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ISSN 2053-0412 (Print)
ISSN 2053-0420 (Online)



Population Matters Magazine

Issue 30 Spring 2017

Adventurer and advocate: Adrian Hayes

Nature under threat

More people, more congestion

Family planning in Kenya

Contents

Director's message.....	3
Population Matters on the ground	3
Annual General Meeting	4
The 'golden ticket' into schools.....	4
More people, more congestion, more cost	5
Interview with a patron: Adrian Hayes	6-7
Meet the team; Tessa Dickinson.....	7
Family planning in rural Kenya	8
News.....	10
Legal Abortion	13
Let's hear it for the boys	14
PopOffsets in the Philippines.....	15
Reviews	16
<i>Patriarch Run</i> : review and interview	17
Ecological Citizen; Sustainability Insights.....	18

Cover image: Adrian Hayes kite skiing in Greenland

About Population Matters

Population Matters is a membership charity working towards a global population size that can provide a good standard of living for all, a healthy environment and environmental sustainability. We are funded by our members, donations and grants and receive no funding from official or commercial bodies.

Simon Ross

Simon Ross, our longstanding Chief Executive Officer, left Population Matters in November. We would like to pay tribute to him for very hard work over six years to help establish Population Matters as a trusted advocate for population issues. We wish him well in his future career.

Magazine

This magazine is printed using vegetable-based inks on 100 per cent recycled paper. If you are willing to receive the magazine by email, which reduces our costs and helps the environment, please contact enquiries@populationmatters.org.

Additional copies are available on request; a donation is appreciated. Population Matters does not necessarily endorse contributions nor guarantee their accuracy. Information about how to contribute to the magazine is available on our website.

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Correction

An article in the Summer 2016 edition of Population Matters claimed that in 2009 meetings of the Optimum Population Trust (as we were then known) were "still held in someone's living room". Meetings were held in many venues. We are happy to correct any misleading impression and acknowledge with gratitude the professionalism and dedication of the trustees and volunteers working for OPT at the time.

We are a registered charity under the name Optimum Population Trust (no.1114109) and a company registered in England and Wales (no. 3019081). Registered office: 135-137 Station Road, London E4 6AG.

Reaching the summit

A message from the director

“An evolved mind has the capacity to solve all of the world’s problems...”, that positive aphorism, with which our Patron, explorer Adrian Hayes ends his interview (see p6), set me thinking - as did much else he reflected on as his motivation for supporting our work.



As someone who has seen more of the world than most - particularly those wilderness areas which, despite being devoid of humankind, bear the impacts of our industrial development more starkly than urban areas, where infrastructure and technology mask the cracks – he is well-placed to understand “the universal truths of economic, social and environmental sustainability” and see that “each of these pillars is inextricably linked”.

Without underplaying Adrian’s heroic achievements, all of us who set out on this exposed and lonely path of seeking to raise the consciousness of more people, politicians and the media about the population issue are adventurers. Against the odds, we press on pursuing and promoting that altruistic goal of achieving sustainable human population numbers – without which humanity’s chance of reaching those other sunlit summits of economic, social and environmental sustainability are slimmer than getting down Everest’s South Col with a broken oxygen mask in a white-out!

To succeed, we need the toughness, resilience, but also the humility and patience of an explorer - one with sound survival instincts, like Adrian. The mountain just got steeper, with President Trump rolling back both US domestic support and foreign aid for family planning. Despite 64% of Americans supporting legal abortion ¹, Trump is paying more attention to those who took part in February’s ‘March for Life’ – with one banner indicating how far back such populism may take us, ‘We don’t need planned parenthood’.

Here’s to harnessing and motivating evolved minds!

Robin Maynard is Interim Director of Population Matters

¹ Quinnipiac University poll (27.1.17) showed 64 percent of Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 31 percent said it should be illegal in all or most cases.

The PM family

Population Matters is deeply fortunate to benefit from the dedication and creativity of volunteers who do so much work on our behalf.

PM’s local groups have continued to be highly active promoting the cause. Highlights included the talk given to young civil engineers by the Reading Group in August and the multi-faith evening in New Barnet organised by the Hertfordshire Group, which featured presentations from Anglican, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu representatives.

Population Matters volunteers and coordinators have also brought our message to thousands of people through stalls at university and local environmental events. An enthusiastic cadre of volunteers has been recruited in London and are already planning their own activities.

Volunteers (such as Jem and Jane, below) also manage activities as diverse and important as our highly successful Facebook page and our education group (see p4). Our thanks to them all.



Jem Randles and Jane Blank with the Jack Parsons Award

Annual General Meeting

Thank you to all the members who attended our Annual General Meeting on 8 October.

The formal meeting in the morning approved the financial statement and auditors. Elections to the board saw all the current members re-elected and John Charnock-Wilson joining the board.

The following awards were made:

- The Population and Sustainability Awareness Award to Stephen Emmott for his talk, book and film, Ten Billion;
- The Jack Parsons Lifetime Achievement Award to Martin Desvaux;
- The Jack Parsons Award jointly to Jane Blank, Education Group Coordinator and Jeremy Randles, Facebook Administrator;
- The Local Group Coordinator of the Year to Helen Haran and the Local Group Member of the Year to Alison Hull.

A fascinating keynote speech about obstacles to the population concern message was given by Prof Diana Coole of the University of London, while David Richardson and Edmund Davey talked movingly of our 25-year history as an organisation. Members then enjoyed vigorous debates in break-out sessions on migration, family size, education and PopOffsets.

