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# What To Expect When No One's Expecting: America's Coming Demographic Disaster



## Synopsis

Look around you and think for a minute: Is America too crowded? For years, we have been warned about the looming danger of overpopulation: people jostling for space on a planet that's bursting at the seams and running out of oil and food and land and everything else. It's all bunk. The "population bomb" never exploded. Instead, statistics from around the world make clear that since the 1970s, we've been facing exactly the opposite problem: people are having too few babies. Population growth has been slowing for two generations. The world's population will peak, and then begin shrinking, within the next fifty years. In some countries, it's already started. Japan, for instance, will be half its current size by the end of the century. In Italy, there are already more deaths than births every year. China's One-Child Policy has left that country without enough women to marry its men, not enough young people to support the country's elderly, and an impending population contraction that has the ruling class terrified. And all of this is coming to America, too. In fact, it's already here. Middle-class Americans have their own, informal one-child policy these days. And an alarming number of upscale professionals don't even go that far—they have dogs, not kids. In fact, if it weren't for the wave of immigration we experienced over the last thirty years, the United States would be on the verge of shrinking, too. What happened? Everything about modern life—from Bugaboo strollers to insane college tuition to government regulations—has pushed Americans in a single direction, making it harder to have children. And making the people who do still want to have children feel like second-class citizens. What to Expect When No One's Expecting explains why the population implosion happened and how it is remaking culture, the economy, and politics both at home and around the world. Because if America wants to continue to lead the world, we need to have more babies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The UN projects that world population, currently around seven billion, will peak over the next eighty-five years between ten billion and twelve billion people before starting a long and inexorable decline. Which is, Last argues, precisely the real cataclysm humanity faces. An extremely sharp writer with a great eye for telling details and revealing anecdotes *What To Expect When No One's Expecting* is a rich and detailed read, well worth the price of admission just for Last's cogent summarizing of long-term demographic trends. â "Nick Gillespie --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"A powerful argument that the only thing worse than having children is not having them. I'm reading *What To Expect When No One's Expecting* aloud to the three little arguments for birth control at my house in hope they'll quit squabbling and making messes and start acting so cute that all my neighbors decide to conceive." #151;P.J. Oâ™Rourke, Author of *Holidays in Heck*#147;This book explodes old ways of thinking. Not moralizing, not blaming, Jonathan Last peers methodically ahead at the cold consequences of plunging global birth rates: aging and ever smaller national populations, the fatal destruction of the financial premises of the welfare state, disappearing military strength. He describes the comfortable, happy childlessness chosen by more and more highly educated couples#151;lives of personal contentment, yes, but with unutterably sad national consequences. We are left to draw conclusions ourselves: The use of sex is not simply personal; the future of the whole human race hangs on it. Those who missed Ben Wattenbergâ™s *The Birth Dearth* (1987) have another chance to be shaken awake by the earthquake rumbling louder and faster beneath us.â•#151;Michael Novak, recipient of the Templeton Prize (1994), and author of *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*"Jonathan Last provides us with a well-written, well-argued description of one of the most profound, yet poorly understood phenomena of the 21st century: the world worldwide fall in birthrates and attendant rapid aging of the human population. He masterfully describes the key facts and concepts any literate person should know about the sea change in global demography and speculates wisely and soberly about the implications for the future of humanity. Avoiding the alarmism, sexism, and racial chauvinism that mars so such other writing on this subject, Last is an insightful and trustworthy guide."#151;Phillip Longman, Senior Fellow of the

New America Foundation and author of *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity And What To Do About It*"Jonathan Last's writing matches his reasoning: as clear as a shot of gin, and just as bracing. America is changing more quickly than ever before, and this book explains why. A terrific, important read."#151;Tucker Carlson, Editor of *The Daily Caller*"Jonathan Last's pulled off an amazing feat. He's written a book that's at once lively and profound, that deals with weighty matters with a light touch, and that explains a complex subject clearly. It might make you laugh, it could make you cry--but above all it will make you think."#151;William Kristol, Editor, *The Weekly Standard*"Imagine a merger of Mark Steyn and David Brooks with a Supreme Court imposed page limit."#151;Hugh Hewitt, Host, *The Hugh Hewitt Show*#147;The Malthusian paranoia of a coming population boom has nothing on the reality of a coming population implosion. Frankly it kinda makes a girl want to procreate.â •#151;S.E. Cupp --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

As we all know, economic growth depends on population growth. However, population growth takes a toll on nature and on personal finances. For many years through the 70's and 80's and 90's we read about the damages of uncontrolled population growth. But there was another drumbeat in the background; population decline. The author picks up the drumbeat of population decline, explains his methodology for determining population decline and goes on to cite the many drawbacks of aging and declining populations. It is thought provoking. I disagree with some of his assumptions, but there are some valid points also. It is a timely discussion

This is a very interesting, easy to read book, that those who have the "world is overpopulated" bee in their bonnet, should read. It explains in simple language the principles of demographics, and how women who do not have enough babies determine the future populations of their country.

Demographics is a freight train. Read this book.

The only thing to find fault with in the book is that he will not more fully discuss the faith factor inherent in those having babies. Maybe he thought it was enough to mention it and give a few trends. Maybe he doesn't want to label and get into a tangle. But the writing is great and humorous to boot. Last has done a thorough job explaining very disparate issues at play in why fewer and fewer people are having babies.

This book was recommended by a friend, and I found it absolutely fascinating. If you are even

remotely interested in demographics, I would pick this one up.

If you want a glimpse into America's future, then read this book. He makes the case that family is the foundation of a strong nation.

I read this book and liked it. I've read all the negative reviews, and frankly, I think that the folks that wrote those reviews are putting their politics ahead of the quality of the book and its arguments. That is to say, they aren't willing to take a look at what is bound to happen if it doesn't jive with their political outlook. The numbers are not controversial. They've been reported in the press for years--as soon as the baby boomers die off (in the US) and as soon as the generation born in the late 50's and early 60's in the third world die off, the population of the world will begin to decline. Don't believe this author if you don't like that he is a religious man, just look the numbers up on the internet (the UN has them) and you can see for yourself. This book is written in a very conversational style that is very easy to grasp. His numbers are clear and all of them are cited. He gives a comprehensible prognosis and suggestions to avoid what the author deems will be a huge disaster. I never felt that the author was pushing his ideology on me, although he was clear as to what his values were. The author's values are not mine, but I am happy to listen to him and hear his very interesting argument. I give this book 4 stars instead of 5 because, although he was clear, the author never made me feel that the population going down would be such a devastating thing. Social security will be destroyed, here and in all the developed world. China will have a huge mess trying to support its aging population. But, since this book is taking the long view (none of this mess is expected to take place for 50 years or so) I wasn't convinced that the long view for population decline (after the disruption caused by the initial shock) would be so bad. Many of us alive today will see the strain put on society by fewer workers having to pay for more Social Security recipients (and other elders in the rest of the world) but none of us alive today, will live long enough to see the final outcome. I think there will be great disruption, but I think it may all turn out very happily with a smaller population. So, although I don't agree with the author on all points, there is no controversy about his data. The population is going to go down. The question is what happens next. That is where I disagree with this author, but I certainly enjoyed my "discussion" with him as I read the book.

I'm still in progress on this book as of this review, but this far it is eye opening and very intriguing. Last's writing is clear, his dissection and interpretation of the statistics is easy to understand, and he

even injects some humor into it.

"What to Expect..." is filled with data but is not long winded or dull. Last draws reasonable conclusions from the data based on the fact that in the West, our countries and our social programs require a population that continually grows.

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