct” answers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World population conferences

- The issue of human population growth as a problem or issue of concern is really a 20th century phenomenon
- During the 18th century, Malthus declared that overpopulation was bound by nature to occur
- But it was not until the 1960s and the early 1970s that the public became acutely aware of the problem
- Starting in the 1970s, there was considerable debate in academic circles with many advocating voluntary family planning

U.S. policies

- In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson established an Office of Population in the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- The goal of USAID was to convince governments in developing countries to foster contraceptive usage among its citizens
- However, host country officials asked why the U.S. was promoting family planning instead of addressing, according to their way of thinking, more pressing needs like assistance in relieving the millions of people suffering from malaria

UNFPA

- In part to defuse this issue, the U.S. worked with the United Nations to help create in 1969 the **United Nations Fund for Population Activities** (UNFPA)

- UNFPA served as a major source of funds for population initiatives in developing countries

- Three world population conferences were subsequently held in 1974, 1984, and 1994 and framed the story of international family planning that has unfolded since the 1970s

1st world population conference

- The 1st World Population Conference was held in Bucharest, Romania in 1974

- Organized by members of the U.N., it was an attempt to bring together government officials from around the world and illustrate for them the facts and consequences of rapid population growth (as a population problem)

Developing countries reaction

- Instead, most developing nations stressed their preoccupation with the importance of socioeconomic development

- They called for a “New Economic Order,” whose position was encapsulated in the expression “Development is the best contraceptive”

2nd world population conference

- The 2nd conference was held in Mexico City in 1984
- Many developing countries had changed their opinions about population growth and were now interested in assistance directed toward their emerging **family planning programs**
- A **family planning program** is a systematic effort to promote modern fertility control

