

CHAPTER 9

POPULATION, FOOD AND FREEDOM



The contemporary age is not short of terrible and nasty happenings, but the persistence of extensive hunger in a world of unprecedented prosperity is surely one of the worst. Famines visit many countries with astonishing severity—"fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell" (to borrow John Milton's words). In addition, massive endemic hunger causes great misery in many parts of the world—debilitating hundreds of millions and killing a sizable proportion of them with statistical regularity. What makes this widespread hunger even more of a tragedy is the way we have come to accept and tolerate it as an integral part of the modern world, as if it is a tragedy that is essentially unpreventable (in the way ancient Greek tragedies were).

I have already argued against judging the nature and severity of the problems of hunger, undernourishment, and famine by concentrating on food output only. However, food output must be *one* of the variables that can, inter alia, influence the prevalence of hunger. Even the price at which food can be bought by the consumers will be affected by the size of the food output. Furthermore, when we consider food problems at the global level (rather than at the national or local level), there is obviously no opportunity of getting food from "outside" the economy. For these reasons, the often aired fear that food production per head is falling in the world cannot be dismissed out of hand.

IS THERE A WORLD FOOD CRISIS?

But is the fear justified? Is the world food output falling behind world population in what is seen as a "race" between the two? The fear that this is precisely what is happening, or that it will soon happen, has had remarkable staying power despite relatively little evidence in its favor. Malthus, for example, anticipated two centuries ago that food production was losing the race and that terrible disasters would result from the consequent imbalance in "the proportion between the natural increase of population and food." He was quite convinced, in his late-eighteenth-century world, that "the period when the number of men surpass their means of subsistence has long since arrived."¹ However, since the time when Malthus first published his famous *Essay on Population* in 1798, the world population has grown nearly six times, and yet food output and consumption per head are very considerably higher now than in Malthus's time, and this has occurred along with an unprecedented increase in general living standards.

However, the fact that Malthus was badly mistaken in his diagnosis of overpopulation at his time (with less than a billion people around) and in his prognosis about the terrible consequences of population growth does not establish that all fears about population growth at all times must be similarly erroneous. But what about the present? Is food production really losing the race with population growth? Table 9.1 presents the indices of food production per head (based on statistics from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) for the world as a whole as well as for some of the major regions in terms of three-year averages (to avoid being misled by year-to-year fluctuations), with the average for 1979–1981 serving as the base of the index (100); index values are given up to 1996–1997. (Adding the 1998 figures does not alter the basic picture.) Not only is there no real decline in world food production per head (quite the contrary), but also the largest per capita increases have come in the more densely populated areas of the third world (in particular, China, India and the rest of Asia).

The African food output has, however, declined (on which I have already commented), and the prevalence of poverty in Africa puts it in

TABLE 9.1: *Indices of Food Production per Head by Regions*

Regions	1974-1976	1979-1981	1984-1986	1994-1996	1996-1997
World	97.4	100.0	104.4	108.4	111.0
Africa	104.9	100.0	95.4	98.4	96.0
Asia	94.7	100.0	111.6	138.7	144.3
India	96.5	100.0	110.7	128.7	130.5
China	90.1	100.0	120.7	177.7	192.3
Europe	94.7	100.0	107.2	102.3	105.0
North and Central America	90.1	100.0	99.1	99.4	100.0
U.S.A.	89.8	100.0	99.3	102.5	103.9
South America	94.0	100.0	102.8	114.0	117.2

Note: With the three-year average of 1979-1981 as the base, the three-year averages for the years 1984-1986, 1994-1996 and 1996-1997 are obtained from the United Nations (1995, 1998), table 4. The three-year averages for the earlier years (1974-1976) are based on the United Nations (1984), table 1. There may be slight differences in the relative weights between the two sets of comparisons, so that the series should not be taken to be fully comparable between the two sides of 1979-1981, but the quantitative difference made by this, if any, is likely to be quite small. *Sources:* United Nations, *FAO Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics*, 1995 and 1998, and *FAO Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, August 1984.

a very vulnerable situation. However, as was argued earlier (in chapter 7) the problems of sub-Saharan Africa are mainly a reflection of a general economic crisis (indeed a crisis with strong social and political as well as economic components)—not specifically of a “food production crisis.” The food production story fits into a larger predicament that has to be addressed in broader terms.

