

Lesson 4: Freedom for Excellence

PURPOSE

To motivate students to use their freedom for excellence to defend human dignity as the basis for human rights.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between freedom of indifference and freedom for excellence.
2. Recognize coercion as a violation of freedom and basic human rights.
3. Recognize the correct and incorrect understanding of freedom in the context of human rights.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Population Posters from around the World worksheet
- Chelsea Follett: A History of Neo-Malthusianism
- [Video](#): What it was like to grow up under China's one-child policy | Nanfu Wang

VOCABULARY

- Freedom for excellence: performing intentional actions in a way that respects one's dignity and that of others, leading to human excellence
- Freedom of indifference: performing intentional actions carelessly, failing to consider one's dignity or the dignity of others
- Political freedom: the freedom in which a State allows everyone to act according to truth and justice
- Informed consent: having the information and education needed to make truly free and responsible decisions

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Recall that integrating one's emotions with the power to think and to choose maximizes the opportunities for emotions to be good and reliable allies in decision making. An emotional response that is not integrated with reality can serve to justify a logical bias. In Ehrlich's case, his feelings of being overcrowded led him to promote coercive population control policies, causing serious human rights violations.

Recall the distinction between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference:

Freedom for excellence: performing intentional actions in a way which respects one's dignity and that of others, leading to human excellence

Freedom of indifference: performing intentional actions carelessly; failing to consider one's dignity or the dignity of others

Highlight that one should always strive to practice freedom for excellence, living in a way that respects the dignity of ourselves and others. A just government should allow its citizens to pursue freedom for excellence on the social and political level by granting them political freedom. Write the definition of political freedom on the board:

Political freedom: the freedom in which the State allows everyone to act according to truth and justice

Political freedom involves freedom of speech, freedom to form associations of like-minded people (freedom of assembly), freedom to act according to one's conscience (freedom of conscience), freedom to practice one's religion of choice, freedom of the press, freedom to vote and to run for public office, etc. A government that does not grant these basic freedoms can be rightly called unjust.

Step 2: Another basic freedom is the freedom to found a family. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the family as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society"¹⁷ and states that "men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family [...]"¹⁸ and that the family is "entitled to protection by society and the state"¹⁹.

The Final Act of the International UN-Conference on Human Rights affirms, that women have: "the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children"²⁰. Nevertheless, in the context of modern day population control policies, these basic human rights and freedoms are violated.

¹⁷ The United Nations: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Proclamation of Teheran, Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights, Teheran, 22 April to 13 May 1968, U.N. Doc. A/CONF. 32/41 at 3 (1968), Statement 16.

Divide the class into groups and have students read the article: [A History of Neo-Malthusianism](#). Lead the class in discussion by asking the provided questions at the end of the text.

Step 3: Explain that international aid (foreign aid) can be used as a form of coercion, applying pressure on poorer countries through funding (or withholding funding), gain of access strategies (e.g., promises of opening networks to a country if certain policy is adopted) or by threat (e.g., tarnishing the image of a country; withdrawing support). Some forms of state coercion, include:

1. COERCION BY PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE

This type of coercion is often carried out through the help of media and culture, weaponizing social ostracization or stigmatizing certain behaviors or attitudes in order to coerce individuals, families, groups, etc.. "A victim may be subjected to various types of coercive influence, anxiety and stress-producing tactics over time."²¹

2. COERCION BY ECONOMIC PRESSURE

Often called "soft" force, economic pressure is when someone may risk losing their job or face unreasonable fines or financial penalties for failing to submit. Likewise, the promotion of family planning through incentive payments to people who may be unduly influenced by the payments to undergo procedures or use services that they would not otherwise have chosen is coercive because it uses economic pressure.

3. COERCION BY FORCE

In this kind of coercion, individuals lack the information or knowledge to give informed consent and are physically forced to undergo certain procedures.

Step 4: Give students the [Population Posters from around the World](#) worksheets. Have students identify which type of coercion is at play in each poster and briefly explain how the image is designed to convey certain emotions or ideas. Use the Answer Key provided to review their responses.

²¹ Psychological Coercion, available at https://theneurotypical.com/psychological_coercion.html (last visited Nov 29, 2022).

Have the class watch the [video](#): What it was like to grow up under China's one-child policy | Nanfu Wang

Explain that in several countries which implement population control policies, people are often forced to undergo procedures that violate their dignity and their right to freely make decisions for their family. China is perhaps the best-known example of a coercive one-child policy that fundamentally denies human freedom and violates basic human rights. But other examples of state-sponsored coercive population programs, including: India, Vietnam, Puerto Rico, and the United States.

