

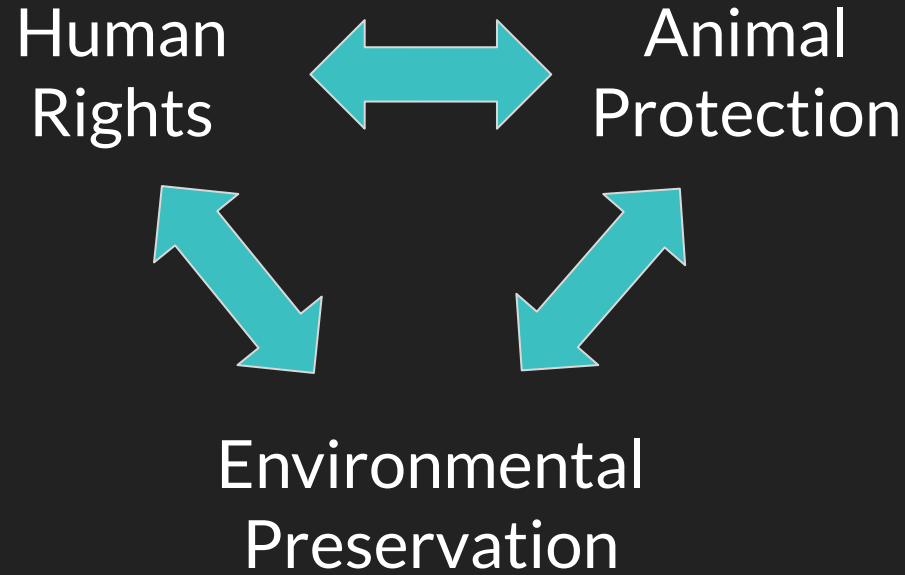
Challenging Pronatalism: The key to advancing reproductive rights and a sustainable population

Nandita Bajaj

Executive Director, Population Balance

Adj Faculty, Institute for Humane Ed | Antioch University

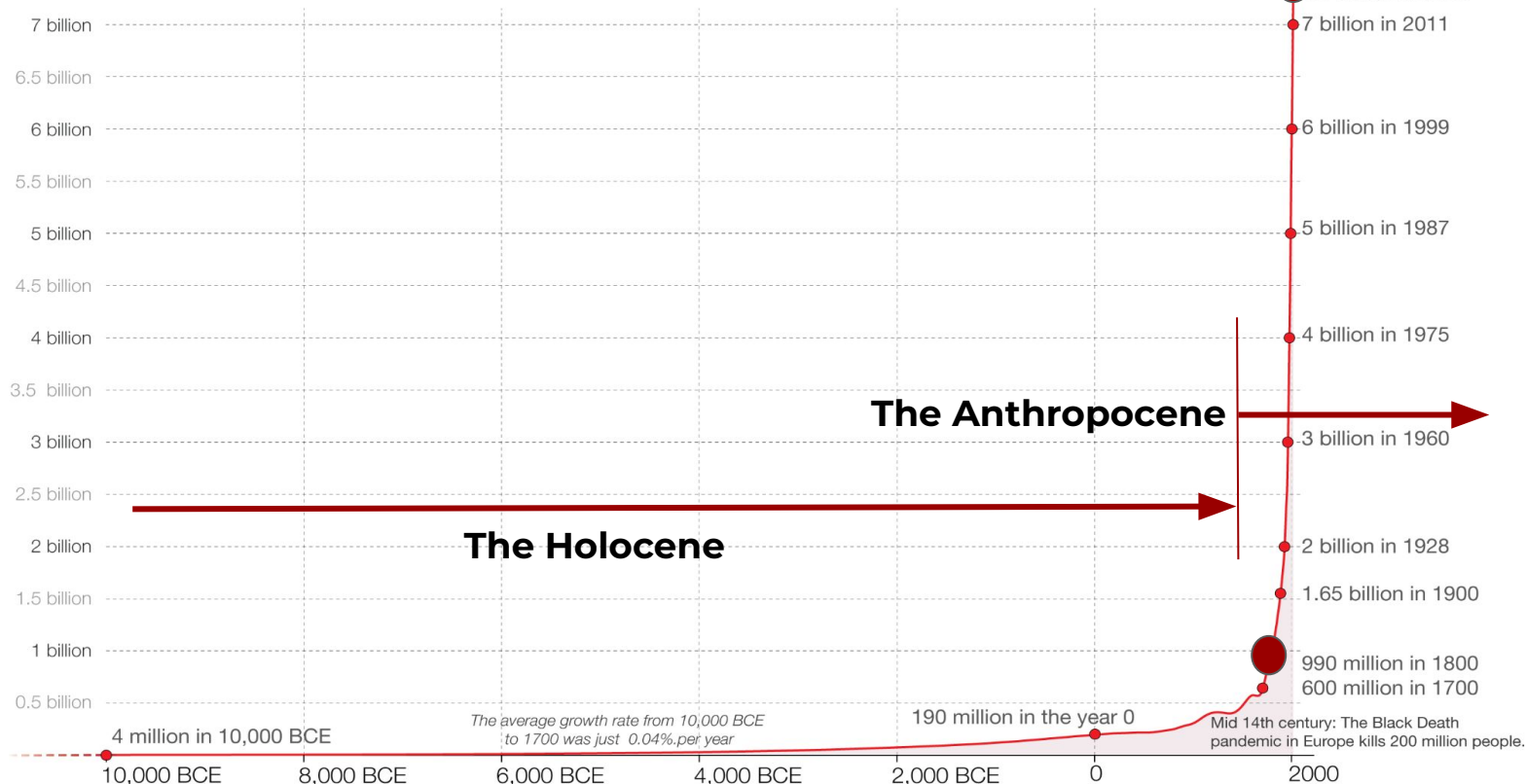
Humane Education Lens



Outline

- **Human Expansionism**
- The Population Taboo
 - Human Supremacy
 - Past Policies
 - Pronatalism
- Difficult Conversations

The size of the world population over the last 12,000 years



Based on estimates by the *History Database of the Global Environment (HYDE)* and the United Nations. On OurWorldinData.org you can download the annual data.

This is a visualization from OurWorldinData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) by the author Max Roser.

