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978-0-521-87287-4 - Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography

Dudley L. Poston and Leon F. Bouvier

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## POPULATION AND SOCIETY

*Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography* is an ideal text for undergraduate, as well as graduate, students taking their first course in demography. It is sociologically oriented, although economics, political science, geography, history, and the other social sciences are also used to inform the materials. Although the emphasis is on demography, the book recognizes that at the individual level, population change is related to private decisions, especially in relation to fertility, but also to mortality and migration. The text thus considers in some detail, especially early in the book, the role of individuals in population decision making. At the level of countries, and even the world, changes in population size have an important effect on the environmental and related challenges facing all of the world's inhabitants. Therefore, attention is paid to the broad implications of population growth and change.

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**POPULATION AND SOCIETY**

# **An Introduction to Demography**

**Dudley L. Poston, Jr.**

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**Leon F. Bouvier**

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia



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## Preface

Although the authors did not know it at the time, this book had its genesis when its two authors, Dudley L. Poston and Leon F. Bouvier, met for the first time in April 1974 at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, held that year in New York City. When two demographers meet for the first time, they usually want to tell each other about the demographic research they are conducting and the interesting and important facts and findings they are producing. Strangely, this was not the case when Poston met Bouvier. They found themselves talking not about their research but, instead, about what was then, and still is today, their first love: the teaching of demography.

In the more than thirty-five years since that first meeting, Poston and Bouvier have become very good friends, as have their families. They see each other once or twice a year and communicate frequently by e-mail. In the last twenty years, they have coauthored a book about the population of Texas and several research articles dealing with immigration, congressional apportionment, and the relationship between the two. But, over the years, whenever they were together, their conversations would always seem to lead to their talking about teaching demography. They would talk about the topics they were covering in their classes, the teaching tools and techniques they were using, the books and readings they were assigning, and the importance and relevance of demography to society and the world. Every now and again, one of them would say, “Some day we need to write our own demography text.” But they never did, at least for the first thirty years of their friendship. Finally, in the early 2000s, Poston said to Bouvier, “If we are ever going to write our demography book, we had better do it soon.” Thus, in late 2005, they prepared a book prospectus and chapter outline. In early 2006, they shared it with Ed Parsons of Cambridge University Press, who several months later gave Poston and Bouvier a contract to write *Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography*. The book has taken much longer to write than planned, but it is a true labor of love.

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Bouvier drafted some of the chapters, and Poston the others. Each then critiqued and edited and rewrote the other's drafts. And this "back and forth" process continued several times for each chapter, and in the case of a few chapters, many times. Poston, with the help of his graduate students, took the responsibility for finalizing each chapter and putting the complete book together.

Poston and Bouvier usually agreed, for the most part, with the final versions of the chapters. However, they had the most difficult time agreeing about the overall tone of Chapter 7, "International Migration," particularly its discussion about the positive and negative aspects of undocumented migration on the sending and receiving societies. This was indeed an issue debated and talked about for a good while. Its tone may still not be entirely satisfactory as far as Bouvier is concerned, but since Poston initially drafted the major parts of the chapter, it was decided in the end to agree to disagree, a little bit, about this very important issue. For the other chapters of the book, the authors had many fewer disagreements and quibbles, working them out fairly satisfactorily in the final drafts.

The writing of a book such as *Population and Society* would not have been possible without the help and patience of many people. First, we want to thank our editor at Cambridge University Press, Ed Parsons, for his many suggestions and encouragement, and especially his patience. We also thank the several reviewers Ed selected to evaluate our prospectus in 2005 and to read and critique the drafts of many of our chapters in 2008 and then the full book in 2009. These reviewers include Stephanie Bohon of the University of Tennessee, Elwood Carlson of Florida State University, Laurie DeRose of the University of Maryland, Hans-Peter Kohler of the University of Pennsylvania, James Raymo of the University of Wisconsin, and Ronald Rindfuss of the University of North Carolina. Their comments and suggestions, and Ed's, certainly resulted in improved clarity and overall quality. We considered seriously and responded to most of the suggestions and critiques raised by the reviewers. It was not possible to respond to every one of their suggestions owing to overall coverage and style issues and the general format of the book. But we are most grateful to them for the time they spent reading and commenting on our chapters.

We thank a number of individuals who read and edited our chapters and provided feedback, suggested improvements, and alerted us to the work of others. Poston asked many of his former and current graduate students to read, edit, and critique chapters; check references, assemble tables and figures, and prepare chapter outlines and PowerPoint slides for classroom use; also, published work with some of his students has been adapted and referenced in various chapters of the book. He thanks his conscientious and very helpful students, listed here alphabetically: Wadha

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Our friends and associates answered questions we raised about chapter topics, geography, and referencing, and listened and sometimes reacted to our discussions about one or more of the chapters and themes; some listened to a lot of our discussions. These friends and colleagues, listed alphabetically, are James Burk, Rafael Cazorla, Nadia Flores, Mark Fossett, Parker Frisbie, Sidney Goldstein, Melanie Hawthorne, Peter Hugill, John Macisco, Kyriakos Markides, Rogelio Saenz, Jane Sell, James Weatherby, and Xiushi Yang.

Lastly, our long and time-consuming efforts in writing this book were assisted by the support, understanding, patience, and love of our families. In this regard, Dudley Poston thanks his wonderful wife Patricia and their children, Nancy and Dudley III, and son-in-law, Rick. Leon Bouvier thanks his children, Thomas, Lynne, Linda, and Kenneth, and his very special best friend, Becky Livas.