Re-centring 'race' in development: population policies and global capital accumulation in the era of the SDGs

Kalpana Wilson

ABSTRACT: This article argues that contrary to some recent theorizing of contemporary development interventions, ideologies of race and discursive and material processes of racialisation remain central to development in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is explored through an examination of current population policies, and in particular the 'global family planning strategy' initiated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the British government. Population concerns are now routinely invoked in the context of neo-Malthusian discourses which relate migration, climate change and conflict. This article argues however that contemporary population policies represent more than a discursive smokescreen for the destructive impacts of global capital accumulation – they are in fact deeply enmeshed in strategies for its expansion. As such, they rely upon embodied coercion and violence which is racialised and gendered, even as they invoke narratives of reproductive rights and choices.

Introduction

This article is part of an ongoing project in which the reproduction of 'race' and extended processes of racialisation are understood as integral to contemporary development. It seeks to 'research racial formations beyond ideology, through materiality, embodiment and spatiality' (Chari, 2008:1907) and emphasises in particular the importance of addressing questions of racialised and gendered embodiment in the context of global processes of accumulation. In this context, it examines the resurgence and reframing of population policy in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, through an examination of a range of policy documents, it explores the role of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (the largest private donor in international planning) and the British Government, joint organisers of the 2012 London Family Planning Summit and key drivers of the FP2020 'global family planning strategy'. Population concerns are now routinely invoked in the context of neo-Malthusian discourses which relate migration, climate change and conflict. This article argues however that

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contemporary population policies represent more than a discursive smokescreen for the destructive impacts of global capital accumulation – they are in fact deeply enmeshed in strategies for its expansion. As such, they rely upon embodied coercion and violence which is racialised and gendered, even as they invoke narratives of reproductive rights and choices.

The article begins by critically engaging with recent work which identifies liberal universalism as the locus of continuity between eras of formal colonialism those of development, relating their relegation of 'race' exclusively to the former in these accounts to their neglect of the extractive and accumulative aspects of global capitalist processes taking place within the framework of 'development'. It then briefly traces the colonial and Cold War histories of population control policies, and the evolution of contemporary approaches which link climate change, conflict and migration to population growth. Through an analysis of the 2015 report of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, 'Population Dynamics and the Sustainable Development Goals (APPG, 2015), it highlights how the renewed emphasis on population growth in the SDG era both draws upon and extends the differential and racialised valuation of lives, and provides legitimacy for a new phase of depredation by corporate capital. The second half of the article addresses in this context the role of the Gates Foundation with particular reference to the evolution of India's 'family planning' policies and practices, and explores the relationship between population policies and the intensification and extension of the racialied and gendered labour of women in the Global South as a strategy for global capital accumulation.

Race, Accumulation and Imperialism

Foucault's notion of biopower, in which populations are managed and regulated through technologies of surveillance and monitoring, has been a productive one for recent critical work on development. This understanding of biopower is predicated on a shift in the nature of power associated with the emergence of capitalism. Pre-existing 'sovereign' power defined as the power to 'let live or make die' is replaced by biopower which conversely seeks to 'make live' within a framework of far more intensive – while less visible - processes of intervention, regulation, surveillance and discipline which produce the 'docile bodies' and the subjectivities

required for capitalist production.   The Foucauldian approach has a number of aspects which have seemed to make it particularly appropriate for theorising development (and in particular its continuities with colonialism) - its emphasis on the regulation of populations through enumeration, categorisation and measurement; its conceptual focus on the discursive production of consent through 'processes of subjectivisation' rather than the coercive aspects of power; and its theorization of the co-constitutive relationship of power and knowledge. Foucault's ideas were incorporated extensively in the work of postcolonial theorists (most notably in Said's concept of Orientalism [1978]) but a number of writers have commented on the absence of any explicit engagement with colonialism in Foucault's own work; and the apparent failure to recognize that the practices he describes were not merely adopted but originated and were perfected under conditions of colonial rule (Young [1995]; see Stoler [1995] for a different reading of Foucault).

Mark Duffield (2005; 2006), who has deployed a biopower framework extensively in his work on contemporary development and the emergence of the development/security nexus, highlights however, that Foucault drew a distinction between the biopolitics of 'mass society' in advanced capitalist/metropolitan social formations with various forms of state provision ensuring the reproduction of life, and that of populations in the global South which are 'non-insured' and expected to be self-reliant and self-reproducing (Duffield, 2005:145-6). 'Self-reproduction', Duffield argues, '…has long been axiomatic for people understood through the register of tradition, simplicity, backwardness and race' (ibid:146). Maintaining this self-reliance in order to both contain migration to the global North and to counter 'extremism' and other 'threats to international security' becomes a key objective of contemporary biopolitics (Duffield, 2006). In this context, Duffield provides a powerful critique of discourses and practices of sustainable development which he sees as emerging from and structured by these objectives. He suggests that the rise of sustainable development as the dominant development paradigm marked a break with the 'aspirational goal' of modernization theory which claimed that living standards in the 'underdeveloped' world would eventually come to resemble those in the 'developed' countries (Duffield, 2005:152). Instead, the strategy was now to promote self-reliance in the interests of containment. In a telling example, he cites an OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) report on 'terrorism prevention' which emphasises that 'education that spreads faster than jobs is potentially destabilizing since it heightens awareness of inequalities and hence breeds

frustration' and that education and training imparted to young people as part of donor-funded programmes should be mindful of '…the feasibility of their aspirations' (DAC, 2003 cited in Duffield 2005:155).

