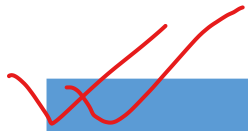


Demographic Transition Theory

- A more complex analysis of population change is demographic transition theory, a thesis that links population patterns to a society's level of technological development.



| | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Level of technology | Pre industrial | Early industrial | Mature industrial | Post industrial |
| Population growth | Very slow | Rapid | Slowing | Very slow |

Demographic Transition Theory

Stage 1

- Preindustrial, agrarian societies have high birth rates because of the economic value of children and the absence of birth control. Death rates are also high because of low living standards and limited medical technology. Deaths from outbreaks of disease cancel out births, so population rises and falls only slightly over time. This was the case for thousands of years in Europe before the Industrial Revolution.

- Stage 2, the onset of industrialization, brings a demographic transition as death rates fall due to greater food supplies and scientific medicine. But birth rates remain high, resulting in rapid population growth. It was during Europe's Stage 2 that Malthus formulated his ideas, which accounts for his pessimistic view of the future. The world's poorest countries today are in this high growth stage.

- In Stage 3:

A mature industrial economy, the birth rate drops, curbing population growth once again. Fertility falls because most children survive to adulthood and because high living standards make raising children expensive. In short, affluence transforms children from economic assets into economic liabilities. Smaller families, made possible by effective birth control, are also favored by women working outside the home. As birth rates follow death rates downward, population growth slows further.

- Stage 4:

Corresponds to a postindustrial economy in which the demographic transition is complete. The birth rate keeps falling, partly because dual-income couples gradually become the norm and partly because the cost of raising children continues to increase. This trend, linked to steady death rates, means that population grows only very slowly or even decreases. This is the case today in Japan, Europe, and the United States.

- Evaluation: Demographic transition theory suggests that the key to population control lies in technology. Instead of the runaway population increase feared by Malthus, this theory sees technology slowing growth and spreading material plenty.