

From Baby Boom to Birth Dearth:

An Interpretation of the Population Control Movement and its
Political Discourse since 1945 in the United States

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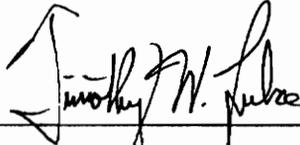
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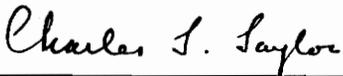
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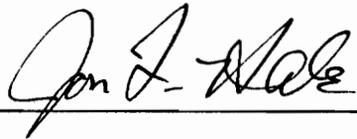
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FROM BABY BOOM TO BIRTH DEARTH:

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POLITICAL DISCOURSE SINCE 1945 IN THE UNITED STATES

by Helmut C. Terjung

Timothy W. Luke

(Abstract)

This thesis investigates and interprets the origins and political discourses of the post World War II population movement in the United States. It argues that this movement, in part, was artificially created by members of the upper social class. Its most important representatives were the founder of the Population Council, John D. Rockefeller III and the owner of the Dixie Cup Company, Hugh Moore. Reasons for their interest in population control can be found in their concern for the national security of the United States which, they believed, was challenged by Communist expansion. Equally important was their attempt to perpetuate their upper class privileges by ensuring the continuation of the existing political and social order in the United States. The ideology employed was "overpopulation." But while the image was overcrowding, it was not the industrialized, densely populated countries that were accused of being overpopulated but rather the poor, underdeveloped, often sparsely populated nations in the Third World. Or, similarly, the poor in the US were accused of being the main cause for all kinds of social ills. As poor

countries had a higher population growth rate and as poor people tended to have more children than rich people, the poor were the main target of population control.

This study, then, shows how pronatalism and antinatalism, the two variants of the population movement, capitalized on the political and social setting of their time in the United States. Although the antinatalists' apparent goal was population control in general, the poor were their main target while the wealthy population, as supporters of American values, did not have to be controlled in number. Similarly, the pronatalists seemingly desired to increase US birth rates, but mainly addressed the more privileged portions of the American population. The attitude toward the poor, and here explicitly toward the Third World, remained antinatalist.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	12
1.1 INTRODUCTION	12
1.1.1 The Baby Boom	12
1.1.2 Liberal Reforms	14
1.1.3 The Population Increase in the Third World	15
1.1.4 The Role of the UN	16
1.2 THE ORIGINS OF THE POPULATION CONTROL MOVEMENT	17
1.2.1 Margaret Sanger	20
1.2.2 Guy Irving Burch	22
1.2.3 William Vogt	24
1.3 THE RISE OF THE POPULATION CONTROL MOVEMENT	28
1.3.1 John D. Rockefeller III	30
1.3.2 Hugh Moore	32
1.4. REASONS BEHIND THE SUCCESS	49
1.5. "ONE OF THE GREATEST PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD"	52
1.6. THE ENVIRONMENT	53
1.7. THE ECONOMY	57
1.8. CONCLUSION	59

CHAPTER 2	62
2.1. INTRODUCTION	62
2.2. THE POPULATION MOVEMENT AND THE COLD WAR	62
2.3. A THREAT TO PEACE	64
2.4. A THREAT TO NATIONAL STABILITY	66
2.5. THE POOR AS VICTIM	68
2.6. THE MERITS OF A NEW IDEOLOGY	74
2.7. TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS	78
2.7.1. Fairfield Osborn	79
2.7.2. Paul Ehrlich	82
2.8. CONCLUSION	89
CHAPTER 3	92
3.1. INTRODUCTION	92
3.2. THE FIRST SIGNS OF A TURNAROUND	93
3.3. GROWING INTERNATIONAL CONCERN	101
3.4. THE BUCHAREST CONFERENCE	103
3.5. TWO CONTRASTING DEVELOPMENTS	108
3.6. FROM LIBERALISM TO CONSERVATISM	114
3.7. CONCLUSION	120
CHAPTER 4	127
4.1. INTRODUCTION	127
4.2. THE POPULATION MOVEMENT OF THE 1980S	127
	vii

4.3. THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE IN MEXICO CITY	149
4.4. CONCLUSION	158
CONCLUSION	160
BIBLIOGRAPHY	166
VITA	177

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1-1 Frequency of Stories on population per year in the <u>New York Times</u> from 1945 to 1970	43
TABLE 1-2 Frequency of Stories on population per year in the <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u> from 1945 to 1970	44
TABLE 3-1 Number of Articles on population per year in the <u>New York Times</u> from 1968 to 1988	118
TABLE 3-2 Number of Articles on population per year in the <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u> from 1968 to 1988	120

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INTRODUCTION

Roughly twenty years ago the detrimental effects of a worldwide "population explosion" captured the imaginations of many Americans. In the Third World, it seemed, that "rapid population growth" aggravated famines and caused poverty. Since the poor of the world were not able to feed themselves adequately, how could they sustain their children? Poverty, it was believed, thus perpetuated itself. This, in turn, would result in social and political unrest that eventually could pose a threat to international stability. The Third World, however, was not alone. The baby boom in the United States seemed to create its own problems. Higher unemployment, more crime, and overburdened public facilities were all tied to this event. In addition, the growing US population was held responsible for causing greater environmental damage. Since "people polluted," more people were believed to pollute even more.

All these claims were supported by a host of "scientific" data, which "proved" this cause-effect relationship. Demographic projections seemed to indicate the enormous dimensions that the world and the US populations would surely reach within a few generations. This meant that poverty would likely increase further, and that the environment would suffer even more. For most people it had become clear that only population growth control

would offer a viable solution in the long run.

In this thesis, however, I will try to show that such an apparently unequivocal reality never existed. On the contrary, I hope to demonstrate that this "reality" was carefully and purposefully constructed by members of elite interest groups in the United States. They believed in perpetuating their control over societal and political structures which also they trusted would be beneficial to the nation's as well as their long-term interests while there are other interpretations of these events, the ideology of "overpopulation," I will argue, was created in large part to advance these special elite interests. The mystifying intent of this ideological project was to demonstrate that ills of the world and American society could be attributed almost exclusively to the existence of too many poor people rather than the agendas of the established political and economic elite structures that purposely exploited the disadvantaged.

The discursive connections between these elite interests and the public were made by using the mass media as a transmitter of such ideas. To clarify the role of the media in this context, it is necessary to look beyond the fact that they are corporate entities with wealthy owners who decide to promote elite causes. One can observe two roles which it plays in this regard, namely, how it is acted upon on the one hand by issue-groups and how it becomes an actor itself carrying these issue-groups' messages on the other hand.

Generally, the press seems disinclined to "dig up" a story by itself. This notion is corroborated by the term "investigative journalism," which is

only used if a journalist devotes himself to thoroughly examining the roots and origins of a certain topic. Actually, "the overwhelming majority of stories are based on official sources"... "Powerful people not only make news by their deeds but also tell reporters of those deeds."¹ And journalists generally position themselves so that they have access to institutions (the government, organizations etc.) which frequently generate a useful volume of reportable activity.² Moreover, the interpretation that is often delivered with the story usually is added by other "sources." Thus, in some sense, the press usually acts upon information that it has been "fed." In this fashion, the mass media determine which events are made part of more public knowledge by selecting a few stories out of hundreds of daily occurrences that may be newsworthy. By screening what happens, they define what reality looks like. Through these frames, the ordinary citizens are told what is important, what is not, and how this could be interpreted in the discursive grids of the news.

But what kind of world is being created or reflected in this process? The press seems generally inclined to take events into consideration that are "out of the ordinary."³ It most often considers stories that involve elite persons, important nations, terrible disasters or riveting human dramas. Such themes then represent the ever-changing and conflictful nature of the

¹ Walter Karp, "Who Decides What is News? (Hint: It's not Journalists)," Utne Reader, No. 36, November/December 1989, p. 61.

² Stuart Hall et al., Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order (London 1978: MacMillan Press), p. 57.

³ Ibid., p. 53.

world. Furthermore, there appears to be an "innate" tendency to play up or dramatize parts of any selected story in order to "enhance" its newsworthiness.

This process of "gathering" news "naturally" creates a news coverage that is heavily biased toward the influential and wealthy as well as important institutions. This slant is often further enhanced by the perceived necessity for "objectivity." The press turns to "accredited" sources, to "authoritative" statements, which means that well-established institutions and interest groups are its main "targets" of news gathering. Another key source that can also be found in these institutions is the "expert". His allegedly "disinterested pursuit of knowledge" confers "objectivity and authority."⁴ Thus the press reproduces the existing power structure of society, which also corresponds with affirming its own goals: profit, image, power.⁵ Still, the media do not create news or simply transmit the ideology of the ruling class; they are not even the primary definers. "[B]ut their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in reproducing the definitions of those who have privileged access, as of right, to the media as 'accredited sources.'"⁶

Given these tendencies, the "population crusaders" cleverly maneuvered themselves into a very favorable position for influencing public

⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

⁵ Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, "Accidents, Scandals and Routines: Resources for Insurgent Methodology," in Gaye Tuchman (ed), The TV Establishment, (Englewood Cliffs NJ 1974: Prentice Hall), p. 64.

⁶ Hall et al., p. 59.

discourse: they recruited supporters within government ranks, they employed experts in credible organizations, and they gained academic support in the universities.⁷ These various sources of information were extremely attractive to the media, and the antinatalist movement skillfully used the media to transmit their discursive frameworks. The population movement likewise sponsored the publication of "expert" opinions and "the latest" research findings. Knowing that the press seeks events to gather news, they organized their own conferences, major speeches, bigtime seminars and press network to popularize their discourse in pamphlets, journals, films and advertisements. The antinatalists thus established the connections for gaining considerable access to the media. The "gloom and doom" of appalling rates of population growth, as they were used in demographic statistics, also lent themselves to the cause. Such statistics always could be made even more impressive by dramatizing the negative developments of growing from a "few people" to "many people" within a short period of time. Videotape from India, Kenya or Haiti, for example, could show the allegedly "direct results" of this "population explosion" -- famines, poverty, environmental decay.

By supporting the population movement with the weight of the

⁷ The antinatalists' ability to attract government financing offered an indication of their "[m]astery in influencing policy and gaining high level converts." . . . "The Population Council [one of the most important antinatalist organizations] took on aspects of a state organization because it had the expertise and ability to carry out projects for which government agencies were not equipped or direct government intervention was considered too sensitive." (Thomas Shapiro, Population Growth Control, (Philadelphia 1985: Temple University Press, p. 82)

scientific establishment, not only additional legitimacy could be gained or the dissemination of information accelerated. Also, a new field of science could be constructed with the intention of excluding the emotional side of the problem that could make the issue divisive. It was argued that one should instead deal with "demonstrable facts"⁸ and quantitative analysis. Charts, graphs and numbers "scientifically" depicted the explosiveness of a growing population. Science enhanced antinatalism's visibility: a quantitative presentation of the future was valuable as a powerful means of influencing public opinion "to facilitate the adoption of corrective measures."⁹ The scientific network, which had been set up, defined, determined and delivered the data in a whole new scientific discourse. Thus, it could be shown what would happen over a prolonged period of time "if current trends continued." Yet, the disciplinary intentions of controlling population did not reveal that those trends were always subject to quick changes and that scientific scenarios envisioning "standing room only" were pure fiction. All ecological experiences with living creatures actually have demonstrated that long before such a state is reached, regulatory mechanisms would set in to reduce population pressures. Yet, it is at this point where science and unscientific rhetoric often become indistinguishable.

Once the science of population control was organized, the "auspicious"

⁸ Population Council as cited in Shapiro, p. 72.

⁹ George Tapinos and Phyllis Piotrow, Six Billion People, (New York 1978: McGraw Hill), p. 157.

population growth patterns of the early 1960s lent themselves to fantastic extrapolations. World population was increasing exponentially due to an ever larger base (an increasing proportion of young people, that is) while the population growth rate itself also was on the rise. Never before in the history of mankind had a population stopped its own growth "voluntarily." Until the 1900s, Malthus' positive checks, scourges like famines and war, allegedly had so far curtailed population expansion.

Some extrapolations, as Cole and Miles pointed out, may indeed have been deliberate exaggerations. For instance, Heilbroner spoke of world population in the region of 40 billion "in order to show that such a figure is insupportable..."¹⁰ But J. Spengler thought that 50 billion would be possible by 2110, Heilbroner imagined 20 billion as a "realistic possibility".¹¹ The physicist Heinz von Foerster even claimed that world population would reach "infinity" and annihilate itself on November 13, 2026.¹² He based his doomsday date on population growth patterns of the last 2000 years, and his optimistic belief that human proficiency at surviving and reproducing would increase as the size of the populations increased. Foerster maintained that this was realistic as long as food technology and the industrial sciences had always kept pace. He selected the date -- Friday the 13th -- out of "convenience," the margin of error was +/- 5 years.

¹⁰ Cole and Miles in: Christopher Freeman and Marian Jahoda, World Futures, (New York 1978: Universe Books), p. 53.

¹¹ Cole in Freeman and Jahoda, p. 16.

¹² Heinz von Foerster et al., "Doomsday: Friday 13 November A.D. 2026," Science, Vol. 132, No. 3436 (November 4, 1960) pp. 1291-95.

Consequently, it is not so clear that the "futurologists" did not believe in their forecasts. A safe assumption is that all these authors pursued a certain purpose in such discourses -- to startle people in one way or another. By scaring people into believing that they had acted irresponsibly, or at least that those in the Third World had acted irresponsibly by procreating without considering the consequences, antinatalists hoped to introduce a new discipline into society. People who were scared were more susceptible to following unusual policies as well as being more prone to believing these arguments. All kinds of draconian measures to avoid catastrophes, to prevent poor people from starving to death, to guard environments from deteriorating, and to protect economies from suffering thus could be legitimized. Simultaneously, the citizen was called upon to restrict the size of his family while the government was permitted to impose harsh measures on him to preserve the "quality" of American life.

In this thesis, then, I will try to show that the emergence of the population control movement can be attributed largely to elite interests, which skillfully transformed their private ideological agenda into a public policy concern. The ultimate objective was to influence the American government since the "population crusaders" believed that influencing the state was their most effective means of advancing their own private objectives. But it is also crucial to keep in mind that once those private interests had reached the mass public they tended to take on a life of their own. Others perceived the usefulness of such ideas for their political

agendas and converted them in order to achieve goals different from the ones originally intended. In this fashion, activists of the environmental movement capitalized on the "population crusade" as they attributed environmental degradation to the presence of too many people. This transformation also suggests that some of the original attributes -- for instance, that population control particularly targeted the poorer segments of a population -- were diluted or submerged in the new discourses.

The intention of this thesis is not to investigate to which extent population control is beneficial for or detrimental to a society. It will not be debated either, that availability of and access to birth control are important necessities. Instead I will examine the origins and objectives of population control, which attempts to regulate the growth of certain segments of a population for the alleged benefit of society. Moreover, I will attempt to illustrate that the construction of a "population crisis" could only occur in a particular political and social climate. That is, it seems that a certain historical setting, or the post-1945 Cold War era, was indispensable for the success of this venture.

The first chapter, then, will take a close look at the historical origins of the population movement. It will try to establish whether the ideas of the birth control movement that existed during the first decades of this century have had any relevance for -- or even resemblance with -- the post-World War II movement. Within this context, it will try to answer how the population "crisis" as it was perceived, emerged. Who were the actors, the "producers" of this crisis? How could they be successful? What were the

factors that led to a constantly growing attention? How could it reach dimensions that riveted not only the American public but also involved America's political leaders? For instance, ex-President Eisenhower stated in 1968 that

"once as president, I thought and said that birth control was not the business of our Federal Government. The facts changed my mind; I have come to believe that the population explosion is the world's most critical problem. Failure would limit the expectation of future generations to abject poverty and suffering, and bring down upon us history's condemnation."¹³

Similarly, in 1969 President Nixon, in the most explicit statement a US president ever made on the subject, accepted not only "clear responsibility to provide essential leadership"¹⁴ in this field. He also declared:

"[o]ne of the most serious challenges to human destiny in the last third of this century will be the growth of the population. Whether man's response to that challenge will be cause for pride or for despair in the year 2000 will depend very much on what we do today."¹⁵

The second chapter will concentrate on the underlying reasons of the antipopulation crusade. What lay hidden behind the notion of "overpopulation"? Who benefited and who suffered from antinatalism? Why did the government perceive such an advantage in the pursuit of reduced birth rates that it devoted hundreds of millions of dollars to that purpose? In addition, the second chapter will examine the historical backgrounds of

¹³ Eisenhower as quoted in Edward Pohlman (ed), Population (New York 1973: The New American Library), p. 485.

¹⁴ Nixon in an advertisement reprinted in Lawrence Lader, Breeding Ourselves to Death (Chicago 1971: Ballentine Books), p. 77.

¹⁵ Nixon as quoted in Pohlman, p. 486.

the population movement.

Antinatalism did not proceed unchallenged throughout the 1980s. In fact during the 1970s already a dwindling interest in the population "crisis" could be noticed. The third chapter will investigate why this was the case, asking what role the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest played in this respect. What was its purpose and what were its outcomes?" The third chapter also will deal with the political motivations behind antinatalism. Why did it exist and why has it come under question recently? In this respect, it is important to determine the role played by the abortion and pro-family debate.

The fourth chapter will examine who in America had an interest in the switching to pronatalism, which happened to be the most prominent aspect of the population issue in the 1980s. And again, who profited from and who was targeted by the pronatalist discourse? How did the 1984 World Population Conference in Mexico City fit into this picture? What were the goals and intentions of the actors? And last but not least were the antinatalist and the pronatalist movement engaged in two separate causes? Or was pronatalism simply the continuation of antinatalism with a different focus?

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Between the end of the Second World War and the early 1970s, an antinatalist movement emerged in the US which reached dimensions unheard of in the demographic history of mankind. To enhance the understanding of this event the origins of the modern population movement will be considered briefly. In this context, the ensuing investigation of how the underlying mass perceptions of the population crisis were "produced" will appear in a new light. This chapter will try to establish who had an interest in such a "production" and which factors permitted its success. In order to unravel the emergence and the growing importance of the population crisis as a political issue it is useful to recall a few historical events that jointly determined the advancement of the movement. Four factors may be mentioned here: the baby boom, liberal reforms, rapid population increases in the Third World, and the role of the United Nations.

1.1.1 The Baby Boom

The enormous economic growth that America experienced almost uninterruptedly between 1945 and 1964 really began with the onset of World War II, which brought new employment and prosperity. The pent-up appetite for consumer goods based on a long deprivation and huge savings accelerated industrial expansion: "[i]t was in the 1950s that the nation achieved a level of affluence that erased the persisting fear of another

depression."¹ Family life was emphasized in cultural discourses about everyday living, and "togetherness" became the new ideological code word. "Traditional conservative values" dominated the discourses about American family life. This did not encourage feminism. Indeed, the role of a woman as wife and mother, the importance of getting married early, and the satisfaction of having a large family were values that were much in vogue. This domestic model of cultural practice was assisted by the availability of cheap new housing in the suburbs. This suburban development, together with the arrival of deferred births following the end of the War, served as a great stimulant for the consumer goods industry.

Sharp increases in US fertility derived principally from a "shift toward earlier and more nearly universal marriage" and "a larger proportion of women having at least two children."² The extent of the ensuing baby boom, "reversing more than a hundred years of experience,"³ was still surprising: by the late 1950s the birth rate had climbed to a level more than 40% above the low point in 1930.

1.1.2 Liberal Reforms

An important intervention that helped the population crusade were the liberal reforms which gained political substance in the early 1960s. Much

¹ Robert Divine et al., America (Glenview IL 1987: Scott, Foresman and Company), p. 838.

² Shapiro, p. 71.

³ James Kuhn, "The Immense Generation," Current, No. 156 (November 1973), p. 46.

more so than Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson provided presidential leadership in this respect. Rather than accepting lower standards of living for most of the American population, these administrations pushed hard for socio-economic equality. Public education and basic health care were improved despite tough resistance from conservatives, and new social, political and cultural rights for blacks were attained.

The Supreme Court under the leadership of Earl Warren not only ruled against segregation, but it also expanded the constitutional guarantees to "the poor and the ignorant"⁴ and increased the freedom of expression. Greater social justice was one consequence. And, with greater efforts to attain social justice, pressures to reduce population were felt to make these benefits more effective for those receiving them. Johnson proved even more successful in furthering Civil and Equal Rights and liberal reforms in his "Great Society" programs than Kennedy. This set of reforms lessened segregationist practices, provided greater equality for women and attempted to reduce poverty in America.

Such social and political reforms were indispensable for changing American attitudes towards birth control.⁵ This new policy setting facilitated the crusade for population control in the 1960s. Effective population control was impossible without considering contraception. But the interest in greater social equality also spurred the demand among the poor segments of the population for equal access to birth control -- another important

⁴ Divine et al., p. 880.

⁵ Shapiro, p. 74.

development point which facilitated the antinatalist cause.

1.1.3 The Population Increase in the Third World

The magnitude of population growth in many Less Developed Countries (LDCs) after 1945 stunned most population experts even more so than the baby boom in the US. Its existence was concealed by poor data and lack of interest. It was unexpected in many respects. The projections of the old colonial power did not foresee the possibility of increased longevity, brought about by health measures (like vaccinations) and better nutrition and hence were far below actual figures. In 1945 Burch and Pendell, for instance, assumed roughly 3.3 billion people for the end of the century -- a simple extrapolation derived from the trend of the decades before.⁶ In 1951 the UN still forecast annual increases of 0.7% to 1.3% for Africa and Asia for the years between 1950 and 1980. However, these figures were way off the mark. "It was only in the beginning of the 1960s, with the publication of the censuses made at the beginning of that decade that the experts and the public learned of an 'explosion' which had already been going on for over 10 years."⁷ By 1964 the highest worldwide increase ever recorded was discovered: 2.1%⁸ Consequently, all subsequent extrapolations in population

⁶ Guy Irving Burch and Elmer Pendell, Population Roads to Peace and War, (Washington D.C. 1945: Population Reference Bureau), p. 3.

⁷ Jacques Loup, Can the Third World Survive (Baltimore 1983: Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 4.

⁸ UN Demographic Yearbook as cited in New York Times, August 31, 1964, p. 1.

discourses, now based on this trend, were mind-boggling, making the outlook for the entire world very dire.

1.1.4 The Role of the UN

Initially, the United Nations contributed mainly indirectly to the birth and progress of the population control movement. As Harf and Trout claimed, the UN was slow to respond to the issue because it feared to be "accused of engaging in some form of ethnic, racial or national genocide."⁹ So it began to address population growth (other than statistically) only after prodding by the US in the mid-1960s. Whether or not Harf and Trout's statement above is exaggerated, as it may seem at first glance, can be left an open question. It is certain, however, that population control programs were decidedly unpopular among many Third World countries at least until the mid-seventies.

Unintentionally, the UN fueled the debate by providing demographic statistics for the population crisis discourse on a fairly regular basis. The UN also promoted international cooperation in dealing with social, economic and cultural problems by serving as an agency through which member states can achieve these goals. Within the UN organization many industrialized countries, and especially the US, began to make grants of economic aid and food transfers to the LDCs. Medical advice and supply improved rapidly, deadly diseases could be eradicated or at least controlled. Mortality rates

⁹ James Harf and Thomas Trout, The Politics of Global Resources, (Durham 1986: Duke University Press), p. 189.

fell quickly while fertility rates stayed high mainly due to the insignificance of economic, social or political advances. These programs and their progress needed to be monitored: UN demographic information became indispensable and a useful tool for the discourses of the antinatalist movement.

1.2 THE ORIGINS OF THE POPULATION CONTROL MOVEMENT

Population control, or the planned attempt to control which particular segments of a population might reproduce, has its origins in the eugenics movement of the late 19th century. Before 1880, the majority of people migrating to America came from northern and western Europe. After 1880, however, a sharp increase in immigration from eastern and southern European countries occurred that led to a debate over population. Specifically, the "quality of population became a dominant issue."¹⁰ The subsequent attempt to apply genetic principles to the improvement of mankind became part of a political discourse about eugenics. Pseudoscientific reasons in these discourses were offered to explain why certain races (Eastern European vs. Teutonic) and certain classes (lower vs. higher) could not achieve higher levels of civilization.

As Shapiro notes, eugenicists were concerned with an "alleged social disorganization, spread by rapid growth of racial and ethnic minorities,"¹¹ which, in turn, might reproduce their particular (mental and physical) disabilities and harm society. Eugenics, "the science of improvement of the

¹⁰ Shapiro, p. 33.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 13.

genetic stock of the human population or a subgroup within it"¹² obviously took as its goal the protection of the well-to-do to safeguard their status, prestige and property. This discourse always blamed social ills on the poor and it was financed and organized by a wide variety of business men, professors and the propertied class.¹³ A new reality was created which labeled disease, illiteracy, and above all poverty as hereditary disorders. This discourse was used, for example, to keep wages low: "these humble poor [who asked for higher living wages] were...born [emphasis in the original] too unintelligent to understand that what they were asking for was the unpardonable waste of money..."¹⁴ Similarly, eugenics discourses suggested that the majority of people were "genetically ineducable beyond the eighth grade."¹⁵ This implied that a greater effort to improve education was unnecessary and in vain. Such reasoning can be extended. By attributing illnesses to heredity it was considered to be superfluous -- and less costly -- to improve the health system, which, for example, could have provided vaccinations for every child to prevent diseases like rubella and measles, often affecting eyes, ears, the nervous system and the brain. Furthermore, eugenicist arguments blamed increasing unemployment on the increasing numbers of poor people. This went along with the notion that the

¹² Michael Teitelbaum and Jay Winter, The Fear of Population Decline, (New York 1985: Academics Press), p. 47.

