

## Overpopulation

The topic is overpopulation; it is widely studied in geography at A-level and undergraduate level. Overpopulation is the state that the planet is in when the human population rises to an extent exceeding the capacity of the resources the earth has. Overpopulation could be seen as bad because there are too many people for the amount of food, materials and space available. This meaning, some people will have nowhere to go, and it could cause many problems. Overpopulation could be prevented by the use of many ideas thought about, and many theories considered. Overpopulation could lead to the scarcity of food and unemployment, causing large scale poverty.

A rapidly growing population brings challenges such as, more food needed to be supplied to support the fast-growing population. The key topics of overpopulation are Malthus' theory of overpopulation and Hardin's idea of the "Tragedy of the Commons". Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) was an English economist who outlined his theory in his "1798 book of an essay, on the principle of population". Malthus' theory is that the human population will grow more rapidly than the food supply available, until war or disease reduces the population. His view was that he believed the human population had risen over the past few decades. Malthus identified two primary types of reasons he believed he could keep the population down; these are Preventative checks and positive checks. Preventative checks he believed could work were, to reduce the birth rate and control the population growth such as delayed marriage, contraception and family planning education.

The positive checks are the things that could naturally reduce the population growth such as diseases like cholera, smallpox and other illnesses that can spread and cause deaths. Also, famine which is the lack of food at a certain time due to crop failure or poor agriculture. The most vulnerable such as the elderly, children and those with weakens immune systems would be most affected. In modern times Malthus' theory has been criticised even though the theory proved somewhat true, it is not acceptable now.

Hardin's theory, "Tragedy of the Commons" (1968) explains that when people have access to a finite resource, they will continuously overuse it until it is eventually destroyed. An example of Hardin's theory is Deforestation, when forests are not privately owned, people have the idea to clear land for farming or logging. This can lead to habitat loss and water quality problems. Another example of the "Tragedy of the Commons" is Overfishing. This is when fishermen have the incentive to catch as many fish as possible, which can lead to the loss of fish population, for example the world's bluefin tuna stock has declined nearly 90% since the 1970's. A final example of Hardin's theory is Pollution, this is when households and companies dump their waste into the water. This can lead to the water not being able to clean itself, resulting in water that could be toxic to wildlife and the people that use and rely on it. One solution to prevent the tragedy of the commons is Preventing Overconsumption.

Overconsumption is the excessive use of goods and services that can cause harm or effects. To prevent overconsumption, for example could be when farmers let cattle graze, they can divide the available land into sections to allow for sustainability. This shows two key topics on the argument of overpopulation and the opinions of what people thought.

In conclusion from this course of Geography and researching the topic of overpopulation, I believe it would be something I would consider to study at university. I feel it is quite an interesting subject on how people's opinions have changed over time. The topic of research is something that is studied in Geography and has a big Impact on the world and its effects. I believe it would be useful to study, and it would be something that I would enjoy learning about.