

POPULATION

An Introduction to Concepts and Issues ■ John R. Weeks



Updated Fifth Edition

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Updated Fifth Edition



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POPULATION

An Introduction to Concepts and Issues
Updated Fifth Edition



I wrote this book with a wide audience in mind because I find that students in my classes come from a wide range of academic disciplines and bring with them an incredible variety of viewpoints and backgrounds. No matter who you are, demographic events are influencing your life, and the more you know about them, the better off you will be.

ORGANIZATION AND FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

The book is organized into five parts, each building on the previous one.

Part One “A Demographic Perspective” (Chapters 1–3) introduces you to some major sources of information about population studies and to some major facts and perspectives about population growth. These chapters have all been updated for this edition. Throughout this edition, I have drawn upon as much demographic information as is currently available in the 1990s.

Part Two “Population Processes” (Chapters 4–7) follows the introductory overview and discusses the three basic demographic processes: fertility, mortality, and migration. For this edition, each of these chapters has been updated to reflect current research. Knowledge of the three population processes provides you with the foundation you need to understand why changes occur and what might be done about them.

Part Three In “Population Structure and Characteristics” (Chapters 8 and 9), I discuss the interaction of the population processes and the number of people in a society according to demographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and religion. Chapters 8 and 9 have been updated. The first nine chapters set the stage for the last seven.

Part Four In “Population and Contemporary Social Issues” (Chapters 10–14), I explore with you the demographic underpinnings of several major issues confronting the world—women and household structure, aging, urbanization, economic development, and food and the environment. Each of these chapters has been updated for this edition. In particular, the focus of Chapter 10 reflects a growing body of research on the demography of households. The changing status of women in society has created a broader range of living arrangements, and I discuss some of these issues as they relate to our demographic understanding of the world. At the other extreme are those persons who have no household at all, and Chapter 12 has a section on the demographics of homelessness in urban areas of the United States. Chapter 14 offers an emphasis on the relationship between population and environmental degradation.

Part Five I conclude with two chapters that make up the section on “Using the Demographic Perspective.” In Chapter 15 I discuss various ways to alter the course of demographic events, and this chapter has been brought up-to-date to reflect the latest changes in government attitudes and policies toward population growth. Chapter 16, “Demographics,” is a chapter in which I review the ways in which demographic information is used in business, social policy, and political planning.

To help increase your understanding of the basic concepts and issues of population studies, the book contains the following special features.

Short Essays Each chapter contains a short essay on a particular population concept, designed to help the reader better understand current demographic issues.

Main Points A list of main points appears at the end of each chapter, following the summary, to aid in your review of chapter highlights.

Suggested Readings At the end of each chapter I have listed five of the most important and more readable references for additional review of the topics covered in that chapter.

Glossary A glossary in the back of the book defines key population terms. These terms are in boldface type when introduced in the text to signal their appearance in the glossary.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like most authors, I have an intellectual lineage that I feel is worth tracing. In particular I would like to acknowledge Kingsley Davis, whose standards as a teacher and scholar will always keep me reaching, the late Judith Blake, Thomas Burch, Carlo Cipolla, Murray Gendell, Nathan Keyfitz, and Samuel Preston. In small and large ways, they have helped me to unravel the mysteries of how the world operates demographically. Thanks is due also to Steve Rutter, formerly of Wadsworth Publishing Company, whose idea this book was in the beginning. Serina Beauparlant and Marla Nowick at Wadsworth provided key insights for the updating of this fifth edition. Greg Hubit is owed a large debt of gratitude for his expert work throughout the editing and production phases of the third through latest editions of this book. I would also like to thank the users of the earlier editions, including professors and their students from various parts of the country and my own students, for their comments and suggestions. Special thanks go to John, Gregory, Jennifer, and Suzanne for teaching me the costs and benefits of children. They have instructed me, respectively, in the advantages of being first-born, in the coziness of the middle child, in the joys that immigration can bring to a family, and in the gifts that a daughter-in-law can bring to a family. However, the one person who is directly responsible for the fact that the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and now the updated fifth edition

were written, and who deserves credit for the book's strengths, is my wife Deanna. Her creativity, good judgment, and hard work in editing the manuscript benefited virtually every page, and I have dedicated the book to her.

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