There is, in fact, no significant crisis in world food production at this time. The rate of expansion of food production does, of course, vary over time (and in some years of climatic adversity there is even a decline, giving the alarmists a field day for a year or two), but the *trend* is quite clearly upward.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AND FOOD PRODUCTION

It is also important to note that this rise in world food production has taken place despite a sharply declining trend in world food prices in real terms, as table 9.2 indicates. The period covered—more than forty-five years—is from 1950-1952 to 1995-1997. This entails a decline of economic incentives to produce more food in many areas of commercial food production in the world, including North America.

TABLE 9.2: *Food Prices in Constant 1990 U.S. Dollars: 1950-1952 to 1995-1997*

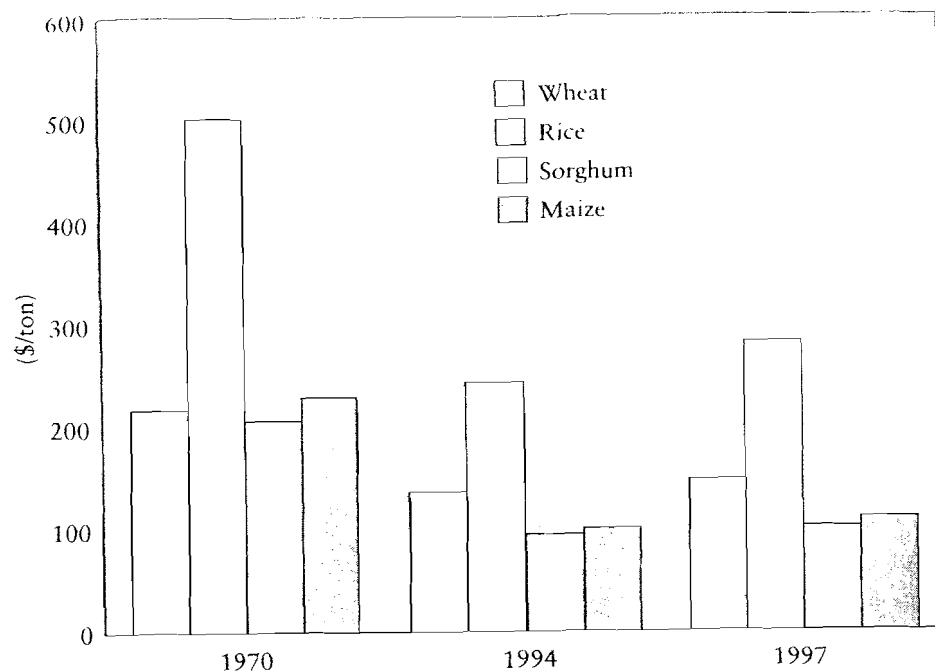
Food	1950-1952	1995-1997	% change
Wheat	427.6	159.3	-62.7
Rice	789.7	282.3	-64.2
Sorghum	328.7	110.9	-66.2
Maize	372.0	119.1	-68.0

Note: The units are constant (1990) U.S. dollars per metric ton, adjusted by the G-5 Manufacturing Unit Value (MUV) index. *Sources:* World Bank, *Commodity Markets and the Developing Countries*, November 1998, table A1 (Washington, D.C.); World Bank, *Price Prospects for Major Primary Commodities*, vol. 2, tables A5, A10, A15 (Washington, D.C., 1993).

