

7-21-1999

## Studies Show Declining Birth Rates Slowing Mexico's Population Growth

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

---

### Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Studies Show Declining Birth Rates Slowing Mexico's Population Growth." (1999). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4107>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [amywinter@unm.edu](mailto:amywinter@unm.edu).

## Studies Show Declining Birth Rates Slowing Mexico's Population Growth

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 1999-07-21

In separate reports published in early July, two government agencies projected Mexico's population would increase in coming years, but the growth rate would slow because of a decline in the birth rate. In a report, which contained preliminary data before the next 10-year census in 2000, the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) said Mexico's population had reached 93.7 million in 1997, based on an unofficial census conducted that year. An earlier unofficial census in 1995 had placed Mexico's population at 91.1 million, meaning the number of Mexicans grew by 2.6 million over the two-year period.

INEGI did not issue projections for population numbers for 2000 and beyond. However, a report published two days later by the Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) said Mexico's population would approach 100 million by 2000 and expand to 130 million by 2030. Despite the projected population growth, both agencies said Mexico has experienced a dramatic decline in the birth rate. INEGI said the birth rate fell to an average of 2.8 children per woman in 1996, compared with 3.6 children in 1988.

The decline is more dramatic when compared with the birth rate in the 1970s, estimated at about seven children per woman. Some researchers suggest Mexico could reach a zero-growth rate by 2045 if current trends continue. "The drop in fertility is a spectacular change that has meant a revolution in mental attitudes," CONAPO secretary general Rodolfo Tuiran Gutierrez told *The New York Times*. "It's opening a demographic window of opportunity for Mexico."

CONAPO said the decline in the birth rate, along with an increase in life expectancy, means the Mexican population will increasingly become older. The average life expectancy of Mexicans is now estimated at 74 years, compared with the average of 35 years in 1930. CONAPO said the number of Mexicans older than 65 years will grow to 15.6 million by 2030, more than twice the 6.8 million projected for 2010. In contrast, only 4.4 million Mexicans were 65 or older in 1998.

The drop in the birth rate has reduced the proportion of the population younger than 15 years of age to 34%, compared with 48% in the 1970s. At the same time, the proportion of Mexicans between the ages of 15 and 64 has increased from 49% to 61% in just a couple of decades. Manuel Ordorica Mellado, a researcher at Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, said the trend toward an older population means the government will have to allocate more funds to the social security system to compensate for the growing imbalance between workers and retirees. "In recent years, very little investment has been devoted to meet the future needs of the population, particularly in the health sector," said Ordorica. "Medications are already insufficient in some cities."

The INEGI report said the largest concentrations of population are in Mexico City and surrounding areas. The population of the capital reached 8.5 million in 1997, a slight increase from 1995. In

Mexico state, which surrounds most of Mexico City, the population grew to 12.2 million in 1997, compared with 11.7 million in 1995. Because of its large population, Mexico state is considered crucial for the 2000 presidential elections. Gubernatorial elections in that state earlier this month were won by the governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), although the results are being contested by opposition parties (see SourceMex, 1999-07-07).

The migration to Mexico City and other metropolitan areas has increasingly turned Mexico into an urban nation. INEGI figures show almost 47% of Mexico's population now lives in cities of more than 100,000 people. In contrast, only 26% reside in communities of less than 2,500 people. In a report earlier this year, INEGI said Mexican cities grew by about 3.5% annually between 1994 and 1998. Some government estimates predict almost 60% of Mexico's population will be residing in cities by 2000. INEGI said Quintana Roo state, which did not become a state until the 1970s, has had the fastest growth rate in recent years at 6% annually. The state is home to the popular tourist resorts of Cancun and Cozumel. (Sources: Excelsior, 01/18/99; Novedades, 02/08/99; Spanish news service EFE, 02/26/99; The New York Times, 06/08/99; Associated Press, 07/08/99, 07/11/99, 07/12/99; La Cronica, 07/12/99)

-- End --