Special General Meeting

Following a resolution by a group of guarantor members, a Special General Meeting was held on 5 November. The meeting was attended by 44 guarantor members, with a further 29 voting by proxy.

Following discussion of PM's strategy, plan and ongoing work, the following decisions were made:

- A resolution directing the Board to hold two 'General Meetings' a year, was rejected.
- A resolution supporting the Board in conducting a comprehensive review of the governance of Population Matters was accepted. It was agreed that proposals for change, following on from the governance review, would be brought before the next General meeting.
- A resolution directing the Board to produce a new strategy by March 2017 in full and open consultation with staff, the Advisory Board, members and external experts, was rejected.
- A resolution calling on the Board to give full and unequivocal support for PopOffsets in its present format as PM's designated funding vehicle was rejected.

Plans to facilitate communications between guarantor members and the Board were discussed and are presently being taken forward.

The 'golden ticket' into schools

Jane Blank, Education Coordinator

The Wellcome Trust's The Crunch is a nationwide project for schools and communities which aims to help people think about how our food, our health and our planet are all interconnected.

The project has delivered a range of online and practical science resources into every UK school. A comprehensive network of training has been developed for interested volunteers.

The Wellcome Trust or The Crunch approached us at PM and, for the Education Group, 'the rest was history'!

With all of their resources relating to the stresses of overpopulation, the project has been a gift for conveying our message to key young audiences. With the full blessing of The Wellcome Trust, we've been running joint PM/ The Crunch workshop sessions with pupils from ages 6-18.



Four of the Education Group team are registered 'Ambassadors' for the project. As a result of the collaboration, we have reached more children and more schools in three months than we had done in the previous three years. The invitation to PM to get involved in The Crunch is a positive example of the slowly increasing recognition of the importance of teaching children about population. As a practising teacher I know that, once you open a child's mind, the effect will last a lifetime.

More people, more congestion, more cost

Analysis released by Population Matters in January has estimated England will face total annual costs of £23.8 billion by 2030 as a result of road and rail congestion caused by surging population.



The impact of population growth on congestion will cost the economy an additional £8.8bn by 2030 – an increase of nearly 60 per cent over the figure for 2015.

The original research commissioned by Population Matters, and featured in an exclusive report in *The Times* newspaper, uses statistical data and analytical reports from the UK's Department for Transport and the latest population projections by the Office of National Statistics to calculate the effect on road and rail traffic. It shows that England's projected population growth of 10 per cent by 2030 will have a far bigger impact on road and rail congestion than the percentage population increase alone suggests.

Among the conclusions of the research are that by 2030:

- The average cost of traffic congestion per household could increase by 40 per cent, translating to a total of £2,100 per year
- Average lateness for individual rail passengers could increase nationally by 48.2 per cent, and by 103.4 per cent in London
- Road users could waste an average of 136 hours a year because of traffic congestion; this is over 12 hours more than in 2015
- The number of cars on England's roads could increase by 20 per cent to 31 million.

PM also looked at the impact in London and found that the capital could bear nearly 40 percent of the national

bill. The £9.3bn annual cost of congestion to London's economy in 2030 would mark a 63.2 per cent rise over the cost in 2015. The capital's population is projected to reach more than 10m by 2030 – a 17.8 per cent rise in the same period, compared to a projected 10 per cent increase in population for England as a whole.

To accompany its report, *The Times* also published an article by Population Matters patron Chris Packham reacting to the figures and highlighting how human population growth is affecting the natural world in the UK and globally. In the piece, Chris writes:

“Our natural world is in competition with the unnatural world we create — and it is losing badly. This destructive competition will continue as long as human numbers are growing.

“In the UK we already have the choice of how many children we have. If we want them to enjoy the natural world — to have a thriving, supportive natural world they will need to survive — we have to recognise that the more of them we have, the more difficult it will be for them to do that. We all need breathing room: animals, plants, human beings. We shouldn't have to compete for it, and we don't have to.”

Further information about the research and its findings can be found on our website.

Interview with a patron

Adrian Hayes

Adrian Hayes joined Population Matters as a Patron in 2016. He is a record-breaking adventurer, speaker, business coach and consultant, campaigner and author.



How did you make a transition from a senior corporate role to becoming an adventurer - and were you confident at the time that it would work?

Well, I've been adventuring all my life since I was 17, which continued in my 10 years in the British Army, firstly with 21 SAS and then as a Gurkha Officer. Since moving into business in the 90s, I've continued it all throughout – the only development being that the projects have become longer and more extreme! So it was far from being new, however the hook was combining it with the world of personal, team and leadership development. I did a full business plan and self-belief, passion and commitment propelled it thereafter. I generally embark on one major project per year, the rest of the time undertaking keynote speeches or leadership / team development programmes across the globe.

What is the most dangerous moment you've had in your adventures? What effect did it have on you?

Two notable occasions. The first was my summiting of Everest in 2006, when a broken oxygen mask for all but the last final two hours ascent made it one extremely tough 12 hour climb. But the real test came when it failed for the entire descent. That 7 hours climb down to the South Col was the closest I've ever come to facing death and was the hardest seven hours of my entire life.

The second was on K2 in 2013. When pushing for the summit, I and most of my team mates took a call to come down due to bad conditions. Two team mates continued and were wiped out by an avalanche that night. Gut instinct is a powerful tool – if we develop and truly listen to it.

