# Political Demography, Demographic Engineering

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*Berghahn Books*

NEW YORK • OXFORD

Published in 2001 by

**Berghahn Books**

www.berghahnbooks.com



**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Weiner, Myron.
Political demography, demographic engineering / by Myron Weiner, Michael Teitelbaum.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-57181-253-9 — ISBN 1-57181-254-7 (alk. paper)
1. Emigration and immigration—Political aspects. 2. Population geography—Political aspects. 3 Internal security. 4. Security, international. I. Teitelbaum, Michael. II. Title.

JV6477.W44 2001
304.6—dc21 00-045546

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library.

Printed in the United States on acid-free paper

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# FOREWORD

The origins of this jointly written book lie in a phone call I received from Myron Weiner in April 1999. I knew, much to my dismay, that four months earlier he had been diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor, and I understood from a mutual friend that it was inoperable and likely to prove fatal. I also knew that he had been undergoing radiation treatments and chemotherapy to slow the course of the disease, and that during a hiatus from such treatments he had undertaken a trip to South Africa, something that he had always wanted to do and which fulfilled a long-deferred promise to his wife, Sheila.

What I did not know until that April call is that, every morning since January at his home in Vermont, he had been working on a series of essays on political demography, a field that he had pioneered three decades earlier. Myron told me that he had hoped to be able to complete a substantial book on this topic, but by April he was finding that he could no longer write. He asked me if I would be willing to read the partial essays he had completed, and to give him comments. I readily agreed, and did so expeditiously. I told him that six of the seven essays, though incomplete, were vintage Myron Weiner: insightful, incisive, creative, and provocative.

A week or so later, Myron's son, Saul, called me to say that his father was not able to talk on the phone, but had asked him to contact me and see if I would be willing to consider taking the essays as the skeleton and partial body of a jointly authored book on political demography and demographic engineering. I expressed some hesitation on grounds that Myron might not be able to review the parts that I would author, but his son said that Myron had anticipated such a concern, and had indicated that he

knew from our previous joint writing that he would find my analyses and writing style perfectly consistent with his own.

Myron Weiner died before I was able to turn my efforts to this volume. Writing it has been an experience at once poignant and exhilarating—poignant to be writing a joint volume embodying the unfinished work of an extraordinary scholar, exhilarating to be working with material so full of intellectual honesty and insight.

Myron Weiner's departure has deprived us of the world's leading political scientist on matters demographic. Perversely, it has done so at the very time that the political dimensions of population change are increasingly being seen as central to the agendas of presidents, premiers, legislators, and other political leaders in many countries. Yet such concerns often are expressed in emotional, ideological, and ill-informed ways. I am confident that Myron would join me in expressing the hope that this volume might stimulate others to address the political dimensions of demographic change in ways that embody the care and objectivity they deserve.

*Michael S. Teitelbaum*

# PREFACE

Over the past decade, the impacts of demographic trends on international security and on peaceful relations between and within states have come to the fore in ways not seen since the aftermath of World War II. An evolving and more complex set of concerns over population has become the basis for a new look at the security effects of changes in the size, distribution, and composition of populations. This book is an attempt to lay out this new look, to take issue with some of the prevailing views on the political consequences of population change, and to suggest where the concerns are realistic and where they are not.

My initial interest in what I have called "political demography" began in the early 1970s when I undertook a study of the costs and benefits of migration to the local inhabitants of places in India to which migrants moved. Indian policy makers faced a genuine dilemma in the precise sense of a situation requiring a choice between two undesirables. On the one hand, providing special protection to some ethnic group meant denying equal opportunities to others, while on the other hand, not acting meant permitting the resentment of local people to fester. How to find a way in which local people belonging to one ethnic community could obtain greater equality in the employment market without at the same time restricting the opportunities of migrants and their descendants belonging to other ethnic groups seemed to be an intractable problem, for India as for other multiethnic societies.