¹³ Shapiro, p. 38.

¹⁴ Allen Chase, The Legacy of Malthus; The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism (New York 1977: Alfred A. Knopf), p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

poor bred faster. Hence, the best remedy was population control, preferably in form of sterilization as its cheapest and safest tool.¹⁶ This form of eugenics could be labeled negative eugenics, which restricted the propagation of the "socially unfit". It was often coupled with positive eugenics, or attempts to increase the opportunities for reproducing the "socially adequate."

Scientific racism scored some impressive victories. Perhaps its greatest triumph was the Johnson Act of 1924, a law which restricted immigration of Jews and of people from Eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries.¹⁷ In 1931, 30 states had eugenic laws, which were drafted to investigate "a person's heredity, to make arrests, and to cause the offender to be sterilized."¹⁸ Although the legislation was rarely enforced, 8000 people were sterilized in the US by its mandate between 1928 and 1933.¹⁹

1.2.1. Margaret Sanger

In connection with the eugenics movement it is also worthwhile examining the careers of two people whose most active efforts came before the Second World War, and who both had considerable influence on Hugh Moore, the "father" of the modern birth control movement: Margaret Sanger

¹⁶ Shapiro, p. 35.

¹⁷ Chase, p. 366.

¹⁸ Shapiro, p. 35.

¹⁹ Teitelbaum and Winter, p. 57.

and Guy Irving Burch.²⁰ Additionally, William Vogt has to be mentioned, whose book The Road to Survival stimulated Moore greatly.

Margaret Sanger had started out as a radical feminist with socialist ideas. She organized the birth control movement in 1914 as a complement of the early women's rights movement. But by 1922 she had discarded her radical socialist ideas. She began to despise support coming from radicals or from the "wives of the wage slaves."²¹ The birth control movement instead began to seek middle and upper class support and soon embraced eugenicist positions.²²

As early as 1919, this turnaround became obvious when Sanger wrote "[m]ore children from the fit, less from the unfit - that is the chief issue of birth control"²³ in her magazine Birth Control Review. By 1922, she had argued that the "healthier" and "more normal" sections of the world had to carry the burden of the unthinking and indiscriminate fecundity of the poor.²⁴ In 1924, she expressed alarm about the rapidly breeding poor of the world. Although the Johnson Act had "taken steps to control the quality of the population...we make no attempt to cut down the rapid multiplication of

²⁰ So argued Lader, Moore's biographer; see also Jacqueline Kasun, The War Against Population, (San Francisco 1988: Ignatius Press) and Glenn Fowler, "Hugh Moore, Industrialist, Dies; Birth Control Crusader Was 85," New York Times, November 26, 1972 as well as Chase.

²¹ As quoted in Shapiro, p. 43.

²² Ibid., p. 42.

²³ As cited in Chase, p. 55.

²⁴ Cited in Kasun, p. 160.

the unfit and undesirables at home."²⁵ Since in America a "moron's" vote counted as much as that of an "intelligent, educated and thinking citizen,"²⁶ it was questionable, she felt, whether this country was safe for democracy. In 1932, Sanger advised "'a stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation' of those persons 'already tainted' by their heredity."²⁷ She also maintained these people could be offered a pension if they agreed to be sterilized. Sanger's passion hardly diminished during the Second World War; in 1950 she urged the US government to sponsor programs for the sterilization of the feeble-minded and victims of transmissible congenital diseases "to save innocent children from the cruelty of being born to such parents."²⁸ By this time, Sanger, who was described by Kasun as a very influential individual with friends among the richest and most powerful,²⁹ already was infected with the fear of war and invasion by alien masses: the hungry of Africa and Asia. Sanger suggested that they needed to be controlled in numbers as they were easy victims for demagogues like Hitler or Stalin. Less people would hence equal the opportunity for experiencing less war.³⁰

²⁵ Sanger quoted in Shapiro, p. 43.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kasun, p. 160.

²⁸ New York Times, October 26, 1950, p. 26.

²⁹ Kasun, p. 161.

³⁰ New York Times, October 26, 1950, p. 26; January 3, 1960, IV, p. 8.

Sanger's most important projects were guided by the principles she had developed since 1919. In 1921, she founded the American Birth Control League which became the Birth Control Federation in 1939 and turned into Planned Parenthood three years later. In 1952, her ambitions assumed international dimensions. Sanger managed to raise a small amount of money for the first world headquarters of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in London.

1.2.2. Guy Irving Burch

Guy Irving Burch was one of a small group of "more sophisticated scientific racists [who] saw the birth control movement as the answer to their elitist dreams" and as a major "part of the last great legislative triumph of the old scientific racism - the preservation of the anti-Semitic, anti-Italian, and anti-Slav immigration quotas of 1924."³¹ Burch had established the Population Reference Bureau in 1929. Its director proceeded even throughout the Depression to warn the nation about "population pressures." He also maintained that "'educated people were not replacing themselves,'"³² hereby combining both positive and negative elements of eugenics. He fought with Sanger's birth control movement to "'prevent the American people from being replaced by alien or Negro stock, whether it be by immigration or by overly high birth rates among others in this

³¹ Chase, pp. 54, 366.

³² Quoted in Kasun, p. 194.

country."³³ He also insisted that the "ignorant, diseased and poverty-stricken" needed to practice "Scientific Birth Control"³⁴ to keep America American.

Burch resumed his activities right after World War II. In 1945, the Population Reference Bureau published his Population: Roads to Peace and War, written together with Elmer Pendell. The two authors offered their book as a guide to peace. Despite the Nazi horrors that had found their expression in countless prisons and concentration camps, Burch and Pendell offered the good old eugenicist approach in their tract. The only thing that had changed was their reasoning. Population control was inevitable if the environment, democracy, freedom (too many people led to despotism as could be seen in Europe) and peace were to be saved.³⁵

Burch and Pendell still promoted the old myth that feeble-mindedness and other traits like poverty were hereditary.³⁶ They had a clear preference for using a certain type of contraception. Although various means could be seen as appropriate at different times, sterilization was the best of all to secure peace as well as prevent crime and prostitution:

"[i]n connection with sterilization, it appears that what the negotiators at the peace table need to do is recommend to all nations and all states the adoption of laws which will
a) actually lead to the [forcible] sterilization of all persons who are inadequate, either biologically or sociologically, and

³³ Burch quoted in Chase, p. 367.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Burch and Pendell, pp. 21-25, 33-43 and Chapters 7 and 8.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

b) encourage the voluntary sterilization of normal persons who had as many as their share of children.³⁷

Sanger would have agreed with the reasoning that sterilization could be applied on social grounds. As Burch and Pendell asked: "[i]s it reasonable to impose the heavier tax burden when that additional pressure on many taxpayers will be just enough to prevent their own reproduction?"³⁸

Needless to say those measures to them, that is, all including forcible sterilization, would be "especially appropriate"... "in China, and India, and Puerto Rico, where domestic facilities for the use of contraceptives are few."³⁹

1.2.3 William Vogt

In tracing the origins of the crusades for population control one should not forget William Vogt, whose book The Road to Survival was an inspiration for the post-World War II population movement. Much more emphatically than Burch, the former director of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America perceived the world as teetering on the brink of an ecocatastrophe. In the long run, even the US would not be excluded. The mindless use of nature's precious resources had resulted in eroding soils, vanishing forests, changing climates and growing pollution. The reason: most countries were already overpopulated, unequivocally indicated by the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 103.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 97.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 99-100.

rapidly increasing levels of mass starvation.

Many passages in Vogt's book explore again the already mentioned eugenicist myths. Like Burch and Sanger, Vogt offered only disdain for the "seniles, incurables, the insane, the paupers and those who might be called ecological incompetents [poor farmers, for instance]."⁴⁰ The latter were people who "exist by destroying the means of national survival," and consequently "the source of environmental sickness with which they are infecting us all."⁴¹ Large areas of the world were overpopulated, the ecosystems were deteriorating quickly, and their land could not feed people anymore. The best development for the world would thus be if the number of people starving to death or dying from illnesses remained high: "perhaps the greatest asset [of Chile] is its high death rate"⁴² and "the greatest tragedy that China could suffer, would be a reduction of her death rate."⁴³ In this respect the worst policies the US could follow would be to artificially, that is by means of food aid, keep those poor people alive. The only result would be that ecological destruction could proceed even faster.⁴⁴

This reasoning, however, only thinly disguised Vogt's biggest fear: he dreaded being overrun by those starving poor people. Immigration had

⁴⁰ William Vogt, The Road to Survival, (New York 1958: William Sloane Associates), p. 145.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 186.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 224-225.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 163-164.

to be strongly discouraged. Otherwise "our living standards" would be "dragged down to raise that of the backward billion of Asia."⁴⁵ Worse, countries suffering from overpopulation, like China, India, Europe of Russia, would soon seek "somebody's productive land"⁴⁶ and war would be unavoidable. In Vogt's scenario, war and the likelihood of massive immigration would be enhanced if the US helped other countries to industrialize. It was useless anyhow because "no alchemy would be able to turn Latin America into the fine gold of the Northern Hemisphere's."⁴⁷ While Vogt believed an industrialized India or China would be an extreme danger to the entire world, the biggest foe was the Soviet Union, which already had embarked on a planned program of population expansion to build the Red Army.⁴⁸

Vogt regarded it as a "disservice" to give foreign aid, because the alien populations would be given a better chance to multiply, possibly industrialize, and hence pose a greater threat to peace. Additionally, aid would result in a depletion of America's financial assets, burdening her resources and hence depreciate American living standards. It would be wasted unless the "senseless proliferation" could be checked. Nonetheless, aid had to be provided lest communism swallow those poverty-stricken countries which, in turn, would aggravate the situation even more. Vogt

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 228.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 210.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 239.

considered this blackmail, but he countered quickly. Aid should be made contingent on programs for population stabilization "through voluntary action of the people."⁴⁹

With this scheme of "voluntary" birth control and sterilization, Vogt, Burch and Sanger had managed to revive and redirect the old eugenicist myths.⁵⁰ Vogt's ideas should come as no surprise if their origin are taken into account. In his book's acknowledgements, he lavishly thanked Burch who had been "extraordinarily helpful with advice and bibliographic suggestions."⁵¹

1.3 THE RISE OF THE POPULATION CONTROL MOVEMENT

In retrospect it seems that, for people concerned with population problems, the fear of "too many people," especially foreigners who might invade a prosperous country like the US, was aggravated rather than abated by World War II. One example is provided by the writing of Burch and Pendell. Disputing a publication that claimed that technology could produce enough for everyone and maintained that the American problem was one of unmanageable abundance, they wondered

⁴⁹ A few pages below, however, Vogt stated because overpopulation led to expansion and aggression "and overpopulation is in itself a danger to 'conservation of the species' there would seem to be a logical compulsion toward control of fertilization" (p. 281) and "sterilization bonuses" which "would appeal primarily to the shiftless...would probably have a favorable selective influence. (p. 282)

⁵⁰ Vogt proceeded to reiterate the danger of giving aid to LDCs until his death. See e.g., New York Times, December 6, 1964, IV, p. 8.

⁵¹ Vogt, p. XVI.

"what the Chinese, the Hindus, or even the Europeans must think of this statement coming from the US. It is not only an exaggeration, to say the least, but borders on the dangerous. If we cannot manage our own riches there are more than a billion people in the world who would like to assist us."⁵²

In their opinion to rid the world of war ultimately required the elimination of "problems of want". But Burch and Pendell were pessimistic of the possibility of providing the world's people at least with the essentials of life:

"[n]owhere is enlightened public opinion needed more than in supporting a world program of population control, because even with all the great accomplishments and promising efforts of scientists and statesmen, the major problem of mankind cannot be solved without a humane and efficient world program of population control."⁵³

A further example of these sentiments spread shortly after the World War II can be found in the thinking of William Vogt. The fear that the reckless breeding masses from all continents (save Australia) are a danger to world peace, or more precisely to the US, pervades his already discussed book The Road to Survival. His argumentation is very similar to that of Burch and Pendell. Although Europe was in a more favorable situation than the underdeveloped world, the Earth had just experienced what could happen if the demand on the carrying capacities of the land were exceeded. "Europe is going to continue to expect to draw on the lands of other peoples in far regions of the world,"⁵⁴ America included. Vogt did not regard aid as

⁵² Burch and Pendell, p. 4.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁴ Vogt, p. 208.

a possible remedy; on the contrary, he kept insisting that American aid would speed up the population explosion and thus enhance the threat to world peace.⁵⁵

Although Vogt's book turned out to be a best seller, its discursive outlook was more likely to stir up resentment toward other nations for desiring US riches or increase the reader's patriotism with its derogatory comments and descriptions than to instill fears of a tide of people ready to inundate America. So shortly after the world had survived the biggest war ever, organized efforts were necessary to focus people's attention on the population dilemma with an insistent discourse of crisis. And, such a well-managed movement was soon to emerge to put "population" on the political agenda of the American people and their government.

The animation of this movement now largely can be attributed to the persistence and influence of two men: John D. Rockefeller III and Hugh Moore. They were the first to make a deliberate -- and ultimately very successful -- effort to organize the discursive campaigns which, they believed, were conducive to their programs for controlling population growth.

1.3.1. John D. Rockefeller III

Before the Second World War John D. Rockefeller III had already decided that he would devote his time to the topic of population. A report

⁵⁵ See for example his statements in the New York Times, August 25, 1952, p. 21.

issued by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1950 re-enforced this interest: it concluded that an important goal for the future should be population control lest the threat posed by upheavals of the teeming poor become incalculable.⁵⁶ To further this goal, Rockefeller founded the Population Council in 1952 which soon claimed that "the relation of population to material and cultural resources of the world presents one of the most critical and urgent problems of the day."⁵⁷ The organization experienced an auspicious start: Rockefeller had grouped well-known and wealthy men around him like the demographer Frank Notestein; Frederick Osborn, secretary of the American Eugenics Society from 1928 to 1971; Detlev Bronk, president of the Rockefeller Institute; Karl Compton, trustee of the Ford Foundation; and, many others. The organization was lavishly supported by grants from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations as well as other generous beneficiaries. Between 1952 and 1974 the Ford Foundation contributed \$63 million, the Rockefeller Foundation about \$49 million to the cause.⁵⁸

The council's central method for attaining its political objectives was to support long-term planning. This did not commit the council itself to solving the population problem but rather oriented it toward developing programs to train population professionals, build professional staffs, design technical plans, and create a scientific network to further the understanding of population issues. A generous fellowship program was

⁵⁶ Shapiro, p. 64.

⁵⁷ Population Council as quoted in Shapiro, p. 65.

⁵⁸ For more detailed information see table in Shapiro, p. 80.

established to mobilize professional interest and generous contributions to population researchers at more than 200 universities throughout the country were made.⁵⁹ Although intended to "educate" Americans about population problems, the structure of research undertaken was dominated by the council: money was available mainly for certain designated projects consistent with the council's general interest in planned population control.

In this manner, the Population Council became a key source for particular information about population issues. The establishment of an apparently credible field of scientific research greatly aided its discursive legitimacy. Seminars, conferences, dissemination of material via journals (e.g. the Population and Development Review) and funding for books dealing with population enlarged the reach of the organization.

Its discursive advocacy of training and family planning programs (sometimes designed especially for "disadvantaged groups") and the furtherance of technological progress (like the improvement of contraceptive devices) soon attracted the attention of government agencies. Its scientific approach began to pay off. The National Institutes of Health of the Agency for International Development (AID) became interested in the 1950s. Soon the government "discovered" merits in organizations like the Population Council: it started to provide money for some of the Council's programs "too sensitive for its [the government's] own agencies, such as demonstration projects that included sterilization."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Shapiro, p. 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

Numerous stories for the mass press were thus provided by the council which then "alerted" the public to the "problems" that its specialists and experts had "discovered." By endorsing this discourse in receiving its messages, the concerned citizen then could now become an effective political actor for the Population Council's cause. Citizens could either contribute money, could live up to and actively promote the newfound ideals of population control, and condone new public policies that seemed necessary to prevent a population explosion.

1.3.2. Hugh Moore

Rockefeller's less subtle counterpart was Hugh Moore whose "tireless" efforts brought the population problem to the attention of the public and government.⁶¹ The Dixie Cup King, whose company was valued at \$75 million when it merged with the American Cup Company in 1957,⁶² devoted the latter part of his life to "his concern with the danger of overpopulation."⁶³ His ideas of how to stimulate government and public into becoming more actively engaged on behalf of his concerns differed substantially from Rockefeller's. His goal was not to "educate" people, but rather to startle them. The "showman-salesman for population control," as his biographer Lader labelled

⁶¹ See for example Lader or Fowler in New York Times, November 26, 1972, p. 85.

⁶² Lader, p. 101.

⁶³ Fowler in New York Times, November 26, 1972, p. 85.

him, used his respectable organizing and fund raising talents openly for his cause. In the early 1950s, he began with the distribution of a few thousand pamphlets entitled The Population Bomb (from which Paul Ehrlich derived the title for his famous book) to business leaders in which he expounded some of the various detrimental effects that population growth might have for America's welfare. The "surprising positive response" indicated that his reasoning appeared sound and logical to his readers. This encouraged him to enlarge the circulation. By 1967, the pamphlet had run through 13 editions, and by 1969 1.5 million copies had been distributed.⁶⁴

Inspired by Vogt's Road to Survival to take up the population issue⁶⁵ Moore labored to enhance the clout and reach of the population movement and to funnel it into a certain direction. More obviously than in Rockefeller's case, his initiatives were guided by the reasoning of eugenicists like Sanger, Burch and Vogt. These parallels may be elucidated by a few examples.

The "threat" to world peace that uncontrolled population growth allegedly posed was one of Moore's main concerns.⁶⁶ This assertion did not

⁶⁴ Lader, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Fowler, New York Times, November 26, 1972, p. 85.

⁶⁶ Moore was a patriot, and his nationalistic enthusiasm expressed itself in his curriculum vitae. He already was engaged before the World War II in various projects that were molded to secure peace. In addition to his many other positions, he served as chairman of the executive committee that promoted the Atlantic Union Committee when it became "clear" that the World War II military alliances would not last. In the postwar period, in turn, Moore worked with many groups seeking means to stabilize the world, including the American Association of the UN, the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, the Council on Foreign Relations, and as a member of the Commission on NATO. (Lader, p. 48-53) The Hugh Moore Fund, too,

stand isolated but was intertwined with economic aid. The cue for this can be found in Vogt's arguments. For the latter, aid had only one effect. It aggravated the population problem even more and thus enhanced the potential for conflict. Moore's reasoning may not have been as crass but struck a similar tune. American economic aid, instead of ameliorating, may actually be compounding the economic problems of many of the overpopulated countries receiving it.⁶⁷ Like Vogt, Moore denied the usefulness of aid to underdeveloped countries unless the exorbitant multiplication of people could be restricted.

"We the undersigned citizens have supported the US Foreign Aid Program from the beginning for humanitarian reasons; but recent experience in many of the underdeveloped countries had shown that such aid is unavailing in the absence of some control of their exploding populations."⁶⁸

And again, Moore's assertion that countries which received American aid should be "assisted" to deal with their rapid population growth"⁶⁹ is reminiscent of Vogt's writing. Phrased differently, aid should be made contingent on the existence of a family planning program.

Another example for the eugenicist background of Hugh Moore's thinking is indicated by his contacts with eugenicist Guy Irving Burch. Burch had stressed on several occasions that he considered sterilization as

was set up to promote peace. Moore's ceaseless initiatives mad him a well-known person in government circles -- an advantage that helped him during his anti-population crusades.

⁶⁷ Reprint of an ad of the Hugh Moore Fund, in Lader, p. 21.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Moore ad in New York Times, December 6, 1960, p. 45.

the most effective, that is irreversible, form of birth control, especially for the "poor" and the "diseased." Moore, in his quest for peace, regarded all forms of birth control important for world peace, but "voluntary" sterilization was his main concern. Consequently, he took over the Human Betterment Society, which he renamed in 1964. Since then, it has been called the Association for Voluntary Sterilization (AVS). The Human Betterment Society had its origins in the New Jersey League for Human Betterment in 1937 which was focused on a platform of encouraging eugenic sterilizations. After 1945, this focus shifted slightly to favor the voluntary variant. Hugh Moore was central to this group. He "infused the organization with money, professionalism, and a polished public relations style."⁷⁰ In "mentioning the unmentionable"⁷¹ it could now tackle the "prejudices" of federal and local governments in the US on sterilization. The AVS' goals were eventually not radically different from the former ones of the Human Betterment Society. "AVS literature continued to stress sterilization as a sound answer to the waste of 'billions more of our tax dollars...on relief.'"⁷² But now it could develop reputation whose "eugenic appeals" had shifted "to those of population explosion, welfare costs and pollution."

Sterilization is widely applied nowadays. Currently, more than one million women and men in the US are sterilized every year for various

⁷⁰ Shapiro, p. 58.

⁷¹ Headline in Lader, p. 37.

⁷² AVS as cited in Shapiro, p. 58.

reasons.⁷³ Similarly, this method has been widely propagated and encouraged in the Third World. India has many infamous examples of forcible sterilization. Its eugenic variant, sadly to say, is not extinct yet. As Federal District Judge Gesell has noted, an "indefinite" number of poor people were coerced into accepting sterilization lest welfare benefits be withheld.⁷⁴ The sterilization practices of the Indian Health Service in the US once reached such an extent that, for instance, "[a]ll the pureblood women of the Kaw tribe of Oklahoma have now been sterilized. At the end of this generation the tribe will cease to exist."⁷⁵ Only one word is appropriate here in this sort of campaign: genocide. In 1965, the New Republic noted the first attempts to target specific poverty-stricken groups when the Interior Department became the first federal agency in the Great Society reforms to offer direct birth control services and advice (although not necessarily sterilization) in a program limited to American Indians, natives of the Pacific Trust Company, and Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts in Alaska.⁷⁶

Another indication for Moore's connections with the eugenicist movement is his effort to reorganize the Population Reference Bureau, founded by Burch in 1929 and headed by him when it maneuvered itself into

⁷³ Kasun, p. 53.

⁷⁴ In Chase, p. 22.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Shapiro, p. 6.

⁷⁶ "Fighting World Famine", The New Republic, Vol. 53 (August 7, 1965) p. 8.

financial troubles in 1954.⁷⁷ Moore considered the PRB to be essential for its "authoritative, scientific reports, widely used by educational institutions, newspapers, and other information media."⁷⁸ Consequently, the bureau's survival was essential for him.

Both Moore and Burch despised the Roman Catholic Church and accused it of being a severe obstacle for "improving the condition of the Third World." Burch stipulated that Scientific Birth Control should be practiced by the "ignorant, diseased and poor" to avert the decline of the American culture. But, Burch concluded, "the most uncompromising organized opponent of Scientific Birth Control, the Roman Catholic Church, had increased its numbers in the US from one-hundredth part of the total population in 1790...to one-sixth part in 1920."⁷⁹ Similarly, Moore was convinced that this institution was one of the great obstacles to his population control crusade. He repeatedly attacked Catholic bishops who spoke fervently against the promotion of birth prevention "above all in connection with welfare benefit programs."⁸⁰

How important the ideas of the population control pioneers were for Hugh Moore is further corroborated by his contacts with Margaret Sanger.

⁷⁷ The PRB is one of the oldest and one of the most effective population agencies. It publishes several journals (e.g. Population Bulletin, Population Today) and the often referred to Population Data Sheet, which provides demographic data from 162 countries. It also distributes material for educational purposes.

⁷⁸ Lader, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁹ Burch as quoted in Chase, p. 367.

⁸⁰ Moore ad as reprinted in Lader, p. 28.

Described as the perfect complement to him and admired by him as "the greatest woman of our time"⁸¹ besides Eleanor Roosevelt, Moore's and Sanger's interests were closely intertwined until her death in 1962. For example, Moore strove to put a solid financial base under her creation, the International Planned Parenthood Federation. For this purpose, he launched the World Emergency Campaign in 1960 which intended to raise \$1 million a year to train physicians, purchase contraceptives and distribute them to Third World countries. When he merged the Emergency Campaign with the Planned Parenthood Federation, Margaret Sanger's most important project, to become Planned Parenthood-World Population in 1961, hundreds of thousands of dollars were turned over to fund Planned Parenthood programs overseas.

