

Welcome to this week's presentation & conversation hosted by the **Canadian Association for the Club of Rome**, a Club dedicated to intelligent debate & action on global issues.



The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of CACOR.

Confronting Population Denial amid the Unraveling Polycrisis.

Description: Human population has doubled in the last 50 years, growing from ~4 B in 1970 to ~8 B now. There is rising public awareness that overpopulation & rampant overconsumption are driving climate change, resource scarcity, & biodiversity collapse, yet it is a challenging issue to discuss. Here we will discuss the pervasive influence on pronatalism & human supremacy as drivers of population growth, as well as reproductive & ecological injustice, & the implications of the silencing of this discourse on the most vulnerable--nature, people, & animals.

Biography: Nandita Bajaj is Executive Director of Population Balance <<https://www.populationbalance.org/>>, a US nonprofit that works to inspire narrative, behavioral, & system change that shrinks our human impact & elevates the rights & wellbeing of people, animals, & the planet. She also co-hosts *The Overpopulation Podcast* <<https://www.populationbalance.org/podcast/>>, a popular series that delves into the nuances of the drivers & impacts of human expansionism with expert guests. She is Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Humane Education at Antioch University, where she teaches about the combined impacts of pronatalism & human expansionism on reproductive, ecological, & intergenerational justice.

The presentation will be followed by a conversation, questions, & observations from the participants.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



Website: canadiancor.com

Twitter: [@cacor1968](https://twitter.com/cacor1968)

YouTube: [Canadian Association for the Club of Rome](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

2024 Jun 19 Zoom #202

Confronting population denial amid the unraveling polycrisis

Nandita Bajaj

Executive Director, Population Balance

Senior Lecturer, Institute for Humane Ed | Antioch University



Outline

- **Human Expansionism**
- The Population Taboo
- Confronting Population Denial

Population Denial

We're sometimes asked "*Isn't population growth driving climate change?*" But that's the wrong question—and it can lead to dangerous answers.

There are 8 billion people on Earth. But that isn't causing climate change, scientists say

It's not the number of people, but 'how we live,' says Nature United's Katharine Hayhoe

People who claim that population growth is the big environmental issue are shifting the blame from the rich to the poor