While I was conducting research for that study (Weiner 1978), I was asked by Roger Revelle of Harvard's Center for Population Studies, then Foreign Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences, to participate in a major National Academy study of the consequences and policy implications of rapid population

growth. Revelle was eager to include in the project a state-of-the-art paper on whether population density and rapid population growth accounted for many of the disturbing features of a changing world: urban violence, political instability, and aggressive behavior. It clearly mattered politically that populations in developing countries were becoming younger, that population growth puts strains on the capacity of administrative systems to provide services, that structural strains were growing in relationships within families and within communities, and that migration within and between countries was on the rise. As a political scientist I was drawn to these questions, notwithstanding the difficulties of separating out demographic determinants from the many other factors that were shaping political outcomes.

My work on the political effects of migration within India led me to think more critically about the effects of migration elsewhere and to take a less rosy view of migration than the one found in American social science writings. By the early 1990s it had become clear than unwanted and illegal international migration and an increase in refugee flows were a significant threat to many states and communities, and that neither individual governments nor the "international community" had any ready solutions. Migration and refugee issues had become foreign and domestic policy issues for the United States and for very many other countries.

With support from the Sloan Foundation, I organized a conference on international migration and security at the MIT Center for International Studies in December 1991. The conference and the resulting book (Weiner 1993) attracted positive attention from my colleagues in the field of security studies, but not among those who worked on refugee issues, who turned their attention to the normative questions of human rights. Indeed, for a while there was tension between those who looked at refugee issues through human rights lenses and those who saw it from a security perspective, a dichotomy which I did not regard as particularly helpful.

In collaboration with the American Assembly, Michael S. Teitelbaum of the Sloan Foundation and I organized a conference on "World Migration and U.S. Policy," which resulted in the publication of *Threatened Peoples, Threatened Borders* (1995), a volume which sought to call attention to the ways in which the influx of refugees, asylum seekers, and other international migrants had become both a major humanitarian challenge and a threat to the

national and international security of states. In 1995, with generous support from the MacArthur Foundation, I wrote *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenge to States and to Human Rights.* The volume analyzed how governments and their citizens viewed these flows, how they were responding to demands for entry by would-be migrants and refugees, and—what was becoming a major foreign policy issue in one country after another—how governments and international organizations could change the conditions within states that produced refugees and illegal migrants.

The essays in the present volume are an effort to further our understanding of the political consequences of population change. I am pleased to acknowledge the support of the Smith Richardson Foundation for making these essays possible. The Foundation provided support for a workshop held at MIT in December 1998 at which commissioned papers were presented focusing on both sides of the relationship between demography and security—how demography shaped security and how in turn security concerns led governments to try to affect demography.

I began writing the essays in this volume in early January 1999, four weeks after I was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive inoperable brain tumor. The reason for informing the reader is not to seek indulgence for errors of fact or poor judgment that are sure to appear in these essays, but rather to explain why I have worked under more than usual time constraints, uncertain as to how my malady would affect my writing, but also mindful of Samuel Johnson's quip about the effects of anticipating one's own hanging. Johnson also wrote, I reminded myself, that a man may write at any time if he will set himself doggedly to it.

*Myron Weiner died at his home in Vermont on June 3, 1999.*

# INTRODUCTION

Population—its growth or decline, its movement, its density, its characteristics, its distribution—has always been linked to questions of security. The movement of peoples has made and unmade states, and transformed societies. Population growth has been regarded as a source of national power or, alternatively, as a contributor to disorder and violence. The subject long ago captured the concerted attention of ancient and classical political philosophers and commentators. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, it is one that has been little attended by modern commentators on international relations and politics.[1]

There has been a waxing and waning of popular interest in population issues as a factor in human security, and what constitutes the population "problem" has been redefined from one generation to the next, and differs from one country to another. For much of the twentieth century, population has been treated as part of a dystopic vision, as in one way or another undermining the well-being of individuals, the communities in which they live, and the states which govern them. This perspective has long since become more complex and nuanced than the subsistence concerns of Malthus; indeed, much of the Malthusian analysis has been discredited as a consequence of extraordinary increases in the production of food, and of our capacity both to exploit and transform our environment. In the post-Cold War world, population-related issues once again loom large as a potential source of disorder—along with terrorism, global warming, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, civil violence and ethnic conflict, the spread of drugs and pathogens, and attacks against global telecommunications.

