

HUMAN RIGHTS, POPULATION ETHICS AND THE THIRD WORLD:  
Sources of Moral Conflict in International Population Policies

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No other arena of state intervention is more troubled by deep moral and ethical conflict than that of population policy. Not only by the regulations and laws affecting migration and mortality but also more obviously in the area of fertility control, public policy seeks to manipulate and delimit the most basic desires and actions of the individual. Pressures to control the size, growth and distribution of a population may require public officials and administrators to overturn deeply revered social mores; to alter the most basic components of the social matrix - courtship, marriage, child bearing and child rearing. Such efforts may place the state at odds with its conventional role as protector and preserver of cultural tradition. Moreover, in the name of progress, national welfare and economic development, strident efforts to control population growth may lead to serious human rights abuses.<sup>1</sup>

Given the various perspectives on the population problem itself, it is hardly surprising that tensions arise over both the goals and the mechanisms of population policies. While many of us have a strong bias to view population growth as usually causing more problems than it cures, there

are many critics of this perspective. Given these dissenting views on population growth, we can expect them to evaluate population policies in a profoundly different manner.

Moreover, since population issues are global in their implication, there is an additional source for conflict. There is a tangle of ethical issues arising from a basic tension between what are assumed to be world-wide "absolute" standards of morality and "contextual" (local, tribal or regional) standards. For the most part, the "population problem" has been defined in Western terms by Western analysts. The solutions - technical and structural - are singularly Western inventions. Ironically, even the "human rights" criteria for judging the moral efficacy of population policy are primarily Western in origin. Yet it is the developing nations of East and South who must live with the immediate consequences of population growth.

Perhaps it is to be expected, therefore, that the debates concerning population policy will be accompanied by strong moralistic pronouncements. Indeed, very few countries have considered implementing policies to limit the size of their populations without some controversy. In Latin America, for example, there has been ongoing resistance to efforts at controlling population growth. Attempts to implement family planning in Kenya in the late sixties generated an immediate and hostile reaction as politicians, church and tribal

leaders expressed concern that the program was an foreign intrusion at odds with their cultural values on fertility. In India, despite its long commitment to family planning and population control, there has been continuing controversy over both means employed and overall goals of the program. In the Philippines, resistance to birth control from both the Catholic Church and the Islamic minority has eroded government efforts to control the rapid growth of the nation's population.<sup>2</sup>

The controversy engendered by China's most recent attempts to limit the growth of its rapidly expanding population reveals the complexity of this issue. Reports of coercion by some local cadres and provincial officials receive considerable coverage in the Western media and, ostensibly, served as justification for the Reagan administration's cession of population assistance funding to United Nations as well as a number of private international agencies. China, which had been previously criticized for not taking its over-population problems seriously enough, now is forced to defend its programs from a choir of criticism from both socialist and nonsocialist nations.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth noting that the United States, the great champion and subsidizer of family planning for more than two decades, recently revealed its own confusion on the population planning issue. Although our foreign policy directives have suggested a uniformity of national opinion

on the issue of population control, in fact there has been considerable domestic debate over both intent as well as the instruments of family planning. Ambassador James Buckley's official statement to the World Population Conference at Mexico City was greeted with some surprise and has been interpreted as a reversal of the America's long-standing position on world population growth.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it is. If one had been attentive to domestic politics in the United States over the past ten years, however, the apparent shift in policy would have been anticipated.

#### Morality and Public Policy: The Origins of Conflict

How we seek to justify specific population policies depends not only on which of various competing ethical criteria we select but also how the "population problem" itself is defined. The definition of the problem, of course, determines the kind of solutions we see as possible and acceptable; and that, in turn, determines the "moral agenda" by which we evaluate both actions and consequences as the policy is carried out.

The point can be illustrated by asking a simple question: How do "real-world" - as opposed to theoretical - moral or ethical quandaries arise in public policy areas? Obviously we need to be confronted with some material or behavioral problem (or conflict) which is perceived to have injurious effects on individuals, groups or perhaps, the collectively

as a whole. This is the basic starting point. Without it, there is no call for reform, no debate over means or ends let alone "moral implications." Without a identifiable, objective problem, any discussion of morality or ethics is essentially an academic or perhaps more precisely, a theological matter and not "policy issue" per se.<sup>5</sup>

Although it wasn't always so, at the broadest level "the population problem" meets these initial criteria. It is now generally recognized as a matter for concern. But as I will seek show the amount of concern one has and the urgency of the concern is dictated by one's perception of "the problem." This in turn sets the terms for whatever moral controversy that may follow.

A second juncture at which moral controversy enters is when someone proposes one or more courses of action which seem likely to alter, ameliorate or resolve the problem at hand. But the key factor here is that the proposal must be taken seriously. An alternative state of affairs must seem reasonable, possible and attainable by human means. Again, debate is purely academic (and likely to be without serious moral conflict) if human intervention appears meaningless. For example, there are a host of natural disasters - tropical storms, volcanos and earthquakes - which have sorry consequences for human kind. Most of us view them as serious problems. While one may rally support for assisting the victims of such disasters, very few of us would take

seriously calls for reforming the weather, punishing volcanos or referring Planet Earth to rehabilitation after a series of particularly destructive earthquakes.

This is not a facetious analogy. Many people view rapid population growth as very much like a natural disaster. Perhaps, we have the means to assist the victims, they argue, but it is foolish arrogance to believe that we can resolve a problem of such magnitude and complexity.

In contrast, for other observers for whom the population problem is amendable to "technical solution," it is merely a matter of finding the most effective procedure or device and resolving the problems of "delivery." Finally, we can find a host of advocates of "structural solutions" ranging from reformist to revolutionary. Tension can arise, therefore, not only over the proposed solutions but whether solution is possible at all.

The third sources for moral controversy in public policy occurs with the realization that the resolution of the material/behavioral problem - or merely the attempt to resolve the problem - will have obvious material or behavioral consequences which fundamentally alter current patterns of resource distribution or generally accepted ideology. (My use of the concept "resources" is in the very broadest way - life, liberty and property. And, when I use the word property here I mean not only individually-owned property as in the Western sense of that term but communal



property in the various senses that traditional societies conceive of resource ownership.) Even if there is reasonable agreement that there is indeed a problem and that solutions are possible, it is at this point that debate over moral and ethical considerations often emerges. Questions of cost versus benefits and ends versus means arise. Issues of distributive justice come to the fore. Interestingly, it is at this juncture that most philosophical analysis has been focused.

Occasionally, it may be possible to resolve a social or economic problem without demanding any change in the existing resource distribution; no one sacrifices yet those who are aggrieved are benefited. (This is, after all, the major thrust of optimality analysis.) Although I am unable to think of a real world example that is not contrived, I am open to suggestions. Regardless, even if we allow the occasional exception, one of the hard facts of political life is that most attempts to resolve social and economic problems do require sacrifice either individually or collectively. The sacrifices may be material or they may involve limitations on behavior - constraints on rights or privileges. The sacrifices may be voluntary or forced. The moral tensions become most obvious as we decide who will benefit and who will suffer. Policy makers must ask, are the costs associated with allowing current population levels to continue greater than the costs associated with resolving

the problem? Unfortunately, we can only guess at the answer to than question.