Food prices do, of course, fluctuate in the short run, and panicky statements were often made in response to an increase in the mid-1990s. But this was a small rise compared with the big fall since 1970 (see figure 9.1). Indeed, there is a strongly declining long-term trend, and there is nothing yet to indicate that the long-run downward trend of the relative price of food has been reversed. Last year, during 1998, the world prices for wheat and coarse grain declined again by 20 percent and 14 percent respectively.²

In the context of an economic analysis of the present situation, we cannot ignore the disincentive effect that the lowering of world food prices has already had on food production. It is, thus, particularly impressive that the world food output has nevertheless continued to grow, well ahead of population growth. In fact, had more food been produced (without curing the income shortage from which most of

FIGURE 9.1: Food Prices in Constant 1990 U.S. Dollars



Note: The units are constant (1990) U. S. dollars deflated by the G-5 Manufacturing Unit Value (MUV) index.

Source: World Bank, *Commodity Markets and Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1998), table A1.

the hungry people in the world suffer), the selling of food would have been even more of a problem than is reflected in the declining food prices. Not surprisingly, the biggest increases have come from regions (such as China and India) where the domestic food markets are relatively insulated from world markets and the declining trend of world food prices.

It is important to see the production of food as a result of human agency, and to understand the incentives that operate on people's decisions and actions. Like other economic activities, commercial production of food is influenced by markets and prices. At this time, the world food production is being kept in check by the lack of demand and falling food prices; this in turn reflects the poverty of some of the neediest people. Technical studies on the opportunity to produce more food (if and when the demand increases) outline very

substantial opportunities of making the food production per head grow much faster in per capita terms. Indeed, yield per hectare has continued to rise in every region of the world, and for the world as a whole, it went up on average by about 42.6 kilograms per hectare per year during 1981-1993.³ In terms of world food production, 94 percent of the rise in cereal production between 1970 and 1990 reflected an increase in yield per unit of land, and only 6 percent was due to area increase.⁴ With greater demand for food, the intensification of cultivation can be expected to continue, especially since the differences in yield per hectare are still enormously large between the different regions in the world.

BEYOND THE TREND OF FOOD OUTPUT PER HEAD

All this does not, however, wipe out the need for slowing down the population growth. Indeed, the environmental challenge is not just that of food production—there are many other issues related to population growth and overcrowding. But it does indicate that there is little reason for any great pessimism that food output will soon start falling behind population growth. In fact, a tendency to concentrate on food production only, neglecting food *entitlement*, can be deeply counterproductive. Policy makers may be misled if insulated from the real situation of hunger—and even threats of famines—by favorable food output situations.

For example, in the Bengal famine of 1943, the administrators were so impressed by the fact that there was no significant food output decline (on which they were right) that they failed to anticipate—and for some months even refused to recognize—the famine as it hit Bengal with stormy severity.⁵ Just as “Malthusian pessimism” may be misleading as a predictor of the food situation in the world, what may be called “Malthusian optimism” can kill millions when the administrators get entrapped by the wrong perspective of food-output-per-head and ignore early signs of disaster and famine. A misconceived theory can kill, and the Malthusian perspective of food-to-population ratio has much blood on its hands.

POPULATION GROWTH AND THE ADVOCACY OF COERCION

While the Malthusian long-run fears about food output are baseless, or at least premature, there are good reasons to worry about the rate of growth of world population in general. There is little doubt that the growth rate of world population has speeded up over the last century at a remarkable rate. It took the world population millions of years to reach the first billion, then 123 years to get to the second, followed by 33 years to the third, 14 years to the fourth, and 13 years to the fifth billion, with the promise of a sixth billion to come in another 11 years (according to the projections of the United Nations).⁶ The number of people on earth grew by about 923 million (1980–1990 alone), and that increase is close enough to the size of the *total* population of the *entire* world in Malthus's time. The 1990s, when they are done, will not have been significantly less expansionary.

If this were to continue the world certainly would be tremendously overcrowded before the end of the twenty-first century. There are, however, many clear signs that the rate of growth of world population is beginning to slow down, and the question that has to be asked is whether the reasons behind that slowdown are likely to become stronger, and if so, at what rate. No less importantly, it has to be asked whether something should be done through public policy to help the process of slowdown.