For Foucauldian theorists, both colonial strategies and contemporary development interventions have focused on managing populations and preventing or containing threats to security through making these populations self reliant. However, an analysis which excludes contemporary processes of extraction of natural resources, exploitation of labour, and expansion of markets by global capital leaves much unexplained. In the context of the discussion above, for example, it does not highlight that the shift from modernizing developmentalism to sustainable development as the key development paradigm was driven by the rise to dominance of neoliberalism as the strategy through which increasingly mobile global capital would sustain and expand accumulation. This neglect may be attributable to the adoption of Foucault's later conceptualization of power as circulating and all-pervasive, which militates against a focus on the class character or objectives of states or international development institutions, or the concentration of power in specific locations[1]. But it has significant implications. The recent trajectory of neoliberalism disrupts any clear-cut dichotomy between the 'insured' populations of the global North and the 'non-insured' and self-reproducing populations of the global South, through both the generalized dismantling of social provision in the countries of the global North and the proliferation of excluded spaces and populations within them. More importantly still, contemporary development interventions do not always 'promote life' or self-reproduction: on the contrary, they frequently fatally disrupt these processes, as for example in the case of corporate displacement of poor communities in India for the purposes of extracting minerals or turning agricultural land into real estate; or policies which allowed the withholding of treatment from people living with HIV in the global South in order to enhance the profits of pharmaceutical corporations; or the deaths in sterilisation camps or in drug tests which we consider below. Constructions of race which assign certain lives less value make these deaths allowable.

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[1] A similar point is made by Bracking and Harrison (2010:7)who point out that 'the increasing attention paid to networks (generated by theories of governance and their Foucauldian variants) opens a path to insightful research on global capitalism, but it also runs the peril of downplaying what is obvious to all observers: the *persistent, and historically structured concentration of power emanating from the West'*.(Italics in original)

A significant strand of recent work has focused on liberal theory and practice as the locus of continuity between colonialism and development (see for example Williams and Young, 2009; 2014; Harris, 2013). This produces some peculiar formulations and striking silences in relation to patterns of accumulation and constructions of race. For example, in a discussion of 'trusteeship and intervention' which aims to draw out parallels and continuities between colonial and contemporary forms of intervention for social transformation (with a focus on the World Bank) Williams and Young (2009)reduce the place of racism in the discourse of the civilizing mission to a 'racial gloss' which makes it 'repulsive to modern liberal ears' but is merely a distraction from the 'very strong assertions of the universality of human nature' on which the authors wish us to focus our attention(ibid:102). They go on to highlight the parallels between the 19th century colonial civilizing mission and elite interventions in the lives of the poor in England in the same period, as evidence of this universalism. This ignores, firstly, the entire body of work which explains how evolving ideas about 'race' and racial superiority informed the pathologisation of the dispossessed poor in England (Magubane, 2004). Secondly, it bypasses extensive scholarship on the way constructions of 'race', and specifically of 'whiteness' evolved over this period in the 19th century, only gradually becoming inclusive of the metropolitan working class, and, later still, the Irish. Williams and Young, in contrast, seem to regard racial categories as fixed and ahistorical, and apply contemporary definitions of whiteness anachronistically, writing for example that 'a kind of practical historicism was by no means limited to exotic 'others' but informed thinking and practice about Ireland, Scotland and England itself' (ibid: 103) in reference to a period when the Irish, in particular, were clearly 'othered' in ways which were unmistakably racialised.

Inextricable it seems from the disavowal of the centrality of race in colonial processes is the minimizing of the processes of extraction and exploitation which shaped colonial interventions, in favour of an emphasis on the 'element of international tutelage' (ibid). The chapter rehearses the well-worn discursive strategy of minimising the extraction underpinning colonial regimes in general by citing the deviant 'exception' which supposedly proves the rule: the Belgian Congo. 'The notoriously brutal and really extractive (private) regime of Leopold II in the Congo' we are reminded 'was eventually terminated through pressure from the major powers' (ibid: 103). Thus extraction and exploitation are characterized (along with brutality) as aberrations engaged in by the irresponsible lesser European powers, which had no place in the benevolent mainstream of

colonial rule. The racialised colonial narrative of the civilizing mission, then, is reconstituted, albeit in somewhat Foucauldian language.

Similarly, when Williams and Young turn to contemporary interventions, there is little consideration of the role of changing patterns of global capital accumulation in driving these interventions. Strikingly, Williams and Young's critical account makes no reference to the extensive economic critiques of Structural Adjustment Policies of the 1980s, seeming to take the World Bank's own explanation based on institutional failure (which became the justification for political conditionalities in the 1990s) at face value (ibid. : 109). This is consistent with their contention that conditionalities 'are not usefully understood as in the interest of more powerful states but are designed to effect policy changes within target states' (ibid.:108)

The exclusive preoccupation with universalizing tendencies within interventionist projects thus seeks to minimize their role in reproducing and intensifying both inequality and difference across space. In particular, as we saw above, it delegitimises the question of how these inequalities are structured by, and articulated through, race. Thus colonial interventions in gendered practices deemed 'repugnant to civilisation' (such as sati in India, or polygamy)which have been the focus of an extensive postcolonial feminist critique (see for example Abu Lughod, 2002; Mani, 1987; Spivak, 1988), are here simply cited as an inevitable result of 'a commitment to some notions of development which clearly tracked metropolitan norms (wage labour, housing, welfare and family structures, education)'(Williams and Young, 2009: 104)[2]. With race – as well as gender - apparently considered irrelevant even in the colonial context, it is hardly surprising that the racialisation of the contemporary 'liberal project in Africa' and its production of 'the right kind of individual' (ibid.: 113) is nowhere to be seen in this account. Yet as I discuss below, the production of hyperindustrious neoliberal entrepreneurial subjects, in part through population policies which seek to control the fertility of women in the global South, is inextricable from processes of gendering and racialisation. And the adoption of the discourse of reproductive rights to promote these policies has unmistakable continuities with colonial interventions which made claims to 'save brown women from brown men' (Spivak, 1988).