Not surprisingly, to the extent that the moral issues surrounding population policy have received treatment it has been in this latter context. The very considerable literature on population ethics, as it is often called, usually begins its analysis at this point. While the practical problems may vary, it is usually assumed that the philosophical issues are essentially the same: individual rights versus collective betterment, the rights and obligations of current generations versus the rights and needs of future generations, the rights of the "have" nations versus the needs of the "have not" nations.<sup>6</sup>

The right-in-conflict approach to population ethics, however, assumes that the dialogue over public policy takes place in prescribed social context - a community in which a system of moral precepts or ethical standards are shared. The rules of conduct and responsibility are assumed to be widely known and generally accepted. Moreover, the boundaries of the community must be identifiable and the members of the community must be conscious of their membership. Even within these constraints conflict may occur because individuals and groups within the same social order can arrange their moral priorities differently depending on how they view the problem, whether or not they view a solution as possible and how they evaluate the cost and

benefits arising from a given solution to the problem. It is a conflict over priorities, however, not a conflict between competing moral systems.<sup>7</sup>

In areas like population policy, however, we often have an additional source of moral conflict. Because the problem spans a variety of cultures, it is possible to have value systems in conflict with one another. In this case not only will the problem be viewed in different terms but evaluated differently because of divergent moral criteria are being applied; it is not solely a difference of emphasis but an appeal to an entirely different set of rules that gives rise to the moral tension. (I will return to this point in the last section.)

#### World Population Growth: A Mini-History Lesson

Perhaps we should remind ourselves of what the various protagonists are talking about when they speak of a "world population crisis." In the twenty years since Paul Ehrlich penned his best selling The Population Bomb (1968) many Americans have forgotten its strident message. Once front page news, population issues seldom command even a passing comment in the nations newspapers and popular magazines.<sup>8</sup> A brief review of "the problem," therefore, might serve to remind us of its importance.

The world's population has been growing for millennia. And, as population has grown, mankind's inventiveness has

greatly increased our productivity. In fact, despite occasional predictions of impending Malthusian disaster, mankind has generally looked upon population growth as an indicator of our success rather than a sign of failure. It seems fair to ask, why shouldn't the future be like the past? Why should we now be concerned? The answer to these questions, I believe, lies in the pace and magnitude of modern (world) population growth.

The increase in the world's population since World War II has been truly astounding and totally unprecedented historically. Across the whole of the world, the growth rate rose steadily throughout the fifties (averaging about 1.65% annually) to reach all time post-war peak in the late sixties and early seventies of about 1.9% annually. The arithmetic of accumulation can generate astonishing results. By 1970 the world population was increasing at slightly less than a billion people a decade. In the five year interval, 1975-1980, world population jumped from 4.066 billion to 4.432 billion and by 1985 it had reached nearly 5 billion. Although the annual rate of increase has actually declined in the last decade to about 1.7%, the base population is now so large that the actual increase are enormous: 81 million people per year! <sup>9</sup>

In contrast, the growth of population over the long span of human history pales in the face of these recent increases. The limited evidence we have would suggested

that the population of homosapien world-wide remained fairly constant for the first three million years never exceeding 10 million. Slowly at first and then accelerating after about 5000 B.C. changes in the level of agricultural activity as well as alterations in social organization and settlement practice encouraged significant increases in global human populations so that by 1 A.D. nearly 200 million people inhabited the world. For the next sixteen hundred years the world wide growth rate was likely to have fluctuated around 0.05% annually, just slightly above the replacement rate.<sup>10</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, however, a major population revolution was underway. Centered primarily in Europe, a major growth surge pushed world population levels over the one billion mark by 1800. During this period, the growth rate was sufficient to add between four and five million people per year. The causes for this rapid increase in population were many. Improvements in diet may have had significant effects on fertility as well as maternal and infant mortality. Most important, however, were the technological and institutional changes broadly subsumed under what we now call the Industrial Revolution. The net result of these changes was to accelerate Europe's growth rate to unprecedented levels.<sup>11</sup>

While emigration and colonization served to relieve much of the social and economic pressures that rapid population

can engender, in the long run there appears to have been a "self-regulating" component involved in bringing fertility rates more in line with declining mortality rates. This process of demographic growth followed by readjustment and stability is often labeled "the demographic transition." The explanation for this process of fertility readjustment is important not only for our understanding of European history but also for our interpretation of current rates of high fertility in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Pacific basin.

One of the major difficulties is sorting out the forces specific to the historical conditions of the time and those economic and social factors which govern fertility behavior more generally. While the European transition to lower fertility may have its origins in a rising standard of living, higher literacy rates and greater female participation in the labor force, ultimately it must have followed widespread changes in Western attitudes about the role, value as well as the purpose of bearing and raising children. How these variables are related to one another is a matter of considerable debate.<sup>12</sup>

Starting in the opening decades of this century there was persistent shift in the locus of population growth away from Europe (and Anglo-based societies such as the United States, Canada and Australia) to Latin America, Africa and the Asia. Particularly, in the post-colonial era (1945-present) world

population growth has been a variable process affecting various parts of the globe differently. We must be cautious in generalizing, of course, for each of these areas displays considerable cultural variation. Nonetheless, the generalization holds: The massive gains in earth's population in the mid to late twentieth century find their origin primarily in the developing nations of the Third World.

Declining mortality and sustained levels of high fertility have greatly accelerated not only the growth rates but base populations in many of these areas. In India and China, for example, the population growth problem is primarily a function of their enormous size. China officially surpassed the billion mark in 1985; and, with a current population of over 700 million, India may not be able to avoid reaching a billion people by the year 2000 - even if it succeeds in radically reducing its growth rate.

In many cases, however, current growth rates exceed even the highest rates of the European population boom in the last century. Bangladesh, already one of the most densely populated nations in the world has an annual growth rate of 3.1; most of the Middle East is in excess of 3.2 annually. Even for developing countries which presently have relatively small total populations the prospects are dim; with declines in infant and childhood mortality many countries in Africa and South America have age distributions

which promise even high growth rates in the next decade as millions of young people reach their most fertile years.<sup>13</sup>

Without entering the debate as to whether the demographic transition model is appropriate or inappropriate in this setting, it is well to note some important empirical differences between the current Third World and last, European-based, population revolution. First and foremost, the growth of the European population as well as the subsequent readjustment and stabilization was spread over two and one half centuries. Death rates declined slowly at first and only later - with innovations in public health and medical technology - did the mortality rate fall rapidly to "modern" levels.

This is in striking contrast to the current surge population in the developing countries which has been compressed into less than a half a century. While it is easy to overstate the benefits of medical progress in the developing areas of the world, from a growth standpoint it is important to note that in less than three decades, mortality rates have dropped significantly.<sup>14</sup> A major consequence of this compression in the time horizon of population change is a dramatic reduction in the response time required of social and economic institutions.

Much of the acceleration in growth is due to another important empirical difference: in the twentieth century, we are dealing with the explosive combination of both higher



growth rates and significantly larger base populations. The population for the whole of Europe increased by 80% in the hundred years between 1750 and 1850. Up to that point in history of the world's population nothing like it had been seen; Europe's population jumped from roughly 140 million to more than 250 million in a century. As impressive as it is in its historical context, it pales by current standards.<sup>15</sup>

A single country in Africa such as Nigeria can serve to illustrate the difference. Approximately 95 million people now reside in Nigeria. If present growth rates continue, a conservative estimate projects Nigeria's population at 623 million by 2035 - that is more than the current population of the entire African continent! This constitutes an increase of 556% in the span of a half century. While Nigeria is the most spectacular example, the projections for the continent as whole stagger the imagination.<sup>16</sup> In the next fifty years, Africa's population is likely to exceed three billion. While famine, war and disease may prove these estimates exaggerated, the fatalities would need to triple the current death rate to offset the extremely rapid growth in population. In real number terms that is roughly 22 million deaths per year, more than four times the number killed (worldwide) annually during World War II.

