

Morocco: Population

Morocco is currently going through a great and exciting transition demographically. In the 1950s, the population was small at approx. 9 million inhabitants, the majority of whom were <45 years old (Figure 1), with a median age of 19.2 years. Population numbers have gradually increased, with no obvious boom in birth rates, suggesting a steady pace of natural increase. Fast forward to 2017 and the population has grown significantly to just over 35 million, with most under the age of 60 years (Figure 2) and a median age of 28.3 years.

It would be easy to assume this was purely down to an increased birth rate, but the picture is somewhat more complex than that. Women's fertility rate has been decreasing since the 1980s (from 5.90 to 2.96 in 2018) when it started becoming more socially acceptable to delay having families in order for women to gain an education, have access to contraceptives and to marry later in life than had been previously expected of them. Furthermore, there has been a widespread improvement in sanitation, access to basic medical care and increased access to more nutritious food, all of which has played a part in reducing mortality rates and increasing life expectancy in general. Whilst Morocco is still considered to be in Stage 3 of the Demographic Transition Model, it is likely to move into Stage 4 by 2025 if this current pattern of demography continues.

The ethnic and religious make-up of the demographics has, however, seen little change in this same time, with 99% of the population being Arab-Berber and practising the Muslim faith.

Figure 1: Population pyramid, 1950

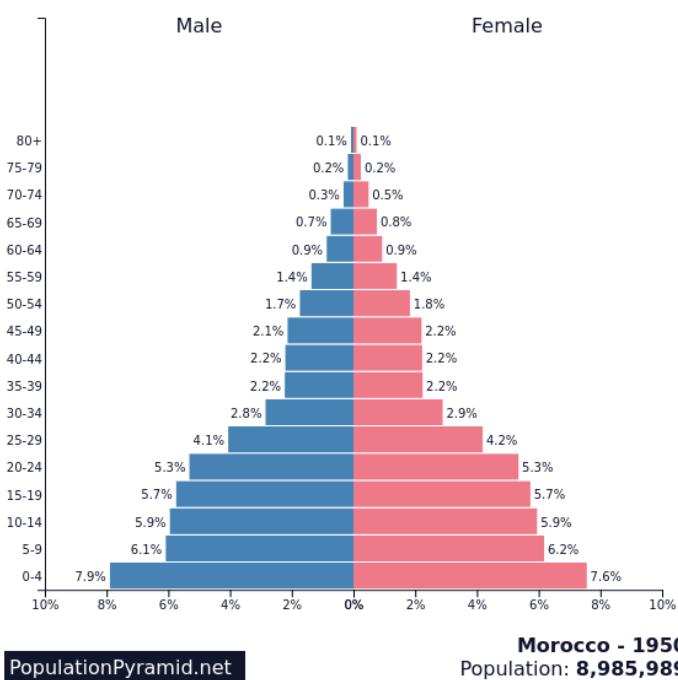
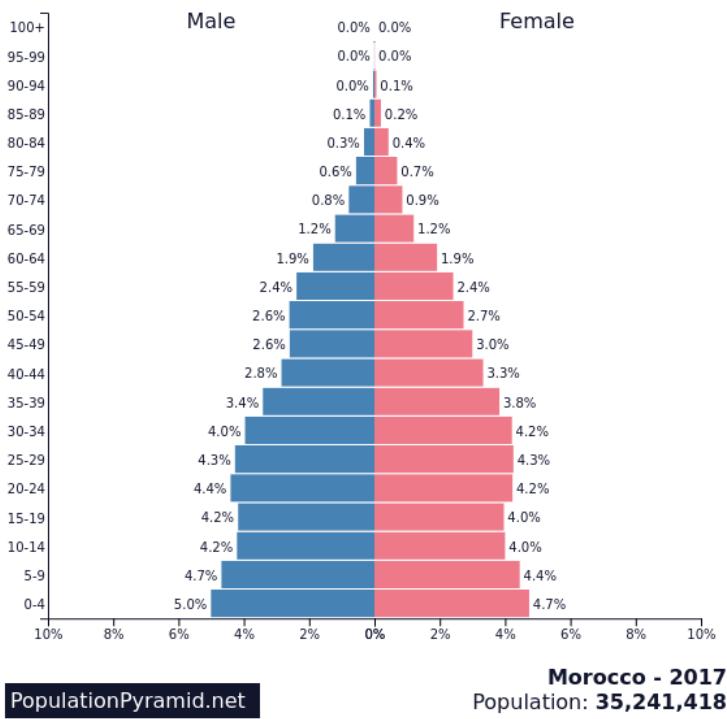