Union of
Concerned Scientists

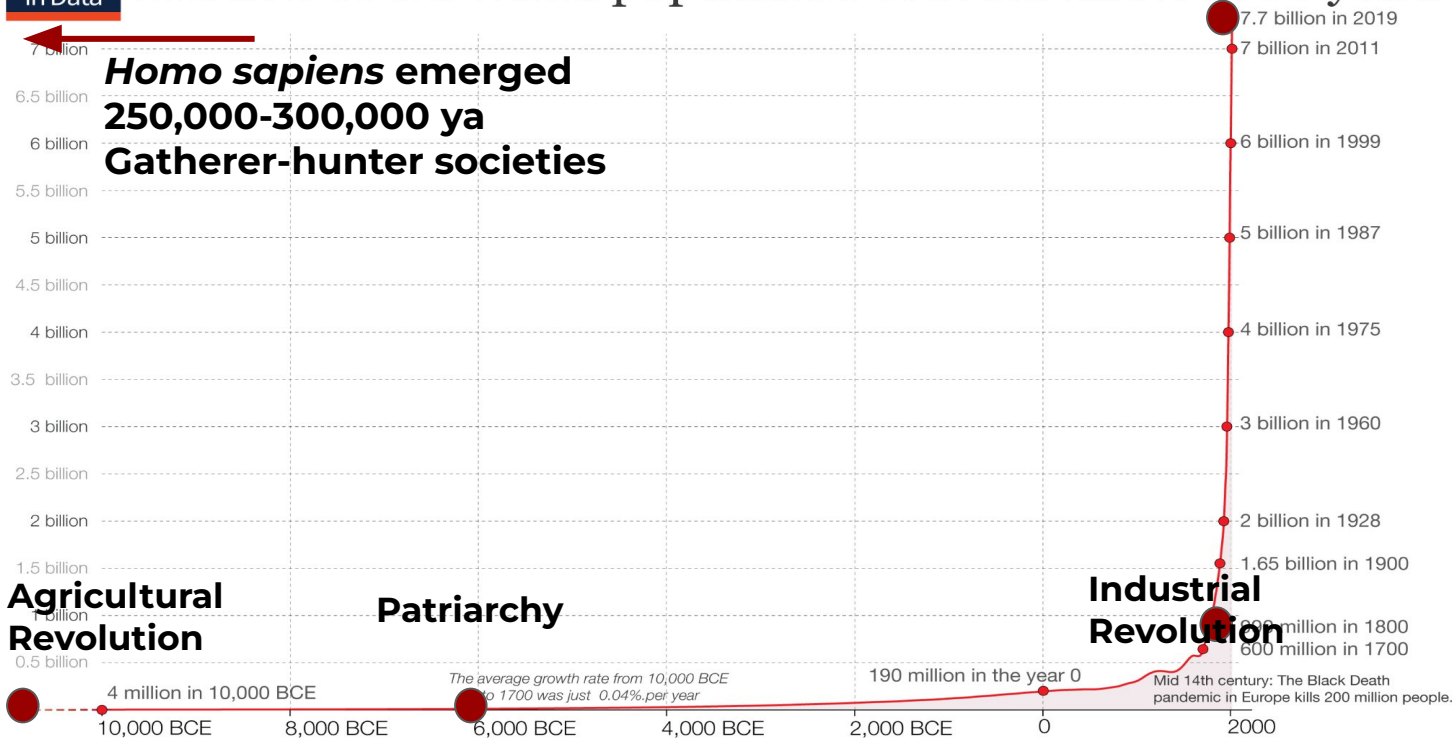
Chief Scientist
The Nature Conservancy

George Monbiot

Humanity: A Brief History

Our World
in Data

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 by the author Max Roser.

**THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST**



Confronting Overshoot
Changing the Story of Human
Exceptionalism



WILLIAM REES

Ecological Overshoot



POPULATION

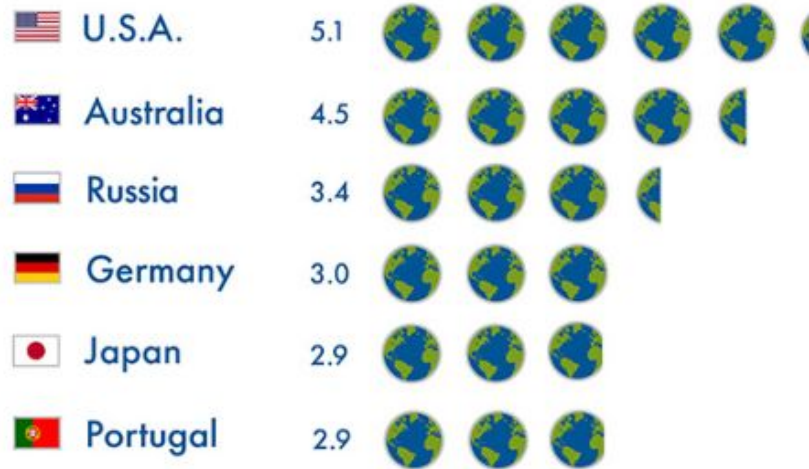
X 8

CONSUMPTION

X 100

Inequitable Distribution Of Resources Globally

How many Earths would we need
if everyone lived like U.S.A. residents?



Population or Consumption?

POPULATION?

CONSUMPTION?

