Sociology 1306-14638

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Assignment 5: Global Problems

One of the primary trends of urbanization in the US is the level of crime in the area. The spikes of crime during the 1830s specifically were of such a terrible nature that they are infamously named, “The Turbulent Era”. Another trend of urbanization is the living conditions that people are subjected to. The government of the area is increasingly corrupt as are the businesses. The third trend of urbanization is population growth, as due to immigration and higher jobs, there is a greater reason for people to move to cities thus increasing their population.

Crowding is the first and most prevalent issue that tends to trickle down into the latter issues. Due to industrialization and commercialization, there is greater demand for labor, which results in an influx of citizens from around the country as well as migrants. The second problem associated with urban life is the constant fiscal strain on the populace. The urban areas require services capable of handling responsibilities that are denser than rural areas due to population density like policing, public education, trash removal, street maintenance, and snow removal. The third problem is the ability to continuously house the growing population. There are two main issues with housing, one of which is the space needed for people in of itself and the other is keeping those spaces affordable. The fourth issue that often stems from prior issues is homelessness, where there is a considerable increase in the number of homeless individuals in urban areas. The fifth issue is traffic and the concern of reliable transportation across the urban area. Traveling to work, school, stores, business, and varying recreation activities are all complicated with the population density. There are several smaller issues that also contribute to the issues with urbanization, but the main final issue is crime. There is a considerable difference in the level of crime in rural areas versus urban areas, which can be attributed to several reasons like guns laws, policies, culture clash, crowding, and gangs.

The causes of population growth are separated into two categories of natural growth and net immigration. The factors that contribute to population growth are adult population, economic wealth, standard of living, culture, and demographic transition theory. Specifically demographic transition theory relates to the idea that population growth is linked to the level of technological development and that growth slows as a country industrializes. The three stages of this theory are the levels of industrialization of the country such as, preindustrial societies with both a high birth and death rate, developing industrial societies that has a high birth rate but now a low death rate, and finally fully industrialized countries where both rates are low. There are several consequences of population growth including overpopulation, environmental effects, and if it is through immigration, it can cause cultural dilution.

Population growth affects the environment in a multitude of different ways that is studied in the subfield of sociology called environmental sociology. Air pollution is one way, as the increase of population causes an increase in demand and thus the increase in industrial production to accommodate, which results in greater output of waste materials into the air. Water pollution is also an issue caused by the increased waste production, sometimes contaminating entire waterways which affects the local fauna, flora, and parts of the population dependent on them for agriculture or commerce. Climate change is an oft discussed issue where the increase in needs potentially causes adverse effects to the local and global climate. Ground pollution and hazardous waste are created as a byproduct of certain manufactures, which are often hazardous especially when improperly disposed of. The last problem is food and the ability to feed the growing population, which is split into smaller categories like overfishing, bycatching, land clearance, and overfertilization.

The problems of the future due to changes in population and rapid urbanization would be; a faltering economy that wouldn’t be able to keep up with the demand given limited resources, poorer education due to the increase in poverty and homelessness that comes with such urbanization, environmental decline from the increase in demand as both population and urbanization increases, and finally the stress of both of these issues have on our current populace and especially on the future generations.