

Global Population

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover aspects of population growth and demography, through the definition and discussion of:

1. Zero Population Growth
2. Demographic Divide
3. Evolution of Cities and Urbanization

1. ZERO POPULATION GROWTH

Zero population growth means that population is maintained at a steady and consistent level. Population is not growing too fast, nor is it falling too fast. The rate of births approximately equals the rate of deaths. What is sociologically interesting about zero population growth? Sociologists are interested in the relationship between population and society, and zero population growth is only possible in modern societies because of the education systems.

In these societies, mothers are largely educated relative to much poorer countries in the world. There is access to more contraceptives than other poorer countries in the world, culturally people tend to marry later, and both parents typically work. This makes it possible to have a system of direct replacement, meaning that if a male and female have two children, they directly replace each other. This is a different scenario than if they have five kids and population is expanding.



TERM TO KNOW

Zero Population Growth

Occurs when the rate of population growth is not too big or too small, but maintains the population at a consistent level.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE

Modern societies hover around zero population growth. This is not the case, though, in some other countries where you see what is called a **demographic divide** in society. Across the globe, demographic trends have developed along two distinct paths. This is evidenced by the demographic divide in global society, meaning there are large disparities between different countries' birth and death rates.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Countries that restrain the freedom of women to make choices about their lives--who they want to marry, or if they want to marry at all--have higher birth rates and greater populations than do countries in which women have many choices. Therefore, greater population growth only exacerbates the already existing problems of poverty.



TERM TO KNOW

Demographic Divide

The large difference between countries' birth and death rates.

3. EVOLUTION OF CITIES AND URBANIZATION

How have cities evolved through the history of human society?

Step 1: Nomads and the Agricultural Revolution

Hunting and gathering societies were nomadic--they moved around a lot, and didn't establish any permanent settlements. Given this, how could they have cities? They didn't, and people lived like this for many years, up until about 10,000 years ago until the agricultural revolution enabled people to become more sedentary, and produced the first cities. People set up roots because they could domesticate crops and animals, which enabled them to stay in one place and set up cities. These cities, though, were nothing like the cities of today--they were much smaller.

Step 2: Trade and Specialization of Tasks

However, as the centuries passed, people became more urban. Cities were thriving in Egypt and Europe 5,000 years ago and in China 4,000 years ago. In the model of domestic agriculture, cities set up trade, facilitated because cities offered a place for people to meet and trade with each other. Because people were producing food agriculturally, and doing so more efficiently, there was a food surplus, which enabled fewer people to be involved in the production of food to feed a larger number of people. This allowed people to specialize and do other tasks--they could take up carpentry and build shelters and buildings in the city, or be chefs or bakers, or work with metal. Cities provided a place for all of these different occupational groups to cohabit, thrive and trade their products with each other.

Step 3: The Industrial Revolution

This continued until the Industrial Revolution, which was a second wave of urban expansion. The Industrial Revolution caused **urbanization**, which is the process of more and more people moving into cities, to increase. In the Industrial Revolution, factories became concentrated in cities, and all the former serfs--the people who were living under the feudal lord--were cast off once the feudal lords closed off their systems. Where did they go? They went to the cities to look for work in industrial factories, which transformed society into an urban, industrial laboring class, furthering the **evolution of cities**.

Step 4: Capitalism and Current Day Urbanization

Urbanization has dramatically continued with the development of capitalism, as capitalism has matured. If you count suburbs and exurbs--the farther ring suburbs--a huge portion of the population now lives in cities, and many see this trend continuing. Most argue that urbanization is here to stay.



TERMS TO KNOW

Evolution of Cities

The process by which human cities have evolved throughout our history.

Urbanization

The process of urban population growth, of more and more people living in cities.



SUMMARY

Today you learned about some ideas of demography, including the **demographic divide** with **zero population growth** on the one hand, characterizing wealthier countries, and a higher population growth in less wealthy countries. You also learned about the **evolution of cities** and the related concept of **urbanization**.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



TERMS TO KNOW

Demographic Divide

The large difference between countries' birth and death rates.

Evolution of Cities

The process by which human cities have evolved throughout our history.

Urbanization

The process of urban population growth, of more and more people living in cities.

Zero Population Growth

Occurs when the rate of population growth is not too big or too small, but maintains the population at a consistent level.