FALSE DICHOTOMY

Overpopulation is a Scientific Fact

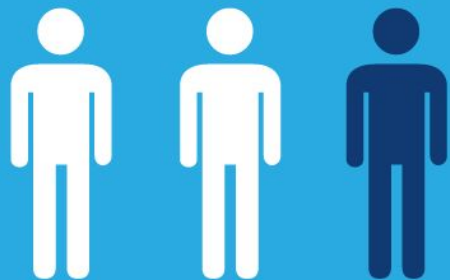


SCIENTISTS' WARNING
In Cooperation With The Alliance of World Scientists

The Global Middle Class

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



Outline

- Human Expansionism
- **The Population Taboo**
- Confronting Population Denial

The Population Taboo

**HUMAN
SUPREMACY**

**PAST
POLICIES**

**PRO-
NATALISM**



EILEEN CRIST

AUTHOR

ABUNDANT EARTH: TOWARD AN ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

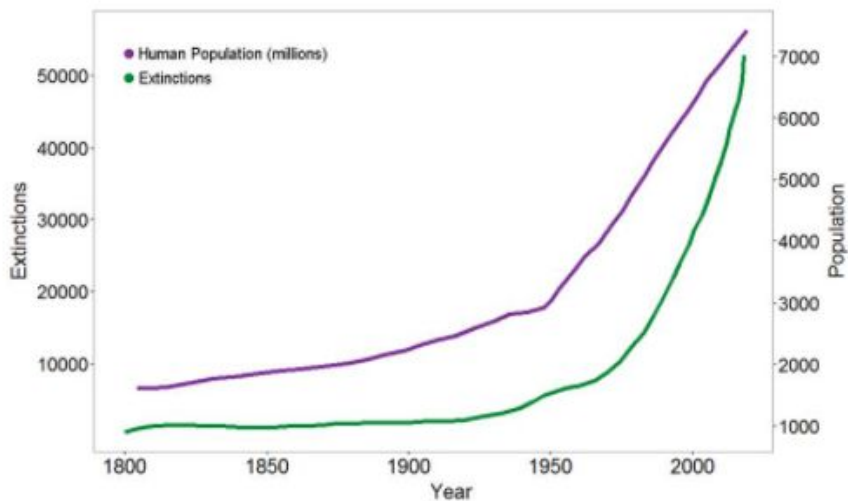


Human supremacy is a worldview that esteems the human as a distinguished entity that is superior to all other life forms and is entitled to use them and the places they live.

