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The Overpopulation Shivers: A Blend of Spurious Philosophy, Elitist Economics, And A Racist/Diversionsary Politics

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Abstract

Population planners and some ill-informed demographers have dealt a deadly blow on our psyche. They have gradually drummed it into our collective consciousness that population growth is a universal catastrophe: myriads of theories, nay, myths, have been evolved to help ram down our throats this ill-intentioned propaganda.

These alarmists, as it were, say the world has suddenly become too small to contain its inhabitants. They argue that soon we shall begin to stand on our neighbors' shoulders for want of space. They say the earth's resources are fast being exhausted. They link poverty, especially in the third world countries, to so-called population explosion.

But that fact remains that this propaganda is based on a faulty philosophy of elitism and racism. It is traceable to a few pseudo-theories, especially Margret Sanger's theory of polite genocide. She and others had advocated a calculated and systematic elimination of what is termed the human weeds. In their view, the 'unfit members' of the human community need not be (Walters, 2022).

Yet the vexing problem is, Europe and America having altered their populations to dangerous levels, now wish the third world to share their ugly experiences. One such experience has been the problem of ageing. Informed, perhaps, by the knowledge that the strength of a nation depended on its human potentials, they utilize fascinating avenues and organs to propagate their racial philosophy. Hence, we have today the overpopulation shivers. In fact, what is labeled overpopulation is but a mixture of spurious philosophy, elitist economics and politics with ominous neocolonial intents.

In this paper, therefore, we shall attempt to uncover the myths surrounding population growth. To do this, we shall first trace the issue to its origin, namely elitism and racism; we shall also outline a few informed objections to the overpopulation theory. In the end, we intend to show that the panacea to population growth is to be sought not in depopulation, but in an aggressive agrarian policy, coupled with industrialization, trade, and international partnerships.

Keywords: Population management, global trade, international cooperation, partnership, industrialization, modernizing agriculture.

Introduction

The Overpopulation Myth

The overpopulation fuss is but a mix of spurious philosophy, elitist economics and racist /diversionsary politics orchestrated by the West on the third world (American League, 2023; Urban, 2001; & Hartman, 1997). They intentionally present overpopulation as the primary cause of economic underdevelopment, political instability and environmental degradation of African countries (Urban, 2001). This plays two roles for them. One is to mask their sinister intention of continuing the economic subjugation and political maneuvers on Africa and other third world countries. The second one is to exonerate them from any blame in the underdevelopment and pauperization of Africa. Simply put the overpopulation fuss has become a garb for hiding neocolonial intentions. Nkrumah (1963) warned Africa of the indirect and subtle domination that will emerge after independence. This domination and manipulation according to him, will take political, economic and social forms. Indeed, Africa is belabored by a new form of neo-cultural and economic colonialism (Obuna, 1986).

Remotely, Robert Malthus in 1798, had put forward a theory named after himself. He had

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reasoned that population rise would always outgrow production rate. The result, he argued, would be the reduction of the human race to a state of perpetual poverty. He had assumed that the means of sustenance would increase mathematically if the species grew in geometric sequence (Berman, 1965: 187). He then imagined that if reproduction process was allowed to operate naturally population would double once in 25 years.

About a century later, Marie Stopes of England began to propagate an elitist creed. Her chauvinistic tendencies led her into founding the first British birth control clinic, in 1921 (Maude, 1933).

But perhaps, more devastating was the emergence of Margret Sanger. An Irish-American commentator has rightly held that the history of the overpopulation question was the story of Sanger. No single individual has so popularized the issue as Sanger did. She had given it both a social recognition and a legal backing. A racist and an elitist, she had popularized her creed. And with her theory of polite genocide, the heavens were her limit. As a racist, she felt the American Negroes had no *raison d'être*. An accomplished elitist, she had advocated a systematic elimination of what she termed the human weeds (American experience, 2023). For her, they were the unfit members of the society. These were the so-called "defectives" and the "feeble minded", who were, in the main, minority and "low-income groups", such as Jews, Irish Americans, and African Americans, (Walters, 2022). Though imprisoned a few times for her dangerous philosophy, the status quo later bought her ideas.

