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## Review of Disasters Without Borders: The International Politics of Natural Disasters, by John Hannigan.

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migration and differential fertility (for the latter, Toft's neologism is "wombfare"). Introductory and concluding chapters by Jack Goldstone offer a theoretical frame for political demography and a summary of the principal relationships discerned by the contributors. The editors, respectively, are at George Mason University, Birkbeck College (University of London), and Harvard's Kennedy School. Consolidated bibliography, index.—G.McN.

**JOHN A. HANNIGAN**

*Disasters Without Borders: The International Politics of Natural Disasters*

Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012. 195 p. \$24.95.

The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake off the coast of Sumatra resulted in a tsunami that devastated coastal areas of fourteen countries and killed more than 230,000 people. The 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami off the coast of Japan concentrated its impact on one country, but the ensuing meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant prompted countries around the world to make significant changes to their national energy policies. In the United States the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina (2005) and Hurricane Sandy (2012) have even convinced former climate-change skeptics that the world can expect more extreme weather events of greater destructive force. Natural disasters truly have no borders.

John Hannigan, an environmental sociologist at the University of Toronto, offers an insightful overview of the international politics of "disaster management." The first two chapters theoretically situate the study of natural disasters, and the next three present a perceptive history of international actors' changing perceptions of disasters. Throughout most of the twentieth century, disasters were considered to be episodic events of short duration that called for international humanitarian relief, a position inaugurated by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1860. After World War II a quartet of UN agencies (UNICEF, IRO, FAO, and WHO) and key NGOs (CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, and World Vision) joined in the effort to establish an international disaster relief network. But during the 1980s and 1990s disasters seemed to become more severe in terms of fatalities and property damage, especially in developing countries. Many commentators began asserting that the international community needed to "make a safer world" by initiating disaster risk reduction programs. Poor communities built on slopes prone to mud slides needed to be moved, structures built in earthquake-prone areas needed to be built to withstand predictable tremors, early warning systems for hurricanes and tsunamis needed to be put in place. Building an international consensus for a risk reduction approach to disasters, though, was not easy. Many of the socioeconomic dimensions of disaster vulnerability, such as extreme poverty, could be rectified only with prolonged effort and substantial political change. To gain support for this risk reduction approach to disasters, certain international actors such as the World Bank began drawing clear connections between climate change and the increased severity of storms, floods, droughts, and famines. The consequences of making disaster risk reduction a component of the larger international effort to control or adapt to climate change are not yet clear. Hannigan foresees a future in which remote geospatial sensing of natural

hazards and the development of quantifiable models of disaster risk become a part of both national security preparations and private-sector attempts to sell risk protection. The age of disaster relief as a simple humanitarian expression of the “kindness of strangers” might soon become a thing of the past.—D.H.

**DEREK S. HOFF**

*The State and the Stork: The Population Debate and Policy Making in US History*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. 392 p. \$49.00.

What is the relationship between population growth and economic development in the United States? Was Adam Smith correct when he argued that a growing population aids economic development by enlarging markets, facilitating a more complex division of labor, and allowing greater economies of scale? Was Malthus correct when he asserted that a growing population hinders economic development by pressing upon resource limits, enlarging the labor force, and depressing wages? In the 1930s was Keynes correct when he argued that a resurgence in population growth was needed to stimulate consumer demand and pull the economy out of depression, or were the “Stable Population Keynesians” correct when they contended that altering the spending and savings habits of consumers through fiscal and monetary policies was a much more potent way of stimulating demand in a modern economy than having babies? What about the correctness of the current consensus among US policymakers that a positive rate of population growth is beneficial since it allows the economy to cope more easily with aging baby boomers? In an era of significant man-made climate change and proliferating water shortages, should this pro-growth stance be reconsidered?

Hoff, an associate professor of economic history at Kansas State University, chronicles how economists, students of population, and political leaders have debated the effects of population growth on US economic development. He treats the colonial period through the late nineteenth century in thirty pages (Chapter 1), contrasting Thomas Jefferson’s worries that substantial population growth was making an agrarian republic increasingly improbable with the Federalist Party’s embrace of population growth and manufacturing. The heart of Hoff’s story, though, is the twentieth century, especially the period from the 1950s through the 1970s. His meticulous archival research adds considerably to our knowledge of the machinations that lay behind President Richard Nixon’s decision to establish a Presidential Commission on Population and America’s Future and his subsequent disavowal of its findings. He does a similarly excellent job tracing the economic and environmental thought that led to the rise of Zero Population Growth as a significant policy movement and the subsequent changes in that thinking which led to its declining policy relevance.

It is important to note the book’s subtitle. Hoff believes that *the* population debate of real significance in American history is the economic one: does population growth aid development, detract from it, or have little impact on it? He objects to American historians who focus on America’s compositional population debates while ignoring its quantitative ones. He admits that racism and eugenics had much to do with the passage of restrictive immigration policies in the 1920s, but he explicitly takes to task