The demographic transition model essay sample

The Demographic transition model (DTM) is a model used to explain the process of shift from high birth rates and high death rates to low birth rates and low death rates as part of the economic development of a country from a pre-industrial to an industrialized economy. It is based on an interpretation begun in 1929 by the American demographer Warren Thompson of prior observed changes, or transitions, in birth and death rates in industrialized societies over the past two hundred years.

Most developed countries are beyond stage three of the model; the majority of developing countries are in stage 2 or stage 3. The model was based on the changes seen in Europe so these countries follow the DTM relatively well. Many developing countries have moved into stage 3. The major exceptions are poor countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and some Middle Eastern countries, or countries affected by government policy or civil strife, notably Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Yemen and Afghanistan.

Strengths of the DTM

The DTM has many good factors. For example, it is universal in concept. It can be applied to all countries in the world. You are able to see, that many other countries in Europe and North America went through similar stages as they industrialised. Some newly industrialised countries (NICs) such as Singapore and South Korea also seemed to go through similar stages, but faster than countries like Britain had done, which I will examine in my essay later.

The model helps to explain what has happened and why it has happened in that particular sequence, because it is also easy to understand. Furthermore

it enables comparisons to be made demographically between countries. In addition, it provides a starting point for the study of demographically change over time. The model's timescales are flexible and to sum up, it is very dynamic, showing changes through time.

The DTM of the UK

The UK went in the last 300 years through five stages of the DTM. Reliable estimates and census returns go back further for the UK than for any other country. I want to explain those stages now a little bit further:

Stage 1: The death rates fluctuated up until about 1740. In years of plenty the death rate fell, rising again in periods of scarcity, missing hygiene and cheap gin drinking. It also rose when epidemics of illness struck and no medical science was there. In addition there was uncertain food supply. The birth rate stayed high to compensate for the high death rate. There was no birth control or family planning, and many children were needed to work on the land and support their parents in old age. But there was also such a high birth rate, because so many children died in infancy that parents tend

Tanja Dördelmann Geography Year 12 Page 2

to produce more in the hope that several will survive. Both rates were about 35 per 1000.

Stage 2: The UK went through the second stage from 1760 till 1880. The birth rates remained high, but death rates fall rapidly to about 20 per 1000 people. The medical care were improved, there were now vaccinations, hospitals and doctors. The supply of improves sanitation, water and food

production improved in quality and quantity. Transports to move to the doctors and to the foods were also provided. Furthermore the child mortality decreased between 1770 and 1870. In the 1870s Anne Besant published brochures advocating birth control. Compulsory education and factory reforms after 1870 made employment of children much more difficult. All this resulted in a big population growth.

Stage 3: The late expanding in the UK of the third stage happened from 1880 till 1940. The birth rates fall rapidly to perhaps 16 per 1000 people. This may due to the different family planning, there was now contraceptives, sterilisation, abortion and government incentives. The fall of the infant mortality rate lead to less pressure to have so many children. The increased industry and mechanism meaning fewer labourers are needed. All in all the desire for material possessions and less desire for large families grew up. Another important factor was the emancipation of the women, which enabled the women to follow their own careers rather than just bearing children. While this, the death rate continued falling slightly, means to 12 per 1000 people. Therefore the population had a slowly increase.

Stage 4: By 1940, the birth rate had fallen again to 14 per 1000, partly due to the uncertainties of war. After the war the birth rate rose immediately for a short while, which is called the post-war baby boom. But at 1980 birth rates fallen again and remained at the same level. There was also the introduction of the antibaby-pill and more use of condoms. This is also a result of the rise in the importance of women in the employment structure of the UK. Whereas the death rate remained low at 10 – 12 per 1000. This resulted in a steady population.

The UK has not achieved the fifth stage yet, like many other countries, either. Actually this fifth stage is just a conjecture and only Hungary passed this stage.

Weaknesses of the DTM

The DTM doe not only have good factors, even though it is universal in concept, it is Eurocentric and assumes that all countries in the world will follow the European sequence of socioeconomic changes. It is based on the experience of industrialisation and does not originally include the fifth stage. Also you cannot read why all this happened. It does not include the factor of Aids, the role of the government and the impact of migration, although it is a very important part of studying population change.

Conclusion – My opinion of the DTM

The DTM is, in my eyes, a very good way of compare countries in their population change over the years. Unfortunately it does not include all countries in their development. But all in all I think using the DTM is very useful.