

# Glossary of Demographic Terms

**Aging of Population** A process in which the proportions of adults and elderly increase in a population, while the proportions of children and adolescents decrease. This process results in a rise in the median age of the population. Aging occurs when fertility rates decline while life expectancy remains constant or improves at the older ages.

**Baby Boom** A dramatic increase in fertility rates and in the absolute number of births in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand during the period following World War II (1947-1961).

**Baby Bust** A rapid decline in U.S. fertility rates to record-low levels during the period immediately after the baby boom.

**Birth Rate (or crude birth rate)** The number of live births per 1,000 population in a given year. Not to be confused with the growth rate.

**Birth Rate for Unmarried Women** The number of live births per 1,000 unmarried women (never married, widowed, or divorced) ages 15-49 in a given year.

**Brain Drain** The emigration of a significant proportion of a country's highly skilled, highly educated professional population, usually to other countries offering better economic and social opportunity (for example, physicians leaving a developing country to practice medicine in a developed country).

**Case Rate** The number of reported cases of a specific disease per 100,000 population in a given year.

**Census** A canvass of a given area, resulting in an enumeration of the entire population and often the compilation of other demographic, social, and economic information pertaining to that population at a specific time. See also survey.

**Childbearing Years** The reproductive age span of women, assumed for statistical purposes to be 15-44 or 15-49 years of age.

**Cohort** A group of people sharing a common temporal demographic experience who are observed through time. For example, the birth cohort of 1900 is the people born in that year. There are also marriage cohorts, school class cohorts, and so forth.

**Consensual Union** Cohabitation by an unmarried couple for an extended period of time. Although such unions may quite stable, they are not regarded as legal marriages in official statistics.

**Death Rate (or crude death rate)** The number of deaths per 1,000 population in a given year.

**Demographic Transition** The historical shift of birth and death rates from high to low levels in a population. The mortality decline usually precedes the fertility decline, resulting in rapid population growth during the transition period.

**Demography** The scientific study of human populations, including their sizes, compositions, distributions, densities, growth, and other characteristics, as well as the causes and consequences of changes in these factors.

**Dependency Ratio** A dependency ratio is the ratio of people (under age 15 or 65 and over) to those of working-age (15 to 64). For instance, a child dependency ratio of 0.45 means there are 45 children for every 100 working-age adults.

**Depopulation** The state of population decline.

**Economic Infrastructure** The facilities of a country that make business and financial activity possible, such as communication, transportation, and distribution networks; financial institutions and markets; and energy supply systems.

**Economic Security** The condition of having stable income or other resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future.

**Emigration** The process of leaving one country to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence in another.

**Emigration Rate** The number of emigrants departing an area of origin per 1,000 population in that area of origin in a given year.

**Ethnicity** The cultural practices, language, cuisine, and traditions — not biological or physical differences — used to distinguish groups of people.

**Family** Usually two or more persons living together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Families may consist of siblings or other relatives as well as married couples and any children they have.

**Gender** Refers to the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes, constraints and opportunities associated with being a woman or a man. The social definitions of what it means to be a woman or a man vary among cultures and change over time. Gender is a sociocultural expression of particular characteristics and roles that are associated with certain groups of people with reference to their sex and sexuality.

**Gender Equity** is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field.

**Gender Equality** is the state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, and resources.

**General Fertility Rate** The number of live births per 1,000 women ages 15-44 or 15-49 years in a given year.

**Growth Rate** The number of people added to (or subtracted from) a population in a year due to natural increase and net migration expressed as a percentage of the population at the beginning of the time period.

**Household** One or more persons occupying a housing unit.

**Illegal (Undocumented) Alien** A person who has entered a country without inspection or without proper documents, or who has violated the terms of legal admission to the country, for example, by overstaying the duration of a tourist or student visa.

**Immigration** The process of entering one country from another to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence.

**Immigration Rate** The number of immigrants arriving at a destination per 1,000 population at that destination in a given year.

**Infant Mortality Rate** The number of deaths of infants under age 1 per 1,000 live births in a given year.

**In-migration** The process of entering one administrative subdivision of a country (such as a province or state) from another subdivision to take up residence.

**Life Expectancy** The average number of additional years a person could expect to live if current mortality trends were to continue for the rest of that person's life. Most commonly cited as life expectancy at birth.

**Life Span** The maximum age that human beings could reach under optimum conditions.

**Marriage Rate (or crude marriage rate)** The number of marriages per 1,000 population in a given year.

**Maternal Mortality Ratio** The number of women who die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth complications per 100,000 live births in a given year.

**Mean Age** The mathematical average age of all members of a population.

**Median Age** The age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older.

**MENA Countries** The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is an economically diverse region that includes both the oil-rich economies in the Gulf and countries that are resource-scarce in relation to population. The MENA region includes: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco. Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

**Metropolitan Area** A large concentration of population, usually an area with 100,000 or more people. The area typically includes an important city with 50,000 or more inhabitants and the administrative areas bordering the city that are socially and economically integrated with it.

**Migration** The movement of people across a specified boundary for the purpose of establishing a new or semi-permanent residence. Divided into international migration (migration between countries) and internal migration (migration within a country).

**Mobility** The geographic movement of people.

**Mortality** Deaths as a component of population change.

**Nativity** Births as a component of population change.

**Natural Increase (or Decrease)** The surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths in a population in a given time period.

**Neonatal Mortality Rate** The number of deaths to infants under 28 days of age in a given year per 1,000 live births in that year.

**"Old" Population** A population with a relatively high proportion of middle-age and elderly persons, a high median age, and thus a lower growth potential.

**Out-migration** The process of leaving one subdivision of a country to take up residence in another.

**Perinatal Mortality Rate** The number of fetal deaths after 28 weeks of pregnancy (late fetal deaths) plus the number of deaths to infants under 7 days of age per 1,000 live births.

**Population Density** Population per unit of land area; for example, people per square mile or people per square kilometer of arable land.

**Population Distribution** The patterns of settlement and dispersal of a population.

**Population Increase** The total population increase resulting from the interaction of births, deaths, and migration in a population in a given period of time.

**Population Projection** Computation of future changes in population numbers, given certain assumptions about future trends in the rates of fertility, mortality, and migration. Demographers often issue low, medium, and high projections of the same population, based on different assumptions of how these rates will change in the future.

**Population Pyramid** A bar chart, arranged vertically, that shows the distribution of a population by age and sex. By convention, the younger ages are at the bottom, with males on the left and females on the right.

**Race** Is defined primarily by society, not by genetics, and there are no universally accepted categories.

**Rate of Natural Increase (or Decrease)** The rate at which a population is increasing (or decreasing) in a given year due to a surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths, expressed as a percentage of the base population.

**Sex Ratio** The number of males per **100** females in a population.

**Social Mobility** A change in status (for example, an occupational change).

**Survey** A canvass of selected persons or households in a population usually used to infer demographic characteristics or trends for a larger segment or all of the population. See also census.

**Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** The average number of children that would be born alive to a woman (or group of women) during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year. This rate is sometimes stated as the number of children women are having today. See also gross reproduction rate and net reproduction rate.

**Vital Statistics** Demographic data on births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages and divorces.

**"Young" Population** A population with a relatively high proportion of children, adolescents, and young adults; a low median age; and thus, a high growth potential.

**Zero Population Growth** A population in equilibrium, with a growth rate of zero, achieved when births plus immigration equal deaths plus emigration.