CHAPTER 14

Population and Urbanization

Populations, Large and Small

Birth and death—nothing in our lives quite matches the importance of these two events. Naturally, each of us is most intimately concerned with our own birth and death, but to an important extent, our lives are also influenced by the births and deaths of those around us. Do we live in large or small families, large or small communities? Is life predictably long or are families, relationships, and communities periodically and unpredictably shattered by death?

In this chapter we take a historical and cross-cultural perspective on the relationship between social structures and population. The study of population is known as **demography**, and those who study it are known as demographers. Demographers focus primarily on three issues: births, deaths, and migration patterns. Here we will look at these three issues and also at the effect of population size on social relationships within communities. We are interested in questions such as how births, deaths, and community size affect social structures and, conversely, how changing social structures affect births, deaths, and community size.

Currently, the world population is 6.7 billion people, give or take a couple hundred million. This is two and a half times as many people as lived in 1950. World population has grown for two basic reasons. First, the **mortality rate** (or *death rate*)—the number of *deaths* per every 1,000 persons in a given population in a given time period—has declined rapidly. Most babies now survive until adulthood, and many adults live into old age. Meanwhile, the **fertility rate**—the number of *births* per every 1,000 *women* in a population—has decreased only slowly. Similarly, the **birth rate**—the number of *births* per every *person* (male or female) in the population—has decreased slowly. In other words, births are now outpacing deaths, and so each year there are more and more people. In part because of this population growth, millions are poor, underfed, and undereducated; pollution is widespread; and the planet's natural resources have been ransacked.

These problems are among the causes of **migration**, the movement of people from one geographic area to another. We use the term **internal migration** to refer to migration to find new homes *within* a country and the term **immigration** to refer to migration *between* countries to find new homes.

Migration, in turn, leads to another set of social concerns, as nations wrestle with how to respond to the newcomers in their midst. Some nations, like the United States, allow immigrants to eventually become citizens. Other nations refuse citizenship not only to almost all immigrants but also to their children and grandchildren. For example, Germany generally will not grant citizenship to the children of Turkish immigrants, even if these children are born, raised, and educated in Germany. Immigration has substantial consequences, then, not only for population growth and economic development but also for issues such as the meaning of citizenship and nationality.

In sum, population size and population change are vitally linked to many important social issues. The next section examines how the world's population reached its current size.

Demography is the study of population—its size, growth, and composition.

The **mortality rate** is the number of deaths per every 1,000 people in a given population during a given time period.

The **fertility rate** is the number of births per every 1,000 women in a population during a given time period.

The **birth rate** is the number of births per every 1,000 persons in a population during a given time period.

Migration is the movement of people from one geographic area to another.

Internal migration is the movement of people to new homes within a country.

Immigration is the movement of people to find new homes in a different country.

Understanding Population Growth

The human population continues to grow each day, as Table 14.1 shows. Worldwide, the birth rate in 2008 was 21 births per 1,000 population; the mortality rate was a much lower 8 per 1,000. Because the number of births exceeded the number of deaths

TABLE 14.1 World Population Picture, 2008
In 2008, the world population was 6.7 billion and growing at a rate of 1.3 percent per year. Growth was uneven, however; the less developed areas of the world were growing much more rapidly than the more developed areas. As a result, most of the additions to the world's population were in poor nations.

Area	Birth Rate per 1,000 Persons	Mortality Rate per 1,000 Persons	Annual Percentage Increase in Population*	Projected Population Increase, 2006–2025
World	21	8	1.3%	1,294,652,000
More-developed nations	12	10	0.2%	41,853,000
Less-developed nations	23	8	1.5%	1,252,798,000

SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau (2008).
*Rate of natural increase.

by 13 per 1,000, the world's population grew at 1.3 per hundred, or 1.3 percent. If your savings were growing at the rate of 1.3 percent per year, you would undoubtedly think that the growth rate was low. A growth rate of 1.3 percent in population, however, means that the planet will hold an extra 2.6 *billion* people by the year 2050.

Importantly, all those new people will not be spread equally around the world. Instead, as Table 14.1 shows, populations are growing more rapidly in some nations than in others. Less developed nations in Africa, for example, may double population size in less than 30 years, whereas the developed nations of Europe will have shrinking populations.

Because most population growth is occurring in poor nations, the world will likely be poorer in 2025 than it is now. How did these different population patterns evolve?

Population in Former Times

For most of human history, both birth rates and mortality rates were about 40 per 1,000. Because both rates were similar, populations grew slowly if at all. Translated into personal terms, this means that the average woman spent most of the years between the ages of 20 and 45 either pregnant or nursing. If both she and her husband survived until they were 45, she would produce an average of 6 to 10 children. The average life expectancy was perhaps 30 or 35 years. Such a low life expectancy was largely due to very high *infant mortality rates*. The **infant mortality rate** is the number of babies who die during or shortly after childbirth per every 1,000 live births in a given population. Throughout much of human history, perhaps one-quarter to one-third of all babies died before they reached their first birthday. Both birth and death were frequent occurrences in most preindustrial households.

The **infant mortality rate** is the number of babies who die during or shortly after childbirth per every 1,000 live births in a given population.

The Demographic Transition in the West

Beginning in the eighteenth century, a series of events occurred that revolutionized population in the West. First, death rates fell substantially while birth rates remained high. As a result, the population grew rapidly. Then birth rates, too, dropped. Once birth and death rates reached similar levels, they balanced each other out

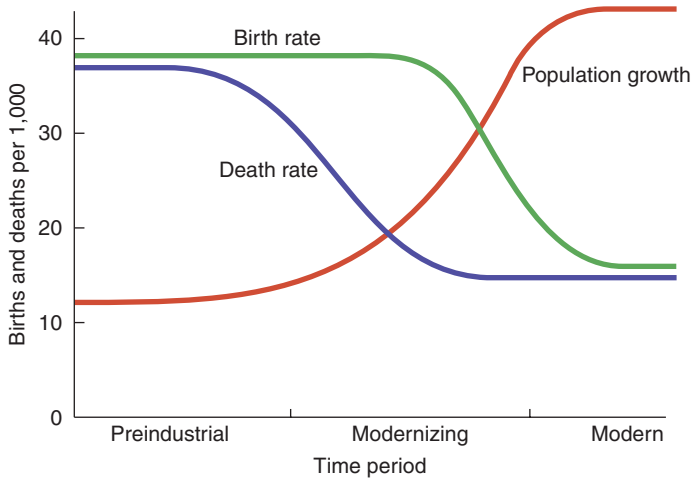

FIGURE 14.1 The Demographic Transition in the West
In the preindustrial West, both birth and death rates were high. As living conditions improved and death rates began to fall, the population grew. Eventually, however, birth rates also fell and population size stabilized. This process is known as the *demographic transition*.

and population size stabilized, as Figure 14.1 illustrates. Because studies of population are called demography, this change from a population characterized by high birth and death rates to one characterized by low birth and death rates is called the **demographic transition**. It results in longer life expectancies. Although this transition occurred at different times in different countries, the process was more or less similar across Europe and in the United States. More recently, birth rates have fallen still further, and populations in some nations are shrinking.

The Decline in Mortality Rates

Prior to the demographic transition, widespread malnutrition was an important factor underlying high mortality rates. Although few died of outright starvation, poor nutrition increased the susceptibility of the population to disease. Improvements in nutrition were the first major cause of the demographic transition's decline in mortality rates, beginning in the 1700s and continuing into the early twentieth century. New crop varieties from the Americas (especially corn and potatoes), new agricultural methods and equipment, and increased trade all helped improve nutrition in Europe and the United States. The second major cause of the decline in mortality rates was a general increase in the standard of living, as improved shelter and clothing left people healthier and better able to ward off disease. Changes in hygiene were vital in reducing communicable diseases, especially those affecting young children, such as typhoid fever and diarrhea (Kiple 1993).

In the late nineteenth century, public-health engineering led to further reductions in communicable disease by providing clean drinking water and adequate treatment of sewage. For example, between 1900 and 1970, the life expectancy of white Americans increased from 47 to 72, and the life expectancy of African Americans increased from 33 to 64 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975, 2006). Thus, although life expectancy has been increasing gradually since about 1600, the fastest increases occurred in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Medical advances probably account for no more than one-sixth of this overall rise in life expectancy (Bunker, Frazier, & Mosteller 1994). Instead, public-health initiatives, better nutrition, and an increased standard of living are largely responsible for rising life expectancies (McKinlay & McKinlay 1977; Weitz 2010). Interestingly, once the standard of living in a nation reaches a certain point—approximately $6,400 per capita income—further increases in life expectancy depend less on increasing income than on reducing the income gap

Demographic transition is the process through which a population shifts from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates.

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Have you ever traveled to a less-developed country? If you did, the odds are that you got a nasty stomach virus for a day or two, but otherwise suffered no health problems. Yet malaria, cholera, dysentery, and the like kill millions in these countries each year. Why are American tourists virtually immune? Vaccinations, antibiotics, and access to soap and water help. But the most important reason is that, unlike many residents of less-developed countries, tourists start out healthy, well nourished, well sheltered, and well clothed. As a result, even if they come in contact with dangerous germs, their bodies most likely will be able to fight against infection.

between rich and poor (Wilkinson 1996). This is one major reason why, on average, Cubans live almost as long as do Americans, and Swedes live longer than Americans.