Growth in Population and Consumption



POPULATION

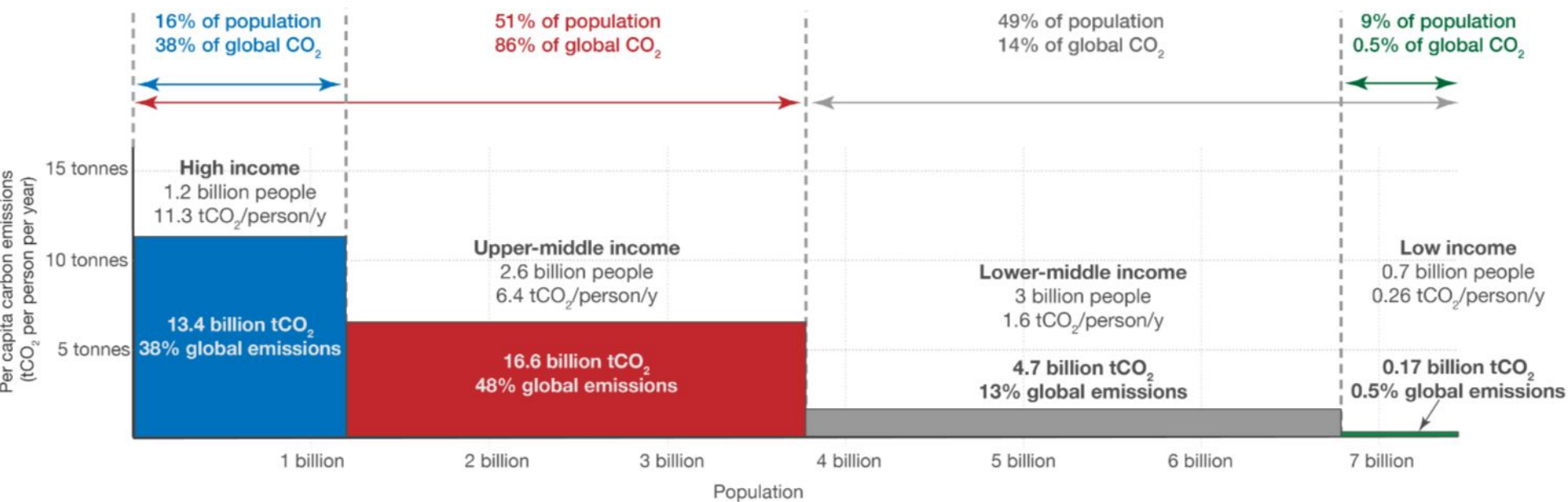
X 8

CONSUMPTION

X 100

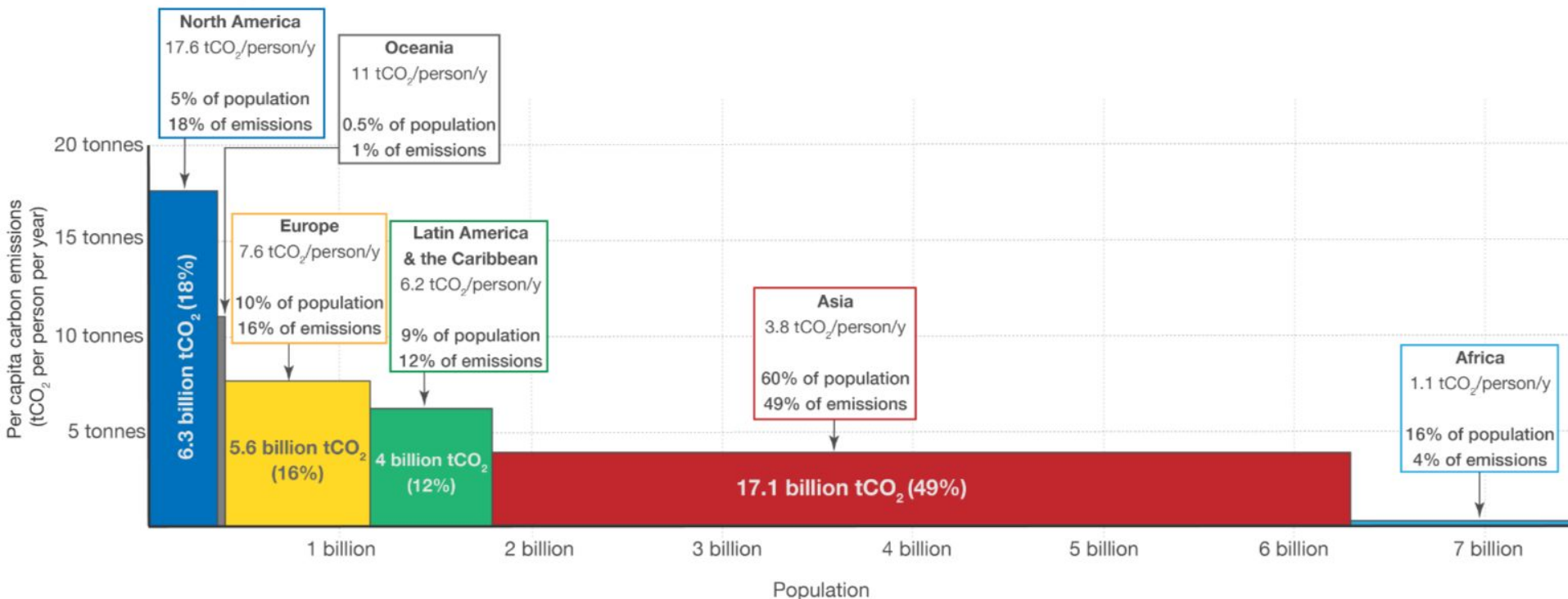
Global CO₂ Emissions by Income Group

By Income Group



Global CO2 Emissions by Region

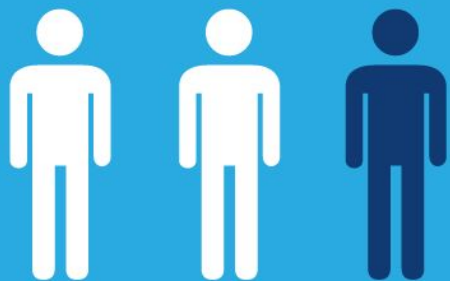
By Region



The Population-Consumption Conundrum

88 percent of the next billion entrants into the middle class will be in Asia

By 2030, Asia could represent 2/3 of the global middle class population.



