



Population Theory

General description of the course

The increase of the world population has been used as a scapegoat for the evils that threaten the Earth: poverty, hunger, global warming, environmental damage, deforestation, threats to biodiversity, depletion of the seas, energy shortages, migration, etc... To what extent are all these alarming perspectives justified?

The course will present a pluralistic view of the various conflicting schools and lines of thought on the relationship between **population growth** on the one hand, and **economic development** and **ecological threats**, on the other. Official data supporting the different theoretical paradigms will be subject to discussion. Also, the **ethical implications** of some demographic policies different states and international agencies and organizations have been supported and implemented in order to curb population growth will be discussed. Students will be actively involved in seeking information available online (United Nations, World Bank and many other international bodies) which contravenes and/or ratify the theories discussed in class.

The main objective of the course is to provide students with the necessary knowledge to make a critical analysis of the consequences of global population growth in the socio-economic, ecological and ethical areas.

Course Overview

- 1) The growth of the human population and its spatial distribution over history
- 2) Historical approaches to the challenge of population growth (A. Smith/ Marquis de Condorcet/ T. Malthus/ K. Marx/ E. Durkheim/ G. Dupréel / A. Dumont/ L. Brentano/ E. Deevey)
- 3) The Population Transition Theory (A. Landry/ W. Thompson/ F. Notestein)
- 4) Critiques and contributions to the PTT: The European Fertility Project
- 5) The current debate about population growth and economic development
 - a. The pessimistic view of population growth (K. Davis/ Coale & Hoover)
 - b. The optimistic approaches (The French School/ E. Boserup/ S. Kuznets/ F. Hayek/ The Chicago School/ J. Simon/G. Reisman)
- 6) Famines and Population Growth (Amartya Sen)
- 7) The current debate about population growth natural resources and the environment
 - a. Population growth as an ecological aggression (P. Ehrlich/ *The Tragedy of the Commons* and *Living Within the Limits* by G. Hardin/ L. Brown/ J. Lovelock/ E. Pianka/ *An Inconvenient Truth* by Al Gore)
 - b. Responses to fears of environmentalists (F. Singer/ *The Ultimate Resource* by J. Simon/ *The Skeptical Environmentalist* by Bjorn Lomborg)
- 8) Eugenics and international programs for birth control
- 9) Examples of coercive population control policies and their implications



Recommended readings

- Barricarte, J. J. S. (2008). El crecimiento de la población mundial: implicaciones socioeconómicas, ecológicas y éticas. Tirant lo Blanch.
- Boserup, E. (1981). Population and technological change: A study of long-term trends.
- Ehrlich, P. (1968). The Population Bomb. New York. NY: Ballantine.
- Gore, A. (1992). Earth in the Balance. Dove Audio.
- Gore, A. (2006). An inconvenient truth: The planetary emergency of global warming and what we can do about it. Rodale.
- Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. Science, 162(3859), 1243-1248.
- Hardin, G. J. (1993). Living within limits: Ecology, economics, and population taboos. Oxford University Press.
- Livi-Bacci, M. (2012). A concise history of world population. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lomborg, B. (2001). The skeptical environmentalist: measuring the real state of the world. Cambridge University Press.
- Malthus, T. R. (1966). First essay on population, 1798 (Vol. 14). Macmillan.
- Sen, A. (1982). Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation. Oxford University Press.
- Simon, J. L. (1981). Population: The ultimate resource.
- Simon, J. (1996). The ultimate Resource 2. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.