1. India

In the face of the perceived challenges associated with population growth, India reformulated its National Population Policy in 2000 with the goal of achieving long-term population stabilisation by 2045.²² Although the government purports to be committed to the 'voluntary and informed choice' of citizens, India has continually implemented coercive programmes. Sterilization camps, under the direction of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975, serve as the most egregious example of coercive practices. In these camps, rural Indians were forced to undergo vasectomies, leading to the sterilization of more than 6 million men in one year alone.²³ Currently, programs like Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh (National Population Stabilization Fund) provide flat nationwide payments for people who decide to undergo sterilization. The Prerna (responsible parenthood) programme provides financial incentives to young couples and its public-private partnerships offer powerful incentives for performing more sterilizations on a larger scale.²⁴

2. Vietnam

Starting in the 1960s, communist Vietnam enforced a two-child policy. Individuals who did not use contraceptives sometimes had their names announced over the intercom system of the village to shame them into using them, whereas individuals who did could be selected to win the Labor Medal for "good realization of the population – family planning program"²⁵. In 2003 the two-child policy ended, but in 2005 the Population Ordinance was reversed, to state that each couple and individual has the right and responsibility to decide time and birth spacing; "have one or two children", with "exceptional cases to be determined by the Government."²⁶

22 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Population Policy- Various Initiatives Taken Under National Family Planning Programme Providing Broad Range of Services, available at <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseSelfFramePage.aspx?PRID=1740753> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

23 Ramya Jawahar Kudekallu, India's Forced Sterilization Practices Under International Human Rights Law, *Völkerrechtsblog*, 10.03.2022, doi: 10.17176/20220310-120951-0., available at <https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/indias-forced-sterilization-practices-under-international-human-rights-law/> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

24 Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh (Population Stabilization Fund): <https://healthmarketinnovations.org/program/prerna-incentives-responsible-parenthood> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

25 Knudsen, Lara (30 June 2006). *Reproductive Rights in a Global Context: South Africa, Uganda, Peru, Denmark, United States, Vietnam, Jordan* (1 ed.). Vanderbilt University Press. pp. 139–168. ISBN 978-0-8265-1528-5.

26 Vietnam Re-introduces Two-Child Policy by Chi-Viet Giang 09/12/08, available at <https://www.dw.com/en/vietnam-re-introduces-two-child-policy/a-5213122> (last visited Nov 23, 2022).

Depending on the specific location, district governments can charge fines ranging from 60 to 800 kilograms of paddy rice, equivalent to a month to a year's wages, for each additional child, whereas women who agree to be sterilized are often given bonuses of 120 to 400 kilograms of rice. There is evidence of coercive sterilisation campaigns in the Central Highland Mountains. The Montagnard Foundation asserts that the ongoing allegations and personal testimony of Degar Montagnard people indicate that abuse continues today, including forced surgical sterilization.²⁷

3. Puerto Rico

A 1965 survey of Puerto Rican residents found that about one-third of all Puerto Rican mothers, ages 20–49, were sterilized. To put this figure in context, women of childbearing age in Puerto Rico in the 1960s were more than 10 times more likely to be sterilized than women from the United States. These shocking findings suggested that systematic bias influenced the practice of sterilization, not just in Puerto Rico, but in the United States as well. Since the United States assumed governance of Puerto Rico in 1898, population control had been a major effort. The United States, citing concerns that overpopulation of the island would lead to disastrous social and economic conditions, instituted public policies aimed at controlling the rapid growth of the population. The passage of Law 116 in 1937 signified the institutionalization of the population control program.²⁸ This program, designed by the Eugenics Board, was intended to “catalyze economic growth”.²⁹ U.S. policy promoted the use of permanent sterilization. Institutionalized encouragement of sterilization through the use of door-to-door visits by health workers, financial subsidy of the operation, and industrial employer favoritism toward sterilized women pushed women towards having a hysterectomy or tubal ligation (i.e., “tying the tubes”). The coercive strategies used by these institutions denied women access to informed consent. More than one-third of the women in the 1968 study did not know that sterilization through tubal ligation was a permanent form of contraception. The euphemism “tying the tubes” made women think the procedure was easily reversible.³⁰

4. The USA

As early as 1907, the United States had instituted public policy that gave the government the right “to sterilize unwilling and unwitting people.” Similar laws were passed in 32 states. These policies listed the “insane,” the “feeble-minded,” the “dependent,” and the “diseased” as incapable of regulating their own reproductive abilities, therefore justifying government-forced sterilizations.³¹

²⁷ Knudsen, Lara. Reproductive Rights in a Global Context: South Africa, Uganda, Peru, Denmark, United States, Vietnam, Jordan.