Like Rockefeller, Moore counted many wealthy and influential men among his friends: Rockefeller Prentice, Camnot duPont Copeland, Eugene Black from the World Bank, Marriner Eccles of the Federal Reserve Board to name only a few. This added a "new kind of respectability."⁸² But more importantly, Moore was able to convince those men (and very few women) of the necessity of population control. In turn, they were willing to contribute not only their names but provide substantial sums of money to the cause. This financial backing allowed Moore to succeed in his ventures. The IPPF had an auspicious start due to the financial support. The PRB could be revived. And Moore's initiatives infused the Association for Voluntary

⁸¹ Lader p. 53.

⁸² Ibid, . p. 11.

Sterilization with money and expertise. Furthermore, an advertising campaign that lasted an entire decade could be sustained.

An interesting aspect of Rockefeller's and Moore's efforts is that they never seemed to team up to pursue their cause in a more united fashion. Apparently, Rockefeller's style was too different: he always feared that phrases like "population explosion" or "population bomb" might create an atmosphere of panic.⁸³ Moore intended this effect, but Rockefeller saw it as unfit for his progress. So they continued working for the same goal during the same time but separately.

The primary goal of both Moore and Rockefeller was to gain access to the government. This would not only enlarge the legitimacy of the movement, but it could then operate as their extended arm to alter current policies. Moreover, the government had connections to all kinds of different international agencies and other governments which in turn could, if the "reasoning" was accepted, set about to influence their policies in a adequate manner.

One of Moore's closest affiliates was General William Draper, former Under Secretary of the Army, chairman of both the Population Crisis Committee and Planned Parenthood-World Population. Draper had discovered in the 1950s already that "birth control was imperative to the preservation

⁸³ Ibid., p. 3.

of the civilized world."⁸⁴ A first great opportunity to influence government attitudes emerged when Draper was named chairman of a committee to report on the effectiveness of US foreign aid and its relationship to economic growth. The Draper Report's findings specified that US aid was useless in the face of the population explosion which threatened "world stability" and that the government needed to provide aid to curb it.⁸⁵ The report soon made its impression as it was not only discussed in the media, but the State Department also reported shortly afterwards that "[r]apid population growth may prove to be one of the greatest obstacles to...maintenance of political stability in many areas of the world."⁸⁶

The intensity of the campaign increased substantially. In 1961, the Hugh Moore Fund, which was established in 1944 to promote world peace and entered the population field in the early fifties, embarked on a full and double-page advertising campaign in newspapers and magazines including the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Time, Harper's Magazine, Reader's Digest.⁸⁷ These ads were signed by some of the most influential men in America like Linus Pauling, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Frank Abrams, former chairman of Standard Oil, Admiral Radford, former chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff. This not only

⁸⁴ As cited in Kenneth Crawford, "Birth Control," Newsweek, July 12, 1965, p. 52.

⁸⁵ New York Times, November 15, 1960, p. 23.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Shapiro, p. 74.

⁸⁷ Lader, p. 20.

conveyed legitimacy for the attempt to alert the public to problems of the population explosion but was also meant to target the government. For instance, shortly before Congress debated the foreign aid bill in 1963, an ad headline read: "Population Explosion Nullifies Foreign Aid."⁸⁸ Depending on the occasion the addressee was the president himself or the American public who was asked to rip out the ad and send it to "anyone in Washington you think might be helpful."⁸⁹ Another target was the strongest opponent of birth control, the Catholic Church: "Catholic Bishops Assail Birth Control as Millions Face Starvation."⁹⁰ In this manner, an arbitrary, oversimplified cause-effect relationship was created. Ads and reports, supported by various "scientific" findings, always conveyed the same message: any attempt to improve the lot of mankind was futile without reducing population growth.

The campaign proceeded on several levels: in addition to the ads, the Hugh Moore Fund wrote personal letters to selected audiences, for instance, Washington bureau officials, members of the White House staff, all ambassadors of the UN, all the key officers at UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, and WHO and to "80,000 people selected from Who's Who in America, Who's Who of American Women and the American Catholic Who's Who, a mailing that contributed to further pressure on Washington."⁹¹ The Population Crisis

⁸⁸ See for instance New York Times, June 9, 1963.

⁸⁹ Ibid., January 16, 1968, p. 40.

⁹⁰ Ibid., December 18, 1966, IV, p. 14.

⁹¹ Lader, p. 33.

Committee, created by Moore and Draper in 1965, proved a further effective tool for lobbying in Washington as it incorporated highly influential figures. Even Vice President George Bush was in close contact with the organization in the early 1980s.⁹²

In 1967 the advertising campaign was intensified under the guidance of the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion. Moore had found that despite all of his efforts public expenditures for his venture were still too small and that the average citizen was unconcerned. The time had come "for top leaders in public relations and advertising to become involved with the population explosion."⁹³ The individual citizen was told in these ads what to do, how to get involved, overpopulation was depicted as the threat to peace, to the environment, and the cause of crime and famines. By 1969, "[t]otal circulation [of the ads] exceeded 40 million, with perhaps 140 million reader exposures."⁹⁴ When finally the Campaign's funds were exhausted, Moore himself continued to finance it personally through 1971.

To look at just one small indicator, for example, the effect of Moore's and Rockefeller's persistence, (their) population organizations and money are reflected in the amount of articles the reader was exposed to in elite newspapers. An examination of the New York Times Index indicates this frequency of stories on population per year.

⁹² Kasun, p. 191.

⁹³ Moore as quoted in Lader, p. 64.

⁹⁴ Lader, p. 64.

Table 1-1: Frequency of stories on population per year in the New York Times from 1945 to 1970.

1945 - 5	1954 - 25	1963 - 65
1946 - 7	1955 - 16	1964 - 35
1947 - 5	1956 - 12	1965 - 78
1948 - 20	1957 - 15	1966 - 73
1949 - 13	1958 - 10	1967 - 67
1950 - 6	1959 - 38	1968 - 71
1951 - 8	1960 - 50	1969 - 96
1952 - 15	1961 - 42	1970 - 101
1953 - 10	1962 - 34	

It can be noticed that the number of articles concerning overpopulation increased dramatically over time. This impression is confirmed by an examination of the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature.

Table 1-2: Frequency of stories on population per year in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature⁹⁵ from 1945 to 1970.

1945 - 9	1954 - 9	1963 - 41
1946 - 5	1955 - 14	1964 - 36
1947 - 4	1956 - 15	1965 - 43
1948 - 12	1957 - 18	1966 - 28
1949 - 6	1958 - 21	1967 - 21
1950 - 2	1959 - 36	1968 - 22
1951 - 3	1960 - 23	1969 - 40
1952 - 5	1961 - 17	1970 - 46
1953 - 6	1962 - 36	

⁹⁵ The amount of articles in the Reader's Guide listed are the sum of the articles under the headings "Population", "Overpopulation", and "Increase of Population". From 1965 onward, the years in the Reader's Guide begin in March of the respective year and end in February of the next year. "1966" thus encompasses March 1966 to February 1967. During the 1960s the number of articles listed under "population" and "increase of population" outnumbered those under "population" by far whereas before 1960 almost all articles could be found under the heading of "population."

This success can be assessed even more clearly by following the actions and policies concerning population matters. A short chronological summary shows that during Kennedy's presidency organizations like the International Economic Growth Center and the National Sciences Academy as well as government members already began to take an interest in the population explosion and urged the public to get more actively involved.⁹⁶ Kennedy himself reconsidered his initially hesitant position towards the issue. In the wake of the World Food Congress in 1963, Congress expressed alarm about the magnitude of the population explosion. Soon afterwards the use of funds for birth control studies in nations that received US foreign aid was authorized, providing a more open role at home and abroad for birth control matters.⁹⁷

These developments indicate that the priorities in American politics changed their focus. The topic of "contraception" was openly discussed, and attitudes toward abortion and sterilization changed slightly with the onset of the "sexual revolution". The introduction of the pill proved a milestone in itself: the sexual act and reproduction became two different things, accelerating this change even more.⁹⁸ In addition, the political setting -- Civil Rights and Equal Rights movement -- enhanced liberalization

⁹⁶ New York Times, May 6, 1962, p. 41; April 18, 1963, p. 18.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, July 20, 1963, p. 1; June 23, 1965, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Edward Stockwell and Theodore Groat, World Population (New York 1984: Franklin Watts), p. 157.

while the population crusaders intensified their campaign.

Some of the effects were reflected by Johnson's statements which showed a growing inclination to address population control over time. Johnson went from seeking "new ways" to deal with the population explosion in 1965 by assuring that his administration help other nations curb their populations in 1966 to asserting in 1967 that the food-population race had been lost and concerted action would be needed.⁹⁹

At the persistent urging of Rockefeller, who saw the need of persuading the government that fast action was needed, in 1968 Johnson appointed the Committee on Population and Family Planning. Such a request was calculated in terms of satisfying public opinion. In 1966, a Gallup poll taken for the Population Council already had established that most Americans backed federal aid for birth control programs to foreign governments. Not surprisingly, Rockefeller also co-chaired the Committee whose task it was to assess the total role and responsibility of the federal government for the population problem.¹⁰⁰

Soon afterwards AID, in a major policy shift, stated it would finance the manufacturing and distribution of birth control pills for those LDCs which had voluntary family planning programs. The organization subsequently doubled its expenditures to \$20 million a year from 1967 to 1968. Simultaneously, the International Planned Parenthood Federation

⁹⁹ New York Times, January 5, 1965, p. 16; January 21, 1966, p. 1; January 11, 1967, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Shapiro, p. 77; New York Times, July 17, 1968, p. 46.

(IPPF) was to receive \$3.5 million from the US government in 1968, seven times as much as in 1967.¹⁰¹ The population campaign continued to expand in 1970 when President Nixon signed into law the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act. This bill pledged \$382 million for a three year program and created a Federal Office for Population Affairs to coordinate ways to control population growth.¹⁰²

Nixon proved even more committed than his predecessor to government financed birth control programs. The Committee on Population and Family Planning in its report had urged the government to establish a Commission "to assess the consequences of population growth trends in the US, to evaluate progress in fledgling family planning programs already in operation and to consider alternative population policies."¹⁰³ The 24 member Committee on Population Growth and the American Future, co-chaired by Rockefeller too, began its work in early 1970. After being appointed by President Nixon, this committee was only one of many actions taken by him to fight the population problem. He was also the first American president to send a message to Congress recommending legislative action to deal with the population problem. The effect of the population explosion discourse also turned up in other public forums. "Extremist" views about the crisis were presented more and more often. UN General Secretary U Thant, for instance, gave the world 10 years to solve the problem and avoid disaster;

¹⁰¹ New York Times, April 6, 1967, p. 1; November 13, 1967, p. 13.

¹⁰² Ibid., December 27, 1970, p. 1.

¹⁰³ Shapiro, p. 78.

a group of scientists called Nixon's policy of voluntary birth control "insanity" and urged compulsory methods; and major scientists, like Paul Ehrlich, said that the US might have to resort to the addition of drugs to induce temporary sterility in food shipped to foreign countries. Over time, several proposals were also made to withhold aid from countries without population programs.¹⁰⁴

In 1971, a study revealed that the concern over population problems was so widespread that 50% of the US citizens favored liberalization of restriction of abortion and 80% backed voluntary sterilization.¹⁰⁵ Predictably, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future found no merit in population growth for the US and suggested the US be the first nation to slow and gradually stop its population growth.¹⁰⁶ But the commission avoided the word "crisis" which had been used lavishly before. This shift indicated of a new caution as US birth rates reached the replacement level.

1.4 REASONS BEHIND THE SUCCESS

How can these initial successes of the anti-population movement in the US be explained? Although Moore and Rockefeller did not work together,

¹⁰⁴ New York Times, July 19, 1969, p. 1; September 22, 1969, p. 31; November 25, 1969, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, October 28, 1971, pp. 1, 22.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1972, p. 1; See also Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, Population and the American Future (New York 1972: The New American Library).

they had the same goals, namely, to alert the public and, more importantly, establish the necessity for a population policy. During the 1950s, this was virtually impossible as the conservative political and social setting contained many discussions about contraception and population control. This situation made a different approach necessary, particularly systematic efforts to organize a movement by dominating public discourse on the issue.

Due to their financial backing these two population crusaders could use their substantial material to construct and support new population control organizations, direct the training of population professionals, and steer the funding and publishing of research. Financial means ensured the active participation and support of academics and experts. Additionally, well-known public figures were recruited who could lend the cause respectability and legitimacy.

The population control movement, then, became much more well organized. But to establish the need for a population policy and to convince the government of the advantages of adopting their vision of population policy required the right timing. This opportunity came at the beginning of the 1960s as public attitudes toward birth control changed with the invention of oral contraceptives. The Draper Committee's report, advocating birth control as the best means of dealing with the population "explosion," made a tremendous impression as its policy implications were debated in the media. It also triggered intense public discussions about contraception which had been a taboo topic. Similarly, the Population Council used foreign policy

pressures to put contraception abroad in a new context.¹⁰⁷ John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign was a further valuable factor in breaking the media silence on birth control. Since he was Catholic, and the Catholic Church was very much opposed to any form of contraception, "his candidacy generated a flurry of activity on the birth control issue."¹⁰⁸ Kennedy himself went through an individual change. At the beginning of his candidacy, he sided with his predecessor Eisenhower that the US should not influence other nation's policies. By 1963, this opinion was considerably weakened. Kennedy now believed that the US should give demographic data and contraceptive technology to nations requesting such assistance, which would have been unimaginable a few years earlier.¹⁰⁹

Thus, introduction of a contraceptive pill, the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, apparently more liberal sexual mores, and the growing interest of youth in environmental issues made it easier for population controllers. The discussion about contraception had reached the public, birth control was widely accepted, and the ecological reasoning that more people polluted more gave more momentum to birth control advocates.

It was now easier to convince the government of the sensibility of having a population policy. Rockefeller's persistence brought about the appointment of the Committee on Population and Family Planning. The

¹⁰⁷ Shapiro, p. 74.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ New York Times, April 20, 1960 p. 28; July 20, 1960 p. 15; April 25, 1963, p. 15.

committee's suggestion to create a commission, which was to assess the population trends, to develop family planning programs and to consider alternative population policies eventually involved the government deeply.

The significant role the media played in transforming a private interest into a public concern was briefly discussed in the introduction. It was shown that the press, due to its interests to report "important" and "extraordinary" events in a preferably objective fashion, is generally biased toward the more powerful members and institutions of the American society. By skillfully making themselves available to the media, the population crusaders could, as the initiators of the population issue, define the topic and hence determine how it was debated. All further discussions "had to be" set within these discursive boundaries lest they be considered irrelevant. The initial definition of the problem set the framework for the public debate by focusing on the objectives and needs of the antinatalist movement.

While the media were cautious in the 1950s when birth control was a cultural taboo, their curiosity about considering the population issue grew more rapidly once these obstacles were overcome. This shift certainly coincided with the willingness of the government to consider new population controls. Otherwise, it might have contradicted the campaign's declarations. This would have happened if a powerful opposition had been present. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, this was not the case. The New Right, which would play an important role in this respect in later years, emerged only in the early 1970s. A second reason for rejection might have been if the campaign's objectives had clashed with the government's own. Equally, this

did not seem to be the case as the government went along.

1.5 "ONE OF THE GREATEST PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD"

Rockefeller, Moore, Draper and their disciples cleverly used their media, money and personal influence to alert public, business and political leaders of the benefits of reducing population growth. The issue permeated into the life of most Americans as they were bombarded with advertisements, articles and books. Discussions about the merits of contraception became a daily occurrence in the 1960s. Various organizations soon demanded cheap and free access to contraception for teenagers and poor people. Some, as mentioned, even asked for coercive methods: "pure access" would be trivial.¹¹⁰

Most people after being exposed to these discussions soon believed that the population explosion had become one of the greatest problems in the world. Population growth in the US was detrimental to the "well-being" of the nation. Sex education was put on the curriculum of many eighth graders,¹¹¹ and many new birth control clinics opened across the nation. An almost unanimous belief emerged that held "the population explosion should be checked by making birth control devices and counseling more widely available, particularly for poor people."¹¹² Only some religious authorities

¹¹⁰ Kasun, p. 95.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹² "An Explosive Desire for Children", in: Time, August 22, 1969, p. 57.

were adamant in their opposition, while occasional protests from blacks who feared "genocide" and "racism" could be noted when the discussion was about zero population growth or when they felt pressured to consult birth control clinics lest they lose their welfare.¹¹³ They resented that public and private birth control clinics were set up in slum areas with otherwise inadequate health facilities. Sterilization also became widely available in the 1970s when other public services were reduced. As blacks had to fight so hard for every small improvement, this new policy seemed contradictory. It was perceived as a thinly disguised scheme to eliminate the poor rather than reform the system. However, most of their fears easily were dispelled. After all, for many it was an advantage to have cheap access to birth control.

1.6 THE ENVIRONMENT

Although the anti-population crusade caused a major sensation, many people were not as radically influenced as the antinatalists had hoped. Surveys, as Wayne Davis has shown, indicated in 1970 that the average American family wanted 3.3 children regardless of wealth, race and religion.¹¹⁴ The antinatalists were bound to use every possible means to remedy this "wrong" ideal. Conveniently, it was overlooked that in the late 1960s the trend pointed to a fertility that would reach replacement levels soon.

¹¹³ The Nation, April 28, 1969.

¹¹⁴ Wayne Davis, "Overpopulated America," New Republic, Vol. 162, No 2 (January 10, 1970) p. 15, see also "Explosive Desire for Children," Time, August 22, 1969, p. 57.

The utilization of the environmental consciousness by antinatalists during this period turned out to be an important tool to alert people who would soon wear "people pollute" buttons on their lapels. William Vogt in 1945 and Fairfield Osborn in 1948 had already warned of the problems that overpopulation compounded for the environment.¹¹⁵ This belief was spread by many others who wrote in the 1960s and 1970s. Magazines like The New Republic joined the chorus: recreational areas were becoming overcrowded as countless people invaded them every weekend and quiet spots were more and more difficult to find.¹¹⁶ Cities bigger than 300,000, on the other hand, inhibited the access to the countryside and thus divorced people from nature, which was seen as a very unfavorable development. Even the economy suffered from the overcrowding syndrome: per capita productivity was noticed to decline as more people were born.¹¹⁷

Robert Cook, then president of the Population Reference Bureau, in an article in The Nation explained that the destruction of the environment could only be linked partly to advancing technologies.¹¹⁸ More importantly, the growing number of people in the US were the problem: after all, the present standards of living would require such a high amount of resources that we were rapidly depleting them. Consequently, he urged, a restriction

¹¹⁵ Fairfield Osborn, Our Plundered Planet (Boston 1948: Little, Brown and Company).

¹¹⁶ John Rader Platt, "The Delicate Question of Population", The New Republic, Vol. 137 (September 2, 1957) p. 10.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Robert Cook in: The Nation, January 13, 1962, pp. 31-33.

of births was the sole remedy. National Parks Magazine also worried the "only action which can provide a lasting solution to our land resource problems [like wildlife parks] is one that will provide a means of controlling human population."..."If we hold wilderness and natural beauty to be important...then one must act immediately."¹¹⁹

Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall was shocked by the prospect of dismal future living conditions (if the then present projections about population were correct) which would inevitably follow from the threatening overcrowding. Poverty would be unavoidable, the enjoyment of nature restricted to the rich elites, and the extinction of animals the rule.¹²⁰

In 1968, Paul Ehrlich's Population Bomb¹²¹ alarmed the people with his scenario of an impending ecocatastrophe. While population growth in the Third World population growth was outstripping food supply, the US had managed to feed its people. Alas, the prize it paid was high: industrialization and high yield agriculture had poisoned and degraded the environment. Although Ehrlich recognized that high living standards could aggravate environmental problems his main reason for fearing pollution was still "too many people".

The close interconnection of the two subjects "environment" and

¹¹⁹ Bruce Welch, "The Real Threat to Wilderness: Population", Natural Parks Magazine, January 1963, p. 10.

¹²⁰ Stewart Udall, "Our Perilous Population Implosion," Saturday Review, Vol. 50, No 35 (September 2, 1967) pp. 10-13.

¹²¹ Paul Ehrlich, The Population Bomb, (Binghamton NY 1968: Ballentine Books).

"population" was reflected by a 1969 New York Times article under the title "Two Groups Merge." The Association for Voluntary Sterilization (formerly the Human Betterment Society renamed and revived by Hugh Moore) had sponsored a National Conference on Conservation and Voluntary Sterilization because most conservation groups now "accept the population explosion as close to the roots of their problem."¹²² The environmental inclinations of especially the youth in the 1960s had been quickly recognized, seized and converted by the population crusaders. Rockefeller was no exception when he stressed in 1966 that air pollution was caused by overpopulation.¹²³ Equally, Draper alleged that the biggest threat was not overdevelopment, power projects or four lane highways but people.¹²⁴

Again, one must be impressed with Hugh Moore. A nationwide Environmental Teach-In was planned for April 22, 1970 -- or "Earth Day." Upon discovering that the Teach-In lacked "any strong population component,"¹²⁵ he set about to change this: a third of a million leaflets, pamphlets and folders were distributed on campuses and in communities. Taped radio programs, featuring Paul Ehrlich and his friend David Brower from the Sierra Club, were sent to over 300 college radio stations. Cartoons highlighting the population crisis were offered to college newspapers. A

¹²² "Two Groups Merge," New York Times, October 2, 1969, p. 49.

¹²³ New York Times, December 11, 1966, IV, p. 9.

¹²⁴ William Draper, "Parks - or More People," National Parks Magazine, Vol. 40, No. 223 (April 1966) p. 10.

¹²⁵ Lader, p. 81.

contest which awarded prizes for "slogans relating environmental troubles to 'popullution'" ¹²⁶ were awarded (the term "popullution" should demonstrate how tightly intertwined population and pollution were). And again, upon realizing that those in power had to be made conscious of population's "critical relation to the environment," extensive print advertising space was used. The key ad took the form of an open letter to President Nixon and appeared a day prior to Earth Day. Moore paid for it himself "[k]nowing that the signers of an ad could speak out more forcefully as private citizens than in the name of a foundation."¹²⁷ The response was enormous: thousands of reprints were ordered, and offers for free publication were made.

1.7 THE ECONOMY

It is curious that stagnating population growth mostly was accepted as being profitable for the economy and beyond that for the entire country at least until the early 1980s. For centuries, a strong and economically powerful nation had depended upon a growing population. That is, a growing number of people had been seen as equal to a growing economy and strong military power. The Nation gives a first hint at why this belief was shattered. Current population growth trends, the magazine argued, would overburden the economy since 400 million people were likely to inhabit the United States by the year 2000.¹²⁸ Such a staggering increase had never

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ The Nation, June 28, 1965, p. 687.

happened before. Up until World War II most nations were mainly concerned with increasing, sometimes even stabilizing their populations: disease, famines and war had periodically reduced their size.

Daniel P. Moynihan supported the theory of people as an economic burden. The population in the 1960s, so argued Moynihan, grew by 13.8 million in the US, five times the average of the preceding seventy years.¹²⁹ The nation's institutions were overwhelmed, because it had been only a few years before the impact was felt. The president, he explained, believed "[t]he world was drowning in people. America was drowning in Americans."¹³⁰

The Senior Scholastic underlined this position: at the current population growth rate the US economy would soon not be able anymore to provide the needed housing, schools, teachers, hospitals; public and private transportation facilities would be overburdened.¹³¹ The magazine Commonweal predicted equally overtaxed public services as well as tremendous pollution problems, mainly due to the "high standards of living." This magazine's approach seems a little bit more sophisticated:

"[t]he reason is simple: where a country like India exemplifies the problems of underdevelopment, the US illustrates those of overdevelopment. These problems of overdevelopment, as any newspaper reader knows, are already nearing the level of a

¹²⁹ Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Most Important Decision Making Process," Policy Review, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Summer 1977) p. 91.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 92.

¹³¹ "The Population Explosion: What It Means for the US," Senior Scholastic, Vol. ? (November 4, 1966) pp. 4-7.

national emergency."¹³²

Why, however, the Commonweal recommended that fewer people was the best solution remains its secret. Most likely, it had been attracted to by the easiest solution for every problem described and explained by Moore, Rockefeller and their disciples.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The population control movement began to organize itself shortly after the Second World War. The reasons for this, as laid out by the population controllers, included the perceived threat to national traditions, international political stability, the economy, and the environment as well as the desire to avoid increasing crime rates and poverty. Interestingly, the outlines of this discourse were developed within the most privileged class of the American society. With great certainty, it can be said in retrospect that this beginning was a most crucial factor. It meant not only connections to important people but also possible access to substantial financial support. A second key factor permitting success was the almost unanimous consent which the most influential founders Moore and Rockefeller could secure from their fellows within their elite social class. Without its generous support neither the organization of a scientific network nor year-long advertising campaigns would have been financially possible. Thirdly, the antinatalist crusade took hold within the specific social and political setting of American

¹³² Robert Neil, "The More the Merrier?", The Commonweal, Vol. ? (February 9, 1968) p. 556.

society of the 1960s. Particularly crucial here were the rapidly changing attitudes toward birth control, the greater enthusiasm or initiative for bringing about more equality and the interest of youth in environmental issues. The acceptance of scientific contraception also made population control much more possible. The Civil Rights movement had an important function in converting an initially limited concept into a public social issue as will be shown in Chapter 2. The same positive effect was enjoyed from skillful capturing the environmental awareness of the 1960s in establishing a cause-effect relationship between "too many people" and "environmental degradation." Thus, through these loosely linked discourses, a new popular consciousness about the need for family planning programs was actively fostered as private wealth and influence essentially shaped a public commitment to antinatalist population policies.

