

# **THE ROLE OF POLICIES IN DEMOGRAPHY**

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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## What are the drivers of demographic change?

**MORTALITY** – Declines with higher income, better nutrition, access to medical care

**FERTILITY** – Declines with more education (esp. for women), higher child survival, later marriage, urbanisation, female formal employment, contraceptive adoption, better markets & good governance. Remains high with high kin dependence.

**MIGRATION** – Rises with fertility, war, climate change, poor governance, income differentials, labor force supply/demand, local information/resources/ties to destinations.

**BUT:** We still have disagreement about *how much* each factor will contribute, and *how large* changes will be in the future. Moreover, most we cannot change, or do not wish to change.

## Should policies pursue demographic targets in the first place?

**NO** – Demographic policies need to be part of comprehensive plans. Isolated targets are more harmful than helpful.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Can population policies be effective at all in modifying long term processes of demographic transition linked modernisation/ urbanisation/development? YES**

Fertility can be rapidly decreased, without coercion (e.g. Iran, Brazil). But to effect modernisation/urbanisation/development requires much more: good governance, human capital, sound macro-policy, labour market regulation, a favorable market niche, etc. However, fertility cannot be increased as readily. The direction of development also depends on energy/transport/urbanisation policies.

**Should we more simply start adapting to low fertility and ageing society? YES.**

Fertility will likely remain below replacement, often far below replacement, for the foreseeable future everywhere except Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and a few other small countries.



# WHY ARE POPULATION POLICIES CONTROVERSIAL?

Family life is personal: interference is unwelcome and coercion violates human rights.

Imperialism contaminates perceptions: Population policies often seen as Western vs. local goals and values.

Some believe education/development will quickly bring down fertility; others believe promoting family planning is critical.

Some believe the future will be run by robots, so falling population won't matter.

Some believe the future will be dire due to climate change and conflict, so reducing population matters above all.



# **WHY ARE POPULATION POLICIES CONTROVERSIAL?**

Rich countries (plus China) and poor countries are at different stages of the demographic transition so need different policies. With no “one size fits all” policy prescription, there is conflict over who should do what, and different perceptions of what is needed.


