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East-West Population Institute, no. 37*

Some sociological suggestions
concerning the reduction of fertility
in developing countries

by Norman B. Ryder

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PREFACE

The original manuscript was prepared while the author was Senior Fellow at the East-West Population Institute, for oral presentation at a session on "Realistic Pathways to Fertility Reduction in Developing Countries" at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America, New York, on 20 April 1974. The organizer of the session, Ronald Freedman, invited parallel papers expressing the viewpoint of the family planner and the economist.

ABSTRACT This paper considers social approaches to reducing fertility as part of the process of modernization in developing countries, on the assumption that the variables affecting fertility are systemic in nature. Fertility norms are instilled in individuals by society, and to ensure high levels of reproduction these norms have traditionally emphasized the primacy of the family, the obligations of children to their parents, and rigidly segregated sex roles. Because high fertility is no longer a desirable goal, fundamental shifts in the organization of human society may be necessary to alter reproductive behavior. The paper discusses specific elements of the modernization process that might be manipulated to change fertility norms.

The purpose of this essay is to propose some pathways to fertility reduction in developing countries, from the perspective of a sociologist. The account purposely excludes discussion of possible contributions to the same goal through the provision of family planning services, or through manipulation of the economic context of decision-making; by way of governmental taxation or subsidization of particular reproductive categories. Analyses of such activities are well represented in the literature; they are conceptually separable from the kinds of consideration to be introduced here; and, in my judgment, they play an essentially auxiliary and supportive role in the solution to the fundamental problem.*

The euphemism that a country should be termed “developing” signifies simultaneously that it is now poor and that it need not remain so. Behind the title of this paper lies an implicit argument that the achievement of a higher level of living will be more likely if there is a lower interim rate of population growth, and that fertility reduction is a better way to attain that lower rate than either emigration or increased mortality. It is the process of modernization, in the various senses of that term, which produces a higher level of living, and lower fertility is a necessary but not sufficient part of that process. Among the many components of the modernization strategy, proposals for fertility reduction must compete with others for the limited resources

* The absence of references in what follows should be construed not as a sign of scholarly ingratitude, but rather as a way of emphasizing the informal tentativeness of the views expressed.

of money and talent and organization. It is the consensus of most demographers that the preferable policy is one that leads to earlier rather than later fertility reduction, a point worth making because it is generally agreed also that the achievement of a higher level of living is likely to be accompanied or followed by a lower level of fertility.

Intrinsic to the sociological viewpoint is the prejudice that the important variables affecting behavior are systemic in character. Changes in such variables are accordingly expected to have wide ramifications throughout many aspects of social life. The comprehensive institutional reformation which I believe to be the most effective pathway to fertility reduction can also be argued to be essential to the modernization of the economy and the society in other respects. Indeed, it may be that the suggestions advanced below with a view to lowering the birth rate have less chance of acceptance for that reason than because they are perceived as contributions to nondemographic goals. In short, a sociological approach impels one to consider demographic change as embedded within the general rubric of societal transformation.

Every society has standardized solutions to its important and pervasive problems, in the form of injunctions and prohibitions, constraints and pressures, concerning individual behavioral decisions. Norms and sanctions channel individual behavior into directions which, however the individual might regard them in the abstract, are considered desirable from the standpoint of the groups of which the individual is a member and a representative. The process of socialization is designed to eliminate the apparent conflict between individual and group interests by internalizing norms; the pervasive existence and employment of sanctions is testament to the insufficiency of the socialization process.

One such important societal problem is reproduction. High fertility is not the consequence of inherited biological propensities, nor of ignorance of where babies come from and how they might be prevented, but rather of systematic institutionalized prescriptions and proscriptions, instilled by incessant socialization and more or less maintained by vigilant social control. The peculiar responsibility of the sociologist as a behavioral scientist is to assess the ways in which behavior is influenced by the institutional structure—i.e., by the complexes of norms that provide blueprints for role relationships in activities that have consequences beyond the individual. Traditional and modern societies are not infrequently contrasted by the implication that, in the latter, an individual exercises freedom of choice, whereas, in the former, those choices are culturally prescribed—they have already been

made by the groups of which the individual is a member. Although members of modern societies may be more inclined than those of traditional societies to proffer reasons for their decisions, those reasons are learned from, and are subject to the test of acceptability to, the larger society. In every culture, individuals exercise volition within a context of constraints; in every culture, decisions are made with reference to the legitimate interests of those who are affected by the decisions and are in a position to influence them.