This is a highly divisive subject, but there is a strong school of thought that favors, if only implicitly, a coercive solution to this problem. There have also been several practical moves in that direction recently—most famously in China, in a set of policies introduced in 1979. The issue of coercion raises three different questions:

- 1) Is coercion at all acceptable in this field?
- 2) In the absence of coercion will population growth be unacceptably fast?
- 3) Is coercion likely to be effective and work without harmful side effects?

COERCION AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The acceptability of coercion in matters of family decisions raises very deep questions. Opposition to it can come both from those who would give priority to the family to decide how many children to have (it is, in this view, a quintessentially family decision), and from those who argue that this is a matter in which the potential mother in particular must have the deciding voice (especially when it comes to abortion and other matters that directly involve the woman's body). To be sure, the latter position is usually articulated in the context of asserting the right to have an abortion (and to practice birth control in general), but there is clearly a corresponding claim that would leave the woman to decide *not* to abort if that is what she wants (no matter what the state wants). So something substantial does turn on the status and significance of reproductive rights.⁷

The rhetoric of rights is omnipresent in contemporary political debates. There is, however, often an ambiguity in these debates about the sense in which "rights" are invoked, in particular whether the reference is to institutionally sanctioned rights that have juridical force, or whether the appeal is to the prescriptive force of normative rights that can precede legal empowerment. The distinction between the two senses is not entirely clear-cut, but there is a reasonably clear issue as to whether rights can have intrinsic normative importance and not just instrumental relevance in a legal context.

That rights can have intrinsic—and possibly pre-legal—value has been denied by many political philosophers, particularly utilitarians. Jeremy Bentham in particular is on record as having described the idea of natural rights as "nonsense," and the concept of "natural and imprescriptible rights" as "nonsense on stilts," which I take to mean highly mounted nonsense that is made arbitrarily prominent by artificial elevation. Bentham saw rights entirely in instrumental terms and considered their institutional roles in the pursuit of objectives (including the promotion of aggregate utility).

A sharp contrast between two approaches to rights can be seen here. If rights in general, including reproductive rights, were to be seen in Benthamite terms, then whether or not coercion should be acceptable in this field would turn entirely on its consequences, in

particular utility consequences, without attaching any indigenous importance whatsoever to the fulfillment or violation of the putative rights themselves. In contrast to this, if rights were to be seen as not only important but also as having priority over any accounting of consequences, then the rights would have to be accepted unconditionally. Indeed, in libertarian theory, this is exactly what happens to the delineated rights, which are seen as appropriate no matter what consequences they yield. These rights would, then, be appropriate parts of social arrangements *irrespective* of their consequences.

I have argued, elsewhere, against the necessity of opting for one or the other approach in this dichotomy, and have presented arguments for a consequential system that incorporates the fulfillment of rights among other goals.⁸ It shares with utilitarianism a consequentialist approach (but differs from it in not confining attention to utility consequences only), and it shares with a libertarian system the attachment of intrinsic importance to rights (but differs from it in not giving it complete priority irrespective of other consequences). Such a “goal-rights system” has many attractive properties as well as versatility and reach, which I have tried to discuss elsewhere.⁹

I shall not repeat here the arguments in favor of such a goal-rights approach (though I shall take the opportunity of saying a bit more on this approach in the next chapter). But in making comparison with utilitarianism, it is hard to believe that it can be adequate to explain our support for rights of various kinds (including those of privacy, autonomy and liberty) only—and exclusively—in terms of their utility consequences. The rights of minorities often have to be preserved against the intrusion of a majority’s persecution and its grand gains in utility. As John Stuart Mill—a great utilitarian himself—noted, there is sometimes “no parity” between utility generated from different activities, such as (to quote Mill) “the feeling of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it.”¹⁰ That lack of parity would apply, in the present context, to the importance that the parents attach to the decision on how many children to have compared with the importance that others, *including* the potentates running the government, may place on this subject. In general, the case for seeing intrinsic importance in autonomy and liberty is not easy to escape, and this can easily conflict with no-nonsense maximization of the

utility consequences (taking no note of the *process* of generation of utilities).¹¹