One final important difference between population expansion of Europe and that of the Third World today is the lack of emigration as a safety valve to release the

pressures of rising densities. More than sixty million people left Europe between the voyages of discovery and the outbreak of the First World War. While massive international migrations are not unknown today, encouraging emigration it is clearly a politically impractical alternative for most of the developing nations of the world. Obviously, the low density developed nations are unlikely to cooperate with such redistributational efforts.

So what we face at the end of the twentieth century is a shift in the both the location and pace of world population growth. While there is some debate over causes and consequences, no one disputes the basic facts. Despite some signs for optimism, the world's population is still growing at an accelerated pace and it is the Third World which is receiving the lion's share of the increase.

#### The Political Economy of Population Policy

Hidden beneath the broad sweep of global generalization, we find considerable diversity in the kind of population/resource problems various countries face. And, because every country faces its own peculiar mix of problems the "appropriate response" of any particular nation to the "world population crisis" is not immediately obvious. While there seems to be consensus that "population problems" deserve serious attention, the specific concerns of individual nations vary considerably. As of 1980, the U.N.

Secretariat reported that 35 of the world's 165 countries perceived their rate of population growth as being lower than ideally desirable, 75 countries saw their rates as acceptable and 55 perceived their growth as higher than desirable.<sup>17</sup>

Not surprisingly, the 55 nations whose population goals are most consistent with the "worldwide goal" of reducing growth are the nations who collectively account for 59% of the world's population and consistently evidence growth rates in excess of the world rate of 1.7%. Presumably this is as it should be. While some Islamic countries continue aggressive pronatalist policies despite persistently highly growth rates, there are fewer and fewer nations who remain unredeemed.

Overall, however, it can be said that by the 1980s, the nations suffering from the most immediate consequences of population growth are also the nations who set population control as a national priority.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the World Population Conference at Mexico City in 1984 was held primarily at the urging of Third World nations. This in contrast to the 1974 Conference at Bucharest, when the United States and the nations of North Europe lead the cause for population control.<sup>19</sup>

This constitutes an interesting shift in positions. For much of the 1960s and 1970s, it was not the developing nations which campaigned aggressively for controlling

population growth but the industrialized West. Since Thomas Malthus famous essay on population, the issue of population growth has been deeply embedded in Western political economy.<sup>20</sup> In the postwar era, debate over the role of population in the economy resurfaced as questions of economic growth gained currency. Somewhat separately, the birth control rights movement which has its origins in the United States and Great Britain, gained new momentum. For a variety of reasons these two perspectives were joined in the fifties into an alliance of groups pushing for recognizing the need for population control.<sup>21</sup>

Starting with the Kennedy administration, the United States became officially committed to assisting nations in controlling population growth. Soon after the establishment of the Agency for International Development, the United States reversed the Eisenhower dictum that "...population questions are an inappropriate area for governmental intervention." From an initial allocation of \$2 million in 1965 the annual appropriation for "population assistance" grew to \$125 million by 1973 and \$248 million by 1976. The Reagan Administration, for a variety of reasons, curtailed population assistance funding in the early eighties, however, in late 1986 Congress approved \$234.5 million package which now brings United States population foreign aid back to mid-1970's levels.

This governmental initiative was paralleled by an equally

impressive effort by private American-based foundations. The Population Council, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and a host of smaller private agencies have contributed considerable sums of money in support of research, implementation and evaluation of population programs in the United States and overseas.<sup>22</sup>

American public opinion generally supported the integration of population control with American foreign policy objectives, although we continued to be deeply divided on the question of means. Ironically, while we have been willing to present a "united front" to the world on the question of population policy, in fact Americans have failed to resolve many of the moral issues themselves.

The question of "the means and methods of population control" is very much contingent on how one perceived the immediacy of the problem. Some Americans viewed the basic facts of the current population revolution with alarm. They perceived not one but a cluster of inter-related problems involving population growth and limited resources. Lester Brown and his Worldwatch Institute identified no less than twenty two immediate and serious consequences associated with population growth ranging inflation, overcrowding, climatic change, deforestation to political conflict, hunger, unemployment and pollution.<sup>23</sup> Viewed in this manner, it should not be surprising that for some people

rapid population growth poses impending crisis for all of mankind.

Despite the accompaniment of computer models and technical jargon, the catastrophe argument is, at its base, quite simple: Human populations have grown so enormously and continue to expand so rapidly that, despite our technological capabilities, we will simply exhaust our planet's capacity to support us. Attendant to this rapid growth in population is also the growing abuse of the natural environment which will only serve to hasten the day of judgment. While the crisis school occasionally addresses the reasons why we have arrived at this desperate state of affairs, their primary emphasis is on the role of population as a singular driving force in eminent world catastrophe.<sup>24</sup>

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s the population crisis scenario received considerable attention in the American and European press. Books such as The Population Bomb, Famine--1975, Born to Starve, and The Hungry Planet presented a picture of impending doom triggered by overpopulation and diminishing resources. The logic was simple and deadly. Given this perspective, solutions of only the most drastic sort were worthy of consideration.<sup>25</sup>

While the crisis rhetoric declined over the decade of the seventies, its immediate effect was to encourage further the growing American commitment to population control as part of our foreign aid program. Moreover, the crisis mentality -

which at the time was not wholly shared by the Third World-- contributed in part to the almost evangelical approach to birth control of American agencies and advisors abroad.<sup>26</sup>

It had another long run effect, however. The strident emphasis on the immediacy of the threat set the stage for a resurgence in the political strength of the opponents of population control (particularly in the United States). As the decade passed without a worldwide catastrophe, those who had originally voiced suspicion felt they were vindicated. A few of these critics went further, however. They argued that it had not been simply a case of exaggeration; the fact that no serious crisis had developed suggested that the claims impending disaster were without factual basis whatsoever. (To some extent this perspective is reflected in the United States position paper at the Mexico City U.N. Population Conference.<sup>27</sup>)

Indeed, at the other extreme, there were always groups who had rejected the notion of a population crisis. Some of the observers went so far as to reject the view that population growth was a problem at all. Rather, they argued that it is simply a symptom or manifestation of other social and economic forces at work in the world today. Many of these dissenters have argued that by focusing on the so-called "population crisis" we divert our attention from the "real" problems which plague us.

It is a somewhat surprising mix of people who view rapid

population growth in these terms. Marxists and Roman Catholic theorists and, more recently, some conservative economists as well as radical feminists, join together in their initial assumption that high levels of population growth is not a primary cause of suffering in the world. All would agree with the notion that " ..population is not an independent variable, which "causes" poverty or underdevelopment, but a dependent variable - dependent upon the political economy of particular societies." <sup>28</sup>

Without overstating the similarity of their respective positions, let me cite a few examples to illustrate the commonalty of their initial presumptions about the nature of the "population problem." Karen Michaelson, a Marxist anthropologist, in a recent restatement of the traditional Marxist position on population growth argued that " ..overpopulation is not a matter of too many people, but of unequal distribution of resources. The fundamental issue is not population control, but control over resources."<sup>29</sup> Summing up his long critique of current population theory, the conservative political economist, Peter T. Bauer, concluded, "Allegations or apprehensions of adverse or even disastrous results of population growth are unfounded. They rest on seriously defective analysis of the determinants of economic performance ..[and].. they misconceive the conduct of the peoples of ldcs [lesser developed countries].." <sup>30</sup> Although a bit more poetic than the others, Pope Paul VI was



no less obvious in his intent when he said, "..[we] need to multiply bread so that it suffices for the tables of mankind rather than to relay on measures which diminish the number of guests at the banquet of life."<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Betsy Hartmann, summarizing a decade of feminist opposition to efforts at population control, arrives at the conclusion that "...rapid population growth is not the root cause of development problems in the Third World; rather it is a symptom of those problems."<sup>32</sup>