BROOKINGS



130m
in rest of the WORLD

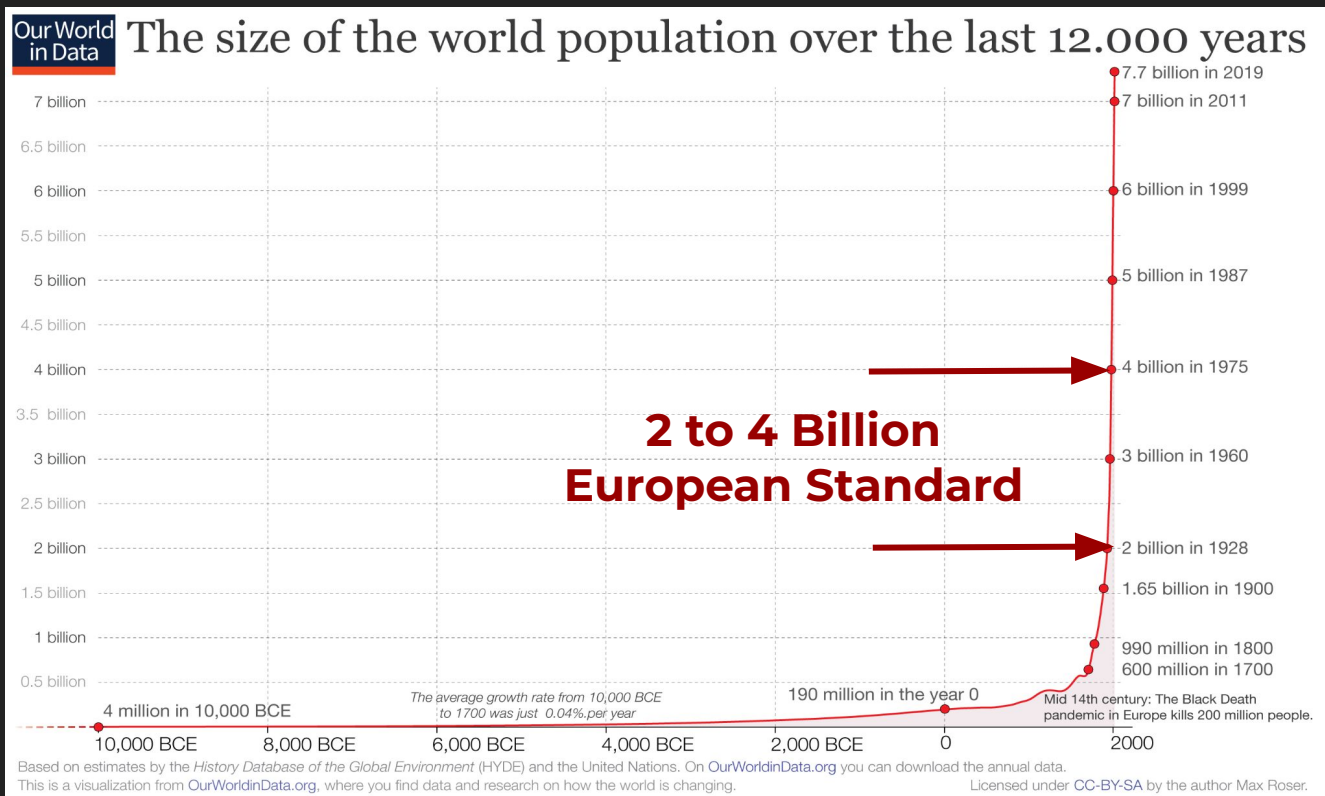
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



Globally, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and population growth remained the strongest drivers of CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion in the last decade.”

Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change

Sustainable Population + Consumption



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The Population Taboo

Population panic lets rich people off the hook for the climate crisis they are fuelling

George Monbiot

The Overpopulation Myth and its Dangerous Connotations



Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline

The Population Taboo

**HUMAN
SUPREMACY**

**PAST
POLICIES**

**PRO-
NATALISM**

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EILEEN CRIST

AUTHOR

ABUNDANT EARTH: TOWARD AN ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

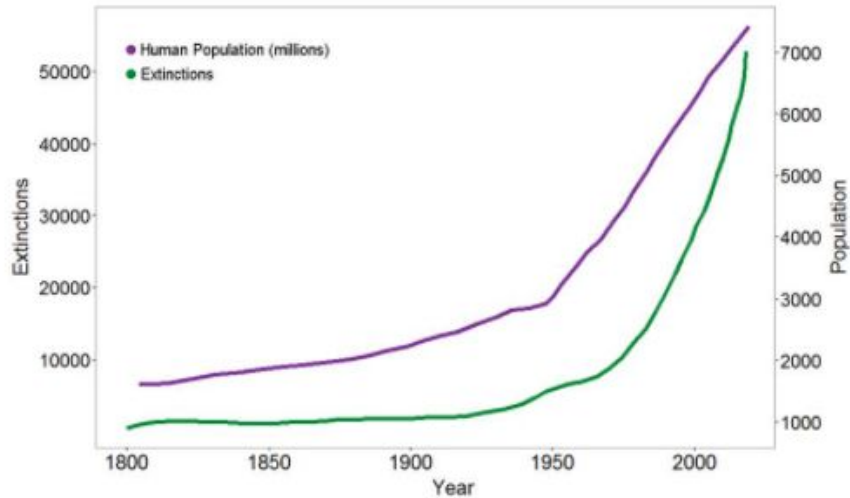


Human supremacy is a worldview that esteems the human as a distinguished entity that is superior to all other life forms and is entitled to use them and the places they live.

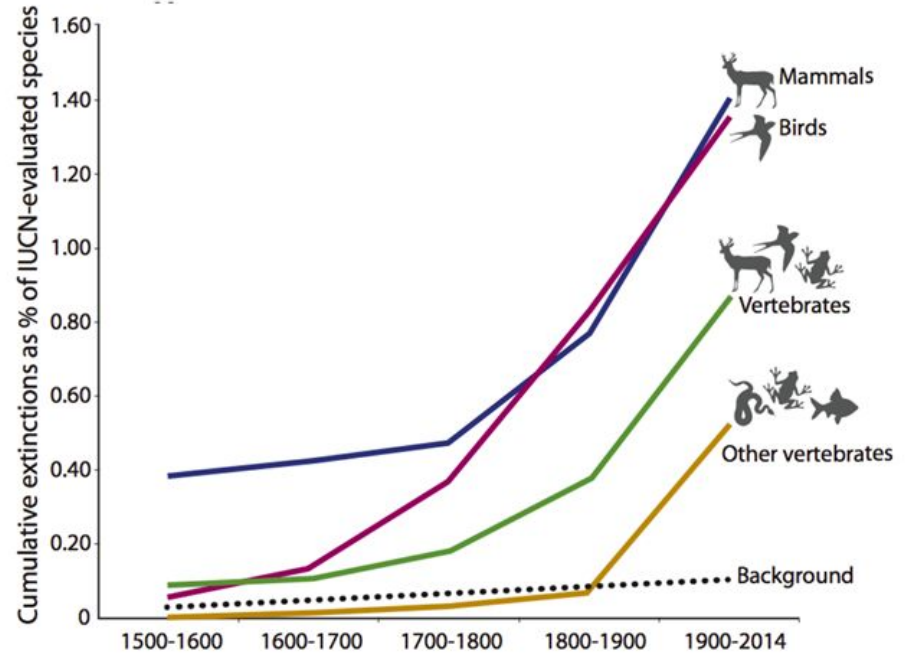


Humans and The Extinction Crisis

Humans & The Extinction Crisis



Data source: Scott, J.M. 2008. *Threats to Biological Diversity: Global, Continental, Local*. U.S. Geological Survey, Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife, Research Unit, University Of Idaho.



Drivers of Species Extinction

**AGRICULTURE
& LOGGING**

**HUNTING &
FISHING**

**HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**

**AGRICULTURE
& LOGGING**

**HUNTING &
FISHING**

**HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**



LOGGING



CROP FARMING

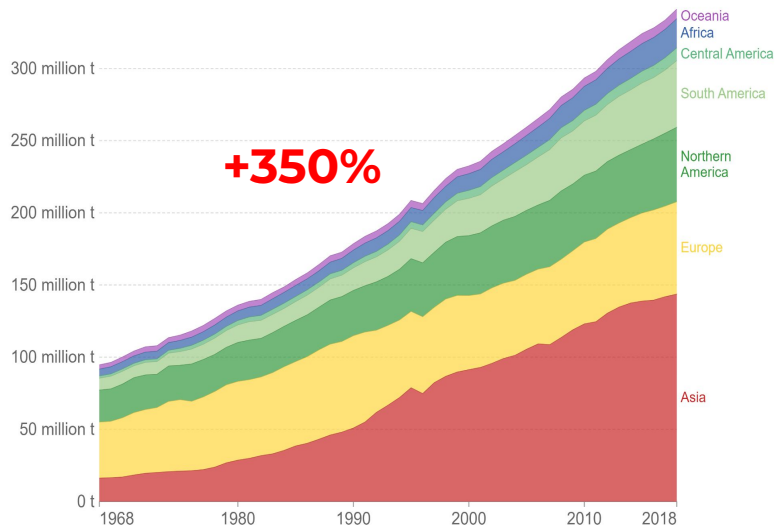


LIVESTOCK

Global Animal Food Production Over 50 Years

Global meat production, 1968 to 2018

Our World in Data



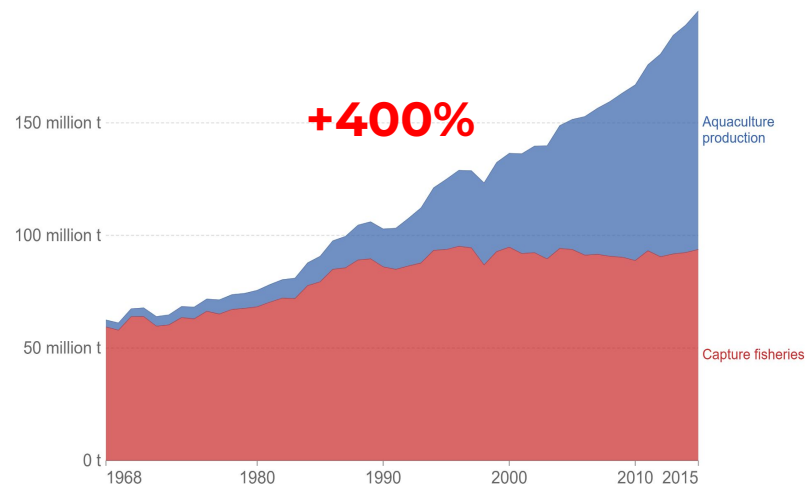
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

OurWorldInData.org/meat-production • CC BY

Seafood production: wild fish catch vs aquaculture, World

Our World in Data

Aquaculture is the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants. Capture fishery production is the volume of wild fish catches landed for all commercial, industrial, recreational and subsistence purposes.



Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

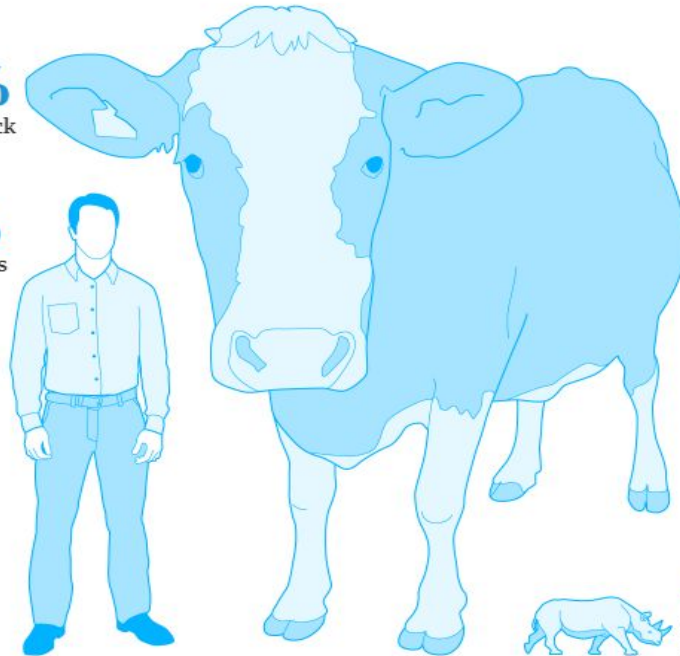
OurWorldInData.org/seafood-production • CC BY