It is, thus, implausible to confine consequential analysis only to utilities, and in particular to exclude the fulfillment and violation of rights related to liberties and autonomies. But it is also not particularly credible to make these rights completely immune, as in the libertarian formulation, to consequences they have—no matter how terrible the consequences might be. In the context of reproductive rights, the fact that they are taken to be significant does not entail that they are so overarchingly important that they must be fully protected even if they were to generate disasters and massive misery and hunger. In general, the consequences of having and exercising a right must ultimately have some bearing on the overall acceptability of that right.

The consequences of population growth for the food problem and hunger have already been discussed, and there is no real basis for great alarmism here, at this time. But if the process of population explosion were to continue, then the world might well be in a much more difficult situation even in terms of food. There are, in addition, other problems connected with fast population growth, including urban overcrowding and of course the environmental challenges at the local and global levels.¹² It is very important to examine what prospects of a slowdown of population growth can be seen now. This takes us to the second of the three questions.

MALTHUSIAN ANALYSIS

Even though Malthus is typically credited with having provided the pioneering analysis of the possibility that population may tend to grow too much, the possibility that continued increase in population might conceivably lead to “a continual diminution of happiness” was in fact aired, before Malthus, by Condorcet, the French mathematician and great Enlightenment thinker, who first presented the core of the scenario that underlies the “Malthusian” analysis of the population problem, with “the increase in the number of men surpassing their means of subsistence” resulting in “either a continual diminution of happiness and population, a movement truly retrograde, or, at least, a kind of oscillation between good and evil.”¹³

Malthus loved this analysis of Condorcet's, was inspired by it and quoted it with great approval in his famous essay on population. Where the two men disagreed was in their respective views of fertility behavior. Condorcet anticipated a voluntary reduction in fertility rates and predicted the emergence of new norms of smaller family size based on "the progress of reason." He anticipated a time when people "will know that, if they have a duty towards those who are not yet born, that duty is not to give them existence but to give them happiness." This type of reasoning, buttressed by the expansion of education, especially female education (of which Condorcet was one of the earliest and most vocal advocates), would lead people, Condorcet thought, to lower fertility rates and smaller families, which people would choose voluntarily, "rather than foolishly to encumber the world with useless and wretched beings."¹⁴ Having identified the problem, Condorcet noted its likely solution.

Malthus thought all this most unlikely. In general, he saw little chance of solving social problems through reasoned decisions by the persons involved. As far as the effects of population growth were concerned, Malthus was convinced of the inevitability of population outrunning food supply, and in this context, took the limits of food production to be relatively inflexible. And, most relevantly for the topic of this chapter, Malthus was particularly skeptical of voluntary family planning. While he did refer to "moral restraint" as an alternative way of reducing the pressure of population (alternative, that is, to misery and elevated mortality), he saw little real prospect that such restraint would be voluntary.

Over the years, Malthus's views on what can be taken to be inevitable varied somewhat, and he was clearly less certain of his earlier prognosis as the years progressed. There is a tendency in modern Malthus scholarship to emphasize the elements of "shift" in his position, and there is indeed ground for distinguishing between the early Malthus and the late Malthus. But his basic distrust of the power of reason, as opposed to the force of economic compulsion, in making people choose smaller families remained largely unmodified. Indeed, in one of his last works, published in 1830 (he died in 1834), he insisted on his conclusion that:

there is no reason whatever to suppose that anything beside the difficulty of procuring in adequate plenty the necessaries of

life should either indispose this greater number of persons to marry early, or disable them from rearing in health the largest families.¹⁵

It was because of this disbelief in the voluntary route that Malthus identified the need for a *forced* reduction in population growth rates, which he thought would come from the compulsion of nature. The fall in living standards resulting from population growth would not only increase mortality rates dramatically (what Malthus called "positive checks"), but would also force people, through economic penury, to have smaller families. The basic link in the argument is Malthus's conviction—and this is the important point—that population growth rate cannot be effectively pulled down by "anything beside the *difficulty* of procuring in adequate plenty the necessaries of life."¹⁶ Malthus's opposition to the Poor Laws and the support for the indigent related to his belief in this causal connection between poverty and low population growth.