In 1922, in her book, *The Pivot of Civilization*, she had told the American Congress: Remember our motto; if we give welfare, give it to the rich, not to the poor (Golden, 1981: 81). She did not scruple to expose her elitism. She felt that the American Congress was wasting funds that should have been used to upgrade the levels of their civilization, in maintaining those she believed should never have been born, (Golden, 1981).

Similarly, in 1968, Paul Ehrlich shocked the world with his declaration that about 3½ million people will face starvation (Ehrlich, 1968: 17) and that come 1980 unless massive depopulation was carried out, insects would inherit the earth. He argued that the situation was so hopeless that food production programs would merely stretch the carrying capacity of the earth. Humanity could only provide a 'stay of execution'. There would be no solution save in reversing population growth rate, he had reasoned.

The Origin of The Myth

The overpopulation myth had its remote genesis in the secular humanism of modern and contemporary thinkers including Darwin and Einstein. According to Onwukwe (1989: 26), Darwin had espoused a theory of natural selection; Einstein had propounded a theory of relativism; the humanists in turn had championed a philosophy of the 'here and now' and the existentialists, stretching the matter further, had created an anthropocentric universe; Nietzsche had proclaimed God dead. Science killed him, he had explained. According to the above author, Sartre would follow suit. He would argue: Man is nothing but what he makes of himself.

All this boils down to one thing: a tendency toward secular humanism. The high point of this creed is the belief that whatever appeals to one is morally right. And this is the

precise thrust and import of Einstein's relativity theory. For Einstein, it all depends on your own viewpoint. But secular humanism is a lopsided kind of humanism. Yet it was this that informed the sensibilities of Margret Sanger and her allies. And we identify the proximate origin of our subject with this later group.

Rockefeller, Mellon, Carnegie and Ford need be mentioned here too. These were people who threw in their fortunes to propagate their newly found ideology. With them, a type of epistemological revolution had been set in motion. Both sacred and mundane sciences had been altered. They were bent on capsizing the primordial perennial truths of philosophy and theology. Eliminating basic religious and moral values was their target. They aimed at a calculated dislocation of fundamental societal settings and structures (Onwukwe, 1989: 26).

It is interesting to note that in 1952 Rockefeller convened a population council. He became its first president. And the enthusiasm with which he sponsored population control programs, could better be experienced than described.

Identifying The Problem: The Crisis of The Third World

The major problem of the developing nations is bad leadership. Revolving around this leadership problem are poverty, urban-drift, inadequate healthcare, problem of shelter, unemployment and high stress and strain. Inclusive are drought, desertification, erosion and other ecological disasters which are manageable in places characterized by good governance.

The problem of leadership is the boiling pot of all other problems in Africa. The continent has got an unfortunate dose of bad leaders who continue to deepen its poverty situation. One typical example is the Buhari administration in Nigeria which ended in May 29th, 2023. It failed in almost all aspects including economy, politics, health and security, leaving Nigeria in fetters of poverty, insecurity, hopelessness, debts, inflation, and unemployment. Osita Chidoka, former Minister of Aviation described Buhari's government of eight years as a disaster of unimaginable proportions (Daily Trust, 2023).

According to a UNDP report, The impact of drought on the horn of Africa has been horrendous with sparse rains in 73 years and five failed rainy seasons with a sixth forecasted to fail in April / May of 2023 (Ummer & Godfrey, 2023). Desertification too has been exerting its menacing influence on third world economies. The 1987 desert encroachment at Sokoto in Nigeria is a case in point. It was this that gingered Nigerian government into forestation drive. The result has been a tree planting campaign all over the country. Indeed, these natural disasters contribute enormously to hunger and poverty. However, due to leadership problems, the effects of good policies are not felt due to poor implementation. Thus, recently, Nigeria has experienced preventable flooding, erosion, sand storms and oil spillage in many regions (Wikipedia, 2023).