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[2] Postcolonial feminist theorists, notably Stoler (1995; 2002) have used Foucault differently, emphasizing how he viewed the production of difference as inherent in processes of regulation

I am by no means suggesting here that liberalism and universalist discourses should not be a central element in an analysis of imperialism – whether in its historical or contemporary manifestations. The shift in the approach of 19th century liberal thought to the imperial project has been extensively analysed (see for example Mehta, 1999; Pitts, 2006). In a more general sense, the key liberal concept of human progress has underpinned both colonial and development projects. Rather, I am concerned to highlight the silences and elisions which are produced when liberalism is considered in isolation from two other questions – those of race and capital. These three questions, I would argue, have been and remain mutually constitutive. The relationships between the development of enlightenment liberal universalism, the consolidation of concepts of race, and the emergence of capitalism out of slavery and colonialism, have been traced and theorized in depth elsewhere. I suggest that any project which seeks to explore the facets of contemporary development-as-imperialism must also consider these three questions in relation to eachother.

The focus on liberal notions of social engineering as the main axis of comparison between colonialism and development also seems to frequently be associated with two assumptions: firstly that coercion and violence have been over-emphasised in earlier analyses of colonialism; and secondly that coercion cannot be central to a characterization of development. The starting point of Foucauldian theorists of contemporary development is clearly very different from that of the current crop of revisionist conservative historians of colonialism such as Niall Ferguson and Andrew Roberts: as Duffield and Hewitt stress, 'isolating a liberal colonialism should not be confused with attempts to rehabilitate the colonial project'(2009:10). But arguably they share with the latter a suspicion of analyses of colonial interventions (often by Third World Marxist scholars) in which exploitation and coercion are central. Marxist scholars are even, despite their marginalization in mainstream academic discourse, particularly on Africa, accused of having 'endlessly obscured the degree to which colonial rule was committed to projects of social change that were never reducible to oppression and exploitation' (William and Young, 2014:34).

Even more importantly for our current discussion, coercion is assumed to be marginal in contemporary development processes, to be, in fact, the grounds on which any comparison between colonialism and development must inevitably falter. A broad conceptualization of development encompasses the visceral corporate- and state-sponsored violence accompanying

contemporary resource extraction and accumulation by dispossession - from the bauxite mountains of Odisha in India to the oilfields of the Niger Delta. But even if we accept a narrower understanding of development, one which is limited to government aid departments, NGOs and international financial institutions, the structural violence of coercively imposed neo-liberal economic policies seems difficult to ignore. The market fundamentalism and racialised disregard for human life of colonial administrations, which fuelled the El Nino famines of the nineteenth century, echo in the early twenty-first century's policy driven famines and epidemics brought on by the dictates of the IMF.

 I suggest that the neglect of the specificities of accumulation processes and the inequalities they build upon and reproduce, and of how these are experienced in ways which are material and embodied, actually makes it easier to marginalize questions of racism and racialised relations of power, and to view them as no longer relevant. Since race is understood solely as a discursive strategy of power in the critiques of the development/security paradigm, its apparent absence from development discourse[3] appears to render race unworthy of serious consideration in the context of development. As race is rarely explicitly cited as a justification for subordination, or for the treatment of certain groups of people as less than human, it is assumed to be marginal to the contemporary operations of power. In what follows, I consider the implications of re-centering 'race' – understood here as always already gendered – for a consideration of contemporary global population policy. In order to do this we need to briefly consider the history of such policies.

Population Policy in Historical Perspective

Historically population policies can be understood as an ongoing racialised project of capital, informed by the closely intertwined ideologies of Eugenics and neo-Malthusianism (Wilson, 2012). While Thomas Malthus' name has become synonymous with theories of 'overpopulation', his primary legacy has been to provide 'an enduring argument for the prevention of social and economic change' (Ross, 1998:6) by suggesting that the poverty

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[3] In fact race does structure the discourse in more subtle ways – this has been the focus of some postcolonial critiques of development such as Kothari(2006) , White (2003, 2006) and Heron (2007)

associated with capitalist development is an inevitable consequence of population increase, rather than of the logic of capital accumulation.

Combined with Eugenicist ideas and more broadly ideologies of racial supremacy, Malthusianism of the 19th century was intimately linked to imperialism. Malthusian concerns about overpopulation in England declined during the course of the 19th century with the beginnings of a demographic transition to lower birth rates as well as mass emigration of the poor as part of the colonial project. In the later part of the 19th century, when the cumulative effects of deindustrialisation, grinding taxation, forced cultivation of cash crops and other forms of integration into world markets combined with El Niño crop failures to produce a series of devastating famines across much of the global South, Malthusian ideas became central to colonial policy.

Colonial officials like Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India during the famine of 1876-9 in which up to 10.3 million people are estimated to have died, invoked Malthusian principles to justify his refusal to prevent these deaths. Finance minister Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer) stated: 'every benevolent attempt made to mitigate the effects of famine and defective sanitation serves but to enhance the evils resulting from overpopulation'(cited in Davis, 2001: 32). Sir Richard Temple, appointed by Lytton to ensure that India continued to produce immense revenues for Britain and its imperial war in Afghanistan even at the height of the famine, implemented the notorious 'Temple wage' in relief camps which combined with hard labour could only lead to slow death by starvation.

