



# Demographical aspects of environmental damage and climate change

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## General Note



Article is recommended to print as color version in recycled paper. *Save Trees, Save Climate.*

## ABSTRACT

Environmental damage and climate changes are influenced by human industrial activities, which are proportional to the population size. Of potentially grave consequence is the unplanned industrial development in the previously underdeveloped countries because environment protection is observed less rigorously there and especially due to the large scale of this process, proportional to the population size. Humankind can choose between reduction of the birth rate and raising the death rate by means of famine, epidemics or homicide, which have been a norm during the whole history and prehistory. The conclusion is that in order to prevent ecological and other catastrophes, the humankind should be unified. Nuclear energy, the only thinkable alternative to the fossil fuels, must be introduced globally under a strict central control. People must learn to trust each other. English should become official language all over the world. Labor, discipline, modesty and birth control are urgently needed to facilitate survival of the billions of people.

**Keywords:** overpopulation, climate change, environment.

Environmental damage and climate change are influenced by human industrial activities (Godlee, 2014), the latter being obviously proportional to the population size. Overpopulation leads to poverty, overcrowding, pollution of air and water (Greep, 1998). Together with increasing unemployment, food and fresh water shortages, these factors would decrease the quality of life for billions of people. Of potentially grave consequence is the unplanned industrial development of previously underdeveloped countries

because environment protection measures are observed less rigorously there and especially due to the large and unpredictable scale of this process, which is proportional to the population size. In the last quarter of the 20th century, population grew faster in developing than in developed countries, and, compared with the population increase, the growth of carbon emissions was even faster in developing countries than in developed ones. The ratio of emissions-to-population growth rates was reported to be 2.8 in developing countries compared with 1.6 in high-income countries (Cohen, 2010).

Food production cannot increase infinitely without soil depletion, desertification, deforestation and other forms of environmental damage (Reddy, 1989). There is a well-founded opinion that the humankind can choose between reduction of the birth rate and raising the death rate (Russell and Russell, 2000), the latter by means of famine, epidemics or homicide, which were usual during the whole history and prehistory. Even today, damage to a fragile infrastructure in some areas can result in severe shortages of fresh water and food. Humanity is in a demographic cul-de-sac (Vishnevsky, 2005); while no realistic solutions of the overpopulation-related problems have been proposed so far. Such solutions would require a revision of some ethical principles and propagation of new ones, in particular, that no population group, on a national or international scale, may obtain any advantages because of its numerical size or growth. On the contrary, those who have had many children should logically live in more crowded conditions. Adherence to this principle could be a basis for globalization and mutual trust. Without procreative competition, different peoples would be more likely to live in peace. Importantly, the equality principle would primarily affect populations with higher birth rates.

The most reliable method of birth control is sterilization. The last (or single) birth should be preferably accomplished by a caesarean section. Although more costly, this procedure is associated with a lesser risk for the newborn and facilitates sterilization by resection of the fallopian tubes. Admittedly, the caesarean section as a form of delivery would be associated with more risks in areas with limited medical facilities. Vasectomy in men would be also efficient, especially in the populations, where overt or hidden polygamy is practiced. Sterilization can provide a solution to the controversies related to the economic migrations. If an economy needs foreign manpower, sterilization would be a desirable condition. Such measures would be preferable compared to economical sanctions against families with many children, which, to be efficient, must include denial of free education and medical care for the second or third child. The victims of such measures would be children themselves, who are not responsible for their parents' unwillingness to use contraception.

It can be argued that sterilization does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS; however, these conditions may be regarded as self-inflicted in consequence of negligent or immoral behavior, thus being in a sense a private matter. However, when children appear, it ceases to be a private matter or an inherent human right, as the number of children in a family is of public concern today. Furthermore it can be heard as objection that birth control and sterilization are unnatural. It should be noted that death from infectious, parasitic diseases and many forms of homicide are natural, while survival in a case of perforated appendicitis is unnatural. The care for the elderly and disabled is very unnatural. In fact, it is the human civilization that is unnatural, and it is the civilization that can prevent overpopulation, environmental damage and international conflicts.

High fertility was propagandized during the global conflicts and the Cold War to replenish military and labor resources. Necessity of birth control has been obfuscated by conflicting national and global interests: population growth has been regarded as a tool helping to sovereignty and economic advance. It is sometimes argued that the birth rates tend to decrease as living conditions improve. There is such tendency indeed but the population of the countries with high living standards continues growing due to the economic and newly also ecological migration. Finally, it should be stressed that there can be no religious objections against contraception, sterilization and abortions because these methods are not mentioned in sacred texts. Religious concepts, realized without consideration for realities, may cause geopolitical and demographic problems that can be solved only with the international help.