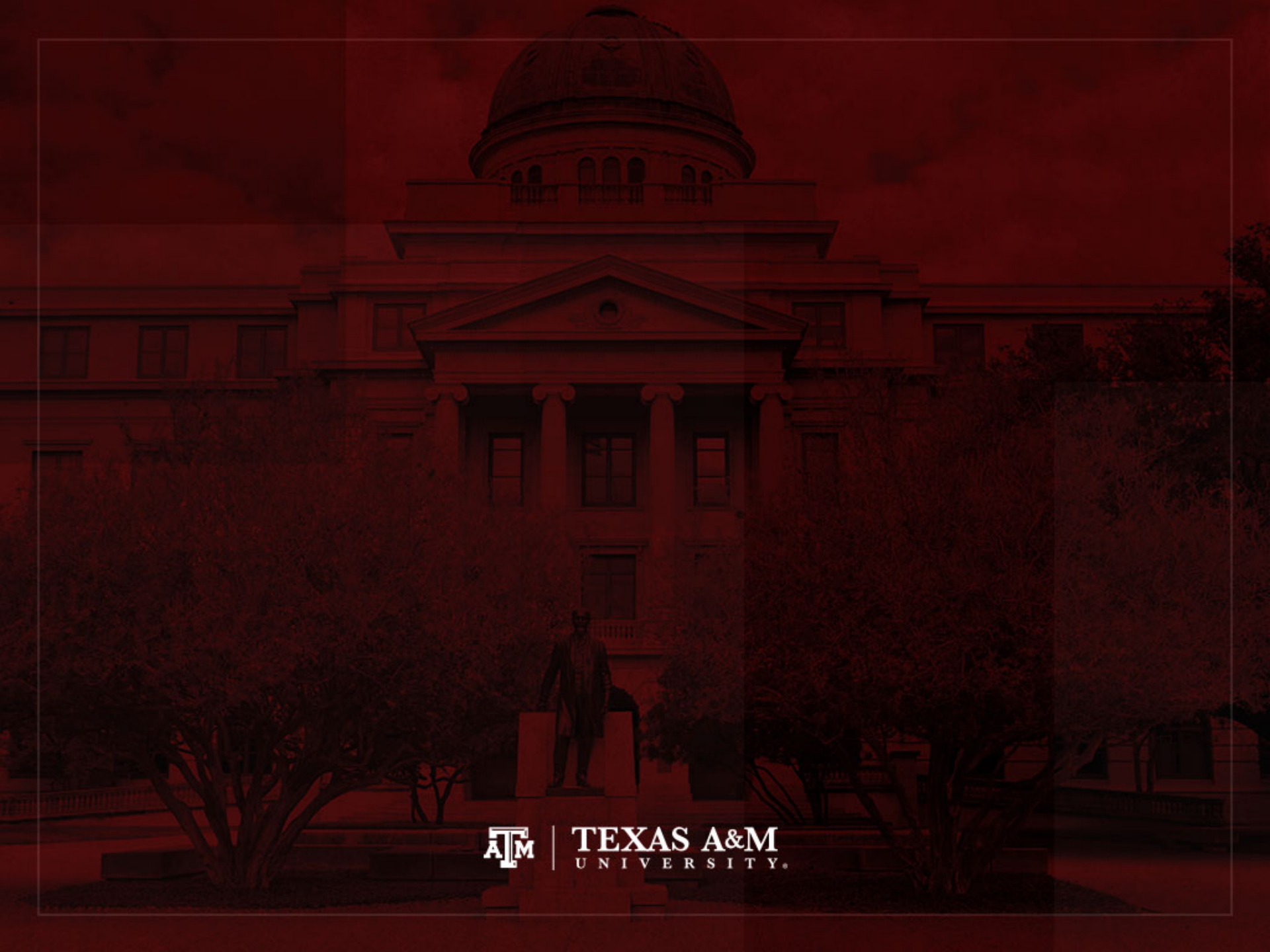
3rd world population conference

- The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo, Egypt

- Its major outcome was a new definition of population policy, giving prominence to reproductive health and downplaying the strictly demographic rationale for population policy

Women's empowerment

- According to the demographer John May, the Cairo conference "stressed the importance of individual choices and the necessity to further empower women"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Policies affecting fertility

- Prior to the 20th century, most fertility policies were concerned with increasing population growth

- These policies usually were of three types
  - Pronatalist propaganda
  - Measures related to the family, such as family allowance programs
  - Restrictions on the distribution and use of contraceptives and abortion

Pronatalist policies

- In the 20th century, the pronatalist movement reached its peak in Germany, Italy, and Japan between World War I and World War II
- France and Romania adopted pronatalist policies at various times after World War I
- These policies represented a reaction to the low fertility that accompanied modernization
- Sometimes countries have policies that have both pronatalist and antinatalist effects

Singapore

- Singapore is another example of a country reversing its policies regarding population growth
- Its determination to reduce growth through lowered fertility was very successful
- These efforts included indirect measures such as better facilities for health and education

South Korea and Taiwan

- South Korea and Taiwan have both adopted incentive programs to increase the number of children per household

- However, there is little evidence of any success in raising fertility, and total fertility rates (TFRs) remain very much below the replacement level

- In 2013, South Korea's TFR was 1.2 and Taiwan's 1.1

China

- China undoubtedly had one of the most stringent population policies in human history
- Indeed one reason why China is such an interesting and intriguing country for demographers to study is precisely its fertility policies
- Another reason, as noted by the demographer Nathan Keyfitz, is that in China the political leaders are “able to control the annual number of births with considerable precision”

Low fertility levels

- The current situation in virtually all the countries of the developed world is one with fertility rates well below the replacement level

- Such low rates over a long period have many consequences
  - Dramatic aging of the population
  - Reduction in population size

Concerns about low fertility

- There is concern about below replacement fertility in the countries of the developed world and in some other countries (South Korea, Taiwan)

- The concern is not solely about population decline, but also about the aging of the population as a result of the very low fertility

