

Study Questions, Week 14

Topic for the Week: Population Growth and Social Change

Readings for the Week:

Society: The Basics, Chapter 15

Sociological Footprints, Chapters 56 (Mitchell) and 57 (Flynn)

Questions:

(1) What is *demography*? Explain measures that demographers use to assess *fertility*, *mortality* and *migration*? Explain how demographers assess *population growth*, and identify important *components* of a population.

(2) What is the relationship between *population change* and *famine*? Explain Thomas Malthus' theory. Is Malthus' theorem relevant today? What are the weaknesses of Malthus' explanation.

(3) What is the *demographic transition*? Explain the factors that contribute to each stage in the demographic transition (e.g. Why are both birth rates and death rates high in stage one? Why does mortality drop in stage two, while fertility stays high? Why does fertility drop in stage three? And what factors lead to population decrease in stage four?)

(4) How does *population composition* and *change* differ between high-income and low-income countries? What are some reasons for these differences?

(5) Why is it important to understand demographic trends? What practical applications stem from an understanding of demography?

(6) When did the first cities emerge? Identify the reasons for *urban growth* in pre-industrial and industrial societies. What are some problems that accompany urbanization?

(7) Explain each of the following theorists' contributions to our understanding of urban life:

- Ferdinand Tönnies
- Emile Durkheim
- Georg Simmel
- Robert Park & Louis Wirth
- Ernest Burgess

(8) Has *urbanization* been a constant in U.S. society? What is meant by the "*rural rebound*?" What factors have contributed to recent growth in rural areas?

(9) What is meant by the *environmental deficit*? What factors contribute to the environmental deficit in modern society?

(10) Identify significant *environmental issues*, and explain their causes and consequences. What is meant by an *ecologically sustainable culture*? Are we currently moving towards or

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Spring Semester 2005

away from a sustainable culture? Cite examples from the issues described in the text to support your contention.

(11) What is meant by *environmental racism*?

(12) What are the three dimensions of the population explosion? Which of these is the biggest threat? Why?

(13) What have been some of the changes in population policy as a result of the 1994 Cairo Conference? What events threaten these programs?

(14) What are some of the problems that *urban areas* face in today's world? How did these problems come about? Why should we be concerned with these problems?