Who has inspired you?

I prefer to find inspiration more in separate qualities / traits / components of numerous people, rather than an entire person. When you dissect a person down into those, it's actually possible to find some inspiration or admiration in anyone and everyone from a refuse collector to a world leader. And, although I won't give any examples, even the most odious of people have some qualities we can all learn from!



Where did your interest in population come from?

I have been fascinated and concerned by the subject since I was a boy. I guess it was an intense love of nature, wildernesses, mountains, ice caps, exploration and so on, and the effect of humankind on these areas that sparked the interest. I had a large poster on my wall called 'Overpopulation' which showed a futuristic scene of people crowded together with no space to move. I was probably 14 at the time! The interest has remained and now being in a position to speak about it has amplified it.

On your travels, what positive signs have you seen for human beings and the planet?

Amongst a host of problems the world faces, one huge leap is that of awareness. Like most things, the internet has changed everything – not all good granted, but a lot of positives. Aside from the most repressive of countries such as North Korea, countries and leaders simply cannot get away with things that they used to because the world will quickly become aware. That is a huge step in reducing the many malpractices of all shapes and forms the world over.

What solutions do you see to help limit population growth?

Firstly, get our leaders, politicians, businesses and charities to fully understand and recognise the model and

universal truths of economic, social and environmental sustainability. That is, everything in each of these pillars is inextricably linked; what we do in one will affect all others; and we cannot solve problems in one without addressing all three together. Once this is accepted, then population stands out like a beacon as the main cause of all of our environmental problems, most of our social problems and even some of our economic problems. And, as such, sustainable actions can hopefully be implemented to address the problem.

The second key is one of consciousness, the key to so many of our problems in the world today. Once our awareness increases and we evolve in our mindset, then conflict, materialism, religious dogma, economic growth at all costs, happiness, health and much more fall into their proper place in significance. An evolved mind has the capacity to solve all of the world's problems...

www.adrianhayes.com

Meet the team: Tessa Dickinson

Tessa is Population Matters' Research and Recruitment Coordinator and has worked with us for a year-and-a-half. Here she tells us about what she does and why she does it.



What do you do at PM?

My initial focus was recruitment. I coordinate and attend events, help with advertising, merchandise, and managing volunteers. I'm working with universities to assist students in getting our message out by organising events like talks, discussion panels, pub quizzes, and film screenings. Outreach is a priority.

My role has also expanded recently. I now help with our online communications and support our campaigns and strategy by doing research.

Why does population interest you?

It's clear that population is one of the most powerful leverage points for effecting positive change. It connects to all the issues I care about: environment, human rights, women's rights, public health, education. It's logical, sensible, and compassionate. It is also taboo for many, so talking about it will help people.

I'm an archaeologist by training and have travelled to Egypt for 15 years. Something clicked during my last trip. The situation has worsened. The environment is dying, human rights are abused, there's ill-governance,

lack of education and sanitation, a failing economy, conflict. The population grows, and more suffer.

Being born on the 'right side of the fence' comes with power and responsibility – or 'the ability to respond'. For me it's a duty. I've spent time in a place that is overpopulated and suffering, Egypt, while frequently visiting one that was not, Sweden.

It was clear where I wanted to put my energy and when I came across PM, it all clicked.

You talk to the public regularly at events. How have you found they respond to our message?

There has been a palpable shift. I've had the chance to attend the same event two years running, and I see the change. More people are understanding that population matters; students queue up to speak to us where they weren't last year. And they want to do something. It's inspiring. Seeing the change in mentalities and desire to act shows our work is paying off.

Family planning in rural Kenya - a day with Dandelion Africa

Stephen Bown, Population Matters

Dandelion Africa is a charity for “Women Empowerment in Rural Areas”, directed by Wendo Aszed in Mogotio, Kenya.



Setting out for the clinic

2000 people live in Lomola B village, with three times as many children as adults. There is no electricity and the only water supply is a hilltop lake, shared with all the animals.

The school takes children up to age 16, although only for primary level studies. Some classrooms were still very basic and in the open, when I visited in 2015, although new buildings have been completed since. There are no regular health services, the nearest permanent facilities being in Mogotio, 30km away across a sisal plantation. Dandelion has built a new clinic in Lomola, but with no resources to employ a nurse, its current use is only for Dandelion free clinics and child immunisations.

Preparation for an outreach clinic

The strength of Dandelion is the ability to take their services to outlying communities such as Lomola. Prior to a clinic, one of the Dandelion team visits the surrounding area telling residents the clinic date and what facilities would be available.



Wendo Aszed at Dandelion's headquarters

On the clinic day during my visit, the minibus set out from Mogotio, picking up two volunteer doctors, six nurses and various support staff together with their drugs and required equipment. We were soon joined by mopeds loaded with such essentials as loudspeakers for the children's entertainment.

The driver was remarkably skilled at avoiding massive potholes whilst maintaining a brisk pace. How the heavily loaded mopeds stayed upright under these conditions amazed me, but they did. Halfway, someone in the minibus noticed that the chairs were no longer strapped on the back, which caused some hilarity and head-scratching. A moped was sent back to retrieve them. The whole journey was accompanied by loud reggae music and streams of giggles from the back seats. It was like a party.



Animals and people share the only water

Running the clinic

On arrival, staff members introduced themselves and this was followed by a general talk on health and hygiene, the merits of limiting family size and the importance of involving both men and women in discussions about family planning.