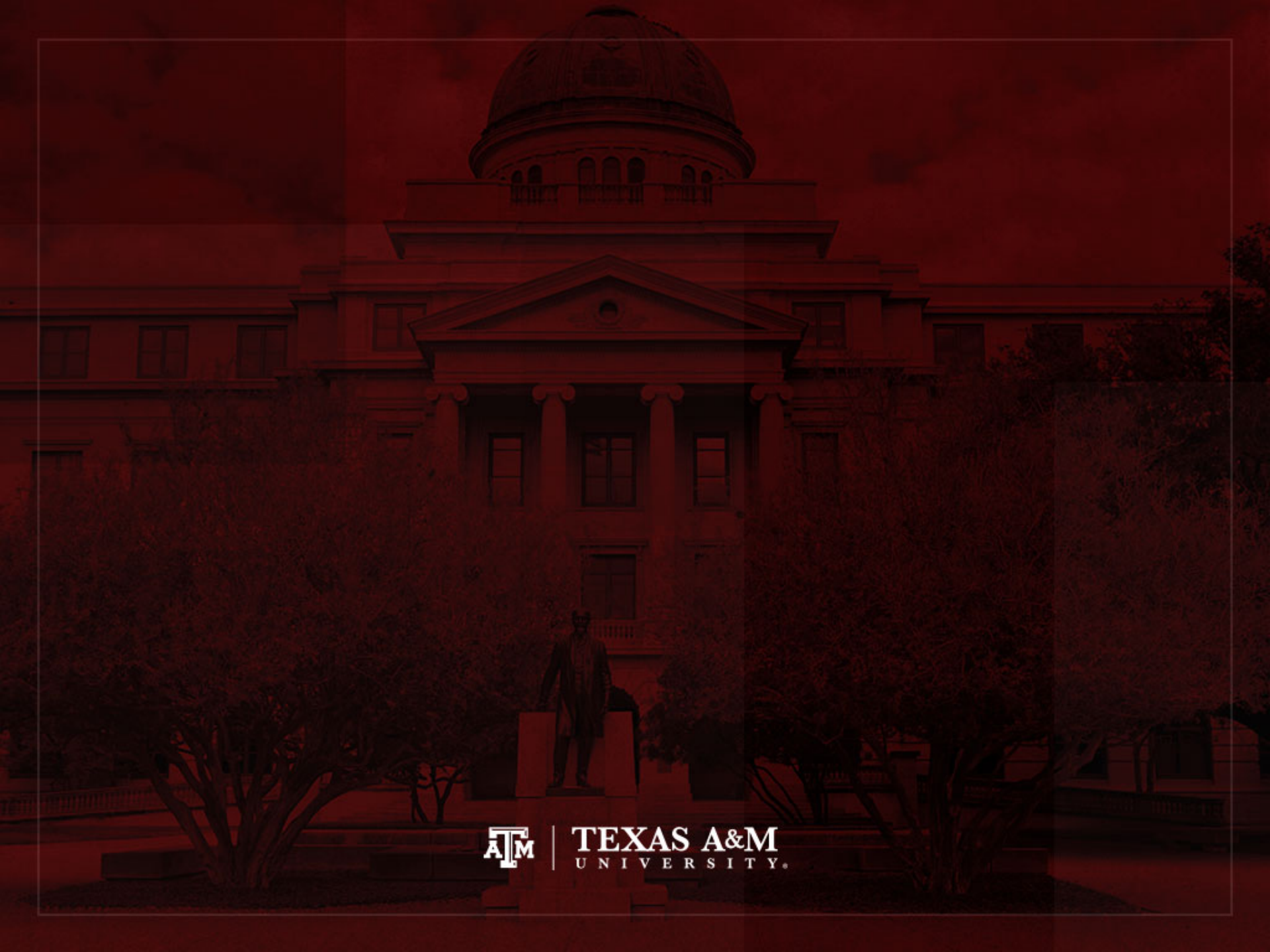
Challenges of policies

- The development of pronatalist policies in such countries is difficult to promote
- Today family planning policies are based on an equal-opportunities rationale and aim to help women combine child rearing with employment
- Some countries have implemented fertility policies involving financial remittances for each child born, liberal parental leave policies, and guaranteed child care and schooling for children

Variation in fertility policies

- In summary, fertility policies vary across the world, and they have for decades
  - In some regions, birth rates are high
  - In other regions, birth rates are low

- Both governmental and nongovernmental agencies have been attempting to restore some demographic balance in their respective societies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Policies affecting mortality

- Some hold that mortality related policies should not be considered to be direct population policies
- The reduction of mortality should be the goal of all governments, even those wishing to reduce their rates of population growth
- Mortality policies receiving the most attention are those supporting the development of medical knowledge with the potential to expand life expectancy