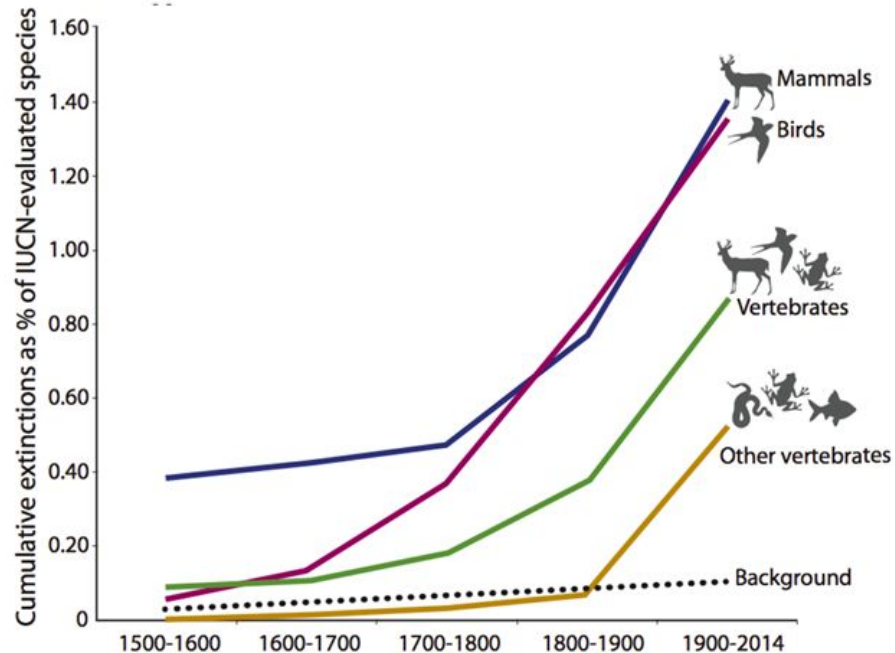


Humans and The Extinction Crisis

Humans & The Extinction Crisis

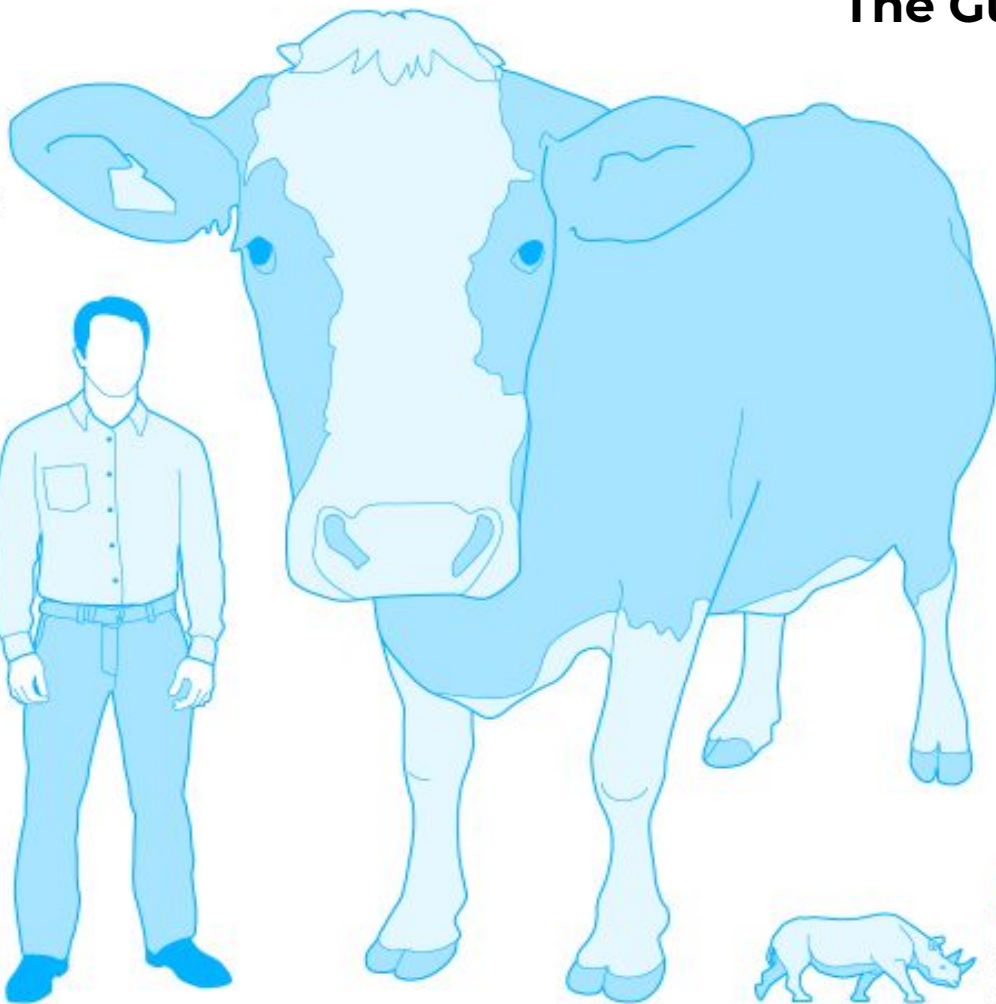


Data source: Scott, J.M. 2008. *Threats to Biological Diversity: Global, Continental, Local*. U.S. Geological Survey, Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife, Research Unit, University Of Idaho.