In the first half of the 20th century, with the rise of anti-colonial struggles, populations came to be constructed as a racialised threat. Whereas earlier they were described in terms of 'apathy', 'indolence' and 'fatalism', tropes which were used to justify colonial inaction in the face of famine and starvation, these same populations now began to be more often portrayed as ominously hyperactive, incessantly 'swarming', 'teeming' and 'seething' (Wilson, 2012). These ideas would soon be mobilized to call for direct intervention to limit these populations, in the context of the Cold War, the reconfiguring of imperialism after formal colonialism, and the challenge to the existing global distribution of wealth and resources posed by communist movements in the global South.

The constitution of population control as a Cold War political and economic weapon is reflected in the transformation in the field of demography described by Mohan Rao – a primarily descriptive social science discipline dedicated to observing long-term historical changes in population patterns rapidly came to be viewed in the 1950s as a technical, policy oriented 'science' (Rao, 1994: PE47). The idea of a demographic transition was rejected on the basis that 'rapid modernization might not lead to fertility decline before it led to a threatening level of social and political instability' (Ross, 1998:92). Demographers like Kingsley Davis argued for intensive and large-scale population programmes to be made central to US aid.

In 1966, President Johnson announced that for the first time population control would receive Federal funding. In 1969, the US government set up the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the World Health Organisation established a Special Fund for Research Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (Wilson, 1994:2201). This was alongside ongoing investment by corporate capital in population control, both directly, and via the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. Thus the funding for the IPPF 'initially came from the Hugh Moore Fund and Rockefeller Foundation. Soon it attracted funding from …a veritable Who's Who of America's corporate and finance capital' (Rao, 1994: PE49).

The perceived relationship between population control and the interests of US corporate capital were set out clearly in National Security Study Memorandum 200: Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests (NSSM200), completed in 1974 by the United States National Security Council under the direction of Henry Kissinger. It outlines the US government's major concerns: firstly the radicalisation of the global South to a point where 'younger people – who are more prevalent in high fertility populations - can more readily be persuaded to attack such targets as multinational corporations'; secondly that certain Third World countries might 'advocate a better distribution of the world's wealth'; thirdly that 'in the absence of slow or zero population growth, concessions to foreign companies are likely to be expropriated or subject to arbitrary intervention. Whether through government action, labour conflicts, sabotage, civil disturbance, the smooth flow of needed materials will be jeopardised.' (cited in Wilson,1994: 2201)

While Cold War population interventions focused on Latin America and Asia, the World Bank's highly influential 1989 report 'Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth' heralded

a growing emphasis on population growth in Africa. Produced in the context of both the end of the Cold War and incontrovertible evidence of growing poverty, unemployment, worsening levels of child nutrition and overall economic crisis across the continent after a decade of IMF dictated economic reforms and Structural Adjustment Policies, as well as growing popular protests against neoliberal policies in many African countries, the report was a strategic intervention which aimed to shift responsibility for the crisis to internal factors through a new dual focus on problems of governance and of population growth, while reiterating a commitment to the core principles of neoliberalism and globalised capital accumulation. Most recently, powerful new development actors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the plethora of corporates and NGOs with which it works closely, have emerged as key champions of population control. This however has been accompanied by a thorough reframing of population discourse.

The 'narrative rupture' with both colonialism and the Cold War period which marks much contemporary development discourse (Biccum, 2009) is effected not as in other contexts through silence, but is explicitly acknowledged and embraced in the case of population policy discourse. Recent population policy has been framed in a way which explicitly distances it from earlier Cold War-era policies – a 'troubled past' to which coercive practices such as forcible sterilizations are discursively relegated even as evidence of the continuation of these practices regularly resurfaces (see Hendrixson, forthcoming 2018, for a detailed discussion of this process and its implications). Thus it is asserted that 'Population is all too often ostracised in international development; it is seen by some as a relic of the 20th century's population control programmes' (APPG, 2015, p.1). This supposed 'ostracisation' is then used to valorize contemporary population interventions as a courageous breaking of 'taboos'. In 2011, for example, Britain's then Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, announced that it was 'time to talk about population' which had become 'a dirty word' (Mitchell, 2011) while Stephen O'Brien, Minister for International Development vowed not to 'shy away from talking… about global population growth and its impacts' (O'Brien, 2011).

More broadly, this approach seeks to elide the ongoing centrality of the changing demands of global capital accumulation and economic and geostrategic imperialism in shaping population

policies, in particular via the emphasis on the securing of reproductive rights as an important goal of contemporary population policy.

If Cold War population policies had at their core the notion of population growth as a cause of poverty which in turn created the conditions for the emergence of the 'threat' of communism, from the 1970s onwards this was accompanied by the rise of 'degradation narratives' which focused on population growth among the poorest in the Global South (and increasingly, their migration) as the pre-eminent cause of environmental destruction. As Hartmann, Hendrixson and Sasser (2016) argue, these ideas were central to shaping the emerging field of sustainable development in the late 1980s and 'while sustainable development advocates acknowledged the role of inequality, they still saw population pressure as the most important cause of both poverty and environmental degradation' (ibid.:60). The shift in emphasis in dominant population discourses was consolidated with the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987 (United Nations, 1987). While the need for improvemenents in women's access to health services and education was highlighted in the report, this was seen primarily as a means to reduce population growth, and as Hartmann, Hendrixson and Sasser note, was in any case 'secondary to an emergency prerogative to drive down birth rates. "But time is short", it warns, "and developing countries will also have to promote direct measures to reduce fertility, to avoid going radically beyond the productive potential to support their populations"' (Hartmann, Hendrixson, and Sasser, 2016: 60).

In the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, this approach has been extended and deepened, and population discourse revolves around the notion of population growth as a driver of climate change (or more recently, as at the very least an obstacle to its mitigation), with the anticipated 'threats' being increases in conflict, terrorism, and crucially, migration from the global South the global North. As Duffield and Evans (2011, p.95) note, climate change is now seen as a key threat to the containment of the global South '…a truism of 21st Century security discourse and practice is that the spatial dimensions of the development-security nexus cannot be achieved without an adaptive *environmental sustainability*'.

Climate change, conflict and migration within contemporary population discourse

The following section considers the current emphasis on climate change, conflict and migration within population discourse and how this relates to the Sustainable Development Goals. It examines in particular the recent report of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, 'Population Dynamics and the Sustainable Development Goals (APPG, 2015), a group whose major donors include the UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. This report 'examines the role of population dynamics to support policy-makers in the run up to, and following, Sustainable Development Goal negotiations' and emphasizes 'the interplay between population dynamics (in terms of population size, age, migration and urbanisation) and two key determinants of sustainable development: climate change and conflict' (op cit., p.7).

In these readings of both the present and the projected future, the role of imperialist economic, geo-political and military interventions, the ongoing transfer of wealth to the global North (particularly from Africa) and increased corporate control over land and resources (Curtis, 2016) are all rendered invisible, as are the specificities of particular places and times, in favour of population growth rates and demographic structure. Thus the APPG report focuses on 'high fertility' as a cause of conflict arguing that 'There is significant overlap between countries with high fertility and those that are considered to be "fragile" states ... At present, of the world's 20 most fragile states, half were among the countries with the highest fertility in 1990. Eight countries still occupy the 20 most fragile states and have the world's highest fertility rates. One explanation is that countries with high rates of population growth experience conflict as a result of reduced employment opportunities, marginalisation of communities, and dissatisfaction among young people' (APPG, 2015,p.22). Contemporary population discourse redeploys Cold War fears about 'young populations' and the related 'youth bulge' theory of security threats developed by the CIA in the 1980s[4], embodied in the racialised and gendered constructions of

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[4] 'Developed in 1985 by geographer Gary Fuller during a stint as visiting scholar in the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) Office of Global Issues, formal "youth bulge" theory originally aimed to provide ...a tool to predict unrest and uncover potential national security threats...It equates large percentages of young men with an increased possibility of violence, particularly in the South, where, analysts argue, governments may not have the capacity to support them' (Hendrixson, 2004) Today, it is often juxtaposed with the more optimistic notion of a 'demographic dividend' which however can be achieved only if countries with young populations can prevent future population

the 'angry young men' it produces and the 'veiled young women' who in the future will produce yet more 'dangerous' children (Hendrixson, 2004).

The APPG report for example displays such confidence in the explanatory power of the 'youth bulge' hypothesis that it goes on to cite a difference of 5 years in the average age of the population as sufficient to account for differences in the very diverse contexts of Tunisia and Egypt: 'Recent "uprisings" in the Arab Spring are an example. Tunisia, with an average age of 31 years has (so far successfully) transitioned into a liberal democracy. Egypt, with an average age of 26 years, has not' (APPG, 2015, p.24). Disembodied statistics thinly mask the invocation of racialised and gendered bodies.

The renewed emphasis on population growth as a threat, this time in the context of sustainable development narratives, thus serves to displace and derail the possibilities for a more transformative agenda around sustainability to emerge from debates aroung the SDGs and the opportunity identified by Death and Gabay (2015) to 'contest and destabilise' the 'growth-orientated development model of intensive resource extraction' (op. cit., p.602). It is notable that influential critiques of these models which have emerged in the context of debates around the SDGs, for example Tim Jackson's 'Prosperity Without Growth' reiterate ideas about the need to 'stabilise' populations (Jackson, 2009, p.80) without engaging with what this would mean in practice, and for whom (a question which is explored in the second half of this article). As a result, these approaches have arguably not effectively countered those which promote population control as the 'answer' to a crisis of sustainability.

 At the same time, and relatedly, population discourse in the context of the SDGs reinscribes and reinforces rather than challenging the distinction between the developing world which was the focus of the MDGs and more broadly is the perennial object of development interventions, and the 'developed' world, whose security is to be safeguarded by these interventions. If a range of conflicts from Darfur to Syria are reframed as 'climate wars' caused primarily by growing populations and scarce resources (Hartmann and Selby, 2015) much of this discourse focuses on

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growth leading a greater percentage of people of working age in relation to elderly people and children (Hartmann, Hendrixson and Sasser, 2016).

migration from the global South as a threat to security in the North. As the APPG report puts it 'it is highly likely that the second half of the 21st century will see unprecedented levels of migration, including hundreds of millions of migrants fleeing climate change, and at the time of writing there is already a growing crisis of refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean from Africa to Europe'. This combines the prediction of a dystopian future with an invocation of fears about the present ('already a growing crisis').   Despite the preoccupation with numbers in population discourses, the 'migrants and refugees' in these constructions are clearly far from disembodied statistics, but rather are racialised and gendered bodies who are by definition excludable: both through the policing of national borders, and by extension through the policing of the borders of the category 'human' itself, to which these discourses contribute. This is emphasised by the striking use of photographic illustrations in the APPG report which appear designed to highlight this underlying projection of racialised apocalypse and undermine some of its caveats (such as the acknowledgment that consumption in the global North is the major driver of climate change (APPG, 2015,p.15) or of the potential gains from supporting migrants' rights (op. cit., pp.19-20).