Health care

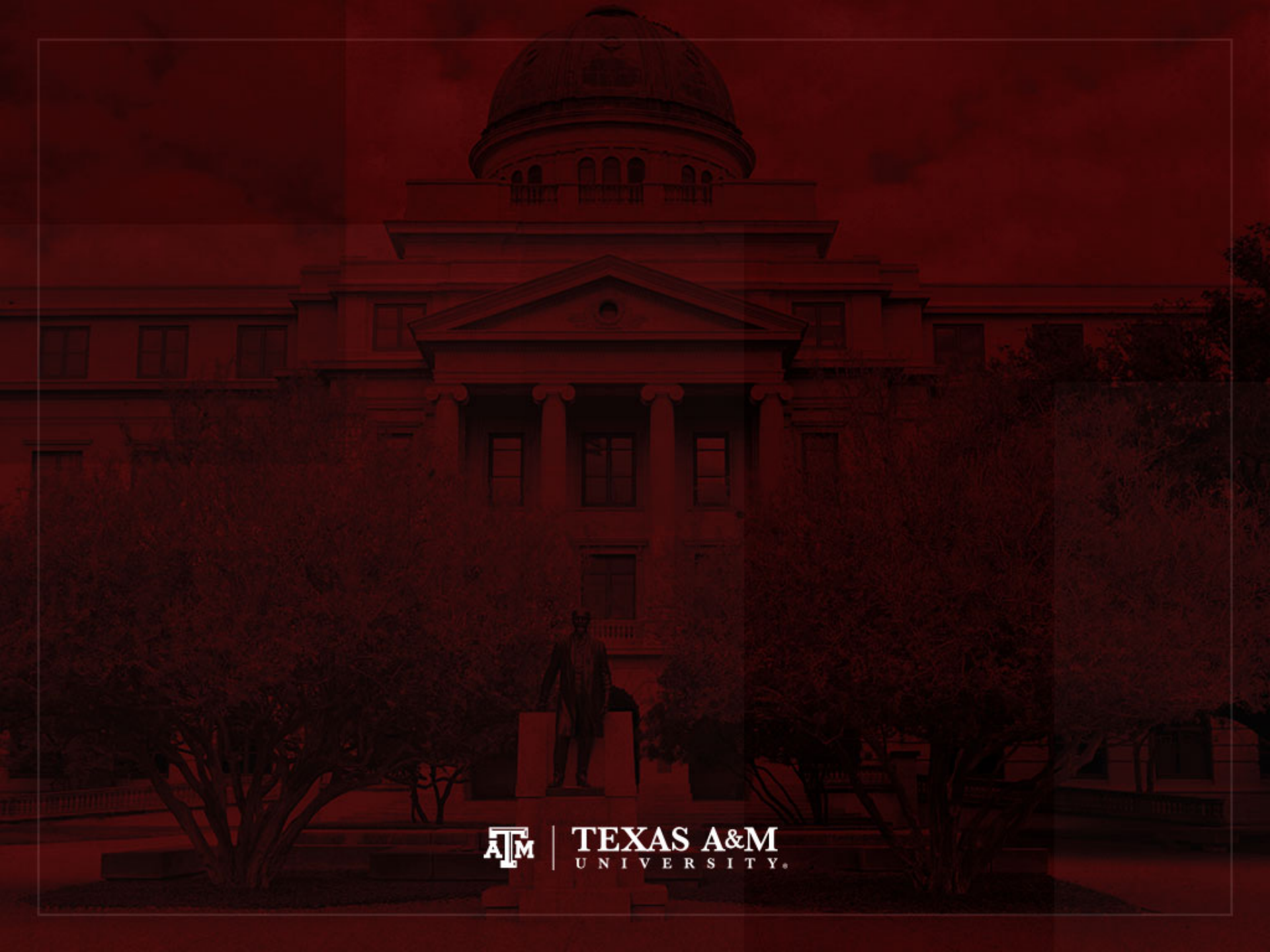
- Government policies can directly contribute to lower mortality

- Every developed country in the world, with the important exception of the United States, offers free or subsidized health care to all of its citizens

Measures that raise mortality

- If we accept the fact that government measures or policies exist that contribute to declining mortality, we must also accept the fact that some government policies can lead to increased mortality

