

**Foreign Affairs Canada
Policy Research Division/POR**

Geopolitics and Global Demographics eDiscussion Questions
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Demographics and Geopolitics

Demographic trends have long played an important role in shaping world history and relations among states. They will continue to do so in this century. According to the United Nations Population Division global population continues to increase and **virtually all population growth is occurring in the less developed regions**. Most industrialized countries will experience little growth and some may even face population decline. If current projections hold, in 2050 the world will bear the following characteristics:

- ▶ a **more populous Asia-Pacific region**;
- ▶ an **older and greying Europe**; and
- ▶ a **much larger and more Hispanic-influenced United States**

Global Outlook

By the year 2050, **the world's most populous countries will be India, China, United States, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria and Bangladesh**. Some countries in the industrialised world - **Russia, Germany and Japan** - may see their **populations actually decline over the next several decades**.

- ▶ What effect will this have on geopolitics and the global balance of power?
- ▶ How will these demographic and geopolitical changes affect Canada and Canadian interests?

Demography and Resources

According to the UN, the world is going to **grow in population size from 6.5 billion to 9.1 billion** by 2050. This will significantly increase pressure on the world's resources, including to meet fast-rising energy needs.

- ▶ Will we see more cooperation or conflict among states as they strive to meet their demand for energy and resources?

Canada-US Relations

US population centres and political power are increasingly moving away from the Canadian border. The 2000 U.S. census indicated that the **South and West accounted for nearly two-thirds of population growth in the United States** from 1900 to 2000. It is projected that **by 2050 nearly half of all Americans will be visible minorities**, with a large proportion being Hispanic.

- ▶ What impact will this changing demographic have on internal US politics and what would be the implications for Canadian relations with the US?

New International Networks

Over the next fifty years, demographers predict that countries in the **Asia-Pacific area will undergo significant transformations with broad implications for their growth and development**. This region is increasingly important for Canada. In recent years, **more than 50 percent of new immigrants to Canada have come from Asia, mostly from China and India**. Today, a significant and growing percentage of Canadians with roots in Asia are developing an ever-broadening range of ties, giving Canada privileged access to the region. Successful relations with Asia-Pacific will be key to Canada's foreign policy objectives.

- ▶ What impact will demographic changes in the Asia-Pacific region have on Canadian foreign policy in the long term?
- ▶ How can Canadian foreign policy benefit from the increasing ties between Canada and the Asia-Pacific region?
- ▶ Apart from Canada's ties with Asia-Pacific, what role can Canadians with links to other regions of the world play in the shaping of Canadian foreign policy?