

## How Many People can the Earth Support

Joel Cohen

Plays with all the assumptions and variables to get a wide range of numbers

The most relevant question is "Support in what style?" The Earth could support vastly more people living like they do in rural India than in modern America.

We see what has happened to India and China in the years since publication. They are getting richer; automobile use is exploding. Therefore, the lower end of his estimates, five billion, appears more likely.

A trend which Cohen certainly didn't predict is that vast decrease in fertility. It is below the replacement rate (2.1 children per woman) in countries accounting for the majority of the world population. It is vastly below replacement in every country dominated by whites and north Asians, the peoples who are driving the world economy. There has been an abrupt cultural shift in those places. Having children is not valued or supported by the society. Individuals are not encouraged (much) to marry and have children. Conversely, lifestyles / sexuality decisions inconsistent with having kids are gaining recognition everywhere.

Cohen's groundwork is an essential support for analyzing more recent trends.