This book considers some of the most striking of the rapidly evolving connections between demographics and the security of both states and human groups within them. In so doing, we wish to advance three broad generalizations:

The first is that the past century has been one of the greatest demographic turbulence. For much of Europe after World War I, the population problem was defined as demographic growth that was too slow to sustain national security and economic prosperity. By the 1950s, such concerns had waned as the postwar "baby boom" developed in some (though not all) of these countries. Yet at the same time there were growing perceptions of explosive rates of demographic increase emerging in the formerly colonial regions of what is now called the "South" or the "developing world." The concern was that demographic growth in these regions was too rapid to maintain internal and international comity and to allow the attainment of economic prosperity.

By the mid-1960s, the high fertility rates of the "baby boom" in Western countries had begun to decline, but rising interest in environmental problems coupled with continuing rapid demographic increase in the South evoked a number of books with sensational titles such as "The Population Bomb." A decade further on, as clear signs appeared of accelerating fertility in the South, new alarms arose as fertility in the West declined to very low levels, thereby coming full circle with similar alarums during the 1930s. Meanwhile, the number of refugees in need of assistance rose dramatically, and immigration from abroad into low-fertility countries rose rapidly if sometimes erratically.

For some influential Americans, rapid domestic population growth since the 1950s has been seen as evidence of progress, for others as a driver of declining quality of life. Similarly, some Americans have seen increasing immigration as a source of national vitality and diversity, others as an economic drag and a threat to national integrity. In short, the past century has been a period of dramatic changes, unanticipated reversals, and frequent crosscurrents in both global and national demographic trends. These shifts and crosscurrents have in turn produced a noisy chorus of rhetoric, and a turbulent set of contending political responses and concerns.

The second generalization we wish to advance is that demographics have now emerged visibly into the realm of actions by states and other political actors seeking political advantage over, or protection from, their competitors. In some senses this is not a

new phenomenon; after all, larger populations have long been sought by absolutist monarchs as instruments of their military and economic power, and expulsions or exterminations of groups perceived to threaten state power are hardly late twentieth-century innovations. Yet the very magnitudes of global and regional populations, their historically high growth rates, and the volumes of human migration movements since World War II do suggest that fundamental shifts are underway.

The third and final generalization is that these recent demographic patterns pose significant challenges to those concerned with developments in the realms of politics and security. This may be true, if only in a partial way, with respect to the impacts of very low and very high fertility rates. But it is powerfully consistent with recent reality with respect to international migration movements. Increasingly, states see large-scale international migratory movements toward their borders as representing threats to their security. Control over such entry is universally seen as central to state sovereignty, and states generally are seeking new instruments—unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral alike—to control unwanted migrations. Unfortunately, extant theories of international migration do not provide adequate explanations of the complex of forces that underlie such movements, and most migration theorists pay surprisingly scant attention to the impact of state actions regarding migration.

A brief explanation of the structure of this volume may be helpful. The first four chapters deal with overall demographic trends—driven by fertility, mortality, and migration—insofar as they have implications for state power, internal politics, external competition, and perhaps aggression.

Chapters 5 through 7 consider the roles played by states in "engineering" the addition or subtraction of human groups residing within their territory, including actions of recent concern such as "ethnic cleansing." They also deal with emerging patterns such as migrants' political mobilization against regimes in their countries of origin and the growth of dual nationality, both of which may further complicate the politics surrounding demographic patterns.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on two different theoretical traditions addressing international migration: economic and social theories as the forces underlying such movements; and international relations/security theories addressing migrations as perceived threats.

