# Article information:

Meet the New Population-Control Movement - The Atlantic  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/03/population-control-movement-climate-malthusian-similarities/673450/>

# Article summary:

1. Some climate activists are advocating for population control as a solution to global warming, citing family planning and education as leading solutions.

2. This idea can be traced back to Thomas Malthus in the 18th century, who argued against aid to poor Britons on the grounds that they consumed too many resources.

3. While education and access to birth control are preferable to forced sterilization, solutions that emphasize better growth instead of slower growth have proved effective across history.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article "Meet the New Population-Control Movement" by The Atlantic discusses the resurgence of Malthusianism in the environmental movement, which emphasizes human population growth as the primary driver of environmental destruction. The author argues that this approach is analytically unsound and morally objectionable, as it treats people less as individuals with value and agency than as sentient locusts.

The article highlights how many climate activists view having children as the worst thing an individual can do from an emissions perspective. It also notes that some climate advocacy groups list family planning and education to lower fertility rates as leading solutions to global warming. However, the author argues that proposals such as modern energy infrastructure, high-productivity agriculture, and access to global markets are more effective solutions to environmental decline than slower growth.

The article provides historical context by tracing Malthusianism back to Thomas Malthus's 18th-century argument against aid to poor Britons on the grounds that they consumed too many of the nation's resources. The author notes that human societies have repeatedly proved they can escape the Malthusian trap, and agricultural productivity has improved to support a British population seven times larger than in Malthus's time and a global population eight times larger.

The article also highlights how conservationist and eugenicist theories have long been intertwined. For example, William Vogt proposed offering sterilization bonuses to poor people since such a bonus would appeal primarily to shiftless individuals who would probably have a favorable selective influence. Vogt was also the national director for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, which has recently reckoned with its founder Margaret Sanger's eugenicist commitments.

The article notes that intellectual descendants of Paul Ehrlich continue to sell old Malthusian wine in new bottles. Ehrlich warned about food shortages but was primarily concerned about our influence on the natural world. He lost a bet with libertarian economist Julian Simon over resource scarcity, but his warnings about overpopulation led powerful institutions such as the Population Council and International Planned Parenthood Federation to fund fertility-reduction programs that led to millions of sterilizations in China, India, Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and elsewhere.

Overall, while the article provides valuable historical context on Malthusianism and its links with eugenics and conservationism, it presents a one-sided view of population control without exploring counterarguments or evidence for claims made. The author argues against slower growth approaches without providing evidence for why modern energy infrastructure or high-productivity agriculture are more effective solutions. Additionally, while highlighting potential risks associated with population control policies such as forced sterilization or government interference in people's lives, it does not explore potential benefits or alternative approaches such as education or voluntary family planning programs.

# Topics for further research:

* Evidence for the effectiveness of modern energy infrastructure and high-productivity agriculture in addressing environmental decline
* Counterarguments to the Malthusian approach to population control
* Benefits and drawbacks of voluntary family planning programs
* Historical examples of successful population growth management without resorting to coercion or eugenics
* The role of education in reducing fertility rates and promoting sustainable development
* The impact of population growth on resource depletion
* climate change
* and biodiversity loss.

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/bbc7d9c19c68a24a9e41f43255d3049d>