
Editors' Foreword

Global population growth is slowing. Yet, as the UN Secretary-General noted in his 2002 World Population Day message, “[T]here will still be a billion more people in the developing world by 2015. And the most rapid growth is occurring in the world’s least developed countries, where the population is expected to triple over the next 50 years from 658 million to 1.8 billion. Already, these countries are least able to provide basic services and among the most severely challenged by hunger, HIV/AIDS, water scarcity and environmental degradation.” What hope is there for states playing a seemingly impossible numbers game? This issue of the *Journal of International Affairs* explores the connections, issues and assumptions within this question.

Demographic factors haunt history, suggesting irreducible links with instability: Iran was experiencing a youth bulge before its 1979 revolution, which brought young people to the streets to end the monarchy; the French population before revolution in 1789 was likewise weighed toward youth; and today the mass of unemployed males throughout the Muslim world is held by some as a direct factor in extremism’s rise. Moreover, scarce resources, increasing populations and the imperative for economic growth conspire to degrade the environment, bringing deforestation, water depletion, air pollution and disease. These developments may spur further social and political instability.

Fortunately, demography is far from destiny. In fact, destiny depends very much on how a given state deals with demographic challenges. From immigration, population and labor policy to family planning, as well as political systems sufficiently flexible—or inflexible—to manage people and their demands, states maintain stability with a host of tools. In his message the Secre-

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tary-General notes that implementing real family-planning policies, resulting in fewer dependents, provides potential economic growth within a generation—a phenomenon observed throughout East Asia in the 1980s. Regarding the environment, institutions mediate resources with production technologies and economic structures. Beyond demographic determinism, an array of actors and factors play a role in the population numbers game.

The capstone essay by Jack A. Goldstone lays the groundwork for exploring issues in population change and security, parsing the interrelation of influences. Milica Z. Bookman explores the implications of relative population size in multiethnic states; Neil DeVotta and Monica Duffy Toft turn to India and Israel, respectively. Nazli Choucri, providing a framework for weighing migration and security, addresses the subjectivity of both terms. Ellen Brennan-Galvin investigates the main site of the world's future population growth, urban areas. Jonathan Crush examines the exodus of skilled workers from South Africa. Ellen Laipson and Peter G. Peterson consider broad demographic transitions and their intersection with state policies. Richard A. Matthew explores the role of the environment in population and stability questions, while Ariaster B. Chimeli, Carolyn Z. Mutter and Chet Ropelewski present a case study. Colin Kahl, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Henrik Urdal examine current debates. In sum, the authors deliver analyses both broad and deep on how politics, populations and the challenge of stability shape the face of the state. 🏰