Macie Kolb

Mrs. Leaver

AP Human Geography- 1st

2nd March 2016

Populations grow and decline over time, and knowledge of the geographic patterns of human populations facilitates understanding of cultural, economic, political, and urban systems.

Migration is largely dependent on the political, economic, and social opportunities that surround a city, thus causing population to fluctuate repetitively over time as migrants move from urban areas to suburban areas, or vice versa. When I was three years old, I relocated to Texas from Kansas, and moved to a new neighborhood that had only three houses established at the time. We were the fourth house to be built in that area, and slowly, over the next twelve years of my life, I witnessed the fluctuation of migration to the suburbs of McKinney, as well the increase in population over time, and was able to contrast it to the development of cities in Kansas.

The neighborhood that my family managed to settle in after our move to McKinney, Texas has grown immensely in size and population density over the last couple of years. After we first relocated, the area was sparsely inhabited, filled with vegetation, and seemed to be located on the outer areas of the Dallas metropolis, largely overshadowed by it’s neighboring cities, Allen, Frisco, and Plano. However, intraregional migration became an astounding factor in the neighborhood’s population growth, as families began to decide to move to suburban areas in order to live a quaint, simple lifestyle, instead of a busy, and noisy life in the Dallas area. As I grew up in the area, I watched as numerous houses, parks, businesses, and lakes began to be built around the neighborhood, due to the increased economic and social opportunities awaiting families that migrated from the urban to suburban areas, as the United States continued to grow in population and increase industrialization. Now, the neighborhood contains 2,200 acres and is a residential community that offers townhomes, condominiums, and houses with trails for running, parks, swimming pools, a golf course, and several businesses, such as Pizza Hut. Thus, over the course of twelve years, the neighborhood has grown immensely in size and population density, and has allowed my family to engage in more social and economic opportunities as friends unite in a tight community in and around the area.

Furthermore, in Kansas, intraregional migration occurs as well, however a larger number of people move to cities, where there are more economic, political, and social opportunities than in the rural countryside. In Texas, more people are able to migrate to the suburbs, because of its access to industries outside of cities such as Dallas; however in Kansas, the rural countryside surrounding the larger cities doesn’t contain nearly as many economic opportunities, and thus forces larger families to move to the cities in order to receive the wage they need to raise their children. Annually, I travel to Lawrence, Kansas to visit my family, and engage in the small town experiences that my mother and father grew up in. The closest movie theater to the farm, which most of my family lives on, is nearly 30 minutes away and is located in a small town that has two or three restaurants, with roughly four other businesses. My family drives close to an hour to arrive at their jobs in the largest city nearby, and must drive thirty minutes in order to travel to the nearest city, away from the farm they live on. Thus, the migration patterns fluctuate in different places, depending on the placement of businesses in and around cities in each state. These migration patterns affect the population density of cities, and can result in an increase or decrease in population, as shown through Texas and Kansas. Thus, migration is largely dependent on the opportunities that surround a city, and vary over time and space, as different regions experience a larger amount of industrialization than others.

Populations grow and decline over time and space due to patterns of migration caused by social, economic, cultural and political factors. These factors heavily influence the areas people choose to migrate to, and depend on family size, lifestyle, living expectations, etc. The growth in population in my neighborhood in Texas serves to emphasize the change in population over time, and reasons for migration, such as in order to socialize more frequently, enjoy better economic opportunities, and engage in a tight-nit community, which are all characteristics of my neighborhood. Furthermore, my family’s lifestyle in Kansas indicates how migration to cities can be due to several factors that increase standards of living, and how populations can decline in rural areas over time and largely depend on the location of the city, itself. Thus, populations grow and decline over time and space, due to migration patters, which are impacted by economic, social, and cultural factors.