The Decline in Fertility Rates

The Industrial Revolution also affected fertility rates, although less directly. Industrialization meant increasing urbanization, greater education, and the real possibility of getting ahead in an expanding economy. Pensions and other social benefits became more common with industrialization, so people no longer needed to have many children to care for them in their old age (Friedlander & Okun 1996). In addition, as mortality rates dropped, parents no longer needed to have eight children to count on two surviving. Perhaps even more important, industrialization created an awareness of the possibility of doing things differently than they had been done by previous generations. As a result, the idea of controlling family size to satisfy individual goals spread even to areas that had not experienced industrialization, so that by the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of family limitation had gained widespread popularity (van de Walle & Knodel 1980). Currently in Europe and North America, birth and death rates are about even, and there is little population growth.

The Demographic Transition in the Non-West

In the less-developed nations of the non-West, birth and death rates remained at roughly preindustrial levels until the first decades of the twentieth century. After that, in some areas such as Latin America, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea, economic development and improvements in the standard of living caused both death and birth rates to plummet, much as they had previously done in the West.

The poorest nations of the world followed a somewhat different path. Death rates in these nations only began to fall in the second half of the twentieth century, following basic improvements in sanitation and in health care (especially the adoption of childhood vaccinations and of new treatments for childhood diarrhea). Because death rates fell while birth rates remained stable, initially this shift led to population growth. More recently, however, birth rates also have declined, and population growth has slowed considerably. In addition, in the countries hardest hit by AIDS, such as Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho, death rates have soared, and population growth has dropped dramatically (UNAIDS/WHO 2007).

Population and Social Structure: Two Examples

In this section we explore contemporary relationships between social structure and population in two societies: Ghana, where the fertility rate is high, and Italy, where the fertility rate is low.

Figure 14.2 illustrates the differences between the populations in these two countries through the use of "population pyramids." A population pyramid shows the number of people in a nation's population, broken down by age group. Males are shown on the left-hand side and females on the right-hand side.

Ghana's population pyramid actually looks like a pyramid because many Ghanaians are very young and relatively few Ghanaians survive into old age. In contrast, Italy's pyramid bulges out in the middle because there are so many middle-aged Italians. Moreover, its pyramid shows that Italy has almost as many old people as young people.

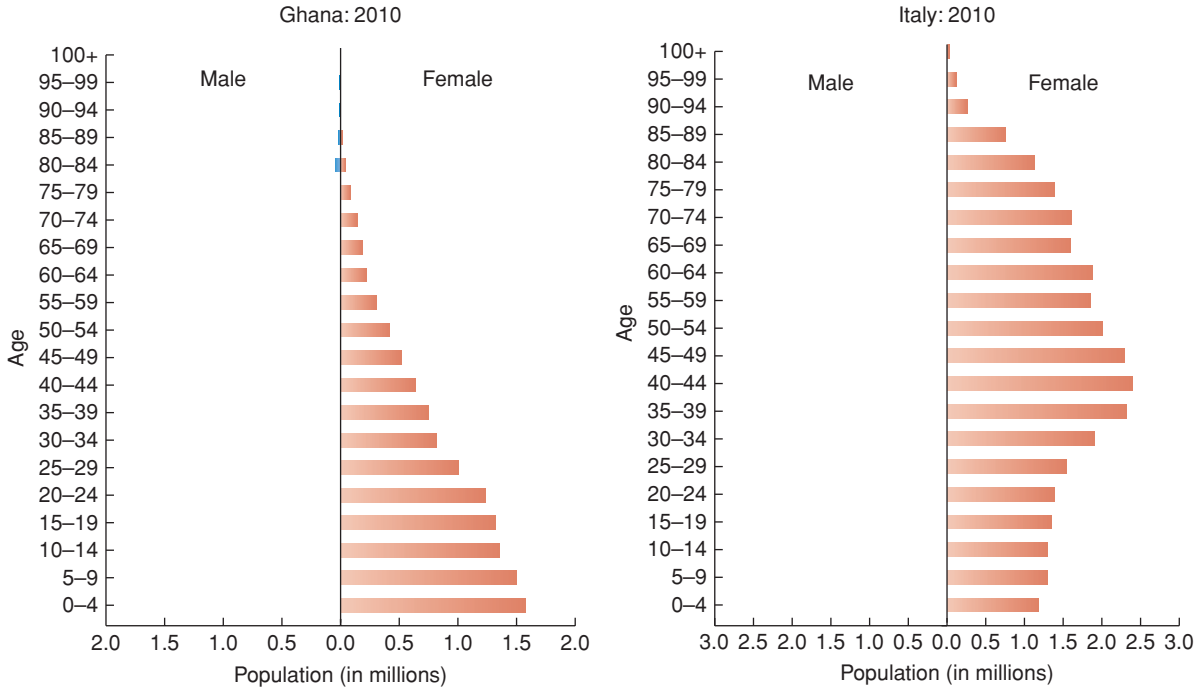

FIGURE 14.2 Population Pyramids for Ghana and Italy

Ghana's population pyramid looks like a pyramid because it includes many young people and few old people. Italy's pyramid bulges out in the middle with middle-aged people and is balanced top and bottom with reasonably similar numbers of young and old people.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, Accessed June 2009.

Ghana: Is the Fertility Rate Too High?

Ghana is an example of a society in which traditional social structures encourage a high fertility rate. It is also an example of a society in which high fertility may ensure continuing traditionalism—and poverty.

The Effects of Social Roles on the Fertility Rate

Fertility rates have declined in Ghana in recent years but remain high. Ghana still has a crude birth rate of 32 per 1,000 population. The mortality rate, however, is down to 10 per 1,000. This means that the rate of natural increase in Ghana is 2.2 percent per year (Population Reference Bureau 2008). If that rate continues, the population could double in less than 30 years.

One of the most important reasons for this high fertility rate is the nature of women's roles in Ghanaian society. In Ghana, children are an important—or even the only—source of esteem and power open to many women. Women who cannot bear children risk divorce or abandonment. This is especially true for the 22 percent of Ghanaian women who live in polygamous unions (Social Institutions & Gender Index 2009). The number of children a woman has—especially the number of sons—strongly affects her position relative to that of her co-wives. Moreover, because infant mortality rates remain relatively high, Ghanaian women believe they must have four or more children to ensure that two survive to adulthood.

Another important cause of the high fertility rate is the need for economic security. Most Ghanaians work in subsistence agriculture. To survive, families need

Many families in Africa, especially polygamous families, have numerous children, and overpopulation is a cause for concern.

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children as well as adults to work in the fields. In addition, when children grow up and marry, they can add to the family's economic and political security by creating political and social allegiances to other families. Finally, children are the only form of old-age insurance available to Ghanaians: Parents who grow old or ill must rely on their children to support them. Conversely, having children is relatively inexpensive: No expensive medical treatment is available for children, schooling is either inexpensive or unaffordable, and children don't expect to own designer jeans or $150 tennis shoes. With a cost/benefit ratio of this sort, it is not surprising that Ghanaians desire many children.

The Effects of High Fertility Rates on Society

Although individual women may benefit from Ghana's high fertility rate, Ghanaian society as a whole has suffered. If its population continues to explode, Ghana will have to increase its governmental expenditures dramatically just to maintain current levels of support for education, highways, agriculture, and the like. Thus, a decision that is rational on the individual level turns out to be less wise on the societal level.

This problem sometimes leads people in the West to ask: "Are they stupid? Can't they figure out they would be better off if they had fewer children?" Unfortunately for the argument, nations don't have children; people do. A high fertility rate continues to be a rational choice for individual Ghanaians.

Policy Responses

To reduce its population growth, Ghana has established an excellent family-planning program that makes contraception available, convenient, and affordable to women who want it. When women want several children, however, access to contraception has limited impact. Currently, only 17 percent of all married women in Ghana use modern contraceptive methods (Population Reference Bureau 2008). Contraceptive use is considerably higher among younger, better-educated, urban women. Study after study has found that the best way to reduce the fertility rate is to combine access to

TABLE 14.2 Population Change in Europe
Overall, deaths are now slightly exceeding births in Europe. Thus, some nations are already experiencing population decline. The last column in the table shows the combined impact of births, deaths, and migration into and out of a country.

Country	Birth Rate per 1,000 Persons	Mortality Rate per 1,000 Persons	Annual Percentage Change in Population*	Average No. of Children per Woman	Projected Population Change, 2000–2050** (percent)
Denmark	12	10	0.2%	1.8	0%
Germany	8	10	–0.2	1.3	–13
Hungary	10	13	–0.4	1.3	–11
Italy	9	10	0.0	1.3	3
Romania	10	12	–0.2	1.3	–20
Spain	11	9	0.2	1.4	–6
United Kingdom	13	9	0.3	1.9	26

SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau (2008).
*Rate of natural increase.
**Reflects the impact of immigration as well as birth and death rates. (United Kingdom receives more immigrants and Romania loses more to immigration than do the other countries in this table.)

contraception with educational and economic development and higher status levels for women (Poston 2000).

Italy: Is the Fertility Rate Too Low?

In a world reeling from the impact of doubling populations in the less-developed world, it is ironic that many developed countries worry that their fertility rates are too low. Yet low fertility also can cause serious problems.