60%
are livestock

36%
are humans



4%
are wild
mammals

The Population Taboo

**HUMAN
SUPREMACY**

**PAST
POLICIES**

**PRO-
NATALISM**

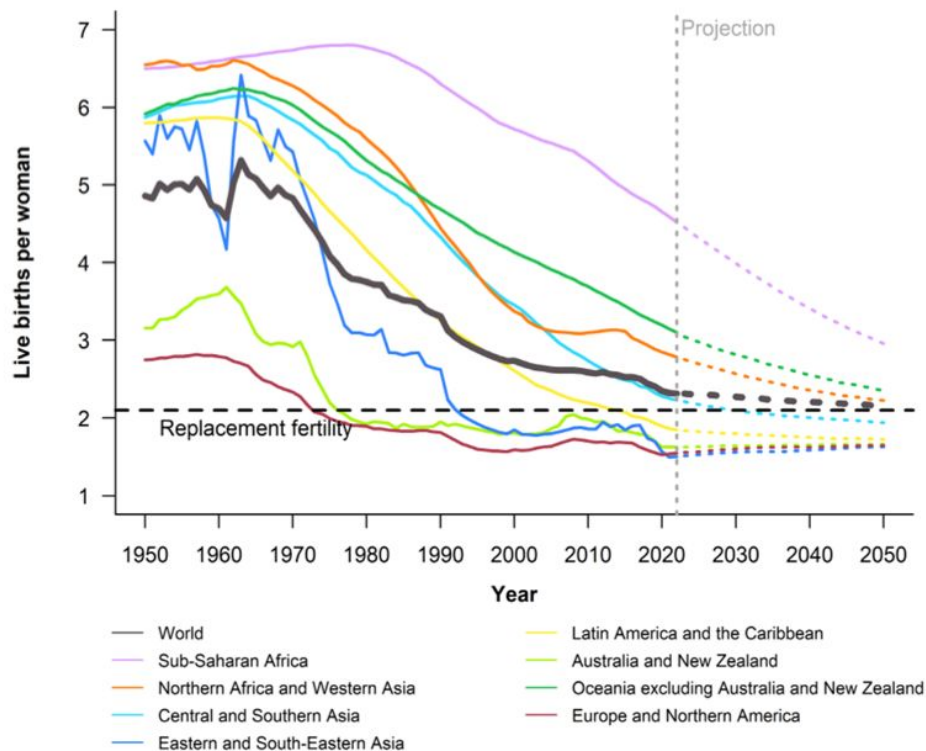
Historical Population Policies

**Empowering
rights-valuing
methods**

**Coercive
rights-violating
methods**

Fertility Rate Trends

Total fertility rate: estimates, 1950-2021, and medium scenario, 2022-2050



Unmet Need for Modern Contraception

Expanded services are needed to fulfill unmet needs in LMICs

923 million women
of reproductive age
want to avoid
a pregnancy

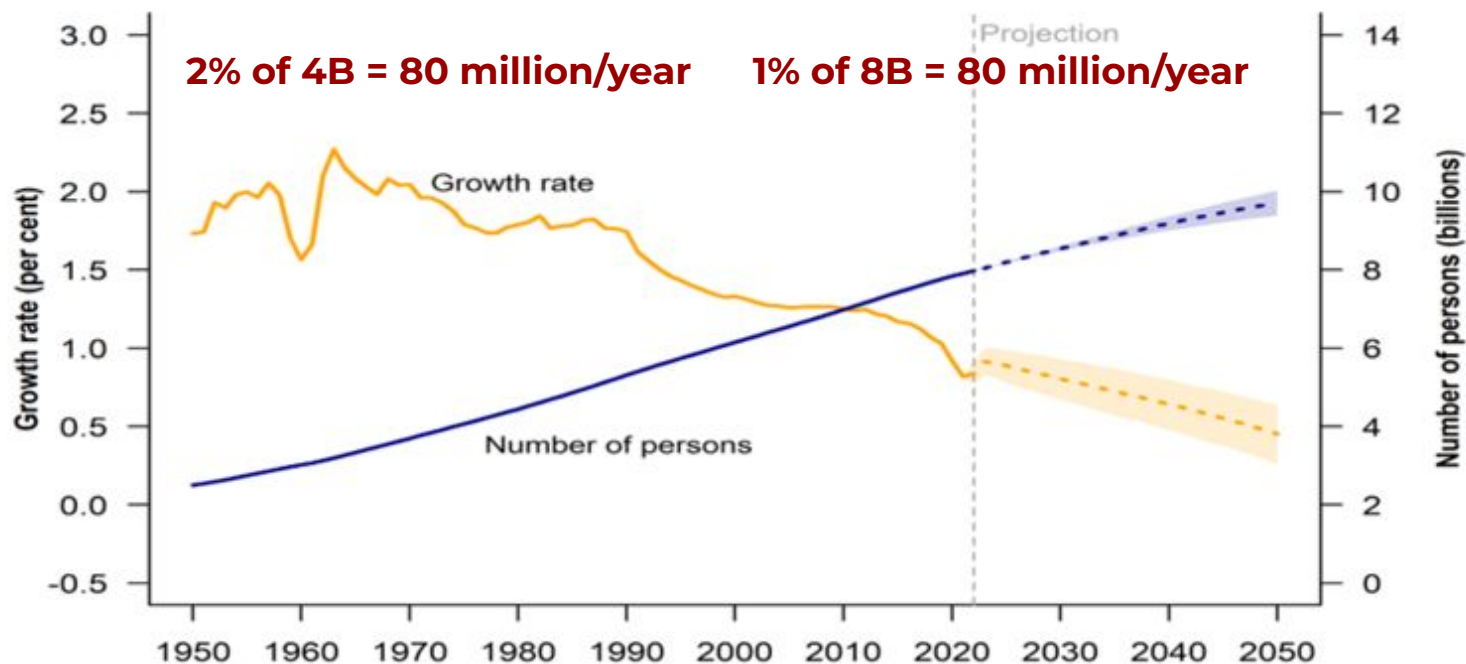


218 million of them
have an unmet need
for modern
contraception


guttmacher.org

Population Growth Rate


Global population size and annual growth rate: estimates, 1950-2022, and medium scenario with 95 per cent prediction intervals, 2022-2050