²⁸ When Medicine is Violent: The Harmful Legacy of Eugenics and Medical Racism, *First Pres*, available at <https://medium.com/firstpres/when-medicine-is-violent-the-harmful-legacy-of-eugenics-and-medical-racism-f8dd02ab94a7> (last visited Nov 23, 2022).

²⁹ Sterilization Abuse: The Policies Behind the Practice, National Women's Health Network, 1996, available at <https://nwhn.org/sterilization-abuse-the-policies-behind-the-practice/> (last visited Dec 1, 2022).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ When Medicine is Violent: *First Pres*.

In 1927, the Supreme Court case *Buck v. Bell* upheld a compulsory sterilization law in Virginia. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes delivered the sentence with the conclusion: “Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”³² Beginning in 1909 and continuing for 70 years, California led the country in the number of sterilization procedures performed on men and women, often without their full knowledge and consent. Approximately 20,000 sterilizations took place in state institutions, comprising one-third of the total number performed in the 32 states where such action was legal. California’s eugenics program inspired the similar programs implemented by the Nazi regime in Germany. Some states, notably including North Carolina, set up Eugenics Boards in the early 20th century.³³

These boards reviewed petitions from government and private agencies to impose sterilization on poor, unwed, and/or mentally disabled women, children and men. North Carolina alone sterilized over 7600 individuals between the 1930 and 1970s. Latina women in Puerto Rico, New York City, and California were specifically targeted by the government for sterilization throughout the 20th century. Black women have also long been the targets of population control and have been disproportionately affected by sterilization abuse. In North Carolina, a state noted for its discriminatory practices in the 20th century, 65 percent of sterilization procedures were performed on black women, even though only 25 percent of the state’s female population is black. “Mississippi appendectomies” was another name for unnecessary hysterectomies performed at teaching hospitals in the South on women of color as practice for medical students.³⁴

Step 5: As discussed, freedom of excellence is closely tied to the power to think. “The right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children” is essentially connected to the right “to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.”

To be able to practice freedom for excellence, governments ought to support people in making informed and educated choices. Write the definition of informed consent on the board:

Informed consent: having the information and education needed to make truly free and responsible decisions

32 “Three Generations of Imbeciles are Enough” — The Case of *Buck v. Bell* May 2, 1917, available at <https://education.blogs.archives.gov/2017/05/02/buck-v-bell/> (last visited Nov 23, 2022).

33 Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the United States, *Independent Lens*, PBS, available at <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states> (last visited Nov 23, 2022).

34 Ibid.

Several human rights treaties ensure this right. Article 10(h) of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) requires States to ensure women and men equal “access to specific educational information”³⁵. This includes “the right to be fully informed, by properly trained personnel, of their options in agreeing to treatment or research, including likely benefits and potential adverse effects of proposed procedures and available alternatives.”³⁶

Step 6: Summarize. Recall how coercion occurs in population control policies and how freedom for excellence through informed consent is important for making truly free decisions. Highlight once more how coercion threatens human dignity by treating persons as objects rather than subjects.

If students are interested in learning more, there the article [‘Exploding Population Myths’](#) published by the Fraser Institute of Canada in 1995, that further details the history.

35 CEDAW Part III, Article 10(h).

36 CEDAW General Recommendation 24, para 20.

Population Posters from around the World

The following are family planning posters from around the world. For each image, circle which type(s) of coercion the image uses and briefly explain how the image works (what emotions does the image make you feel, or what kinds of ideas does the image make you think about?)