The Effects of Social Roles on Fertility Rates

With modern mortality rates, fertility rates must average 2.1 children per woman if the population is to replace itself: two children so that the woman and her partner are replaced and a little extra to cover unavoidable childhood deaths. Such a fertility rate is called **zero population growth**. If the fertility rate is less than this, the next generation will be smaller than the current one.

Currently in Italy, the average woman is having only 1.3 children (Table 14.2). This means that the next generation of Italians will be much smaller than previous ones, unless the country absorbs many new immigrants. The same scenario holds true across most of Europe, as Table 14.2 shows.

Why is the fertility rate so low in Italy? In essence, the situation in Italy is the reverse of that in Ghana. Most Italian women are educated, and many hold paying jobs outside of the home. Women's social status is close to that of men, so women do not need to have children to have a purpose in life or to assure their social standing. Because few Italians work in agriculture, and all children are expected to be in school,

Zero population growth exists when the fertility rate is about 2.1 births per woman, the rate needed to maintain the population at a steady size.

In Europe, many families have only one child, and underpopulation is increasingly a cause for concern.

having children doesn't add to a family's labor pool. Finally, the Italian government provides a good safety net in the form of disability insurance, health care, old-age pensions, and the like, which means that couples do not need to have children to take care of them in sickness or old age.

The Effects of Low Fertility Rates on Society

Given the serious worldwide dilemmas posed by population growth and Italy's very high density, why should we consider a low fertility rate a problem? There are two main concerns: the large numbers of old people compared with young people, and rising nationalistic fears resulting from the importing of immigrant labor.

A very low fertility rate creates an age structure in which the older generation is as large as or larger than the younger generation on whom it relies for support. As a result, it is increasingly difficult for Italy to fill all the occupations—from taxi drivers to doctors—needed to keep the nation running. At the same time, the cost of paying for old-age pensions and health care is growing rapidly. (The same is true of Social Security in the United States.) As a result, the most-industrialized nations must spend more and more of their national net income on pensions and health care for older citizens.

To counteract this problem, Italy has imported workers from other countries, primarily neighboring Albania. This has led to nationalist fears of cultural dilution. A survey conducted in 2003 found that an astounding 80 percent of Italians believed that Albanian immigrants were bad for Italy (Pew Research Center 2003). These feelings have provoked anti-immigrant violence in Italy and have led Italy to clamp down on immigration. In turn, the isolation and discrimination experienced by immigrants in Italy have also led to outbreaks of violence by immigrants themselves. Similar conditions elsewhere in western Europe have produced similar results, such as the riots that blazed across France's immigrant neighborhoods for 3 weeks in late 2005.

Another consequence of low fertility was tragically illustrated on May 12, 2008 when a devastating earthquake struck China's Sichuan province. To relieve overpopulation and protect its declining environment, China's authoritarian government refuses to allow most couples to have more than one child and punishes severely those who ignore this rule. When the earthquake struck, almost 7,000 poorly built classrooms collapsed, killing thousands of children—most of whom were their parents' only child.

The loss of a child is always a tragedy. Losing an only child, however, is particularly devastating, since parents lose both the sense of a future for their family and the sense of security that children can bring to aging parents. China has agreed to relax its one-child policy for couples who lost their only child in the earthquake, but some couples may be too old to take advantage of this.

Policy Responses

In response to the various concerns raised by low fertility, Italy and other European nations have established incentives to encourage a higher fertility rate. Among them are paid, months-long maternity leave; cash bonuses and housing subsidies for having more children; and monthly subsidies for children until age 3 (Oleksyn 2006).

TABLE 14.3 Average Number of Births per Woman, 1950–2008
In the last half century, the average number of children per woman has declined worldwide.

	Average Number of Births per Woman	
Region	1950	2008
Africa	6.6	4.9
Asia	5.9	2.4
Europe	2.6	1.5
Latin America	5.9	2.5
North America	3.5	2.1
Oceania	3.8	2.4

SOURCE: Gelbard, Haub, & Kent (1999); Population Reference Bureau (2008).

Nevertheless, the costs of raising children far outstrip these benefits. As a result, while these incentive plans have kept birth rates from falling drastically, they have not helped to raise birth rates in Italy or other countries where women have attractive alternatives outside the home (Gautier & Hatzius 1997).

Population and Social Problems: Two Examples

Analysis of world population growth reveals a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that the average number of births per woman has declined in every part of the world (Table 14.3). The bad news is that the population of the world will nonetheless increase dramatically over the next 50 years. The reason for this gloomy prediction lies in the age structure of the current population. The next generation of mothers is already born—and there are a lot of them. Thus, we must plan for a world that will soon hold 8 or 9 billion people.

Population pressures can contribute to numerous social problems. In this section, we address two of them—environmental devastation and poverty.

Environmental Devastation: A Population Problem?

All around the world, there are signs of enormous environmental destruction: In the developed world, we have acid rain and oil spills; in Africa, desert environments are spreading rapidly due to deforestation and overgrazing. Both of these pose serious threats to the environment, but only the latter is truly a population problem.

The United States is responsible for far more than its share of environmental destruction. Our affluent, throwaway lifestyle requires large amounts of petroleum and other natural resources. Obtaining these resources results in the destruction

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Deforestation is devastating tropical rainforests in Brazil, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

of wilderness, the loss of agricultural lands, and the pollution of oceans. Using these resources causes illness-inducing air pollution, acid rain, and smog that are killing our forests. Although these problems would be less severe if there were half as many of us (and hence half as many cars, factories, and Styrofoam cups), they are not really population problems. They stem from our way of life rather than our numbers.

In sub-Saharan Africa, however, population pressure is a major culprit in environmental destruction. In rural areas, the typical scenario runs like this: Population pressure forces farmers to plow marginal land and to plant high-yielding crops in quick succession without soil-enhancing rotations or fallow periods. The marginal lands and the overworked soils produce less and less food, forcing farmers to push the land even harder. They cut down forests and windbreaks to free more land for production. Soon, water and wind erosion becomes so pervasive that the topsoil is borne off entirely, and the tillable land is replaced by desert or barren rock. This cycle of environmental destruction—which destroys forests, topsoil, and the plant and animal species that depend upon them—is characteristic of high population growth in combination with poverty. When one's children are starving, it is hard to make long-term decisions that will protect the environment for future generations.

In sum, reducing population growth would reduce future pressure on natural resources, but it would not solve the current problem. The solution rests in an international moral and financial commitment to reducing rural poverty, improving farming practices, reducing the foreign debt of the less- and least-developed nations, *and* curbing wasteful and destructive practices in the developed nations.

Poverty in the Least-Developed World

Perhaps 500 million people around the world are seriously undernourished, and each year outbreaks of famine and starvation occur in Africa and Asia. A billion more are poorly nourished, poorly educated, and poorly sheltered. These people live in the same nations that have high population growth.

Some observers blame poverty in the developing nations on the high fertility rates in these nations. Yet high fertility rates are not the only or even the primary cause of this poverty. Poverty and malnutrition result primarily from war, corruption, and inequality in nondemocratic countries and from a world economic system that extracts raw goods and profits from poorer countries (Chase-Dunn 1989; Dreze & Sen 1989; Sen 1999). It is a terrible irony that most poor countries export more food than they import (Lappé, Collins, & Rosset 1998). Cuba, for example, became poorer in the 1990s not because of population growth but because its authoritarian government failed to develop a strong economy and instead relied heavily on subsidies from the now-defunct Soviet Union. People in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, meanwhile, are dying of starvation because of war rather than because of a high fertility rate.

Policy Responses

Although many factors contribute to poverty, almost all world leaders agree that reducing the fertility rate is an important step toward increasing the standard of living

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Because you live in the United States, you use far more environmental resources each day than does the average citizen in the less-developed nations. You probably get to campus and to work by car, or at least by bus, and so use more gas than does someone who walks most places. You may have bought a bottle of water to carry with you—using not only plastic but all the oil, water, and other resources needed to make the bottle, fill it, and ship it to you. Throughout the day, you will continue to use plastic, water, fossil fuels, metals, and many goods made with those resources.

in the poorer nations of the world. The most successful programs to reduce fertility rates have combined an aggressive family-planning program, economic and educational development, and improvements in the status of women (Poston 2000).

FAMILY-PLANNING PROGRAMS Family-planning programs are designed to make modern contraceptives and sterilization available inexpensively and conveniently to individuals who desire to limit the number of their children. For example, between 1975 and 1991, an aggressive family-planning program increased contraceptive use in Bangladesh by 500 percent and decreased the average number of children per woman from 7 to 5 in just 16 years (Kalish 1994).

ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Experience all over the world shows that fertility rates decline as education increases and the country undergoes economic development. For example, South Korea's fertility rate has plummeted from 6.0 children per woman in 1960 to only 1.3 currently in the wake of its dramatic economic development (Population Reference Bureau 2008).

IMPROVING THE STATUS OF WOMEN In countries where women have low status, they can only increase their social value and guarantee support in their old age by having many children—especially sons. When women have greater education and can earn even a small income on their own, they gain greater power within the family. As a result, they typically marry later and have fewer children. In addition, they are better able to protect their daughters from being married off while still children. Consequently, the countries that have proven most successful in family planning and in economic growth are those, such as South Korea and Singapore, that have made particular efforts to increase education, economic options, and legal rights for women (United Nations Population Fund 2000).

