27. Population – distribution, density and growth

Demography = science studying population (distribution, density, structure, etc.)

Population distribution refers to where people live. The ability to support (feed) a population ⇔ areas with resources can feed people, those without cannot.

- 75% of the world´s population live within 1000 km of the sea
- 85% of the world´s population live in areas less than 500 m high
- 85% live between latitudes 68°N and 20°N
- <10% live in southern hemisphere

The most favoured locations:

- fertile river valleys (Nile, Ganges, Yangtze)
- regular supply of water
- not too extreme climate
- good communications
- raw material reserves

Disadvantaged areas:

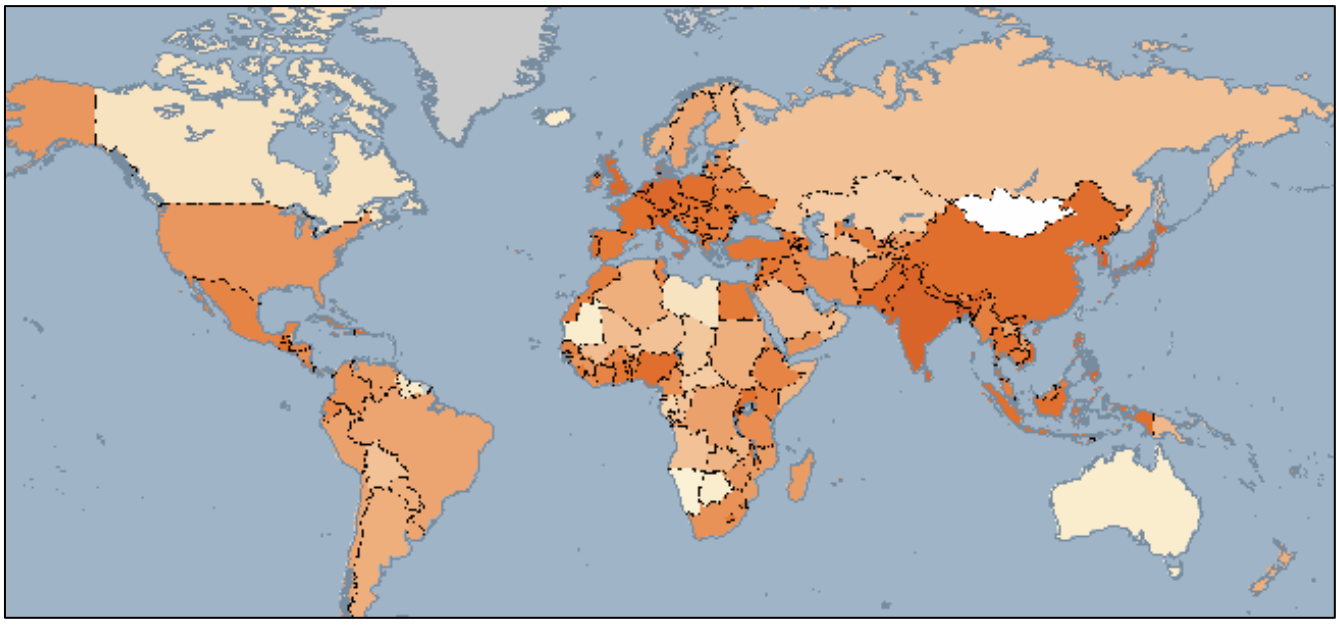
- deserts (too dry)
- mountains (too steep)
- high latitudes (too cold)
- rainforests (too infertile)

Population density (Figure 1)
= the number of people living in a given area (inh./km^2).
= influenced by the same factors as distribution
3 major regions of high population density (>200 inh./km^2):

a) SE Asia
b) NE USA
c) W Europe

Smaller areas = California, Nile valley, Java, Mexican plateau, SE Brazil

Figure 1: Population density in the world



Population growth (Figure 2)
= country's annual population increase or decrease.
% = difference between total live births and total deaths for the year => reflects reproductive health and the status of birth control in a country's population

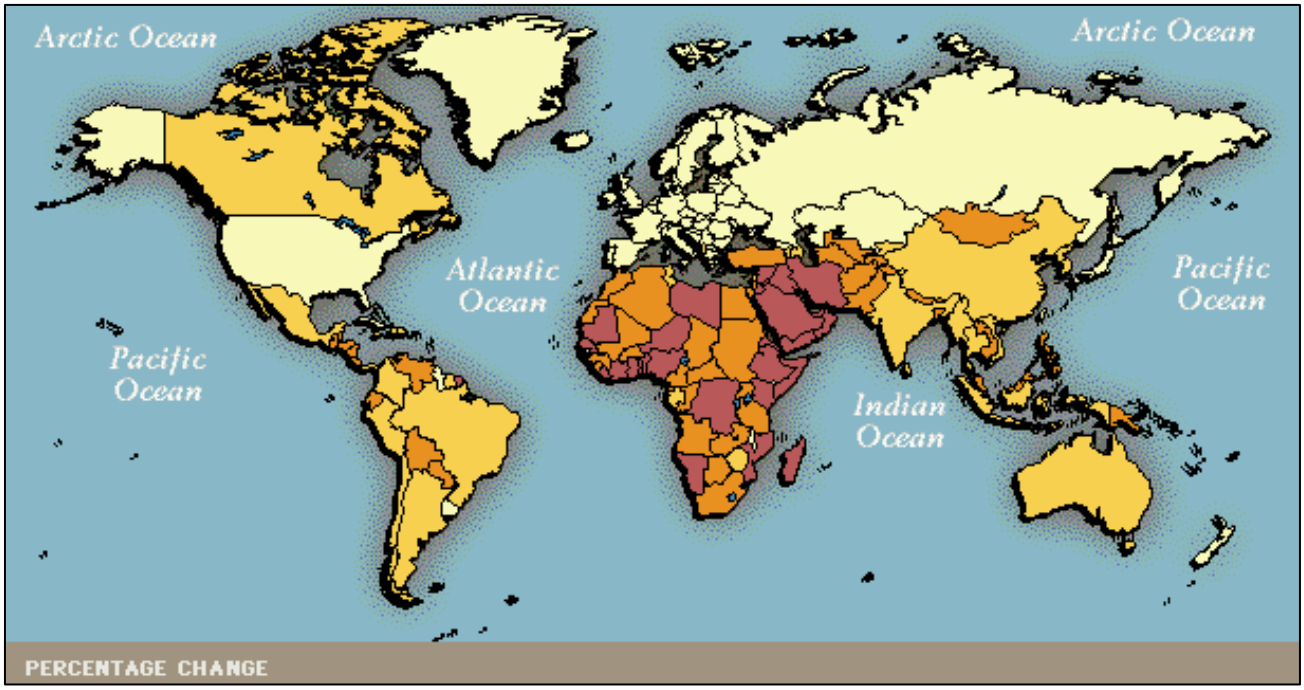
The world´s population doubled between:

- 1650 and 1850
- 1850 and 1920
- 1920 and 1970

95% of population growth = economically LDCs => overpopulation => increased risk of famine and malnutrition, differences between richer and poorer countries => demographic time bomb.

Will the natural resources of the planet be able to feed all the population?

Figure 2: Population growth in the world



Keywords
population distribution, population density, population growth, fertile lowlands, population increase/decrease, overpopulation