

Non Malthusian perspectives on Population and Development in Latin America and Africa

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The exponential growth of population in the developing world during the last 50 years has resulted in this phenomena being automatically related as determinant factor which contributes to underdevelopment. National planning programs and international organizations have had the tendency prioritize programs which combat population growth in development agendas in order to avoid a “Malthusian crises”. This paper examines issues in recent population growth and development from a non-Malthusian perspective which addresses issues other than population in analysing population growth. It is argued that while there has been unprecedented growth in population, aspects such as Geopolitics and economic policy have contributed more to underdevelopment as opposed to population growth. We suggest some countries continue to grow at fast rates at present, but the fact that they are no longer pawns of the Cold War, allows for them to withstand population growth and focus on the economic sector which was not the case earlier. Furthermore, countries in Latin America, which have curbed population growth, seem to be affected more by issues such as international economic policy such as a growing gape between rich and poor and sociological factors associated with rapid urbanization. In the end, it is argued that policies which are heavily based on population growth should re-examine the theoretical underpinnings of the population debate and examine regions which are growing in population and experiencing and also growing economically given the absence of conflicts. Countries such as Colombia and Ethiopia will be utilized as case studies.

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