

# Pronatalism and Rapid Population Growth: Challenging the Social Pressures to Have Children

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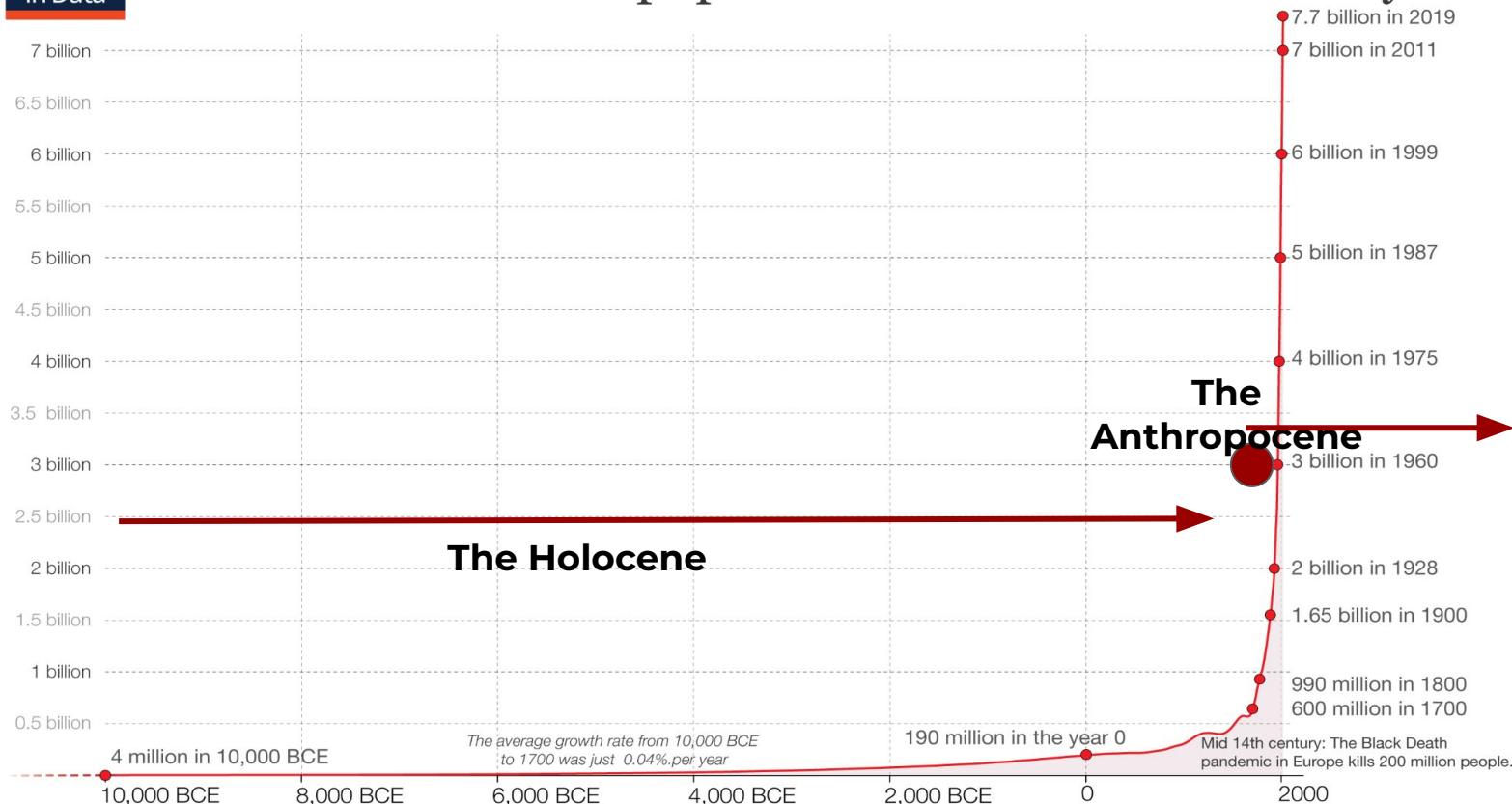


# Outline



- **Deep-Time Perspective**
- The Overpopulation Taboo
- Human Exceptionalism
- Pronatalism
- Our Obligations