Chapter 10 considers, in summary, whether claims that "demography is destiny" ought to be taken seriously. To what extent do the powerful demographic forces of fertility and migration drive political changes, or determine economic trends? And, perhaps more importantly, to what degree are such demographic forces immutable—too powerful for mere mortals to affect—or to what extent are they subject to control or at least modification by concerted state action?

The past century has indeed been one of powerful crosscurrents and passionate controversy about demographic trends. Looking forward, current demographic patterns and perceivable trends suggest more of the same, increasingly in ways that pose challenges to the securities of individuals, minority groups, nations, and states. It is our hope that the discussions in this volume will contribute to a reversal in the surprising inattention to such matters by modern commentators on international relations and politics. The humanity and effectiveness of actions by states, and the well-being of countless millions of threatened people, could benefit greatly from their thoughts and insights.

## Note

1. For a recent symposium volume on this subject, see Weiner and Russell (2001).

— *One* —

# GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THEIR SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

Demographic visions of the future have rarely been benign. Few scholars or journalists have regarded the worldwide growth in population kindly. To be sure, a handful of writers have applauded the dramatic postwar expansion of populations (see, for example, Wattenberg 1987; Simon 1981), but in the main scholars and journalists have regarded population growth as a global burden. One need only look at the title of articles and books, from Ehrlich's 1968 best-seller, *The Population Bomb*, to recent writings on the world's carrying capacity. Such demographic visions are decidedly dystopic. By this we mean visions of the future in which demographic variables—rapid population growth, increased population density, high rates of uncontrollable migration—are regarded as having destructive consequences for social order, the functioning of government, relations among people, and national and individual security.

There have, of course, always been gloomy, even apocalyptic, anticipations of the future. In the nineteenth and early parts of the twentieth century both the utopian and dystopian visions centered on technology. But while the technology-based dystopia envisioned an ordered world in which human emotions were repressed and individuals were under the control of autocratic rulers—Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's vision of

*1984*—the demographic dystopias envision a world that is chaotic, violent, and unpredictable.

Dystopias and utopias are imagined out of the present: The future is already with us, but not fully developed; the worst—or in the vision of utopias, the best—is yet to come. Our vision of the future is thus in part empirical, part imaginary. The technology-based dystopias emphasize our capacity to destroy ourselves by unwisely manipulating our genetic environment, employing weapons of mass destruction, fouling our air and water. The demography-based dystopias are about what Others can do to us, what threats they create in the form of terrorism, biological pathogens, drugs, and the cruelties that people commit upon themselves, drawn in by civil strife and genocide.

Demography-based dystopias also alert us to the threats created by others, not as a consequence of their strength but as a result of their weaknesses. From this perspective, genocide, ethnic warfare, famine, the spread of pathogens put us (in the West) at risk because of the ease with which Bad Things readily cross international borders. Moreover, for the West, the breakdown of social order elsewhere in the world poses a set of moral questions about the efficacy, risk, and obligations of doing something.

Another feature of the demographic dystopic model is that it is global, not national: Population growth is seen as running up against the world's carrying capacity; environmental degradation is worsened by population growth that poisons our atmosphere; forests destroyed by population growth deprive us of our oxygen; pathogens, made worse by crowding and poverty, enter our bloodstreams; and ethnic hatreds lead to violence and the flight of refugees across international borders.

The centerpiece of the demography-based dystopian models is that we are now experiencing a worldwide shift in population distribution, from the West to the Rest, that has implications for the well-being and security of the world's industrial democracies.[1] This shift has been well under way throughout this century and, so the argument goes, it will accelerate in the twenty-first century in ways that may well put the Western democracies at risk economically and militarily. In this section, we explore this argument, first with a brief account of global demographic trends, and then with a consideration of their potential consequences for the security and well-being of developed countries.