In my view, the level of fertility in a traditional society and in a modern society alike is an intelligible outcome of the individual decision process. That level tends to be high in the former and low in the latter not only because of differing material conditions but also because of the differing normative context. The observed level of fertility in a society is ordinarily a reasonable approximation of the level of fertility intended by the responsible parties, given the "rules of the game" within the particular economic context. The approach to fertility reduction through the provision of family planning services is oriented to narrowing whatever gap there may be between observed and intended fertility, because of lags in response to change; the approach to fertility reduction through the manipulation of economic variables is oriented to modifying the price and income constraints to be considered in the decision situation; and the sociological approach is focused on modifying the normative context itself.

The intergenerational contract

Explicit and implicit understandings exist concerning the future rights and responsibilities of all parties having an interest in a prospective child. In every society, the birth of a child signals the activation of specific and diffuse obligations on the part of various persons with respect to the resources that child will consume, and of rights with respect to the resources that child will produce. Such obligations and rights are patterned to the life cycle of the child and of the relevant others, with disjunctures occurring typically at the time the child becomes a parent and then the parent becomes a dependent. I call this contract intergenerational because I think the relationship between parent and child (using the latter term in its generational rather than age connotation) is the most important aspect of the family as an institutionalized structure; it obviously extends also to relationships with other members of the families of orientation of parent and child, and of their families of procreation, and, in most developing societies, further into the kinship network. In other, particularly modern, cultures, the nonkin collec-

tivity may be the party with the most significant rights and responsibilities concerning the newborn.

High-fertility norms are sensible responses, on the part of the groups which instill and enforce them, to conditions of high mortality in a peasant agricultural economy. Not only is high fertility requisite to societal survival in a demographic sense, but also it provides the principal source of new energy for the practical solution of the problems of the kinship group. Children are that group's almost sole form of investment to provide a labor supply, defense against external enemies, and the foundation for a primitive social security system. The strength of the kinship group in these respects varies directly with its size; maintenance or enlargement of that size other than by way of fertility is uncommon, probably because of the many problems that incorporation of adults into the group would involve. Marriage is arranged when the individuals to be married are young. The couple, once married, are incorporated inside a larger kinship group (in the sense of having rights and responsibilities, if not in the physical sense) and are enjoined to produce children for the greater good of that group. Children are raised frugally and put to work early. Should numbers of children become too large for the particular couple's resources, the kinship unit provides flexible adoption possibilities or supplementary help. The individual is submerged within the kinship system; the important role relationships are family relationships.

The two fundamental dimensions of the family as a structure are generation and gender. The basic argument of the present section is that economic development is assisted by, and encourages, a gradual shift of power outward from the family in two directions, first toward the larger society and second toward the individual. That shift of power implies a reformation of the normative bargain between the generations (what parents expect from children and what children expect from parents), and such a reformation promotes reduction in fertility, other things being equal.

It is convenient to cast the discussion in the framework of investment, including particularly within that category the investment in human resources. To say it simply, the modern society is more productive than the traditional society. Productivity is a function of the capital that can be created by deferral of consumption. The life cycle of the human species implies a characteristic timetable of borrowing and lending, as the individual proceeds through successive phases of net consumption, net production, and net consumption. From one perspective, the family can be considered as an institutionalized solution

to this intrinsic species problem: it is a system for transferring resources through time, i.e., across generations. The terms of this transfer, in both directions, between older and younger generations, are what we here call intergenerational norms.

In the traditional society, fertility is high in part because families are faced with short-run considerations that tend to overwhelm or prohibit attention to long-run considerations. Human resources must be expended in the present rather than saved for the future, lest there be no future. The predominant direction of intergenerational rights and responsibilities in the traditional society is what the child owes the parent, whereas in the modern society, the predominant direction is what the parent owes the child. It is tempting to hypothesize that the turning point of fertility reduction is closely associated with reversal of the direction of temporal obligation. In a sense, society intervenes between parent and child in the interests of the child (and of the society at large), and thereby makes parenthood a much less rewarding venture. There is a large and difficult ethical question in the allocation of society's resources through time, which could be thought of as a maximization problem across cohorts—i.e., to what extent should resources be expended to the advantage of present cohorts and to what extent should they be invested to the advantage of future cohorts? (A similar question arises in connection with the depletion of nonrenewable resources.) Thus there is an issue of intergenerational equity: What do parents deserve from children, and vice versa? Such an ethical question can scarcely be resolved by resort to notions of democratic representation in a framework of freedom of individual choice, since the children of today and tomorrow have no votes. (They certainly have no voice in the reproductive decision that gives rise to them.)