Urbanization is another crucial problem. Some seriously minded developing countries are beginning to react seriously to it. Alfonso S. Arriaga, a one-time Mexican official, had regarded internal migration as his country's biggest problem. Similarly convinced was Roberto Jaguaribe of Brazil. He had lamented that since the 70s, Brazil's rural population had been declining even in absolute terms" (Onwukwe, 1989).

Nigeria shares the same fate with the rest of the developing nations. The urban cities are densely populated. The facilities that make life attractive are only found in the few towns there are. Hence, civil servants abhor, and even refuse transfers to the rural areas. Young families realize their ambitions only when they drift to the towns. Nobody would like to sink in the boredom that is associated with rural life. But urbanization is the result of defective planning! Maybe, we have not been sufficiently thoughtful in our developmental plans.

Unemployment is one thornier component of the woes of the developing nations. Growth in populations, a positive thing in itself, is not matched with innovative and creative solutions that will lead to corresponding job creations. The result is avoidable and actionable joblessness and wastage of human potentials. The unemployment rate in Nigeria as at 2022 stood at 33.3 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Tinkering Around Solutions

The response to the crisis of the third world, it does seem, will begin with addressing leadership issues. The solution to the African leadership problem, for instance, lies squarely on its citizens, in their capacity to make their leaders answerable to them and in their collective resolve to select leaders with good objectives and with a pedigree of transparency and good governance. African people, some say, need acquire the powers that will make segments of our populations no longer 'purchasable' during the various stages of the electioneering process; because it is common knowledge now, they say, that money and material resources sway not only the electorate but those involved in vote counting, vote collation and result pronouncement. The citizens must rise to their creed and be ready to make the sacrifices involved in choosing good leaders.

Secondly, poverty is a global problem. And the F.A.O. has rightly shown that the cause of poverty is no longer linked to a country's population or its growth dynamics (Golden, 1981). One has only to point to the example of China to show this. And as Camera aptly observes, only someone in need of psychoanalysis would want to reduce issues of development to birth control measures (Camera, 1979).

It is now clear that developing countries do not need population control. Instead, they require aggressive agrarian programmes and industrialization. Mark Unegbu did strike the right note when he dismissed the lopsided attention given to population issues. He had argued that reducing development issues to population control gave the impression that population control could address the catalogue of injustices, unbalanced trade terms, exploitative tariffs, unethical trade barriers, deceitful and contentious debts imposed on poorer members of the human race, especially in the third world nations (Unegbu, 1989: 6); and here the distinction has to be made between birth-control and family planning.

Birth control is anti-life; bent on reducing population, it is inhuman. But genuine family planning simply aims at reconciling a couple's earning potential with its procreation capacity. It admits of nothing unnatural. On the contrary, population propagandists are merely obsessed by natural growth rates. Consequently, they do not bother obstructing natural generative processes.

But then what these people have deliberately lost sight of is the fact that before their present theories we already had a

culture. This has in no small measure enabled us to regulate population growth rates by means of natural procedures. The third world, particularly the Africans, are a very sensitive group. Restraint and continence have been very much part of our cultural make-up. By means of these two and other societal taboos, we have been able to keep our society within reasonable bounds.

It has been rightly argued that foreign-sponsored campaign for a particular type of family planning overlooked the methods of restraints and continence (Unegbu, 1989: 7) that had for centuries been essentially our effective cultural methods of family planning.

If the West has been so loose to the extent that their number can no longer be controlled save through scientific and technological means, then that is their specific problem. They should not suppose that other cultures had been that much on the loose. It has been argued that what is being cleverly imposed on third-world populations is this Western-styled philosophy of unrestrained, uncontrolled and irresponsible sexual promiscuity (Unegbu, 1989: 1).

To trade, industrialize, and cooperate with the rest of the world is what Africa needs to come out of abject poverty and apparent stagnation. The trouble with Africa has not been so much lack of resources to trade on or manpower to transform the resources, as it has been the thorny issue of systematic exclusion and isolation by the industrialized and technologically more advanced continents.