As one would expect, a common starting point does not assure a common conclusion. For the Marxist, the real problem is to be found in the nature of worldwide capitalist exploitation. The solution lies in socialist revolution. For the diehard capitalist, of course, it is lack of economic incentives which gives rise to both poverty and overpopulation. The adoption of the free enterprise system will automatically bring the problems associated with population growth into check.<sup>33</sup> For Catholic theorists who oppose most of the current methods of population control, "the problem" is one of maldistribution and greed. "The evils usually attributed to demographic pressure, in their view, are a result, not of population, but of a lack of solidarity between men and nations. What is called the 'population problem' is really a problem of human injustice and greed."<sup>34</sup> Finally, for feminists it will be "..improvements in living standards and the position of

women, via more equitable social and economic development..[which will]..motivate people to want fewer children."<sup>35</sup>

There is, of course, a vast "middle ground" on the subject of population growth. Generally it can be said that most professional demographers view population problems as part of a complex web of difficulties surrounding lagging economic growth in much of the developing world. While occasionally referring to the worldwide scope of the population problems, for the most part the professional literature deals with the problems facing particular nations, the acceptance of various birth control techniques and the evaluation of specific programs. Although there continues to be descent on this issue, the current consensus is that rapid population growth does make the development process more difficult.<sup>36</sup>

As is so often the case in this area, the "Western Model" is the empirical reference point. In Western Europe and the United States, a growing population appears to have had an overall positive impact on economic growth. Growth in population not only added to the labor supply but provided the basis for expansion in the demand for both capital and finished goods. In the Third World today, however, population growth appears to be exceeding the capacity of these economies to absorb the surplus labor. The limited capacity of the wage economy is further strained since the

dependency rates are very high. Moreover, most governments in the Third World are now obliged to make at least a token effort to meet the basic needs of their people in terms of health, education and welfare. At the same time, they are expected to make major investments in infrastructure - transportation and communication systems, natural resource development and the like. Already strapped financially, continuing population growth merely makes matters worse. While much more careful to qualify their views in recent years, many development theorists still believe that it is impossible for these nations to sustain even modest economic growth unless population growth is stabilized.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the two extreme positions on the population problem, the solutions for those assuming various "middle ground" positions are less obvious. The enthusiasm for birth control campaigns which was once wide spread among professionals has waned.<sup>38</sup> It is now generally acknowledged that fundamental changes in the demographic structure of developing countries are contingent on changes in the social and economic structure. A willingness to curtail family size is not simply a function of the availability of birth control.<sup>39</sup> Rising personal incomes, the integration of female workers into the wage economy, higher levels of literacy (particularly among women), a change in attitudes about the 'investment' value of children are among the many factors which need to change for population levels to

stabilize. We find ourselves faced with a circular logic: if the infamous demographic transformation is to occur, then it must be preceded by the infamous demographic transformation!

#### Defining "the Problem" and Setting the Moral Agenda

How "the population problem" is defined determines the moral criteria by which policy will be evaluated. If one defines current levels of population growth as reaching crisis proportions and that the consequences are both immediate and catastrophic, then one sets a decidedly different moral agenda from individuals who view population problems as an inevitable but transitory by-product of economic transition.

If Armageddon is at hand, one is likely to give demands for individual freedom short shrift. The "crisis perspective" is likely to generate a call for forced compliance with various procedures which strictly and irreversibly limit family size.<sup>40</sup> Concern for the individual's right to decide their own fate is interpreted as selfishness in the face of the catastrophic consequences of uncontrolled fertility. After all, it might be argued that in a world of deprivation and hardship one's personal freedom is greatly curtailed or perhaps even extinguished altogether.

Someone who holds the transition perspective, or for that

matter the Catholic, feminist or Marxist perspective, is likely to reject the presumed "necessity for coercion." Too often in the past, serious injustice has been done under the pretext of "an impending crisis." Emergency procedures are only justifiable in the most extreme cases. But, we might ask, who defines "extreme"? In practice it is often elites who decide the fate of the masses whose opinions and welfare are secondary to calls for national economic growth and stability.

Still, two individuals might both hold the transitional perspective and come to different conclusions about whether it is appropriate to intervene at all. The divergence here has to do primarily with how one weighs current injustices versus presumed injustices under various future scenarios.<sup>41</sup>

The transition perspective may, on the one hand, lead to protests against any intervention, on the grounds that misplaced benevolence will only make matters worse. This school argues that until changes in social and economic structure are well underway attempts to impose family planning and birth control will not be well received. In such an environment, we are unlikely to make any serious difference in the resolution of the population problem while at the same time we will cause great harm as we ride roughshod over individual rights. Moreover, while it may appear as cruel, attempts to relieve the injury of famine and poverty in the absence of structural change will serve

to postpone transition and therefore lengthen the period in which population pressures cause these hardship.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, the same initial presumption - that the population problem is a transitional phenomena - may lead one to advocate programs such as famine relief which aim at relieving pain and suffering in the short run while at the same time emphasizing the need for voluntary cooperation with family planning programs. While admitting that the solution of the population problem may lie with large-scale changes in social and economic structure, this view holds that the transition may be hastened by even modest reductions in fertility. Moreover, individuals should at least have the opportunity to avail themselves of various means of birth control even if they decide to reject its use.

Finally, one might argue that even if such interventions as famine relief and birth control programs produce modest results, they are humane in their intent and generally beneficial in their results. Even if the overall effects are modest, individual welfare is likely to be enhanced. In the final analysis, it is inhuman to standby while people are suffering if you can relieve their pain and anguish. It is ludicrous to claim that people should be allowed to starve to death so that the survivors can (possibly) have a better future.

In summary, then, it is clear that morality is "embedded"

in population policy regardless of how it is formulated. Population problems are usually defined in terms of ideological assumptions which subsequently dictate that certain moral imperatives will be invoked either in defense of policy or in critique of current practice.

#### Population Ethics and the Doctrine of Human Rights

Given the alternative visions of "the problem" and the contradictory appeals to moral doctrine, it is customary to seek resolution in basic human rights criteria. This is to be expected. The course of Western political philosophy, despite the occasional digression into authoritarianism, has been marked by an increasing commitment to the concept of individual human rights. Starting in the eighteenth century, the idea that individual's have "natural" or "God-given" rights has been enunciated not only by political philosophers but in a variety of national and international declarations. Responding to the ghastly consequences of totalitarianism, the affirmation of human rights reached its culmination the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the way we judge the moral efficacy of public policy is by appeal to various pronouncements on human rights. For Americans it is their two hundred year old Constitution which serves to guide our judgements of wrong and right in public policy. And, while the difference between law and morality is philosophically

important, for the world as a whole the various declarations of the United Nations serve a similar function.

