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 ANSWERS

1. Demography (from prefix demo-from Ancient Greek demos meaning the people”, and graphy from grapho , writing, description or measurement”) is the statistical study of populations, especially human beings.

Demographic analysis can cover whole societies or groups defined by criteria such as education, nationality, religion, and ethnicity. Educational institutions usually treat demography as a field of sociology, though there are number of independent demography departments. Based on the demographic research of the earth, earth’s population up to the year 2050 and 2100 can be estimated by demographers.

Formal demography limits its object of study to the measurement of population processes, while the broader field of social demography or population studies also analyses the relationships between economic, social, cultural, and biological processes influencing a population.

1. The Malthusian theory of population is a theory of exponential population growth and arithmetic food supply growth. Thomas Robert Malthus, an English cleric and scholar, published this theory in his 1798 writings, an essay on the principle of population.

Malthus believed that through preventative checks and positive checks, the population would be controlled to balance the food supply with the population level. These checks would lead to the Malthusian catastrophe.

MALTHUSIAN THEORY OF POPULATION

1. Population and food supply: Thomas Malthus theorized that populations grew in geometric progression. A geometric progression is a sequence of numbers where each term after the first is found by multiplying the previous one by a fixed, non-zero number called the common ratio. For example, in the sequence 2, 10, 50, 250, 1250, the common ration is 5.

Additionally, he stated that food production increases in arithmetic progression. An arithmetic progression is a sequence of numbers such that the difference between the consecutive terms is constant. For example, in series 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, the common difference of 3. He derived this conclusion due to the law of diminishing returns.

From this we can conclude that populations will grow faster than the supply of food. This exponential population growth will lead to a shortage of food.

1. Population control: Malthus then argued that because there will be a higher population than the availability of food, many people will die from the shortage of food. He theorized that this correction would take place in the form of positive checks (or natural checks) and preventative checks. These checks would lead to the Malthusian catastrophe, which would bring the population level back to a sustainable level.
2. Positive checks or natural checks: he believed that natural forces would correct the imbalance between food supply and population growth in the form of natural disasters such as food and earthquakes and human-made actions such as wars and famines.
3. Preventive checks: to correct the imbalance, Malthus also suggested using preventative measures to control the growth of the population. These measures include family planning, late marriages, and celibacy.

MALTHUSIAN TRAP

The Malthusian trap is the idea that higher levels of food production created by more advanced agricultural techniques create higher population levels, which then lead to food shortage because the higher population needs to live on land that would have previously used to grow crops.

Even as technological advancement would normally lead to percapita income gains, theorizes Malthus, these gains are not achieved because in practice the advancement also creates population growth. Once the population exceeds what food supplies can support, this supposedly creates a Malthusian crisis with widespread famine as well as rampant disease. This ends up decreasing the population to earlier levels.

The reality, however, has been that population growth has not itself created the crisis that Malthus predicted. We will discuss the ways in which the Malthusian trap has been disproven in the following section.

CRITICISMS OF THE MALTHUSIAN THEORY OF POPULATION

1. Population growth
2. Food production
3. Global trade
4. Calculations