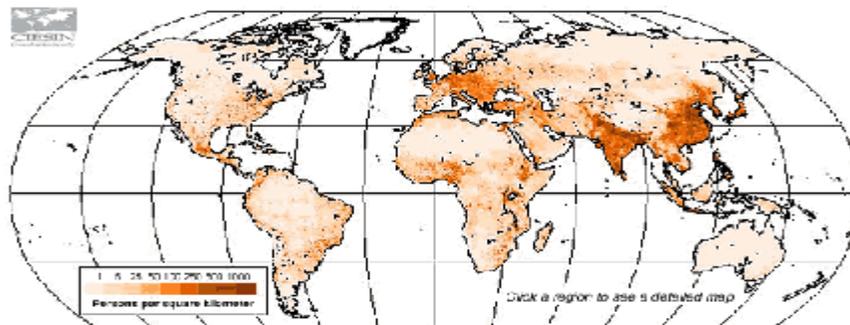


Population Distribution

Population distribution means the pattern of where people live. World population distribution is uneven. Places which are **sparsely** populated contain few people. Places which are **densely** populated contain many people. Sparsely populated places tend to be difficult places to live. These are usually places with hostile environments e.g. Antarctica. Places which are densely populated are habitable environments e.g. Europe.

Population Density

Population density is a measurement of the number of people in an area. It is an average number. Population density is calculated by dividing the number of people by area. Population density is usually shown as the number of people per square kilometer. The map below is a choropleth (shading) map and illustrates population density. The darker the colour the greater the population density.



Source: Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network
Page URL: <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/plue/gpw/index.html?main.html&2>

The map above shows that world population distribution is uneven. Some areas have a high population density while others have a low population density. Areas of high population density tend to be located between 20° and 60°N. This area contains a large land area and a relatively temperate climate.

Factors Affecting Population Density

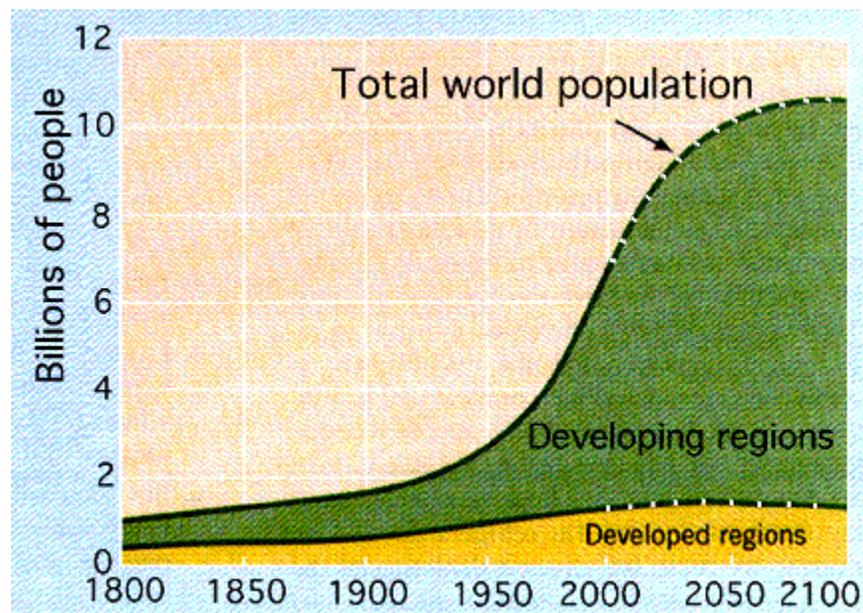
There are a range of **human** and **natural** factors that affect population density. The tables below illustrate this.