The history of the world since that Malthus-Condorcet debate has not given much comfort to Malthus's point of view. Fertility rates have come down sharply with social and economic development. This has happened in Europe and North America, and is currently happening over much of Asia, and to a considerable extent in Latin America. The fertility rates remain the highest and relatively stationary in the least privileged countries—particularly in sub-Saharan Africa—which are not yet experiencing much economic or social development, and which have continued to remain poor as well as backward in terms of basic education, health care and life expectancy.¹⁷

The general fall in fertility rates can be explained in rather different ways. The positive association between development and fertility reduction is often summarized by the ungainly slogan "Development is the best contraceptive." While there may be some truth in this rather undifferentiated thought, there are various components of development, which the West has experienced together, including rise in income per head, expansion of education, greater economic independence of women, reduction of mortality rates and spread of family planning opportunities (parts of what may be called social development). We need a discriminating analysis.

ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several theories as to what is causing this fertility decline. One influential example is Gary Becker's model of fertility determination. Even though Becker has presented his theory as an "extension" of Malthus's analysis, and even though his analysis shares many features of Malthus's analysis (including the tradition of seeing the family as *one* decision-making unit with no divisions within it—on this more presently), Becker has, in fact, negated Malthus's conclusion that prosperity raises population growth, rather than reducing it. In Becker's analysis, the effects of economic development on investment to improve the "quality" of children (such as investment in education) play an important part.¹⁸

In contrast with Becker's approach, the *social* theories of fertility decline point to changes in preferences as a result of social development, such as expansion of education in general and female education in particular.¹⁹ This is, of course, one of the connections that Condorcet emphasized. However, we have to distinguish between (1) changes in the number of children desired by a family despite unchanged preferences, because of the influence of changing costs and benefits, and (2) shifts in such preferences as a result of social change, such as modification of acceptable communal norms, and greater weighting of the interests of women in the aggregate objectives of the family. Condorcet focused on the latter, Becker on the former.

There is also the simple issue of availability of birth control facilities and the dissemination of knowledge and technology in this field. Despite some early skepticism on this subject, it is now reasonably clear that knowledge and practical affordability do make a difference to the family's fertility behavior in countries with high birthrate and scarce family control facilities.²⁰ For example, the sharp fertility decline in Bangladesh has been linked to the family planning movement, and in particular to the greater availability of knowledge and facilities. It is certainly significant that Bangladesh has been able to cut its fertility rate from 6.1 to 3.4 in a mere decade and a half (between 1980 and 1996).²¹ This achievement debunks the belief that people will not voluntarily embrace family planning in the less-developed countries. However, Bangladesh still has a long way to go,

and while it is going that way (the fertility rate has continued to drop rapidly), to get near the pure replacement level (corresponding to total fertility rates around 2.0 or 2.1) something more than mere availability of birth control facilities would be needed.

EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG WOMEN

One line of analysis that has emerged very powerfully in recent years (and which I have already articulated in earlier chapters) gives the empowerment of women a pivotal role in the decisions of families and in the genesis of communal norms. However, so far as historical data are concerned, since these different variables tend to move together, it is not easy to separate out the effects of economic growth from those of social changes (given what statisticians call "multicollinearity"). I shall presently pursue this distinction further, with the use of cross-section—rather than intertemporal—comparisons. What should be, however, abundantly clear is that some things "beside the difficulty of procuring in adequate plenty the necessaries of life" have made people choose radically smaller families. There is no reason why the high-fertility developing countries cannot follow others that have already reduced their fertility rates through the combined process of economic and social development (no matter which component of that development plays exactly what part).