- Measures that endanger health, although unintentionally, will eventually raise mortality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Policies affecting migration

- Throughout most of human history, people have been free to move about in search of a better life
- However, to a considerable extent, such freedom of international movement has been significantly restricted since late in the 19th century
- Many countries have introduced laws that infringe on the freedom to engage in international migration
- At the same time, some governments have taken measures to encourage movement into some areas and out of others

Immigration regimes

- Some countries encourage immigration (migration into a country from another country) in order to increase the size of its population

- In the developed world today, there are three main types of national immigration regimes
  - Traditional immigration regime
  - Guest worker regime
  - More likely to receive than to send immigrants

First immigration regime

- The first regime is the so-called traditional immigration regime
- The U.S., Canada and Australia are the three most important and sizeable traditional immigration countries
- The numbers of people legally admitted into these three countries are categorized in terms of family unification, economic needs of the country, and refugees

Second immigration regime

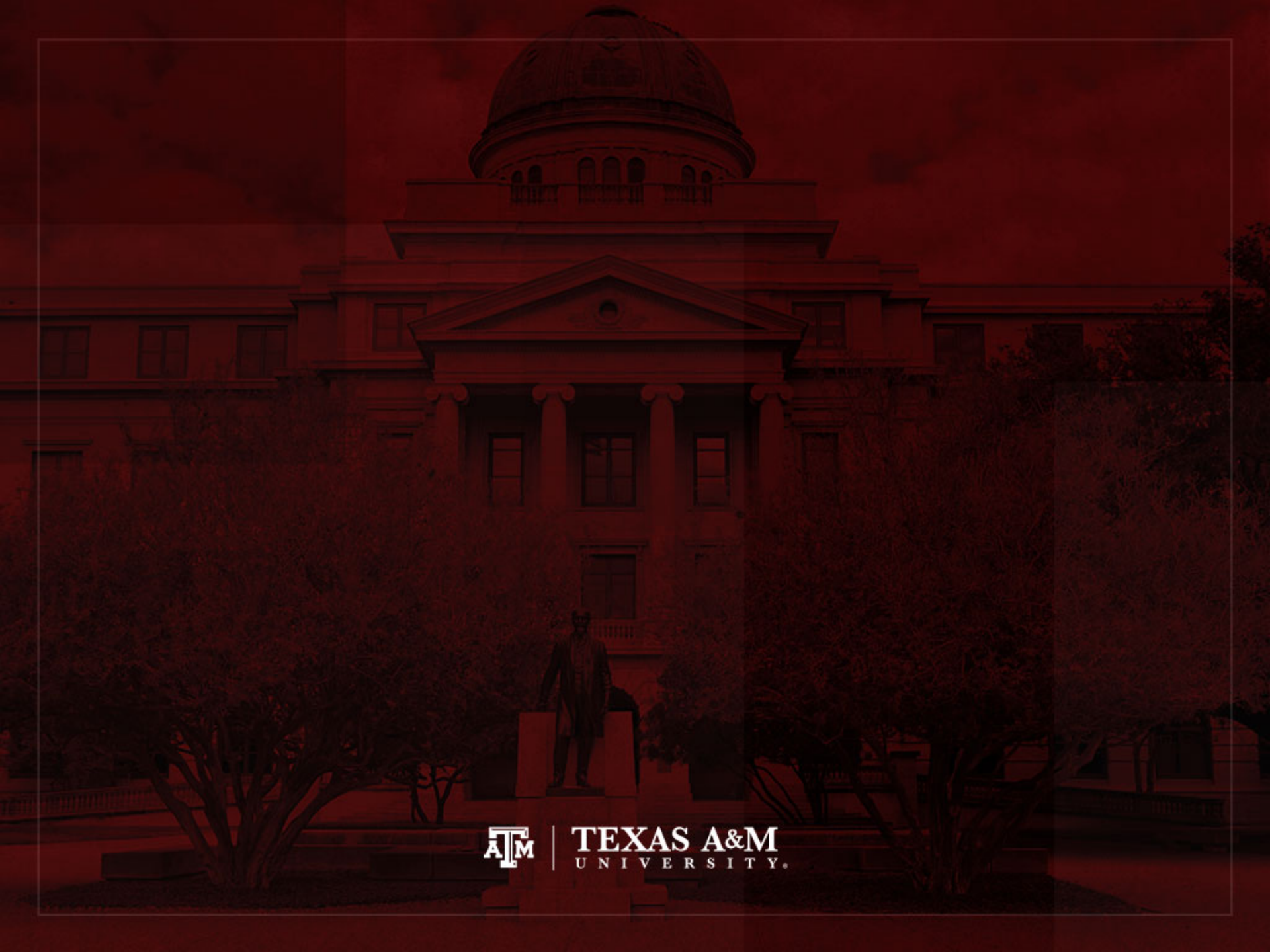
- The **second** type of national immigration regime is the category of countries that mainly allow immigrants to enter as guest workers