# 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](https://OurWorldinData.org) you can download the annual data.

This is a visualization from [OurWorldinData.org](https://OurWorldinData.org), where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

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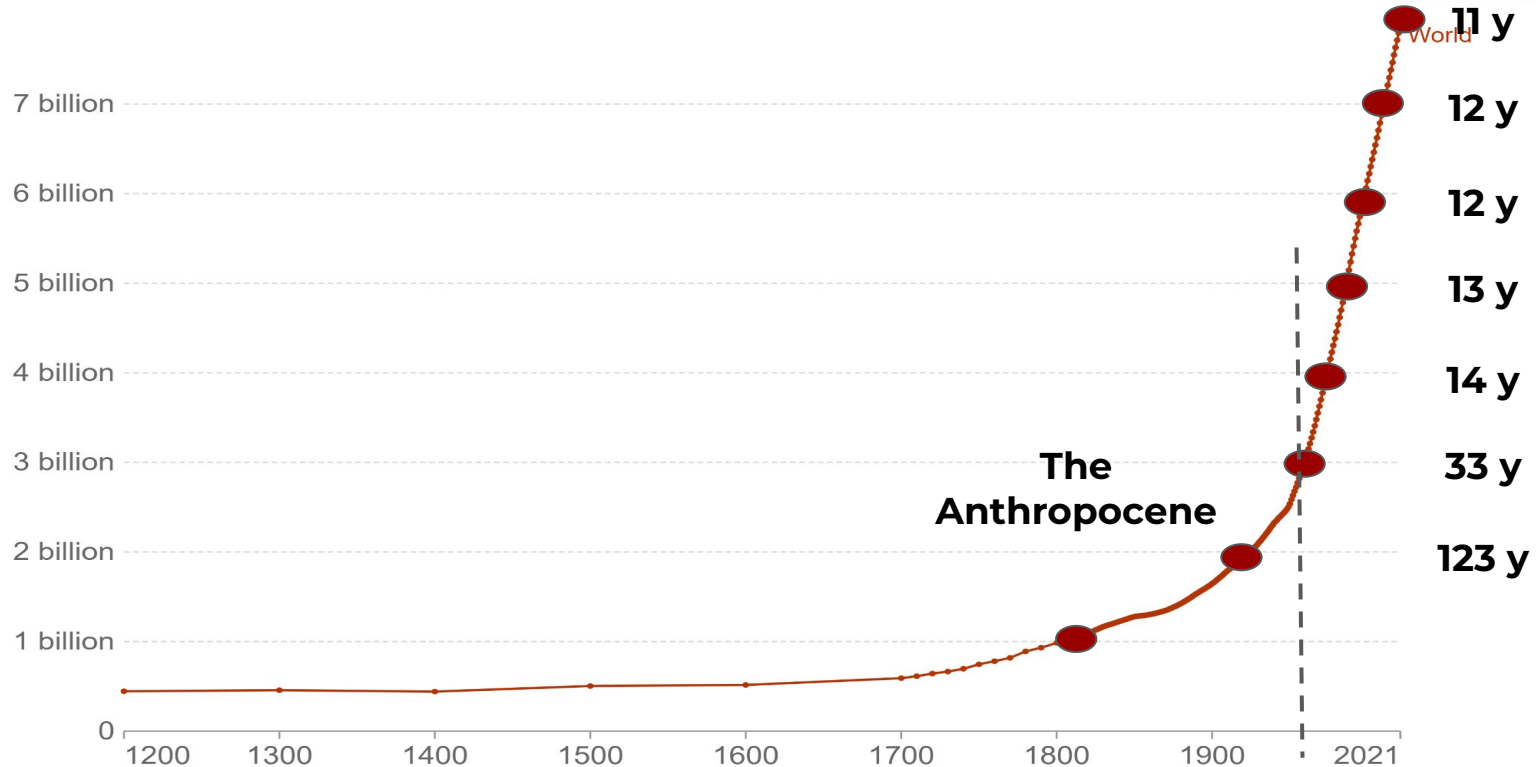