The facilities consisted of temporary mud huts, supplemented by two small tents (one for HIV screening). Two huts were staffed by the doctors, who saw 254 patients during the day. The commonest complaints were chest infections, backache and diarrhoea.

The family planning hut was somewhat larger. Light was provided by fortuitous gaps between the top of the mud walls and the corrugated iron roof. The treatment couch was a small pool table with a rug on top. How or why such an item got to such a remote location was not clear! Local women had learnt about available contraceptives through training visits by Dandelion staff. Almost all chose long-acting, reversible options, most preferring implantable formulations. These are inserted under the skin in the upper arm – a 5-minute procedure under local anaesthetic that provides effective contraception for 3 years, but can be simply removed at any time. These procedures were undertaken smoothly and efficiently by experienced nurses under sterile conditions. A reasonable degree of privacy was provided by a sheet hanging from the roof for the few who chose IUD's (intra-uterine devices, effective for up to 12 years) or who wanted cervical cancer screening. Many women were anxious that their husbands should not be aware that they were using contraception. During the day, 115 women received implants.



Family planning – inserting implant

The immunisation zone, full of mothers with babies and small children, had shelter from the sun, but not much more. Many had had neither ante-natal care nor the children any immunisations. The nurses were concerned and enthusiastic to give the best service they could.

One hut was a mini-pharmacy. Drugs such as antibiotics, pain killers and medicines for diarrhoea were dispensed in small brown envelopes, filled from larger containers. Children from the age of about 2 were de-wormed. Each was given the required tablet with a drink and watched to make sure they swallowed it. A finger was marked to be sure they were not treated twice. Mother Nature undertook the rest of the treatment, with privacy provided by local bushes.

Older children were divided into boys and girls and given talks on hygiene as well as basics on sex and relationships. Sex education is particularly important as there are frequent early pregnancies and illegal abortions; girls as young as 12 sell sex to get a little money. Most use rags and cut out T-shirts as sanitary pads and they were taught how to use and dispose of these. Some mothers in

this area still want their daughters to undergo FGM (female genital mutilation) and are resistant to discouragement from health workers. A new approach of explaining the situation to boys and asking them to dissuade their mothers from having their sisters cut seems more effective.

For the children, this was a fun day as well as being health-related. With no electricity, music is rare. The team arriving with a small generator, CD's and 2 big loud speakers, was a treat. One of the helpers led the children in dances and running races.



Queueing to see the doctor

About 900 people attended on the day – 550 children and over 300 adults. The clinic was organised and run extremely efficiently and provided an important and highly valued service to an isolated rural community. Dandelion can only run two to three outreach clinics per month, due to limited resources, although it does get some help from the Kenyan Ministry of Health. The most important need is to support full-time local staff, so that they can be trained and provide continuity.



In January 2017, a nursery school close to Lomola reported that their intake of new children was the lowest number ever recorded! This is the best possible indication that the Dandelion family planning programme is working! There are now fewer children aged 18-24 months in the area, women are working more and the economy of the area is improving.

All services at the outreach clinics are provided free of charge, but the overall aim of Dandelion is always to help people help themselves, not just to provide free services. Their remit goes far beyond outreach health clinics.

Dandelion's family planning clinics are funded by UK charity Chase Africa. Find out more at www.dandelion-africa.net and www.chaseafrica.org.uk or contact the author at s.bown@ucl.ac.uk.

News

Global family planning under threat



International aid support for family planning received a blow in January when President Trump announced he would reinstate the 'Global Gag Rule', which stipulates that US overseas aid will not be given to any organisation providing abortion services or even information about abortion. The move was widely condemned by family planning organisations. The International Federation for Family Planning declared it would not sign a policy which denied human rights and "life-saving services to the world's poorest women".

The US has been the largest single donor to family planning worldwide, providing US\$600m in 2015. In 2015, donor governments across the world provided US\$1.3 billion for bilateral family planning, but this marked a drop of 6% on previous years' funding. Last year, a global coalition of family planning organisations had warned that by 2020 a shortfall of \$850 million in funding for UNFPA Supplies – the world's largest supplier of donated contraceptives – could "derail" progress towards meeting Sustainable Development Goals.

The global family planning initiative FP2020 announced in November that 30 million more women are accessing contraception in the world's poorest countries than in 2012. The FP2020 program aims to give 120 million more women access to modern contraception than in 2012.

More than 300 million women in the world's poorest countries are now using modern contraception for the first time. However, the figure is below the target set for this stage of the FP2020 programme and there are concerns that it will now fail to meet its target.

There are also significant disparities in access within countries. At a meeting attended by Population Matters to discuss the issue, the problem of the "last mile" – actually getting resources in a country into the hands of the women who need them – was identified as one of the key problems still to be overcome in some places.

UK among world's most 'nature-depleted' countries

Last September, more than 50 nature conservation and research organisations published the 2016 State of Nature report. The report found evidence of significant losses in biodiversity in the UK. 56 per cent of species declined in number between 1970 and 2013, with 40 per cent showing strong or moderate declines. The UK has experienced significantly more biodiversity loss than the global average, and is now ranked as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.



However, 44 per cent of species increased in number, and it was found that well-planned conservation projects can "turn around the fortunes of wildlife."

Many factors were held to be responsible for changes in species number, but the report primarily attributed blame to intensive agricultural practices. The effect of climate change was also significant, but negative impacts were balanced by the northward expansion of species that previously could not cope with northern temperatures. Future climate change, however, is expected to cause significant reductions in northern species.

