

Forum:	General Assembly
Issue:	Issue #101: Managing Earth's Human Population
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Introduction

While the world's human population continues to expand, the earth's resources remain finite. Governments, individuals and corporations are all well aware of the slow-moving crisis that faces humanity. While most global north countries, especially in North America remain at below capacity for population, global south countries are facing immense pressure to effectively handle high birth rates and populations.

Key Words

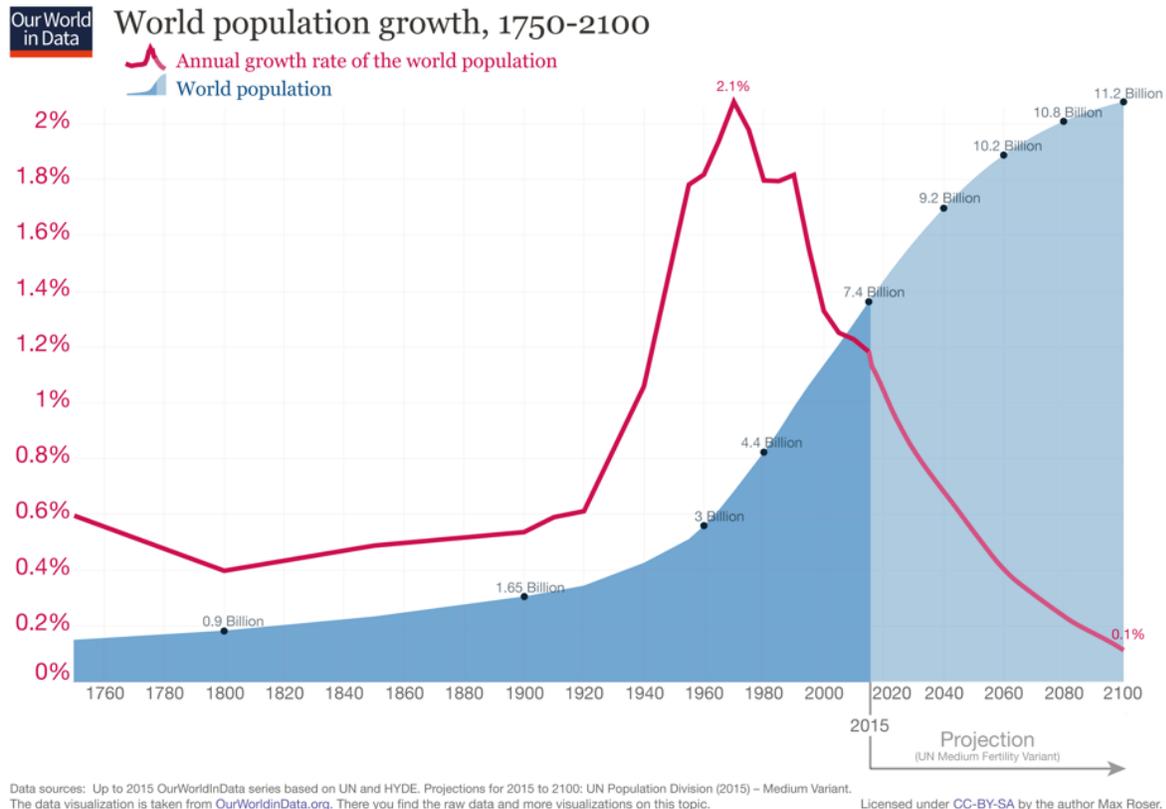
- **Fertility Rate:** Number of live births within a segment of a population over a period of time.
- **Birth Rate:** Number of live births per population over a period of time.
- **Death Rate:** Number of deaths per population over a period of time.
- **Population Growth Rate:** (birth rate + immigration) – (death rate + emigration)
- **Quality of Life:** General standards of living that are expected for human life.
- **Family planning:** The ability for a family unit or woman to plan out her or their reproductive future.
- **Palliative Care:** Long-term tending of patients with life-threatening medical issues.
- **Euthanasia:** Painless consensual killing of a person usually with a poor quality of life.
- **Longevity:** How long does something last/live.

History

For the vast majority of human history, populations of human beings on this earth have never been remotely close to reaching the limit of planetary resources. Over the span of many thousands of years the human population finally reached 1 billion people about 200 years ago. Now in the year 2018 this number has increased 7 times that, to well over 7 billion people.

Of course, the human population without any active intervention from state's, NGO's and corporations would be eventually controlled but not without significant human suffering. It is the goal of the United Nations to offer practical and sustainable solutions in

an effort to support a healthy human population growth rate. At the beginning of the 19th century the growth rate for the general human population was approximately 0.4%. This rate would continue to rise steadily, then exploded after the first world war. This number eventually peaked in 1962 at 2.1%. Since that period in time the growth rate has steadily been falling to about half of what it was in 1962. Projections for the beginning of the 22nd century estimate that the global population growth rate will decrease to 0.1% and by 2100



we will reach over 11 billion people.¹

Each country/continent faces their own unique possibilities and challenges for their own populations. Japan for example, has a negative growth rate at this point in time where they will be facing a serious crisis in the demographics of their country because of the decrease in the replacement of the elderly. These sorts of demographic changes effect the make-up of the workforce which in turn changes the nature of the state economy. Other countries are facing the exact opposite problem such as Niger. Their current population growth rate is just over 4%.

