

Dysgenics, Overpopulation, and Conventional Ignorance

Blithering Genius

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1 Introduction

These days, most people seem to believe that overpopulation is not a problem, although the reasons for that belief differ. Also, most people view eugenics as both evil and unnecessary. The conventional “wisdom” on these topics is wrong. Overpopulation and dysgenics are serious problems. If we don’t solve these problems, they will destroy modern civilization.

The idea that overpopulation is not a problem is usually based on the evidence of recent history: that we have been able to expand food production to keep up with population growth for a hundred years or so, and thus (I guess the reasoning goes) we will be able to keep doing this... forever?? The absurdity of this is pretty obvious.

2 Helpful Analogies

Imagine that you are walking up a mountain in the fog. You can't see the top of the mountain, and it might take longer than you expected to reach the top. Just because you can't see the top, and haven't reached it yet, that doesn't mean the mountain is infinitely tall. Just because we haven't reached the limits of growth yet, it doesn't follow that we never will.

Here's another analogy. Suppose that you have a box of chocolates. You greedily eat all the chocolates over a few days. When they are finished, however, you discover that there is another layer of chocolates under a cardboard separator. Does that mean you have a magic box of chocolates that never runs out? No, it just means that there were more chocolates than you originally thought. Did lifting the separator create the chocolates underneath? No. It might have required some ingenuity to discover the chocolates, but the ingenuity didn't create the chocolates.

Finite resources are like a box of chocolates. You can't go on consuming them forever.

3 Why Malthus Was Proven Wrong By Recent History

Was Malthus proven wrong by recent history? Well, I don't know what Malthus said exactly, because I have never read Malthus. From what I have heard, Malthus said that agricultural production grows linearly and population grows exponentially, and so population will outpace agricultural production. If that's what he said, then he was wrong, because agricultural production can also grow exponentially in the short run.

The correct argument is simply that limits exist, and so neither agricultural production nor population can grow forever, regardless of whether it grows linearly, exponentially, logarithmically or any other way. That is a logical conclusion from the simple fact that the Earth is finite, and of course it has never been disproven.

So, whether Malthus was right or not, it is certainly true that populations are ultimately limited by scarcity. Every species has the potential to reproduce to excess, including human beings. Any species without this capacity would go extinct. Evolution selects for traits that maximize successful reproduction, which is essentially the number of offspring that live to reproduce themselves. The potential for explosive (exponential) population growth is built into the nature of life.

4 Populations Can Grow Exponentially

Given a good environment, the population of a species will grow exponentially. The increased population will then cause greater competition for resources (scarcity). Increased competition will make the environment worse for the species, until its population stops growing. Abundance causes population growth, which causes scarcity, which limits population growth. That is how the population of *every* species is regulated, including the human population.

In most times and places, the human population was regulated by premature death: by children dying from war, disease and famine. That is another obvious fact that most people are woefully ignorant of. The normal condition of life is harsh: a struggle for existence in which most children die before maturity.

During the last few hundred years, the human population has exploded, because we discovered a

new source of energy (fossil fuels) and invented new technologies to use that energy. New energy and new technology created a period of abundance. This sort of thing has happened before, on smaller scales. Whenever humans discover a new environment, such as the Americas, or a new method of food production, such as agriculture, they have a population explosion that stops when they reach the limits of the new environment or the new method of food production. Human populations have exploded and reached limits before, in many different times and places.

5 Population Cannot Grow Forever

When humans discovered agriculture, and were able to expand their population beyond the limits of a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, did the population grow forever? No, of course not. The population grew until it reached the limit of the new method of food production, and then it stopped.

The idea that the industrial revolution disproves limits is beyond stupid. It is simply insane. Yes, we have found ways to expand our population and economy. It does not follow that we can do so forever. The modern era of abundance is based on consuming a finite stock of fossil fuels. It is not the result of magic.

Population explosions often lead to overshoot and collapse rather than just an end to growth, either because the growth phase destroys the underlying basis of food production (e.g. intensive agriculture causing soil erosion), or because scarcity creates conflict, which leads to greater scarcity. A vicious cycle can cause catastrophic collapse when limits are reached after a prolonged period of growth. A catastrophic collapse is very likely to occur when modern civilization reaches its limits. We are destroying the finite resource on which our civilization depends (fossil fuels), and our social order depends on abundance and growth.

6 Space Does Not Extend The Earth's Resources

"But, but..." I hear the libertarians saying, "We can expand into space! The Earth is finite, but space is essentially infinite."

Okay, I will deal with that incredibly naive objection.

We can't escape from the Earth's limits by going into space, because going into space requires a huge amount of energy, and there is nothing worth going into space to get and bring back. There is nowhere else in the solar system that could support human life without complex technology, and so it would be a practical impossibility to colonize anywhere else in the solar system. A colony on Mars would always depend on the Earth. It would never provide any net benefit to the Earth. A colony on Mars would not extend the resources of the Earth. It would be a drain on them. We certainly can't move our population off the Earth, because it would require a huge amount of energy, and there is nowhere else that can support life. Even if we could get to Mars as easily as we can get to Antarctica, we wouldn't have anything more than a small scientific outpost there, for the same reason that we only have a small scientific outpost in Antarctica: it's a shitty place for human beings. Mars is at least ten thousand times harder to get to than Antarctica, and about a billion times shittier.

Space does not extend the Earth's resources. The Earth is finite and growth is limited.

7 Voluntary Low Fertility Is Self-Eliminating

“But, but. . .” I hear the humanists saying, “There is no need to worry about overpopulation, because people choose low fertility when they have a good standard of living. If we raise Africans out of poverty, then their fertility will fall. Fertility in the developed world is already below replacement. Thus, there is no reason to worry about overpopulation. It will fix itself.”