The fundamental changes in the organization of human society that characterize the shift from traditional to modern consist of a differentiation of kinship structures from other social structures and the functional specialization of family roles. Industrialization and urbanization, with their accompaniments of mobility and specialization, foster secularism over religion (the present and future over the past), the growth of individualism, and the shift of primary individual allegiance from the family and the kinship group toward the larger society. Modernization breaks down ascriptive criteria, emphasizing what one can do rather than who one is (who one's parents are), by minimizing familism and localism. The shift of the focus of work from the rural family to the urban society decreases what children can contribute to family resources and increases what they need to claim from family resources.

Their opportunity cost from the standpoint of the nonfamilial roles of parents also increases, as those roles take on enhanced importance. In an economic sense, a child becomes an inferior good.

This is a propitious context for fertility decline: erosion of the primacy of kinship to the point where parental aspirations can be fulfilled only in ways for which high fertility is either irrelevant or burdensome. Meanwhile, fertility decline increases productivity by reducing the price of capital: the supply of capital increases, because of the decrease in child dependency; the demand for capital decreases, because of the subsequent decrease in the rate of growth of the labor force. Productivity and reproductivity are mutually antagonistic.

The interests of the wife

Most discussion of fertility reduction concerns ways of inducing couples to set as a reproductive target a lower final parity than comparable couples in the past have had. The burden of the previous argument is that there are many interested and powerful parties in the decision concerning the number of children to be borne. Despite the almost exclusive focus in fertility surveys on desired family size as expressed by the prospective mother, it is apparent in the traditional society that unsurveyed others, such as the husband, his family of orientation (in the typical patrilineal case), the larger kinship group, and the community, care a lot about the outcome because it affects their welfare; accordingly their preferences carry considerable normative freight and they have diffuse and extensive possibilities of implementing sanctions, should the socialization process be inadequate. The stage for fertility reduction is set by a quite different specification of the appropriate relative influences of these diverse interests, and of the principles to be followed in judging the rightness of a positive or negative decision. The change of specification discussed above was that the question of how a birth will affect the welfare of the parents and the kinship group becomes transmuted into the question of how it will affect the child.

The other important change of specification is the much larger attention given to the interests of the prospective mother. An essential component of the kinship system as an institutionalized arrangement for securing societal survival is that women be coerced into abundant reproduction. Traditional societies promote high fertility by maintaining sharp sex-role segregation. Often the only way for a woman to earn esteem is to contribute to the survival of the group by bearing healthy sons. The burden of bearing and of rearing children has always fallen more directly and heavily on women than on men. Adequate repro-

duction can be achieved only through considerable social pressure because of the ambivalence many women have toward childbirth and motherhood. Conversely, the liberation of the woman from her typical status as a family chattel is correlated as well as any other single variable with the level of modernization. Fertility reduction would appear to depend substantially on the right of a woman to determine the extent of her commitment to the maternal role, and on the availability of opportunities for her to fill nonfamilial roles and earn prestige from them. Equality of gender is the final and most difficult step in modernization, including reproductive modernization, and it is a long way from accomplishment in any society, perhaps because its achievement would prejudice the survival of the family institution itself. There seems to be little doubt that a shift toward equality of males and females, i.e., the abandonment of ascription of roles on the basis of gender, would exert downward pressure on fertility. The interesting question is whether the reproductivity of the new order would be adequate to replace the population.

Internal population pressure

High fertility is an institutionalized response to a condition of high mortality. When that condition no longer prevails, normative arrangements that are part of that institutionalized response, such as extended family households, become inappropriate and burdensome; overpopulation at the household and family level seems likely to promote the abandonment of such arrangements. Residential arrangements that are propounded as cultural ideals can be maintained so long as in actuality conditions prevent their full realization. Aggressive effort to reduce the mortality of children and adults, a desirable goal on many grounds, has the further virtue of bringing immediate pressure on those physical and social designs that were developed for a context in which high mortality made such designs feasible.