Photo by Tim Graham/Getty Images

Efforts to reduce birth rates in poor nations like Afghanistan have been most successful when they have combined family-planning programs with increases in access to jobs and education, especially for girls and women.

Population in the United States

The U.S. population picture is similar to that in Italy, with low mortality and fertility rates, but there are also several differences. First, although the fertility rate is close to the zero population growth level, it has not dropped significantly below this level as has happened in Italy. Second, immigration continues to add substantially to the size of our population. Third, and partly because of this immigration, our population is younger than Italy's. In this section, we briefly describe fertility rates, mortality rates, and migration issues in the United States.

Fertility Rates

For nearly 20 years, the number of children per woman in the United States has remained just around or just under 2.1—the zero population growth level. This low fertility rate has been accompanied by sharp reductions in social-class, racial, and religious differences in fertility rates. Some women will give birth when they are teenagers and some when they are 40, but increasingly they will stop at 2 children.

Mortality Rates

Death is almost a stranger to U.S. families. The average age at death is now in the late seventies, and many people who survive to age 65 live another 20 years. Parents can feel relatively secure that their infants will survive. If they don't divorce, young newlyweds can safely plan on a golden wedding anniversary.

Since 1970, we have added about 7 years to the average life expectancy. This increase is primarily due to better diagnosis and treatment of the degenerative diseases (such as heart disease and cancer) that strike elderly people. In addition, increases in life expectancy have been made possible by reducing (although not eliminating) racial and social-class differentials in mortality rates. In the early 1940s, African American women lived a full 12 years less than white women; today, the gap is down to a bit over 4 years (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2009a).

On the other hand, the AIDS epidemic, first recognized in 1981, has given death a new face. Although death rates from AIDS have fallen in recent years, AIDS remains a leading cause of death for all persons ages 25 to 44, but especially for African Americans and Hispanics. Often spread through intravenous drug use (which has the most appeal for those who have the least to look forward to), AIDS is becoming a disease of the poor and disadvantaged.

Migration Patterns

Although it can safely be ignored as a factor in world population growth, migration often has dramatic effects on the growth of individual nations. The United States is one of the nations for which immigration has had an important impact, particularly in Sunbelt states such as California, Arizona, and Florida.

Most U.S. citizens are descended from people who emigrated to the United States to improve their economic prospects, such as many recent migrants from Mexico. Other immigrants, such as those from Iraq, Bosnia, and the Sudan, are primarily refugees driven from their homes by warfare or the economic destruction that often follows in its wake (see Focus on a Global Perspective: International Migration

on pages 358–359). Patterns of both internal migration and international immigration have created a unique set of problems in the United States and have dramatically changed our political landscape.

Immigration

The United States has always been a country of immigrants. Immigration peaked between 1880 and 1920, and then fell with the passage of restrictive immigration laws. Immigration then rose steadily until 2008, when the sharp loss in U.S. jobs made immigration to this country much less appealing (Preston 2009). Future immigration will depend on how the U.S. economy compares to that in Mexico and other countries.

An estimated 1 million immigrants enter the United States each year. Almost all recent immigrants come from Latin America or Asia. Perhaps as many as half are illegal immigrants, most from Mexico or Central America.

Immigrants to the United States divide roughly into two very different groups. The first is skilled, well educated, able to speak English, and here legally, such as doctors and computer scientists from India. The second group is made up of low-skilled workers with little education or ability to speak English, many of whom are here illegally. Most of these workers come from Latin America. The experiences of these two groups, and their impact on the United States, differ markedly.

Because of immigration, the United States does not need to fear population decline. The racial and ethnic composition of the nation will change substantially, however. By 2050, it is estimated that the combination of Hispanic immigration and a low fertility rate among whites will reduce the proportion of our population that is white non-Hispanic from 69 percent in 2001 to 50 percent (Figure 14.3 on the next page).

Most immigrants to the United States, both legal and illegal, are pushed from their native lands by poor local economies and are pulled by an unmet demand in

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The Hispanic population in the United States has grown considerably in recent years. This family is waiting to apply for legal residency.

focus on  A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

International Migration

During 2008, approximately 11.3 million refugees fled their homes involuntarily, and several million more (who had fled earlier) remained outside their home countries as either stateless persons or asylum seekers (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2009). Millions more chose voluntarily to seek new lives and new opportunities in other countries.

We often hear debate about immigrants and refugees in the United States, but what do we know about international migration? Map 14.1 shows recent migration patterns around the world. Most refugees flee from one developing nation to a neighboring developing nation, whereas many voluntary migrants move to industrialized nations in search of a better life.

Demographers believe that the economic and political turmoil of the last two decades, coupled with the opportunities presented by globalization, have substantially increased international migration. At least 191 million people lived outside their country of birth or citizenship in 2005, almost twice the number 50 years ago (United Nations Population Fund 2006). Although push factors such as war and famine account for much of this international migration, some migrants are also pulled by the economic growth and employment opportunities in newly industrializing nations, such as South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia. Pull factors also account for much of the immigration from less-developed to more-developed countries. Strong European economies provide increasing numbers of jobs to a growing non-Western labor force. Migrants traditionally have been young men, but women and girls now comprise about half of those leaving their home countries (United Nations Population Fund 2009). Many of these are mothers who, in growing numbers, seek employment opportunities in more affluent neighboring countries in order to send money to the family, friends, or neighbors who are raising their children.

The money sent back home by migrants—both men and women—is an important source of revenue for many nations. During 2005 alone, migrants sent more than $232 billion to their home nations (United Nations Population Fund 2006). These funds have helped millions of people in poorer nations to rise out of poverty (United Nations Population Fund 2006). With the current economic crisis, however, these funds have fallen dramatically, and whole communities in nations such as Mexico have suffered as a result.

It is not yet clear who profits most from the international migrant stream. Although countries such as Germany, France, and Italy face new challenges stemming from an ethnically diverse population, workers from developing nations help to sustain the continued expansion of these nations' economies. Low birth rates have led to smaller labor forces and aging populations in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere. Thus, migrants from countries such as Turkey and Pakistan fill the demand for more workers, particularly at the low end of the labor hierarchy. Whether the money that migrants send home will significantly improve the quality of life in less-developed nations remains an open question.

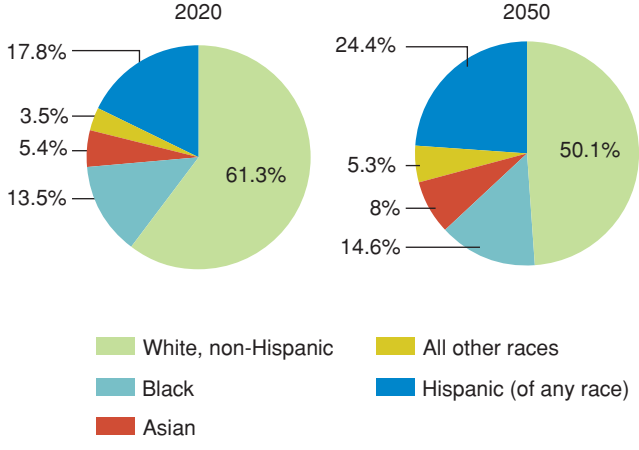
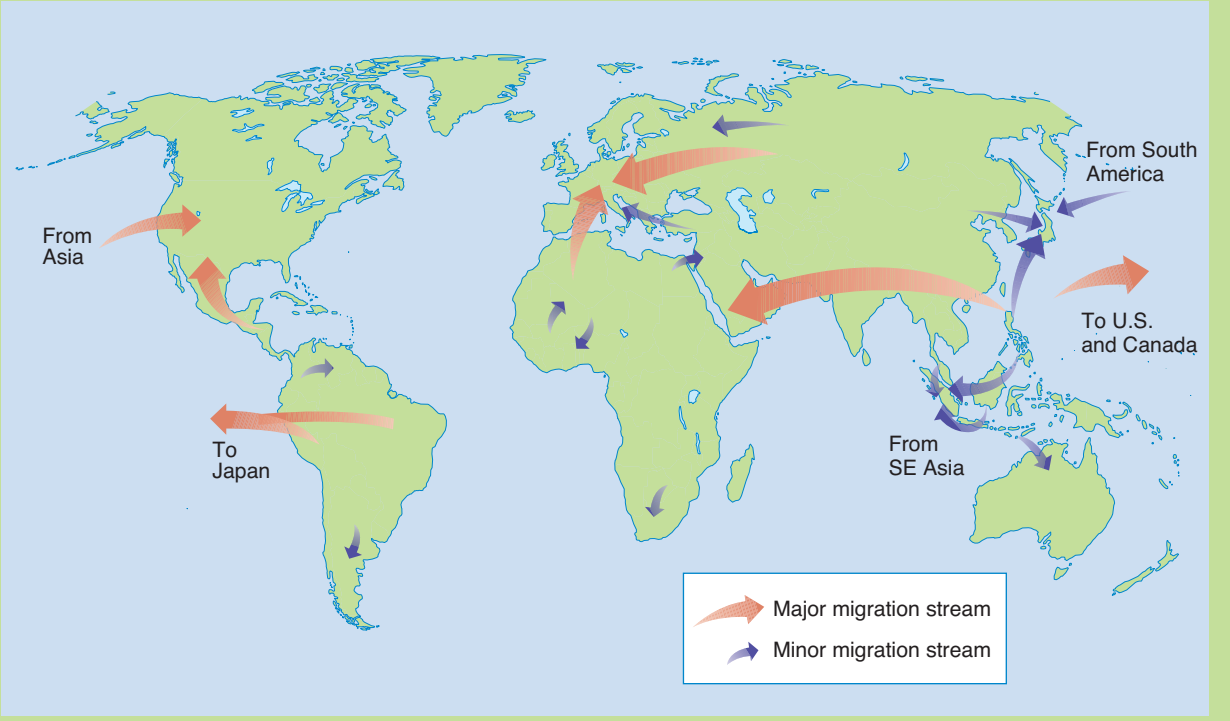


FIGURE 14.3 The Changing U.S. Population
If immigration and fertility rates remain stable, the proportion of Hispanic and Asian Americans will likely increase and the proportion of non-Hispanic whites will likely decrease.