**POPULATION  
BALANCE**

Shrink Toward Abundance

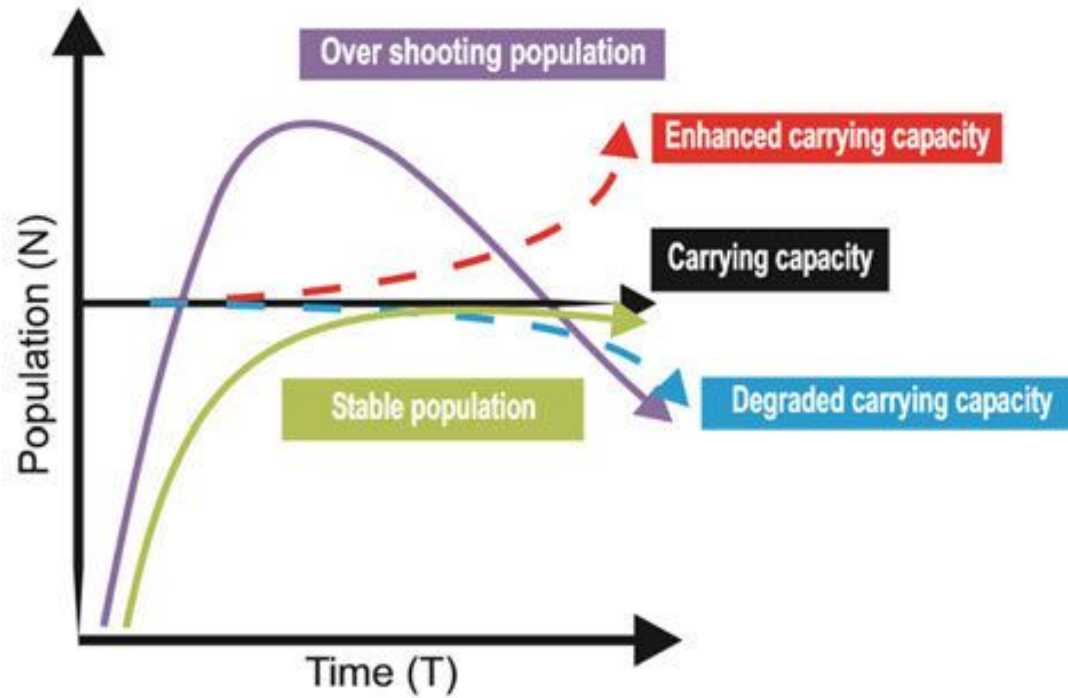
# Population, 1200 to 2021

Our World  
in Data



Source: Gapminder (v6), HYDE (v3.2), UN (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/world-population-growth • CC BY



**Carrying capacity graph**  
© CoE ILPWRM IITG

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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  
Exceptionalism

Pronatalism



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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.