In comparison with the West, people say, relations with Russia and China have been more helpful to Africa. For example, Russia wrote off African debts at nearly the tune of 20 billion dollars in 2022, and has shown commitment in propelling growth in bilateral relations in Africa (Zimwara, 2023, Tass, 2023). Also, China has shown strong economic and collaborative presence in Kenya, and has been involved in building expressways, ports and roads stretching over many miles (Nyabiage). Over and above this, China has been making notable impacts in countries like Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritius and others through, building of roads, bridges and airports.

Again, for all the Chinese growing presence in Africa, Africans do not see China as merely one foreign influence among many. Unlike their western European and Northern American counterparts whose presence Africans experience as colonialist, hegemonic, and exploitative, China's encounter with Africa is not experienced adversely. Instead, Africans perceive and experience China's presence in the continent differently. Evidence of this was provided through a poll in which African countries were asked to choose between Euro-American influence and Chinese presence in Africa (Epstein & McDermott, 2022). The six countries involved voted in support of China presence.

Moreover, the African Christian conscience helps to reinforce their cultural sensibility. Our framework even provides an explicit manner of family planning one that is quite appreciative of our moral considerations, our vision of life as sacred, and our responsibility for life.

It has been again argued that rather than birth control what is at stake is indeed self-control. The argument is that birth control ceases to be an issue when appropriate self-control becomes the norm (Onwukwe 1989).

Possibly, the developed nations are genuinely interested in the welfare of the developing countries. Probably, they would like to offer genuine aid. Such would be more useful in the sphere of agriculture. Developing nations would

appreciate the mechanized farming that has made developed nations self-reliant. Most Africans live below subsistence level. The problem here is how to combat hunger: food sustenance, not pills for birth control.

Developed nations can tread the path of Japan. Japan has a culture of supporting modernization of Agriculture in the African continent. This is to make possible the predicting of harvests in Africa through satellite remote-sensing. Developing nations do indeed require competencies such as this that would enable them predict harvest on a regular basis. Investing in building capacity in Africa for collecting and analyzing data, and similar competences, will help ensure sustainable agriculture and guaranty food security. This can also help to counter the devastating effects of natural disasters (Mutesi, 2023). Money hitherto lavished on extravagant projects like military industrial projects could be meaningfully diverted to this sector.

Moreover, intensive forestation programs should become permanent policy of the third-world nations. This not merely remembered only when countries are hit by acute deforestation. By this precautionary measure, desert encroachment would be somewhat checked.

Nobody doubts the extent indigenization program could go in revitalizing third-world economies. In this regard, functional indigenous control of trade could do some good. Included here is a framework that would ensure ownership of or at least partnership in banking and insurance businesses as well as other strategic industries. A situation where an overwhelming majority of the banks and insurance companies are owned by only foreigners dwarfs third-world struggle for economic recovery and survival. Third-world countries should take their destinies in their hands rather than preferring to radically alter their populations as if this provided a magic wand for development.

Absolutely important too would be a fundamental land reform that would give land to numerous landless segments of the population of the third world countries. Fulton Sheen (1985) makes a similar proposal. He regrets that adversity of hunger is ravaging the earth, because mankind is not engaging enough labour force in cultivating the land. He notes that ploughing one and a half average football field will yield enough food to feed a person for life. Even now humanity has hardly ploughed a tenth of its arable land.

The proposal Fulton Sheen has made concerning a reform in our political set-up is also pertinent here. The call is on the desirability of a framework that will allow the means of production to be so distributed as to allow every laborer to partake in the management, profit and in the ownership of his work place. In this connection, Sheen has called for the abolition of monopolistic capitalism. He denounces as unjust any economic system that discourages broad distribution of common goods of the world among all the citizens of the earth, (Fulton Sheen, 1995). This will make it ethical and also politically correct for any affirmative action of government to redistribute wealth to enable extensive and inclusive private ownership of property.

The Organization for Action Against Hunger (2023) regrets that even as there is sufficient food to feed everybody in the world, yet well upto 828 million human beings go hungry daily. The organization laments that the "global hunger crisis in 2023" affects nearly ten percent of the world's population. It puts the rise in undernourished humans from 2019 to 2022 at about one hundred and fifty million. The

organization takes exception to the fact that global hunger is preventable, avoidable, and surmountable.

