THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION MODEL

INTRODUCTION:

The Demographic Transition Model is a generalization of observations made about countries' birth rates and death rates over 200 years. A major contributor to this theory was Warren Thompson, an American demographer who built his model around earlier population theories.

As countries experience agricultural, medical, and industrial revolutions, Thompson suggests that countries transition into the next demographic phase.

However, there are enough examples of outliers showing that the model is somewhat flawed. Economic, social, and political differences can stagnate a country's progress, or leap them forward. Early demographic models were also created using developed countries as examples of countries that made full transitions, through a Eurocentric lens.

Originally, there were four stages, but contemporary geographers make an argument for a fifth stage, a stage where the rate of natural increase declines.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Hand out the demographic transition model worksheet and have students practice drawing the lines of birth rate, death rate, and total population. I always tell my students, that if they are able to memorize the lines, they are better suited to answer questions about the model.

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STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5

40

30

20

10

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BIRTH RATE ——————   DEATH RATE ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪   TOTAL POPULATION ┼┼┼┼┼┼┼

	POPULATION PYRAMID	DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	ECONOMIC SITUATION	SOCIAL SITUATION	MIGRATION TRANSITION	EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION