



How late-marrying, contraception-using progressives are helping the religious right

It's a numbers game

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If nothing else, the continuing fight over ObamaCare's infamous contraception mandate has revealed two profound cultural divides in America. The first is about the role of government. The other is about fertility.

It increasingly seems as if the progressive secular worldview is almost hostile to fertility. The logic behind the contraception mandate all but implies that the only way to lead a truly free and human life is to lead a contracepted life. As the Cato Institute's Julian Sanchez has argued, the mandate seems designed not so much to improve access to contraception — a nonproblem — but rather to enshrine in American law that conscientious objection to contraception is so contemptible that it may be quashed regardless of consequences. The uncritical way in which contraception is described as "health care" seems to imply that pregnancy is a disease, to be avoided at all costs.

When Sarah Palin made her thunderous appearance on the national stage in 2008, the instinctive progressive revulsion toward her — a revulsion that was apparent, remember, way before she made any of the long series of humiliating gaffes that have now deservedly turned her into a punch line — seemed to revolve around her fertility. It was not hard to read between the lines of some progressive critiques of her character. It seemed as if many thought it self-evident that only a deranged person would let children such as Trig (Down syndrome) and Tripp (conceived out of wedlock) live. Mollie Hemingway has rightly talked about the secular media's fear of fertility. And it usually doesn't take long for a discussion with a progressive about global economic trends to lapse into dire Malthusian warnings about "overpopulation."

My fellow conservatives usually lament this. And, of course, morally speaking, they are correct — I don't understand any moral framework that doesn't view human life as something sacred and worth glorifying and multiplying.

But I say, dear progressives, keep at it! Keep using contraception! Keep delaying the

having of families!

You know why?

Because us troglodytic religious conservatives will keep breeding and eventually inherit America.

Religious people marry earlier and have more kids. The 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) reported that women who say religion is "very important" in their everyday life have both higher fertility and higher intended fertility than those who say religion is "somewhat important" or "not important." The report Sustainable Demographic Dividend shows that overall and especially in the United States, religious people have more kids than secular people. In the 53 rich countries they surveyed, religious people have a 2.21 birthrate, while secular people have a birthrate of 1.69 — not enough to replace themselves.

If you want a picture of the future, you might want to look at Israel. Israel, famously, was founded by secular Jews as a secular, socialist state, and its politics were dominated by the left from independence to the election of Menachem Begin as prime minister in 1978. In the wake of Israel's latest intervention in Gaza, many have commented on the distinct rightward tilt to Israeli politics. A lot of it is due to the failure of the peace process and the fanaticism of Israel's enemies, but no one could fail to recognize that demographics have played a role — specifically, the fact that orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews have been outbreeding secular Jews for decades.

Demography isn't exactly destiny. And to exploit the numbers, conservatives need to get better at making sure their kids keep the faith as they grow up. And of course, there's immigration, which has long helped progressives keep up their numbers.

Still, progressives seem intent on marrying later and later, having fewer kids, and enshrining a contracepted life as the right way to live. Conservatives, true to their nature, are not making those same lifestyle changes.

The issue isn't so much that conservatives are outbreeding progressives, but rather that progressives seem intent on the collective suicide of their movement.

Sorry, progressives — we will bury you.

Just don't say we didn't warn you.