The Human Footprint

Of all the mammals on Earth, 96% are livestock and humans, only 4% are wild mammals

60%
are livestock

36%
are humans



4%
are wild
mammals

**AGRICULTURE
& LOGGING**

**HUNTING &
FISHING**

**HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**



FOOD



BODY PARTS



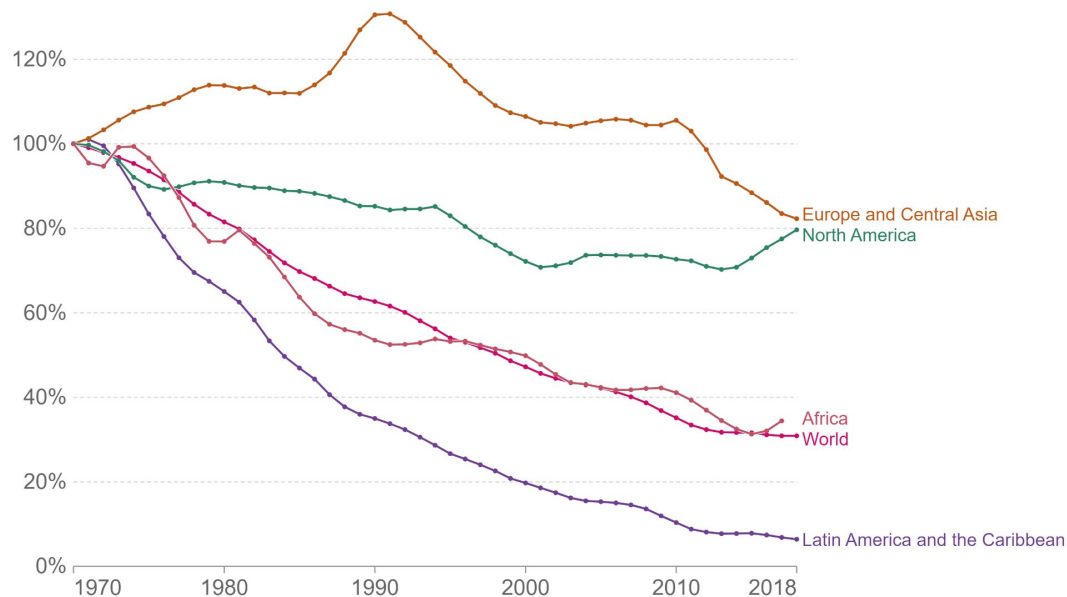
MEDICINAL USE

Decline in Studied Wildlife Populations

Living Planet Index by region

Our World
in Data

The Living Planet Index (LPI) measures the average decline in monitored wildlife populations. The index value measures the change in abundance in 38,427 populations across 5,268 species relative to the year 1970 (i.e. 1970 = 100%).



Source: Living Planet Report (2022). World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Zoological Society of London.

OurWorldInData.org/biodiversity • CC BY

**AGRICULTURE
& LOGGING**

**HUNTING &
FISHING**

**HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**



INDUSTRY



HOUSING



ROADS

Outline


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Historical Population Policies