Reflecting this tradition, the United Nations has been careful to phrase its support of population policy primarily in terms of human rights. Over the last two decades various United Nations agencies have emphasized the right of individual to "adequate education and information on family planning matters. [and]..access to the means of practicing family planning."<sup>43</sup>

It is important to note, however, that the United Nations came to this position rather slowly. Through the 1940s and 1950s there was considerable resistance to any effort that might expand the United Nations role in the area of population policy. It was expected that various U.N. statistical agencies should merely monitor global trends and occasionally report their findings. Nothing more. Despite intermittent efforts by the British, Scandinavian and Indian delegations to broaden the agenda, an alliance of resistance from Catholic and socialist nations was able to prevent the U.N. from assuming even the most limited advisory role in the area of population policy.<sup>44</sup>

The period 1958 - 1965 was critical, however. Within the United Nations there was growing pressure to allow open discussion of population growth, resource distribution and economic development. Primarily through the efforts of Sweden and India the "population issue" - as it was called -



was finally placed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1962. The nations which had resisted these efforts for nearly two decades knew that once the "population issue" was openly recognized as a "problem," it was only a matter of time before the issue of family planning would find a place on the agenda. Their worst fears proved correct.<sup>45</sup>

After 1964 the speed with which the United Nations embraced family planning is startling. Although there are earlier indications that a profound shift in policy and practice was underway, the United Nations official recognition of family planning as a basic right comes in 1968 when the United Nations Conference on Human Rights (Tehran) declared that "...parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."<sup>46</sup> It was further noted that this newly established human right to control family size was dependent on access to information. The affirmation of the right to access to "the means necessary" to exercises family planning came the following year.<sup>47</sup> Subsequent declarations, resolutions and procedural documents of the various United Nations sponsored agencies have continued to reaffirm the idea that family planning is a fundamental human right placing it among the basic individual rights accorded to all peoples.

Finally in 1974 the United Nations World Population Conference unanimously adopted Resolution 16 which in many

ways is the penultimate expression of the relationship between population planning and individual's "right of family planning:"<sup>48</sup>

...population programs should be established and promoted to provide guidance, information and services in order that individuals and couples may determine the number and spacing of children they desire through educational means and health care, both in the public sector and through non-governmental channels approved by the national governments, care being taken to ensure that they are carried out with absolute respect for the fundamental rights of the human being, that they preserve the dignity of the family, and that no coercive measures are used.

This statement, I believe reveals some of the inconsistencies inherent in the human rights approach to population problems. It assumes a unanimity of belief between parents, within family and across nations on questions of family size, birth control and resource distribution. Moreover, at a deeper level it assumes agreement on the role of the individual in nature and society. Ironically, it is not likely that we would find agreement on these assumption within the United States let alone across the nations of the world.

It should be remembered, of course, that the 1974 Report of the World Population Conference is a political document not a technical report or a tightly reasoned philosophical exegesis. I am not fixing on the United Nations because I think it is the final arbiter of such things. Rather I am focusing Resolution 16 because it is a compromise , a collective statement which has "universal

affirmation." Resolution 16 not only expresses our collective hopes but also that they express our collective confusions on this score.

The notion that an individual has "fundamental rights" is a fairly recent innovation and a decidedly Western conception. For most of Western history and in most the world's cultures presently the notions of rights and privileges are embedded in a conditional matrix of social status, power and inheritance. One's rights are determined by positional and relational imperatives. The concept that all individuals have essentially the same basic rights is, therefore, a substantial departure from most traditional conceptions of social interaction. Finding much of its justification in the scientific positivism of 18th century Enlightenment, it places individual free will as the primary force in all social and political action. Interestingly, it presumes a universality without reference to social or economic context and, in this regard, is not substantially different from any other absolutist moral doctrine.

Initially, rights doctrines were concerned primarily with political and property rights. Over the years, however, the list of fundamental rights has grown as has the inclusiveness of the community of individuals who may claim these "inalienable" rights. And, despite some controversy over the philosophical foundation which ultimately justify some of these rights, the degree of consensus on their

affirmation is truly impressive.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, we have continued to struggle with the practical application of the concept of human rights for nearly four centuries. Americans are by no means agreed on how to resolve the conflicts the individual rights concepts engenders. At the international level, the issues are even more muddled.

Part of the problem, as Richard McKeon noted nearly forty years ago, is that human rights declarations carry different "meanings" which go beyond the actual words themselves. Compiling a list of rights is not the problem. Even the actual wording goes without much controversy. "The differences," McKeon observed, "are found rather in what is meant by the rights, and these differences in meaning depend on divergent basic assumptions, which, in turn, lend plausibility to and are justified by contradictory interpretations of the economic and social situation, and finally, lead to opposed recommendations concerning the implementation required for a world declaration of human rights."<sup>50</sup>

It is important to stress, therefore, that the conflict is not simply "cross-cultural." Even within the confines of Western political philosophical discourse a unified perspective has not emerged. While the idea of "fundamental rights" has been defended both from the perspective of "natural rights theory" and "social contract theory," in either case the moral and ethical issues surrounding

population policy are generally reducible to questions of individual rights and responsibilities versus collective rights and responsibilities empowered in the state. Some philosophers have argued that the philosophical problems in the area of population policy are fundamentally no different than other problems involving political/civil rights and government action.<sup>51</sup> While they are probably not different in kind they are certainly more complicated. The added complicating dimension is the role of such informal institutions as the family into the rights and obligations matrix. In many instances it is not only a question of state versus individual but individual versus tradition!

Perhaps the most obvious area of confusion is the conflict between rights and responsibilities of various individuals within the family. In Resolution 16 we find explicit reference to "...individuals and couples..", human beings (undefined by time or space) and the "the family" whose "dignity" is to be preserved.<sup>52</sup>

Resolution 16, therefore, carries the apparent presumption that there are no conflicts between the goals of the individuals - husband and wife [or, in some cases, wives] - their goals as parents collectively and the expectations of the family generally over the question of the "...number and spacing of children." While it is common to hear people speak of "family rights", it is very unusual in either legal discourse or philosophical analysis to pose the question of

rights and responsibilities in terms of social (informal) institutions. The reluctance to pose libertarian/justice issues at the level of social institutions is easily explained. The two assumptions necessary to support such an analysis prove empirically untenable for most of modern Western culture. First we must assume that there is unanimity of interest and opinions within the social entity. Secondly, one must assume an indivisibility of behavior. It is patently evident that neither assumption is tenable in fact.

For most of the European-based societies where extended families are relatively rare, the boundaries of the family for "decision-making purpose" is the husband and wife. Even if we assume that this rather ethnocentric view of the family has some generality, it still poses some difficulties if there are tensions between the parents over fertility expectations. There has been considerable litigation on this issue in both the United States and Europe in recent years. A satisfactory resolution of the problem appears unlikely. The problem is further aggravated, however, in the more complicated hierarchical organization of most extended families outside of European-based setting. When there are conflicts, whose rights are paramount?

Admitting that there can be conflicts at this level, the 1981 U.N. Symposium on Population and Human Rights recommended that "...apart from quite extreme situations,

neither partner [should] exercise absolute authority over the decisions about child bearing." The Symposium's Proceedings goes on to note, however, "...that decisions about child bearing should ultimately be the woman's in view of her greater involvement in the process."<sup>53</sup> This is, of course, a necessary compromise in the face of other United Nations' declarations on the rights of women.

A UNESCO publication on human rights and population programs offers further council on the subject:<sup>54</sup>

The biological distinction between men and women and the extent to which this defines roles in bearing and rearing children means that the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of births is of crucial importance to a woman in the control of her own life. Having this right, knowing about its existence and possessing the means to exercise it becomes, therefore, of fundamental importance to every woman as a prerequisite for having equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities with men. But she is also expected to take into consideration, not only the impact of her decision on herself, but also on the life of the child to be born, on other members of the family, and on society.