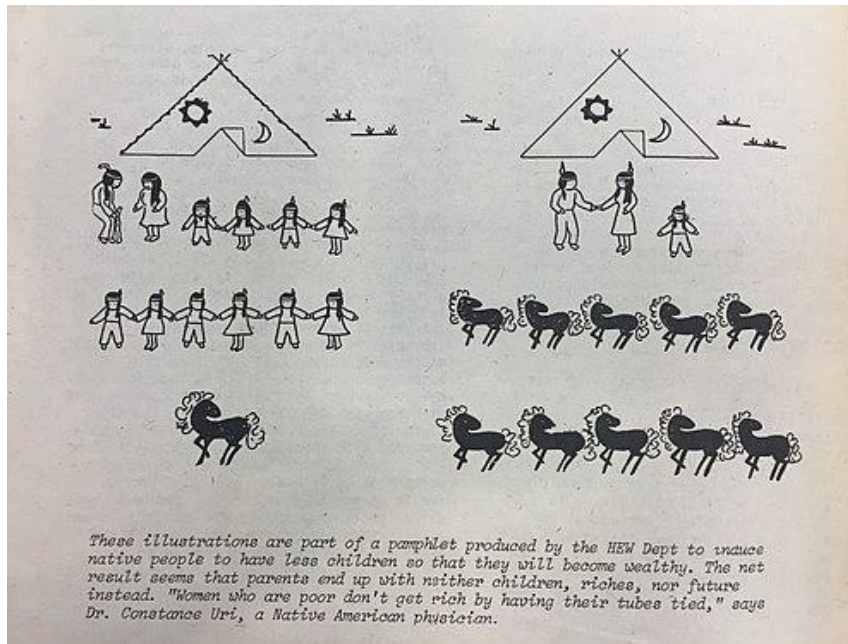
For Example:



Type of Coercion: Psychological Economic Force

Explain: I would say that the image uses both psychological coercion and force.

Psychological because the poster draws the world as a bomb, which is threatening, but also a kind of force as the image shows scissors (“population control”) that are cutting the ticking time bomb before it goes off. In this way, it’s showing that force is needed to save us from the many people on the planet, drawn in the image as completely covering the whole surface of the earth.



1. Illustration from a sterilization pamphlet by the US Health Education and Welfare Department. Native American physician Dr. Constance Redbird Uri commented, "Women who are poor don't get rich by having their tubes tied."

Type of coercion: Psychological Economic Force

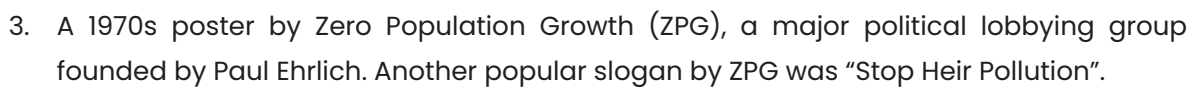
Explain:



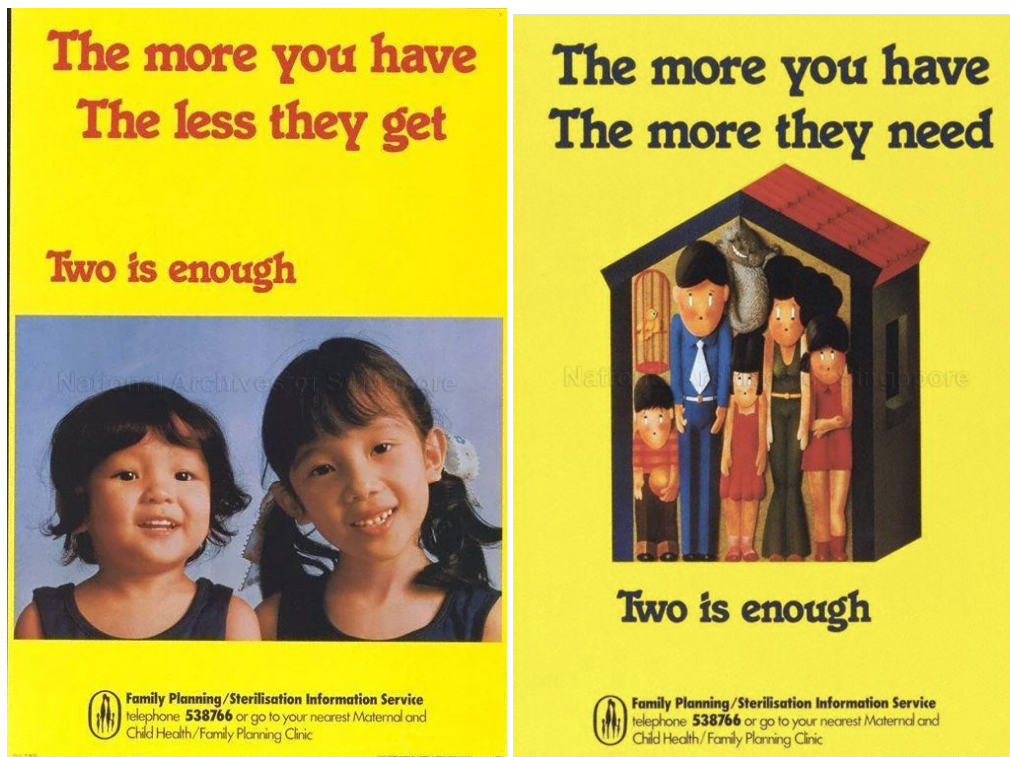
2. "Giving birth to one is better" says the poster on the left and "Eugenics causes happiness" says the poster on the right, by the Communist Party of China.