The Sixth Great Extinction

The 2016 Living Planet report published by WWF in October 2016 pulls no punches in describing the devas-



out in time. The UK's TFR has not been above 2.1 since 1972 but "population momentum" (the increase in numbers of births when babies born at the peak of population growth reach reproductive age) and net immigration have led to a population increase of nearly 10 million people since then.

In December, the ONS reported that 650,000 people immigrated into the UK in the year up to June 2016 and 315,000 left, making the total net migration figure 335,000. The figure is almost exactly the same as the previous year, 336,000. Of those leaving, 127,000 were estimated to be British.

tation to our natural world caused by human activity. It calculates that by 2020 populations of wild vertebrate animals globally will have declined by nearly 70 per cent since 1970 – when the population was half what it is today. It described the current rate of decline as the "Sixth Great Extinction".

Dr Mike Barrett, head of science and policy at WWF, said: "We know what the causes are and we know the scale of the impact that humans are having on nature and on wildlife populations – it really is now down to us to act."

The report takes a close and systematic look at the underlying drivers of the crisis – including consumption, food production and distribution, and much more – but treats population growth largely as an inevitability which must be taken into account, rather than a problem which can be solved.

Births, deaths and migration figures for the UK

In November, the Office for National Statistics released its 'Vital Statistics' report for 2015. 777,165 babies were born in the UK in 2015 and 602,000 people died, a "natural increase" in the UK's population (excluding migration) of 175,000 people.

The UK's current total fertility rate (TFR) is 1.8, below the 'replacement rate' of 2.1 at which numbers of births and deaths will balance

Sex education amendment defeated



An attempt by MPs to make Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) compulsory in all UK schools has failed after being voted down in a parliamentary committee.

In addition to information on the biology of sex, SRE provides information and guidance in areas such as consent, relationships, abuse, and LGBT issues. Under current legislation, however, it is mandatory only in schools managed by local authorities.

Despite hints from Education Secretary Justine Greening that she was willing to reform existing law, Conservative MPs on a committee considering an amendment voted against any change. According to junior education minister Edward Timpson the proposal was incomplete and its potential repercussions meant it needed further consideration.



The parliamentary decision not to make SRE compulsory goes against the view of teachers, parents and pupils. 70% of 11-15 year-olds in England believe all children should have school lessons on sex and relationships and 75% think that making SRE compulsory would make them safer according to Barnardos.

Currently, only state schools offer compulsory Sex Education lessons from age 11. Parents can choose to withdraw their child from parts of it. Sex Education classes focus on the biological aspects of sex. As a result of the vote, independent, fee-paying schools and schools which

are state-funded but not managed by local authorities (such as academies) are still free not to teach SRE. Many do choose to do so but standards are not monitored.

MP Stella Creasy, who introduced the amendment, remarked that millions of children are not getting the information they need.

The UK still has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe. In 2015, 9.9 out of 1,000 abortions were under 18s. Research has established that high-quality SRE helps to prevent teenage pregnancy.



Are the brakes on US population growth?

The US population grew by just 0.7 per cent in the year to July 2016, to a little over 323 million. This is the lowest population increase since 1937.

A number of states, including Illinois and New York, saw their populations fall. Census Bureau figures show that states in the west and south tend to show the most growth. Internal migration drivers, such as older people moving to warmer states like Florida (which has a majority of over-65s) and workers pursuing job opportunities, are significant factors in the individual states' changes.

At nearly, one million, international immigration was down 4 per cent on 2015, while birth rates remained low and death rates slightly higher than previous years.

Are the brakes off Chinese population growth?

The Chinese government has released figures for births in the first full year since the official end of the 'one child' policy. At 18m, the number is a 7.9% increase on the 2015 figure.

The one child policy (OCP) was introduced in 1979 in an attempt to alleviate poverty and reduce environmental degradation. Over its course, China's fertility rate fell from 2.8 to 1.7, although a similar fall occurred in some developing countries which did not employ compulsion. The Chinese government claims 400 million births were avoided. Under the OCP, forced implantation of contraceptive devices and abortions were widely reported. The policy is also believed to have led to infanticide of female children and abortions of female foetuses.

China's government initially predicted that the end of the OCP would lead to 3m more births per year but these expectations have now been revised downwards. According to government surveys, 75% of Chinese couples do not want to have more than one child for economic reasons.

Comment

Legal Abortion

The Effect on Population in Britain 1968-2015

Keith Hindell

The Abortion Act 1967 liberated pregnant women from their biological imperative, but after nearly fifty years we can see it also had a profound effect on the population of Britain.

In broad terms the introduction of safe, free medical abortion has limited population growth by five million.

Since the Act came into force in England, Wales and Scotland, the annual numbers rose from 53,000 in 1969 (the first full year) to a peak of 212,000 in 2007 and then declined to 198,000 by 2015. Altogether 7,692,906 pregnancies of resident women had been terminated legally by the end of 2015.

While abortion reform was being debated in the 1960s, its supporters claimed it would have little effect on the birth rate. Based on emergency admissions, it was widely but wrongly believed that about 100,000 abortions had taken place per year before 1968; instead 53,000 took place legally in 1969, rising to consistently above 150,000 by 1985. Although the critics who claimed reform would increase numbers of abortions were moved more by religious belief than by medical science or statistics, they were right.