**Empowering
rights-valuing
methods**

**Coercive
rights-violating
methods**

Population Engineering



Efforts to
Lower Birth
Rates



Efforts to
Increase
Birth Rates

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LAURA CARROLL

AUTHOR
THE BABY MATRIX

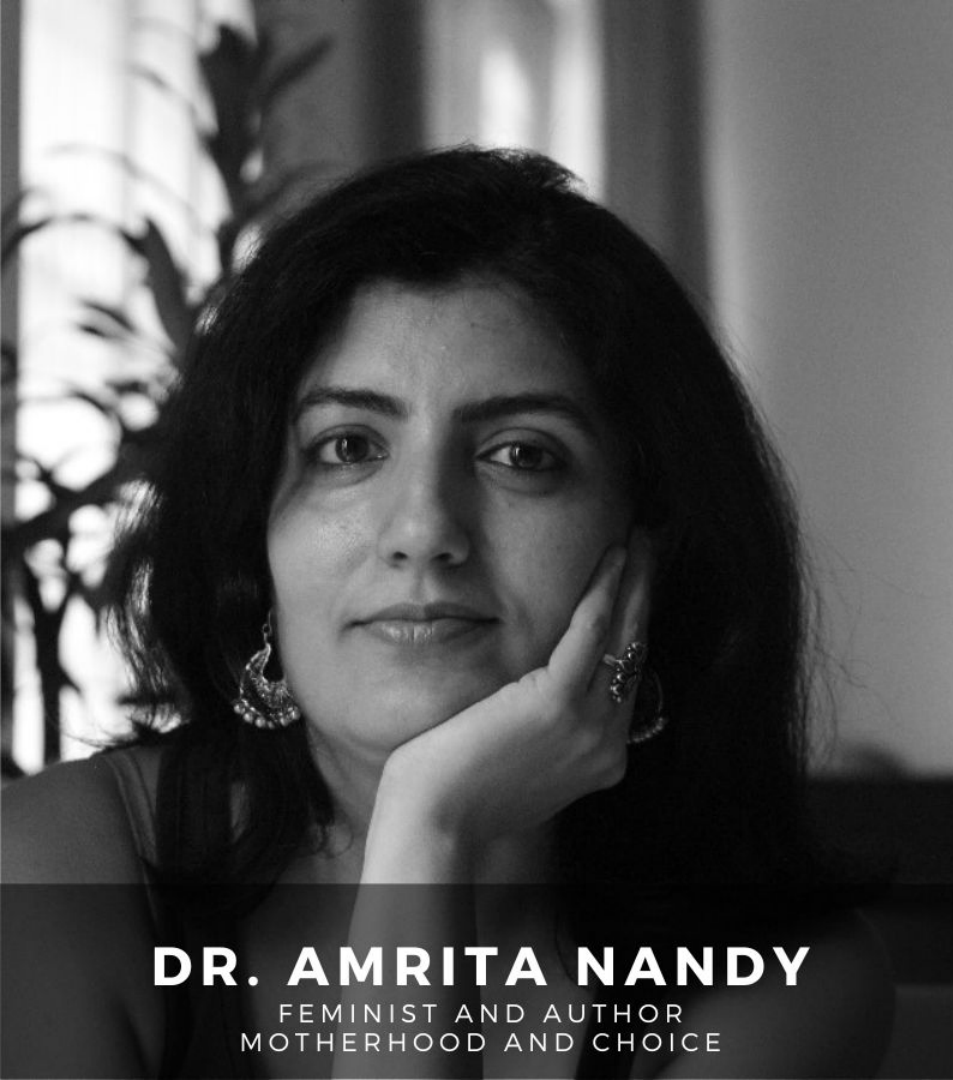


The idea that parenthood and raising children should be the central focus of every person's adult life. It is a strong social force and includes a collection of beliefs so embedded that they have come to be seen as true



**POPULATION
BALANCE**

Shrink Toward Abundance



DR. AMRITA NANDY

FEMINIST AND AUTHOR
MOTHERHOOD AND CHOICE



Pronatalism is especially disempowering for girls, because from a young age they're groomed for marriage and motherhood, and can never even come to think of motherhood as choice, and this robs them of their ability to fully live out their authentic selves.





SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

THE MOMMY MYTH: THE IDEALIZATION OF MOTHERHOOD
AND HOW IT HAS UNDERMINED ALL WOMEN



If you're like us - mothers with an attitude problem - you may be getting increasingly irritable about this chasm between the ridiculous, honey-hued ideals of perfect motherhood in the mass media and the reality of mothers' everyday lives.



DR. KIMYA NURU DENNIS

SOCIOLOGIST, CRIMINOLOGIST, RESEARCHER



African Diaspora women like myself who want to be independent of children are oftentimes not just seen as defying our womanhood, but defying our Blackness and defying our Africanness. People have explicitly said that we have fallen for the white people's scheme, we're killing out our people





MARTHA A. GIMENEZ

MARX, WOMEN, AND CAPITALIST SOCIAL
REPRODUCTION: MARXIST FEMINIST ESSAYS



The ‘biological clock’ that some women claim to hear ticking is also a ‘social clock’ reminding them that whatever else may be going on in their lives, motherhood is their destiny, the road to social acceptance and integration.



ORNA DONATH
SOCIOLOGIST, AUTHOR
REGRETTING MOTHERHOOD



And even though ambivalence is a feeling that may accompany each and every one of our human relationships, there is only one answer society tolerates from mothers to the question of motherhood: “I love it.”



THERESE SHECHTER

FILMMAKER
MY SO-CALLED SELFISH LIFE



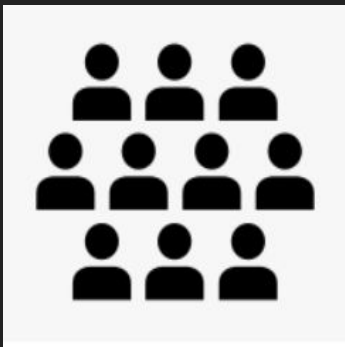
For young women, especially for women who haven't had children, it's very hard to get a sterilization procedure, in large part, because of the assumption that every woman will want a child. Doctors have a serious reluctance to get in the middle of that. So, that's another aspect of reproductive rights that we don't even talk about—the right to get permanent contraception.



**POPULATION
BALANCE**

Shrink Toward Abundance

Pronatalist Pressures



Cultural
Pressures



More
Followers

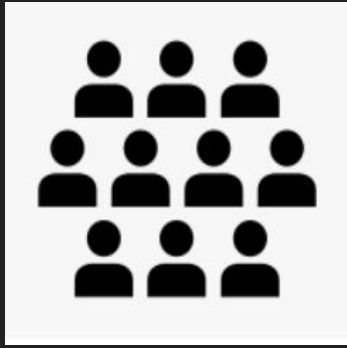


More
Consumers



More
Taxpayers,
Military,
Ethnocentrism

Cultural Pressures



Cultural
Pressures



Cultural Pressures

Expanded services are needed to fulfill unmet needs in LMICs

923 million women
of reproductive age
want to avoid
a pregnancy



218 million of them
have an unmet need
for modern
contraception

Religious Pressures



More
Followers



Iran ends provision by state of
contraceptives and vasectomies



**Turkish PM pushes for ‘three
children incentive’**



**The Islamophobic roots of population
control efforts in India**



Birth control: Fear of impotence, religious beliefs, other
factors scare Nigerian men away from vasectomy

Political/Nationalistic Pressures



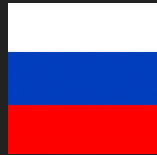
More
Taxpayers



Have four or more babies in Hungary and you'll pay no income tax for life, prime minister says



'Baby machines': eastern Europe's answer to depopulation



Putin revives Stalin-era 'Mother Heroine' award for women with 10 children



'It's national preservation': Greece offers baby bonus to boost birthrate

Economy-Driven Pressures



More
Consumers



China Caused a Baby Bust with Forced Abortions, Now 'Forced Pregnancy is in the Future of Chinese Women'