Type of coercion:

Explain:



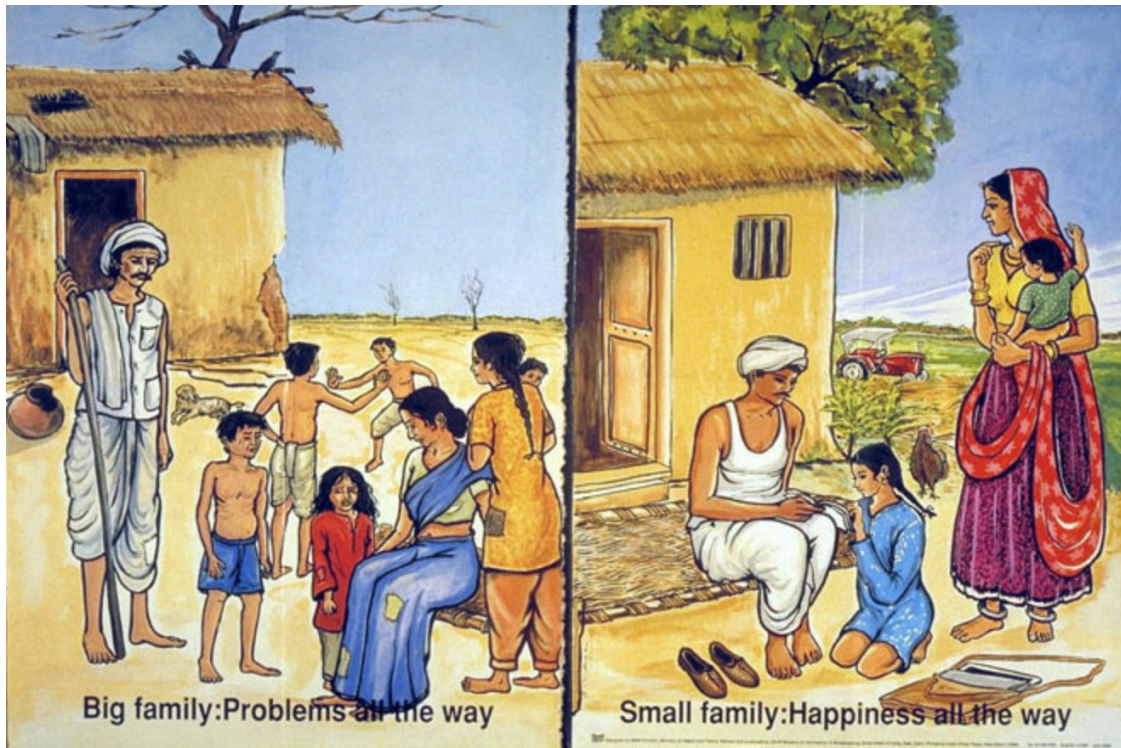
Explain:



4. Posters from the “Stop at Two” campaign in Singapore, 1970s.

Type of coercion:

Explain:



5. A 1992 poster from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India presents two contrasting possibilities: *Big family: Problems all the way* and *Small family: Happiness all the way*.

Type of coercion:

Explain:

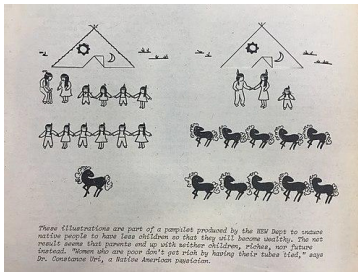


6. A 1992 poster from Kenya: "Jobs are scarce. Have few children."

Type of coercion:

Explain:

Population Posters – Answer Key for the teacher



1.