The rights of the woman are clearly given priority over the so-called rights of the family and over the husband's rights as a parent. The consequence of this priority in the hierarchy of rights and obligation within the family, in my opinion, carries with it a rather oppressive responsibility: the mother must weigh her child bearing decisions in the light of its "...consequences in terms of health, nutrition, shelter, education and economic opportunities for her family and for society."<sup>55</sup> The authors of this UNESCO publication

go on to admit that "the use of such criteria implies having a fairly good knowledge of the health and nutritional requirements of the mother and the child, educational and employment opportunities, and the economic, social resources available." [my emphasis] For a woman to meet these obligations she would need to be nothing short of a clarevoyant with a Ph. D. in Resource Economics - an unlikely combination in either the developed or the developing nations of world.

Quite apart from this naive presumption of omniscience, as a practical matter it would seem unlikely that most women in the world would be able free themselves so completely from their culture to act with such independence. Having decided to curtail her fertility, a young women is not likely to be spared the criticism of grandparents, parents and spouse with mere reference to the board social and economic implications of child bearing or reciting the appropriate sections from a UNESCO publication.

There is, however, another important source of confusion. We are dealing with varying definitions of which individuals are "at risk". What, we need to ask, is the universe of individuals whose rights and liberties are subject to constraint? Often in the area of population policy and resource distribution, "individuals" not usually considered part of the politely are brought in for consideration.<sup>56</sup> For example, a problem arises in the populations literature



when we speak of "an obligation to future generations." (Perhaps an obligation to future generations is implied in Resolution 16 but it is most certainly not clear about their "rights.") From the standpoint of post-Enlightenment political philosophy such a notion poses an interesting quandary. How can people who do not now exist and may never exist have "rights"? (It is important to remember that they may not exist even if we meet all of our a supposed obligations to "them.")

One approach has been to treat "future generation" as a group without reference specific individuals.<sup>57</sup> However, as with the tension between individual parents and "the family", shifting the discussion to the group level does not avoid confusion. It merely moves you into another area of confusion: how do we define the groups, institutions or collectivity in which membership determines the relationship between rights and obligations? As I have already noted traditional discussions of distributive justice are posed in terms of the individual and the state, avoiding the problems posed by other and various (informal) aggregations of individuals. The state, which is certainly an aggregation, would pose similar problems in philosophical discourse if were not for an interesting bit of casuistry. The state is personified and bestowed with individual attributes such as intentionality. Whether it is assumed to be coherent and rational in its behavior or irrational and malevolent, "the

state" is always viewed as an anthropomorphic entity.

In any event, ethical questions in public policy are generally judged in terms individual versus state issues. However, it should not be forgotten that abstraction - THE STATE - is itself a collectivity of individuals which are actors in a spatial/temporal context.

#### National Sovereignty, Population Policy and Human Rights

Not only are states assumed to be agents acting upon individuals within their jurisdiction but they are also assumed to have the very same rights as individuals in the international community. The idea that each nation state is, in the final analysis, free to determine its own way in matters involving population policy is hidden very discreetly in Resolution 16 in such phrases as " ..channels approved by the national governments.." We shouldn't be surprised. After all, the United Nations is a collectivity of nations not of individuals. Again the 1981 Rights Symposium Proceedings recognize this point in declaring: "..the State or society at large [has] always and everywhere intervened in at least some minimal fashion in the conjugal life of couples."<sup>58</sup> This, of course, simply affirms the power of the state "...to formulate and implement a population policy."<sup>59</sup> Certainly, it is not license for human rights abuses.

The potential for conflict in the area of population

ethics would appear obvious but is actually quite subtle. Daniel Callahan, one of the few philosophers to confront this problem directly, provides the following hierarchy of potential conflict:<sup>60</sup>

At the same time as the right of individual freedom was gaining an international following, another right was gaining ground no less rapidly: the right of nations, to be free. A strong anticolonialist movement, and the resultant emergence of a plethora of new national states, manifested the belief in that right. To complicate matters still further, still another right gained credence as well: the right of religious, ethnic, tribal and traditional groups to be free, even within national borders.

At the extreme, of course, the issue is clear-cut. Few of us would have any patience for the a "national sovereignty defense" to justify Hitlerian "population planning" which isolates groups for extermination, forced exile or internment. The confusion enters not at the extreme but in attempting to evaluate the moral consequences of many sincere attempts of governments either to encourage or discourage population growth in the name of national welfare. Even if we set aside the fact good intentions can engender harmful consequences, there are many instances when the "collective" individual welfare can be posed as conflicting with the "specific" individual right to procreate. (Witness the current controversy surrounding China's "One-Child" policy.)

Indeed, the potential for conflict between the policies of nation states and individual human rights usually

centers, in part, on this tension between the consequences of individual actions and the welfare of other individuals or the collectivity as a whole. This is often the terms on which discussions of population ethics are based. But, in reality, the nature of controversy is determined initially and primarily by the way in which one defines the collectivities which constrain or protect individual rights.

A state may represent itself as the primary protector of individual rights - a shield against the onslaught of an abusive external world. Posing the issue in this manner, of course, makes it roughly equivalent to the states- rights/ national-authority/ individual-rights controversy which has raged in the United States since our founding. Americans tend to forget (particularly those north of the Mason-Dixon line), that the presumption of national authority as the final arbiter of disputes over individual rights conflicts was, in the final analysis, resolved by force and not by appeal to any singularly compelling philosophical or legal argument. While the rhetoric of Reconstruction Republicans was checkered with appeals to Enlightenment notions of individual rights, a victorious Union Army was the most compelling argument for the use of national authority as the guarantor of these rights. Interesting, when nation states are pressed to justify internal policies in the face an accusation of human rights abuses, they often argue in a

fashion quite similar to Senator John C. Calhoun's defense of states' rights in the Antebellum era. His argument was that states "interposed" themselves between a potentially oppressive external authority and the individual.<sup>61</sup>

At the international level, of course, the principle of national sovereignty is taken as a cornerstone of international law and justice. Particularly in matters like population policy, where questions of cultural tradition are deeply integrated with the demands of political exigency, national governments are posed as the protectors of local and national tradition while at the same time, they are also expected to be leading their nations to an acceptance of "modern" (Western?) value system more consistent with the whole notion of human rights at the individual level. Whether they actually act in a manner that promotes such ends may be questionable, but their "right" to interpret their policy decision in either light is beyond dispute.

The confusion over whose rights are to be served is further confused by the fact that many tribal, linguistic, religious and ethnic "boundaries" often do not accord with the boundaries of existing nation states. Indeed, in much of the Third World today, the modern concept of the nation state itself is more a legacy of colonialism than a product of indigenous ideologies. Not only are the actual boundaries themselves reflective of the interests of European powers in the last century but the "ideology" of

the state which underscore the concept is Eurobased. In the struggle to a nation state in the somewhat artificial environment of Asia and Africa, various indigenous cultures may be seriously abused in the name of "population control."

#### Ideology, Development Politics and Population Ethics

The belief that the individual is the basic component of society determines not only how we study population problems but how we evaluate their solutions. A singularly European/American notion, it underscores our philosophy, our ethics, our religions and our social science. Most of our conceptions of how people are motivated are based on the idea that individuals are and should be in control of his or her own destiny. When we conduct surveys on child rearing, birth control and family relations we focus the interviews at the individual family members - usually the mother. We aim our educational programs at individuals; family practice services are aimed at individuals and their effectiveness is judged in terms of individual welfare. And finally, as highlighted in above, we make moral judgments on the ethical conduct of policy on the basis of "individual rights criteria."