The roots of the population control movement can be found in the eugenicist ideas of the late 19th and early 20th century. Many activities of the modern population crusaders reminded of the theories of prominent eugenicists like Guy Irving Burch and William Vogt. Moreover, a striking resemblance in the construction of an artificial reality by means of "scientific" evidence can be observed. Eugenicists labored to "prove" that hereditary endowments constituted poverty and ignorance. The public acceptance of this corroborated that this reasoning, which did not reflect any real cause-effect relationship, was accepted. In a similar fashion proceeded the population control movement. Reports published by "scientific" institutions (but also the advertizing campaigns) elicited a

positive public response. The alleged connection between "overpopulation" and "disaster" came to occupy the minds of most Americans who had been exposed to this reasoning.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

By 1970 it had become clear that Hugh Moore and John D. Rockefeller III had succeeded in alerting the American public to the threat of the "population explosion." But why were they preoccupied with the idea that controlling population growth could be a worthwhile goal? Why did they invest their time, money and energy in such an apparently esoteric cause? Regarding its eugenicist origins, this chapter will also examine who profits from and whom is victimized by the population control ideology. In addition it will ask whether these origins still play a role in today's antinatalist movement.

2.2 THE POPULATION MOVEMENT AND THE COLD WAR

To understand Moore's and Rockefeller's thinking a closer look at the political situation after the Second World War will provide a clue. In 1945, the US found itself in an unusually dominant position in the world, which presented unique opportunity. That is, America would be able to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the earth, largely constructed along American ideals. Yet, there were strong indications that the Soviet Union, was not willing to play along with the US. It was instead very interested in spreading its own ideals. The development of the Cold War was a consequence of this conflict. These frictions between the superpowers

eventually led to "a blind fear of communism" in the US.¹

Nonetheless, the most important goal of the US was to keep peace. In this respect, the biggest threats to peace from the American point of view came from the Soviet Union, in particular, and from Communism in general. Additionally, as the two superpowers competed for ideological allies among Third World countries, the USSR's socialist ideology was believed by many to offer a viable alternative to capitalism. Socialism seemed to provide the much needed solutions to exploitation and poverty. This is the point at which the topic of population control gained critical significance. The belief of the American antinatalists had spread the notion that population growth eroded economic gains. Therefore, expanding populations were believed to perpetuate or even aggravate poverty. This, in turn, led to mass dissatisfaction and political resentment capable of endangering political stability.² Also, the suppressed and dissatisfied poor masses, it was assumed, would be tempted to seek a better future in communist ideology rather than the capitalist West.

Those, however, who were most concerned with the possibility of such developments did not intend to make economic, financial, and technical help a priority. Despite the fact that the demographic transition in the First World had required significant economic and social improvements, the proposition was advanced during the Cold War that population growth needed to be reduced first. Already shortly after World War II, people like

¹ Divine et al., p. 846.

² Shapiro, p. 67.

Elmer Pendell, Guy Irving Burch, William Vogt, and others maintained their conviction that this simplistic formula was the best tool to control communism and contain political conflict. The basic message was that overpopulation breeds poverty, poverty breeds discontent, and discontent leads to communism. If Americans wanted to prevent the US from being engulfed by dangerous communist masses, than these teeming Third World populations had to be controlled.

2.3 A THREAT TO PEACE

These were also the beliefs of John D. Rockefeller III and Hugh Moore in the early 1950s. They feared not only international communism, which might challenge the position of the US, but also the "uprising" of the "socially handicapped" in the US itself. Like Burch and Vogt, Moore and Rockefeller envisioned population control as the most effective means for disarming these dangers.

Their goals fit with the interests of the propertied upper social class. Soon after they ventured out to elicit support for their population control schemes, they noted "surprisingly positive"³ responses. Fertility control designed to alleviate the threat to property, privilege and peace seemed to hold quite an attraction.

The population explosion was compared to the atomic or hydrogen bomb in the magnitude of its threat to world peace: "[a] tidal wave of three billion people will inundate the world in the next 30 years if the present rate

³ Lader, p. 10.

of increase is not arrested."⁴ Such a multitude of people could not possibly be fed as famine already "stalks the earth".⁵ The "hungry overcrowded world" was going to be a world of "fear, chaos, poverty, riots, crime and war. No country will be safe. Not even our own."⁶

In a similar fashion, President Johnson during the 1960s added legitimacy to the population crusade when he argued that "our island of abundance" could not survive in a "sea of despair and unrest, or in a world where even the oppressed may one day have access to the engines of modern destruction."⁷ Obviously, this "access" would be provided by the Soviet Union. Poverty would "inevitably" lead to "social tensions" and ultimately to "more Panamas, Haitis and Cubas - to revolutions and wars, the dimensions of which would be hard to predict. All of it grist for the communist mill. There would be no peace!"⁸ The tensions of the Cold War were deeply ingrained in Moore's mind. Despite the overwhelming military capabilities of the US at that time -- and for any foreseeable future -- the population crusaders were highly agitated by their fears of foreign invasion and of Soviet communism.

⁴ Moore ad in New York Times, December 18, 1966, IV, p. 5. The advertisements cited here are examples as they were repeated on several occasions and appeared in numerous other newspapers and magazines.

⁵ Ad headline, New York Times, January 9, 1966, IV, p. 5.

⁶ Moore ad reprint in: Lader, p. 96.

⁷ New York Times, January 9, 1966, IV, p. 5.

⁸ Moore ad in New York Times, February 9, 1969, IV, p. 5.

2.4 A THREAT TO NATIONAL STABILITY

But there was another danger seen as emerging from within the US: the belief that as America's population grew, more discontented Americans would fall into the "economically deprived" category (estimated in the mid-1960s to be at 35 million already).⁹ This would not only mean an "obstacle to economic and social advancement."¹⁰ It would also pave the way for riots and insurrection. Rampant population growth in the US presented the "prospect of 8 million unemployed instead of 5 million today - of 10 million on welfare, 30 million elderly and 100 million children to be taken care of."¹¹ The cost of maintaining such a huge burden of non-producers, so the assertion went, could of itself add millions of families to those which "are unable to adequately support themselves." This conveyed the notion that rapid population growth inhibited economic progress, a belief repeated in many articles and books.

General Draper, for instance, explained that "population growth is unevenly distributed among income groups."¹² The poor, according to him, simply breed faster. The result was that we would have more public welfare costs but more poverty. With more poor people, we would see more school

⁹ Senior Scholastic, November 4, 1966, p. 5.

¹⁰ Moore ad reprint in Lader, p. 72.

¹¹ Moore ad in the New York Times, February 9, 1964, IV, p. 5.

¹² Draper in Natural Parks Magazine, op. cit., p. 12. Draper served three American presidents in the study of military and population problems overseas. He was also chairman of Planned Parenthood - World Population and national chairman of the Population Crisis Committee. In these position he was a close associate of Moore.

dropouts who would be unable to pay taxes to contribute to community needs. The city slums "jam-packed with juveniles, thousands of the idle" were not only breeding grounds for "discontent, drug addiction and chaos." Environmental problems also would abound: "The quality of life in this great country of ours is deteriorating before our eyes. We have rivers clogged with pollution and air unfit to breathe, due in a considerable degree to multiplication of people."¹³ Additionally, delinquents as well as those with a "mental performance below sixth grade level" were more likely to come from large families. Thus, these discourses claimed that public acceptance of birth control and the education of millions of women "who do not know how to limit the size of their families"¹⁴ in combination with "massive" birth control programs should be made of utmost urgency in public policy. The "underprivileged twenty percent" needed to gain access to information and facilities that the rest could already afford - this "human right should not be denied."¹⁵ Otherwise, the "population bomb" would destroy the human race and our "present-day civilization just as surely as would a nuclear conflict."¹⁶

¹³ Moore ad in New York Times, March 23, 1969, IV, p. 5.

¹⁴ Draper in Natural Parks Magazine, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

2.5 THE POOR AS VICTIM

The population crusaders thus made every conceivable effort in these discourses to prove the importance of their new ideology of "overpopulation." "Too many people", implicitly too many poor people as they were the ones who procreated much faster, were the culprit behind everything bad in American society. The new ideology did not leave much room for questions. For example, were not the poor the ones who suffered most from misguided politics, unequal economic distribution, and greed by certain elite members of their societies (or, in the Third World, of colonial and neo-colonial politics, unequal market participation, exploitation, the world economic system and dependencies)? Not according to the new ideology. On the contrary, they were seen as the ones who threatened the well-being of the individual countries and their well-meaning inhabitants. In this discourse, the poor in America, the unemployed, and those on welfare burdened the honest taxpayer and prevented a better economic performance. As late as 1982, President Reagan declared, for example, that unemployment did not exist because of a recession but because the workforce was so big.¹⁷ The population controllers offered no alternative explanation for crime and violence. It grew all out of too many people. Similarly, the underprivileged were blamed for causing environmental degradation and increasing pollution thereby depriving the successful of their rights to enjoy an atmosphere free of toxins and a society without poverty. Fertility control offered the quick technical solution to all these

¹⁷ Boston Globe as cited in Shapiro, p. 17.

social ills.

The fledgling environmental movement was extensively lobbied not only by the population crusaders but also by the Johnson and Nixon administrations. There seemed to be a logical connection between the assertion that "people pollute" and the idea that more people polluted more. But was it really so easy? Actually, the poor (and at least a part of the middle class) suffer the most from environmental problems. They are the ones who have to live in the inner cities of America. They cannot avoid breathing unhealthy air, they are confronted with unsanitary conditions, and they can neither afford to remedy this situation nor to pay for better health care. They are the victims. Others drive long distances to get into the cities and own factories that release toxins into the air and water. Although many of the underprivileged could be remonstrated for negligence or contributing to unnecessary pollution, they cannot be made responsible for the underlying policies allowing for these developments.

One of the main causes for air pollution, for example, is the burning of fossil fuels in factories, refineries, power plants and, importantly, motor vehicles. It is not news that with the application of technological advances like filter systems the output of pollutants can greatly be reduced. But why are we so reliant on fossil fuel combustion? Without going into detail, it is safe to say that the "maximization of profits has had more than a little to do with the maximization of fossil fuel combustion pollutants."¹⁸ Filters are expensive; to pollute has proven to be much cheaper, even if fines are

¹⁸ Chase, p. 390.

taken into consideration. Also, research is costly, which also means that the development of alternative clean energy sources is unprofitable.

A free market system apparently favors the "strongest." This does not imply that the outcome of the permanent struggle for market shares favors the environment. The demise of the public American transportation system is one example. The involvement of General Motors in public transportation during the Great Depression led to a "sudden abandonment of cheap, electrified, and infinitely safer trolleys, trolley-buses, and commuter trains."¹⁹ In 1949, General Motors was convicted of criminally conspiring with oil and tire companies to replace "electric transportation with gas or diesel powered buses and monopolize the sale of buses and related products..." GM played the key role in the "dismantlement of the \$100 million Pacific Electric [Railway] system."²⁰ It was also the auto industry which produced ever more (unnecessarily) powerful cars which consumed excessive amounts of fuel. The privileged thus were responsible for the destruction of public mass transportation or the failure to build and encourage the use of the latter. A closer examination may reveal that this is only the tip of the iceberg. The dumping of toxic wastes, unsafe garbage disposal and garbage treatment, mismanaged water supplies and waterways or the misuse of renewable and non-renewable resources, at least in part, can equally be attributed to the overwhelming importance of the profit motive.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Senate document as quoted in Chase, p. 391.

The capitalist class, which apparently profited from such developments, generally regarded the environmental movement with its demands for greater improved environmental legislation and more restrictions on business practices as a fetter upon economic growth.²¹ The growth of the economy was the main interest of the government despite the publicly acknowledged clout of the environmental movement. This may be seen in the declarations of John Ehrlichman, Special Counsel of President Nixon, and the thinking of President Gerald Ford. Ehrlichman professed that the Nixon administration attached foremost importance to environmental protection. However, this could not interfere with industrial growth as it "was the key to national growth, and 'a nation which does not grow perishes.'"²² Likewise, Gerald Ford argued that environmental protection often did "more harm than good and 'the question is whether the added costs to the public make sense when measured against actual benefits.'"²³

The population control movement thus had found a very convenient resource. Working for fertility control promoted their fight against the perceived political dangers of the population bomb without sparking discussions about the prevailing social hierarchy. A closer look at poverty in America might have revealed that the system was more flawed than one

²¹ The profit motive determined the actions of the businessman Hugh Moore too. Although he appeared so concerned with the environment he did not mind that "the world threw away 25 million of [his Dixie Cups] every day!" (Fowler, New York Times, op. cit.)

²² Quoted in Chase, p. 61.

²³ Ibid., p. 62.

cared to admit. Ultimately, such acknowledgements might have meant more stringent regulations and an expansion of welfare state interference. Restricted business activities in combination with changing tax policies to remedy these problem could have been a consequence, increasing competition and endangering profits.

The government, too, soon found the adoption of the new population control ideology advantageous. As long as contraception in the American society was a taboo, the US government was more willing to consider it as part of its policies toward the Third World. The benefits had quickly become clear. Communism could be counteracted by promoting fertility control, while the policy concentration on such disadvantages of rapid population growth distracted mass publics from other fundamental conflicts over unequal market shares or neo-colonial exploitation. This is corroborated by US governments' policies urging Third World nations to adopt family planning programs. In 1966, for instance, President Johnson pledged aid to those countries trying to control their populations.²⁴ Kasun stated that

"although there is not doubt that the [antinatalist] policy has aroused antagonism in foreign countries, it has been promoted as a condition for receiving foreign aid, which tends to quiet objections. In return for large flows of American aid, pragmatic foreign rulers consider the demands a small price to pay, especially if democratic elections are not an important factor in their policies.... The rationale is that 'as long as we are feeding them, we should have something to say.'"²⁵

Similar merits could be seen in applying these ideas at home. By

²⁴ New York Times, January 13, 1966, p. 14.

²⁵ Kasun, p. 76.

attributing the shortcomings of the free market system to the victim, his or her demands appeared in a different light since the victims was now the cause of everyone's deteriorating "quality of life." Thus, they were hardly in a position to ask for anything. The campaign could successfully, if not explicitly, target the poor as they did not know "how to curtail their fertility". An alleged "unmet need" for contraception was satisfied in the program of this discourse. Thus, one of the ads read: "[o]ne thing is certain, Mr President [Johnson] 35 million Americans - 'one-fifth of all families with incomes too small to meet their basic needs' - will support you in your war on poverty."²⁶ That is, they, too, will accept family planning. This remedy simply was extended into the US from abroad where millions of women were "desperately seeking to limit the size of their families."²⁷

2.6 THE MERITS OF A NEW IDEOLOGY

How could it happen that so shortly after World War II people could talk again about "sterilizing the poor?" That is, why use population control methods which would be reminiscent of eugenic methods?

Eugenicism in its old negative and positive form had died in Germany's concentration camps. If Malthusianism was to survive, new scientific bases had to be found to make it intellectually respectable in population discourses. The increasing discussion of population growth provided just that. Old dangers that had arisen from the ethnic and racial minorities could

²⁶ Moore ad in New York Times, February 9, 1964, IV, p. 5.

²⁷ Moore ad reprinted in Lader, insert between pp. 24 and 25.

be replaced by the connection between overpopulation and its negative impact on environment; international political stability and economic growth. With America dominating the world scene, those discursive formulations of such global concerns became important. This was the discursive opportunity for organizations like the Population Council to construct a new reality, to offer a legitimate explanation for population control.

"The organizational and ideological tasks were the creation of an organization to resolve the problem of limiting population growth. To accomplish this feat the council helped create a population establishment; forged a coalition to further its goals; attempted to influence public opinion by educating government, corporate and academic leaders; and throughout the world, including the US, successfully rallied scientific support to institute population control policies."²⁸

Although the images played off of overcrowding, this concept is only meaningful in its ideological context. Ironically, it was not densely populated Europe or the densely populated Northeastern part of the US under discussion but the sparsely populated countries in Africa or Latin America that suffered from "overpopulation." The implication here was that poverty and underdevelopment also constituted discursively the problem of overpopulation. Or in an industrial country, when talking about overpopulation, it was the poor who were the culprits. This was explicitly and unmistakably formulated by Moore: "[w]hatever your cause it's a lost cause unless we control population."²⁹ In this fashion, population controllers like Moore or Rockefeller were talking about overpopulation among the lower

²⁸ Shapiro, pp. 67-68.

²⁹ Ad by Hugh Moore in New York Times, August 17, 1969, IV, p. 5.

classes and poorer nations. It was their impact on the environment, a nation's political stability or its welfare that were problematic. This discursive turn was merely a rhetorical shift from the eugenicist's focus on racial and ethnic minorities to the population controllers' concern about poor in general.

In the 1950s when contraception was a taboo topic, the movement aimed more at expanding private research and at building a network of organizations. But when the cultural mood changed in the beginning of the sixties (to which "the population bombers" had contributed), the population controllers were immediately supported in their demands by liberals, progressives, and advocates of women's rights. The basis of their discursive case was the right to choose and the right of the poor to have access to birth control. This was a perfect arrangement. As Shapiro noted "[f]ive million women were initially defined as being at high risk for unwanted pregnancy, and these women, concentrated among the poor and minorities, became the target of government policy."³⁰

What was really at stake in this discourse was the perpetuation of privileges the upper class, to which Moore and Rockefeller undoubtedly belonged. This rhetorical struggle entailed protecting the present form of society or assuring that the social structure was maintained. "Overpopulation" poses a danger to this stable set of privileges. Moore and Rockefeller translated this awareness in their discourses into the population control ideology. As one consequence, the state was pressured over time to

³⁰ Shapiro, p. 77.

accept it and adopt all varieties of birth control methods, including abortion and sterilization, into social policy. After all, it was the best equipped institution to translate ideology into a policy which would ultimately serve the interests of the promoters. Through managing public discourse, a private interest could be translated into a public policy. By building this network of professional organizations, by educating people and explaining the connection between overpopulation and all kinds of problems in the media, the average citizen often came to accept the new ideology. The link was understandable, it made sense, it was "scientifically" proven. In this manner, societal behavior was influenced by discourse, the ideology concurred with people's beliefs. That the state had to interfere in private affairs to enforce better and more birth control was perceived as only a minor distraction. After all, the state was "penetrating so many other areas of social life...[that] intervention in birth control appeared to be just one more logical extension."³¹

Technologically-induced fertility control always tended to appeal to policy makers. It was an available, cheap scientific method to tackle social problems. It offered quick and easy solutions. Government thus came to embrace these policies. As the New York Times noted in 1966: "[i]n a careful, step-by-step manner over the past few years so as not to arouse political opposition the Administration has begun to offering foreign governments technical and financial assistance to undertake demographic

³¹ Ibid., p. 69.

studies and organize population control programs."³² Government efforts to support Third World family planning were "designed especially to help eliminate unwanted childbearing by making contraceptives available to the poor and disadvantaged."³³

This notion was particularly prevalent in President Nixon's thinking. Foreseeing another 100 million Americans by the turn of the century, the US would have to build a good-size city every month.³⁴ Echoing Burch and Moore, Nixon asserted that the "frightening fact is that the poor are multiplying twice as fast as the rich."³⁵ He, therefore, was ready to commit the nation to a family planning program predominantly for the poor to lighten their burden of their "unwanted" children. In the early 1970s, however, Nixon's freedom to act in this respect became more restricted. The right-to-life groups as well as the New Right gained strength. Taking this into account he only supported part of the suggestions made by his Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. Such critical issues as abortion or the supply of contraceptive information and services to teenagers were rejected because they did "nothing to preserve close family relations."³⁶

³² New York Times, January 14, 1966.

³³ Stockwell and Groat, p. 224.

³⁴ "Unwanted People," New Republic, Vol. 161 (August 2, 1969) p. 7.

³⁵ In Shapiro, p. 77.

³⁶ Nixon in the New York Times, May 6, 1972, p. 1.

2.7 TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS

Population control, originally an attempt by upper class advocates to influence public policy regarding the poor, thus had a broadly based policy foundation. Its advocates consequently can be divided into two sets of activists:

- a) those who use population control as a political tool to foster their particular social and political interests; and,
- b) those who are either not aware of or disregard background, origins and goals of the population control movement, supporting it because they feel that birth control is a human right or necessary to improve mankind's condition.

Making this distinction is not to say that members of the first group are not interested in human welfare or that the second group is unanimous in its concern for improving the human condition. The two groups interrelate to some extent. It can, however, generally be noted that the first group often regards state intervention as detrimental (with the exception of family planning as it directly advanced their goals) and views the welfare system with all its implications as an unnecessary burden. Whereas the fear of the poor masses is a reality for them, the environmental concerns are used as an ideological screen to persuade and to give the cause additional legitimacy.

The second group, which eventually constituted much of the population control movement, was much more liberal. It was concerned about

equal rights, equal opportunity, and the effect that people have had on the environment. They generally endorsed state intervention, for instance, to provide legislation to curtail the negative effects of the free market system. They also would provide to those who could not afford it access to contraception or advocate building a much more efficient social security system.

Representatives of the second group are Fairfield Osborn, who wrote Our Plundered Planet in 1948, and Paul Ehrlich, whose Population Bomb hit the market in 1968. Each work in its time became an important milestone in the population control movement.

2.7.1. FAIRFIELD OSBORN

Fairfield Osborn's best seller "Our Plundered Planet" sold over three million copies. It was as successful as Vogt's "Road to Survival" which appeared during the same year. But while Vogt preached eradication of many Asian and Latin Americans, Osborn pointedly explained that "we are all brothers under the skin" and "[t]he antipathies of nations and races, the cults of 'superior' and 'inferior' races, cannot be founded on biology."³⁷

Osborn rejected defeatist, alarmist attitudes. Unlike Vogt, he advised that all people should work together for survival as they were sitting in the same boat: "[t]he peoples of the earth, whether they will it so or not, are bound together today by common interests and needs, the most basic of

³⁷ Osborn, pp. 25-26.

which are, of course, food supply and other primary living requirements."³⁸ Nevertheless, the advice of Burch and Vogt, who Osborn thanked for providing information,³⁹ had convinced him that population growth was "perhaps the greatest problem facing humanity today."⁴⁰ It could be one of the major causes of war and worldwide depletion of natural resources. To Osborn, man was still part of nature despite the emergence of civilization. At the same time, human beings had changed the face of the earth and have destroyed their own resources. But contrary to Vogt, Osborn felt that both Russia and America found themselves in a very undesirable situation.⁴¹

Once in a while Vogt's influence seems to trap Osborn in his own reasoning. He showed a highly critical attitude towards any form of aid in order to hold a country in line with the western democracies (an option that Vogt regarded as inevitable), and his argumentation still considered withholding aid in certain cases. The investor, he believed, often failed to examine the long-term prospects of a poor country before sending aid. Self-reliance would be much more crucial in the long run in every poor country because America could not feed the world as it "slowly ran out of resources itself."⁴²

Here, he showed that he was affected by Malthusianism, and came

³⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 204.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 140-142.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 101-108.

close to Vogt's "death solution". This was not his intention. Still, he recognized the "unfavorable recent developments" in Africa as its natives were coaxed into mining their land to satisfy their desires for imported unnecessary goods which had to be paid for. Taxation he regarded as a "thin veneer to cover forced labor or economic slavery."

Recognizing that factors other than population growth played a role, his belief in Malthusianism is somewhat ambiguous. The productivity of the land could be further enhanced: "[i]t is not invariably true," he concluded, "that population pressures result in damage to the fertility of the land."⁴³ Overpopulation was not his main concern. He intended, as stated in the conclusion, to make people aware of ecological problems. Others "far more competent" were in a better position "to formulate a program."⁴⁴ As man could not be isolated from nature, he had no choice but to protect it. Moreover, the government needed to pursue this goal much more enthusiastically.