Thus, François Bourguigno (2018) makes a case for redistributing income and wealth, a way of spreading global riches, as part of addressing objectionable global poverty. He sees globalization and changes in technology as major contributory factors for poverty, especially in more advanced economies. He contends that heightened inequality in developing economies may hamper efforts at growing national economies and reducing indigence. He proposes that redistributing income has the potential to yield rapid prosperity in developed economies, and it can also abate pauperism quicker in developing economies, (Bourguigno, 2018).

There are many legitimate and ethical ways to shift national, regional, and global resources from those at the higher cadre of the revenue scale to those at the lower end of it. One way to do this is to allow indigent children access to quality education and finance same by taxing the wealthier members of the society. This has an incredible potential to cut down on inequality, grow the economy, and curtail destitution, (Bourguigno, 2018).

Other ways of wealth redistribution include land reforms, public services, and welfare. A lecture material at the University of South Carolina (Lecture-NCSU, 2022) indicates that intellectually sophisticated modern societies redistribute wealth, because doing so is ethical (it's the right thing to do), tactical (prevents proletarian revolt), commonsensical (shows a sense of proportion), economic (keeps the wealthy in business), equitable (restores some semblance of balance, given low cost of labour), and just (minimally offsets corporate subsidies). This is the case, given that the corporate world does not often reinvest in the economy; it frequently spends its disproportionate profits in extravagant and provocative lifestyles (Lecture-NCSU, 2022).

Oxfam, an aid agency, in Davos, Switzerland, January 17, 2023, agreed that billionaires should be taxed to facilitate global wealth redistribution, "for the common good", and 200 millionaires have already signed up to this, (Michael Fitzpatrick, 18/01/2023).

A more decisive way to eradicate global poverty, though, is to invest directly in economic prospects for low-income and indigent people, structurally enhancing their ability for short- and long-term revenue and wealth generation. We eradicate destitution in low-income regions of the globe once we provide them opportunities to be educated, trained, acquire critical skills, access healthcare, micro-credit, electricity, water, and means of moving from one point to another (Bourguigno, 2018).

In an experiment performed by Ryan J. Dwyer and Elizabeth W. Dunn and edited by Elke Weber (November, 2022) a substantial "causal evidence" was established linking global contentment to a more equally global wealth redistribution. They had gone out to investigate to what extent, if any, a more equitable global wealth redistribution could yield a global sense of fulfillment. In the experiment conducted with participants covering a "global economic spectrum," a couple of high-end income earners signed up for wealth redistribution. They shared two million US-dollars of their riches with 200 low-income earners from seven countries, giving them ten thousand dollars each. Those who benefited from the wealth redistribution acknowledged a feeling of contentment and fulfillment as

they saw their lives change, (Dwyer & Dunn, November, 2022). What was not reported, though, was whether the generous donors also experienced the sense of blissfulness that is the prerogative of those who have learnt to share their privileges with the less privileged members of the human community.

A lecture in North Carolina State University (Lecture-NCSU, 2023) shows how a non-profit group organizes and motivates a couple of rich young persons to commit to redistribution of riches, land, political and economic might. The aim is to usher in equity and fairness and promote the social engineering of "better economies and communities" (Lecture-NCSU, 2023). Noting the role of "wealth inequality and class privilege" in the poverty vicious circles in the United States of America, the discourse sees the sense in inclusiveness in generating resources, especially through redistribution of riches, to build fairer and more harmonious human societies. It was this, the lecture notes, that in 2022 motivate about one thousand members of the non-profit group, 'Resource Generation', to redistribute well over hundred million US dollars of their wealth (Lecture-NCSU, 2023)

Combating urbanization is also very essential. Often, what we call overpopulation is only urban drift: the rural areas are virtually empty; the cities, capacity full. This could easily be corrected. Spread out the population! The method is clear. Let the villages feel as much the touch of modern life as the cities.