Throughout much of the Third World (and, incidentally, throughout much of Western history as well), it is not the individual but family, clan, caste and tribe which serve as the basic components of the social system. In many

instances the role of the individual is carefully circumscribed in a web of mutual obligation and dependence. What is moral or immoral is judged in terms of its consequences for kinship and clan not by appeal to abstract principles and doctrines on fundamental individual rights. Freedom of the individual is not the ultimate criterion by which actions are judged. Communal or collective imperatives serve as the primary basis for morality.

Notions of individual destiny and control are very new to many non-Western cultures. We should not be surprised that the ideal of individual liberties has been embraced with some uneasiness. Given a different fundamental perception of the organization of society, many cultures are faced with a major reordering of priorities for both the acceptance of "modern" attitudes toward fertility control but also an acceptance of the moral precepts which underscore the acceptability of such things. In the United States which (presumably) was founded on these principles, it has taken more than two hundred years to move as far as we have; in practice we still have considerable resistance to these doctrines. Many Americans, when confronted with their own Bill of Rights reject it as too radical. They are certainly unlikely to ascribe to the various pronouncements of the United Nations on human rights.

Developing nations are called upon to meet a variety of conflicting demands. The sources of these demands are both

internal and external. Internally, there is an ongoing tension between preservation of traditional values while accruing the benefits of modernization. From the outside they are "offered" a variety of formulas for modernization and economic development. Unfortunately, the resurgences of Cold War rhetoric has again posed the problem in rather simplistic "either/or" terms.

However, even if a nation embarks on the capitalist path, problems still abound. The development "experts" are either Western expatriates or nationals trained at universities in the United States or Western Europe. Their advice and council reflects this Western bias. Development "problems" -including population growth- are defined in Western terms. "Westernized solutions" pose the alternatives for choice. And, not surprisingly, Western value systems provide the criteria for what is just and humane.

In the last analysis, cultural relativity is chic in all but morality, where only European values, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations shall prevail. As such, population policies will ultimately be judged by these standards. Perhaps it is all for the best. But we should be cautious that our self-righteous pronouncements on the primacy of individual procreative rights be no more than the most recent version of the Victorian presumption of cultural superiority.

The point is not to dispute the value of a human rights



approach to development and population growth problems but to challenge the simplistic approach that is often taken in the critique of population policies. Simply to invoke the much revered concept of "basic human rights" does not resolve moral issues. While they may serve to highlight where the conflict originates, appeal to "fundamental rights" often poses more not fewer conflicts in morality. The history of Western political philosophy attests to this fact. There is no reason to believe that conflicts inherent appeal to rights doctrines will be any less controversial in the developing Third World.

## NOTES

1. This paper is based, in part, on the Fulbright Lecture in Demography delivered at the University of Papua New Guinea in the Spring of 1986. I wish to thank those who attended the lecture and offered comments and suggestions for its revision. I wish particularly to thank the faculty of the Department of Geography and Demography at the University for their support during my stay in Papua New Guinea. This work has also benefitted, in part, from resources provided by the University of Wisconsin, Center for Demography and Ecology which receives core support from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (Grant #P30-HD05876).

As is usually the case with such things, I am solely responsible for content, substance and opinions expressed in this paper. No agency, department, institution or government which has offered me succor or assistance during the research, writing and presentation of this paper is accountable in any way for what appears on these pages.

2. Bonnie Mass, Population Target: The Political Economy of Population Control in Latin America (Toronto:1976); Donald P. Warwick, Bitter Pills: Population Policies and their Implementation in Eight Developing Countries (Cambridge: 1982); Mahmood Mamdani, The Myth of Population Control: Family, Caste and Class in an Indian Village (New York:1972).

3. Joan Kaufman, A Billion and Counting: Family Planning Campaigns and Policies in the People's Republic of China (San Francisco: 1983); Leo A. Orleans (ed.), Chinese Approaches to Family Planning (White Plains: 1979).

4. The U.S. Policy Statement was reprinted in "Documents," Population and Development Review, 10 (September, 1984): 574-581. For a general review of the Mexico City Conference as well as the American position on population growth see: "They Came to Mexico City..." Population Today 12 (October, 1984): 2, 8-12. For commentary on the U.S. position see, Ian Pool, "From Bucharest to Mexico: The Politics of International Population Conferences," New Zealand Population Review, 11 (198?): 52-63.

5. Bernard Berelson And Jonathan Lieberman, "Governmental Intervention on Fertility: What is Ethical?" Working Papers No. 48 Center for Policy Studies, Population Council (New York, 1979.)

6. See, for example, Michael Bayles, Morality and Population Policy (University, Ala.:1980); Ronald M. Green, Population Growth and Justice (Missoula, 1976).

7. One of the continuing tensions in the area of public policy in the international setting is the conflict between a pluralistic view of conflicting value systems and the presumption of absolute standards by which we judge human

rights. The major thrust of the social science literature over the past fifty years has been to push an understanding of and respect for different value systems. Yet, if one message came from the horrors of World War II, it is that certain values are not relative but absolute and beyond compromise. Unfortunately, there is no "obvious" resolution of this tension.

8. Paul Ehrlich has not, of course, abandoned his crusade. See "The Extinction Crisis," The Washington Book Review, 1 (November, 1986): 3-6.

9. A useful brief review of recent demographic trends is Paul E. Zopf, Jr., Population: An Introduction to Social Demography (Palo Alto:1984), Chapter 1-2; Paul Demeny, "The World Demographic Situation," in World Population and U.S. Policy: The Choices Ahead(1986) edited by Jane Menken, pp. 27-66. The statistics presented here are taken from United Nations, Demographic Yearbook for 1960, 1970 and 1980 and My T. Vu, Short-term Population Projection, 1980-2020 and Long-term Projection, 2000 to Stationary Stage by Age and Sex for All Countries of the World (Population, Health and Nutrition Department, World Bank, Washington, D.C.: August, 1983).

10. A brief summary of worldwide trends over time can be found in Population Reference Bureau, World Population: Fundamentals of Growth (Washington, D.C.: 1984): 1-4; my observations here are taken from Colin McEvedy & Richard Jones, Atlas of World Population History (New York, 1978): 13-15, 343-351); also see J. Dennis Willigan & Katherine A. Lynch, Sources and Methods of Historical Demography (New York, 1982): 40-53.

11. McEvedy & Jones, pp. 19-39.

12. There are many, many reviews of what is now called the "transition model" of demographic change. The concept was originally proposed by Warren S. Thompson, "Population," American Journal of Sociology 34 (May, 1929): 959-975. Also see, Donald O. Cowgill, "Transition Theory as General Population Theory," Social Forces 41 (March, 1963): 270-274; Steven E. Beaver, Demographic Transition Theory Reinterpreted (Lexington, Mass.:1975); Richard Grey Sipes, Population Growth, Society and Culture (New Haven: 1980): 1-10.

13. Lester R. Brown, "Stopping Population Growth," in Lester R. Brown, et al., State of the World: 1985 (New York: 1985): 201-206. Depending on the country, in South America and Africa between 40% and 60% of the population is under age 15.

14. For an introductory discussion of declining mortality trends see, Paul E. Zopf, Jr., Population: A Introduction to Social Demography (Palo Alto: 1984): 180-190; also see, John

Bongaarts, "the Transition in Reproductive Behavior in the Third World, World Population and U.S. Policy (1986): 105-132.

15. McEvedy & Jones, pp. 343-351.

16. These observations are based on data from My T. Vu, Short-Term Population Projections, 1980-2020, pp. 118.

17. This survey is reported in United Nations, World Population Trends and Policies, 1981 Monitoring Report, Vol I. (New York, 1981): Chapter 1.