Figure 2: Population pyramid, 2017



<https://www.populationpyramid.net/morocco/2017/>

Across the country there is a disparity between rural and urban areas, and where wealth is distributed. From the mid-1980s (as seen in Figure 3) there was a significant movement of rural-urban migration where the pull of *bright-lights syndrome* attracted young working males in the hope of earning a higher wage than had they stayed in their rural villages. This left behind demographically imbalanced and socially fractured communities by the large outward movement of this male generation. Rural women work hard as it is by tending to the animals, keeping the home, raising children and fetching water for the day. With the young men gone the women needed also to tend to growing crops, which was normally a job for the men. In remote rural villages, this meant that getting girls into education was virtually impossible. Meanwhile, young men often struggled to get the formal employment they had hoped in the cities, resulting in an increase in the informal economy and general levels of poverty.

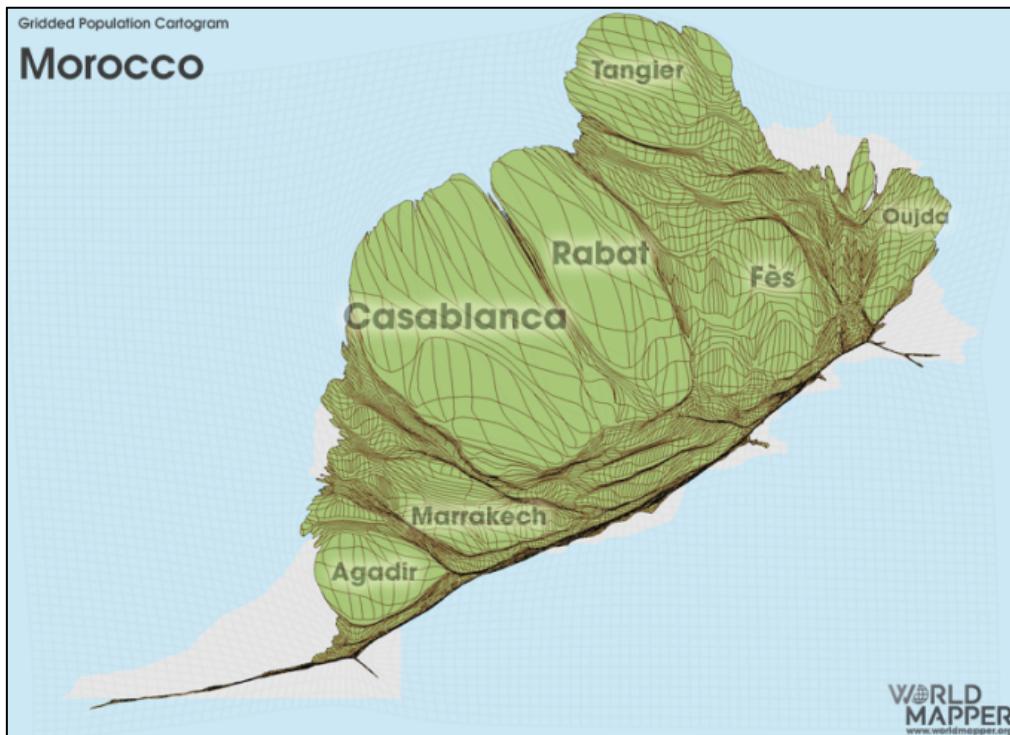
Figure 3: Population of Morocco since 1950