MAP 14.1: Major Migration Patterns in the Early Twenty-first Century
SOURCE: Martin & Widgren 2002.



the United States for low-skilled, low-paid labor. In the past, many immigrants (especially from Mexico) would come to the United States to work briefly and then return to their home countries, a cycle they repeated whenever they needed to earn extra money. Ironically, the clampdown on border crossings has made it too dangerous to cross the border repeatedly, and so many of these migrants instead have settled in the United States (Massey 2006). Meanwhile, that clampdown has had no impact on the number who cross the border: One study of 1,000 persons who chose to migrate from southern Mexico found that *all* eventually made it across (Preston 2009). However, the current economic downturn has made the United States a less attractive destination, and for the moment immigration has decreased.

The consequences of current immigration trends are likely to be both economic and cultural. From the standpoint of economics, research suggests that (1) immigrants are not taking jobs away from U.S. citizens, but (2) the availability of low-wage illegal immigrants may depress wages for the least educated American citizens. Some economists believe immigrants have no effect on wages; others believe they reduce wages

for high school dropouts by as much as 5 percent (Borjas & Katz 2007; Card 2005). From the standpoint of culture, it is likely that the United States will become a more pluralistic society in which salsa and soccer are as popular as hot dogs and baseball, but that the new immigrants will integrate into American society as did earlier waves of Hispanic and other immigrants (Alba & Nee 2003).

Internal Migration

Until recently, internal migration—movement from one part of the country to another—has been higher in the United States than in most of the developed world. However, the recent economic downturn has dramatically changed this: The percentage of Americans who moved homes in 2008 was the lowest in *60 years* (Edwards 2009). Many people cannot move because no one can afford to buy their homes, whether because potential buyers have lost their jobs or savings or because banks have tightened the rules for giving mortgages. Others cannot move because the value of their homes has dropped substantially and they fear financial catastrophe if they sell at current low prices.

The most striking and largest example of internal migration in U.S. history was the exodus of about 1 million people triggered by 2005's Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans had already been a city in decline for many years before 2005. But things got much worse when the hurricane and the flooding that followed it destroyed homes, businesses, and basic services, such as sewer systems and electric lines. As a result, many fled the city. Although living conditions have improved and some have returned to the city, its population remains about 40 percent lower than it was before the hurricane. Many of the hurricane refugees—both those who returned to the city and those who have relocated elsewhere—remain mired in deeper poverty than before the disaster, and many are still living in "temporary" mobile homes designed only to serve as emergency shelters.

New Orleans, of course, is a unique case. More generally, the history of internal migration in the United States has been a story of **urbanization**—the increasing movement of people from towns and farms into cities. For most of our history, urban areas grew faster than rural areas, with the largest urban areas growing the most. Since about 1970, however, this has all changed. Currently, the three major trends in internal migration are Sunbelt growth, migration from central cities to suburbs, and the resurgence of some nonurban areas.

Since 1970, there has been consistent movement of people from the Midwest and the northern states to the Sunbelt states of the Southeast and Southwest. Working people have followed jobs, and retirees have followed the sunshine. Most urban growth has occurred in these areas as well. However, the crash in jobs and housing prices has hit hardest in these areas, and many are now losing population.

In the rest of the country, central cities have declined while suburbs surrounding them have grown. **Suburbs** are communities that develop outside of cities and that, historically, primarily provided housing rather than services or employment. Importantly, the middle class has disproportionately left the cities, so that increasingly cities are home to only the wealthy and the poor (Scott 2006). Urban poverty has sharply increased as jobs have moved to the suburbs, public transportation to the suburbs remains minimal, and the wealthy have driven up the cost of urban housing ("Out of Sight" 2000).

At the same time that central cities have been shrinking, nonurban areas have experienced some modest growth (Johnson 2003). Most of this growth, again, has occurred in Sunbelt states, especially in retirement destinations and in areas within a few hours' drive of a big city. But rising home prices, rising numbers of retirees,

Urbanization is the process of concentrating populations in cities.

Suburbs are communities (primarily residential) that develop outside of cities.

Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many New Orleans neighborhoods have lost homes. As a result, many families have moved from New Orleans to Houston and elsewhere, in a process known as *internal migration*.

and rising numbers of workers who can live anywhere there is an Internet connection have led to a small but growing migration to more distant towns in more varied places, like northern Michigan and Archer County, Texas (Fessenden 2006).

Because suburban and nonurban life is so dependent on automobile transportation, migration to the suburbs and beyond has increased air pollution. In addition, much of the geographic relocation of the U.S. population since 1970 has been to those regions of the country that are least able to withstand the ecological impact of a large population. In many areas of Florida, California, and the Southwest, the demand for water already outstrips the supply. As states argue over water rights, political tensions are likely to increase; within states, competition for access to water may increase conflict between agricultural and urban interests.

Fertility rates, mortality rates, and migration patterns in the United States provide clear examples of the interrelationships between population and social institutions. Social class, women's roles, and racial and ethnic relationships are all intimately connected to changes in population. One additional element of population that is especially important for social relationships is community size, an issue to which we now turn.

Urbanization

Most of our social institutions evolved in agrarian societies, where the vast bulk of the population lived and worked in the countryside. As late as 1850, only 2 percent of the world's population lived in cities of 100,000 or more (Davis 1973). Today, nearly a quarter of the world's population and more than two-thirds of the U.S. population live in cities larger than 100,000. (This population shift is illustrated in less-developed and more-developed countries in Figure 14.4 on the next page.) How did these cities develop, and what are they like?

Theories of Urban Growth and Decline

Structural-functionalist theorists and conflict theorists hold very different views of the sources, nature, and consequences of urban life. Structural functionalists emphasize

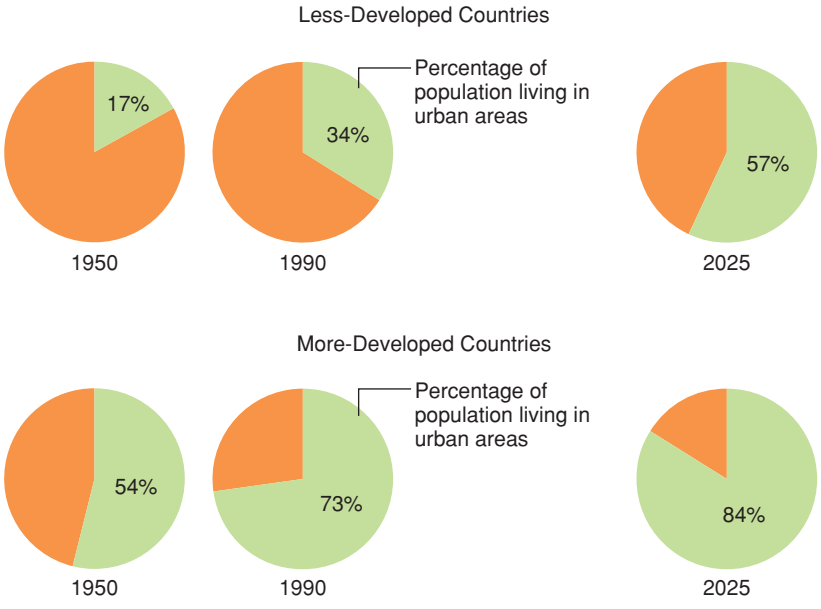


FIGURE 14.4 Urbanization Trends around the World
Urbanization is growing around the world. It is more common in the more-developed nations but is growing more rapidly in the less-developed nations.
SOURCE: Haub (1993).

the benefits of urban growth and decline, while conflict theorists emphasize the political struggles that undergird these changes.

Structural-Functional Theory: Urban Ecology

Early structural-functional sociologists, many of whom lived in the booming Chicago of the 1920s and 1930s, assumed that cities grew in predictable ways. Some argued that (like Chicago), cities naturally grew outward in concentric circles from central business districts (Burgess 1925). Others believed that cities grew in wedge-shaped sectors, along transit routes, or in other patterns (Hoyt 1939). All structural functionalists, however, agreed that healthy and natural competition between economic rivals would lead cities to grow in whatever ways offered the most efficient means for producing and distributing goods and services. More recently, structural functionalists have assumed that urban decline and the growth of suburbs similarly reflect natural progress toward superior and more efficient ways of organizing economic and social life.

