

# NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

## Press Release

*For immediate release*

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## NPG Releases New Forum Paper on Millennials' Impact on U. S. Population Growth and Sustainability

**Are the changing values of Millennials – the generation of Americans born between 1980 and 2000 – concerning family size, life-style, and resource use improving the prospects for a sustainable U.S. through lower population growth and reduced consumption?**

Alexandria, VA (November 13, 2017) NPG President Don Mann finds strong evidence for that view in a new Forum paper by NPG's senior economist and demographic researcher Edwin Rubenstein on [\*How Millennials Are Slowing U. S. Population Growth and Enhancing Sustainability\*](#). Mann hails the author's finding that, should the Millennials' trends continue, NPG's goal of a sustainable America is attainable.

Mann notes that the author conclusively documents how the U.S. fertility rate, already below replacement, declined 10.6 percent to 62.0 births per thousand U.S. women from 2007, when Millennials began entering their child-bearing years, to 2016. That fertility rate decline, the author determines, is driven entirely by millennial mothers in their teens and twenties. Another demographic indicator the author cites, the Intrinsic Rate of Natural Increase (projected population growth at zero immigration) has been negative for decades and plummeted sharply with the Great Recession and the entry of Millennials into child-bearing age.

Predictably, some are alarmed by this fall in fertility. But Mann notes that the author finds a growing acceptance among economists that a shrinking population is not necessarily a bad thing. According to Rubenstein, GDP growth may slow, but GDP per capita may well benefit. Fewer children could mean fewer workers in years ahead contributing to social security and Medicare. But Rubenstein notes that fewer children allow families to invest more in each child's education, thus increasing their productivity. The author cites China, Japan and Germany as countries where vibrant economies have co-existed for decades with below replacement fertility.

Mann points out that Rubenstein's work also provides extensive valuable analysis of the sources and

convictions of Millennialism that go beyond its demographic dimensions. He examines such contributing factors to Millennialism as the devastations of the Great Recession; the professionalization of women in the work force and the declining economic returns of marriage; the devaluation of the possession of such traditional American status symbols as homes and automobiles; and the preference for the “sharing economy” over ownership of things.

A major concern of NPG, according to Mann, is that high immigration is nullifying the long-term downward trends in U.S. fertility well documented in this Forum paper, preventing the stabilization of population and its ultimate reduction to a sustainable level for the long term. Mann affirms that Americans have, by their reproductive behavior since the late 1960s, voted overwhelmingly for population stability and reduction. But their legislators repeatedly override their preferences with expanded immigration intake.

Mann calls attention to Rubenstein’s conclusions in what he calls the “immigration wild card.” Rubenstein finds that birth rates among the foreign born, including Millennials, have been higher than those of the U.S. born. But recent data shows that the foreign born rate is now falling significantly faster in all foreign born age groups than among the U.S. born. He concludes that in matters of family size, immigrant Millennials have embraced the “smaller is better” ethos of their host nation.

Mann asks whether the author sees these trends as generational fads or as lasting changes in the fabric of U.S. society. Rubenstein is optimistic. He sees millennial values evolving in ways that that make a return to the old ways less likely. In his words, Millennials “. . . seem determined to break away from the spendthrift, materialistic ways of their baby boomer parents.” This transformation, the author concludes, will have enormous long-term benefits: a smaller U.S. population, a lower per capita carbon footprint, and a proliferation of renewable energy sources.

*Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at [www.NPG.org](http://www.NPG.org), follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter [@npg\\_org](#).*