2.7.2 PAUL EHRLICH

Paul Ehrlich is quite well-known for his alarmism. In the opening chapter of the Population Bomb (1968), he described his main concern: his simple extrapolations of the present trends yielded that in about 900 years sixty million billion people, 100 persons per square yard, would

⁴³ Ibid., p. 147.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 195.

populate the earth and we would have reached the "heat limit".⁴⁵ But the world was, according to him, already overpopulated, because most countries, including many developed countries were not able to feed themselves anymore. In addition, partly due to an unequal population distribution "we hear constantly of the headaches caused by growing populations: not just garbage in our environment, but overcrowded highways, burgeoning slums, deteriorating school systems, rising crime rates, riots, and other related problems."⁴⁶

The main problem that Ehrlich recognized, however, was the tie between overpopulation and environmental deterioration. The need to grow more and more food for an ever larger population had undesirable results, especially in MDCs. Soils eroded. Animals and plants became extinct. The use of pesticides not only aggravated the problem they were supposed to solve but poisoned the environment further.⁴⁷ Air and water were being more and more polluted. This

"causal chain of deterioration is easily followed to its source. Too many cars, too many factories, too much detergent, too much pesticides, multiplying contrails, inadequate sewage treatment plants [!], too little water, too much carbon dioxide - all can be traced to too many people."⁴⁸

Ehrlich's concern with the environment had brought him to the issue of overpopulation. Long before the publication of the Population Bomb he

⁴⁵ Ehrlich 1968, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 39-48.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

had made local speeches, stating publicly his position on the connection between the environment and the growing world population. As Ehrlich explained

"what was not rational and calculated was the result of having my mouth open at that particular point in time, when apparently people were ripe to listen. All of a sudden I was very much in demand for Bay Area things."⁴⁹

Friends like David Brower from the Sierra Club suggested that he write a book on the subject. With this book, he "naively believed" that he might be able to influence the presidential elections. The Population Bomb, put together quickly from former speeches, turned out to be probably the most widely read and discussed book of the entire population crusade. Ehrlich had entered the discourse at the perfect time as the antinatalist wave approached its zenith. Soon Ehrlich's cause was deliberately promoted. "Debates, speeches, magazine articles, interviews, technical papers, and college and high school textbooks were all part of the conscious effort by Ehrlich's group to get the message about population control to as wide an audience as possible."⁵⁰ In an age of television, radio and mass paperbacks, Ehrlich proved to be an extraordinary talent. His favorable appearance and his talents at using the media made it easy for him to fascinate and convince people. In 1970 when he hit the peak of his popularity, "he reached over two dozen requests a day for personal appearances, although he charged

⁴⁹ Ehrlich as quoted in: Rae Goodell, The Visible Scientist (Boston 1975: Little, Brown and Company), p. 15.

⁵⁰ Goodell, p. 17.

\$2000 for lectures and was booked a year in advance."⁵¹ The media came to him: reporters sought him out for interviews, magazines searched for his articles, television crews wanted to videotape his opinions. After an appearance on the Johnny Carson Show, NBC received a record of over 5000 letters and Ehrlich was invited back.

What attracted people to him and his book? Ehrlich is a very eloquent, outspoken and educated man. He could capture the attention of an audience. He illustrated his reasoning in a logical and memorable fashion. The Population Bomb itself made its points equally clear. But there also are quite a few parallels with the ideas of Vogt and Burch. Ehrlich, as he depicted in three futuristic scenarios, believed in Burch's and Vogt's reasoning, namely, that if the Earth eventually was engulfed in nuclear war and ravaging famines, then it would all be due to overpopulation. Like Vogt, he claimed that "reduction of the death rate in a population will lead to disaster if the birth rate remains uncontrolled."⁵²

Ehrlich, however, could not easily be accused of being biased. His remedy was not birth control for only selected (poor) people. He did not recommend that only the Third World countries pursue family planning, that only potential adversaries or the poor in the US needed to adopt it. He instead tried to construct a scheme of financial incentives and disincentives to not have children as equitably as possible: "For each of the first two children, an additional \$600 would be added to the 'taxable income' figure.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵² Ehrlich 1968, p. 81.

For each subsequent child, \$1200 would be added. In order to prevent hardship, minimum levels would be established guaranteeing each family enough for food, clothing and shelter"⁵³ regardless of the amount of children.

Ehrlich's concern encompassed all countries. He not only believed that the United States was an especially urgent case, but that it needed to set an example which would make it easier for the other nations to follow. It is well known that he was among the first to live up to his ideas. In 1963, he underwent a vasectomy.⁵⁴ He wanted to alert people to the catastrophes that were soon to come:

"I am an alarmist, because I am very goddamned alarmed. I believe we are facing the brink because of population pressures. I am certainly not exaggerating the staggering rate of population growth; it's right there in plain, round numbers....Whatever problems I'm diverting attention from will be academic if we don't face the population-environment crisis now."⁵⁵

Looking for racist and eugenicist statements as well as "incorrect" doomsday views of the population bombers, Kasun's attempts to include Ehrlich with them seem rather lame. She stated, for instance, that American school children, who had read The Population Bomb, "were taught, falsely that 'world population is increasing at a rate of 2% per year whereas food supply is increasing at a rate of 1% per year', and equally falsely, that 'population

⁵³ Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁴ Goodell, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Ehrlich in a Playboy interview 1970 as cited in Pohlman 1973, p. 20.

growth and rising affluence have reduced reserves of the world's minerals."⁵⁶ Kasun's critique mainly is confined to the "obvious repugnance" which Ehrlich displays when he speaks of "'people, people, people, people."⁵⁷ She argues his well-known name and best seller contributed to "seducing" official aid circles into a commitment to international population control.⁵⁸

As Chase admitted,

"many of the most active and vocal partisans of Zero Population Growth (ZPG) [Ehrlich was founder and president of ZPG] and other Population Bomb crusaders are not racists. Some of them, in fact, have proven themselves to be active opponents of the old-fashioned gut racism.

It is merely that they have not the faintest suspicion of the fact that the entire postwar Population Explosion concept and the Population Control Movement...that it has fathered are now essential ingredients of the new scientific racism."⁵⁹

Ehrlich was well aware of the possibility of being accused of racist sentiments and underlined his aversion against them:

Minority groups very wisely detect an element of genocide in the talk of many people who discuss population control.... The most serious population growth is among affluent whites, because they are the heavy polluters and consumers. The blacks and chicanos and the American Indian tend to be victims of pollution rather than the cause of it; they have very little chance to consume. Anybody who worries about too many black, brown or red babies has a very simple device available to make the black, brown or red birth rates identical to the white birth rates. All that's necessary is for everyone in the country to

⁵⁶ Kasun, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁹ Chase, pp. 55.

have the same economic, social and educational opportunities."⁶⁰

Actually, Ehrlich did not disassociate himself unambiguously from racism in The Population Bomb. An indication of this problem is his adoption of a selective system, based on "triage", to allocate aid to other countries.⁶¹ Under the triage system, which has been used in military and civilian disasters, human casualties are divided into three groups: first, those who will probably survive without immediate treatment; second, those whose life depends on medical help; and third, those who will most certainly die even with medical care. Ehrlich regarded the application of the triage system as virtually inevitable if mankind wanted to survive the population problem. Hence, only countries which were likely to pull themselves out of the quagmire if foreign aid was provided or those with the necessary resources, should be helped. Although morally questionable, Ehrlich had drafted this concept because he, like Osborn, saw America and a few other nations in a predicament. It would be impossible to feed everybody since the "giant food surpluses are gone and even a maximum production we would not be able to produce surplus for all (to say nothing of getting it properly distributed)."⁶² Consequently, "rational choice" would dictate "to adopt some form of the 'Paddocks' [triage] strategy as far as the food distribution is concerned."⁶³

⁶⁰ Cited from Playboy interview with Ehrlich, in Pohlman 1973, p. 24.

⁶¹ Ehrlich 1968, pp. 142-144.

⁶² Ibid., p. 141.

⁶³ Ibid.

As criticism abounded, Ehrlich clarified his most ambiguous positions in interviews or the revised edition of The Population Bomb (1971). He still believed that "too many people" were at the core of many of the world's problems. He complained that particularly America had an exceptionally big population problem. It existed not because of high population numbers, but rather because it consumed comparatively large amounts of resources due to her affluence, high living standards, and wastefulness. A country like the US lived at the expense of others. It used disproportionate amounts of resources and created disproportionate amounts of waste and environmental damage.

This position can hardly be challenged on racist grounds.⁶⁴ Rather, it might have been questioned to what extent the size of a population and its affluence necessarily compound environmental problems. At least, Ehrlich seemed well aware that to exclusively attribute the world's ills to overpopulation was too simplistic. Thus, he made extensive suggestions about how to tackle environmental problems -- apart from

⁶⁴ In his criticism, Chase as well as Kasun studiously overlooked that Ehrlich, due to continuous attacks, deleted, revised, toned down various passages in his 1971 edition of the Population Bomb (Goodell, pp. 105-106) and tried to alleviate those which were reminiscent of racism. Particularly in Chase's case, this is peculiar. After all, he cited, and thus must have read, Goodell, who elaborated on Ehrlich's career. A better explanation for Ehrlich's "racist" undertones might have been that he appeared to become trapped in his own argument. He could not evade the Paddocks' strategy because he appeared unable to imagine that the world's population could be fed under different circumstances. Thus, he only toned down the application of triage. While India in his 1968 version was not worth considering for aid at all, he distinguished in 1971 that "some sections of India might be aided and others not." (Paul Ehrlich, The Population Bomb (Riverside MA 1971: Riverside Press), p. 151)

reducing population growth.⁶⁵

2.8 CONCLUSION

Allan Chase definitely had a good point when he argued that the anti-population campaign originally was founded in scientific racism despite the fact that most eugenicists in the beginning of this century "put down the birth control movement...as a dangerous and uncouth conspiracy of socialists, liberals, Jews, anarchists, crackpots, Jew lovers, racial degenerators and otherwise dysgenic hyphenated Americans."⁶⁶

There is no doubt either that many of the population controllers, like Burch and Vogt, pursued these goals. Others at least subconsciously supported these objectives as well.⁶⁷ The group that advocated Osborn's and Ehrlich's positions, however, can hardly be accused of racism. Granted, the dividing line between Burch's and Vogt's racism and Ehrlich's concern is flexible. Underlying racist attitudes often have been well hidden beneath seemingly "innocent" sentences, paragraphs, and articles. Thus Chase, and to some extent even Kasun, were right when they claimed the antinatalist movement had been infiltrated by eugenicists and racists. But

⁶⁵ See Ehrlich 1968, pp. 135-141, or even more explicitly Ehrlich 1971, pp. 97-115.

⁶⁶ Chase, p. 54.

⁶⁷ See e. g. Edward Pohlman, How to Kill Population (Philadelphia 1971: Westminster Press), pp. 26, 32, of 103ff. Pohlman is himself prejudiced against other nations and races; therefore he regards Ehrlich's position, which made no distinction between races and colors, as "extreme".

to create the impression that all antinatalists can be treated alike as Kasun attempted to show is not only not justified, but an insult to those who have been trying to stop environmental destruction. It is one thing to believe that many more billions can be fed easily, that there is no connection between rapidly increasing populations and economic and social difficulties, that earth and man will always be able to provide more resources, and that environmental deterioration has virtually nothing to do with people.⁶⁸ It is another thing to accuse all those who have different opinions of genocide and racism.

The discursive interest of the antinatalist movement could be described as a general concern with national security and the fear of communism. Or, more specifically, it had the main objective of perpetuating a privilege. This goal, necessarily, had to be disguised. The population crusaders discovered the apparently cheapest and easiest method of coping with the problem. If poverty led to communism, and if the poor were likely to rule the world because they multiplied much faster, then population control was the means to avoid this occurrence. The logical equation that poverty indicates an overpopulation problem created a new ideology. This was translated by their discourses into public awareness. Too many people were not only responsible for the lack of economic growth but also resulted in crime, social upheaval, wars, and environmental decay. Thus, in these discourses, the poor were essentially made responsible for the ills of the world, which often were really the responsibility of the well-to-do. Those

⁶⁸ Kasun, Chapters 1, 2.

who suffered most actually were the culprits too. The public accepted this reasoning in population discourse without generally being aware of its background and intentions. The social order thus was reenforced by these population discourses -- the poor were unlikely to gain, poverty was unlikely to be alleviated, the wealthy remained untouched.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Strong antinatalist arguments in the population discourses were essentially unchallenged until they reached the pinnacle of their popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Afterwards, antinatalism experienced a slow but continuous decline in popular support and interest. The main event that stimulated the fear of global overpopulation in the US was the World Population Conference in Bucharest in 1974, which also showcased some important differences in opinion about the role that "too many people" played. But the resumed discussion about the negative impact of overpopulation did not seem to last long. As new national and international events demanded more attention, the population question left the headlines. One might say that the debate became "de-internationalized". As one could observe in the New York Times, the global aspects of population issues, which had been prominent under the heading of "population" in the 1960s and 1970s had all but vanished by the early 1980s.

This chapter will examine what caused this unexpected development. How was it possible that the interest for the population question in the US flagged while the world population grew faster than ever before? Were Americans simply tired of the issue or did political developments play a more important role in this change?

3.2 THE FIRST SIGNS OF A TURNAROUND

To understand why American birth rates started to decline after reaching their zenith in 1957, certain historical events have to be taken into account. The postwar economic upswing had resulted in higher living standards and certain financial freedoms. At the same time, however, the trend toward more consumption made life increasingly expensive.¹ The pent-up consumer demand initially met scarce supplies which drove up prices by 25% during the first two postwar years.² While inflation decreased substantially afterwards, the baby boom and the flight to suburbia quickly raised living expenses. For many, a two-car household became a necessity. Long commutes to work became unavoidable while women often needed cars to run errands and drive their children to school. Ultimately, women were forced to participate in the work world, a trend reflected in constantly rising employment figures. Despite an emphasis on the traditional family, the number of wives joining the work force doubled between 1940 and 1960.³ Between 1955 and 1985 the percentage of working women increased from 40% to over 70%.⁴ This, in part, was caused by the fact that after 1965 the wage

¹ During the 1950s, the suburbs grew by 46% while the inner cities remained fairly stagnant in size. By 1960 1/3 of the nation lived in the periphery. (Divine et al., p. 836.)

² Ibid., p. 838.

³ Ibid., p. 842.

⁴ Stewart Powell et al., "Measuring the Impact of the 'Baby Bust' on US Future," US News and World Report, Vol. 99, No. 25 (December 16, 1985) p. 66.

gap between the sexes narrowed.⁵ At the same time, the feminist movement gained additional leeway, demanding equal rights, equal pay, equal treatment, and a redefinition of the traditional role of women as mothers and wives.

These demographic and economic events were directly responsible for the rapid decline of the US birth rate. After peaking in 1957, it reached its lowest point in 1976.⁶ Other important features also should be mentioned. First, another very important factor was the availability of highly effective, medically safe, and culturally acceptable methods of birth control: the contraceptive pill and the intrauterine device (IUD) which reached the market during the 1960s. Second, voluntary sterilization was widely practiced for the first time in the 1960s. During the 1970s, it even surpassed the pill as the single most common form of fertility control. More than 700,000 men and women were sterilized annually during the early 1970s; currently the figure is more than one million.⁷ Third, changing mores and attitudes also enhanced the acceptance of abortions. The Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision of 1973, effectively legalizing the unconditional right to abortion during the first trimester of a pregnancy, made access to abortions much easier: 6000 in 1966; 50,000 in 1969; 200,000 in 1970; 1.3

⁵ Teitelbaum and Winter, p. 85.

⁶ See graph in Scott Menard and Elizabeth Moen, Perspectives on Population (New York 1987: Oxford University Press), p. 79.

⁷ Kasun, p. 153; Teitelbaum and Winter, pp. 82-83.

million in 1977; over 1.5 million in 1985.⁸ In addition, the decline of religious authority further diminished traditional family values. Fourth, the costs of childbearing and raising soared, especially as longer and better education became more essential. The well-to-do preferred high-quality education for their children, wanting their children to be more successful than they were. Fifth, growing independence and freedom of women meant there were many more practical and viable alternatives to marriage and motherhood. Sixth, the average age of marriage rose along with the proportion of people who never married and the number of unmarried couples. Thus, fewer people spent their "prime" reproductive years in a stable marital union, the social setting where most childbearing occurs.⁹

The antinatalist movement operated in combination with these events, which all "naturally" led to reduced birth rates since it had "discovered" the interconnection between growing populations and environmental problems (like crowding, higher demand on resources, strain of public facilities etc.).¹⁰ By recommending slower population growth as the main solutions to these problems and furthering such public respective policies, the antinatalists certainly magnified all of these deterrents to childbearing.

Thus, an interesting situation evolved. The anti-population campaign

⁸ See Kasun; also Stockwell and Groat, p. 206.

⁹ See for example: McFalls, Jones, Gallagher: US Population Growth: Prospects and Policy in: Menard and Moen; Tapinos, Piotrow, p. 158; Charles Nam and Susan Philiber, Population (Englewood Cliffs NJ 1984: Prentice Hall), pp. 116-156.

¹⁰ See for example: Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, Chapters 3, 5 and 6.

reached its apex when the US birth rate approached its nadir. This is, however, not as surprising as it seems. The official absolute growth rate, a factor often cited in population statistics, remained slightly below 1%. These figures showed no sign of leveling off albeit the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) remained below replacement level and failed to rise again as many had expected.¹¹ The continuing increase was, of course, due to the population momentum as well as immigration. And, the factors necessary for an increase in birth rates (traditional family values, low costs, economic success, lack of equality, and lower education, etc.) remained elusive during the 1970s and 1980s.

The 1970s, in fact, could well be described as the decade of crisis. Inflation and unemployment became highly significant concerns, export surpluses dwindled, the economy sputtered. The oil embargo quadrupled oil prices by 1974 only to reach a six-fold increase after 1980 although they decreased again slowly. Still, the energy crisis was born. This pattern of crisis was reflected politically in the Watergate affair, humiliation in Vietnam, hostage ordeal in Tehran. A general disillusion with the industrial society and the national government developed out of these serious crises. "The American's image of himself and his government and country altered

¹¹ The UN registered 4.3 million births in the US in 1960, 3.7 million in 1970, 3.6 million in 1980, and projected 3.6 million for 1990. The Total Fertility Rate declined from 3.77 in 1957 to 1.74 in 1976. Subsequently, it recovered slightly and has since then remained between 1.8 and 1.9. (See Ben Wattenberg, The Birth Dearth (New York 1987: Simon and Schuster), p. 28 and appendix.)

drastically and for the worse..."¹² These sentiments, combined with the economic squeeze and other factors mentioned above, led to the lowest birth rates ever. The Gallup poll showed that more people now believed in the value of smaller families. Main reasons cited were the high cost of living and education, an uncertain future, and concern with crowded conditions and overpopulation.¹³ Thus, the antinatalist discourse of the 1940s finally manifested itself in household practices in the 1970s.

A slight economic recovery, however, began in 1982-1983. This sparked more confidence in the future while the conservative Reaganite movement promoted more traditional family values. A reflection of revival was the emergence of the volatile pro-life/pro-choice debate. Although it could be said that some factors leading to higher birth rates were again becoming more prominent, the main features remained untouched. Life was still so expensive that children entailed high family expenditures, and many mothers needed to work. Actually, members of both sexes increasingly emphasized career rather than family in their lives, finding new satisfaction in material possessions. Changes that were reflected in terms like Yuppies (Young Upwardly Mobile Professionals) or DINKS (Dual Income No Kids).

The international anti-population campaign, although less conspicuous than during the 1960s, continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The population situation in the Third World was changing very slowly. Although

¹² Encyclopedia Americana, Volume 27, Collier, Danbury, CT 1989, p. 748d.

¹³ New York Times, February 21, 1971, p. 31.

birth rates had started to come down -- more significantly so in Asian and Latin American than in African countries -- the percentage decline seemed excruciatingly slow. After the natural increase in LDCs peaked at an annual 2.38% between 1965 and 1970, it still averaged 2.04% between 1980 and 1985. The rate in the Third World in 1985 was at 2% but as high as 2.4% excluding China.¹⁴ In addition, due to the population momentum, the absolute increase in numbers will climb for years to come, peaking around 90 million by the year 2000.¹⁵ Yet, in the wake of the world food crisis (1973-1974) the United Nations announced that at least 400 million people were malnourished. The World Bank estimated a figure closer to one billion in 1976.¹⁶

During the early 1970s, the first pronatalist voices in the population discourses tried to spread their vision of the future. They asserted that in reality the US was more likely to deal with less people in the future rather than with more. As early as 1969, the National Review, for example, argued that there was no population explosion in the US. Pointing to the quickly declining birth rates, the magazine quoted Department of Agriculture sources who saw less land would be needed in 1970 to feed the US.¹⁷ It tried to counter the prevailing fears of overpopulation and their

¹⁴ David Yaukey, Demography, (New York 1985: St. Martin's Press), p. 47; Population Reference Bureau, World Population, (Washington D.C. 1985: Population Reference Bureau), p. 8.

¹⁵ See for example Michael Redclift, Sustainable Development (New York 1987: Methuen), p. 30.

¹⁶ Loup, p. 46.

¹⁷ "The Population Firecracker," National Review, October 7, 1969, p. 999.

impact. Still, this pronatalist position matched antinatalism with respect to the less developed countries. The Third World, so the magazine agreed, "definitely" had a population problem. This, however, had to be seen in context with its severe political, cultural and technological problems. While a reduction in birth rates would be desirable, coercive population planning, as antinatalist sometimes advocated, had to be seen as deleterious to US interests. These were almost exactly the same arguments that the influential Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), which were represented by such important figures as economist Julian Simon and former White House aide Ben Wattenberg, put forth later. As early as 1971, the latter pointed out that the US had birth rates "10% lower than [during] the years of the Depression."¹⁸ The Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies claimed that the US population may "even" decline this century.¹⁹ These prognoses nicely concurred with the report made by the National Center for Health Statistics and the Census Bureau that foresaw these continuing rapid, dramatic downward trends would have long-term implications.²⁰

These developments should have soon helped launch a new population debate, based upon the discourses of the small pronatalist movement. For

¹⁸ Ben Wattenberg, "The Demography of the 1970s: The Birth Dearth and what it means" (1971), originally in Family Circle Magazine, reprinted in Pohlman, 1973, p. 73.

¹⁹ As cited by John Crosby: Demographic Demographers, original in Los Angeles Times 1971, reprinted in Pohlman 1973, p. 77.

²⁰ New York Times, November 5, 1971, p. 1.

the time being, however, the population control movement was still in a much better position. It was supported by the government, which in turn was backed by various antinatalist issue group organizations as well as by the general public which still was concerned with overpopulation even in the US.

The "discovery" that US fertility had almost reached replacement level "shocked" many experts. A picture of crisis that had been created over years was endangered. The continuing decline of birth rates generally had been brushed off as a short-lived phenomenon or it was purposefully overlooked. Vigorous attempts were made by antinatalists to dispel the notion of a declining population. Kingsley Davis already had discovered signs of an increasing population growth rate in industrial countries; the slower growth could be a false indication.²¹ Hauser argued the "high positive relationship between the business cycle and the birth rate",²² that is recession and increasing unemployment combined with uncertainties like the seven-year eligibility for the draft, were reasons for delayed marriages. This could and probably would change anytime. Then we would experience a second baby boom, an echo of the first one, as the baby boomers of the 1950s came into their reproductive ages.

For the same reason, the Commission on Population Growth and the

²¹ Kingsley Davis in Edward Hutchings and Harrison Brown (eds.), Are Our Descendants Doomed? (New York 1972: Viking Press), pp. 17-26.

²² Philip Hauser (Population Research Center), Testimony before the Special Subcommittee, US Senate, reprinted in Pohlman 1973, p. 82.

American Future, which was chaired by John D. Rockefeller, admitted to surprise as "[i]t had long been assumed that birth rates would increase during the 1970s."²³ Like most others the Commission considered a long-term low fertility rate unlikely. Playing different scenarios and disregarding current trends, it warned President Nixon and Congress that 322 million Americans could be expected by 2000 and almost one billion by 2072.²⁴ This scenario reassured its readers once more that booming crime rates, traffic accidents, housing squeezes and unemployment could become serious problems.

For the time being the picture of the antinatalist discourses could be upheld. The business community was still very much convinced that further population growth would have almost exclusively deleterious effects. It was still persuaded that population growth, especially among the poor and minorities, would lead to excessive social costs, a growing welfare state, resource shortages, infrastructure problems, and social unrest.²⁵ The persistent population problem was also another reason for growing pressure to liberalize abortion laws. "Such pressures were, at least in part, the response of many legislators and policy elites to the perceived excessive fertility of the population, especially among unmarried welfare recipients."²⁶

²³ Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, p. 14.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁵ Shapiro, p. 80.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

3.3 GROWING INTERNATIONAL "CONCERN"

Since the 1950s, concern with the detrimental effects of overpopulation had resulted in fervent efforts in the UN and the Third World to curb these problems. The success of the antinatalist movement, led by the US pushing for comprehensive international population programs since 1965 through bilateral assistance and multilateral contributions,²⁷ could be seen in many resolutions targeted at population policies that various UN agencies adopted. Initially, these programs were only meant to examine the situation. Gradually, however, these resolutions had "the effect of legitimizing family planning" (at the World Population Conference in Belgrade 1965) and establishing "the basic human right of couples to decide on the number and spacing of children" (Tehran Conference on Human Rights 1968).²⁸

Simultaneously, the number of countries seeking to control population growth as well as the level of financial support for population control increased quickly. This was due to various factors. It was true that population pressures on the social and political systems of Third World countries forced governments to cope with these higher costs. But more importantly, Western nations, and especially the US, urged the LDCs to adopt family planning to improve their economic standing. Money, then, was a compelling incentive. Already by 1966, President Johnson had pledged aid

²⁷ Jason Finkle and Barbara Crane, "The Politics of Bucharest: Population, Development, and the New International Economic Order," Population and Development Review, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1975) p. 102.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 90.

to countries which tried to curtail their population growth. Since 1965, the US has given more money to foreign population control programs than all other countries combined. It also has urged other MDCs and international agencies to support such programs.²⁹ In the mid-1960s, only India worried about its high fertility. But by 1969, the number of officially concerned countries had risen to 40. By 1974, their number soared to 63. This encompassed 75% of the developing world's population, while another 16% "resided in nations where governments were supporting fertility reduction activities because of their health and human rights benefits."³⁰ At the same time, the amount of external assistance from the MDCs for population policies in the LDCs rose from \$5-6 million in the early 1960s to \$250 million in 1974.³¹

3.4 THE BUCHAREST CONFERENCE

The importance of the population issue was reflected in the proclamation by the UN of the World Population Year in 1974 and the scheduling of a World Population Conference, which was to be held in Bucharest. Both events largely were due to the initiative of the US, which was trying to increase international awareness of the drawbacks that rapid

²⁹ Kasun, p. 79.

