

Temporarily New: on the prospect of pro-natal policies

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What are governments for?

- To maintain territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the state
- To improve quality of life and wellbeing of the population
- NB. All primary goals derived from these
- Population policies are secondary in nature, have to serve higher objectives

Which types of population policies exist?

- Those that aim to exert a direct influence on fertility, mortality or migration
- Those that have no demographic intent but are designed cognizant of their likely demographic effect
- Those designed without demographic intent, but with non-negligible demographic effect

Why is prudence appropriate?

Basic policy goals not endangered

Structural reforms have priority

Outcome of policies in doubt

Lamentable examples of the past

Social change bound to continue

Fertility beyond governmental control

Maintenance of integrity and sovereignty

- Requires power, but that should not be equated with pop. size or military numbers

- $Pp = (C + E + M) \times (S + W)$

C= critical mass

E= economic force

M= military capability

S= strategic purpose

W= will to pursue a national strategy

Improving quality of life

- Three types of needs to be fulfilled:
 - Primary needs (physiological, food, housing etc)
 - Secondary needs (social: security, dignity etc.)
 - Tertiary needs (cultural: participation, self-fulfillment, harmony etc.)
- Much more difficult, answer economic growth

Need for structural reforms

- Largely result of globalization
- Exposed structural weaknesses (rigidity labour market, high unemployment, gap between gross and nett hourly wage, false incentives etc.)
- Integration of minorities
- Costly affair for governments, employers may even cut parental benefits

Outcome of pro-natal policies in doubt

- Who can define a policy that is guaranteed to work and to be cost effective?
- PPA studies suggest usual measures would make things easier but not increase numbers
- Research suggests only effects if policies broadly designed, maintained over a long time and with little concern for costs
- When in doubt, abstain?

Lamentable examples of the past

- Are explicit pro-natal policies compatible with principles of democratic societies?
- Can only authoritarian regimes be successful in raising fertility? (Germany, Italy, Eastern Europe)
- Any exceptions? Is strong central government and national consensus a pre-requisite for success?

Social change bound to continue

- Full mastery of fertility immense achievement,
- Regime change it triggered has not yet come to an end; migration and mortality also involved
- New cohorts bound to see new options
- Do we suffer from lack of imagination?
- Perceptions of benefits and costs not stable

Beyond governmental control

- New stage in society characterized by distrust of meta-narratives
- People wary of motives and promises (see EU draft constitution treaty)
- Analysis and Instruction have to make way for Diversity and Selection
- Reaching consensus on values extremely difficult

Any way forward?

- Alleviate impact as much as possible (migration, labour force participation, retirement age etc.)
- Raise awareness (special responsibility of researchers)
- Investigate possible courses of action via indirect approach

Criteria

- - measures should be valuable by themselves
- - not discriminatory; respect Constitution
- - respect international agreements
- - seen to be of benefit to society as a whole
- - would contribute to completion of regime change
- - would be sustainable in foreseeable future
- - would receive broad political support

Is strong investment in
children being born central to
the answer?

It has long been suggested that
when parents find children too
demanding governments should
help rearing them