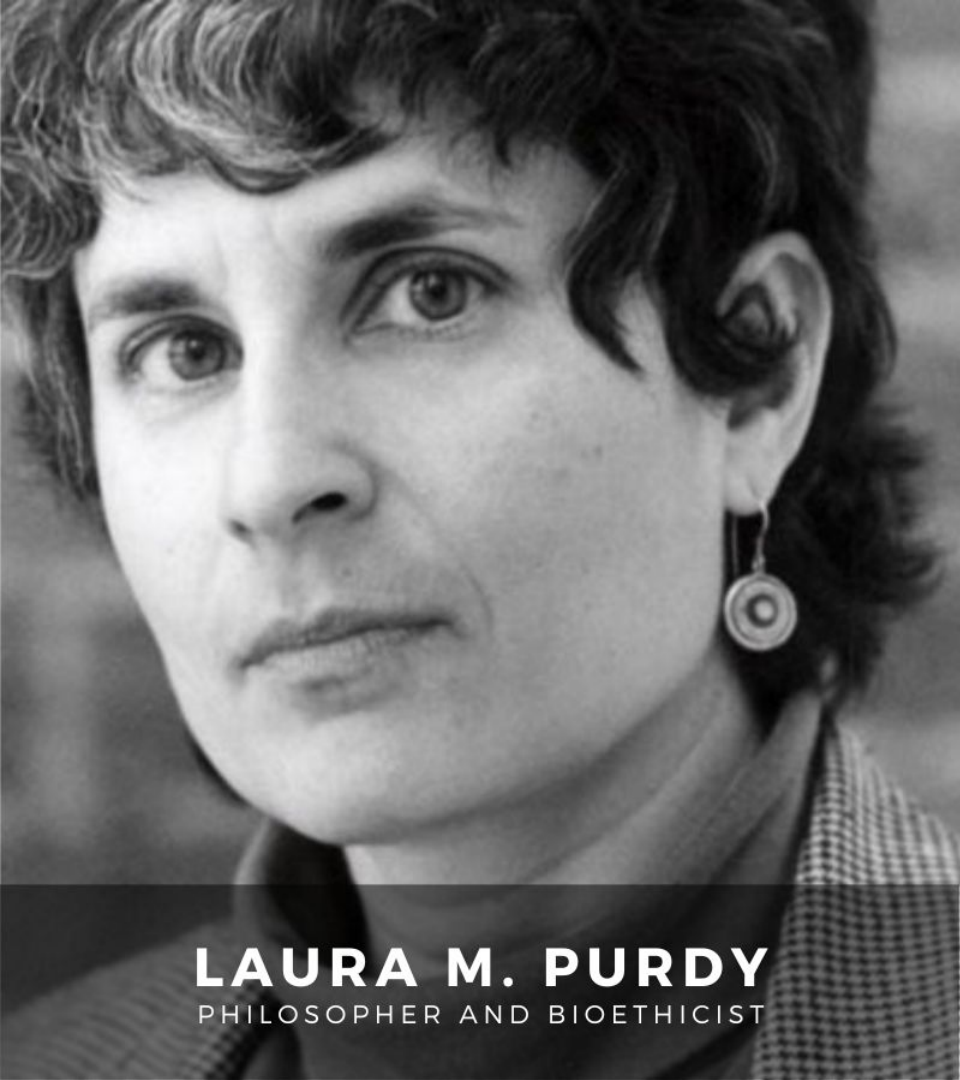
No-exception laws, once too harsh even for anti-abortion Republicans, gain traction across US



Raising birth rates, balanced regional growth on urgent agenda for new administration



Japan's deputy PM blames women for nation's falling population



LAURA M. PURDY
PHILOSOPHER AND BIOETHICIST



Yet, this state of affairs is so taken for granted that it is almost invisible, and is therefore especially hard to eradicate.

Attempts to do so (anti-pronatalism) are also often erroneously confused with, and undermined by, negativism about having children (anti-natalism).

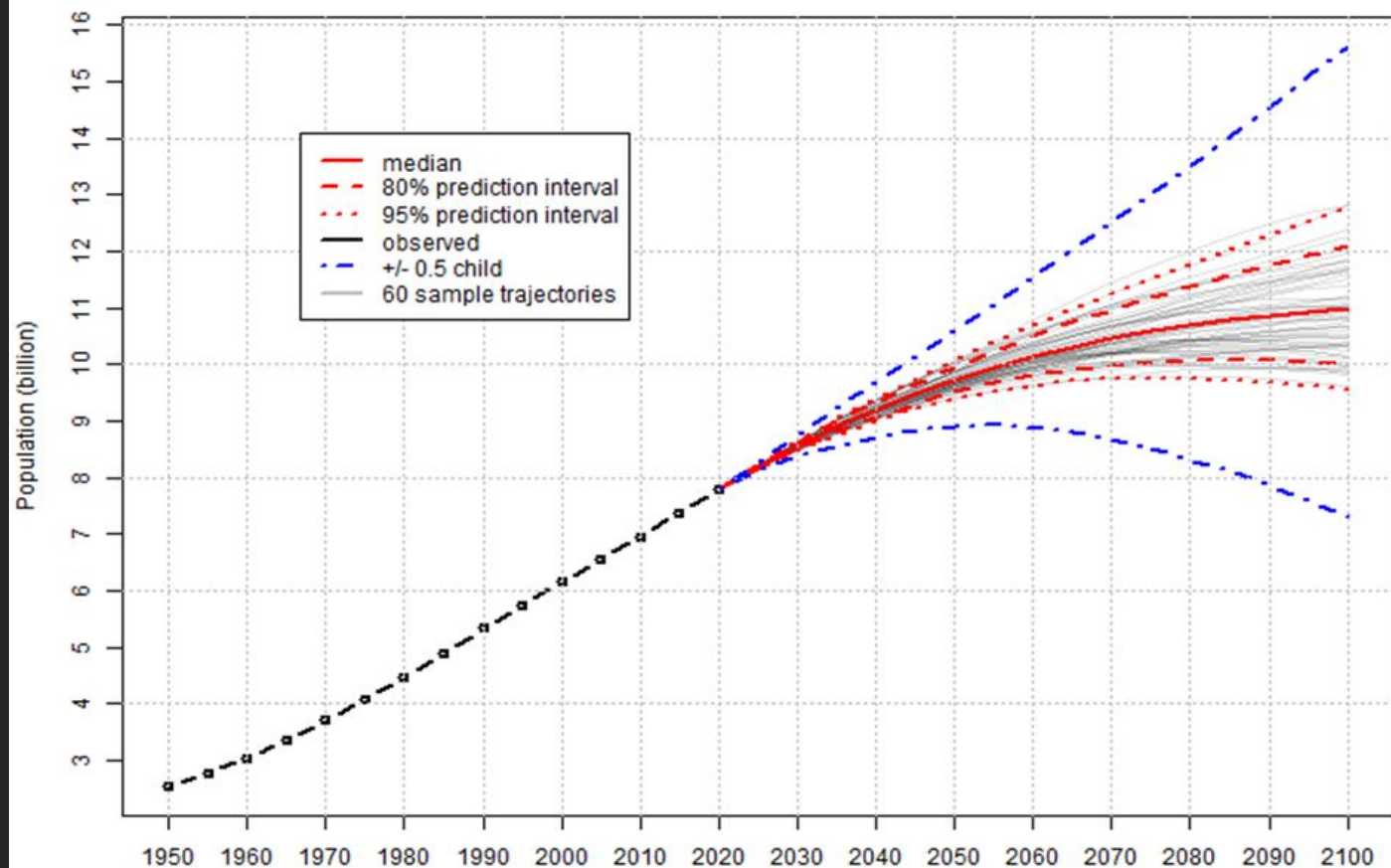
**Anti-pronatalism
=
Reproductive Autonomy**