Most importantly, agricultural technology should become part of the system of the developing nations. Mechanized farming should be made a culture everywhere. Third world governments should popularize and localize modern agricultural equipments. Farm implements should be heavily subsidized by governments and distributed at attractively give-away prices. Grains should be made available everywhere, and at enviably affordable rates. Every effort should be made to make farming enticing and lucrative. And farmers should be made to feel a sense of societal belonging and importance. Governments should give them audience on a routine basis. This will serve both to ascertain their difficulties, and also give them a sense of societal recognition. To be precise, farming, and more importantly big-time farming, has to be made the cheapest occupation of the third world, yet the most lucrative. After-all, farmers constitute the richest group in the American economy.

Regretting that the pride of place farmers actually occupy in any nation's economy has too often been forgotten, Fulton Sheen makes the distinction between fictional wealth and real wealth - stocks and bonds belong to fictional wealth while real wealth of the world is owned by farmers. Rediscovery of Productive land as a fundamental economic base is *conditio sine qua non* for national, regional and global peace; though modern society has tended to glossed over this fact, (Onwukwe, 1989).

The agricultural sector ought to be the chief investment of governments of the third world nations. And to make it sufficiently productive, the situation whereby farmers are looked down upon should be sternly discouraged by government. Fulton Sheen has also condemned as contrary to economic progress the practice where farmers are pitied as peasants. He has proposed too that the word farmer be made to assume a more dignifying connotation than the humbling meaning it has presently. He has rightly

recommended that farmers be not regarded as inferior people any longer simply because they are not as educated as civil servants. He has explained too that they are not anti-social for the mere reason that they do not dress the same way as the city dwellers. He dismisses this inferiority tag by comparing the farmer with the civil servant. He shows how in spite of the over-bloated social security the factory worker is still insecure. The factory worker is not independent, he does not own his means of production, as he increases production for factory owners, he loses his own personality in the mass movement of factory production. But the farmer even with only a little piece of land is his own boss and contributes immeasurably to societal stability. He is a co-worker with the Creator in providing for the people of the world, (Onwukwe, 1989).

Next to agriculture is industrialization. Governments and wealthy nationals should explore this area. Money used in establishing 'five-star' hotels could be gainfully channeled to this sector. Governments should proffer sufficient incentives to encourage citizens to establish small scale industries. Citizens of the developing countries ought to be made to learn that it pays to invest in industries. They should also be granted sufficient subsidies to guarantee that their products compete favorably with foreign ones. Moreover, nationals should always patronize their indigenous products. And of course, countries of the third world should not allow foreign goods be more affordable than their domestic ones. This should be the business of our governments.

Over and above these, we need not panic. Nature takes care of itself. Developing countries have been blessed with abundant landmass and commensurate human resources. If only properly planned, this would be sufficient to sustain and accommodate billions of generations. Perhaps, it is this realization that informs the position of authentic world population experts. In their opinion, the solution to world economic problem is an equitable wealth redistribution, (Marshall, 1977, François Bourguignon, 2018).

Given this background, then, one would expect that the world's material and human resources be harnessed to serve the entire human race. The scientific and technological edge which Europe and America have over the developing countries could be employed to the common good of all mankind. Their technology could serve positive ends; rather than manufacture pharmaceutical products that hamper human development. As Onwuanibe has suggested, technological development should be used in agriculture to feed and sustain the global population. In this way, technology would be given a human face (Onwuanibe, 1985). Call it humanization of technology.

In the medical domain, the effects of technology could be very yielding, especially in checking high mortality rate. Adequate health-care services could be provided for expectant mothers. By so doing, their alleged insecurity would be taken care of. At least prenatal care through sufficiently equipped antenatal clinics, could do this much. Again, there is no gain-saying it, Europe and America can in no small measure aid developing countries to overcome their predicaments. The ugly circumstances of illiteracy, inadequate medical facilities, hunger, and dwindling economy have continued to plague the developing countries. The advanced countries therefore, should, in the name of humanity, know that the plights of the underdeveloped nations are as much theirs in solidarity.

Merely trying to gain an ideological edge, perpetuated through propaganda, would certainly not do. What is more, the third world should realize that what is at stake is an evolutionary contest. Developing nations ought to be aware that if they resist maneuvers, the evolutionary scales could tip in their favor.

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