Representations of the global South are now replete with representations of women and adolescent girls as potential hyperindustrious, entrepreneurial neoliberal subjects (Wilson, 2015); in a new version of the 'deserving and undeserving poor' dichotomy, men in the global South are assumed to be irresponsible, unproductive, and potentially threatening to the global order, in a reiteration of racialised and gendered colonial representations.

As is perhaps then to be expected in a publication which places more emphasis on the apocalyptic side of the population control argument than on its correlate, the celebration of the integration of women's labour into global markets which population control is expected to facilitate, the pages of the report are strewn with images of black and brown men in which they are represented as a threat, both in terms of sheer numbers and through association with conflict and violence.

The vast majority of the photographs used to illustrate the report portray groups of people in (or from) the global South – of ten such photographs, seven are exclusively of men, while only two

exclusively portray women and one is of a mixed gender family group. Only one of the all-male groups - 'two boys rest on sandbags…along the river Jamuna..Bangladesh' (APPG, 2015, p.18) - consists of children. In one photograph, a group of adult men of varied ages sharing an overcrowded cycle rickshaw to cross flood waters in rural Bangladesh stare unsmiling into the camera. Another two photographs underline the report's emphasis on links between population growth, climate change and conflict/security by showing groups of African men in militarized contexts: Chadian soldiers, many with faces covered, are shown 'on patrol' (op. cit.,p.24) and 'displaying arms captured from Boko Haram' (op.cit., p.31).

Most prominent and most disturbing however are the two photographs which bookend the report. The first, the report's cover photograph, shows around approximately fifty African men sitting in a small wooden vessel at sea – the photograph has been taken from above and the men are pictured looking up squinting against the sunshine with anxious, uncertain and expectant expressions. This photograph is titled '*Would-be immigrants are pictured in a dinghy after being rescued in the sea near Italy's southern island of Lampedusa on August 28, 2008. Seventy would-be illegal African immigrants to Europe perished when their boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea, according to eight companions rescued off Malta*' (APPG, 2015, cover). The racialised dehumanization which allows human beings to be described as 'would-be illegal African immigrants' is shockingly intensified in the closing image, which appears before the report's conclusions. This photograph shows a beach with the dead bodies of twelve people lying in the surf and on the sand where they have been washed to shore. Three of them are in the foreground; they appear to have been disfigured by being in the water. In the middle distance, figures in masks, some in orange overalls, can be seen picking up bodies. This horrific photograph has a caption which repeats the term 'illegal immigrants/migrants' no less than three times: '*Rescue workers pull the bodies of illegal immigrants onto shore in al-Qarbole, some 60 kilometres east of Tripoli on 25 August, 2014 after a boat carrying 200 illegal immigrants from sub-Sahara Africa sunk off the Libyan capital two days earlier. Libya, which is mired in unrest and political chaos, has been a launchpad for illegal migrants seeking a better life in Europe, they often turn to people smugglers to get them across the Mediterranean*' (APPG, 2015:38). The notion of the disposability of racialised bodies under capitalist globalization, and its

continuities with colonial depredations reaching back to the transatlantic slave trade could not be more starkly – and more uncritically – illustrated than by this juxtaposition of image and text. As this suggests then, rather than countering the developed/developing world dichotomy, the renewed emphasis on population growth in the SDG era actually reinforces the differential and racialised valuation of lives, those which are 'grievable' and those which are defined as 'ungrievable' - which has characterised development from the outset and provides legitimacy for a new phase of depredation by corporate capital.

In the following sections, I argue that contemporary population policies represent more than a discursive smokescreen for the destructive impacts of global capital accumulation – they are in fact deeply enmeshed in strategies for its expansion. As such, they rely upon embodied coercion and violence which is racialised and gendered, even as they invoke narratives of reproductive rights and choices. In this context I consider in particular the role of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has emerged as a key advocate of contemporary population initiatives, with a focus on its impact on population policy and practice in India.

The Gates Foundation, FP2020 and India's 'Family Planning' programme

An important milestone in the establishment of the post-MDGs population consensus was the 2012 London Family Planning Summit hosted by the British government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on July 11, World Population Day. Along with USAID, UNFPA and other international organisations, the hosts announced a $2.6 billion global family planning strategy, 'FP 2020', to get 120m more girls and women in the poorest countries to use 'voluntary family planning' by 2020. The strategy relies heavily on the mass promotion of long acting hormonal injectable and implantable contraceptives, in particular Depo-Provera, Implanon and Norplant 2 (produced by pharmaceutical giants Pfizer, Merck and Bayer respectively) all of which have faced sustained opposition from reproductive health activists, who argue that rather than giving poor women in the global South much needed access to safe contraception they can control, these approaches potentially further undermine women's health and control over their bodies (Kafila, 2015; Subramaniam et al, 2016 AVAC, 2016).

As a recent report notes, the Gates Foundation is now one of the most powerful actors in global development (Global Justice Now, 2016), as well as one of the least accountable (Harman,

2016). Population growth has been a key concern of the Gates Foundation, which was instrumental in influencing Britain to take the lead on population issues (J.P., 2012). As well as its central role in the 2012 Family Planning Summit and FP2020, it extensively funds research and scholarship which supports its approach to family planning. Hendrixson (forthcoming 2018) explains how the discourse of the Gates Foundation, FP2020 and the World Health Organisation continues to reproduce neo-Malthusian ideas by repeatedly linking family planning to 'environmental stewardship', 'sustainable development' and 'long-term environmental sustainability', underlining the inherent tension between a stated commitment to 'voluntary' family planning and its instrumentalisation for specific policy goals, which creates the conditions for coercive interventions.