³⁰ Davidson Gwatkin, "The State of the World's Population Movement: Implications of the 1984 Mexico City Conference," World Development, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1985) p. 558.

³¹ Ibid.

population growth caused.³² Furthermore, it was hoped that this conference would stimulate governments and international agencies to dedicate themselves to the problem more firmly.³³

Unexpectedly, the Conference developed into an ideological confrontation between the Third World and the MDCs. Several factors led to this result. The UN itself had never regarded population growth as the only serious issue or even a major problem in the LDCs. It saw economic and social factors as a more critical concern. But more importantly, frictions between LDCs and MDCs -- in the wake of the oil embargo -- were at their peak. A key psychological breakthrough for the LDCs in their relations with the industrialized world had been OPEC's oil price shocks. Frustrated with deteriorating terms of trade and the growing gap between rich and poor nations, they voted to adopt the Declaration and Programme of Action for a New Economic Order.³⁴ Still, for various reasons (for instance, the policy preparations for Bucharest were made by population experts, not by development specialists, so the original Draft Plan did not contain many ambiguities), a controversy initially was not expected. When the LDCs, however, became aware of the high levels of international attention they tacitly began to form an outwardly united Third World "bloc" to further

³² Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit. (September 1975) p. 102.

³³ Ibid., p. 87.

³⁴ Jason Finkle and Barbara Crane, "Ideology and Politics at Mexico City: The United States at the 1984 International Conference on Population," Population and Development Review, Vol. 11, No. 1 (March 1985) p. 3.

their interests.³⁵

Another reason for the eventual severity of the ensuing conflict were contradictions in the actions of the industrialized nations. While the US and others had reduced their development assistance efforts, they showed enormous enthusiasm for reductions in population growth for which more and more money was available. Humanitarian goals in assistance were excluded, and their resistance to the LDCs' economic demands suggested that family planning was used as a substitute for new western development efforts.³⁶ Some LDCs went even so far as to claim that family planning programs diverted funds from their development efforts which, in turn, were little more than a thinly disguised scheme to eliminate the poor rather than reform the global economic system that actually created poverty.

The developing nations, including all of those with and without interest for the population question, ended up promoting the New Economic Order. They saw it as the most effective solution for underdevelopment and hence, as the MDCs had demonstrated, rapid population growth. They argued that there was no population problem as such. Instead, the ruling elites were the culprits. They were behind unequal distribution of the earth's wealth and resources as well as the economic exploitation of the

³⁵ The public was flooded with conferences, discussions and publications - the World Population Bulletin was issued especially for this occasion - while the Conference was perceived to be the focal point of the World Population Year.

³⁶ Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit. (March 1985) p. 108; Gwatkin in World Development, op. cit., p. 558.

poor. Population pressures resulted from poverty and inequality, not vice versa. This, as the LDCs maintained, was exemplified by the MDCs' enormous intake of animal protein and "superconsumerism".³⁷ They suggested that food should be distributed much more equitably, because the MDCs consumed a disproportionate share. The LDCs thus employed different criteria to measure overpopulation -- qualitatively as compared to quantitatively. In these terms, the US and other MDCs were the most urgent cases of overpopulation.

Kingsley Davis used the term "Indian Equivalents" to clarify this assertion. On average, an American not only ate several times as much as an Indian (because a large portion of grain was first converted into animal protein), but also used up more space (houses, cars, recreational areas), polluted more, and needed more water.³⁸ Davis thus estimated that in Indian Equivalents the US population equalled at least four billion. To cite more recent examples, the Ehrlichs felt that a human being born in an MDC imposed more than 100 times the stress on the world's resources and environment than a birth in Bangladesh.³⁹ Willy Brandt used the ratio of energy consumption per capita to point out the same disparity: one American used as much energy as 16 Chinese, 109 Sri Lankans, 438 Malays, or 1072

³⁷ New York Times, August 21, 1974, pp. 2 and 38, August 25, 1974, p. 9.

³⁸ Kingsley Davis, "Overpopulated America," The New Republic, Vol. 162, No. 2 (January 10, 1970) pp. 13-15.

³⁹ A. and P. Ehrlich, "Population, Plenty and Poverty," National Geographic, Vol. 174, No. 6 (December 1988) p. 917.

Nepalese.⁴⁰

While the LDCs saw the key to population growth reduction in economic advancement, the US and other Western nations based their position on neo-Malthusian beliefs. Formulated in several draft versions of the Plan of Action, they reasserted that population growth was the most serious impediment to development.

Eventually, the World Population Plan of Action accommodated both positions to some degree, because such an agreement was advantageous for both parties. On the one hand, the LDCs felt that supporting the Plan of Action would better serve their interests in the long run. It would strengthen the UN, which also was the strongest defender of their cause in the industrialized world. The UN's influence grew and fell with the importance that the developed world attributed to it. Still, its agencies had not given up on the idea that it was necessary to address problems like poverty and inequality more energetically than population control.

On the other hand, the US and other Western nations tried to reinforce their population agenda, which had gained slightly more legitimacy through the various UN resolutions. These resolutions were "designed to create or to strengthen international programs and activities for existing countries, when requested, in dealing with demographic problems."⁴¹ If no consensus had been attained, the legitimacy of those programs would never

⁴⁰ Willy Brandt, North - South, (Cambridge 1980: MIT Press) p. 162.

⁴¹ Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit. (September 1975) p. 90.

have been brought into question. It was in the interest of the developed nations to uphold the validity of their approach in tackling poverty and famines. Population control in their analysis remained the most expedient and a relatively cheap "solution".

3.5 TWO CONTRASTING DEVELOPMENTS

The decade after the Bucharest Conference, and despite the acknowledgement by the industrialized countries that economic growth would be necessary if lower birth rates were to be achieved, there were no important changes in the population situations of most Third World countries. Economic aid stayed at the same low levels as before, while only funding for population control programs were extended. In fact, the MDCs, and particularly the US, had used the notion of overpopulation to divert attention from other development issues that were important to the LDCs. The unity that the LDCs displayed at the Conference crumbled along with the once powerful position of the OPEC. Similarly, the idea of a New Economic Order became much less feasible and eventually its support largely vanished. Differences in economic and political development among the Third World countries and changing relations with the industrialized world accounted for this. After the election of more conservative governments in the Western MDCs, especially during the 1980s, the UN was more often accused of being a forum for communists and of not representing the interests of its biggest contributors sufficiently. With the onset of the Reagan era, US pressure on the World Bank mounted. McNamara's

successor, Clausen was urged to make sweeping changes. The Bank allegedly had deteriorated in the prevailing conservative discourse into a welfare agency lending money to communist countries or those that limited the free market system and the activities of multinational corporations.⁴²

In the US and other western nations, on the other hand, the Bucharest Conference was interpreted as a successful indicator of their policies. By signing the Population Plan of Action, the Third World had acknowledged that family planning was inevitable.⁴³ The confirmation that this was a "basic right" signaled US citizens that overpopulation was indeed seen as the world's most pressing problem, a position which also was carried by the media. The Department of State Bulletin, for instance, asserted, "[t]he World Population Plan of Action, despite its wordiness and often hesitant tone, contains all the necessary provisions for effective family planning programs and population growth control programs at national and international levels."⁴⁴ Because of the dangerous world food situation these goals had become even more pressing. The Saturday Review's analysis conveyed the impression that the economic component was a minor factor that mainly was an ideological statement of the Third World at the Bucharest

⁴² "Reagan vs. the World Bank," Newsweek, September 21, 1981, p. 88.

⁴³ "TRB from Washington," New Republic, Vol. 172, No. 14 (April 5, 1975) p. 2.

⁴⁴ Philander Claxton, "The World Population Conference; An Assessment," Department of State Bulletin Vol. 71, No. 1846 (November 11, 1974) p. 654.

Conference.⁴⁵ The magazine thus maintained that the LDCs had misused the conference to further their irrelevant political objectives that did not necessarily deny the merits of population control.

Anti-population sentiments, then, were once again revived. Following the Conference, the US increased its backing for family planning programs as part of its development assistance.⁴⁶ The antinatalist movement was as unanimous and unidimensional in its pursuits as ever. Agriculture consultant William Paddock may have been an extreme example but he may have reflected as well a common attitude in an interview with Forbes magazine. He argued that "we will have to let people starve to death in societies that fail to cut their birth rates" since "you only increase the amount of hunger in the world by feeding everyone because you increase the number of the hungry."⁴⁷ Forbes' conclusion of his comments offered a reflection of a widespread perception: "The point is not that William Paddock is a callous man, but that the world's overpopulation crisis is that desperate."⁴⁸

In the wake of the World Population Conference in Bucharest, more Third World countries assumed the position that rapid population growth was indeed a hindrance to economic and social development. Others

⁴⁵ Anthony Astrachan, "People are the Most Precious," Saturday Review/World, Vol. 37, No. 1. (October 19, 1974) p. 10.

⁴⁶ Jane Menken (ed.), World Population and US Policy (New York 1986: Norton and Company), p. 8.

⁴⁷ "A Modest Proposal: Interview with Agriculture Consultant Paddock," Forbes, Vol. 116, No. 11 (December 1, 1975) p. 65.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

strengthened their laws and policies concerning family planning. Interestingly, local funding increased significantly relative to foreign aid. Many Third World governments apparently felt a growing inability to provide their people with the essentials of life. But US and other Western incentives also played a role. The International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1978, for instance, stated that American foreign aid should be designed to build motivation for smaller families. Aid would be "'concentrated in countries that demonstrate their commitment to progress by their control of population growth.'"⁴⁹ China and India moved towards even more aggressive population control policies, which proved very effective in China but less so in India. UN agencies also played bigger roles. The UNFPA (Fund for Population Activities) while disbursing \$50 million annually in 1974 increased that sum to \$150 million by 1980, the World Bank's population lending rose fivefold during the late 1970s.⁵⁰

Even more intriguing is that meanwhile a contradictory trend could be noticed, especially in the US. Although Carter had stated that his administration attached overriding importance to the population question, and that the target of the US government was to bring about a two-child family worldwide by the year 2000, interest in the population issue was flagging.⁵¹ Despite the fact that population activists prevented cuts in US support for population control funding, it fared poorly during the late

⁴⁹ As cited in Kasun, p. 80.

⁵⁰ Kasun, p. 80.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 80-83.

1970s. The dramatic increases of the 1960s could not be repeated. Even some of the private foundations, among them some of the pioneers of the movement, reduced their levels of activity and lost members.⁵²

Several reasons may have been responsible. Throughout the 1970s more conservative values took hold. Opposition to abortion, originally represented mainly by the Catholic Church, grew. This shifting discourse about population diverted attention from the previously overwhelming concern for overpopulation. Also continuing low fertility levels in the US lessened the perception of an immediate threat within the US. The "crisis," so to speak, shifted down a notch in character to become a "problem." It had lost its "zip" and "sizzle" in the media as a newsworthy subject.

Awareness in the US about the population "crisis" was further undermined by a new debate about the "Birth Dearth." For the first time, birth rates were falling faster than death rates worldwide, birth rates in the Third World had fallen by 20-25%, and population growth rates slowed by 10-15%.⁵³ The inevitable extrapolations followed, spreading some short-lived optimism. Some expected only 5.4 billion people by the turn of the century,⁵⁴ and saw a population stabilization by 2010 or 2015 at seven to eight billion.⁵⁵ The well-known futurologist Herman Kahn predicted that

⁵² Gwatkin in World Development op. cit., p. 559.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 560.

⁵⁴ Charles Panati and Mary Lord, "The Population Implosion," Newsweek, December 6, 1976, p. 50.

⁵⁵ Pat Moynihan in: Policy Review, op. cit., p. 92.

energy and raw materials would certainly satisfy the world's peoples in the future -- he expected 7.5 to 30 billion.⁵⁶ The Club of Rome "refuted" the antinatalists' Malthusian theory and claimed that the food supply would suffice for the expected growth rates.⁵⁷ Nobel Prize winner Wassily Leontief averred that resources would be sufficient for more people at higher standards of living without environmental damage.⁵⁸ The Worldwatch Institute spread the good news that falling birth rates combined with higher-than-expected death rates had slowed world population growth significantly while the Population Reference Bureau felt that even in case of bumper crops widespread starvation could now be avoided. World Fertility Surveys found dramatic, inexplicable declines in fertility to even below replacement level in some MDCs.

Meanwhile, the Census Bureau had corrected the forecasts for 2000 to 6.35 billion. Thus, within three years, the predictions in the population control discourse differed by almost one billion. The unreliability of demographic forecasts was once again corroborated. In 1989, Census experts admitted that population projections were as much an art of hypothesis as a science and hence figures for the future may be wrong.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Sam Cole in: Freeman and Jahoda, Chapter 2.

⁵⁷ New York Times, May 14, 1976, p. 26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, October 14, 1976, p. 1; see also Sam Cole in: Freeman and Jahoda, Chapter 2.

⁵⁹ New York Times, October 29, 1976, p. 5; January 30, 1977, p. 19. June 15, 1980, p. 10; August 10, 1979, p. 8; February 5, 1989, p. 30.

3.6 FROM LIBERALISM TO CONSERVATISM

The apparent drift toward more liberal lifestyles and values in American society during the 1960s did not make everybody in the US very happy. Many people felt that student revolt and cultural revolution with its drug culture and lax mores were a threat to society. Rising divorce rates, teenage pregnancy, liberal attitudes toward sex and the use of contraceptives, feminism and the Equal Rights Movement were all factors perceived as undermining long revered values. Signaling the demise of the traditional family -- the "fundamental moral fiber"⁶⁰ of society -- this led to growing opposition. This shift to a more conservative attitude was perhaps already indicated by the election of 1968. Nixon's victory, together with George Wallace's success in the South, showed that especially the "unyoung, unblack and unpoor"⁶¹ were ready to return to the less permissive views of the 1950s.

The general discontent of American society was brought into focus by the right-to-life movement, which emerged in opposition to the liberalization of abortion laws during the late 1960s and early 1970s after Roe vs. Wade. Underlying the discourse of the anti-abortion movement were new political agendas to restore and defend traditional family values. The discourses of conservatism resented not only rising abortion and sterilization rates but also the greater acceptance of homosexuality, the widespread use of various forms of contraceptives, and the independence of

⁶⁰ Shapiro, p. 174.

⁶¹ Divine, et al., p. 910.

women. A coalition of Protestant evangelical and fundamentalist churches and various conservative groups including the New Right wing of the Republican Party joined the Catholic Church in its pursuit of new restrictive abortion laws. These "historically hostile groups plus the political activation of permanently conservative, but previously inactive, communities"⁶² represented a formidable political force. An estimated 50 million evangelicals lived in the US in the beginning of the 1980s.

This conservative movement proved much more adept than ever before in furthering their cause. Political techniques like direct mail, the use of polls to single out the most effective issues, and telephone banks to elicit votes on behalf of conservative candidates on election day were applied very efficiently. Televangelism was another source to convey political messages. Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority, intent on defending the "American way of life".⁶³ By means of workshops, television programs, and church seminars his followers were taught to become politically active.

Conservative scholars and academics also began to flourish in "think tanks" like the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Heritage Foundation. They provided the intellectual backbone of the right-to-life movement and other conservative causes. William Buckley, editor of the National Review, was quite effective in print and on television. Norman Podhoretz' Commentary became fashionable among intellectuals who were

⁶² "The Australian" as reprinted in World Press Review, Vol. 31, No. 10 (October 1984) p. 39.

⁶³ Divine et al, p. 957.

former liberal stalwarts.⁶⁴ Now liberals were denounced as being too soft on Communism and accused of compromising high living standards to meet the demands for equality from minority groups. Julian Simon, economics professor at the University of Maryland and economist for the Heritage Foundation, was the chief philosopher for the Reagan administration's family planning policies.⁶⁵ He had a major influence on the "turnaround" of the US position at Mexico City Conference. Simon had close ties to conservatives in the Reagan administration. Although his recommendations and arguments were criticized by many, he provided strong backing for pro-life activists.⁶⁶ Simon's friend Ben Wattenberg, former White House Aide, member of the reorganized US delegation in Mexico City 1984, and now a senior fellow and demographic analyst at the AEI, was also one of the advocates of the Reagan administration's free market policy. In particular, he was a strong opponent to state intervention in family matters and funding for birth control.

The New Right's focus on abortion had further objectives. It was meant to motivate voters with deep religious, pro-family convictions to "push right wing candidates and topics"⁶⁷ like fervent anti-communism, nationalism, devotion to free enterprise, opposition to welfare programs, and strong leadership to project more confidence and optimism about the

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 957.

⁶⁵ Constance Holden, "A Revisionist Look at Population and Growth," Science, Vol. 231, No. 4745 (March 28, 1986) p. 1493.

⁶⁶ Teitelbaum and Winter, p. 97.

⁶⁷ James Wall, "The New Right Exploits Abortion," The Christian Century, Vol. 97, No. 25 (July 30 - August 6, 1980) p. 748.

future. Instead of birth control, a "massive reinfusion of moral rectitude"⁶⁸ was advocated. Obviously, the New Right did not want the state to help those who did not conform to their notion of morality, sexuality and family. In essence, they sought to repeal the idea of the welfare state. Welfare -- or population growth control -- was, of course, unnecessary because their beliefs held that the free market was a perfect regulator. Recognizing this point, Kasun found it paradoxical

"that the most fervent antinatalism is voiced in the US which is, or claims to be, the world headquarters of free enterprise. If it is true that the free market imposes natural constraints so that people tend not to overdo anything, then the free-market society should mitigate against antinatalism."... "The free-market economy, with its system of built-in restraints and incentives, does not need population control."⁶⁹

As the conservative movement gained strength during the 1970s, the government became more careful about making statements about population control. As early as 1971 this was a factor that led President Nixon to reject recommendations by his Commission on Population Growth and the American Future to greatly liberalize abortion and contraceptive services for teenagers. Nixon pulled up short, because these measures could be seen as doing nothing to preserve and strengthen family relations.⁷⁰

Shapiro pointed out that the flagging interest of some organizations might not only have been due to the mentioned "anti-crisis" picture, but also a slow shift of corporate interests regarding family planning matters.

⁶⁸ Shapiro, p. 15.

⁶⁹ Kasun, pp. 74, 75.

⁷⁰ New York Times, May 6, 1971, p. 1.

In the 1960s this group recognized that its interests would best be served by state-assisted population control programs as exemplified by Rockefeller's initiatives in the Population Council. "In the 1980s, however, the dominant corporate interests have begun to identify with the neo-conservative and New Right ideological solutions to rising social expenditures."⁷¹

The tables below reflect the dwindling attention given in the elite press to the population crisis.

Table 3-1: Number of articles on population in the New York Times from 1968 to 1988.

1968 - 71	1975 - 30	1982 - 1
1969 - 96	1976 - 27	1983 - 41
1970 - 101	1977 - 12	1984 - 56
1971 - 93	1978 - 15	1985 - 38
1972 - 48	1979 - 9	1986 - 28
1973 - 24	1980 - 5	1987 - 44
1974 - 104	1981 - 2	1988 - 30

It can clearly be seen that the number of articles published in the New

⁷¹ Shapiro, p. 183.

York Times reached its peak in 1970 and then started to decline quickly. The enormous amount of articles that appeared during 1974 is mainly due to the World Population Conference in Bucharest. The vanishing interest in antinatalist discourses reached its nadir in 1982. The New York Times published just one article that appeared in its Index under the heading of "population".⁷² In 1983, however, the population issue made a strong comeback. In the New York Times Index the number of articles listed soared from one in 1982 to forty-one in 1983. But a closer look reveals that the preeminent topic was not overpopulation and its immediate dangers anymore. The focus was now on national issues like migration and (illegal) immigration, China's allegedly coercive abortion practices and the possibility of a declining US population as discussed for instance by the AEI (which had discovered the advantages of "supply-side demographics") and the consequences of the baby bust.⁷³

Similarly, since 1980 the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature had not carried any articles under the headings of "overpopulation" and "increase of population" anymore, although many were indexed in the 1970s. As in the New York Times, the World Population Conference in 1974 stimulated the publication of articles. This trend was much less conspicuous in 1984.

⁷² The comparatively large amounts of articles in 1974 and 1984 are due to the World Population Year and the Bucharest Conference 1974 and the Mexico Conference 1984.

⁷³ For examples see New York Times, February 7, 1985, p. 5; August 23, 1987, p. 25; October 24, 1987, p. 9.

Table 3-2: Number of articles on "population"⁷⁴ in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature from 1968 to 1988.

	pop	op	ip	pf		pop	op	ip	pf
1968	- 2	14	7	= 23	1979	- 1	0	2	10 = 13
1969	- 5	24	11	= 40	1980	- 10	0	0	8 = 18
1970	- 2	30	14	= 46	1981	- 13	0	0	2 = 15
1971	- 0	7	8	= 15	1982	- 6	0	0	5 = 11
1972	- 2	3	10	= 15	1983	- 4	0	0	13 = 23
1973	- 3	2	7	= 12	1984	- 10	0	0	12 = 22
1974	- 14	7	24	= 45	1985	- 8	0	0	4 = 12
1975	- 3	7	16	= 26	1986	- 6	0	0	6 = 12
1976	- 2	9	2	= 13	1987	- 7	0	0	7 = 14
1977	- 3	0	5	1 = 9	1988	- 12	0	0	10 = 22
1978	- 4	1	12	4 = 21					

⁷⁴ The first number indicates the amount of articles under the heading of "population" (pop), the second number is the amount of articles under the heading of "overpopulation" (op), the third number is the number of articles found under "increase of population" (ip), the fourth number the amount of articles under "population forecasting" (pf). The fifth number represents the total amount of articles. During the World Population Year 1974 a separate rubric carried 19 articles about the World Population Conference. The years in the Reader's Guide begin in March of the respective year and end in February of the next year. "1968" thus encompasses March 1968 to February 1969.

It is interesting to note that the number of articles under the heading of "overpopulation" and "increase of population," indicating ongoing antinatalist discourses, had diminished to zero by 1980. Since 1977, a new rubric of "population forecasting" can be found in the Reader's Guide. Articles under this heading often deal with pronatalist discourses. As the tables indicate, the debate about abortion or more generally the restoration of more traditional family values, the New Right movement and other factors mentioned earlier had displaced the formerly strong interest in the population explosion in population discourses. The image of an "overcrowded" United States had all but vanished. It was only represented by a few liberal voices still concerned about the environment and high resource consumption. The shift of US politics from liberal to conservative, exemplified by Reagan's victory in 1980, also had shifted the lines of discourse in the population debate. This change was further reflected by a note preceding the list of articles under the heading of "population" in the New York Times Index: "General material on 'population explosion' is carried here, including controversy over proposals to curb it by means of organized birth control programs sponsored by government or other national or international agencies." This note was adopted in 1965 and dropped again in 1982.

These changes in public discourse reflected and made more possible a new form of population activism. It was fueled by factors like baby bust, immigration, the battle against communism, and maybe the reduced interest in environmental problems. Initially, the so-called baby bust had captured

little interest. But the unexpected "record low levels" at which the baby boomers continued to procreate resulted in extremely low birth rates: "[a]ctual births for the decade [1970] proved to be only 33.2 million, 17 percent below the lowest projection, and 23 percent below the lowest widely accepted series."⁷⁵

Along with the baby bust, immigration had undergone a "surprising" shift. Hardly any Europeans entered the country anymore, while more than five million Asians (especially from Vietnam) and Latin Americans (particularly from Mexico) had immigrated during the 1970s with an annual rate of over 700,000 by the end of the decade.⁷⁶ The impact of immigration was almost negligible before 1970 due to the fairly restrictive immigration laws until the mid 1960s. In addition, the number of illegal immigrants, though hard to assess, turned out to be a significant factor in population growth.⁷⁷ Hispanics became the fastest growing and largest ethnic minority group in the US in 1980 second only to blacks. At the same time, the fertility rate for black women was 30% higher than for white women "as it has been for the last 50 years."⁷⁸ Immigration from Europe continued to fall to 11% of the total legal immigration between 1981 and 1985, while Asia provided 48% of the average 573,000 legal immigrants admitted each year.

⁷⁵ Calvin Beale, "Six Demographic Surprises of the 1970s," in Menard and Moen, p. 71.

⁷⁶ Divine et al., p. 937.

⁷⁷ Beale in Menard and Moen, p. 71.