18. Paul Demeny, "Bucharest, Mexico City, and Beyond," European Journal of Population, 1 (1985): 131-139.

19. Population Today (October, 1984: 2) observed, "At Mexico City (in contrast to Bucharest a decade earlier) the most vigorous calls for action to slow world population increase came from less developed countries (LCDs). Compounding the contrast, the U.S., a leading advocate of population control at Bucharest, journeyed to Mexico to articulate a policy that was staunchly anti-abortion and cast doubt on the view that rapid population growth retarded economic development."

20. Charles K. Wilbur, "Population in Western Economic Theory," in Ethical Issues and Population Aid: Culture, Economics and International Assistance (New York: 1981) edited by Daniel Callahan & Phillip G. Clark, pp. 86-112.

21. There is as yet no complete study of American foreign policy and population assistance. To date, attempts to review the history of U.S. policy in this area have been very biased. See Nicholas J. Demerath, Birth Control and Foreign Policy (New York: 1976); Bonnie Mass, Population Target (Toronto, 1976), pp. 35-70; Donald P. Warwick, Bitter Pills (Cambridge: 1982), pp.44-70; Betsy Hartmann, Reproductive Rights and Wrongs (New York, 1987): 91-125.

22. The role of private foundations is discussed by Demerath, Birth Control and Foreign Policy, 35-58, and by Warwick, Bitter Pills, 44-67. It should be stressed that these are not friendly evaluations.

23. Lester R. Brown, P.L. McGarth, Brice Stokes, "Twenty-Two Dimensions of the Population Problem," Worldwatch Paper 5 (Washington, D.C.: 1976).

24. For a good review of the basic assumptions of the crisis school see Ronald M. Green, Population Growth and Justice (Missoula, Mon.: 1976), pp. 16-26.

25. Paul R. Ehrlich, The Population Bomb (New York: 1971 Rev.

Ed.); William Paddock & Paul Paddock, Famine -- 1975 (Boston:1967); Joseph Tydings, Born to Starve (New York: 1970); Georg Borgstrom, The Hungry Planet (New York: 1967).

26. N.J. Demerath, Birth Control and Foreign Policy, Chapter 2.

27. The American position paper argued that swayed by "...extremist scenarios too many governments pursued population control measures without sound economic policies..." echoing Ronald Reagan's declaration during the 1980 presidential campaign that "...the Population Bomb had proved to be a dud.."

28. Karen L. Michaelson, "Population Theory and the Political Economy of Population Processes," in And The Poor Get Children (New York: 1981): 19.

29. Ibid., p. 13.

30. P[eter]. T. Bauer, Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion (Cambridge, Mass.: 1981): 64.

31. Pope Paul VI, "Address to the General Assembly," 20th Session, 1965. 1347th Plenary Meeting, p. 4.

32. The leading advocate of this view is Julian L. Simon, The Economics of Population Growth (Princeton, 1977), although others - including the British economist Peter Bauer - have taken up the cause. This literature has been particularly influential in the formulation of the Reagan Administration position on population problem abroad.

33. Hartmann, Reproductive Rights..., xiv.

34. Green, Population Growth and Justice, 71.

35. Hartmann, Reproductive Rights..., xiv.

36. I do not want to imply that there is a uniformity of thinking on the question of development and population growth among professional demographers. In order to get a sense of the issues see: Nancy Birdsall, "Analytical Approaches to the Relationship of Population Growth and Development." Population and Development Review 3 (March/June, 1977): 63-102; John Knodel and Etienne Van de Walle, "Lessons from the Past: Policy Implications of Historical Fertility Studies." Population and Development Review 5 (June, 1979): 217-245; Geoffrey McNicoll, "Population and Development: Outlines for a Structuralist Approach," Journal of Development Studies 14 (July, 1978): 79-99; Michael Teitelbaum, "Relevance of Demographic Transition Theory for Developing Countries." Science 88 (May, 1975): 420-425; Geoffrey McNicoll,

"Consequences of Rapid Population Growth: Overview and Assessment," Population and Development Review 10 (June, 1984): 177-240; Geoffrey McNicoll and Moni Nag, "Population Growth: Current Issues and Strategies," Population and Development Review 8 (March, 1982): 121-139; Michael E. Conroy and Nancy R. Folbre, "Population Growth as a Deterrent to Economic Growth: A Reappraisal of the Evidence," in Ethical Issues of Population Aid, pp. 113-170; Ansley J. Coale, "Population Trends and Economic Development," World Population and U.S. Policy (1986): 96-104.

37. Nancy Birdsall, et al., "Demography and Development in the 1980s," in P. Hauser, World Population and Development: Challenges and Prospects (New York, 1979): 211-295.

38. Donald J. Hernandez, Success or Failure? Family Planning Programs in the Third World (Westport, Conn., 1984).

39. John Caldwell, "Toward a Restatement of Demographic Transition Theory." Population and Development Review 2 (1976): 321-366.

40. For the classic statement of this view see, Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Science CLXII (December, 1969): 1243-48.

41. M. D. Bayles, Morality and Population Policy, pp. 14-13.

42. Richard D. Lamm, "Linking Third World Aid to Population Control," International Herald Tribune, 22 April 1985.

43. UNESCO, Human Rights Aspects of Population Programmes (Paris: 1977): 12.

44. Richard Symonds & Michael Carder, The United Nations and The Population Question, 1945 - 1970 (Sussex: 1973): 33-114.

45. Ibid., pp. 135-149.

46. Tehran Proclamation of Human Rights, paragraph 16, United Nations (New York: 1968).

47. United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development General Assembly, United Nations (New York: 1969), Article 22(b).

48. United Nations, Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, 1974, Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974 (New York:1974), Chapter I.

49. A good review of the issues in terms of Western philosophy is Michael D. Bayles, editor, Ethics and Population (Cambridge,

Mass.: 1976).

50 Richard McKeon, "The Philosophic Bases and Material Circumstances of the Rights of Man," UNESCO, Human Rights: Comments and Interpretations (London: 1948): 35.

51. Daniel Callahan, "Ethics and Population Limitation," Science4 (February, 1972): 487-494.

52. United Nations, Population and Human Rights: Proceedings of the Symposium on Population and Human Rights, Vienna, 29 June - July 1981 (New York: 1983): 7, commented further on this issue: "...the family should be viewed as a basic, rather than the basic social unit. However, it is also recognized that in some regions of the world, especially in many of the less developed countries, the role of the family remain[s] fundamental."

53. Ibid.

54. UNESCO, Human Rights Aspects..., 29.

55. Ibid.

56. Incidentally, the root of the conflict over abortion can, I believe, be understood in these terms as well. For some moral philosophers and theologians, the "universe of individuals" whose rights are at risk is inclusive of the human fetus. Clearly, there is another definition of the "universe" which omits the fetus (at least in its early stages of development). The debate between the groups holding these two definitions has been extremely heated over the years. Seen in these terms, we find here that there is really no basis for discourse on "rights and obligations" at all because of this initial disagreement over inclusion of the individuals at risk.

57. An excellent discussion of the "future generation" argument can be found in Michael D. Bayles, Morality and Population Policy, Chapter 2.

58. United Nations, Population and Human Rights, 7.

59. Ibid.

60. This issue is discussed by Daniel Callahan, "Population Policy, Universal Rights and National Sovereignty," in Callahan & Clark, Ethical Issues of Population Aid, 316.

61. Alfred H. Kelly, W. A. Harbison and H. Belz, The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development (New York: 1983): 214-216.

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