Historical Population Policies



Efforts to
Lower Birth
Rates



Efforts to
Increase
Birth Rates

The Population Taboo

**HUMAN
SUPREMACY**

**PAST
POLICIES**

**PRO-
NATALISM**

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



The Patriarchs
How Men Came to Rule



ANGELA SAINI



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

Pronatalism: Various Pressures



Cultural
Pressures



More
Followers



More
Consumers



More
Taxpayers,
Military,
Ethnocentrism



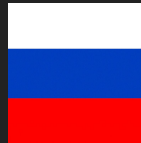
**Iran ends provision by state of
contraceptives and vasectomies**



**Turkish PM pushes for 'three
children incentive'**



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



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



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



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



RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN
PRESIDENT OF TÜRKİYE

”

At least three children are necessary in each family, because our population risks ageing. No matter how successful a woman is, a woman who denies her motherhood, who gives up on looking after the home is incomplete, is only half, is at risk of losing her uniqueness.



POPE FRANCIS
HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

”

Today ... we see a form of selfishness. We see that some people do not want to have a child. Sometimes they have one, and that's it, but they have dogs and cats that take the place of children.



”

We will defend Christian culture and will not surrender the country to aliens. Instead of just numbers, we want Hungarian children. Migration for us is surrender.



”

If you say there is a population problem in a country, but you're killing millions of your own people through legalized abortion every year, if that were to be reduced, some of that problem is solved



ELON MUSK

CEO, TESLA MOTORS

”

Population collapse due to low birth rates is a much bigger risk to civilization than global warming. The urge to have sex and procreate has been “subverted” by birth control and abortion, leading to population decline.



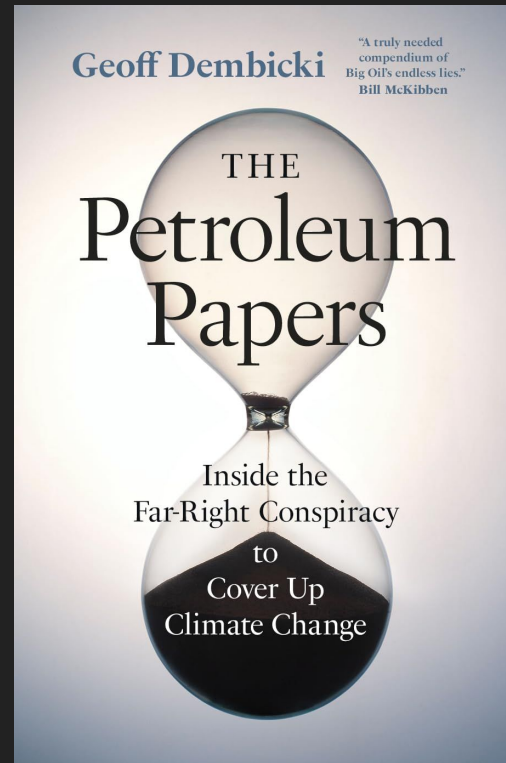
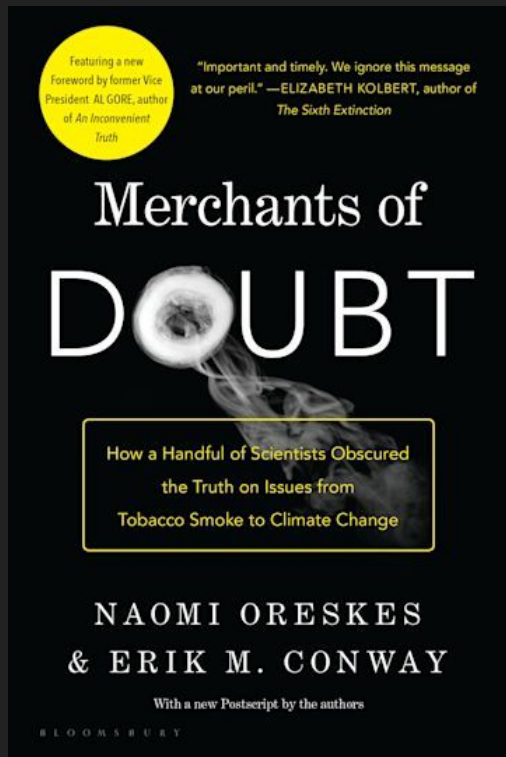
JEFF BEZOS