- These are mainly "European countries that recruited temporary labor (guest workers) or received substantial colonial migration during the post-World War II economic expansions" (Freeman, 2003)

Third immigration regime

- The **third** type of immigration regime are Southern and Eastern European countries “that are more likely to receive than to send immigrants”

- The four countries most prominent in this category are Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy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U.S. immigration policies

- Immigration was not a concern in early America and there were no formal laws or policies regulating immigration on a national level

- But the U.S. constitution did deal with the issue of naturalization

Examples of policies

- One of the most notable laws restricting immigration to the United States was the Chinese Exclusion Act of May 6, 1882
- The next major immigration policy was the 1917 Immigration Act that increased the head tax on immigrants to $8.00 and required incoming migrants to pass literacy tests
- In 1924, Congress passed the National Origins Act, which restricted the total number of immigrants to 150,000

1920–1950 policies

- From the 1920s to the 1950s, immigration to the United States was slow and sometimes resulted in net losses in population size due to international migration
- The only significant immigration was from Mexico under the *Bracero* program
- In 1952, the Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran–Walter Act), was passed, maintaining most of the quotas set forth in the National Origins Act of 1924

1965 Immigration Act

- The next major U.S. immigration policy was the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

- It ended the national origins quota system and allowed the immigration of family members of those already living in the United States, as well as individuals in certain occupations

1986–1990 Acts

- The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 granted legal status to undocumented immigrants who had been in the United States continuously since 1982

- The Immigration Act of 1990 revised the annual ceiling on immigration and the preference categories used to regulate immigration

1996 Acts

- The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 eliminated the entitlement of support for poor families, requiring able-bodied persons who received government assistance to work

- The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 circumscribed the eligibility of immigrants for public benefit programs by creating a four-tier system

1998 Act

- In 1998, the U.S. Congress passed the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act

- Its stated purpose was to protect native-born American workers by preventing employers from hiring low-skilled immigrants instead of native-born workers