Pro-natalism

Anti-natalism

World: Total Population



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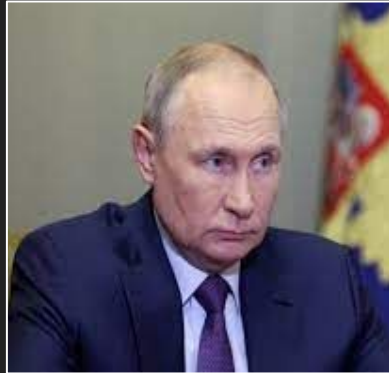
“The Population Myth” by George Monbiot

“It’s no coincidence that most of those who are obsessed with [overpopulation] are post-reproductive wealthy white men.”

- George Monbiot, Guardian columnist



Spinning “The Population Myth”



Those who silence discussions about overpopulation "are themselves carrying water for pronatalist and patriarchal forces that insist women's primary and inarguable function is to bear children." - Nandita Bajaj & Kirsten Stade

Our Work at Population Balance

Liberated Choices

We empower people to make liberated, informed, and responsible procreative choices free from the pervasive and oppressive forces of pronatalism.

[Learn More](#)



Eco-centrism

We advocate for a radical shift in our relationship to animals and the rest of the natural world—from that of dominion to one of respect, reverence and stewardship.

[Learn More](#)



Social Justice

We challenge unjust and growth-driven cultural, political, and economic systems that exploit marginalized human communities and threaten all life on earth.

[Learn More](#)



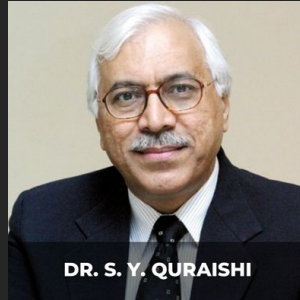
Podcast



DR. SOFIA PINEDA OCHOA

Are Children and
Future Generations
Being Betrayed?

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



DR. S. Y. QURAISHI

Tackling Islamophobic
Population Myths

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



DR. KIMYA NURU DENNIS

The Unique
Challenges of Being
Black and Childfree

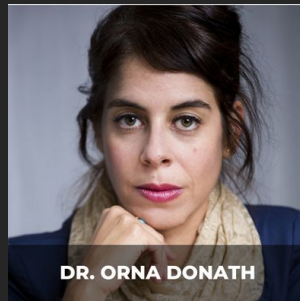
THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



MECHAI VIRAVAIIDYA

Cops, Cabbages & Mr.
Condom: Thailand's
Transformative Family
Planning Program

THE
OVERPOPULATION
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DR. ORNA DONATH

Breaking the Taboo
on Motherhood
Regret

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



DR. ESGAR GUARÍN

One Small Snip for
Man, One Giant Leap
for Humankind(ness)

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



Interviews

GIRLPLANET CONVERSATIONS

MONIQUE TALKS ABOUT
**POPULATION &
SUSTAINABILITY**

WATCH
EPISODE 1
ON YOUTUBE!



GIRLPLANET CONVERSATIONS

SUHEI TALKS ABOUT
**POPULATION &
SUSTAINABILITY**

WATCH
EPISODE 3
ON YOUTUBE!



GIRLPLANET CONVERSATIONS

WILLIANE TALKS ABOUT
**POPULATION &
SUSTAINABILITY**

WATCH
EPISODE 2
ON YOUTUBE!



GIRLPLANET CONVERSATIONS

VINCIE TALKS ABOUT
**POPULATION &
SUSTAINABILITY**

WATCH
EPISODE 4
ON YOUTUBE!



Presentations



Media Advocacy

THE GLOBE AND MAIL*

Amplify: Pope Francis's criticism of childless couples hurts parents and nonparents alike

ZOSIA BIELSKI >

PUBLISHED JANUARY 14, 2022



Pope Francis holds a weekly general audience at the Paul VI Audience Hall, at the Vatican, on Jan. 12.
VATICAN MEDIA/REUTERS

Ms.
MORE THAN A MAGAZINE. A MOVEMENT

Abortion Bans Are a Natural Outgrowth of Coercive Pronatalism

6/7/2022 by NANDITA BAJAJ

Reproductive control prevents people from reproducing.
Coercive pronatalism does the opposite—forcing women to reproduce when they don't want to.



NATIONAL POST

The new push for more babies: How tech elites think it will save the planet

Elon Musk and a new generation of pronatalists are warning of falling birth rates, but some say fertility decline should be celebrated

IDN-InDepthNews

Analysis That Matters

Flagship Agency of the Non-profit International Press Syndicate

Dismissal of "Population Alarmism" is Rooted in Pronatalist Ideology

Viewpoint by Nandita Bajaj*

Academic Work

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Challenging Pronatalism Is Key to Advancing Reproductive Rights and a Sustainable Population



Nandita Bajaj, Kirsten Stade

Graduate Course

Graduate Course

Pronatalism, Overpopulation &
the Planet: The Personal,
Cultural, & Global Implications
of Having a Child

Online, Open, 3 credits
Jan-Apr/ May-Aug/ Sep-Dec
Learn more: bit.ly/3NKS1E5

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UNIVERSITY



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HUMANE EDUCATION

Thank you!
Questions?