Since 1968, two main factors have affected birth rates. A relaxation of sexual mores meant that potentially there could be many more pregnancies, but contraceptives became more available and more widely used, thus preventing many pregnancies. In addition, medical invention spawned new contraceptives for women which are less elaborate, longer-lasting and unobtrusive at the crucial moments of a woman's sex life. In response to the rise in abortions, the government established a free contraceptive service in 1974.

Between 1969 and 2015 conceptions increased by only 0.11%, while births declined by 15.2% across the whole population. The main reason for this decline is the level of abortions. Virtually all adult pregnant women now know they have a choice and nearly 200,000 a year are opting for abortion.



It seems reasonable to postulate that the 53,000 women having legal abortions in 1969 was approximately the number of pregnant women who, before 1968, would have had abortion in mind – although pre-1969 only a quarter of them actually secured an abortion from a qualified gynaecologist. So if the law had not been changed, the number of illegal and legal abortions over the next 48 years could have been 2.54 million rather than the 7.69 million actually reported.

The effect therefore has been profound and sizeable, possibly reducing our numbers in 2015 by 5.15 million. Moreover, if those five million extra abortions had not been carried out, there would have been another two and half million females in the population, many of whom would have had children in due course.

It seems that the legalisation of safe, free medical abortion coupled with much improved contraception has held back population growth by at least five million, probably more. The Act therefore has not only been of great benefit to all the women who have exercised their right to choose, but also to society as a whole. Think of all the extra houses, hospitals, schools, universities, roads and jobs we would have needed for five million extra people, not to mention the extra tonnage of carbon dioxide they would have put into the atmosphere.

Keith Hindell is a former director of a non-profit abortion service and the author (with Madeleine Simms) of *Abortion Law Reformed*.

Sources: Department of Health, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Office of National Statistics

Let's hear it for the boys

Julie Ann Hill

Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood is widely understood to be associated with low educational achievement and lack of economic independence for the mother and poorer outcomes for the child.

Research shows that children of adolescent mothers are inclined to repeat their parents' behaviour; more likely to drop out of school, face unemployment and become teen parents themselves.

Yet, while the UK continues to have the highest teenage birth rates in Western Europe, and more than half of conceptions to under-18's end in abortion, no statistics seem to be kept on the number of teenage fathers, where they are or what happens to them.

While the mother and baby enter the health and social welfare systems, the number of teenage fathers is unrecorded. Local authorities do not collect data on the number of young fathers in school although statutory services and the voluntary sector do help young fathers to stay on track with education, employment and training. Charities such as Barnardo's and Working With Men have programmes to help teenage boys to adjust to fatherhood, but research by Barnardo's suggests that boys who become fathers as teenagers are three times more likely than non-fathers to fail to complete secondary education.

Although promoting male responsibility in preventing teenage pregnancies may be on the school agenda, it seems to receive little coverage elsewhere. Certainly when the attention shifts to global population rates, the focus is almost entirely on placing the responsibility on girls and women, under the heading of 'women's rights'. While initiatives such as World Vasectomy Day promote the completion of a family for more mature men, an attitudinal shift towards the responsibilities of boys and young men would signify that the responsibility does not rest with girls alone. Pregnancy and family planning is an issue for boys and men.

That being a teenage father can damage a boy's future, as well as a girl's, is an important message. That fathering a child with a teenage mother can damage her future is also a message about compassion, responsibility and respect for women.

Barnardo's points out that being a teenage father can galvanise boys to achieve for the sake of their new family.



Yet being a teenage father means a boy has to face the reality of parenthood at an age when he would also be making critical choices about his future. Add to this the financial and legal implications of supporting a child for sixteen to twenty years plus the family, relationship and emotional issues that are likely to ensue, and it is clear that unplanned early parenthood is a problem for boys as well as for girls.

As work continues to improve the status of women and encourage their aspirations, let's not lose sight of the fact that reducing teenage birth rates is not just an issue for girls. And if we believe that education is a key to female empowerment, independent economic roles and smaller families, then that must apply to boys as well.

Julie Ann Hill has a degree in English Literature and Language, a career in Business Analysis and Project Management, and a life-long interest in the environment and natural history.

Sources: Barnardo's report "Are we nearly there yet, Dad?" 2012; OECD report *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education* 2015; The Family Planning Association news release 6th April 2016

PopOffsets helps family planning in the Philippines



More than a hundred people in the Philippines have been able to gain control over their fertility, thanks to £5,000 which our initiative PopOffsets gifted to local organisations.

Working with local providers, the programme in Caloocan City in Metropolitan Manila provided services including outreach education sessions and the provision of a variety of contraceptive methods, including oral contraceptives, implants and reversible sterilisations. While women comprised the majority of those helped, one man opted to take advantage of the opportunity to have a non-scalpel vasectomy. It is a milestone to achieve a little bit of man-involvement in a culture of machismo.



There is no doubt that a good population regulation strategy would benefit the Philippines. In 2005, Aniceto Orbeta, a research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, proved that big families today face greater poverty than they would have in the past. The economic situation of smaller families, however, has improved significantly in the past few decades.

We are delighted to see that funding of small-scale family planning projects has the power to transform lives for the better. What seems like a small change for some, is a huge step for others. A move away from poverty, the power to exercise the right of bodily integrity and most importantly perhaps for many parents: a chance to offer wanted children better life prospects.