Conflict Perspectives: White Flight and Government Subsidies

In contrast, conflict theorists note that no patterns of urban growth have yet been discovered that hold across time and across different locations. Thus they conclude that there is nothing natural about urban growth or decline. Rather, they argue, each city grows or declines in its own unique way, depending on the relative power of competing economic and political forces (Feagin & Parker 1990).

These competing forces appear to have played an important role in drawing middle-class Americans from cities during the last half century. Western culture has long held an anti-urban bias, assuming that rural life is "purer" than city life. This view gained strength during the early decades of the twentieth century, as first foreign immigrants and later African Americans moved in large numbers from the South to the cities of the Northeast and Midwest. These changes contributed greatly to white Americans' sense that the city was a dangerous place and encouraged middle- and

upper-class Americans to flee the cities, a process known as "white flight." In contrast, throughout most of the world, the upper classes live in central cities, and the poor are relegated to city outskirts and rural areas.

The abandonment of American cities was greatly assisted by government subsidies for **suburbanization**, the growth of suburbs (Goddard 1994; Moe & Wilkie 1997). Since the 1930s, federal and local governments have responded to pressure from auto manufacturers and suburban developers by steadily reducing financial support for public transit while tremendously expanding subsidies for auto manufacturing, highways, road maintenance, and the like. As a result, people found it increasingly difficult to live, work, shop, or travel in dense cities with limited parking and decaying transit systems. In addition, since the 1950s the government has provided inexpensive home mortgages (along with tax breaks) to suburbanites while routinely denying mortgages to city dwellers. During the 1960s and 1970s, the government implemented a catastrophic "urban renewal" program that placed highways in the middle of stable, urban neighborhoods (most of which were minority and poor or working class) and moved dislocated residents to poorly constructed, public, high-rise housing. Finally, in the last two decades, local suburban governments have used tax subsidies to entice corporations to relocate to the suburbs.

All these changes pressured middle-class Americans to move to the suburbs, further contributing to the decay of our cities (Moe & Wilkie 1997). Of course, many people gratefully left their urban homes for suburbia and relished the freedom automobiles promised. But many others only reluctantly exchanged their close-knit urban neighborhoods, where they could read the newspaper while riding the bus to work, for sprawling suburbs where high walls separate neighbor from neighbor and long, nerve-wracking drives to work are the norm.

The Nature of Modern Cities

From the Industrial Revolution to the present, the modern city has grown in size and changed considerably in character. We look here at the development of *industrial* and *postindustrial* cities.

The Industrial City

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, production moved from the countryside to the urban factory, and industrial cities, such as Boston, Detroit, and Pittsburgh, were born. These cities were mill towns, steel towns, shipbuilding towns, and, later, automobile-building towns; they were home to slaughterers, packagers, millers, processors, and fabricators. They were the product of new technologies, new forms of transportation, and vastly increased agricultural productivity that freed most workers from the land.

Fired by a tremendous growth in technology, the new industrial cities grew rapidly during the nineteenth century. In the United States, the urban population grew from 2 to 22 million in the half century between 1840 and 1890. In 1860, New York was the first U.S. city to reach 1 million in population. The industrial base that provided the impetus for city growth also gave the industrial city its character: tremendous density and a central business district.

DENSITY Until the middle of the twentieth century, most Americans walked to work—and everywhere else, for that matter. The result was dense crowding of working-class housing around manufacturing plants. Even in 1910, the average New Yorker

Suburbanization is the growth of suburbs.

Photo by Bentley Archive/Popperfoto/Getty Images

As this 1950s photo of Yorkshire, England shows, industrial cities are characterized by dense crowding of working-class housing around often-polluting manufacturing plants.

commuted only two blocks to work. Entire families shared a single room, and in major cities such as New York and London, dozens of people crowded into a single cellar or attic. The crowded conditions, accompanied by a lack of sewage treatment and clean water, fostered tuberculosis, epidemic diseases, and generally high mortality rates.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT The lack of transportation and communication facilities also contributed to another characteristic of the industrial city, the central business district. The central business district is a dense concentration of retail trade, banking and finance, and government offices, all clustered close together so messengers could run between offices and businesspeople could walk to meet one another. By 1880, most major cities had electric streetcars or railway systems to take traffic into and out of the city. Because most transit routes offered service only into and out of the central business district rather than providing crosstown routes, the earliest improvements over walking enhanced rather than decreased the importance of this district.

The Postindustrial City

The industrial city was a product of a manufacturing economy plus a relatively immobile labor force. Beginning about 1950, these conditions changed, and a new type of city began to grow. Among the factors prominent in shaping the character of the postindustrial city are the change from secondary to tertiary production and the greater ease of communication and transportation. These changes have led to the rise of urban sprawl and edge cities.

CHANGE FROM SECONDARY TO TERTIARY PRODUCTION As we noted in Chapter 13, the last decades have seen a tremendous expansion of jobs in tertiary production and the subsequent decline of jobs in secondary production. The manufacturing

plants that shaped the industrial city are disappearing. Many of those that remain have moved to the suburbs, where land is cheaper, and have taken working-class jobs, housing, and trade with them.

Instead of manufacturing, the contemporary central city is dominated by medical and educational complexes, information-processing industries, convention and entertainment centers, and administrative offices. These are the growth industries. They are also white-collar industries. These same industries, plus retail trade, also dominate the suburban economy.

EASIER COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION Development of telecommunications and good highways has greatly reduced the importance of physical location. The central business district of the industrial city was held together by the need for physical proximity. Once this need was eliminated, high land values and commuting costs led more and more businesses to locate on the periphery, where land was cheaper and housing more desirable. Many corporate headquarters moved from New York or Chicago all the way to Arizona or Texas.

A key factor in increasing individual mobility was the automobile. Without the automobile, workers and businesses could not have moved to the city periphery, and space-gobbling single-family homes would not have been built. In this sense, the automobile and the automotive industry have been the chief architect of U.S. cities since 1950.

URBAN SPRAWL AND EDGE CITIES These changes have led to the collapse of many central business districts. In their stead, urban sprawl and edge cities have emerged. Postindustrial cities, such as Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Miami, are much larger in geographical area than the industrial cities were. The average city in 1940 was probably less than 15 miles across; now many metropolitan areas are 50 to 75 miles across. No longer are the majority of people bound by subway and railway lines that only go back and forth to downtown. Retail trade is dominated by huge, climate-controlled, suburban malls. A great proportion of the retail and service labor force has also moved out to these suburban centers, and many of the people who live in the suburbs also work in them. Suburban areas that now have an existence largely separate from the cities that spawned them are known as **edge cities** (Garreau 1991).

Urbanization in the United States

What is considered urban in one century or nation is often rural in another. To impose some consistency in usage, the U.S. Bureau of the Census has replaced the common words *urban* and *rural* with two technical terms: *metropolitan* and *nonmetropolitan*.

A **metropolitan statistical area** is a term used by federal researchers to refer to a county that has a city of 50,000 or more in it *plus* any neighboring counties that are significantly linked, economically or socially, with the core county. Some metropolitan areas have only one county; others, such as New York, San Francisco, or Detroit, include half a dozen neighboring counties. In each case, the metropolitan area goes beyond the city limits and includes what is frequently referred to as, for example, the Greater New York area. A **nonmetropolitan statistical area** is a county that has neither a major city in it nor close ties to such a city.

Currently, 78 percent of the U.S. population lives in metropolitan areas. This metropolitan population is divided between those who live in the central city (within the actual city limits) and those who live in the surrounding suburban ring. More than half

Edge cities are suburban areas that now have an existence largely separate from the cities that spawned them.

A **metropolitan statistical area** is a county that has a city of 50,000 or more in it plus associated neighboring counties.

A **nonmetropolitan statistical area** is a county that has no major city in it and is not closely tied to such a city.

The suburbs are growing faster than rural or urban areas in the United States, and edge cities are growing faster than other cities.

Peter Menzel

of the metropolitan population live in the suburbs rather than in the central city itself. Although these people have access to a metropolitan way of life, they may live as far as 50 miles from the city center.

The nonmetropolitan population of the United States has shrunk to 22 percent of the U.S. population. Although there are nonmetropolitan counties in every state of the Union except New Jersey, the majority of the nonmetropolitan population lives in either the Midwest or the South. Only 5 percent are farmers, and many live in small towns rather than in purely rural areas.

Urbanization in the Less-Developed World

The growth of large cities and an urban way of life has occurred everywhere very recently; in the less- and least-developed nations, this growth is happening almost overnight. Mexico City, São Paulo, Bogotá, Seoul, Kinshasa, Karachi, Calcutta, and other cities in developing nations continue to grow rapidly. Their populations are likely to double in about a decade. The roads, the schools, and the sewers that used to be sufficient no longer are; neighborhoods triple their populations and change their character from year to year. These problems are similar to the problems that plagued Western societies at the onset of the Industrial Revolution, but on a much larger scale.

Urbanization in the less-developed world differs from that in the developed world, not only in pace but also in causes. First, more than half of the growth in developing cities is due to a high excess of births over deaths, rather than to migration from the countryside. Second, many of the large and growing cities in the less-developed world have never been industrial cities. They are government, trade, and administrative centers. More than one-third of the regular full-time jobs in Mexico City are government jobs. These cities offer few working-class jobs, and the growing populations of unskilled men and women become part of the informal economy—artisans, peddlers, bicycle renters, laundrywomen, and beggars.