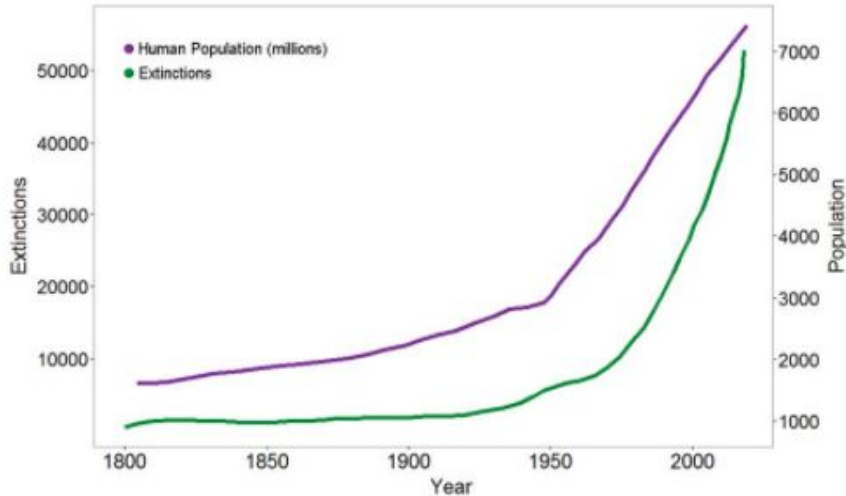


**POPULATION  
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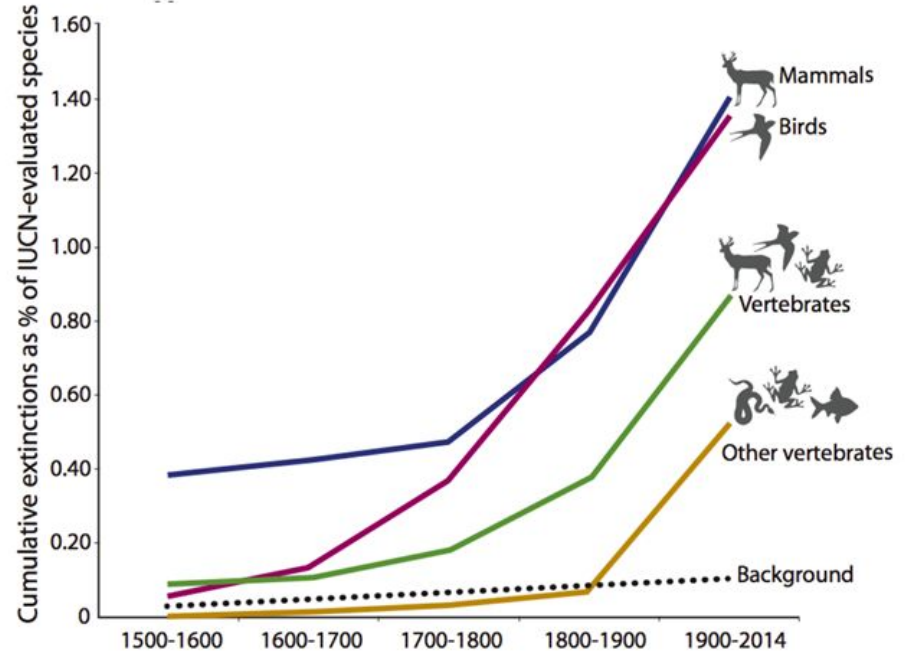
Shrink Toward Abundance

# Humans and The Extinction Crisis

## Humans & The Extinction Crisis

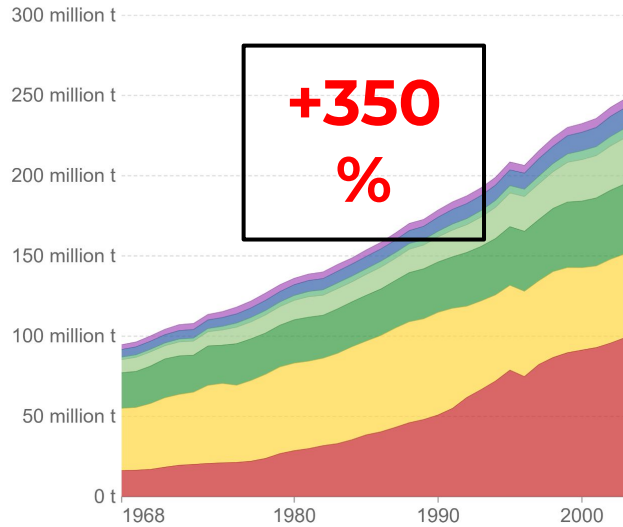


Data source: Scott, J.M. 2008. *Threats to Biological Diversity: Global, Continental, Local*. U.S. Geological Survey, Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife, Research Unit, University Of Idaho.