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,
AMAZON

”

“I would love to see, you know, a trillion humans living in the solar system. If we had a trillion humans, we would have at any given time a thousand Mozarts and a thousand Einsteins...Our solar system would be full of life and intelligence and energy.”





How Koch Industries, Fake Scientists, and Rush Limbaugh Invented Climate Denial

Earth overpopulation is a myth we should all ignore



Valuable People:
Debunking the Myth of
Overpopulation



Busting the Myth of
Overpopulation



The Myth That Our Planet
Faces an Overpopulation Crisis



Stop Worrying About
Overpopulation



The Overpopulation Dog-and-Pony Show



THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



How Free-Market Fundamentalism
Fuels Population Denialism &
Undermines Democracy

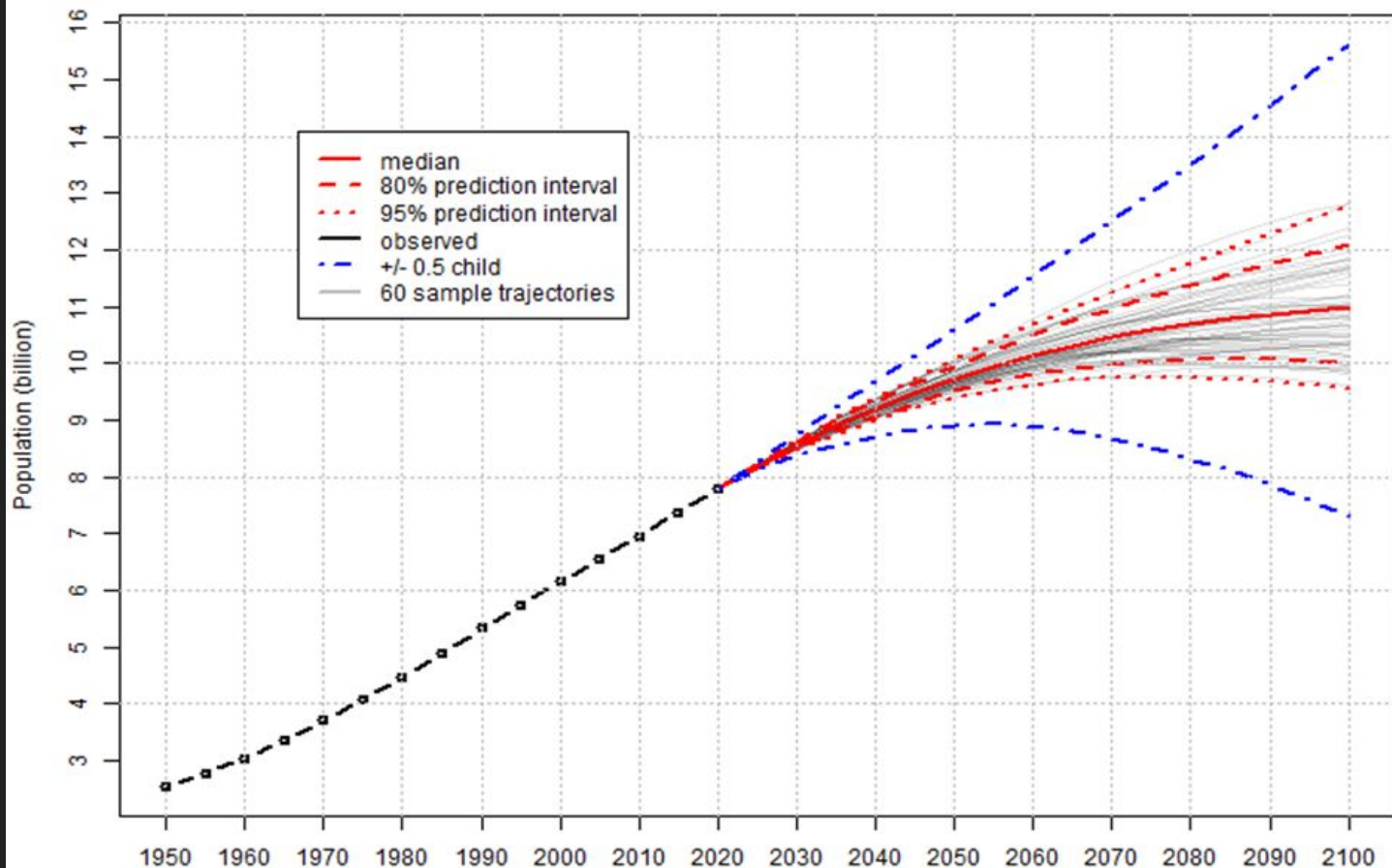


NAOMI ORESKES

Outline

- Human Expansionism
- The Population Taboo
- **Confronting Population Denial**

World: Total Population



Podcast



A Profound Vision For An Ecological Civilization

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



EILEEN CRIST



Confronting Overshoot

Changing the Story of Human Exceptionalism

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



WILLIAM REES



Patriarchy, Motherhood, and the Search for Meaning

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



AMRITA NANDY



Countdown
Our Last, Best Hope for a Future on Earth?

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



ALAN WEISMAN



How Free-Market Fundamentalism Fuels Population Denialism & Undermines Democracy

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



NAOMI ORESKES



Embracing Limits With Ecospheric Grace

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



ROBERT JENSEN



The Patriarchs

How Men Came to Rule

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



ANGELA SAINI



Engaging Boys and Men to Confront Patriarchy in Uganda

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



ANDREW KYAMAGERO



From Ego to Eco
Rewilding Nature and Ourselves

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



SUPRABHA SESHAN



Powering Down