Place of Residence and Social Relationships

Every year, new films and television shows depict the evils of city life, the boredom of suburbs, and the intolerance of small towns. How realistic are such images? This section explores the pleasures and perils of modern urban, suburban, and small-town life.

Urban Living

One of the primary questions raised by sociologists who study cities is the extent to which social relationships and the norms that govern them differ between rural and urban places. Here we look at sociological theories of urban life and research on the realities of urban living.

Theoretical Views

As we saw earlier, the Western world as a whole has an antiurban bias. Big cities are seen as haunts of iniquity and vice, corruptors of youth and health, and destroyers of family and community ties. City dwellers are characterized as sophisticated but artificial; rural people are characterized as unsophisticated but warm and sincere. This general antiurban bias (which has been around at least since the time of ancient Rome), coupled with the very real problems of the industrial city, had considerable influence on early sociologists.

The classic statement of the negative consequences of urban life for the individual and for social order was made by Louis Wirth in 1938. Wirth argued that the greater size, heterogeneity, and density of urban living necessarily led to a breakdown of the normative and moral fabric of everyday life.

Greater size means that many members of the community will be strangers to us. Wirth postulated that urban dwellers would still have primary ties but would keep their emotional distance from, for example, store clerks or strangers in a crowded elevator by developing a cool and calculating interpersonal style.

Wirth also believed that when faced with a welter of differing norms, the city dweller was apt to conclude that anything goes. Such an attitude, coupled with the lack of informal social control brought on by size, would lead to greater crime and deviance and a greater emphasis on formal controls.

Later theorists have had a more benign view of the city. Sociologists now suggest that individuals experience the city as a mosaic of small worlds that are manageable and knowable. Thus, the person who lives in New York City does not try to cope with 9 million people and 500 square miles of city; rather the individual's private world and primary ties are made up of family, a small neighborhood, and a small work group. In addition, sociologists point out, urban life provides the "critical mass" required for the development of tight-knit subcultures, from gays to symphony orchestra aficionados to rugby fans. Wirth might interpret some of these subcultures as evidence of a lack of moral integration of the community, but they can also be seen as private worlds within which individuals find cohesion and primary group support.

Realities of Urban Living

Does urban living offer more disadvantages or advantages? This section reviews the evidence about the effects of urban living on *social networks, neighborhood integration*, and *quality of life*.

Alan Chandler/Photo Library

Many people enjoy the excitement of city life.

SOCIAL NETWORKS The effects of urban living on personal integration are rather slight. Surveys asking about social networks show that urban people have as many intimate ties as rural people. There is a slight tendency for urban people to name fewer kin and more friends than rural people. The kin omitted from the urban lists are not parents, children, and siblings, however, but more distant relatives (Amato 1993). There is no evidence that urban people are disproportionately lonely, alienated, or estranged from family and friends.

NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRATION Empirical research generally reveals the neighborhood to be a very weak group. Most city dwellers, whether central city or suburban, find that city living has freed them from the necessity of liking the people they live next to and has given them the opportunity to select intimates on a basis other than physical proximity. This freedom is something that people in rural areas do not have. There is growing consensus among urban researchers that physical proximity is no longer a primary basis of intimacy (Flanagan 1993). Rather, people form intimate networks on the basis of kin, friendship, and work groups, and they keep in touch by telephone, e-mail, or instant messaging rather than by face-to-face communication. In short, urban people do have intimates, but they are unlikely to live near each other. When in trouble, they call on their good friends, parents, or adult children for help. In fact, one study of neighborhood interaction in Albany-Schenectady-Troy, New York, found that a substantial share—15 to 25 percent—of all interaction with neighbors was with *family* neighbors—parents or adult children who lived in the same neighborhood (Logan & Spitze 1994).

Neighbors are seldom strangers, however, and there are instances in which being nearby is more important than being emotionally close. When we are locked out of the house, need a teaspoon of vanilla, or want someone to accept a United Parcel Service package, we still rely on our neighbors (Wellman & Wortley 1990). Although we generally do not ask large favors of our neighbors and don't want them to rely heavily on us, most of us expect our neighbors to be good people who are willing to help in a pinch. This has much to do with the fact that neighborhoods are often segregated by social class and stage in the family life cycle. We trust our neighbors because they are people pretty much like us.

QUALITY OF LIFE Big cities are exciting places to live. People can choose from a wide variety of activities, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The bigger the city, the more it offers in the way of entertainment: libraries, museums, zoos, parks, concerts, and galleries. The quality of medical services and police and fire protection also increases with city size. These advantages offer important incentives for big-city living.

On the other hand, there are also disadvantages: more noise, more crowds, more expensive housing, and more crime. The rates of both violent crimes and personal crimes are considerably lower in rural areas than in either suburban areas or cities, and the largest cities have higher crime rates than do smaller cities (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2009). (On the other hand, methamphetamine use and associated crimes are now more common in rural areas than in suburban or urban areas, as this chapter's Focus on American Diversity box discusses.)

Because of these disadvantages, many people would rather live close to a big city than actually in it. For most Americans, the ideal is a large house on a spacious lot in

focus on  AMERICAN DIVERSITY

Methamphetamines in Rural America

Since the 1980s, poverty has increased in rural America. Small family farms have been bought by large corporations, and rural mines and manufacturing plants have closed. As a result, rural areas have lost stores, services, and population, with better-educated and younger people especially likely to move to cities.

This shift has contributed to a stunning rise in the use of illegal methamphetamine ("meth") in rural America, especially among working-class white youths (Grant et al. 2007; Van Gundy 2006; NIDA Research Report 2006). Like other amphetamines, meth is a highly addictive stimulant. Users experience very pleasurable sensations that last only briefly, leading some to take the drug repeatedly—sometimes without stopping to eat or sleep. Long-term use can result in anxiety, insomnia, violence, paranoia, hallucinations, and possibly brain damage (NIDA Research Report 2006).

Meth use is now considerably more common in rural America than in other areas, even when we look only at poor people in these different areas. Meth labs, too, are most common in rural areas, which offer both the basic ingredients (such as fertilizer) needed to produce the drug and abandoned buildings on deserted roads to serve as labs. Meth production raises the risks for rural areas, since producing one pound of meth releases five pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment (NIDA Research Report 2006). Moreover, in untrained hands meth production can easily lead to dangerous explosions that can harm anyone in the vicinity.

Unfortunately, it's particularly difficult for rural methamphetamine users to obtain treatment (NIDA Research Report 2006). Many rural communities have neither substance abuse treatment facilities nor support groups like Narcotics Anonymous. At any rate, many rural dwellers cannot afford to pay for treatment or even to pay for transportation to treatment facilities. In addition, many steer away from treatment due to fears of stigma—a realistic concern in small, conservative communities where everyone knows everyone else's business.

To deal with the rural meth epidemic, we will need to address both the underlying social problems that lead to drug use and the lack of social and medical services in rural America.

the suburbs, but close enough to a big city that they can spend an evening or afternoon there. Some groups, however, prefer big-city living, in particular, childless people who work downtown. Many of these people are decidedly pro-urban and relish the entertainment and diversity that the city offers. Because of their affluence and childlessness, they can afford to ignore many of the disadvantages of city living.

Sociological attention has been captured by cities such as Manhattan and San Francisco with their bright lights, ethnic diversity, and crowding. Nevertheless, only one-quarter of our population actually lives in these big-city centers. The rest live in suburbs and small towns. How does their experience differ?

Suburban Living

The classic picture of a suburb is a development of very similar single-family detached homes on individual lots. This low-density housing pattern is the lifestyle to which a majority of people in the United States aspire; it provides room for dogs, children, and barbecues. This is the classic picture of suburbia. How has it changed?

The Growth of the Suburbs

The suburbs are no longer bedroom communities that daily send all their adults elsewhere to work. They are increasingly major manufacturing and retail trade centers. Most people who live in the suburbs work in the suburbs. Thus, many close-in suburban areas have become densely populated and substantially interlaced with retail trade centers, highways, and manufacturing plants.

These changes have altered the character of the suburbs. Suburban lots have become smaller, and neighborhoods of townhouses, duplexes, and apartment buildings

have begun to appear. Childless couples, single people, and retired couples are seen in greater numbers. Suburbia has become more crowded and less dominated by the minivan set.

With expansion, suburbia has become more diverse. Although each suburban neighborhood tends to have its own style, stemming in large part from each development including houses of similar size and price, there are a wide variety of styles. In addition to classic suburban neighborhoods, there are now areas of spacious mini-estate suburbs where people ride horses and lawn mowers, as well as dense suburbs of duplexes, townhouses, and apartment buildings. Some of the first suburbs, which were built after World War II, are now more than 50 years old. Because people tend to age in place, these suburbs are often characterized by retirees living on declining incomes (Lambert & Santos 2006). Many houses are becoming run-down, and renting is becoming increasingly common.

Suburban Problems

Many of the people who moved to suburbia did so to escape urban problems: They were looking for lower crime rates, less traffic, less crowding, and lower tax rates. The growth of the suburbs, however, has brought its own problems (Langdon 1994). Three of the most important are weak governments, car dependence, and social isolation and alienation.