Type of coercion: **Psychological Economic Force**

Explain: On the left, the image depicts a couple, the woman is overweight and the man appears bent with a cane, while there are ten children and only one horse. On the right, a young couple are holding hands, with one small child (a boy) and ten horses. The image leads you to believe that a couple with one child will be happier and with more livestock they'll be prosperous.



2.

Type of coercion: **Psychological Economic Force**

Explain: The images explicitly state the aims of the posters, which is that you will be happier and better off with one child. The image on the left shows a mother, father and little girl, happily displaying their ribbon and certificate for following the one-child policy of the communist party. On the right hand side, the image shows a young boy raising a card of the communist party, while the mother dotingly observes the boy sitting on a table full of fresh fruit and other goodies.

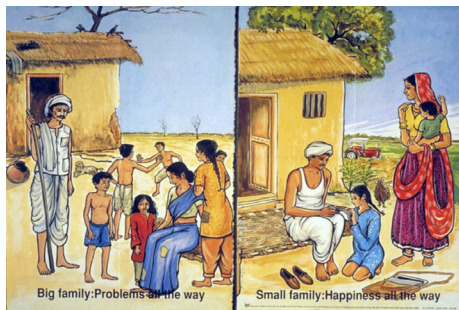


Explain: The image depicts a birthday cake map of the world, with candles covering every square inch of the continents, aflame. The text “the earth can’t handle many more birthday parties” makes a happy occasion feel ominous and perilous, as if one more birth(day) will trigger a global catastrophe.



Explain: In these two posters, the coercion is both psychological and economic in nature. The message is that if you have more than two you're doing your children or your family a disservice, as you and your children won't have the resources they need. As every good parent wants the best for their child, the text preys on psychological feelings of guilt, warning: "the more you have, the less they get". The posters are based on scarcity economics, to convince couples that having more than one or two children is a reckless gamble, risking your child's bright future.

5.



Type of coercion: **Psychological Economic Force**

Explain: The image uses both psychological and economic coercion, as the image on the left shows a larger family with tattered clothes, unhappy looks on their faces (two boys are fighting) and a run down house. Even the tree is bare! Contrasted with the image on the right, the family with two children appears to be happy, they are all well dressed, the daughter is attentively kneeling at the feet of her father, while the house is in good condition with a new window and even the tree is covered in leaves.

6.



Type of coercion: **Psychological Economic Force**

Explain: A chain link fence, people pushing and crowding and policemen pointing, combine to create an image evoking psychological fear. The statement “jobs are scarce” and then in caps: “have few children” makes you feel like you’ll risk losing your job – or worse – if you have more than a “few” children. A man in a suit passes under a chain-link fence door, as the police officer appears to be pointing and telling him to go. Without the text, the image could be read as sending the man to jail, and in this way, the image threatens a coercion by force.

Chelsea Follett: A History of Neo-Malthusianism³⁷

In 1798, English clergyman Thomas Robert Malthus published *An Essay on the Principle of Population as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society*, warning that out-of-control population growth would deplete resources and bring widespread famine. His preferred solution was to decrease birth rates by delaying marriage, but if that proved insufficient, he endorsed extreme measures to slash population growth. To prevent famine, he thought it morally permissible to “court the return of the plague” by having the poor live in swamps and even entertained the idea of banning “specific remedies for ravaging diseases.”³⁸ [...]

After Malthus died, the Industrial Revolution transformed Western society. It created unprecedented prosperity. Food became more plentiful even as the population grew. Malthusianism seemed disproven. Moreover, increased wealth led to more funding for sanitation, hospitals, and education and a decline in child mortality. That allowed for smaller family sizes and resulted in a decline in fertility.

In the early 20th century, as mortality rates among the poor declined, the “eugenics” movement emerged. It sought to prevent allegedly inferior people from reproducing. Roughly 70,000 people were forcibly sterilized in the 20th century under eugenic legislation in the United States alone.³⁹ Eugenacists and Malthusians often allied in policymaking, as they both believed that childbearing should be limited for people they deemed undeserving.⁴⁰

In 1952, population control and family planning activist Margaret Sanger, who was motivated by both eugenics (see her 1920 book, *Women and the New Race*) and Malthusianism, gave an address in Mumbai.⁴¹ In her speech she claimed that Mahatma Gandhi, the man who led India’s successful campaign for independence from British rule, once told her that he supported limiting couples to four children to combat “overpopulation.” She opined:

37 Neo-Malthusianism and Coercive Population Control in China and India: Overpopulation Concerns Often Result in Coercion, by Chelsea Follett, *Cato Institute*, available at <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/neo-malthusianism-coercive-population-control-china-india-overpopulation-concerns> (last visited Nov 23, 2022).

