Migration makes the difference

Re-measuring ageing in Europe

The trend of population ageing is now recognized as one of the most important long-term challenges facing societies worldwide. It is characterized by a decrease in the birth rate and a significant increase in life expectancy for all age groups. This shift towards an older population has profound implications for the structure of populations, economic growth, and social policies. As a result, there is a growing need for more precise measures of the elderly population. The OADR (Older Age Dependency Ratio) is one such measure that has been widely used to assess the extent of population ageing. It is defined as the number of people aged 65 years or older divided by the number of people aged 15 to 64 years, multiplied by 100. This measure provides a clearer picture of the proportion of the population that is elderly, even in countries with low fertility rates. However, the OADR has limitations, as it does not account for population growth or changes in the age structure of the population.

The conventional index of population ageing, such as the OADR, is based on the assumption that all other things being equal, the age at which individuals enter old age is constant. The TFRp* is a more recent indicator that introduces a time-delinked measure of fertility postponement. It can be calculated as the tempo-adjusted TFR (Total Fertility Rate) divided by the median age at first birth. The TFRp* is obtained by adjusting the TFR for changes in the age structure of the population, thereby providing a more accurate measure of the tempo of fertility decline. The TFRp* is useful for comparing populations with different age structures, but it is not comparable across populations with different levels of fertility. For this reason, the OADR is still the most commonly used measure of population ageing.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in using the OADR to assess the extent of population ageing in different countries. However, there are many factors that can affect the OADR, such as immigration, migration, and changes in the age structure of the population. Therefore, it is important to consider these factors when interpreting the OADR.

In conclusion, the OADR is a widely used measure of population ageing, and it is useful for comparing populations with different age structures. However, it is important to consider the limitations of the OADR when interpreting its results. The TFRp* is a more recent indicator that introduces a time-delinked measure of fertility postponement. It is useful for comparing populations with different levels of fertility, but it is not comparable across populations with different age structures. Therefore, it is important to use a combination of measures to assess the extent of population ageing in different countries.
Regional overview

Population change in selected countries of Europe, 1980–2012

Total fertility rate in selected regions of Europe and in the USA

Country rankings

Population size

Projected population size (millions)

Period total fertility rate

Mean age of mother at first birth

Net migration

Life expectancy at birth, men

Life expectancy at birth, women

Difference in male and female life expectancy

Projected data on the population size for the years 2010, 2012 and 2050

Selected European countries

Life expectancy at birth, selected European countries

Female advantage and the reversed gender gap in tertiary education in Europe

Projected prospective old-age dependency ratio

Projected old-age dependency ratio, 2050

Difference in male and female dependency ratio, 2050

Prospective old-age dependency ratio (2015–2060)

Life expectancy at birth, men

Life expectancy at birth, women

Difference in male and female life expectancy

Proportion of the population that was a remaining life expectancy of 15 years or less

Populations aged 65 years or more in the selected countries

Note: Differences in male and female dependency ratio, 2050 (%), and the corresponding projected population size (thousands). Rank difference in male and female dependency ratio, 2050 (%), is the difference between the projected age dependency ratio of men and women. The smaller the value, the better the gender balance. The gender difference in elderly dependency has been calculated using the European Standardized Index. Access to the data for each country can be found in the Eurostat publication “European social statistics 2013 edition.”

Notes:
- Countries with population below 1 million, Caucasus countries, Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina were excluded.
- Note: Data for the USA and Japan are shown in italics and displayed only when their values fall between top five or bottom five European countries. Caucasus countries, countries with total population below 500,000 (Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco and San Marino), Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are not ranked. The proportion of the population with total population below 1 million (Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco and San Marino), Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are not ranked. The proportion of the population in selected regions

Age when remaining life expectancy is below 15 years, selected European countries

Women to men ratio and the % of tertiary educated women by age in 2011, selected countries

Note: Women to men ratio is the share of women in 2011, selected countries. Women to men ratio and the % of tertiary educated women by age in 2011, selected countries.