The county and municipal governments of suburban towns and cities are fragmented and relatively powerless. One result of this is the very haphazard suburban growth associated with weak and inadequate zoning authority. In addition, because there is rarely any governmental body that has the power to make decisions for a city and its suburbs as a whole, it is nearly impossible to coordinate decisions across a metropolitan region. This means, for example, that if one suburb or city decides to ban smoking in restaurants, business will simply move to the next suburb.

The lack of regional planning is particularly important when it comes to transportation. Without effective regional decision making, it is difficult to develop effective mass transit systems or even highways. This leaves suburban dwellers in the lurch, since most commute from suburb to suburb or suburb to city. It also makes suburban dwellers even more dependent than others on automobiles. People who don't have cars are basically excluded from the suburban lifestyle and from jobs in either suburb or city. If you can't afford a car or can't drive one due to disability, aging, or youth, your quality of life in suburbia plummets.

Long commutes leave individuals with little time to socialize with co-workers after work or with neighbors and family once they arrive home. In addition, suburban zoning laws that forbid businesses such as cafes, beauty parlors, and taverns in residential neighborhoods deprive people of the natural gathering places that foster social relationships and a sense of community. Similarly, suburban houses with high fences and no front porches make it nearly impossible for neighbors to meet informally (Oldenburg 1997). When people live in one community and work in another, they may end up feeling alienated from both.

Small-Town and Rural Living

Approximately 25 percent of the nation's population lives in rural areas or small towns (less than 2,500 people). Some live within the orbit of a major metropolitan area, but most live in nonmetropolitan areas, from Maine to Alabama, California to Florida. These areas vary greatly and include everything from millionaire second-home towns like Telluride, Colorado, to dying farm or mill towns in Kansas or Maine, flourishing

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Suburbs are intensely car dependent. As suburbs have grown, so have traffic jams and long commutes.

Amish communities in Pennsylvania, and booming Nebraska poultry processing towns. Some rural areas are overwhelmingly white, some are overwhelmingly African American, and a growing number have substantial Hispanic populations.

Across the board, people find rural and small-town living attractive for a number of reasons (Brown & Swanson 2003). It offers lots of open space, low property taxes, and affordable housing (except in vacation areas). There's much less worry about crime and drugs, although alcohol and methamphetamine abuse are actually most common in rural areas. Many also appreciate the more conservative views on politics, premarital sex, religion, and the like that typify nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, community ties remain strong in the small minority of rural towns still characterized by deep family roots, family-run farms, civically engaged churches, and small rather than large manufacturing plants, and both children and adults benefit from the neighborliness and community sentiment. In a city, you might find a bar like Cheers "where everybody knows your name." In a rural area, practically everyone does.

Although young people who grow up in nonmetropolitan areas often must leave to get an education or a job, these areas continue to grow (Johnson 2003). Most of this growth, however, is in "recreational" areas that attract second-home owners and retirees, areas near large cities that attract long-distance commuters, and areas with large-scale food manufacturing plants (meat packing, canning, and so on).

The major problem with rural life is the dearth of jobs, especially well-paying jobs with benefits (Jensen, McLaughlin, & Slack 2003). Family farms have all but disappeared, driven out of business by global competition or bought out by huge agribusinesses (the only ones with the money and power to compete in this global market). Only 5 percent of nonmetropolitan dwellers still work in agriculture, while the majority now work in low-wage service jobs in prisons, casinos, fast-food restaurants, and the like (McGranahan 2003). Because of these problems, many nonmetropolitan

Jeff Morgan tourism and leisure/Alamy

In the most desirable rural areas, well-paying jobs are scarce and housing is expensive. As a result, many rural families must live in inexpensive manufactured homes.

dwellers must endure long commutes to jobs in distant metropolitan areas. Stress over low wages, underemployment, and unemployment coupled with the physical stresses of the available work, lack of social resources, and limited access to health care combine to leave nonmetropolitan residents, on average, in somewhat poorer physical and mental health than urban or suburban residents (Morton 2003).

In addition, nonmetropolitan areas that have experienced inflows of "city people" are experiencing new strains due to growing stratification: The economic and cultural differences between the upper and lower ends of the population are far greater than in the past (Brown & Swanson 2003). Forty years ago, ski resort owners and ski resort workers all lived in Telluride, if in different conditions. Now, resort owners and their clients live in luxury homes in or near the center of town, while most workers can only afford to live far from town in "rural ghettoes" of mobile homes and concentrated poverty. This stratification is particularly hard on schoolchildren, who find themselves increasingly marginalized and stigmatized by teachers and wealthier children whose expectations for clothing, vacations, and academic preparation cannot be met by poorer children. In sum, although life in small towns and rural areas still brings benefits, it can bring high costs as well.

Where This Leaves Us

There's no question about it: Numbers matter. As the world's population grows—and, in places, shrinks—all of us are affected. Population growth in the United States has enormous consequences for the environment because of the huge amounts of natural resources Americans use. Population growth in the less-developed nations is especially important because it not only stems from poverty but also produces even more poverty. Meanwhile, population loss in Europe leaves nations grappling with problems brought on by having too few young people compared with the number of old people.

The problems of population growth are intimately connected to the problems of urbanization—and suburbanization. Cities emerged with the rise in industrialization, a process that is still continuing in the developing nations. In turn, problems with urban life, accentuated by various social policies, have stimulated the growth of suburbs and "edge cities." Each of these environments offers its own dangers and its own rewards.

Summary

1. For most of human history, fertility rates and mortality rates were about equal, and the population grew slowly or not at all. Childbearing was a lifelong task for most women, and death was a frequent visitor to most households, claiming one-quarter to one-third of all infants in the first year of life.
2. The demographic transition—the decline in mortality and fertility rates—developed over a long period in the West. Mortality rates declined because of better nutrition, an improved standard of living, improved public sanitation, and to a much more limited extent, modern medicine. Somewhat later, changes in social structure associated with industrialization caused fertility rates to decline. In the developing nations, mortality rates have declined rapidly, and fertility rates are only slowly declining in response.
3. Social structure, fertility rates, and mortality rates are interdependent; changes in one affect the others. Among the most important causes and consequences of high fertility rates is the low status of women.
4. The fertility rate in a society is directly linked to the costs and rewards of childbearing. In traditional societies, such as Ghana, most social structures (the economy and women's roles, for example) support high fertility rates. In many modern societies, such as Italy and the United States, social structure imposes many costs on parents.
5. When a nation's fertility rate declines, the nation faces several problems. Among these are labor-force shortages, difficulties in funding health and pension benefits for a burgeoning number of older people, and nationalistic fears over growing numbers of foreign workers.
6. Population growth is an important cause of environmental devastation in the less-developed world but not in the developed world (where most environmental resources are used). Although population growth does contribute to poverty in the less-developed world, other factors are much stronger causes of poverty.
7. In the United States, life expectancy is high and continues to increase. Childlessness is increasing and fertility is near the zero population growth level. Because of high immigration rates, however, the U.S. population is unlikely to decline. Because many of the new Americans are Asian and Latino, the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population is likely to change substantially. Immigration has not taken jobs from U.S. citizens but may have reduced wages among the least-educated native-born Americans.
8. Since the 1970s, central cities in most of the nation have shrunk, and urban poverty has increased. Meanwhile, suburban towns and cities have grown significantly, and nonurban areas have experienced modest growth. This movement to suburbia and to nonurban locations raises serious environmental questions. Across categories—urban, suburban, and nonurban—the Sunbelt states have seen the most growth.
9. Structural functionalists argue that cities grow and decline in predictable and natural ways, reflecting the most efficient means for producing and distributing goods and services. Conflict theorists, on the other hand, argue that city growth and decline reflect the outcomes of economic and political struggles between competing groups. Government subsidies played a major role in the twentieth-century growth of suburbs and decline of central cities.
10. The industrial city has high density and a central-city business district. The postindustrial city reflects the shift to tertiary production and increased ease in communication and transportation and is characterized by lower density and urban sprawl.
11. Urbanization is continuing rapidly in the less-developed world; many of its large cities will double in size in a decade. This urban growth is less the result of industrialization than of high urban fertility.
12. There are competing theories about the consequences of urban living. Wirth's theory suggests that urban living

will lead to nonconformity and indifference to others. Other theorists suggest that the size of the city is managed through small groups and allows for the development of unconventional subcultures.

13. Urban living is associated with less reliance on neighbors and kin and more reliance on friends, with greater risk of crime.
14. Suburban living has become more diverse. Retail trade and manufacturing have moved to the suburbs, and the suburbs are now more densely populated, more congested, and less dominated by the minivan set. Suburban living has its own problems, including weak governments, transportation problems, and social isolation and alienation.
15. Among the benefits of small-town and rural living are less crime, stronger community ties, more open spaces, and more affordable housing (except in vacation areas). The most serious problem is the dearth of well-paying jobs with benefits, which results in somewhat poorer physical and mental health.

Thinking Critically

1. Unless you are much older than most college students, your generation is considerably smaller than your parents' generation. How will this affect you? Consider the impact on you now, as your parents and their generation retire, and as you approach retirement. Think about both personal finances and resources and government programs and spending.
2. How is dormitory life similar to urban living? similar to small-town living?
3. Make a list of the environmental resources you use in a day. Consider "natural" products, such as oranges, as well as manufactured products, such as computers. How would your list compare with that of someone in a developing nation?
4. What would the United States be like if all immigration ceased? What would be the benefits? the disadvantages?

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