Imagine a world in which low-income countries had doubled or even tripled their populations in four decades. What would

the world look like—from a security and stability point of view—if the populations of Turkey, South Africa, China, India, Bangladesh, Mexico, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brazil, and Egypt had doubled or more, and still other large countries, Iran, Algeria, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Sudan had tripled their populations? Imagine a world in which the population doubled and in which the share of the world's population that lived in the industrial world declined from 31 percent to 20 percent in forty years. Imagine the outcome if the population of sub-Saharan Africa, the world's poorest region with the highest rate of population growth, had tripled and its share of world population had increased from 7 to 10 percent.

We are, of course, describing what actually happened between 1960 and the estimated population in the year 2000. The future, as it were, has arrived. According to the "medium-variant" of the United Nations projections (United Nations 1999), the world population would further increase by nearly 50 percent by 2050, to 8.9 billion; the parallel "low-variant" projection for 2050 yields 7.3 billion, while the "high-variant" shows 10.7 billion. (Giving such a range, from 7.3 to 10.7 billion, provides the reader a useful perspective as to the profound uncertainties of such long-range projections.) Using the same UN projections, the population of sub-Saharan Africa would more than double, from 640 million to l.5 billion (with a low-to-high range of 1.3 to 1.8 billion). The population of all less developed regions would increase by 60 percent, from 4.9 billion to 7.8 billion (with a low-to-high-variant range of 6.4 billion to 9.3 billion). Meanwhile, the population of industrial countries, the slowest-growing countries in the world, would decline slightly, by 3 percent between 2000 and 2050, from 1.19 billion to 1.16 billion (low-to-high variant range from 990 million to 1.36 billion). For the year 2000, the best estimate is a world population of 6.06 billion, with about 1.19 billion, or 20 percent, living in regions classified as more-developed. As of the early 1990s the annual population growth rate of the "least-developed countries"—mostly though not entirely in Africa—was 2.5 percent, that of all less developed countries 1.8 percent, and the more-developed countries 0.4 percent.

During the early 1990s, the "more-developed" industrial countries—most notably Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, the Scandinavian countries, Russia, and most of the countries of eastern Europe and the Baltic states—experienced an average annual "total fertility rate" of 1.7 children per woman, well

below the level known to demographers as "replacement" (the level at which a hypothetical generation of women would replace themselves with a new generation of women of reproductive age, typically 2.1 children per woman in such countries).

In any such discussion, it is important to describe the many limitations afflicting these concepts of "total fertility rate" (TFR) and its conventional "replacement" rate of 2.1 for low-mortality settings. The total fertility rate is a "period" rate, in that it is designed to measure fertility during a specified year or other time period. The total fertility rate is defined as the average number of live births that a woman would have if she were to bear children through her reproductive lifetime at the rates observed for women of different ages during a specified year or other time period. So defined, it is a hypothetical or synthetic rate, in that no actual group of women experiences the rates summarized by the TFR, but it has the advantage of reflecting current fertility rates. The fertility of actual women is best measured by a "cohort" rate such as the completed fertility rate, which presents the average number of children produced by an actual cohort of women by the end of their reproductive years (normally defined as age 50). While a cohort rate has the advantage of measuring fertility of actual women, it reflects mainly the fertility experiences of these women during the preceding two to three decades.

The total fertility rate measure is attractive because it relates to recent fertility behavior, but many users are unaware of its deficiencies. Most notably, a population in which the age at marriage and/or childbearing is on the rise will produce annual total fertility rates that are substantially distorted below the true level of fertility, that is, the cohort rates that actual generations of women will average by the end of their childbearing years. One recent analysis develops adjustments for this "timing" or "tempo" distortion of the total fertility rate, and shows that the reported below-replacement fertility in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s was due largely to an increase in the age at childbearing, and that properly adjusted fertility rates during this period were essentially constant at close to two children per woman. For Taiwan, similar adjustments increased the estimated total fertility rate from well below the replacement level to very close to it: from around 1.7 to 2.0 in the period 1985–1993 (Bongaarts and Feeney 1998: 286).

Such distortions almost certainly afflict the total fertility rates calculated for other countries (for example, in Europe) in which