# Increase in Animal-Based Food Production

Global meat production, 1968 to 2018



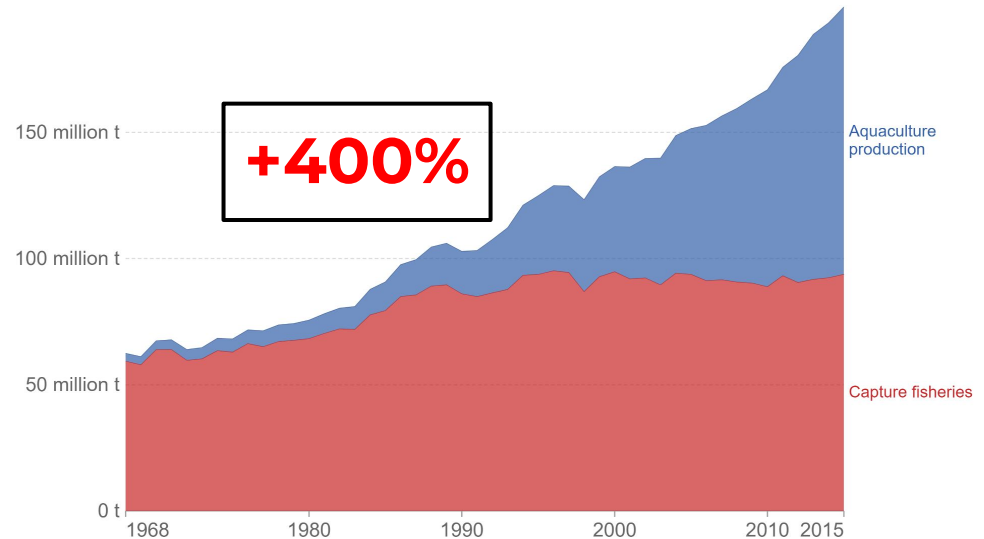
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Our World  
in Data

Seafood production: wild fish catch vs aquaculture, World

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.

Our World  
in Data



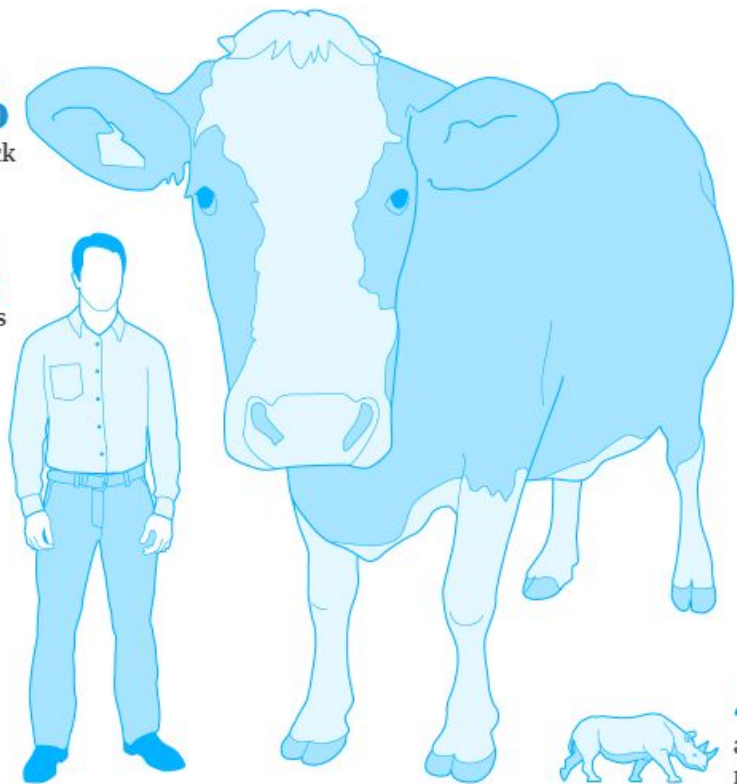
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

OurWorldInData.org/seafood-production • CC BY

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

**60%**  
are livestock

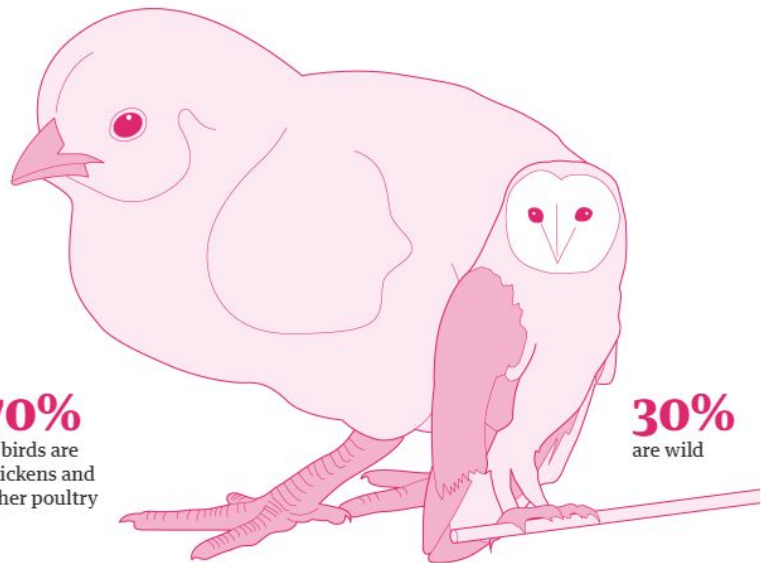
**36%**  
are humans



**4%**  
are wild  
mammals

**70%**  
of birds are  
chickens and  
other poultry

**30%**  
are wild



Guardian graphic.