Further, and in common with the earlier versions we have traced here, today's population discourse insists that existing economic relationships and structures of power do not need to be changed. In particular, it is not predicated on any reversal of the drastic reduction in health spending which characterizes neoliberal policies promoted by the World Bank and the IMF. On the contrary, reducing population growth is actively promoted on the basis of its predicted role in limiting the need for future social spending. If only poor people in the global South can be persuaded or compelled not to reproduce, the World Bank and IMF-imposed neoliberal policies in which health provision, along with education, sanitation and other essential public services, has been decimated since the 1980s, can remain in place. Tellingly, for example, erstwhile British Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell has described population policies as 'excellent value for money', citing Tanzania which he claims would 'need 131,000 fewer teachers by 2035 if fertility declines - saving millions of pounds in the long run' (Mitchell, 2011).

If population policies are to be understood not in the ubiquitous terms of 'value for money' but as material embodied experiences, India's 'Family Planning' programme is illustrative. In November 2014, 15 women died after undergoing sterilisation surgery under appalling conditions in camps in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh. These women were all in their 20s and 30s and from Dalit, Adivasi (indigenous) and OBC (Other Backward Classes) communities (SAMA, 2014). Most of them were from landless households and their main source of income

was agricultural and other daily wage labour. Yet while their deaths made headlines, albeit briefly, these tragic events cannot be seen as an aberration.

India was one of the first countries to initiate an official family planning programme. Between 1952 and 1975, the Ford Foundation had spent 35 million dollars to finance family planning programmes, of which India received more than 20 million dollars (Rao, 1994). Sterilisation of women has been the main method used in India's population control policies since the late 1970s.The drive for female sterilisation further intensified in the context of neoliberal reforms from the 1990s onwards. Since 2000, approximately 4.5 million tubectomies have been taking place every year in India. Data suggests that in 2005-06 around 37% of married women had undergone sterilisation (Singh et al, 2012). In Bilaspur district, where the sterilization camp deaths occurred in November 2014, this figure was as high as 47.2% (SAMA, 2014).

A major feature in this recent period has been the privatization of 'family planning' programmes, with surgeries outsourced to private clinics and hospitals. Doctors, private health centres and NGOs are paid 'incentives' for every woman sterilized. Dr. R. K. Gupta, the doctor who single-handedly conducted 83 surgeries in less than three hours at one of the Chhattisgarh camps, had received an award from the state Health Ministry for performing a record 50,000 surgeries during his career (Jaiswal, 2014). This was not an aberration – in another case only three months later in January 2015, a doctor was found to have conducted 73 sterilisation operations in four hours in Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh. Further, as Human Rights Watch reported in 2012, 'in much of the country, authorities aggressively pursue targets, especially for female sterilization, by threatening health workers with salary cuts or dismissals'(Human Rights Watch, 2012).

The Indian government claimed to have abandoned targets, identified as one of the main drivers of abuses, after the Cairo population conference of 1994. But these have in fact simply been replaced with 'Expected Levels of Achievement' at state level. On a national level, officially recorded deaths caused by sterilisation between 2003 and 2012 translate into 12 deaths a month on average, and actual figures are almost certainly much higher (Bhoumick, 2014). These women died after being lied to about the operation, threatened with loss of ration cards or access to government welfare schemes, bribed with small amounts of cash or food, or, as with the Chhattisgarh 2014 case, forcibly taken to camps.

The Indian state's population policies do not evolve independently of changes in global population policy however. The day after the 2012 World Population Summit, a Human Rights Watch report warned that the commitments made by the Indian government at the Summit would lead to further abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2012). An October 10, 2014 letter from the National Rural Health Mission, under the aegis of the Indian Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, confirmed this. It stated that an increase in sterilizations is essential to meet the Family Planning 2020 commitment made by India at the Summit, especially for 11 "high focus" states, ruling out the importance of other possible methods of contraception. The letter ordered an increase in the payment given to all those involved in carrying out sterilization in these states (Singh, 2014). Meanwhile, aid from Britain's Department for International Development (DfID) was found to have helped to fund forcible sterilizations in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar in which a number of women died in 2012 (Chamberlain, 2012).

Both sterilisation campaigns and promotion of long acting hormonal contraceptives are taking place in the context of further withdrawal of health provision (Schultz and Bendix, 2015). This is also consistent with a wider trend which has been associated with the growing dominance of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in global health policy: the prioritization of 'vertical' interventions over 'horizontal' investment in health systems. As Harman observes, this 'has been seen to lead to underfunding and a lack of attention to the horizontal health systems—for example, procurement chains, referral systems, clinician training, and health center management—that sustain such interventions and provide the basis of health care' (Harman, 2016:355-6)

In India, the increased pressure of meeting FP2020 commitments has been accompanied by the further undermining of already inadequate health provision since the current government of Narendra Modi's Hindu right Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014, as a major study by Indian health experts published in the Lancet has highlighted (Patel et al, 2015).

Injectable and implantable contraceptives are specifically being promoted as suitable for use in the context of this absence of health provision, as they are presented as simple enough to be administered by minimally trained health workers - often unpaid women. DfID's recent initiative with Merck has aimed to promote the longlasting implant Implanon to "14.5 million of the poorest women" by 2015. Implanon was discontinued in the UK in 2010 because trained

medical personnel were finding it too difficult to insert, and there were fears about its safety(BBC, 2011). As well as debilitating side effects, the implant was reported as "disappearing" inside women's bodies(MHRA, 2011). Merck has introduced a new version, Nexplanon, which is detectable by X-ray, but has been allowed to continue to sell their existing stocks of Implanon. It is this discontinued drug which is being promoted in DfID and UNFPA programmes in the "poorest" countries, despite these countries' huge deficit of trained health personnel. In fact, in Ethiopia, one of the target countries, mass insertions of Implanon are part of "task shifting" where hastily trained health extension workers are being made to take on the roles of doctors and nurses.