38 Thomas Robert Malthus, “Of the Consequences of Pursuing the Opposite Mode: Book IV, Chapter V,” in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: John Murray, 1826), http://www.econlib.org/library/Malthus/malPlong.html?chapter_num=47#book-reader.

39 “The Supreme Court Ruling That Led to 70,000 Forced Sterilizations,” NPR, March 7, 2016.

40 Adolf Hitler, for example, became obsessed with the Malthusian idea that available resources limit population and thereby justified military expansionism. See Ken McCormick “Madmen in Authority: Adolf Hitler and the Malthusian Population Thesis,” *Journal of Economic Insight* 32, no. 2 (2006): 1–8; see also Hitler’s words from *Mein Kampf*: “The annual increase of population in Germany amounts to almost 900,000 souls. The difficulties of providing for this army of new citizens must grow from year to year and must finally lead to a catastrophe, unless ways and means are found which will forestall the danger of misery and hunger,” as quoted in Bryan Caplan, “Hitler’s Argument for Conquest,” *EconLog*, March 19, 2005; and Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 84.

41 Margaret Sanger, “The Goal,” in *Woman and the New Race* (New York: Brentano’s, 1920).

“[...] Those who do not have the individual initiative and intelligence to plan and control the size of their families should be assisted, guided, and directed in every way to eliminate the undesirable offspring, who usually contribute nothing to our civilization but use up the energy and resources of the world.”⁴²

The year she gave that address, Sanger founded the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), a global nongovernmental family planning organization that went on to provide technical assistance to China’s coercive one-child program.

The 1960s and 1970s saw rapid global population growth as economic development and the spread of medicine and scientific knowledge continued to lower mortality rates. During that time, Malthus’s view became resurgent, replacing eugenics as the primary motivation behind population control policies. In 1960, world population reached 3 billion. By 1975, it reached 4 billion. Rich countries’ governments started to fear that poor countries’ burgeoning populations would deplete the world’s limited resources, according to development economist Betsy Hartmann of Hampshire College.⁴³ Neo-Malthusianism was born.

As early as 1959, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recommended that aid be given to “developing countries who establish programs to check population growth.”⁴⁴ In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson made U.S. foreign aid dependent on countries adopting population control policies.⁴⁵ [...] In 1977, the head of that office [Office of Population], Reimert Ravenholt, said he hoped to sterilize a quarter of the world’s women.⁴⁶ [...]

42 Emphasis added. Margaret Sanger, “The Humanity of Family Planning” (speech, Third International Conference on Planned Parenthood, Bombay [Mumbai], India, November 26, 1952).

43 Quoted in Mike Gallagher, “Population Control: Is it a Tool of the Rich?,” BBC, October 28, 2011.

44 Quoted in Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1995 and 2016), p. 100.

45 For example, see Lyndon Johnson’s remarks in Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, 1 Pub. Papers 3 (January 12, 1966): “I recommend that you give a new and daring direction to our foreign aid program . . . to help those nations that are trying to control population growth”; and Remarks in Independence, Mo., at a Ceremony in Connection with the Establishment of the Harry S. Truman Center for the Advancement of Peace, 1 Pub. Papers 42 (January 20, 1966): “The hungry world cannot be fed until and unless the growth in its resources and the growth in its population come into balance. . . . We will give our help and our support to nations which . . . ensure an effective balance between the numbers of their people and the food they have to eat”; and in 1966, Johnson signed the “Food for Peace Act,” which required United States Agency for International Development officers to pressure the governments of famine-stricken countries to take steps to reduce their population in exchange for food aid, Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection*, p. 33.

46 Paul Wagman, “U.S. Goal: Sterilizations of Millions of World’s Women,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 22, 1977.

In 1969, the UN launched the UNFPA, which promoted the view that population growth was at the root of environmental problems and poverty, blaming the world's poorest people in particular. The "bottom billion often impose greater environmental injury than" all the other people "put together", the UNFPA said in 1992.⁴⁷ Increasingly prominent neo-Malthusians "spoke of a war on population growth", notes Matthew Connelly, a historian at Columbia University.⁴⁸ "The war would entail sacrifices, and collateral damage," Connelly wrote. "Poor countries were pressed to accept population programs and rich countries were expected to pay for them."⁴⁹

[...]