Myths surrounding contraceptive methods, and great gender inequalities, are two major challenges faced in the Philippines. Moreover, women are not always able to make trips to community health centres, because they have to stay home to care for their children. Family planning projects have started visiting prospective family planning service users at their homes. Continuous education and information about sexual and reproductive health are essential to an effective strategy.

Our deep thanks to the partner organisations who continue to support the family planning needs of their communities: the Caloocan Private Midwives Association, the Philippine Society of Reproductive Health Nurses, LuzonHealth and the Population Services Pilipinas Inc

Find out more about the work of PopOffsets' partner organisations in the Philippines at www.popoffsets.org

Reviews

The Land is Full: Addressing Overpopulation in Israel

Alon Tal

*Yale University Press, 2016,
ISBN: 978-0300216882*

Israel has many splits in its personality. On the borderlines of 'developed' and 'develop-ing' status; multi-racial but within Zionist axioms; democratic but where demography is highly politicised. And with its ultra-orthodox Haredim and Negev Bedouin groups having Total Fertility Rates of 6 or more, whereas the majority – whether Jews, Arab Muslims, Arab Christian or Arab Druze – are following demographic transition paths. In its 68 years of independence, Israel's population has increased ten-fold.

This book has a split personality too, as the author – who himself swapped North Carolina for the Zionist dream as a 20 year-old in 1980 – acknowledges. An academic work, complete with 1,343 references, profiling Israel's demography, but also a polemic where Tal argues that the drivers of the state's pro-natalism no longer hold. Its Jewish majority is established and its military no longer lacks 'boots'; the Holocaust losses have been replaced and those suffering anti-Semitism no longer flock to Israel. Instead, Tal wants population policy to address quality of life, sustainability, and inequality issues.

Chapters discussing immigration, social security, reproductive rights and the dynamics of its different social groups describe the full range of opinions – Tal is always respectful of the difficult terrain being traversed – providing scholarly analysis and fascinating in-sights into Israel's complex demographic matrix and its historical development.

Policy chapters argue for "no regrets" initiatives with broad progressive appeal, whilst also nudging fertility downwards, acknowledging, as the author puts it, that "those who raise the flag of sustainability and population stabilisation will invariably be branded alarmists, anti-Zionists, anti-Arab, anti-Jewish, anti-Orthodox, elitists, heartless, or eu-genicists." Tell us about it, Alon.

Matthew Naylor

Woman on The Edge

Olivia Richards

Self-published ISBN: 978-1526205223

The book's early chapters form a meticulous description of the daily life of a committed woman. Her commitments to her family are manifold and overlapping: to her husband, her ageing mother, increasingly dependent for emotional support; to her children and grandchildren. Inextricably woven through these themes is another commitment: to her efforts to engage the insouciant majority with awareness of the abyss into which the weight of human overpopulation is dragging the planet. She is one of us, and an activist.

I know the writer well; her tale of life and relationships rings true, because it is true. The incessant activities described are her life as lived. Readers will sympathise with personal elements of the family issues, whilst members of Population Matters in particular will find much of the soul-searching part of their own internal world. The novel quickly engages the interest, as description draws us into an existence fraught with stretched nerves. Then though, the inherent tension slips seamlessly into a dramatic end story which culminates in a series of crises, shouldering routine aside and leaving the protagonist in a struggle to hold her life together. *Woman on the Edge* works on various levels; it externalises the angst of living in a gold-en age which teeters towards disaster, but is seemingly ignored by the general public. Contrasting the comfortable, known present with the ever more opaque future, global crisis is mirrored by personal crisis.

Edmund Davey

Woman on The Edge costs £7.99, and Ms. Richards will donate **£4.00 to PM** for every book sold. To order, send your name and address to I Porter, 9 School Avenue, Brown-hills, Walsall, WS8 6AG with a cheque made out to I Porter for £7.99 (or multiples if ordering more than one). Or you can **email oliviabooks@phonecoop.coop** for details of electronic payment. In both cases, please identify yourself as a PM Supporter.

Patriarch Run

Benjamin Dancer

Comundrum Press 2016 ISBN 978-1942280224

Patriarch Run is a thriller with an emotional heart and a political agenda. The death count and weapons inventory is soaring within a few pages, but it also features a deeper family story of an estranged father, his former wife and his troubled son. That the father is an amnesiac assassin on the run drives the plot elements but that thriller cliché is used to good effect while the dynamics of this family provides the emotional engagement.

Grafted skilfully onto these two themes is a well-integrated but forceful lesson on the threat of population growth. The sections dealing with population manage not to feel like lectures dropped in from another book. Instead they move the plot forward and explain the motivations and actions of one of its central characters in a coherent and satisfying way. *Patriarch Run* isn't in the normal mould of books on population and is very much worth reading.

Alistair Currie

Benjamin Dancer talks about Patriarch Run

What first got you interested in population?

I was a young man when I realised, through that, just about everything I don't like about the world is an unintended consequence of continued population growth. We can fix just about every environmental problem and every human rights concern I can think of by choosing a sustainable population. The overwhelming simplicity of that under-reported truth made me want to tell a story about it.



Tell us about the decision to write a thriller. Is it a genre you are an aficionado of?

I wanted a broad range of people to read the book. So I chose a genre with a lot of action. I don't read a lot of thrillers myself. The ones I read are character-driven, like those of Cormac McCarthy. A reader looking for a fast-food-type story might be frustrated by *Patriarch Run*, but I doubt anyone will find the story boring.