Maintenance of internal population pressure would also be promoted by institutionalized constraints on easy adoption, the traditional safety valve for excess offspring, perhaps by formalizing the responsibilities of the new parents to their adopted children. Likewise, restrictions on migration would localize the consequences of high fertility for population growth at the village level, rather than permit the growth to be siphoned off in the direction of urban slums. The institutionalized self-sufficiency of the rural commune within modern Chinese society may be an important element in China's apparently successful strategy for controlling population growth.

As a further example of one direction in which to maintain internal population pressure, it may be noted that the aged will tend to expect support from their children to the extent that they, in their younger days, were obliged to support their parents. A crucial part of the impetus to fertility reduction may be played by that particular generation of parents who find themselves in a position of role conflict, in the sense that they feel obligated, because of their traditional upbringing, to provide support for their aged parents, and feel obligated, because of the modern context, to provide support for their children. To the extent that this reasoning is plausible, it would be a tactical blunder to denigrate the responsibilities of parents to their parents, or to provide social security for the aged from general societal funds.

The argument for maintaining internal population pressure as a spur to fertility reduction is incomplete. It may be that family limitation is practiced less to secure a future gain than to prevent the loss of what has been achieved. Perhaps sensitivity to the disadvantages of a larger family size is most acute in those who have experienced the social and economic benefits of rising real income, and perceive that further childbearing would jeopardize those benefits. It would then follow that a sufficient condition for the efficacy of internal population pressure as a spur to fertility reduction would be the prior achievement of some rise in economic well-being. In the history of the demographic transition in Western societies, economic growth preceded fertility decline. The long delay in that fertility decline (and the consequent multifold enlargement of population size) may be explained by the slight pressure on resources, continually eased by migration, without serious jeopardy to a somewhat higher and rising income. In the European experience, mortality decline and urban economic development applied pressure to several points of strain within the family. Mortality decline created a labor force too large for the family farm. The longer life of the parents postponed the time when the property would pass into the control of their children. More siblings survived, reducing the share of each in their delayed patrimony. Urban economic development offered alternatives to the young and created both spatial and social distance between the family of orientation and the family of procreation.

The role of chance

A society with high and variable mortality will press for children early in marriage, before one or both parents die, and for extra children to safeguard against the loss of the necessary minimum number of sur-

vivors. Should the result be excessive in relation to the resource base, solutions are available through adopting out. There is substantial uncertainty and anxiety not only about the survival of children, but also about the ability to bear a child or another child. The unpredictability of the future family size is matched by the unpredictability of the relevant other socioeconomic circumstances. In such a situation, rationality is a challenging prescription for the individual; perhaps the larger the role of chance, the greater is the tendency to rely on customary and traditional guidance, as distillations of wisdom from past experience. The point is that fatalism is not merely another face of ignorance or superstition, but an intelligible response to high uncertainty. Future aspirations in general hinge on the perception of the reward to be expected for effort. Such effort is unlikely to be forthcoming if the return is fraught with substantial doubt. Moreover, at the level of the larger kinship group and the community, the more likely the occurrence of catastrophe (to the individual), the more advantageous is the attachment of the individual to a population of larger size, on elementary insurance principles.

The inference from this line of thinking is that substantial increase in the exercise of reproductive rationality may await a substantial decrease in perceived uncertainty. Perhaps fertility decline requires a reduction not only in the mean level of mortality but also in its variance. Certainly an extension of the time horizon for planning in general, as a foundation for investment, is favored by the lengthening of life or, more precisely, by the perception that life is more certain. One clear policy recommendation, accordingly, is a strong public effort to reduce mortality and, perverse though it may sound, to search for ways to remove limitations on fecundity.

The initiation of reproduction

Reproductive decisions have a temporal as well as a quantitative component. Although fertility analyses focus almost exclusively on completed parity, births by and large occur one at a time, at no less than annual intervals, and thus sequentially and incrementally. The actual reproductive decision faced by the couple is whether or not to attempt to prevent each potential ovulation in turn from resulting in conception, except, of course, in the limiting case in which the mode of fertility regulation is either abortion or sterilization. That decision includes consideration of the time elapsed since last pregnancy, the associated age difference between the last child and the one contemplated, the proportion of the parents' lives monopolized by the par-

ental role, and also the differences in age between parents and existing children.