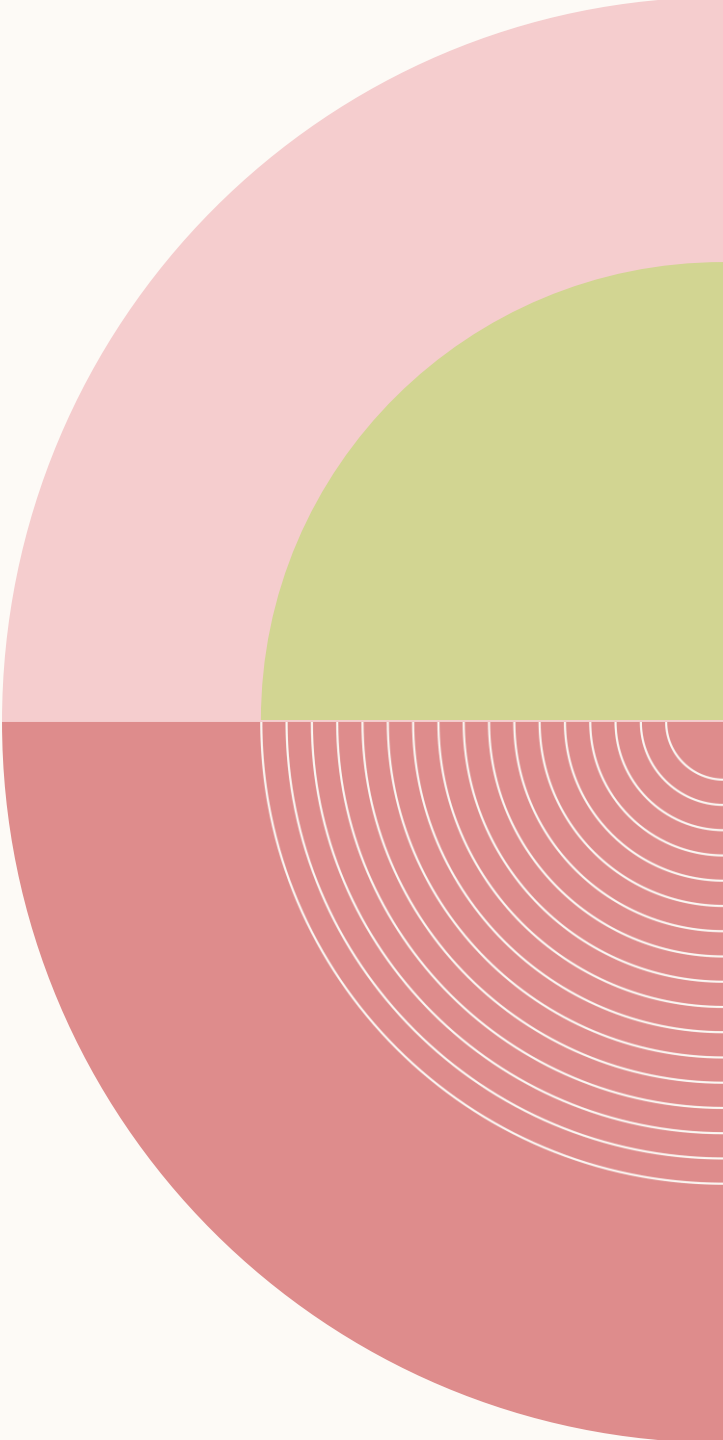
Fertility and migration are, to some degree, substitutable. Some believe with low fertility and aging more migration is needed. Others believe that fertility can and should be raised so that migration can be limited.

# POLICIES WE NEED

For the high-income low-fertility societies (Europe, Asia, North America, East Asia), policies are needed to adapt to aging societies. Mainly--Do everything possible to avoid an overwhelming number of seniors becoming dependent on small numbers of moderately productive workers.

For the low-income high-fertility societies (Africa, south Asia, parts of Latin America) policies are needed to help them advance in the demographic transition and benefit from a demographic dividend. Mainly—Do everything possible to promote voluntary fertility reduction while raising the productivity and opportunities of the young.

For all countries, policies are need to avert and adapt to climate change. Mainly – Increase rapid but realistic investments and planning for transitions to green energy economies and conservation of key environmental resources – wetlands, peatlands, forests, oceans, lakes/rivers.



That means transitions to cleaner fuels, but also more intensive agriculture to spare cropland, non-farm proteins, and transnational partnerships.



# FOCUS ON EU FERTILITY

- Fertility ranges from low (Nordic, French) to very low (southern/eastern states)
- Policies to raise fertility have shown little results at substantial expense.
- An aging population and shrinking workforce are inevitable

## TWO WAYS TO ACHIEVE DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE

- Incorporate immigrants for skilled, entrepreneurial, and labor-intensive tasks.
- Relocate seniors to youthful societies for meaningful second careers, cheaper retirement and medical and service provision.



# RESPONSES TO AGING

- Focus on healthy aging, keep seniors in the workforce longer – delay retirement
- Rebalance medical care, housing, transport for an older population
- Customize retirement by occupation and ability
- Invest in youth education with automation to raise productivity of the workforce
- Raise female labor force participation—parental leave, low-cost accessible childcare, job security





# RESPONSES TO SHRINKING

- The world will be far more African, Asian, and Muslim than in anyone's experience or memory
- International governance and relations need to adapt to this reality.
- Europe will need to be united, and have allies.
- Global talent will be **MOSTLY** outside of Europe.
- An open (but not wide-open) Europe will be best positioned to flourish and grow.
- Europe will look different in 50 years, but it would be better by design than by accident

# THANK YOU

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