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| **Title of proposed Study Group:**The Population Taboo**Name, email and phone number of Facilitator(s):**Max Kummerowmaxkummerow@yahoo.com217 722 6304Meeting time and place listed as: Olli Orange Classroom and via Zoom. 10-11:30 am Mondays. I’ll be out of town 27th**. Propose** **four session discussion, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4, 12/11****Brief Description of Study Group** In 1970 there was support across the political spectrum for cutting population growth rates. By 2000, discussion of population had been pushed off the world agenda, in part due to the toxicity of the abortion debate. Between 1974 and 2022 world population doubled from 4 to 8 billion. Why did ending population growth become demonized, how to put completing the world fertility transition back on the world's agenda?**Suggested topics for each session**1, UN and World Bank population and fertility statistics. Why did support for fertility decline peak in the 1970s and then fade and become toxic by 2000? The Roe v Wade backlash and other factors that made talking about population toxic. Links to backlash against equality for women and rise of the neo-conservative movement.2. Fertility decline by decade that halved world fertility rates 1970-2010 (from 4.7 to 2.3) and fertility divergence (currently <1 (Korea) to >6 children (Niger) per woman). What made fertility decline even when abandoned by the UN, governments, foundations, and NGOs.Some good news from WDI statistics—people live longer, fewer babies die, and incomes rise when birthrates fall.3. What we are up against. The Business/billionaire financed Republican public opinion project from 1934 to 2023. Was sustainable population collateral damage in the climate denial campaign?4. Getting population back on the world's agenda and finishing the global transition. Why and how. Growth sabotages climate solutions. Growth plus climate will generate billions of refugees/migrants. Growth generates violence. Integrating it all, where from here?**Reading materials and sources,**All optional but will deepen understanding to read articles from:Articles & NGOs<https://www.fp2030.org/> [populationmatters.org](https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt%3DAwrEqs.PMERlofcUIAhXNyoA%3B_ylu%3DY29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZANMT0NVSTExM1RfMQRzZWMDc2M-/RV%3D2/RE%3D1698996496/RO%3D10/RU%3Dhttp%3A//populationmatters.org//RK%3D2/RS%3Djjd.RnBiPEohMDTrIELMEiaoWF8-) <https://populationconnection.org/><https://overpopulation-project.com/> <https://www.populationmedia.org/> [www.populationinstitute.org](http://www.populationinstitute.org)<https://www.populationbalance.org/> Abortion rights:[www.guttmacher.](http://www.guttmacher.)org  PPFA and https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/<https://reproductivefreedomforall.org/> (formerly NARAL)The 1971 Lewis Powell memo to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on "winning the battle of ideas" against the Left and environmentalists. <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/democracy/the-lewis-powell-memo-a-corporate-blueprint-to-dominate-democracy/> Oreskes and Conway (historians of science) Book: Merchants of Doubt Paul VI Humanae Vitae <https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html> <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/historians-new-book-highlights-pius-xiis-moral-failures> Paul VI’s moral failures during WWII when he was Bishop Montini, the number three man in the Vatican under Pius XII.Ilsa Hogue (former NARAL director) Book: *The Lie that Binds*Chris Tucker, geographer. Book: *Planet of 3 Billion*. The limiting factor for human population is not food (as Malthus thought) but integrity of earth's life support systems. |

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**Session one agenda**

1. Introductions. I think it would be good to know each other’s background and experience. And if you have any population and reproductive rights experience or perspectives.
2. I’ll try a few minutes on why completing the world demographic transition matters.
3. Definitions:

“fertility rate” the average number of children a woman has in her lifetime. The number usually reported is a statistic called “total fertility rate” or TFR, which is a cross sectional measure at a point in time, found by adding up birthrates of all age groups between 15 and 45. Currently ranges from less than 1 child/woman in Korea to over 6 children/woman in Niger. World average is 2.3.

“replacement fertility rate” = 2.1 children/woman. Two to replace parents, 0.1 to account for mortality before reproduction. (varies with death rates, higher with high infant mortality)

TFR has roughly halved from 4.7 in 1970 to 2.3 now. But meanwhile population doubled. So roughly 2% growth x 4 billion in 1974 is not much different from 1% growth x 8 billion in 2022. In 2021, world growth was 67 million (equal to total of Illinois+Pennsylvania+New York+Florida).

“demographic transition” the transition from high fertility to low fertility. In 1800 women everywhere averaged 5-10 births. Infant and maternal mortality were high, so population growth was slow.

Now 111 countries, about half of all countries, have TFR<2.1

“Demographic transition theory” Originally proposed in 1929.



Originally, the idea was that people have big families to be sure to have children to care for them in old age. So falling infant mortality led to lower birth rates. Also rising prosperity which helped reduce death rates.

I think this is backwards. Falling fertility reduced mortality and raised per capita incomes.

Much research on determinants of fertility rates.

Bongaarts 2016 PAA presentation:

TFR = urbanization+income+education+life expectancy+Africa

The Africa “dummy variable” accounted for 1.1 extra children in TFR. So culture matters.

Other research shows that policy matters. If the government pushes family planning and makes contraceptives and abortion accessible, birthrates fall. Examples: Singapore, Korea, Thailand, Matlab experiment in Bangladesh, and others etc.

And relative to culture, soap operas where beloved characters modeled agency in choosing responsible parenting, helped birth rates fall in Mexico, Brazil, and others. Social norms can change.

1. Discussion questions

Why did support for fertility decline peak in the 1970s and then fade and become toxic by 2000?

The Roe v Wade backlash and other factors that made talking about population toxic.

Links to backlash against equality for women and rise of the neo-conservative movement.

Opinions on population growth and fertility?

Why did family planning become toxic?

How to promote fertility transitions?

How to de-toxify family planning initiatives?

My first presentation on population was a “simplest possible” system dynamics world model at 1999 Ecological Society of America. Circa 2010 I audited four Demography classes at U of Washington’s Center for the Study of Demography and Ecology (CSDE). I've presented a dozen papers and posters on population topics at ESA, PAA, EAERE, NCSE, PJSA, and other meetings. Study of the interactions of ecology and demography by self-guided reading and attendance at a total of 11 ESA and 8 PAA meetings.