However, we have to be more clear as to what the critical parameters would be in changing the climate of fertility. There is now quite extensive statistical evidence, based on comparison between different countries and different regions (that is, cross-section studies, as they are called), that link women's education (including literacy) and the lowering of fertility across different countries in the world.²² Other factors considered include the involvement of women in so-called gainful activities outside the home, the opportunity of women to earn an independent income, the property rights of women and the general status and standing of women in the social culture. I have presented these issues already in the book, but there is a need to link up these discussions.

These connections have been observed in intercountry comparisons, but also in comparisons within a large country—such as between the different districts of India. The most recent—and the

most extensive—study of this connection is the important statistical contribution by Mamta Murthi, Anne-Catherine Guio and Jean Drèze, discussed in chapter 8.²³ As was noted, among all the variables included in that analysis, the *only* ones that are seen to have a statistically significant effect on fertility are (1) female literacy and (2) female labor force participation. The importance of women's agency emerges forcefully from this analysis, especially in comparison with the weaker effects of variables relating to economic development.

Going by this analysis, economic development may be far from "the best contraceptive," but social development—especially the women's education and employment—can be very effective indeed. Many of the richest Indian districts in, say, Punjab and Haryana have very much *higher* fertility rates than the southern districts with much lower per capita income but with much higher female literacy and female job opportunities. Indeed, in the comparison between nearly three hundred Indian districts, the level of real income per capita has almost no impact, compared with the sharp and effective difference made by women's education and women's economic independence. While the original Murthi-Guio-Drèze paper drew on the 1981 census, the main conclusions reached there have been confirmed by the analysis of the 1991 census done by Drèze and Murthi (cited earlier).

EXTERNALITY, VALUES AND COMMUNICATION

The powerful evidence in favor of these statistical relations has to be distinguished from the social and cultural accounting of these influences, including the account—referred to earlier—that both education and outside earning increase a woman's decisional autonomy. There are, in fact, many different ways in which school education may enhance a young woman's decisional power within the family: through its effect on her social standing, her ability to be independent, her power to articulate, her knowledge of the outside world, her skill in influencing group decisions and so on.

I should note that the literature has also produced some arguments contrary to the belief that women's autonomy increases with schooling and that this helps to reduce fertility rates. The contrary evidence has come entirely from some interfamily (as opposed inter-district) studies.²⁴ While the informational coverage in these studies

is relatively small (a great deal smaller than the massive all-India study of Murthi, Guio and Drèze), nevertheless it would be wrong to dismiss the contrary evidence too readily.

However, it does make a difference as to what we take to be the proper unit of analysis. If it is supposed that women's influence increases with the general level of literacy in a *region* (through informed social discussion and value formation), then examining *interfamily* contrasts would not capture this influence. The *inter-district* comparisons investigated by Murthi, Guio and Drèze incorporate relations that are "external" to the family but "internal" to a region, such as communication among different families in a region.²⁵ The importance of public discussion and interchange is one of the major general themes of this book.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS COERCION?

How do these influences compare with what can be achieved through coercive policies of the kind tried in China? Policies such as the "one-child family" have been tried in large parts of China since the reforms of 1979. Also, the government often refuses to offer housing and related benefits to families with too many children, thus penalizing the children as well as the dissident adults. China's total fertility rate (a measure of the average number of children born per woman) is now 1.9, significantly below India's 3.1, and also very much below the weighted average—about 5.0—for low-income countries other than China and India.²⁶

The Chinese example appeals to many who are panic-stricken at the thought of the "population bomb" and want a rapid solution. In considering the acceptability of this route, it is important, first of all, to note that the process has involved some cost, including the violation of rights with some intrinsic importance. Sometimes the enforcement of family size restriction has been very severely punitive. A recent article in *The New York Times* reports:

The villagers of Tongmuchong did not need any convincing on that day when Mrs. Liao, the family-planning official, threatened to blow up their houses. Last year, in the neighboring village of Xiaoxi, a man named Huang Fuqu, along with his