

March 11, 2014



Choice

Jason G. Brent

Since the earth is finite and the resources it can provide humanity are finite, economic growth will cease and no power on the earth or in the heavens will prevent that from occurring. Compound growth will cause that cessation to occur in the very near future. The United States tries for an annual economic growth rate of 2.5%. If that were to occur, in less than a century economy of the United States would be 16 times as large as the current economy and that is impossible, it will not and cannot happen. If that rate of growth were to continue for 280 years, the economy of the United States would be over 1000 times as large as the current economy and that is impossible, it will not and cannot happen. If the economy of the entire planet were to grow at the rate of one percent per year, in 700 years it would be over 1000 times as large as the current economy, in 1400 years over 1 million times as large as the current economy and in 2100 years, about the time from the birth of Jesus to the present, the economy of the planet would be over 1 billion times as large as the current economy. That cannot and will not happen.

Humanity has a choice--- cease economic growth by intelligent action today or in the very near future or economic growth will stop when the planet can no longer supply the resources necessary to maintain the economy at a future higher level. If the economy were to stop when the resources of the earth could not support the economy at the higher future level, that would result in resource wars, most likely with weapons of mass destruction, which would wipe the human race off the face of the earth. If the economy were to stop when the resources of the earth could not support the economy at the higher future level and if resource wars with weapons of mass destruction did not occur, other catastrophes such as starvation and disease would occur which would cause billions to die.

Once economic activity reached a peak only two things can happen, disregarding oscillations, the economy of the planet could remain at the peak forever into the future or

it could start to decline. In reality, it will not remain at the peak forever into the future and, therefore, a short time after the peak is reached economic activity will decline and probably the rate of decline will be very substantial. Both economic activity and population will reach a peak and then start to decline due to the fact that humanity has used and is using both non-renewable and renewable resources at a rate that cannot be sustained. Humanity must change every aspect of civilization to cope with that fact--peak and continual decline of both economic activity and population level

The only intelligent course of action for humanity is to immediately start to stop economic growth. The cessation of economic growth will be the most horrific and traumatic event that humanity has ever suffered. However, if growth were to cease due to the fact that the earth could not supply the necessary resources to maintain the higher level economic activity which would occur if economic growth were permitted to continue, the trauma and horror would be millions of times greater than if humanity were to intelligently cease economic growth in the near future.

Since economic and population growth are two sides of the same coin, humanity cannot take steps to stop economic growth without taking steps to stop population growth. Simply put, without taking steps to stop population growth, any steps to stop economic growth would fail and economic growth would continue leading to disaster. There are only two ways by which population growth will cease--- by the voluntary action of all of humanity or by coercive action on a planet wide basis. The UN's latest medium variant predictions were that the human population would attempt to reach 9.6 billion by 2050 and 10.9 billion by 2100. These numbers represent increases of 400 million and 900 million respectively over the previous predictions made by the UN. These increases support the proposition that at this point in time voluntary population control is failing.

More importantly, the medium variant predictions were based on the **assumption, repeat assumption**, that the total fertility rate (TFR) would decline, on a worldwide basis, from the current 2.55 per woman to 1.85 per woman by the year 2050. The UN did not provide any facts which would support that assumption. The UN also stated that if the TFR which existed during the period 2005-2010 were to continue, population in the least developed regions of the planet would attempt to reach 27.5 billion. If that were to occur, it would mean that the total human population would attempt to reach about 29 billion .

Since a very strong argument can be made that the earth cannot provide the necessary resources to support the 7.2 billion of our species that presently inhabit the planet, any attempt to reach a population of 29 billion is doomed to failure and would result in resource wars with weapons of mass destruction or other catastrophes which would cause the horrific deaths of billions and the collapse of the social order never to rise again. No rational person, only a lunatic and madman, would gamble the survival of humanity on the assumption that the TFR would decline without first evaluating the risks and problems of coercive population control. Logic demands that coercive population control be considered in relation to the UN's medium variant prediction of attempting to reach 10.9 billion by the year 2100 due to the fact that is highly likely that a major die off will occur prior to that year, caused by the growing population and the ever increasing usage

of non-renewable and renewable resources. Simply put, only a lunatic and madman, would gamble the survival of the human species on voluntary population control without considering coercive population control.

Every human right, except the right to produce children, which when exercised harms another human being is in some manner controlled and limited by society. Since the right to produce children not only could, but would, cause the deaths of billions there isn't any logical or moral reason why that right should not be controlled. Therefore, that right must be treated as every other right and controlled and limited by society.

Jason G. Brent is a member of the MAHB community with degrees in Engineering, Law and Business.

MAHB-UTS Blogs are a joint venture between the University of Technology Sydney and the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to joan@mahbonline.org

MAHB Blog: <http://mahb.stanford.edu/blog/choice/>