

# Book Reviews

*Population Change, Modernization and Welfare.* By Joseph Spengler. Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1974.

The book covers a wide field, touching on almost all aspects of population change on a world-wide scale. It discusses, using world and country data, the relationships between demographic and socio-economic variables, and elaborates on their relative importance in the determination of population problems which confront the world as a whole and nations individually. Policies designed to alleviate these problems are discussed with an emphasis on those related to population control.

The first chapter is entitled "Population Growth: Past and Prospective" and reviews the various parameters associated with population change in the past and in the future. It touches upon the concept of a stable population in order to show the elements which cause a population to change (i.e. remove it from its stable condition). The main elements of change, population growth, migration, mortality and natality are discussed individually. The chapter is concluded by a description of the main differences in these elements and other socio-economic conditions as they exist in the less-developed and developed countries.

The second chapter is entitled "Population Distribution: Past and Prospective" and it discusses the population changes associated not with natural increase but with migration (i.e. population redistribution). The socio-economic factors, most closely associated with population distribution are discussed with special attention given to economic development and its impact on population patterning. Some of the other factors discussed are natural resources, transport, economies of concentration, means of communication, intra-urban channels, structure of authority, fixities and urban networks. The factors determining population distributions are categorized into physical and economic parameters. The author then asserts that intervention by the state or other regulatory agencies should also be used to change existing distributions within and amongst urban centres.

The third chapter is entitled "Population and the Natural Environment" and shows the ways in which mankind is dependent for its existence, upon nature. The author classifies the environment as organic and inorganic and

shows how man has developed ways to adapt to it and exploit it. He also throws light on how changes in population composition and size will affect the environment and how adaptation to these changes takes place. The chapter expands on the sources of organic products and minerals as they are now and have been in the past.

The fourth chapter is entitled "Age Composition" and it begins by explaining the conditions which create and affect a society's age structure (crude natality, mortality etc.). It then explains how the age composition also has a major role in determining characteristics of a society such as natural increase, potential productivity, dependency and political power. The age composition will be one of the determinants of the kind of social and economic problems facing a society (e.g. youth connected problems if the population is young or problems connected with the elderly if it is an ageing population). The chapter ends by emphasizing that the age composition of a population in the future will be dependent mostly on changes in fertility and the possibility for this and changes in morbidity and mortality are also explored.

The fifth chapter is entitled "Population Growth: Costs, Benefits, Net Effects" and elaborates on what economic costs and benefits are associated with population. Costs in general are discussed at first, followed then by a discussion of capital costs, age structure costs, unemployment costs, environmental costs, density costs, costs in terms of freedom, conflict producing costs and qualitative costs. The growth rates and corresponding net benefits associated with these costs are discussed along with the response of individuals to the incurrence of these costs. The distinction is made between economic costs and benefits associated with the growth of populations and those related to larger as compared to smaller populations.

The sixth chapter is entitled "Population Optima" and deals with one of the most if not the most crucial of demographic questions viz. "what is the ideal population size for a particular country in terms of its socio-economic conditions"? The optimum rate of growth for a particular society is not considered in this chapter. It is assumed that if a population is large enough already, the rate should be zero and if it is small then the rate should not be too high. The author clarifies what is meant by optimization in terms of population size and average income. The question is examined then whether the optimization process takes place of its own accord or whether arriving at an optimum size is a matter of public concern.

The seventh chapter is entitled "A stationary versus a growing population" and deals mostly with the economics of a non-growing population. Populations in the past are examined and then the advent of a stationary population and accommodations associated with it, are described. The author discusses how the lack of growth in a population will have repercussions on the behaviour regarding certain demands, on the quality of population, and on employment.

The eighth chapter is entitled "Population Policy" and is mostly a discussion or overview of the ways in which a state or related agencies intervene to impose changes in population growth, fertility and population distribution. It is almost implicit that there is a need for such intervention and therefore a belief that changes should not be left to be made in the hand of individuals. The author discusses the types of policy measures adopted by different states,

focusing particularly on the policies concerned with fertility control. The forces operating upon fertility are categorized and those more liable to be effective in controlling fertility are pointed out. Then the author approaches the problem of excessive population growth in certain regions and cities and the political and non-economic determinants of welfare which affect intervention in this problem.

The ninth chapter is entitled "The Road Ahead: Issues" and it focuses further on some of the major issues of population policy which are likely to affect the world and many nations in the near future. Arguments are presented in favour of control of population growth and then in favour of intervention in the redistribution of population. The author is emphatic that a country's population should be able to decide upon a particular population size and a rate of natural increase which it wants, and if this is not reached automatically, then intervention should be exercised. The chapter then contains a discussion about the factors which are favourable and those which are detrimental in implementing effective fertility control.

The final chapter is entitled "Population and Modernization" and enquires into the reasons underlying the disparities between countries, in levels of income and population parameters. There is a discussion about the factors associated with the process of "modernization" which are quantified in terms of wealth and welfare of a population. These factors are then related to demographic factors, with special reference to less developed countries. It is shown that the demographic factors are not direct causes of modernization but that they condition the effect of those factors which can lead directly to modernization and economic growth. The author argues that most less developed countries are in a disadvantageous position on the path towards modernization because of high rates of population growth, unfavourable age structures, non-optimum size and excessive population density. However, although all the underdeveloped countries are lagging behind in their degree of modernization, they are not homogeneous with regard to the factors stated above and their level of modernization. The next section shows the historical process whereby the current world population situation emerged. A discussion of patterns of growth in the past and differences between the historical demography of England and Japan leads up to the speculation of whether this knowledge can be related to those countries not yet at an advanced stage of modernization.

This book has adopted an interdisciplinary approach, linking population with several fields such as environment, sociology, economics and policy decision making. The scope is far reaching and at several points while reading the book, one feels that there is a lack of flow and that the chapters are perhaps too loosely connected. The level of each chapter varies, which makes it hard to pinpoint whether it is meant for "laymen" as an overview on population and modernization or whether it assumes that the reader has a deeper interest in the subject. At times the expression of ideas is almost conversational, whereas at other times the technical discussion is quite difficult to grasp. On the whole it is a useful book to refer to for topics connected with population change and modernization.