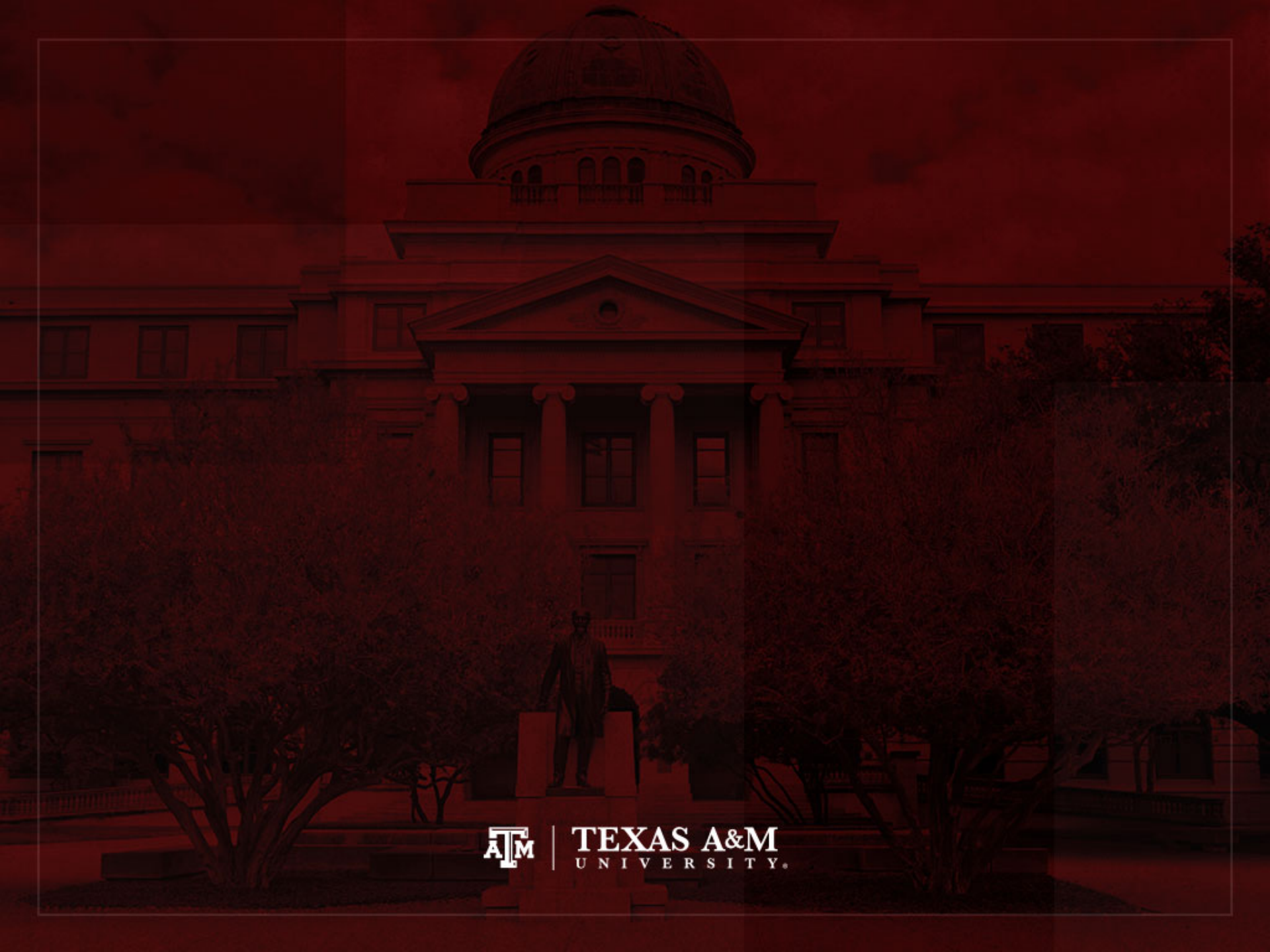
2002–2005 Acts

- The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 dealt with entry documents and data sharing among government agencies

- The Real ID Act of 2005 modified several federal laws pertaining to the issuance standards of drivers' licenses and identification cards accepted by the federal government for official purposes

Entry of immigrants to the U.S.

- The entry of immigrants into the United States usually takes years
- This process is very different from the situation many decades ago at Ellis Island and other U.S. entry points where potential immigrants only underwent a screening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Replacement migration

- Migration, perhaps, could be used as a means for replacing the population lost through fertility
- Population projections prepared for South Korea for the next several decades indicate that the absolute and relative numbers of the older populations will increase tremendously
- A quick approach would be international migration, a strategy that would permit South Korea to bring supporting members into its population directly and immediately

Total population, population in age groups 0–14, 15–64, and 65+, and potential support ratios (PSR): South Korea and the United States, 1950, 2010, and 2050

South Korea	**1950**	**2010**	**2050**
Total population (’000)	20,357	48,636	43,368
Age group 0–14 (’000)	8,479	7,895	4,426
Age group 15–64 (’000)	11,257	35,349	23,364
Age group 65+ (’000)	620	5,392	15,579
Potential support ratio (15–64 / 65+)	18.16	6.56	1.50
United States	**1950**	**2010**	**2050**
Total population (’000)	152,271	309,326	399,803
Age group 0–14 (’000)	40,998	61,202	71,781
Age group 15–64 (’000)	98,876	207,648	244,284
Age group 65+ (’000)	12,397	40,477	83,739
Potential support ratio (15–64 / 65+)	7.98	5.13	2.92

Source: 2050 projection data from International Data Base of the U.S. Census Bureau. Calculations by DLP

Summary

- Many governments have passed laws and regulations that deal with their levels of fertility, mortality, and migration, particularly migration