⁷⁸ Population Reference Bureau, "What's in Store for the US Population," in Menard and Moen, p. 73.

Latin America accounted for another 35%.⁷⁹ Three-quarters of all illegal immigrants came from South America as well.

"Baby bust" aided by the allegedly "lax mores" that the New Right deplored coupled with unwanted immigration from Third World countries were reason enough for some people (like Wattenberg and Simon) to become concerned. But the neo-population movement, that was to emerge, profited also from other developments that advanced their cause.

One such event was the reinvigorated US battle against communism. Much of the 1980s was concentrated on the "[i]ntent on restoring traditional American pride and self-respect" as "Reagan set out to strengthen America's defenses and recapture world supremacy from the Soviet Union."⁸⁰ The new population movement capitalized on this fight against communism in its own way. The baby bust actually was depicted as increasing the communist threat. Countries like the Soviet Union, and potentially communist nations like most LDCs, were likely to overwhelm the US on grounds of their significantly higher birth rates. At the same time, the sub-replacement levels of fertility in the US, so the pronatalist argument claimed, reduced its ability to uphold Western democratic values.

Another aspect was the reduced importance of environmental topics and concerns. In reaction to the strong environmental movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) had been

⁷⁹ "US Could Become a Nation of Minorities," in: The Futurist, Vol. 21, No. 2 (March/April 1987) p. 57.

⁸⁰ Divine et al., p. 963.

created. It imposed significant restrictions on American industry. But the energy crunch at least partly reversed this trend. The Alaskan pipeline was built, and offshore oil drilling permitted. Carter revived the coal industry to produce electricity. Strip mining was accelerated.⁸¹ Under Reagan, the environmental component in public policy was slashed even further as exemplified by the freeing of business from government intervention. The automobile industry, for instance, was released from many of its environmental restrictions.

In accordance with the neoconservative line of the Reagan administration, the pronatalist movement maintained that environmental damage was greatly exaggerated and had nothing to do with the amount of people. Consequently, a higher birth rate would not conflict with environmental protection. In stark contrast to the belief of the 1960s and early 1970s, these arguments advanced the pronatalist ideas of the conservative people that the movement tried to address among the nation's silent majority.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The decline of US birth rates began in the late 1950s and continued into the mid-1970s when it finally stopped and remained at a sub-replacement level throughout the 1980s. This development evoked concern mainly within conservative circles that the US actually would have to deal with "too few" instead of "too many" people in the near future. The growing

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 931-932.

prominence of this pronatalist movement coincided with the slow vanishing of the antipopulation craze in the US. These changes were so all-encompassing that antinatalist organizations soon retreated from the cause. This apparent attitude shift, however, must be seen within its political context. The emergence of the New Right, the abortion debate, and the general emphasis on the reinstatement of a traditional family life cut down on the prominence and effectiveness of antinatalism.

While America was on its way to a demographic turnaround, the situation in most Third World nations changed only marginally. This explains why the antinatalist crusade in those countries continued unabated. Due to the "insistence" of the US, an increasing number of LDCs adopted family planning. Another step the US took to make the world more aware of the "overpopulation crisis" was to urge the UN to organize a World Population Conference in 1974. But the conference turned out more divisive than planned. Many Third World nations did not perceive overpopulation but exploitation and inequality to be the main obstacles to development. For the critical US citizen the ensuing political dispute provided the opportunity to glimpse the thinly disguised artificial construction of the overpopulation ideology. The discussion signaled that the ills of the world may have other reasons than "too many people." Moreover, it made clear that no simple unanimous definition of "overpopulation" existed.

Unfortunately, the population control movement had managed to condition and manipulate mass public and media. Hence, the attempt of the Third World to expose the superficiality of the overpopulation concept was

unsuccessful. In Western nations, the demands of the LDCs were considered to be an attempt to conceal their "guilt" of "reckless" procreation.

This impression seemed corroborated by the fact that more Third World countries adopted family planning after the World Population Conference. This did not mean that its necessity and effectiveness was now proven. Instead, the unity the Third World had displayed at the World Population Conference 1974 disintegrated. Many LDCs felt that a bilateral approach was more likely to improve their conditions. As part of this strategy they showed "conviction" that mounting population pressures resulted in ecological disruptions, famines and other problems. Such "insight" made them eligible for economic aid. But simultaneously, the merits of international population control were confirmed. Until today, the necessity of such programs has hardly been questioned.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 INTRODUCTION

While antinatalist discourses had determined the population discussion well into the 1970s, the debate of the 1980s was apparently more focused on pronatalist discourses. Again, one main event, the World Population Conference in Mexico City during 1984, popularized antinatalist arguments. But similar to the developments during the 1970s, the 1984 World Population Conference could only revive antinatalist discourses for a short period of time. Antinatalism continued to play a subordinate role throughout the 1980s.

This chapter, then, will explore who promoted pronatalism, which were their arguments, how successful were they, and whom was targeted. Were there any connections to earlier antinatalist ideas? Again, an ideological confrontation took the stage at Mexico City in 1984 reminiscent of the one ten years earlier during the Bucharest Conference. This chapter thus will investigate why apparently there could be no agreement as to the importance of family planning. Did the abortion debate and the new conservatism play a role? Had the concern about declining birth rates in the US any significance for this development? And how could the ideological differences between the US and the Third World be explained?

4.2 THE POPULATION MOVEMENT OF THE 1980S

During the 1980s, the population movement in terms of its discursive

articulations consisted of three different groups. The first one could be termed antinatalist with a main focus on environmental protection. The second one professed to be antinatalist as well; its main concern, however, was national security. The third group, which became the most prominent and influential force, assumed a strong pronatalist position and its main focus also was social and national security.

The first group could be seen as the remainder of the 1960s movement. It maintained a strong interest in preserving the environment by means of more effective legislation and stronger population controls. This meant a reduction in the population growth rate of the Third World, but also the pursuit of zero or even negative population growth in the industrialized countries. Population control in these countries was considered crucial because they had far higher consumption and pollution rates than Third World countries. Various groups adopted this position, but especially large environmental organizations like Earth First!, the Worldwatch Institute, the Sierra Club, and the Audubon Society. However, their influence remained quite small, because environmental issues were not particularly popular.

The people who comprised the second group were equally intent upon reducing population growth in the Third World and the US. Their reasons, however, differed from those of the environmentalists. National security was their main concern as exemplified by their fears of a perceived declining

American influence in the world and the continuing threat to US democracy and culture from communist countries. For example, Richard Benedick, the Coordinator of Population Affairs in the Department of State, was very much worried about national security.¹ He foresaw two parallel dangers. There would be 600 million young people in LDCs looking for jobs, while only 17 million were in the same position in the North. Since the rich-poor gap between the more and the less developed world was constantly widening and the governments of the South were already unable to accommodate the masses, an enormous potential for friction would arise. Due to growing poverty many people in the LDCs would be available not only for military service but especially for "the blandishments of extremists."² This could add fuel to the communist cause. Additionally, a rising tide of immigrants could be expected. By 2080, he reckoned, their descendants would constitute 40% of the US population, a fear equally perceived by the pronatalists.

A second example was Steven Mumford, a scientist at the International Fertility Research Program and former member of the House Select Committee on Population.³ As the Third World "exploded," Mumford feared that the influx of particularly illegal immigrants could not only result in social disintegration and crime, but it would also be extremely costly as all those

¹ Kasun, p. 87.

² Richard Benedick, "Population Growth, Refugees and Immigration," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 82, No. 2059 (February 1982) p. 63.

³ Others striking the same tune were for instance George Ball, former assistant Secretary of State; William Colby, former CIA director or Lester Brown, director of the Worldwatch Institute.

immigrants -- up to 160 million within the next 20 years -- would have to be deported again.⁴

Trying to avoid being accused of seeing a military threat from the Third World that could easily be countered by America's military strength, he refined his stance: "It has become apparent that...energy resources, availability of industrial raw materials, the diffusion of military technology, chronic unemployment and food production"⁵ affect national security. His greatest scare tactic turned out to be the dependence of the affluent nations on less affluent ones as suppliers of resources for industrial uses. Widespread social and political instability could be expected by the year 2000⁶ with a possibly devastating impact on the industrial system of the Western world. As US agriculture relied heavily on industrial supplies like tools, chemicals, and machinery, as four industrial workers worked for a single farmer, a smaller food output would be unavoidable. Unemployment could soar to 30 or 40%. Soldiers might eventually have to fight to ensure the continued supply of materials essential to the survival of Americans.⁷

Logically, Mumford's fear of a resource shortage did not permit him to advocate having children in the US either, or so he claimed. More

⁴ Steven Mumford, "Population Growth and Global Security", The Humanist, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January/February 1981) p. 10.

⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

⁶ Exactly the same argument was furnished for example by McFalls, Jones, Gallagher (in Menard and Moen p. 80). They also suggested that political and economic turmoil would swell the number of refugees and immigrants.

⁷ Mumford in The Humanist, op. cit., p. 17.

specifically, the US needed to provide a leading role in cutting all tax incentives for having children "as well as any remaining welfare incentives. Teenage childbearing must be limited and childbearing before the mid-twenties strongly discouraged."⁸ Also the world's population growth rate would be 50% greater without abortions. Since birth control was formerly not pursued "we have no choice," but to encourage abortion.⁹

In essence, although he appeared extremely outspoken about his real intentions, Mumford's position was not that different from other pronatalist views in the US. His disincentives targeted mainly the poor as they tended to be the ones who not only had more children at a younger age, but who were also more in need of financial support. His position on industrial raw materials for the "survival of America" made equally clear that the wealth of the well-to-do was his main concern. His message applied to the Third World as well: eliminate the poor, we can deal with the rich as they want to maintain their status and affluence as well. Thus, by following the US example, a healthy collusion between the rich on both ends should be possible.

Garrett Hardin's "lifeboat ethics" also functioned along the lines of Mumford's thinking albeit he was apparently unconcerned with resources supplied by the Third World. "There is no global population problem"¹⁰, he

⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰ Garrett Hardin, "There is no Global Population Problem," The Humanist, July/August 1989, p. 11.

claimed only "the needy poor greatly outnumber the charitable rich".¹¹ According to him the chances that American society could achieve population control by voluntary means were essentially zero. Some form of coercion would be needed unless "we" could reduce immigration to zero. This seemed extremely unlikely to him: "the resultant population increase shows no sign of leveling off before we are impoverished."¹²

The influence of this group of people on population politics remained too small to mobilize any government action on their behalf. The reasons for this lay not so much in their concern with national security, but their advocacy of all forms of birth control including abortion. The 1980s were the wrong time for this line of argument. Great pressure from essentially pronatalist organizations like the Catholic church and fundamental evangelical churches as well as the advocacy and acceptance of stronger moral values did not permit this movement to spread its wings.

The third group was much more likely to gain popularity in the 1980s. Most of its supporters were conservative in respect to birth control as they agreed with the New Right and right-to-life movement. They deplored the decay of moral values and advocated a return to traditional attitudes as were defined in the 1950s. Although the pronatalists were sometimes more prone to advocate state interference to elicit higher birth rates, they stayed away from "coercive" methods that may have invoked opposition.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 13.

It is worth investigating this group, which is the most successful one in policy terms during the 1980s among all of the population crusaders, more closely. One of its interesting features is that it had the support of think tanks like the AEI and the Heritage Foundation. These organizations have provided the intellectual program of the conservative resurgence in the 1980s; hence, they have had open access not only to the media but also to important government circles. Thus, the media attention that was given to Ben Wattenberg from the AEI, the most outspoken and prolific promoter of the "birth dearth" theory, was quite extensive.

Wattenberg took as his cause in the late 1970s and 1980s to create a new form of alarmism -- the "Birth Dearth" (also the title of his latest book).¹³ Back in the early 1970s in The Real America, he still

"had great hopes for the Birth Dearth. Smaller families would have more disposable income and a higher standard of living; poor families with fewer children would enter the middle class; '[i]n short, unprecedented affluence...more people with more spending money in the massive majority middle.'"¹⁴

Soon after, the boon had become a peril to Western civilization. Despite his derision for the "ludicrous extrapolations" of population explosionists like Ehrlich, Wattenberg himself was seduced by their magic. Only his projections were meant to prove something different. In a conservative

¹³ Wattenberg has numerous followers. Apart from the support of conservative think tanks people like Jack Kemp, Pat Robertson, economics professor Jacqueline Kasun, Richard Perle (US Department of Defense), or conservative newspaper columnists like Richard Grenier from the Washington Times have similar pronatalist views.

¹⁴ As cited in Tony Kaye, "The Birth Dearth," The New Republic, Vol. 196, No. 1/2 (January 19, 1987) pp. 20-21.

estimate (assuming 500,000 immigrants annually), his gloomy predictions alleged that the size of the US population would equal today's again sometime in the 21st century and by the year 5050 "we will have Zero Population."¹⁵ Like Ehrlich, who had projected "million billion people," Wattenberg also indulged in a flagrant misuse of demography although turned upside down. A simple example bares how fickle the science of forecasting can be. If the number of immigrants were 500,000 per year and the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) were 1.8 (as in the early 1980s) the US population would indeed be about as big by 2050 as it is today. If, however, 750,000 immigrated, still a conservative estimate, the number would only decline slightly to 301.5 million by 2080 but would be as high as 335.1 million if the TFR increased to 2.0. It has been estimated that the total immigration amounts to at least one million per annum. Even without immigration and a TFR of 1.8 there would still be the same number of people in fifty years as there are today. Consequently, "it is possible to speculate about future fertility rates and immigration both legal and illegal and be wrong by several hundred million."¹⁶ Wattenberg's fears for US national security were threefold: a relative population decline, immigration, and being "outbred" by descendants of non-Europeans. This all added up to a potentially hazardous situation for the US.

First of all he pointed out that for a decade and a half people in the

¹⁵ Ben Wattenberg, The Good News is the Bad News is Wrong, (New York 1984: Simon and Schuster), pp. 88-91.

¹⁶ US Population: "Where we are, where we are going," Population Bulletin, Vol. ?, No. 6 (June 1982) p. 45.

free modern industrial world "have not [had] enough children to reproduce themselves over an extended period of time."¹⁷ But while the US had a TFR of approximately 1.8 (the situation in western Europe was even worse) the Soviet Union would grow steadily due to a TFR of 2.3.¹⁸ His rather unlikely projection suggested that if America did not take in any immigrants, and if the Soviet Union retained its "strange but positive birthrate," the latter would be twice as populous as America by the year 2050.¹⁹

Wattenberg "confessed" that to him this was a most important aspect. It determined whether or not the US would be a "world power" in the future and "leader of the free world." No amount "of technical superiority could balance a gross lack of population over a long period of time."²⁰ Why was that? A larger population, in terms of Wattenberg's conviction, meant also a larger GNP disregarding the fact that a larger population does not necessarily result in a higher consumption. This, in turn, made possible more industry and more scientists which only a large market could yield as it provided the necessary tax base to finance large and effective defense systems such as "star wars." Especially if opposing nations had an

¹⁷ Wattenberg 1987, p. 6.

¹⁸ This was mainly due to the fact that the USSR employed a successful pronatalist policy. This, so Wattenberg, had lifted the TFR of the European part of Russia to replacement level while the other parts had an average of 2.5. (Wattenberg 1987, pp. 40-43.)

¹⁹ Wattenberg 1984, p. 89; see also Ben Wattenberg, "The Birth Dearth: Dangers Ahead?" US News and World Report, Vol. 102., No. 24 (June 22, 1987) pp. 56-63.

²⁰ Wattenberg 1987, pp. 80-82.

approximately equal level of scientific material and industrial advancement, the sheer population size could become important and a divergence would be destabilizing. In this respect, there would, of course, not only be a direct military threat but also an indirect one. Was it possible that the Soviet Union could become so strong that it might simply gobble up other countries even without military force?

"Now one can say the US and other democracies will still be strong, and that raw numbers don't count - I am familiar with those arguments. But that is not clear. And if they survive at one-tenth [of the world's population], will they survive at one-twentieth, at one-hundredth? Something important is happening, and it is not an easy process to reverse, because of demographic momentum."²¹

The downward demographic track, lowering the free and democratic Western nations to 1/45 of the world population by 2065, would not only mean loss of military power. Comparing Holland as a country with relatively few people with the US a country with many people, Wattenberg sought to demonstrate that sheer numbers also determined whether or not a country could spread its cultural values. Asking rhetorically how many movies Holland made he concluded that only wealthy nations could produce "movies and television programs that directly transmit values and culture."²² Wattenberg seemed to find even persuasion by force acceptable: a strong military would guarantee that "our values are respected" and "our culture

²¹ Ben Wattenberg and Karl Zinsmeister (eds.), Are World Population Trends a Problem?, (Washington D.C. 1985: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research), p. 42.

²² Ben Wattenberg and Karl Zinsmeister, "The Birth Dearth: The Geopolitical Consequences," Public Opinion, Vol. 8, No. 6 (December/January 1986) p. 10.

welcome."²³ The prevalence of Western culture and values, Wattenberg claimed was not a self-interested argument. The West as the most important model for the LDCs had significantly contributed to their improving conditions. "If we can help cement Western values among people of nations now on the brink of both democracy and modernism, the world of the future will be a more secure and friendlier place for us."²⁴

Wattenberg saw a danger not only in the slightly higher Soviet birth rates but also in the much higher Third World fertility. He expected 8 billion people by the middle of the next century in LDCs alone which would be "predominantly poor and nondemocratic."²⁵ This could pose a further serious threat to the US -- especially as the latter was producing fewer people. Third World culture, possibly due to collaboration with the Soviet Union, might even become dominant while US democracy faded from the scene.²⁶

Somewhat surprisingly, he suggested that to improve the situation, the US should allow higher legal immigration, although the American populace "did not want more immigrants". This would slow down the "vanishing" of the US. Conflicts were unlikely. Most immigrants would adopt and support the free democratic system. Simultaneously, this would send a positive message to their home countries which in turn might propel them to

²³ Wattenberg 1987, p. 96.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 96-99.

seek cultural and political changes.²⁷

What were his real intentions? The most important dimension in Wattenberg's outline is his concern with different fertility rates. On the national level he found that fertility was lower among people with higher incomes. An income of \$10,000 yielded a TFR of 2.2, \$20-25,000 resulted in a TFR of 1.7 and \$35,000 and more in a TFR of 1.3.²⁸ It was thus not the "fault" of immigrants who were generally poor and had a high fertility rate, that the US was in trouble. Nor was it due to fertility rates of the "totality" of blacks. Instead, it was due to the wealthy who did not reproduce themselves. Hence for Wattenberg, it is "not a race issue" but "a straight class issue. It is an issue of the non-poor and well-educated."²⁹

What Wattenberg feared was that the US would be overrun by poor blacks, Hispanics, Asians, even whites. They were the ones who were least likely to accept and support the "free democratic US system." The tide of immigrants from the Third World -- the poor that is -- would eventually reduce the proportion of European-descent stock in the US from 84% to 50% by 2080.³⁰ This would lead to riots and turmoil. As this influx of Asians and Hispanics continued "the cultural, linguistic and racial differences seem

²⁷ Wattenberg 1984, pp. 71-86 and Wattenberg 1987, pp. 133, 165.

²⁸ Wattenberg 1987, pp. 75-77.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

³⁰ See e.g. Wattenberg/Zinsmeister 1985, p. 47; also Leon Bouvier and Robert Gardner, "Immigration to the US: The Unfinished Story," Population Bulletin, Vol. 41, No.4 (March/April 1987) p. 57 and "Profile of Tomorrow's New US," US News and World Report, November 24, 1986, p. 32. Both magazines are examples for similar predictions.

even greater to many Americans"³¹ than when the new immigrants arrived in the beginning of the century. In this light, it makes perfect sense that Wattenberg wanted to reduce illegal but enhance legal immigration. This way, the US could control who entered the country -- preferably a wealthy, educated elite who valued democracy. These people would be an asset to the American society, not a burden.

It is hence not surprising that Wattenberg appeared to be pronatalist only nationally: "the promotion of lower fertility in the Third World is not only good for the recipients [of aid] but for the donor-nations as well. That's us."³² The faster their birth rates fell, the better "geopolitically" for us. One should have the courage, so Wattenberg argued, to say these things without being afraid of being called "racist" or "colonialist." It would be healthy to achieve a replacement level in all cases. Hence, our fertility rates needed to be raised, those of the USSR and the Third World lowered. More precisely, the fertility rate of the rich in the US should be increased, but births of the poor discouraged rather than encouraged. All this sounds very familiar. In essence, it is similar to the form of eugenics arguments that had been revived after the Second World War. Although "the problem of race and ethnicity ought to be raised"³³ too as the white European share of the US population was shrinking, Wattenberg was more concerned with the poor/rich distinction. In fact, one could say that he advocated both

³¹ Wattenberg 1987, p. 114.

³² Ibid., p. 161.

³³ Ibid., p. 112.

positive and negative eugenics. Positive in the sense that the propagation of a certain population group was encouraged, negative as the procreation of another group, deemed detrimental, was discouraged. As Chase explained, the basis of this form of racism is not the blind discrimination against other races as such but particularly against the poor who, so the argument went, were born too unintelligent to extract themselves from their pitiful conditions.³⁴ Thus, there was never a shortage of humans but only of a particular kind of humans.

While many antinatalists tended to discourage the poor from reproducing during the 1960s, pronatalists like Wattenberg urged the most "valuable" people, for example, "the Yuppies" to procreate faster.³⁵ They were the ones who contributed most to the nation. They were the brains. They represented culture, economic success, and were the most likely to uphold values like democracy, a free market system, and a strong, culturally pure America.

What was at fault for this "negligence" of the wealthy and how could it be remedied? Wattenberg distinguished several factors that prevented higher birth rates: more liberal mores, sexual permissiveness, legal abortion, higher divorce rates, and delayed marriage. Furthermore, he cited improved contraceptives, more and better education, "environmental arguments" and the new economics of women. That is, he argued, "upwardly

³⁴ Chase, p. 11.

³⁵ Wattenberg/Zinsmeister in Public Opinion, op. cit., p. 13.

mobile career women intimidate men."³⁶

Wattenberg stressed that the decision to not have children was wrong. It mainly was due to being uninformed. The wealthy "do not know that the Birth Dearth may ultimately hurt them due to busted pension plans or economic dislocation or domestic turmoil."³⁷ Yuppies were not aware that the Birth Dearth "can yield a world inhospitable to values they cherish" and that the nation was "withering away".³⁸

The remedies were obvious to him. Education was most important. But since we needed three and four child-families, we would have to compensate people for their lost earnings at least in part. "[L]arge amounts of cash" and "extra-high expenditures" in order to "save Western civilization" would help to remedy "history's cruel joke that a culture's success [can bring] about its erosion."³⁹ For this purpose, large tax exemptions would be one feasible solution. Some went even farther than that. Allan Carlson from the Rockford Institute, a conservative think tank, suggested that the phenomenon of working women was largely the creation of an intrusive government. The damage, however, could be undone by repealing the Equal Rights Act of 1963 and parts of the 1964 Civil Rights

³⁶ Wattenberg 1987, p. 104; see also Wattenberg/Zinsmeister in Public Opinion, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

³⁷ Wattenberg 1987, p. 139. He was convinced that turmoil and crime were not only due to immigration and poverty. "[e]ven if others don't like it" crime has gone up in neighborhoods where population has gone down.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 140-150; and Wattenberg/Zinsmeister in Public Opinion, op. cit., p. 13.

Act, "which prohibits discrimination against women as well as minorities."⁴⁰

To Wattenberg and his supporters, pronatalism made sense economically as well as ecologically. Higher birth rates in a free market system would result in economic success. The reason was simple. According to Wattenberg, there has not been and will not be any resource shortages because mankind will always (re)invent resources. Crises produce creative thinking and thus responses. Zinsmeister even attributed the emergence of international family planning programs to the application of the free market principle, although "gross abuses" like forceful sterilization and abortions occurred.⁴¹ Simon stated that "all evidence for hundreds and even thousands of years shows natural resources to be getting more available - that is, less costly, even as population has multiplied and resource use has multiplied even faster."⁴² More ingenious people meant new ideas, more innovations and higher living standards:

"we should also welcome the scarcity problems that are caused by increasing population and rising incomes, because if problems do not arise, solutions will not be evoked. And the entire process of scarcity problems arising and then getting solved almost always leaves us better off [in the long run; the short run, according to Simon, can last for 30 to 80 years] than if the problems had never arisen."⁴³

⁴⁰ Kaye in The New Republic, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴¹ Zinsmeister in: Wattenberg/Zinsmeister (eds.) 1985, p. 39.

⁴² Simon in Wattenberg/Zinsmeister 1985, p. 31; see also Julian Simon, The Ultimate Resource, (Princeton 1981: Princeton University Press), pp. 15-27, 42-52.

⁴³ Simon in Zinsmeister/Wattenberg, 1985, pp. 31-32. See also Simon 1981, pp. 216-222.

In essence, then, there is no problem because in the problem there is always the solution. This is also the attitude of Jacqueline Kasun who regards Simon as a great authority in this field.

