

POPULATION INCREASE

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'The Population Explosion' — No. 1

'Population Explosion' Fears Have Little Impact on Public

Better Educated Display Most Concern; Poll Charts Public's Views on Ideal Size of Family

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PRINCETON, N. J., June 11 — The fears of many experts about a coming "population explosion" have yet to have much of an impact on the American people.

A great many persons across the country have heard about the predicted great increase in the world's population during the next few decades.

But two out of three Americans in a nationwide Gallup Poll say they do not think such an increase in population is something to be seriously concerned about.

The chief rationale for this lack of worry is some variant of the argument that "nature will take care of things somehow."

Nearly seven out of ten persons (68 per cent) say they have heard about the predicted population increase which some authorities believe may double the present number of persons living on the globe by the year 2000.

All persons interviewed were next asked:

"Are you worried or not worried about this population increase?"

The results:

WORRIED ABOUT POPULATION EXPLOSION?	
Worried	25%
Not worried	66
No opinion	9

Further analysis reveals that education and religion are important factors bearing on one's concern (or lack of it) over the population explosion.

College-trained persons, for example, display significantly greater concern over the implications of a great population increase than do persons with less formal training.

Persons of the Roman Catholic faith are less likely to be worried about the population explosion than are Protestants.

The results by religion and educational background:

WORRIED ABOUT POPULATION EXPLOSION?		Not No Worried Worried Opin.		
	%	%	%	
College	34	63	3	
High Sch'l ..	26	65	9	
Grade Sch'l ..	19	67	14	
Protestants ..	28	62	10	
Catholics ..	18	74	8	

Ideal Family Size

A further question in the current study sheds light on another aspect of the public's attitudes about the whole area of population problems.

This shows that a substantial number of Americans today believe that a large family is a good thing.

For over a quarter-century, the Gallup Poll has charted the public's attitudes about family size. These figures reflect, for example, the "baby boom" which followed World War II.

At the current time, moreover, the results show that just over four out of ten adults think that a family with four or more children constitutes the "ideal family" size.

Here is the trend of thinking about large families (four or more children) since 1936:

IDEAL-SIZED FAMILY % Saying Four or More Children	
1936	34%
1941	41
1945	49
1947	47
1953	41
1957	38
1960	45
TODAY	42

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