

Thomas Malthus (1776–1834)

Malthus was an economist who made his greatest contribution to population studies (Flew, 1967). His basic idea was that human population increases lead to ever greater increases in population from one generation to the next. On the other hand, subsistence resources, under the most optimistic circumstances, increase arithmetically. This necessitated the application of power to keep unbridled expansion in population in check. There were two types of check. First was the preventative processes of premature causes of death (this is where famine, disease, and warfare enter) and any curtailment of the birth rate (although he did not conceive of contraception as a viable option). Second there was the possibility of moral restraint by not marrying and reproducing.

Reference

Flew, A. (1967). Malthus, Thomas Robert. In P. Edwards (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of philosophy*. Vol. 5 (145–147). New York: Collier Macmillan.