It was Wattenberg's conviction that the free market system would yield the highest benefits for the environment as well. In response to the Global 2000 report he stated: "[t]he point is that much environmental thinking in recent years has been directed toward the idea that the overall quality of our lives was poor or deteriorating and would likely get worse."⁴⁴ This was not only wrong but probably a "harmful" mindset. "We may well diminish the quality of life," he argued, with such a view. Indeed, "[c]an it be that environmentalism is bad for the environment?"⁴⁵ asked Wattenberg rhetorically. He proceeded to explain that all the negative media coverage was hyperbole. Simon asserted the same position: environmental difficulties induced public and expert concerns and demands which exceeded any "realistically realizable - or even desirable [!] - expectations."⁴⁶ His conclusion: let the "ultimate resource" solve the problem while we stand back and go on with business as usual. This approach, so Wattenberg reasoned, had worked well. We were now healthier and lived longer, the best single indicator for an improved environment; the big increase in life expectancy had set in already before the effects of environmental legislation could possibly have been felt.

⁴⁴ Wattenberg 1984, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Simon 1981, p. 325.

Thus, it has been unnecessary, even harmful to invest billions of dollars for cleaning up of the environment. This was not only a diversion of tax money, but it also reduced business profits while it raised the cost of living. But no important gains in health or life expectancy could be noticed. Population and people, Wattenberg argued, had nothing to do with pollution. The opposite was the case: "More people provide the funds for more pollution control."⁴⁷ That this was in contradiction to his free market approach did not seem to disturb him. While the US population had gone up, lead emissions, ozone pollutants, nitrogen oxides and other harmful gases had gone down.⁴⁸

The free market economy was beneficial in every respect. Pronatalism would not only improve economic conditions and national security, but it was a boon for the environment as well. People in a free market system were the reason for improvements and quite capable of regulating and protecting their environment. That people had consumed faster and more over the years, thrown away more, polluted more, that more industries had been poisoning water, air and land as environmental regulations were too lax, disregarded or non-existent must have eluded Wattenberg's attention. In fact he claimed that no lasting ill-effects of this disregard for the environment could be registered. After being exposed to dioxin released in a manufacturing accident in West Virginia or the one in Seveso, Italy, no ill-effects could be registered among the workers. The chemicals dumped by

⁴⁷ Wattenberg 1987, p. 167.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

chemical companies into the Love Canal, according to Wattenberg, had no deleterious effects on people's health; nuclear plants were safer than coal plants because more people were killed by the latter, and Lake Erie is really in good health. At the same time, he claimed that wildlife and wilderness park areas had increased and air pollution had been reduced.⁴⁹

Wattenberg or Simon were representatives of the new conservative ideology that emphasized "what was right in America rather than an obsessive concern with social ills."⁵⁰ In a super-optimistic fashion they tried to demonstrate that resources were plentiful, the environment intact, and the economy on the way into a better future. Even the Third World and the Soviet Bloc, as they had "shared or stolen" our technology, profited constantly from our advancements.

The free market approach was accompanied by the focus on traditional family values and the battle against abortion and sterilization. So far the ultimate success -- the overturning of Roe vs. Wade -- has been elusive. Although there may be more people who condemn abortion, the majority still wishes to have abortion legalized. According to a Boston Globe survey, 25% of the population want no restrictions, 53% favor some restrictions and 19% would want to ban it completely.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the goal of the pro-

⁴⁹ Wattenberg 1984, p. 41-55.

⁵⁰ Divine et al., p. 957.

⁵¹ Morton Kondracke, "The New Abortion Wars", The New Republic, Vol. 201, No. 9 (August 28, 1989) p. 20.

lifers at the moment is to press the Supreme Court to overturn Roe vs. Wade. In this pursuit, they have come fairly close to even bigger successes than the one that the decision in Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services provided.

The Birth Dearth, fit into the abortion "war" perfectly, giving the pro-family movement additional legitimacy. The enormous number of sterilizations, abortions, and prevented pregnancies due to a perceived lack of morals among conservative provided a huge political potential. Wattenberg's crusade could thus be an additional factor to justify the rollback of pro-abortion laws.

The Birth Dearth scenario thus had a strong political impact. Its ultimate goal may be seen as an attempt to lessen the remaining liberal or libertarian values of the baby boom generation as well as their hostility toward traditional values. For some time to come, the baby boomers will constitute about 60% of the electorate. These factors, so the assertion goes, were responsible for the potentially disastrous position in which the US would soon find itself. The remedies suggested by pronatalists were meant to root out contraception, abortion, working women, lax morals. To achieve this goal the pronatalists attempted to carve out a system that would appeal to Democrats as well as to Republicans. Tax rewards have always been attractive. The "small sacrifices" suggested would be a small price to pay to avoid the "Finlandization" of the West.

Nonetheless, and despite the publicity that Wattenberg's or Simon's works enjoyed, the influence of the pronatalist movement is difficult to

assess. The backing of the AEI helped make his cause somewhat respectable. But, as Wattenberg himself admitted, conservatives, though generally interested in his theories, have not promoted his ideas very vigorously yet. The biggest response so far has come from the more conservative wing of the Republican Party. TV evangelist Pat Robertson, for instance, elaborated frequently "on the genetic suicide" that America was committing. More children were needed to pay for future bills and to stave off "the decline of our culture and our values."⁵² Jack Kemp, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, also was convinced that people were our "greatest resource". "No nation can long remain a world power when its most precious resource is a perishing resource."⁵³

The Reagan administration also discovered the merits of the population decline discourse. In accordance with Wattenberg's suggestions, the White House Working Group recently recommended \$5000 tax exemption per child. It had decided to advocate such measures because the greying, the "withering of America" would severely strain social security, manpower and the viability of the volunteer armed forces.⁵⁴ An attempt by the government to endorse Wattenberg's ideas openly would, however, certainly would evoke an outcry from people concerned with equal rights, feminism, the environment, and racism. To some degree, the discussion that developed

⁵² New York Times, October 24, 1987, I, p. 9.

⁵³ Kemp in Time, August 24, 1989; Tony Kaye in The New Republic, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁴ Kaye in The New Republic, op. cit., p. 23.

after the publication of The Birth Dearth hinted at that. Nobody in his right mind believes the environmental crisis is over. And although the abortion and birth dearth themes were probably the most important aspects of discourse produced by the population movement of the 1980s, many people are still convinced that an "overabundance" of people would neither be beneficial ecologically nor economically. Many women resent Wattenberg's implication that they, again, become housebound, raising children and standing in the kitchen. Even more money for the wealthy would possibly stir more resentment among the lower classes and could be interpreted as racist by blacks and other minorities.

Similarly, an attempt to boost the American birth rate with an explicitly pronatalist policy could be regarded as racist by Third World countries, particularly since decidedly antinatalist policies are being internationally pursued by the US. Such a lack of consistency can result in problems. One example here is the unexpected development at the World Population Conference in Mexico City 1984.

4.3 THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE IN MEXICO CITY 1984

Ten years after the 1974 Bucharest Conference, the US was not among those nations that perceived the need for another population conference, which was another indication that a growing anti-abortion, pronatalist mood in the US had replaced earlier more liberal, antinatalist sentiments. This time a group of developing countries, supported by the UN and here especially the UNFPA, believed such a conference would be advantageous.

Its objective was to assess the progress that had been made and to increase Western support for new population programs and donor enthusiasm. The conference was to have a much smaller budget than the first one and the US -- which under Reagan was dubious about such UN activities -- only reluctantly agreed to contribute.

After an intense struggle in the Third World for the New Economic Order and against population control programs, almost all LDCs that had formerly opposed those programs as diversions from more important themes now accepted limitations on population growth as necessary and important for development. The political climate had changed radically since 1974. The optimism among Third World leaders that adopting the New Economic Order by the UN could lead to significant gains was short-lived. Although the economic gap was as vast as ever, political North-South confrontations had diminished by the early 1980s.⁵⁵ Economic difficulties and more conservative governments in the industrialized world had a further discouraging effect. Within the Third World, differences in economic development and thus foreign policy objectives had become more pronounced. The newly industrialized countries, for instance, were much more interested in foreign investment and export oriented growth. Enormous debts had also convinced many of the advantages of a bilateral approach. Additionally, population pressures had become so significant in many LDCs that political elites now felt that family planning could enhance their economic performance and

⁵⁵ Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit., (March 1985) p. 3.

reduce the danger to their regimes that the poor masses might ultimately evoke.

Another important point is that many LDCs had recognized that complying with traditional antinatalist policies would be beneficial. With the shift to more conservative politics and the refocusing of the population debate in developed countries, donor enthusiasm had flagged. Money, it was hoped, was more likely to flow into their countries for family planning, and consequently for economic development. US diplomats made it clear that the flow of money from Washington was likely to be facilitated only if family planning programs were adopted.

This hope eventually was manifested in the final Recommendations for the Conference which included a strong endorsement for LDC governments that should "'as a matter of urgency', make family planning services universally available."⁵⁶ The Declaration stated clearly that population pressures could contribute further to the disparities in the quality of life between LDCs and MDCs.

While these positions were what the US had been striving for since the 1960s, and which it had still endorsed in the Draft Recommendations only a few months earlier, at the Conference itself a surprising shift in attitudes took place. Now the US delegation declared that "population growth is, of itself, a neutral phenomenon. It is not necessarily good or ill."⁵⁷ At fault instead were misguided economic policies that prevented

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁷ US Statement as cited in Menken, p. 9.

economic development and reduced birth rates. To justify their former involvement in family planning, the US delegation declared that a "commendable concern for the environment" in industrialized countries, which was really a reflection of anxiety about unsettled times, had led to demographic overreaction and "unsound, extremist scenarios."⁵⁸ As far as abortion was concerned, US funds would in the future be withheld from aid organizations, which encouraged such policies.

This declaration contributed significantly to the politicization of the conference. The reason for this was due to unrelated political events in the US. On the one hand, there was the strong influence of the New Right and the pro-life movement with their redefined free market policies. The US delegation tried to promote these objectives at the Conference. On the other hand, the Republican Convention and the 1984 presidential elections were coming up. Over the years, US support for international family planning had come under concerted attacks from the New Right, and the GOP did not want this issue to spoil its summer convention in Dallas.

The new position presented in Mexico City, which collided sharply with the Draft Recommendations formulated a few months prior to the Conference with active US participation, was changed and accredited to the "major influence" exerted by Julian Simon.⁵⁹ This also led to a quick reorganization of the US delegation. Richard Benedick who had expected to be head of the delegation was removed due to pressure from pro-life

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

groups on grounds of his personal views. An outspoken advocate of family planning, he subsequently resigned from his post as Coordinator of Population Affairs in the Department of State and complained bitterly about the "vicious attacks" these groups had mounted against him.⁶⁰ James Buckley, former senator and Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, was nominated instead. Buckley, who indicated he would like to take Simon and Kasun, his former consultant in the State Department, to Mexico,⁶¹ agreed to accept the position as long as the policies forwarded would be consistent with his convictions.⁶² Not surprisingly, abortion became the central concern: "US support to family planning programs is based on the respect for human life, enhancement of human dignity, and strengthening of the family."⁶³ This position was linked "politically and ideologically"⁶⁴ to the status of women. Members of the New Right and the right-to-life movement were displeased with the attempts of the Conference to enhance it. But the Reagan administration felt it could not afford to avoid endorsing enhanced status of women in the face of the upcoming elections: it ultimately supported the proposal. The original idea to keep the Conference "low key" quickly dissipated when it became clear that its

⁶⁰ New York Times, August 16, 1984, p. 11.

⁶¹ Constance Holden, "A 'Profile' Population Delegation", Science, Vol. 224, No. 4655 (June 22, 1984) p. 1321.

⁶² Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit., (March 1985) p. 17.

⁶³ As cited in *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁴ As cited in *ibid.*, p. 14.

geographic proximity to the US would mean an abundance of American journalists. An additional factor was that the changes in the US position had been discussed prior to the Conference already and had stirred the interest of public and media.

The closeness of the US position at the Mexico meeting with its domestic policies is striking particularly in terms of its stand on abortion as well as the free market economy. This was reflected in the overall assessment of the consequences of population growth. The US delegation stated that "[t]he relationship between population growth and economic development is not necessarily a negative one."⁶⁵ In fact, history had shown that population growth spurred economic growth. If population growth had had negative effects in the past this was due to "governmental control of economies" like price fixings etc. This in turn had prevented an economic development which would have "naturally" reduced birth rates as had happened in the world's "most affluent nations."⁶⁶

The sharpness of change from the policy statements of four previous administrations, and "with some variations" the first three years of the Reagan administration, was surprising only at first glance.⁶⁷ Prior to the conference, leaders of the right-to-life movement had vigorously lobbied for the adoption of a new population policy at the conference. This already

⁶⁵ US statement, Mexico City 1984, as cited in Menken, p. 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁷ Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit., (March 1985) p. 17.

had begun in 1981 when they attempted to "eliminate the entire AID budget for population assistance,"⁶⁸ as they were generally opposed to US involvement in international population programs. Their main concern was the role of international organizations in abortion related activities and the use of (dis)incentives and sterilization.⁶⁹ But the vigorous lobbying of population assistance proponents, including moderate Republicans, like Vice President George Bush, restored AID's budget requests. In the following months, the New Right movement concentrated on abortion as a substitute and successfully elicited policy responses as the events before and at the conference had shown.

The compliance of the Reagan administration thus must be interpreted as a strategy to enhance Reagan's reelection chances. Focusing on the merits of a free-market economy and outwardly pronatalist, anti-abortion in population policies was aimed at the Republican Convention.⁷⁰ The New Right movement could only gain. If the anti-abortion rhetoric had been accepted at the conference, then it would hence have further legitimized national efforts. If not, then the shortcomings of the UN could be underlined. Success also would partly have made up for the earlier failure to bring about an amendment to the US Constitution to ban abortions.⁷¹ In addition,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷⁰ See Time, July 2, 1984 in a comment on the new draft for Mexico City; see also The Nation, July 7-14, 1984, p. 4.

⁷¹ Finkle and Crane in Population and Development Review, op. cit., (March 1985) p. 19.

to solicit money from wealthy contributors, the GOP meant to persuade them that the White House was promoting their cause. For the Reagan administration, in turn, the position in Mexico was an inexpensive and expedient fulfillment of earlier promises to the New Right.⁷²

In practice, the damage done to the population movement was minor. Most importantly, despite the dispute about abortion, the consensus on the Declaration and Recommendations which reaffirmed, even extended, the 1974 World Population Plan of Action made the conference a success for the antinatalist movement. This, without a doubt, was also the intention of the US as most citizens still viewed the reduction of population growth in the Third World as important. Even Buckley indicated on several occasions that the Reagan administration intended to continue its assistance to voluntary family planning programs and to increase the budget for AID.

Population assistance still provided a compelling rationale. In comparison with other aid programs, it was highly cost-efficient and supposedly beneficial to the US long-range economic and security interests. Additionally, the strong initial endorsement of Richard Benedick, the unhappy first choice, by people like Secretary of State George Schultz, US ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and even President Reagan himself⁷³ alluded to that. In this respect, family planning as such was not meant to be controversial. This assessment was further corroborated by Congress which gave the AID program a resounding vote of confidence after the Mexico City

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 16.

conference. It approved a \$50 million increase for the fiscal year 1985. This resulted in a total of \$290 million, \$40 million more than the administration had requested.⁷⁴

Everybody had gained. In the US, the Reagan administration had convinced potential voters of its commitment to New Right causes and thus supported its own bid for the renomination and reelection of Reagan. Ironically, the originally unintended publicity turned out to be a plus for population planners and thus met the needs of the Third World. It encouraged new links between governments and organizations and promoted a spirit of unity for those struggling for the same cause. The antinatalist population movement was further legitimized. Population planners were given a stronger mandate, and the interest in their programs was greatly revitalized in the West and elsewhere.

The only serious drawback for the antinatalist movement came after the conference. The Reagan administration saw itself forced to live up to its promises to cut off aid to organizations which condoned abortions as a means of birth control. To mollify the pro-life movement, AID was asked to withhold funding to the IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) and the UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities). The two most efficient agencies in the field of family planning thus each lost 25% of their income.⁷⁵ This also may explain why US appropriations to AID

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁵ Constance Holden, "US Anti-Abortion Policy May Increase Abortions," Science, Vol. 238, No. 4831 (November 27, 1987) p. 1222.

designated for foreign population assistance were reduced to \$239 million in 1986 and \$230 million in 1987,⁷⁶ which in money terms was still more than 20% larger than during the last year of the Carter administration (\$185 million). These reductions, however, did not affect any other organizations. On the national level, organizations like Planned Parenthood still could maintain their support. The domestic program has become so complex and large that the estimates for the money spent in domestic family planning differ greatly. Expenditures for federal population research alone had increased from \$111 million in 1978 to almost \$200 million annually in the mid 1980s.⁷⁷ Similar increases were noticed in funding that population agencies like the Population Council of the Population Reference Bureau received.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In the US, Birth Dearth and a changing political climate apparently shifted the discursive focus in the population debates from antinatalism to pronatalism. By comparing the goals of the pronatalist movement with those of the earlier antinatalist movement, however, very similar interests could be established in their discourses. Both movements were engaged in creating or securing the privileges of the well-to-do. In the antinatalist case, Moore and Rockefeller were concerned with the poor masses who would possibly take over and convert the American democracy into a socialist society. In the pronatalist case, exemplified by Wattenberg, this danger was

⁷⁶ Kasun, pp. 83 and 166.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 16, 164, 174.

more likely to come from a (potentially) communist world alone. This fear was magnified by the lack of "resistance," that is the failure of the wealthy to reproduce. Hence, the decline of the American society appeared almost an inevitable phenomenon. Although the antinatalist discourses focused on discouraging the poor from procreating and the pronatalist discourses concentrated on encouraging the wealthy to reproduce, a similar idea is at work here. Consequently, both could be called racist as they preferred one population group over another, and one people over other peoples. Both generally preferred the wealthy to the poor, and both favored northern and western Europeans over southern and eastern Europeans -- or even "worse," over Asians, Africans, or Latin Americans. The eugenicist myth, then, as it was revived after the Second World War continued to live on in other more palatable discursive forms. While during the 1980s pronatalism dominated the demographic agenda in the US, antinatalist sentiments internationally showed no signs of levelling off.

The conflict potential inherent in these two antagonistic policies became obvious during 1984 at the World Population Conference in Mexico City. Unlike the World Population Conference ten years earlier, the Third World nations did not try to use Mexico City to promote other political goals. The LDCs instead restricted themselves to winning a greater dedication to their demographic predicaments. The United States delegation, however, used the World Population Conference in 1984 as a platform to further its national policy objectives and partisan political programs. While it also was hoped that more Third World countries would accept and even adopt

America's new demographic insights, the main purpose was to assure the conservative voter at home of the commitment to the market economy and the struggle against abortion. There was no intention to fundamentally change international population policies. Consequently, the disruptions that the antinatalist movement had to endure remained bearable. Aid for family planning programs was still a cheap alternative to more substantial economic aid, and it was believed to have the same positive effects in respect to national security and economic interests. Thus, the antinatalist policy was maintained despite the established fact that economic and social improvements are the key to successful, long-term population planning.

CONCLUSION

One of the first questions that comes to mind when "overpopulation" is discussed is how further increases can be avoided. Similarly, the fear of a population decline has affected several Western and Communist countries. This discourse led to questions about how this can be alleviated as well as how some birth rates can be increased. What is seldom talked about, however, and what would probably be more relevant is what are the criteria that might make a country either overpopulated or underpopulated. What indicates that a population grows too fast? Which factors determine that a population is too large? Which factors show conclusively that a decline is detrimental? Who is victimized and what is responsible for this? Who can make a difference and how?

Needless to say, to actually find answers to these questions would be extremely difficult. The number of variables that would have to be considered to assess population patterns and trends accurately would be immense. Nonetheless, discourses that attempt to address these questions have certain merits. They could positively influence and refocus the discussion about population growth and population control. A different and more scientifically accurate perspective for the population discussion may be found. Poverty might possibly appear in another light, and the responsibility for environmental problems might gain more definition. It might be too idealistic to think that this could be the first small step to a fundamental change in attitude toward poverty, equality, the environment. But one, at least, may express the hope that sooner or later a more definite

approach to the population topic will be discovered. This seems so important because this thesis shows that eugenicism -- although in modified and better disguised forms -- has not only survived World War II, but it also has remained virtually unaffected by the Civil and Equal Rights movements, the 1960s cultural revolution, and student revolt against the universities.

A clever "twist" in the population discourses made it very plausible to believe that many important problems in American society could be attributed to the presence of "too many" poor people. External threats, according to this reasoning, exist because overpopulation fuels communism, foreign immigration and ultimately the subversion of American values. Its mainly white European culture may be destroyed and its democracy replaced by socialist and communist ideas. Crime rates are allegedly high because of an abundance of idle, unemployed, poor people, who roam the streets. The environment suffers, assert the antinatalists, because a growing number of people create more pollution. For the pronatalists -- as they want more people -- the economy suffers, because of a declining number of people. The antinatalists argue that population growth may inhibit economic growth, the pronatalists argue the contrary position.

Disregarding the fact that the anti-population crusade was also supported by people who were genuinely concerned with equality and the environment, all these assertions -- whether they come from antinatalists or pronatalists -- target one particular part of the population: the poor. Both movements have used this group to create an ideology that has served the sole purpose of maintaining the existing social system or more precisely

to ensure the continuation of the wealthy classes' more privileged positions. The dominant social class, or rather some of its most "alert" members, managed to convert their specific interests into dominant social ideas by skillfully applying this ideology in the discourses of population control.

In this process, it seems, two objectives were reached. The least powerful and most politically inactive social class openly was accused of being responsible for a multitude of problems that we are facing today. As this discourse succeeded in blaming them, their powerlessness was made even worse improving the likelihood that the existing social conditions behind their subjugation would remain intact. Moreover, the clever reasoning of these discourses effectively disguised many of the original goals and ultimate targets of such talk. Instead of attacking the poor, the official position only claims that -- in the antinatalist case -- family planning should (generally) expand, and -- in the pronatalist case -- that birth rates should (generally) increase.

The population control movement, then, provides an interesting example of how members of the dominant class can organize themselves and then use their organizational power to shape public opinion and policy. By the same token, it may be difficult to generalize this case. Population control did not seem to create much interclass conflict. The overall idea usually appeared appealing, and few specific interests were explicitly threatened. The goal of lobbying for the adoption of a population policy was accepted almost unanimously. Furthermore, there were only few challenges from other social groups or individuals who regarded birth control as another mystified

expression of racism, or even worse, of attempted genocide. This opposition always remained weak because it was fairly disorganized. But, it also confused birth control with population control. Free access to birth control undoubtedly has its merits, but it does not necessarily always address a specific group. The population controllers, however, often have converted this humanitarian idea into various attempts to control a certain segment of the population.

The privileged class could secure a broad public audience in the population discourses to provide it with legitimacy, which also greatly facilitated their objective of winning governmental support. This also points to the fact that a rational discourse is never enough by itself; the political and social atmosphere has always been crucial. When conservative values prevail, or when a strong anti-abortion, anti-contraception mood can be noticed, population control discourse will hardly be able to make a credible stand. This was clearly indicated in the "vanishing" of antinatalist issues during the 1970s and the virtual absence of the 1960s-style overpopulation discourses during the 1980s. Nevertheless, the conservative resurgence of the last decade could be used in another discursive struggle, seeking many similar goals, such as the pronatalist attacks upon antinatalism.

These shifts pose a new question: how will the population control movement develop in the near future? It is certain that both the Third World population and the US population will increase for the next few decades due to the population momentum. Judging from the last 25 years, it also appears likely that family planning programs in the Third World will continue to act

as a substitute for more substantial economic reforms. This policy seems to be in the interest of the elites in both the industrialized countries and the underdeveloped countries as the dominant elite will try to secure its position in both settings.

Developments in the US, it can be assumed, will probably depend on political rather than demographic changes. At the moment any radical political changes, like another "cultural" or "sexual revolution," are not looming on the horizon. This might be an advantage for the pronatalists which are backed by anti-abortion activists at the present time. However, contrary to the antinatalist movement of the 1960s, the opposition is vocal and strong, even though it is not focused on pronatalism as such. But the government does not seem to be very comfortable with the abortion issue: Earth Day 1990 with its more antinatalist focus on the environment was regarded by many as a welcome distraction from pronatalist concerns.

It can be assumed in the future that the growing magnitude of America's environmental concerns will again play a key role in defining where the population movement is headed. A growing interest in environmental issues, which might mean greater importance for many environmental organizations, could challenge the sensibility of pronatalism. On the other hand, if the environment continues to play a subordinate role in public discourse, and if the pro-abortion movement is successful in repealing Roe vs. Wade, pronatalism could increase in political significance. It would likely be combined with antinatalism as has been the case during the last decade and efforts to restrict immigration. Recent concerns with

illegal immigration from Latin America and Asia are still mounting. And, the fear seems to be more pronounced inasmuch as population control discourses focus upon how these cultures are "diluting" America's ethnic European heritage. Assuming that the population debate will revolve in the future around the same theoretical axis, one thing, sadly to say, seems unlikely to change within the complex currents of population discourse -- the poor will remain the main disciplinary targets for most visions of population control.

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