Beyond Growth, Toward Simplicity

THE
OVERPOPULATION
PODCAST



RICHARD HEINBERG

Media Publications

The Guardian

Reproductive rights are under threat

Nandita Bajaj

Newsweek

'Worrying' Population Declines Are Actually A Hopeful Sign | Opinion

By **Kirsten Stade**

The Washington Post

Opinion | Our goal should be a planet with fewer humans

Kirsten Stade

NATIONAL POST

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

Feat. Nandita Bajaj

The Economist

The benefits of fewer people

KIRSTEN STADE

 **CBC Quirks & Quarks**

Next week there will be 8 billion of us, and that's already too many

Feat. Nandita Bajaj, William Rees, and Céline Delacroix

COUNTERPUNCH

Making More Babies to Drive Economic Growth

How Patriarchal Pronatalism Dominates the Conversation About the Human Future

NANDITA BAJAJ

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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

Feat. Nandita Bajaj

Ms.
MORE THAN A MAGAZINE, A MOVEMENT

Abortion Bans Are a Natural Outgrowth of Coercive Pronatalism

NANDITA BAJAJ

 **INTER PRESS SERVICE**
News Agency

Population Denialism is Reminiscent of Climate Denialism

Kirsten Stade

Academic Publications and Presentations



the journal of population
and sustainability

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

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

Nandita Bajaj, Kirsten Stade

SAGE journals

Ecology & Environmental Sciences

World scientists' warning: The behavioural crisis driving ecological overshoot

Joseph J Merz ^{1,2}, Phoebe Barnard ^{2,3,4}, William E Rees ⁵, Dane Smith ⁶, Mat Maroni ¹, Christopher J Rhodes ⁷, Julia H Dederer ^{1,2,8}, Nandita Bajaj ^{2,9,10}, Michael K Joy ^{1,11}, Thomas Wiedmann ¹², and Rory Sutherland ⁶



NANDITA BAJAJ

ADJUNCT FACULTY, ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, POPULATION BALANCE

Antioch University 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/3NKSIE5

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION



Thank you!

SHRINK TOWARD ABUNDANCE

We envision a future where our human footprint is in balance with life on Earth, enabling all species to thrive.

populationbalance.org