There are many different factors that change how a population is shaped over time. The three main factors that contribute the most are: fertility rates, international migration and increased longevity. Colonialism and the exploitation of resources has integrated different populations in different countries when density rates became high in certain regions. A large reason why the population growth rate before 1800 was below 1% is because a large portion of individuals did not live long enough to enter reproductive age.

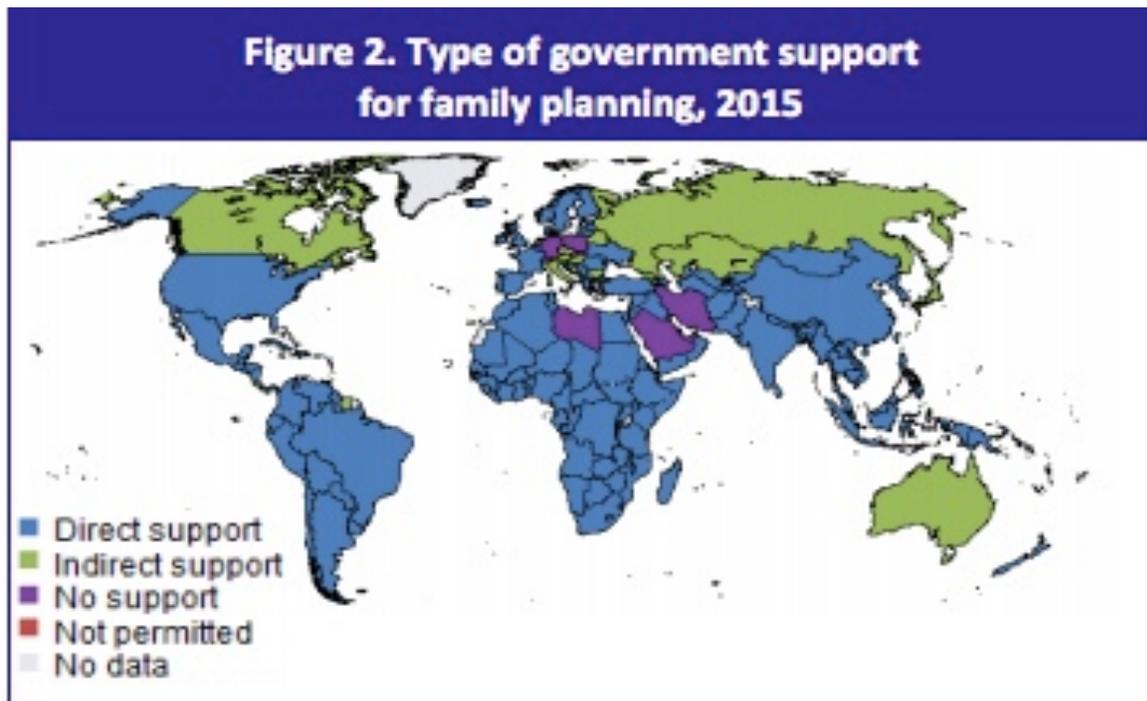
¹ United Nations, "Our Growing Population," Population, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/population/index.html>.

With the advancement of medical technology over the last 100 years infant mortality rates have dropped drastically leading an increase in reproductive adults. ²

The time period between widespread access to contraceptives and the drop in infant mortality rates ensured that large families could be maintained. This was especially common in global north countries in the first half of the 20th century. This correlates to the peak population growth rate in 1962. Through cost effective vaccinations and contraceptives, members of global south countries are more and more being afforded the ability to plan their family. Family planning is integral to maintaining a sustainable population.

Several successful programs have been used for decades to regulate population growth rates. Some of the major initiatives include:

- Raising the legal age of marriage to encourage later stage family planning
- Coordinating female and parental education with general healthcare programs through adolescence and adulthood
- Access to affordable and effective contraception



Data source: United Nations (2016).

Notes: (1) Based on 197 countries with available data. (2) The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

² Max Roser, Estaban Ortiz-Ospina, "World Population Growth," *Our World in Data*, April 2017, <https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth>.

- Education and Employment opportunities for women.³

Timeline of United Nations Actions on Population and Development

1946 - The Economic and Social Council established the United Nations Population Commission to begin reporting on demographic and social change caused by growth in human population.

1953 – First report published detailing human population trends and their effects on society.

1954 – First world conference in Rome co-sponsored by the UN population group.

1962 – The United Nations urges individual governments to create their own reports on population to engineer their own solutions.

1974 – First United Nations world conference on population in Bucharest.