Meanwhile Depo Provera is being extensively promoted in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia under the name of Sayana Press by a collaboration between the Gates Foundation, USAID, DfID, UNFPA, pharmaceutical corporation Pfizer and the US NGO PATH[5], with the claim that it requires minimal involvement of health professionals and can even be self-administered (PATH, 2016), despite compelling medical evidence that Depo Provera may increase the risk of women and their partners becoming infected with HIV (AVAC, 2016; Hartmann, Hendrixson and Sasser, 2016, p.17).

In September 2015, the Indian Health Ministry announced the approval of Depo Provera, for use in the National Family Planning Programme (FPP). In contrast, a wide range of reproductive health and women's rights activists and scholars have opposed its introduction, arguing that a number of serious side-effects are associated with the drug and that 'the use of Depo-Provera needs continuous medical follow-up by health staff in a well-functioning health system…. The health budget has stagnated while the salary and medicine costs have gone up…the health system

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[5] PATH (the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health) is in fact the NGO that has received most funding in health from the Gates Foundation, having received around $1 billion, mainly for medical research and development (Global Justice Now, 2016:21). According to its website, PATH is 'the leading innovator in global health and a pioneer in leveraging the expertise and resources of corporate partners to drive transformative innovation to scale'. PATH works with more than 60 corporate partners to create "market-based solutions", including pharmaceutical companies Merck and Sanofi and mining company BHP Billiton as well as Microsoft (Global Justice Now, 2016; PATH 2016) .

remains incapable of dealing with the safe delivery of a contraceptive requiring intensive medical support'(Kafila, 2015; Sarojini and Nandy, 2015).

Government approval for Depo Provera has been argued to have spurred on by the recent attention focused on the use of sterilizations in Indian government programmes, particularly after multiple deaths of women in Chhattisgarh (Barry and Dugger, 2016). Yet, as observers note, there is no indication that the newly introduced contraceptives will lead to a phasing out of these 'camps' in India, which continue to take place regularly(op.cit.) and which have been largely outsourced to the private sector.

'Smart Economics', population policy and the intensification of women's labour

The renewed emphasis on fertility reduction is not only geared towards shifting attention away from global capital's responsibility for poverty, climate change and food crises. Nor is it only oriented towards increasing profits in the pharmaceutical industry. Central to the strategy of which the return of population control is a part, is the intensification of women's labour, with responsibility for household survival increasingly feminised, and more and more women incorporated into global value chains dominated by transnational corporations. It is this drive to intensify and incorporate the labour of women in poor households in the global South, as I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Wilson, 2015 and forthcoming), rather than feminist concerns about reproductive and sexual rights, which underpins the now ubiquitous slogan of 'investing in women'. The last two decades have seen a growing emphasis on the extension and intensification of women's labour as central to sustaining neoliberal capital accumulation. As in Puerto Rico in the 1950s, where coercive mass sterilization drives were pioneered as part of one of the earliest experiments in increasing profits by outsourcing manufacturing to low-paid women workers in the global South in 'Operation Bootstrap'(Briggs, 2002; Mass, 1977), a reduction in women's fertility is being promoted primarily as it is regarded as facilitating women's entry into labour markets and enhancing their productivity for global capital. For example the World Bank's report on 'Investing in Women's Reproductive Health', begins by explaining why 'investing in reproductive health is smart economics', noting the effects of 'high fertility' on 'female labour supply' Grépin and Klugman (2013).

'Smart economics' is the approach to gender currently promoted by globally dominant development institutions, epitomized by the World Bank's slogan 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics'(World Bank, 2006; 2011) and the current corporate-initiated global development focus on adolescent girls which constructs the potential productivity of 'girls' as the key to accelerated growth. Smart Economics is premised on the assumption that women will always work harder, and be more productive, than their male counterparts; further, they will use additional income more productively and altruistically than men would. Therefore it argues that greater gender 'equality', understood as an increase in women's participation in labour markets, will have a significant impact on economic growth.

While using the language of gender equality, the Smart Economics approach, as should be evident, in fact relies heavily on the perpetuation of gendered ideologies and gendered material compulsions to produce its ideal altruistic entrepreneurial subject, who will continue to fulfil gendered reproductive duties while producing for global capital under ever more precarious conditions (Wilson, 2015). It is also embedded in a racialised postcolonial hierarchy in which economic policies can be built on the assumption that 'poor women in the global South' have a capacity for labour which is almost infinitely elastic.

In 21st century sustainable development discourse then, these women and adolescent girls are simultaneously understood as disposable labouring bodies and as dangerous reproductive bodies marked by 'excessive' fertility, and as we have seen, can therefore be subject to coercive sterilizations, and testing and dumping of hormonal contraceptives. Conversely, men and adolescent boys from the same communities are represented in racialised terms as unproductive and extraneous to processes of global capital accumulation and as embodying violence, conflict, and terrorism. These interdependent gendered and racialised tropes are used to subject men, women and children who seek to migrate to the global North to the embodied violence of borders, and to once again reconstitute their lives as ungrievable.

Conclusion

This article has suggested that a critical engagement with population discourse, policy and practice in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a recognition of the centrality of race and racialisation, understood in gendered, material and embodied as well as discursive

terms and as inseparable from contemporary processes of global capital accumulation. More generally I argue that this 're-centering' of race is essential if the dominant approaches to sustainable development, which are effectively structured around the production and extension of difference, inequality, exclusion and exploitation, are to be effectively challenged.

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