Demography

What factors influence where people settle?

Is the world’s population growing too fast?

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A Brief History of Human Settlement

I. First Human Settlements
   a. Most anthropologists believe humans first appeared in the Great Rift Valley in East Africa hundreds of thousands of years ago.
      i. From there, they spread to the Middle East, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania
   b. Neolithic Revolution (Agricultural Revolution)
      i. In Mesopotamia, people went from hunter-gatherers and nomads to domestication
         1. Occurred between 12,000 and 8,000 B.C. (BCE)
         2. Population grew relatively quickly
II. The Emergence of Urban Populations
   a. In some areas, agriculture became especially successful
      i. Largely in the river valleys of:
1. Egypt  
2. Mesopotamia  
3. India  
4. China  
ii. Had fertile soil from annual flooding  
iii. Abundant harvests  
iv. First cities arose in these areas  
v. People were able to grow surplus food to feed a non-farming urban population  
vi. Specialization occurred:  
   1. Priests  
   2. Scribes  
   3. Architects  
   4. Farmers  
   5. Soldiers  
   6. traders  
   7. Blacksmiths, etc.  
vii. Urban populations increased in size, and a need for government developed  

III. Industrialization and Urbanization  
a. Industrial Revolution  
i. 1700s  
ii. Began in England and Europe (mainly Germany)  
iii. Greatly increased the speed of urbanization  
iv. People moved from rural to urban areas for more opportunity in the factories  
v. Towns and cities grew up around these factories  
vi. Cities also grew up at points where goods were exchanged or transferred  
   1. Seacoasts/port  
   2. Where different railroad lines crossed  

IV. Thomas Malthus  
a. Carrying Capacity  
i. Resources: linear  
ii. Population growth: exponential  
b. Population will outgrow resources  
   i. People reduced to “rats in a cage” type behavior
Factors Influencing Where People Settle

What explains the distribution of people around the world?

- Both physical and human factors affect where people settle.
- 75% of the world’s people live on less than 5% of the earth’s surface
- Most of the world’s population is concentrated in five areas
  - East Asia, including China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan
  - South Asia, with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
  - Southeast Asia
  - Europe
  - North America

I. Physical Factors
   a. Population tends to cluster around seaports and fresh water sources
   b. Most people live near the ocean
      i. 2/3 of the world’s population today lives within 500 miles of the ocean
   c. Much of the earth’s land surface is unfriendly (uninhabitable) to human habitation
      i. Eight of the ten most populous cities in the world are on or near earthquake faults
   d. Population is usually sparse in extremely dry, wet, cold or mountainous areas
   e. People tend to settle in low-lying areas with fertile soil and a temperate or mild climate

II. Human Factors
   a. The need to establish a capital city at a central location
b. The need to establish new transportation routes

c. As technology improves, people are able to explore and settle new areas despite physical barriers

d. Economic activities bring people to new areas

e. The discovery of valuable resources, such as gold, diamonds or oil may attract settlers to an otherwise unfavorable area

III. Changes in Settlement Patterns

a. Settlement patterns sometimes change over time

b. As areas urbanize, surrounding areas attract new settlers

c. Construction of new transportation routes

   i. Far West of U.S was sparsely settled until the discovery of gold and the construction of the continental railroad
Population Density Maps

Geographers measure patterns of population by looking at population density—how many people live in a certain area.

They often measure average number of people in a square mile to determine population density.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000 Summary File 1
population by census tract.
Patterns in the Size and Distribution of Cities

I. Throughout history, cities have exhibited variations in their size and distribution.
   a. Often the business district is in the city center
   b. Surrounded by neighborhoods
   c. Newcomers from the country side have moved to the city center
   d. Wealthier residents began to move to the outskirts

II. In more recent times
   a. Suburbs have developed outside of the cities
      i. They often form satellite cities around the older city center
   b. Megalopolis
      i. A few cities merge to create a single metropolitan region
         1. Bosnywash
III. Less developed countries
   a. Squatter Settlements
      i. People arrive from the countryside without education or resources
      ii. They live where they can, and do not pay for housing
      iii. Often live in shanty towns
           1. Slum settlement
           2. Dwellings made from scrap materials
              a. Plywood
              b. Corrugated metal
              c. Plastic sheets
Population Pyramids

Demographers study the characteristics of human populations as well as where people settle.

For example, they compare the numbers of males and females in a society, as well as look at the average age of both populations.
I. Demographers can tell a great deal about a culture by examining its population
   a. General health
   b. Education level
   c. Lifestyle
   d. General age of the population
   e. Birthrate/death rate
   f. Social needs