1984 – Second world population conference on population in Mexico City.⁴

1994 – Third Conference on world population in Cairo. The first real mention of sexual and reproductive rights of women and the role of family planning.⁵

Case Study: China

In 1979, after the death of Chairman Mao, his successor believed that an expanding population would be a hindrance on economic development. The Chinese government implemented the one child policy which prohibited any family unit from having more than one child. Certain rural areas were given an exception up to two children. The effects (positive and negative) have been widely debated, although China itself views it as sound policy it has indeed created problems for the country in its current state. Only in 2015, did China change to a two-child policy.

³ United Nations Population Division, "Population Facts: Governments policies to raise or to lower the fertility rate," December 2017, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2017-10.pdf

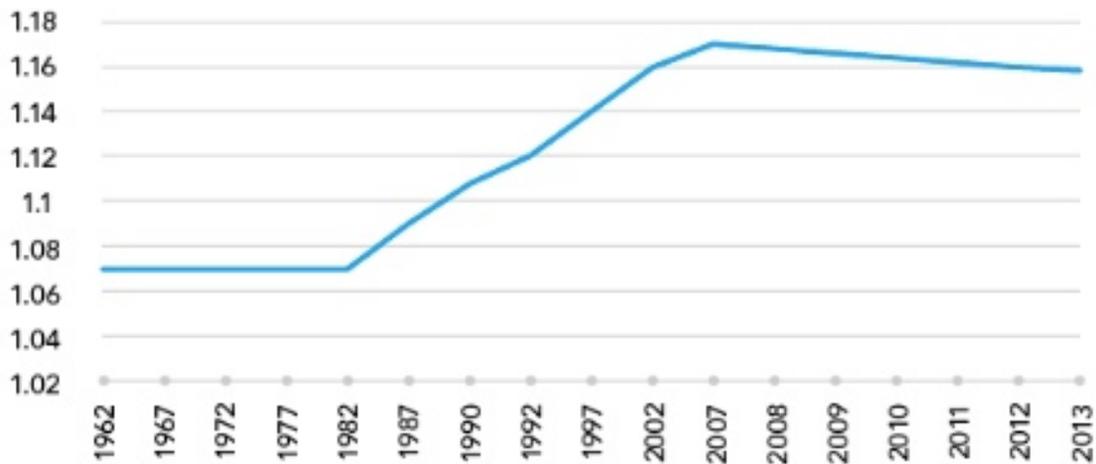
⁴ United Nations Population Information Network, "Background Document on the Population Programme of the United Nations, 24 March 1994," United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/bkg/unpop.html>.

⁵ United Nations Population Division, "United Nations Conferences on Population," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/conference/index.shtml>.

Along with the child restriction policy, the Chinese government also encouraged women to wait longer to have children. Women's education became a priority in attempt to keep their focus on careers rather than raising a family.⁶

Two major problems have stemmed from this policy: a significant gender gap where men outnumber women and an aging population with too few young people to support them. China has also implemented senior alienation laws, where younger generations are obligated to look after their elders. This has created a serious financial and physical strain on young people with aging parents and/or grandparents.⁷

SEX RATIO AT BIRTH (MALE BIRTHS PER FEMALE BIRTHS)



Source: World Bank

Case Study: Japan

Japan is one of the most prominent examples of a country with the lowest birth rates on earth. In order for a population to have a positive growth rate, the state's birth rate must be higher than its death rate by a certain margin to complete the human replacement process. Japan's growth rate is negative therefore their population is slowly decreasing. A question to consider is how do negative growth rates interact with various population demographics? How would a negative growth rate affect countries with a majority youth population vs. a majority elderly population? Or a country with a high population vs. a country with a very low population?

⁶ Asia Pacific Curriculum, "China's One Child Policy," Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, <https://asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/chinas-one-child-policy>.

⁷ Searfoss, Jullien, "China's One-Child Policy has Created Irreversible Damage: A Comprehensive Look at a Life Changing Issue," *The Journal of Business Diversity* 17, no. 4 (12, 2017): 57. Proquest ID (2007651434).

The problems behind the problem

Maintaining lifestyles that cannot be sustained by everyone at once. The North American lifestyle would require several earths.

~How to curb the fear of migration in order to smooth out overpopulation.

~Family planning in global south countries.

~Managing the aging populations in global north countries.

~Euthanasia vs. palliative care

The Future

What will the future of the human population look like. What kind of lifestyles/quality of life will they lead?

Questions to consider

1. Is it possible for states to converge on a general global migration policy?
2. What, if at all should the government be limited in the scope of interventionist family planning?
3. Should medical advancements for increased longevity be widely available and cost effective across the globe?
4. What is the ideal global population size? What is considered to be the bottom line of quality of life?
5. Should wealthy global north countries be forced to accept more of the population burden from overpopulated global south countries?

Further Reading & Tips

Please always be conscious of your individual state policies. Try to find allies in the room with allies that would naturally occur in real life.

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