

GEOG 27500 Sub-Saharan Africa

Name -----

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Dr. Mohamed Babiker Ibrahim

Final exam. Q 2

Write an essay explaining the factors that affect the distribution of the African population.

Give at least 4 examples from peer reviewed journals.

- Many areas of the continent are sparsely settled (less than 4 persons per sq. km). In contrast, Latin America is 9 persons/sq. km.
- Distribution of population is influenced by many factors:
- **Environmental** (i.e. deserts and swampy areas), **political** and **social factors**.
- **Amounts of precipitation** are the most important climatic factors in population distribution.
- Low population densities are associated with low amounts of rainfall.
- On those areas drought and desertification are becoming major problems for African development.
- If there is **no economic investment** such as oil, mineral, agriculture, water supply in these semi-arid desertified areas it will remain undeveloped (i.e. Bushmen in South Africa).
- On the other hand, areas of tropical rain forest which receives high amounts of rainfall have low population densities because of the infertile soils.
- Pockets of **volcanic soils** “Rwanda and Burundi” are **densely populated**.
- Low lands with **alluvial soils** (which are valleys with rich clay soils such as Gambia, Senegal and the Nile rivers) are **density populated areas**.
- In **marginal areas (semi-arid climate)** and where **manures** (animal fertilizer), intercropping, replanting and crop diversity can support high density of population (i.e. Kano region in Nigeria).
- Deadly diseases (**sleeping sickness** which caused by **Tse Tse fly** and **river blindness** (N. Ghana) in some part of the Savanna and tropical forest are factors of **low population density** in areas with **rich soils**.
- **Historically**, slave trade affects the middle belt of W. Africa.
- It was estimated that the cross Atlantic slave trade reduced African population by **one-third**.
- On the other hand, high areas such as **Jos Plateau** have high density of population because it served as **defensive area from the slave trade**.

You can use these words to give examples:

Ecology and distribution of African population, **Low rainfall** and African population, **Rich soils** and African population, **Swamps** and African population, **Deadly diseases** and African population, **slave trade** and African population