Having discussed the birth rate, several words should be said about the dead. Cemeteries occupy space that could be taken by forests or fields. Human corpses contain proteins and other substances that could be used by the industry. Rationally organized industrial processing of corpses would provide fertilizers, bone-meal, fodder for fish, fur-bearing animals, waterfowl, laboratory animals, microbiological media etc. The humankind has no moral right to ignore this source of nutrients so long as there is shortage of foodstuffs, especially of protein-rich products. A corpse is a lifeless body that differs from other lifeless bodies as it provokes emotional reactions especially among relatives of the deceased. This makes necessary a speedy, mechanized, depersonalizing processing. Moreover, coffins are waste of wood indirectly damaging forests; corpses should be collected from private homes in non-expendable containers, and from mortuaries without them. If, due to local conditions, industrial processing would be uneconomic, cremation or collective interment would be an alternative. Portraits, video- and sound recordings are obviously more adequate as a memory of the deceased compared to the tombs and urns which are in fact fetishes. Acceptance of a compulsory industrial processing of corpses would be a milestone on the way from obscurantism to civilization.

Furthermore, in some countries, especially of Southern and Eastern Asia, the sex ratio has skewed towards men, partly in consequence of gender-selective abortions. The sex ratio at birth in several China's provinces was reported to be above 130. According to the 2010 census, the sex ratio at birth in India was 109 (Hesketh and Min, 2012). A similar phenomenon has been observed among immigrants from Asia to Europe (Singh et al. 2010). In accordance with traditions, economic and social stimuli, many families prefer to have sons, which is the cause of the increasing male-to-female ratio among newborns, abandonment of newborn girls, female infanticide, neglect of daughters, etc. (Hesketh and Min, 2012) There have been many campaigns in China since the 1940s, which have ended with nothing; and the 'one child policy' can become one of them (Lancet 2001). Moreover, this policy can be a convenient background for eugenics, spontaneous or planned. The 'one child policy' can also contribute to the gender imbalance as some families would use sex selection to ensure the birth of a son (Hesketh and Min, 2012). In future, the

gender imbalance will probably deepen, in view of the advancing prenatal sex-testing technologies and their increasing availability (Hesketh *et al.* 2011). Therefore, measures should be planned and taken on the global scale. The predominance of males is more conspicuous in the lower socio-economic classes; and there is a concern that their marginalization may lead to antisocial behavior threatening societal stability. As the excess of men may cause insecurity, families would be further motivated to have sons for protection. Moreover, the growing excess of men may contribute to militarism and conflicts.

Son preference was reported also from Africa, where the gender imbalance is not yet prominent because of a lesser availability of the prenatal gender testing. However, should fertility decline in future, the motivation to perform gender-selective abortions would become stronger because many families would try to have at least one boy to secure the patriarchal lineage (Beyeza-Kashesy *et al.* 2010). Note that official census data can underestimate the gender imbalance, the population size and growth. A part of the migrants, who are predominantly males, can be overlooked by a census. Due to the international migrations, a regional excess of men causes global imbalance. A local outflow of men would further stimulate the gender-selective practices in their native countries. For young males in some regions, the damage has already been done; and measures against gender imbalance in future newborns would not help them to find a female partner.

Labor productivity is growing; few workers can provide means of subsistence for many people; while unemployment is growing in parallel. In the past, similar conditions were terminated by wars and pestilence. This has not happened long since, and we are waiting to see what happens, while the population is growing. However, there are many things to do. Great projects could be accomplished by the unified mankind to improve the life of billions: irrigation facilities for drought-stricken lands, worldwide development of nuclear energy as the only adequate alternative to the fossil hydrocarbons. Chernobyl accident has been exploited to strangle the worldwide development of atomic energy, the cleanest, safest and practically inexhaustible means to meet the global energy needs (Jaworowski, 2010; Jargin, 2012). Furthermore, huge hydroelectric power stations could be constructed on Siberian and other great rivers for mass production of hydrogen – the most eco-friendly fuel. Such projects would create jobs for many people, being the only thinkable alternative to international conflicts. Moreover, should the birth rate decline in the future, it means that the workforce is at its maximum today, which is an opportunity to accomplish the great projects. Not much is needed for that: a globalised administration and English as the official language all over the world. People must learn to trust each other. Only by concentrating of authority in an international executive, based in the most developed parts of the world, can the vicious circus of international competition and conflicts be broken and priorities for addressing overpopulation created. Accordingly, propaganda should popularize the image of hardworking people as an identification model for the youth. Finally, scientific research must be revitalized and purged of scientific misconduct, centrally planned and controlled to avoid parallelism, unnecessary experimentation and dangerous developments.

In conclusion, by concentrating authority in a powerful international executive can the vicious circus of overpopulation, ethnicity- and gender-related shifts, of international competition and conflicts, be finally broken. The global leadership would strive for setting up an international society where all people would have the best opportunity to live happily. The motives for high fertility and the son preference should be eliminated, among others, by means of a better protection and support of childless elderly people, unwed mothers and families raising girls. Labor, discipline, modesty and birth control are urgently needed to facilitate survival of the billions of people.

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