Physical Factors	High Density	Low Density
Relief (shape and height of land)	Low land which is flat e.g. Ganges Valley in India	High land that is mountainous e.g. Himalayas
Resources	Areas rich in resources (e.g. coal, oil, wood, fishing etc.) tend to be densely populated e.g. Western Europe	Areas with few resources tend to be sparsely populated e.g. The Sahel
Climate	Areas with temperate climates tend to be densely populated as there is enough rain and heat to grow crops e.g. UK	Areas with extreme climates of hot and cold tend to be sparsely populated e.g. the Sahara Desert

Human Factors	High Density	Low Density
Political	Countries with stable governments tend to have a high population density e.g. Singapore	Unstable countries tend to have lower population densities as people migrate e.g. Afghanistan.
Social	Groups of people want to live close to each other for security e.g. USA	Other groups of people prefer to be isolated e.g. Scandinavians
Economic	Good job opportunities encourage high population densities, particularly in large cities in MEDCs and LEDCs around the world.	Limited job opportunities cause some areas to be sparsely populated e.g. Amazon Rainforest

Population Change

The world's population is growing very rapidly. In **1820** the world's population reached **1 billion**. In **1990** it reached **6 billion** people.



This rapid growth in population has been called a **population explosion**.

The major reason for population changes, whether in an individual country or for the whole world, is the change in birth and death rates. The **birth rate** is the number of live babies born in a year for every 1000 people in the total population. **Death rates** are number of people dying per 1000 people. When birth rates are higher than death rates the population of an area will increase.

Over the past 150 years improvements in **health care** and **sanitation** around the world have led to a drop in the death rate. While birth rates have dropped in MEDCs, birth rates are still high in LEDCs. Therefore the number of people in the world has grown rapidly.

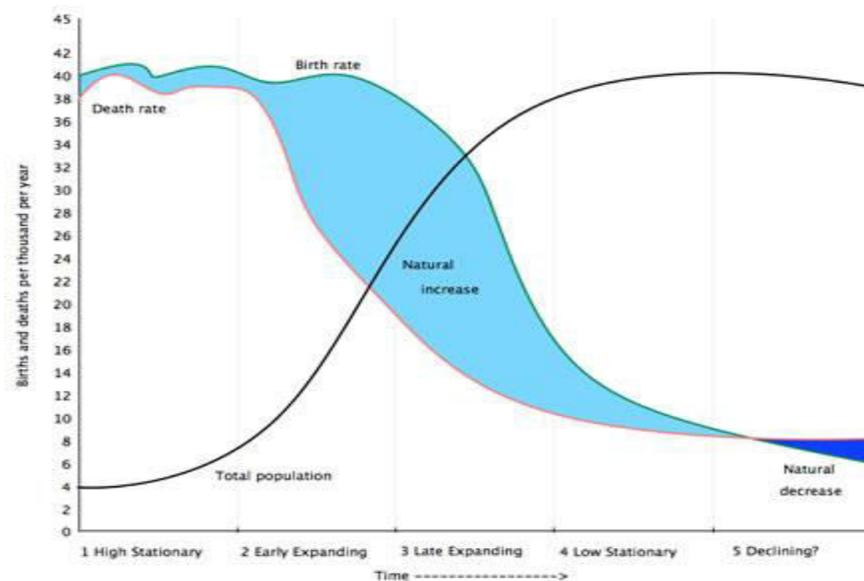
Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is the average age a person can expect to live to in a particular area. Life expectancy can be used as an indicator of the overall 'health' of a country. From this figure you can determine many features of a country e.g. standard of living. As a general rule the higher the life expectancy the more healthy (or developed) a country is.

The Demographic Transition Model

The **Demographic Transition Model** attempts to show how population changes as a country develops.

The model is divided into four stages.



Stage 1

Birth rate and death rate are high - low natural increase - low total population

Stage 2

Birth rate is high - death rate is falling - high natural increase (population growth)

Stage 3

Falling birth rate - low death rate - high natural increase (population growth)

Stage 4

Birth rate and death rate is low - low natural increase - high total population

The Demographic Transition Model does not take into account migration.

Population Structure / Population Pyramids

The population structure for an area shows the number of males and females within different age groups in the population. This information is displayed as an age-sex or population pyramid. Population pyramids of LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries) typically have a wide base and a narrow top. This represents a high birth rate and high death rate. Population pyramids of MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries) typically have a roughly equal distribution of population throughout the age groups. The top obviously gets narrower as a result of deaths. Population pyramids are used to show the structure of the population according to age and sex.