Family relations and particularly paternal responsibilities emerge as very strong themes in the book. Why is that?

There is no more important job I have than to be a father, which makes me a sucker for a father story. At its core, *Patriarch Run* is a story about fathers. I wanted to write this story because I think that is the spectrum on which all of us as parents have to decide who it is we want to be.

The main character, Jack, is an ambivalent figure. As his creator, what do you feel about him?

There are days when I identify with Jack's cynicism about the probability of humankind choosing a smaller population size. On other days I'm more hopeful. People really wrestle with the question of whether he's the good guy or the bad guy. I think that question is what makes the book interesting.

Why do you think people are resistant to the message on population?

Many people don't understand the math and many people react to the reality of overpopulation with a belief like this: "people suck." Not so! People are good. You can love humanity and recognise that humanity would be better served with a smaller population. Humans are wired to provide security for their families and it is good for us to work, to provide them with homes, food, clothing, recreation. And if 7.5 billion people engage in these healthy endeavours, it becomes very difficult to balance our collective behaviour without precipitating the environmental crises we now face.

In your book, the power grid becomes a weapon of mass destruction. What does that plot device have to do with the population theme?

There might be no greater illustrator of overshoot than our absolute reliance on a vulnerable power grid. 100 years ago you didn't need electricity because the "pre-electrical" carrying capacity of the planet was less than 2 billion people.

A collapse of the power grid would probably result in widespread starvation, the reintroduction of diseases vanquished by modern sanitation, unprecedented social unrest, and a skyrocketing mortality rate. Now that we're aware of our absolute reliance on it for basic needs, we can make a more secure choice. We can try to build a failsafe power system (which may be impossible), or we can choose a more sustainable population size. (You can learn more about this subject at www.benjamindancer.com)

Your character chooses a very radical solution to the population “problem”. What’s yours?

Liberty. Human rights. Imagine a world in which human rights are universally respected. When we think through the implications of that world, we realise that every individual would be afforded the right to their own body, including being in control of their own reproductive choices. In such a world, most families would likely choose to have one or two children. We can assume this because the cultures which have come the closest to meeting this ideal tend, on average, to choose smaller families.



A free-to-access Earth-centred journal

***The Ecological Citizen* (<http://www.ecologicalcitizen.net>) is a new online journal that will strive to address the central issue of our time: how to halt and reverse our current ecocidal course and create an ecological civilisation.**

The publication, which is peer-reviewed and free to access, will provide a forum for inspiring and mobilising discussion with an Earth-centred perspective.

The first issue is due out early this coming summer and you can sign up for content alerts at www.ecologicalcitizen.net/#signup.

The overarching aims of *The Ecological Citizen* are to advance ecological knowledge, champion Earth-centred action, inspire ecocentric citizenship, promote ecocentrism in political debates, and nurture an ecocentric lexicon. Within this, the Journal will address a number of key topics, one of the main ones being how we might stabilise and then lower our global population. Other topics to be explored include:

- achieving large-scale protection, restoration and re-wilding of air, land and water;
- rejecting the anthropocentric construction of nature as resources;
- designing and implementing steady-state economies;
- superseding the paradigm of consumerism;
- rethinking food production.

The Editor-in-Chief of the journal is Dr Patrick Curry, who is an Advisor to Population Matters.

Population Matters Sustainability Insights

More than 20 of Population Matters' *Sustainability Insights* have now been published on our website. These short, in-depth analyses of key issues relating to population, sustainability and consumption provide summaries of current information and research. Covering subjects as diverse as planetary boundaries and an ageing population, they are available at www.populationmatters.org/resources/sustainability-insights/

Help us meet the challenge of 7.5 billion: donate today

The world's population will reach 7.5 billion in 2017. It is no coincidence that 2016 was the warmest recorded year ever or that species decline is occurring on an unprecedented scale.



Climate change and other human impacts on the environment are a threat to us all, in particular younger generations who will live through the worst of their effects. There has never been a more critical time to campaign for smaller family sizes.

Population Matters is leading that campaign. This year we have been engaging with the public, media, policymakers and opinion-formers as never before. We see positive signs and genuine opportunities in the year ahead and we are ready to take those opportunities and take on the challenges we face.

As a campaigning charity, we rely solely on donations from supporters like you, and receive no funding from government. Please consider contributing what you can.

These are just some examples of what your gift can do:

- £5 can boost the reach our campaign message by advertising our website or Facebook page to international audiences.
- £20 can help us send one of our speakers to a school to conduct an educational workshop on population & sustainability.
- £50 will cover the costs of producing an expert briefing and meeting a policymaker or opinion-former in person to win their support.
- £100 can host a speakers' panel and film screening to educate and engage the general public on population & sustainability.

"I realized that if I want to call myself a decent human being, I must help protect future generations from the suffering that virtually all politicians, economists and religious leaders are creating for them. My choice of positive action is to implement the policies of Population Matters."



"I strongly encourage the people within Population Matters to courageously do the most decent thing they can imagine and thereby go down in history as valuable people for the children of the future."

PM supporter, Martin Gustavsson

You can donate online at www.populationmatters.org/2017-appeal or by post to: 2017 Appeal, Population Matters, 135-137 Station Road, London E4 6AG

The commitment of our supporters is one of our greatest assets. In this critical and exciting year, please donate to help us achieve our goals, and help us all meet the challenge of 7.5 billion.



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