

Population pressure

- Environmental health (9) on 20th Nov. 2014
- Key concepts
 - Fertility rates are falling in some regions, global population still grows, especially in poor countries
 - Global population is becoming increasingly urban
 - Population growth with affluence/technology (using resource) exerts pressures on natural resources and ecosystem integrity
 - Ecological footprint is to measure impact of population and resource use on the ecosystem
 - Carrying capacity = No. people who an ecosystem or the entire Earth can support
 - Limiting population growth and reducing per capita resource use contribute to environmental health

Population and resource use are divergent

- Current world population ~ 7.275 billion (19 Nov 2014)
<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>
- Fertility declines in virtually every region of the world
 - * Rapid in Europe, Asia, North America "birth dearth"
 - * Africa's fertility drops due to HIV/AIDS (40 million people are HIV positive, 75% of them live in sub-Saharan), but the drop is attenuated due to international programs incl. UNAIDS
- Annual population growth ~ 78 million {UN-DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Population Division (2009) report}
- Projection: 8 billion by 2025, 9.1 billion by 2050
- 99% of the growth occurs in the world's poor, developing countries (sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, South Asia).
- 90% of 1.2 billion teenagers live in developing countries

Measuring population impact

- Malthus T (1803): Human populations have a tendency to increase exponentially, unless limited by starvation, disease or fertility limitation policies, but agriculture only increased its productivity in linear fashion, resulting in famines
- Neo-malthusians: Population is a driver of negative environmental changes
- Boserup E (1965): Population growth is the force stimulating technological change and intensification. Increases of population density resulted in land scarcity, which triggered agricultural intensification through application of improved technology (e.g. better tools, irrigation, terracing, shortening of fallows)
- Ehrlich PR, Holdren JP (1971): Developing countries have large impact on environment due to rapid population growth, developed countries do so due to high affluence and technology level.
 - * Impact = Population x Affluence x Technology (I=PAT)
 - see, Ehrlich PR, Ehrlich AH (1990) The Population Explosion, Touchstone, too.

Population and urbanization

- World is in the middle of urban revolution
- More than 50% of global population live in urban area (2008) -> 60% by 2030
UN-DESA forecast: 3.3 (2007) -> 6.4 (2050) billion
- Big cities in Africa are growing at 4% per year
It will be double within 20 years
- Infrastructure of most cities in developing countries cannot keep pace with such rapid/continuous urban growth
- Urban growth <- fleeing collapsing rural economies, lack of rural infrastructure/services, landlessness, lack of rural employment opportunities (push factors)

Population and environment

- Ecological Footprint
 - (Wackernagel and Rees, 1997) A measure of how much area of biologically productive land and water an individual, population or activity requires to produce all the resources it consumes and to absorb the waste it generates using prevailing technology and resource management practices.
 - Usually measured in global hectares. Because trade is global, an individual or country's Footprint includes land or sea from all over the world.
- Carrying Capacity
 - The number of people the Earth (or specified region) can support. Estimates depend on what's included and how it's measured
 - vegetarian diet with 2500 kcal/day -> 40 billion, meat diets -> 10 billion, if developing population live at the standard of developed, 2 billion

Population-Environment Scoreboard

- "Earth Summit" (at Rio de Janeiro, 1992)
 - * Rio+5 (UN General Assembly, 1997)
 - * Rio+20 (UN Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012)
- Poverty had increased, partly due to population growth
- Situation of environments
 - Arable Land: Degraded, Small scale farmers cannot produce enough food to feed their families
 - Freshwater: Growing populations place pressure on freshwater supplies. In 1995, 2.3 billion lived in water stressed areas. Chronic water shortages will be the most limiting factor on future economic development
 - Oceans
 - Forests
 - Biodiversity

Poverty

- Rapid, unsustainable population growth = a principal contributor to poverty
- 1/4 - 1/5 of Earth's people live in extreme poverty (spend less than \$1.25/day)
- Lower fertility and slower population growth have not brought an improved living standard for the average person. In 1980, about 2.5 billion people lived in less than \$2 per day.
- Extreme poverty decreased during recent decades (from 1.9 billion in 1981 to 1.8 billion in 1990, 1.4 billion in 2005) partly due to MDG1

Environmental Distress Syndrome

- Population pressure and excessive resource use threatens the health of the environment
- Deteriorating environmental conditions and concomitant threats to human health
- Five symptoms
 - Reemerging/Emerging infectious diseases
 - Loss of biodiversity
 - Growing dominance of generalist species
 - Declines of pollinators are intrinsic to the propagation of flowering plants.
 - Proliferation of harmful algal blooms along the world's coastlines -> outbreaks?