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- **Pronatalism**
- Our Obligations



**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



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LETA HOLLINGWORTH

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

”

The pains, the dangers, and risks of child-bearing are tabooed as subjects of conversation. The drudgery, the monotonous labor, and other disagreeable features of child-rearing are minimized by 'the social guardians.' On the other hand, the joys and compensations of motherhood are magnified and presented to consciousness on every hand. Thus the tendency is to create an illusion whereby motherhood will appear to consist of compensations only, and thus come to be desired by those for whom the illusion is intended.





**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.



**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.”



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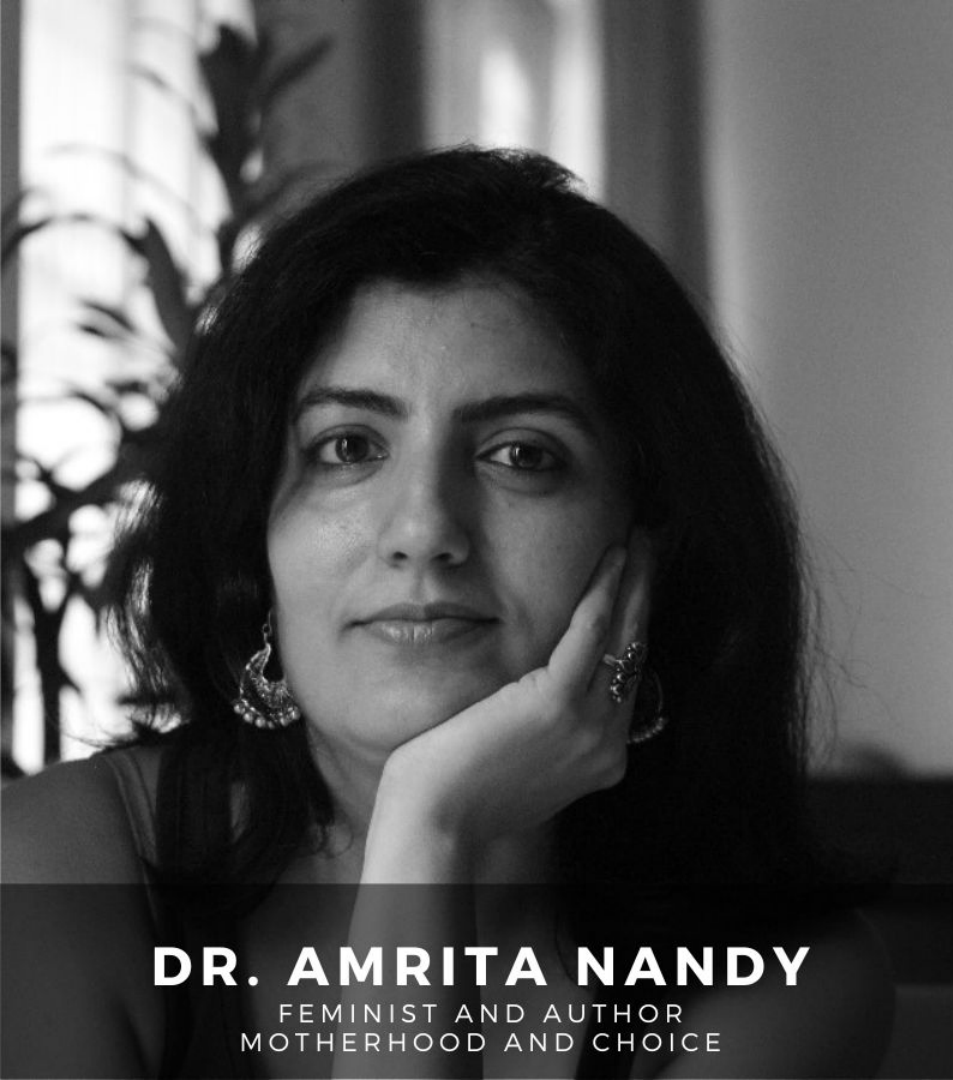
**DR. KIMYA NURU DENNIS**

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





**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.



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**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.