Year	Population	Yearly % Change	Yearly Change	Migrants (net)	Median Age	Fertility Rate	Density (P/Km ²)	Urban Pop %	Urban Population	Country's Share of World Pop	World Population	Morocco Global Rank
2018	36,191,805	1.27 %	452,225	-51,419	28.3	2.56	81	58.8 %	21,691,011	0.47 %	7,632,819,325	40
2017	35,739,580	1.31 %	462,794	-51,419	28.3	2.56	80	59.6 %	21,284,578	0.47 %	7,550,262,101	39
2016	35,276,786	1.36 %	473,464	-51,419	28.3	2.56	79	59.2 %	20,868,301	0.47 %	7,466,964,280	39
2015	34,803,322	1.44 %	478,737	-61,422	27.9	2.60	78	58.7 %	20,439,199	0.47 %	7,383,008,820	39
2010	32,409,639	1.21 %	377,714	-113,028	26.3	2.55	73	56.3 %	18,252,530	0.47 %	6,958,169,159	38
2005	30,521,070	1.13 %	334,290	-130,964	24.4	2.68	68	54.4 %	16,606,903	0.47 %	6,542,159,383	37
2000	28,849,621	1.28 %	354,878	-111,876	22.7	2.97	65	53.1 %	15,312,537	0.47 %	6,145,006,989	36
1995	27,075,232	1.71 %	439,219	-93,325	21.1	3.70	61	51.2 %	13,870,621	0.47 %	5,751,474,416	36
1990	24,879,136	2.00 %	468,352	-83,715	19.8	4.45	56	48.0 %	11,940,483	0.47 %	5,330,943,460	35
1985	22,537,376	2.40 %	503,506	-64,132	18.7	5.40	50	44.3 %	9,975,646	0.46 %	4,873,781,796	35
1980	20,019,847	2.37 %	443,230	-58,666	17.8	5.90	45	40.8 %	8,159,039	0.45 %	4,458,411,534	34
1975	17,803,698	2.16 %	360,738	-99,535	16.8	6.40	40	37.5 %	6,669,840	0.44 %	4,079,087,198	34
1970	16,000,008	2.37 %	354,193	-95,551	16.2	6.85	36	34.3 %	5,487,485	0.43 %	3,700,577,650	34
1965	14,229,044	2.91 %	380,102	0	19.2	6.61	32	31.6 %	4,490,092	0.43 %	3,339,592,688	35
1960	12,328,532	3.26 %	365,173	-2,600	18.1	6.90	28	29.4 %	3,619,335	0.41 %	3,033,212,527	34
1955	10,502,666	3.17 %	303,335	0	19.2	6.61	24	27.7 %	2,913,418	0.38 %	2,772,242,535	35

<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/morocco-population/>

Higher concentrations of population can be seen in popular urban areas. Casablanca is the largest city in Morocco with a population of 3.5 million (2018), equating to 16.56% of the total population. This makes it one of the largest cities in Africa, exceeded only by Lagos (Nigeria), Cairo (Egypt), Kinshasa (DR Congo) and Luanda (Angola). Rabat, the capital of Morocco, is the only other city to have over 1 million inhabitants (1.66 million). Fes, Sale, Marrakesh, Agadir and Tangier all have populations between 965,000 and 689,000 respectively. In total, 60.68% of the Moroccan population live in urban areas with a much faster annual growth rate of 2.16% than rural locations at a 0.1126% growth rate. Figure 4 illustrates an interesting interpretation of population distribution in Morocco as of 2017.

Figure 4: Population distribution in Morocco (2017)



<https://worldmapper.org/maps/gridded-population-mar/>

Suggested reading

- <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/morocco-population/>