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## Review of Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth? Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century, by Eric Kaufmann

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life course of individuals, considering not only individual risk factors but also those associated with the context in which each individual lives and works.

One should also add that, whatever study method is used, it is useful to control for the effect of the duration of exposure to each risk factor. It is widely known that smoking is detrimental to health, that starting to smoke when young and smoking for a long period can lead to lung cancer, and that giving up smoking can improve one's health and prospects for longer life. And, even when the theoretical framework of risk factors is as wide-ranging as possible, in practice unexplained differences in longevity will always emerge. For example, all other factors being equal, certain individuals will not develop a smoking-related disease if protected by genetic factors.

Obviously, fully explaining the differences in longevity between countries, or their development over time, is an impossible task. The analysis in this volume, for all the limitations acknowledged by the authors themselves, is a valuable reference point in the study of differential longevity. It has the merit of both describing divergent levels of longevity and offering and weighing explanations for the divergence. In addition, the authors recommend paths for further research and speculate about future longevity trends in various high-income countries. One's only regret is that the explanation of the differences in longevity is largely limited to understanding the reasons for the particular health-related behaviors of Americans.

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*Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth? Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*

London: Profile Books, 2011. xxii + 330 p. \$20.95.

To avoid suspense, Kaufmann's answer to the title's question is "yes." Demographers have traditionally looked upon religion as an independent variable that affects demographic variables, especially fertility. A Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London, Kaufmann sees religion as an independent variable that will increasingly affect politics in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. In his interpretation trends in fertility and immigration will increase the proportion of fundamentalist Christians, Jews, and Muslims in these regions, a change that may ultimately "replace reason and freedom with moral puritanism" (p. xiii). No widespread conversions will be needed to bring about religion's rise, according to Kaufmann. Children largely inherit their parents' religion, and fundamentalists have higher fertility than their more moderate religious brethren and much higher fertility than religiously skeptical "secularists." Such differential fertility, abetted by many religious immigrants arriving in Europe and the US, will produce populations at century's end that are considerably more religious than at present.

In the first two chapters Kaufmann summarizes the last 300 years of religious, economic, and demographic changes that have led to the current situation. The

Enlightenment in the West produced scientific and technological progress that not only increased economic productivity and improved life expectancy but also “disenchanted” the world and convinced most people that personal piety serves no purpose and that the state should be independent from religion. Thus “secularization” accompanied modernization and the transition from a demographic regime of high vital rates to one of low vital rates. Toward the end of the twentieth century, a second demographic transition occurred as universal access to modern contraception made fertility a matter of individual preferences, values, and cultural norms. Below-replacement fertility levels became commonplace in developed countries as more individuals sought personal fulfillment through material success rather than parenthood. Secularization proceeded apace but, according to Kaufmann, a Darwinian process took place among religious groups in response to secularism’s challenge, resulting in “new, resistant strains of religion” (p. 23) whose adherents consciously isolate themselves from social institutions and emphasize traditional family values. The most successful of these “endogenous growth sects” are the Hutterites, the Amish, ultra-Orthodox Jews, Salafist Muslims, and American Mormons, all of which “grow their own” members at rapid rates. Additionally, within each Hebraic faith more fundamentalist groups have evolved that are “pulling away from moderates and seculars” with respect to family size (p. xix). Therefore, Kaufmann contends, religion’s decline is only temporary: demography has become its secret weapon that will allow it to land a knock-out blow in the last round of its battle with secularism.

In the next four chapters Kaufmann presents illustrative historical treatments of the relationship between religion, fertility, and politics in the United States, the Muslim world, Europe, and Israel. Although brief, they are good introductions for readers interested in understanding the distinctive role that religion plays in these political arenas. The focus on fertility in the chapters on the US and Israel highlights some of the more unusual “endogenous growth sects” that have sprung up recently: the Quiverfull movement in the US, which has a fanciful plan to use high fertility to transform the country into a “fundamentalist dominion” within 200 years (p. 95); and the Haredim (ultra-Orthodox) in Israel, who have used their political status as swing voters to avoid military service and gain significant state subsidies to support large families and allow adult males to spend their days in Torah study. The chapters on Europe and the Muslim world focus more on the future: predicting how much more Muslim Europe will become as a result of fertility and migration trends; and identifying when a substantial fertility gap might appear between Islamists and their more moderate co-religionists as Muslim countries progress through their demographic transitions.

Although demography plays a leading role in this 330-page book, there are no tables and only two charts. Kaufmann writes that he collaborated with demographers at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria to produce projections of the 11 most populous US religious groups and projections of the Muslim population in eight European countries. These projections appear to be the empirical foundation for his claim that “the religious shall inherit the earth” (p. 269). He describes some results of the projections for the United States (pp. 90–93) and for Europe (pp. 181–183), but readers looking for particulars will have to consult two recently published articles.<sup>1</sup> A look at the published projections actually offers little

evidence of a significant increase in the share of the religious over the next 50 years. For instance, the current TFR of fundamentalist Protestants in the US is 2.13, very close to the national average of 2.08, and Kaufmann's IIASA demographers project that their share of the US population will fall from 19.5 percent to 16.7 percent over the projection period (2003–2043) while those with no religion will increase slightly from 17.0 percent to 17.4 percent.<sup>2</sup>

The proposition that the religious shall inherit the earth, therefore, might be more uncertain than Kaufmann suggests in this volume. This is true even in the Muslim world, especially since Iran experienced one of the world's most rapid fertility declines to below-replacement levels after the ayatollahs took the reins of power. Even in Israel's case, does it make sense to project that the Haredim will become a majority of Israel's population on the basis of their current TFR of 7.6? Already there is a net outflow from Israel of the non-Haredim who are subsidizing their growth. Can the Haredim survive as an "endogenous growth sect" in an Israel where they are a majority and must provide for a population with a median age of less than 15 with an education system focused on Torah study? In any case, with a global economy that is affecting the lives of an increasing portion of the world's population in significant ways, why assume that religion will be the dominant factor affecting future fertility trends? Wouldn't socioeconomic status and educational attainment be more likely candidates for that role?

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## Notes

1 For the US projections see Vegard Skirbekk, Eric Kaufmann, and Anne Goujon, "Secularism, fundamentalism, or Catholicism? The religious composition of the United States to 2043," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (2010), pp. 293–310. For the European projections see Eric Kaufmann, Anne Goujon,

and Vegard Skirbekk, "The end of secularization in Europe?: A socio-demographic perspective," *Sociology of Religion* (forthcoming), Advance Access first published online August 8, 2011, doi:10.1093/socrel/srr035.

2 "Secularism, fundamentalism, or Catholicism?," cited in note 1, p. 305.