No, it won't. The human population will not be limited by voluntary low fertility, because voluntary low fertility is self-eliminating.

In an environment of abundance, in which most offspring live to adulthood, high fertility is selected for. Even if most people choose low fertility today, by doing so they select against the traits that make people choose low fertility. The future is determined by who shows up. Human nature (like the nature of every other type of life) is determined by who reproduces. Those who reproduce pass their traits on.

Modern abundance has not taken the struggle out of life. It has just changed the nature of that struggle, from a struggle over resources to a breeding contest. Today, whoever has the most kids wins.

It's true that most people in developed societies choose to have few or no children. That doesn't mean that most people in the future will have low fertility. Why? Because people in the future have to be born, and more of them will be born to people with high fertility than low fertility. Even if almost everyone chooses low fertility, those with higher fertility will simply outbreed them in a few generations. I have gone through these arguments before, so I won't bother to elaborate on them here. I will just say that the Amish alone, at their current rate of growth, could replace the entire world population in less than 300 years.

The future is not predicted by the average behavior of people today. The future is predicted by who is reproducing today. That is the fundamental principle of evolution. What is normal today will be extinct in the future if it doesn't reproduce.

8 There Are No Rational Arguments Against Eugenics

Now let's consider whether eugenics has ever been disproven or discredited. What is the argument against eugenics?

There isn't any rational argument against eugenics. People just decided that eugenics is morally wrong, for no rational reason. This seems to have occurred in the 1960s, as the myth of WWII was being constructed. Eugenics was linked to Nazism, although it wasn't specific to Nazi Germany. Eugenics was a fairly popular idea in the 1920s and 1930s among educated people, for good reasons. Somehow, in the conventional “wisdom” (ignorance), eugenics was linked to the Nazis and equated with genocide or mass murder, even though it doesn't imply either of those things. Eugenics is now considered to be evil, along with other forms of biological realism and pragmatism.

Eugenics is just selecting for traits that we value in other human beings, such as intelligence and responsibility. No matter what we do, the social environment places selective pressures on the human genome. Eugenics means that we consciously choose to select for traits that make people better members of society.

Making people better doesn't sound like such a horrible thing, but it does imply that people aren't

born equal, and so it conflicts with the humanist belief in the intrinsic value and equality of human beings. The racial aspect of dysgenics makes it even more taboo. Not only are individuals unequal, races are also unequal. Eugenics doesn't require racial genocide, but any race-blind eugenics program would affect racial demographics.

Instead of dealing with the moral and social issues involved, our culture just pretends that evolution doesn't apply to humans. This is not rational. It is willful ignorance.

9 Laissez-Faire Eugenics, And Why We Need It

Eugenics could be done by simply requiring people to meet certain conditions before they are allowed to have a child, such as having a certain level of income and no serious criminal record.

We don't allow people to indiscriminately kill one another, or even drive without a license, so why do we allow people to indiscriminately give birth to children? We don't (or shouldn't) allow people to enter our societies at will by walking across borders, so why do we allow parents to bring people into our societies at will through vaginas? Eugenic reproduction control is a reasonable limitation on individual freedom, and it should be no more controversial than requiring a license to drive or having criteria for immigration.

Eugenics was never discredited or disproven rationally. It was just declared to be "evil".

The genome is not stable without positive selection. Even without dysgenic fertility or selection, the genome would gradually degrade by mutation. Random noise is always being added to the genome by mutation, and it must be removed to maintain the quality of the genome. What removes mutations? Selection, or in other words, differential reproduction. That selection can come from differential fertility or differential survival to adulthood.

It is a serious problem that the global IQ is falling because of dysgenic fertility. IQ is not a direct measure of intelligence. It is just a measure of one's ability to take IQ tests, and it can be improved with practice. However, it is a good proxy for a certain type of intelligence (abstract reasoning), and it is predictive of social and economic outcomes, such as income and criminality. With other factors taken into account (such as capitalism vs. communism and natural resources), IQ also predicts the outcomes of societies. Higher IQ people create societies that are better by a lot of standard metrics. Lower IQ people create societies that are worse by a lot of standard metrics.

10 What Will Happen Without Eugenic Reproduction Control

For now, industrialization is still raising the global standard of living (and the global rate of fossil fuel consumption), but a growing population and falling IQ will eventually reverse that trend. Overpopulation and dysgenics both lead inexorably toward civilizational collapse. They lead back to the ancestral condition in which our population is regulated by war, disease and famine. There is only one way that we can have peace and prosperity in the long run: eugenic reproduction control.

The human population of the Earth will be regulated somehow. It cannot grow forever, because the Earth is finite. It will not settle into a pattern of voluntary low fertility, because that behavior is selected against by evolution.

If we do not impose reproduction control on our population, it will grow until modern civilization collapses and scarcity returns. Then the population will be regulated by war, disease and famine,

as it was in the past.

Likewise, the human genome will be regulated somehow. There is existing variation in the human genome, and mutation is always adding random noise. The natural process of regulating the genome is premature death. By socially guaranteeing the survival of all children, we are allowing the genome to degrade by mutation. We are also making evolution into a breeding contest, in which any trait that increases fertility is selected for. This will gradually eliminate the traits that make civilization possible, such as intelligence, creativity and anxiety, because those traits are negatively correlated with fertility in this environment. To maintain those traits, we need to select for them.

If we do not regulate the genome with eugenics, it will degrade until our civilization collapses. Then the genome will be regulated by war, disease and famine, as it was in the past.

If we regulate our population and genome with eugenic reproduction control, we could sustain modern civilization and prosperity indefinitely. Otherwise, our civilization will collapse, and we will return to a condition of life in which the population and the genome are regulated by war, disease and famine. There are no other alternatives.