The temporal distribution of fertility is relevant to the discussion of the reduction of the birth rate because the tempo of cohort fertility, in both a static and a dynamic sense, has quantitative implications when translated into period fertility. On the one hand, the later a birth occurs in a woman's life, the smaller is its discounted contribution to annual growth. (The intrinsic rate of natural increase varies inversely with the length of a generation.) On the other hand, a shift from an earlier to a later pattern of reproduction distorts period fertility downward, whereas a shift from a later to an earlier pattern of reproduction distorts period fertility upward. (The proportional change in the mean age at childbearing is converted into a like, but inverse, proportional change in ultimate population size.) Accordingly, quantitative objectives such as the reduction of (period) fertility can be achieved in part by modifications of the time pattern of fertility.

It would seem plausible, moreover, that an admonition to delay a birth would be more palatable to the recipient than an injunction to terminate fertility. The adverse consequences of short interbirth intervals are widely recognized, and institutionalized mechanisms for their avoidance, such as extended lactation and ritualized abstinence, are commonly found. The targets for a campaign to delay fertility are younger than those for a campaign to terminate fertility, and perhaps are therefore more receptive to innovation. Indeed, termination at a lower parity, unaccompanied by a delay in the initiation of reproduction, is less effective demographically than it would appear on the surface because termination at a lower parity implies termination at an earlier age, reducing the length of generation and distorting period fertility upward.

Beyond such purely demographic arguments, the force of the case for delay is sociologically strong, particularly with respect to the initial steps in the reproductive sequence. The time of entry into marriage is a crucial point of structural strain in the traditional domination of one's family of procreation by one's family of orientation. Such domination is incompatible with sustained economic advance, whether it be that of the individual or of the social system as a whole. Early arranged marriage is a symptom of and mode of preservation of familism. The early imposition of family obligations traps the man, and especially the woman, within the traditional social structure. Temporary freedom from procreation is necessary to provide the young woman with the opportunity to enlarge her personal horizon and acquire sources of

satisfaction alternative to motherhood. The future of developing societies may be much more bound up with the future of their young women than with that of their young men.

Later marriage gives the young person a few adult years in which to become committed to personal or societal rather than familial goals. The later the marriage, the more likely will the couple form their own household, rather than sharing that of the family of orientation. The obligation to support the children is more likely under such circumstances to fall directly on the shoulders of the couple rather than be shared and absorbed by surrounding kinfolk. Basic to the growth of individualism and to the growth of the economy is the principle that one must not marry until a living is assured. Delayed gratification and prudential restraint are essential to the achievement of a higher scale of living; they permit personal capital formation. In particular, the assumption of family responsibilities almost prohibits the continuation of formal education and technical training for personal advance and, collectively, for social modernization. Education is society's agent in the release of the individual from kinship bondage. Education raises social aspirations, increases the anxiety for new goods, and makes children more costly in their own right and in relation to alternative opportunities which must be foregone by the parents. Education can provide a societal alternative to the family as a source of normative orientations, and an enhancement of vision beyond the limited boundaries of the local community—which has always been the ally of the kinship system in the maintenance of ascriptive criteria for placement.

Marriage delay permits the postponement of cohort commitment to the existing system and thereby encourages or at least facilitates social change. Every society is a functioning collectivity with inputs of birth and outputs of death, which persists independently of the lives of its ever-changing membership. To reproduce itself, society must implant its precepts in the minds of each new cohort. Yet this continual threat to stability is also a continual opportunity for society to exploit the new cohorts as the vehicles for initiating change.

The direct demographic consequence of marriage delay is the inferential delay in the initiation of parenthood. Contraception has provided a way to experience copulation without conception. The overarching purpose of the family planning movement, and of fertility control schemes generally, is to reduce the cost of an act of intercourse. Prudery has inhibited the discussion of copulation in relation to contraception and reproduction, aside from euphemistic allusions to the esthetic properties of particular types of contraceptive. Furthermore,

of all the various ways in which the sexual urge can be gratified, only heterosexual copulation leads to conception. Taboos on alternatives probably are rooted in early cultural concern with maximizing procreation. But the larger issue is that the efforts by society to control nonmarital sex are part of the same system of domination of the individual by the family which is at the root of institutionalized high fertility. In that cause, which we have characterized as a bulwark of the traditional society, the young have been permitted two alternatives: either chastity or that regrettable form of venereal disease known as unwanted fertility. The technology that can divorce sex from procreation is an essential ally of modernization and should not be withheld from the unmarried adult.