- But the policies, whatever their intention and reason for their genesis, will never be successful unless they take into account the social, cultural, and economic milieu in which demographic behavior occurs, and unless they consider the indirect as well as the direct effects

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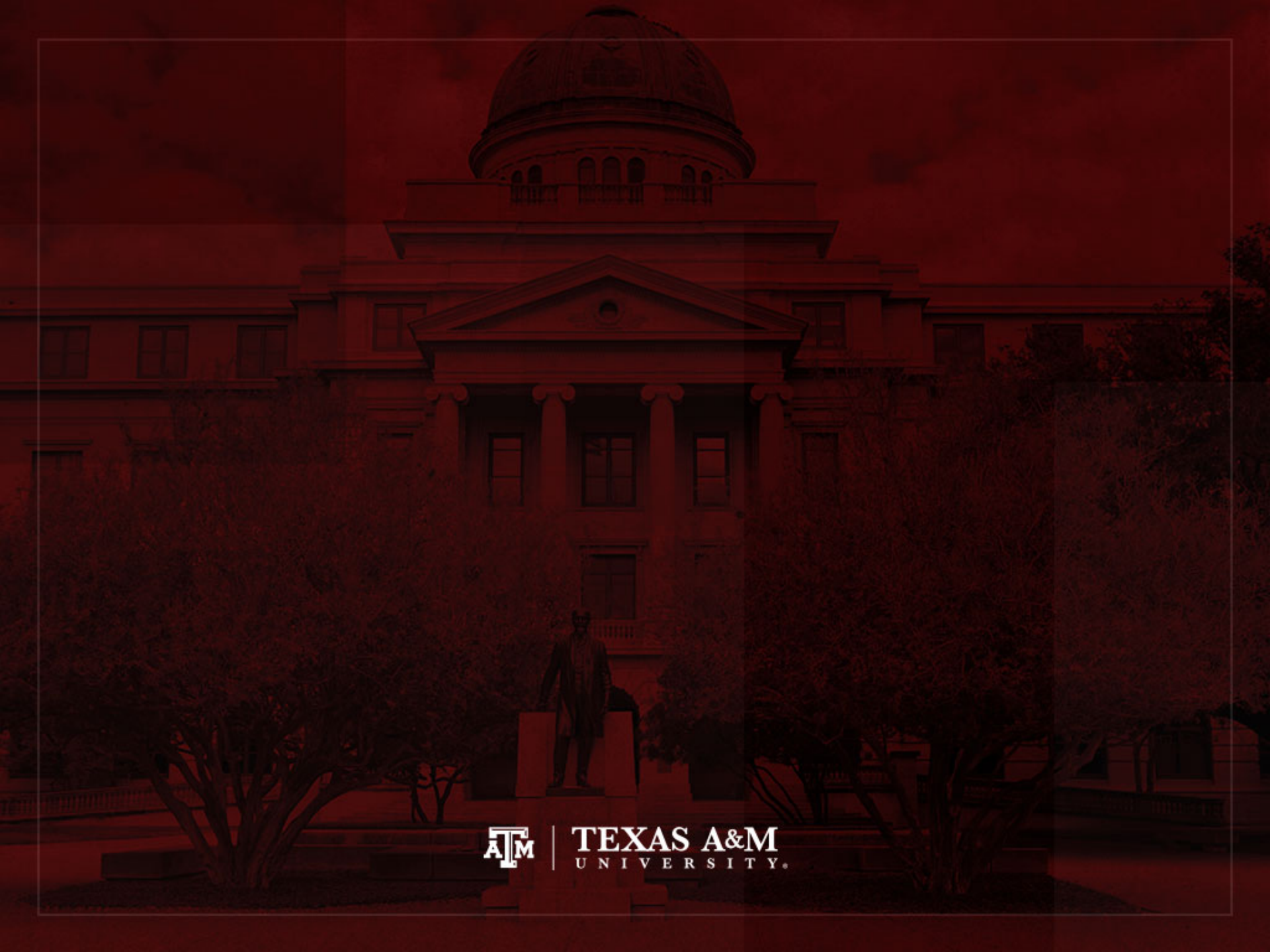
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