The increasingly popular goal of lowering the population justified coercive policies in the minds of some scholars. [...]

By the 1980s, the background document to the International Conference on Family Planning, cowritten by the UNFPA, IPPF, and Population Council, decreed,

"When provision of contraceptive information and services does not bring down the fertility level quickly enough to help speed up development, governments may decide to *limit the freedom* of choice of the present generation."

Many people saw coercion as acceptable because the overpopulation problem was deemed so urgent.

In a 1991 interview with the UNESCO Courier, the famed oceanographer Jacques Cousteau opined that humanity should not try to cure diseases because population "must be stabilized and to do that we must eliminate 350,000 people per day."⁵⁰ [...] In 2002, the UNFPA stated its mission to be "the universally accepted aim of stabilizing world population" to protect "the natural resources on which all life depends," but its use of the word "stabilization" was misleading [...]. Nafis Sadik, a former executive director of the UNFPA, clarified that stabilization meant "stabilization of world population at the lowest possible level, within the shortest period of time."⁵¹ [...]

47 Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*, p. 25; and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Population, Resources, and the Environment: The Critical Challenges* (New York: UNFPA, 1991), pp. 18–19.

48 Quoted in Gallagher, "Population Control," BBC, October 28, 2011.

49 Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, p. 379.

50 Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat, "Interview with Jacques-Yves Cousteau," *UNESCO Courier*, November 1991, pp. 8–13.

51 Nicholas Eberstadt, *Population, Poverty, Policy: Essential Essays from Nicholas Eberstadt*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Washington: American Enterprise Institute Press, 2018), pp. 18–19.

The prevalence of neo-Malthusian doctrine among international organizations, government leaders and philanthropies became widespread. Through these groups, neo-Malthusians exerted moral pressure, sought converts to their cause, and offered financial incentives, rewarding governments in poor countries that enacted population control measures while sounding no alarms if those measures became coercive.

The results were catastrophic. [...]

QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:

How did Malthus view the human person? As a subject or object?

What did Malthus propose could be done to decrease birth rates among the poor?

What other movement was at the heart of population control policies?

How were population control policies implemented around the world?

Do population control policies tend to affirm or deny personal freedom for excellence?

Answer Key for the teacher

1. **How did Malthus view the human person? As a subject or an object?** Malthus viewed the human person as an object, as he believed that some people needed to be limited or discarded for the sake of the collective.
2. **What did Malthus' propose could be done to decrease birth rates among the poor?** Malthus' preferred solution was to decrease birth rates by delaying marriage, but if that proved insufficient, he endorsed extreme measures to slash population growth. To prevent famine, he thought it morally permissible to "court the return of the plague" by having the poor live in swamps and even entertained the idea of banning "specific remedies for ravaging diseases.
3. **What other movement was at the heart of population control?** Like Malthusianism advocates, the eugenics movement also sought to prevent allegedly inferior people from reproducing.

"Roughly 70,000 people were forcibly sterilized in the 20th century under eugenic legislation in the United States alone.⁵² Eugenacists and Malthusians often allied in policymaking, as they both believed that childbearing should be limited for people they deemed undeserving."

4. **How did population control policies spread around the world?**

"As early as 1959, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recommended that aid be given to "developing countries who establish programs to check population growth."⁵³ In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson made U.S. foreign aid dependent on countries adopting population control policies.[...] In 1977, the head of that office [Office of Population], Reimert Ravenholt, said he hoped to sterilize a quarter of the world's women.⁵⁴"

5. **Do population control policies tend to affirm or deny personal freedom for excellence?** Population control policies view the person as a problem, rather than a thinking and choosing subject capable of pursuing freedom for excellence in decision making.

The increasingly popular goal of lowering the population justified coercive policies in the minds of some scholars. [...] By the 1980s, the background document to the International Conference on Family Planning, cowritten by the UNFPA, IPPF, and Population Council, decreed,

⁵² "The Supreme Court Ruling That Led to 70,000 Forced Sterilizations," NPR, March 7, 2016.

⁵³ Quoted in Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1995 and 2016), p. 100.

⁵⁴ Paul Wagman, "U.S. Goal: Sterilizations of Millions of World's Women," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 22, 1977.

“When provision of contraceptive information and services does not bring down the fertility level quickly enough to help speed up development, governments may decide to *limit the freedom* of choice of the present generation.”