It is the convention of most fertility surveys to ask individuals not whether they want to be parents, but rather how many children they want to have. In other words, childlessness by choice is literally considered to be out of the question. The logical extension of the argument on the virtues of delaying parenthood is that some proportion of the population considers having permanently infertile unions or separate individual lives. The modern world offers ample opportunity for lives that can fulfil individual aspirations completely without parenthood. This is not a recommendation that individuals pursue selfish ends so much as a proposal that they be encouraged to dedicate themselves to the building of the new society. One should not underestimate the capacities in the young for such social commitment.

Demography as political arithmetic

The preceding argument implies that modernization, and fertility reduction as an indispensable component of it, require comprehensive institutional reconstitution. To end kinship dominance and create the kind of citizenry needed in a productive society, with rational development and allocation of human resources and systematically higher priority to the future than to the present, society must intervene between the individual and his or her family of orientation. Yet replacement of the kinship system by the national government as the dominant political force is insufficient. The laws and policies of most nations today, respecting marriage and the family, are explicitly or implicitly pro-natalist, and support the family in its position vis-à-vis the individual. An obvious example is the host of legal restrictions on the production, advertisement, display, distribution, and sale of most modes of fertility regulation.

One source of such fertility-supporting policies is the ambivalence

most government leaders have about population size and the rate of population growth. Those rulers of nations who are obsessed with the strength of the collectivity, even to the disregard of individual welfare, are generally implacably opposed to fertility reduction. There is a basic conflict between the wealth of a nation, viewed in the aggregate sense from above, and the well-being of the average subject. Individuals profit little by shifting their allegiance from father to fatherland.

Although the case for numbers as a source of political security is probably now more emotional than rational, there prevails a primitive pride in size and in growth, as an extension of the intuition that more is better—particularly more in relation to nearby nations. The organization of the world into nation-states forces the discussion of population problems into the morass of political arithmetic. The counterpart of international conflict prevails within nations as well, wherever there is more than one subpopulation—i.e., more than one group having boundary-maintaining mechanisms—and recruitment of membership is essentially through fertility. Fertility reduction is a contentious policy to advocate to the extent that it implies change in the relative sizes of nations and of subcultures within nations.

Conservatism and fertility

In my judgment, both modernization and fertility reduction are gravely impeded by conservatism. “Conservatism” is used in two senses. The first is exemplified by those who have vested interests in the status quo, who either support population growth because they profit from it, or support the social structure that ensures it. Their ranks would include the militarists, the owners of property, the employers of labor, and the priesthood. The second sense is implicit in the theory of the mainsprings of human behavior that is disposed to focus on the individual as the primary source of his or her own difficulties, to support research into the characteristics of individuals rather than groups or communities or organizations, and to prescribe cures which may modify individual behavior but leave the encompassing social structure unchanged. The thesis that prolificacy stems from lust and ignorance is akin to the other essentially conservative notions that unemployment is a reflection of laziness, and that the cure for crime is punishment.

The ideology of the family planning movement is essentially conservative. Four professional roles are prominent in its ranks, and all four are oriented to the solution of social problems by the manipulation of individual behavior within an intact unquestioned social struc-

ture. First are the doctors who dispense contraceptive cures to patients in clinics. Second are the social workers, the latter-day charity profession, applying Band-Aids to the sores on the body politic. Third are the men with a Madison Avenue mentality, whose surveys reveal a market for the contraceptive product, and who view the solution to the problem as essentially a matter of packaging and advertising. Finally there are the philanthropists who support these endeavors, the successful embodiments of a conservative system of free enterprise.

If the above diagnosis of the sources of high fertility is close to correct, then the realistic solution would appear to amount to a social revolution. The conservative ideology of the family planning movement is a philosophical impediment to that solution because its purpose is essentially counter-revolutionary. The cost of a better way of life in the future, for the developing countries, is a profound change in social values and social institutions. To insist that policy proposals should meet the tests of political feasibility and ethical acceptability is to remove from the universe of discourse what I perceive to be the essential elements of the solution, as well as to ignore the ethical claims of the cohorts yet unborn. Should we misjudge the magnitude of this challenge, mankind may lose its last best chance to escape from the past.

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