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**MARTHA A. GIMENEZ**

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

”

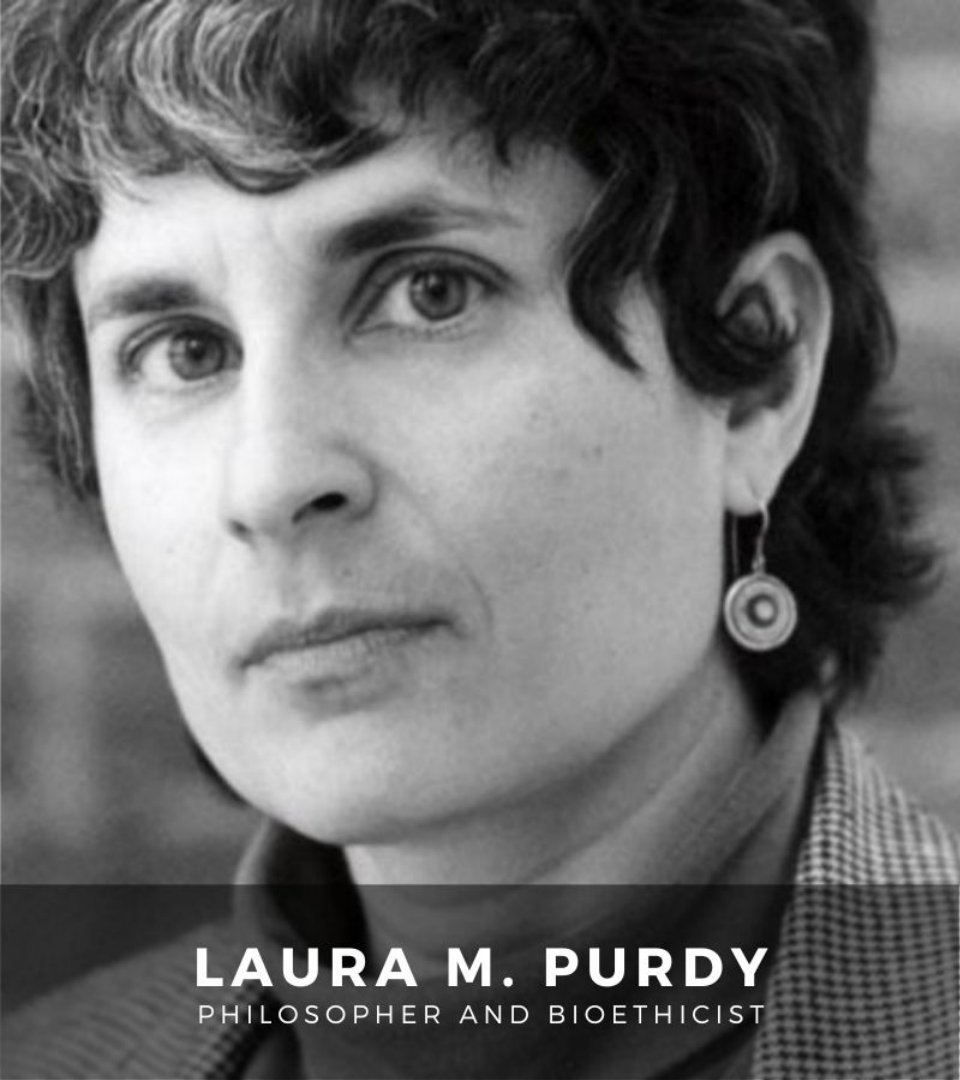
The ‘biological clock’ that some women claim to hear ticking is also a ‘social clock’ reminding them that whatever else may be going on in their lives, motherhood is their destiny, the road to social acceptance and integration.



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**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.

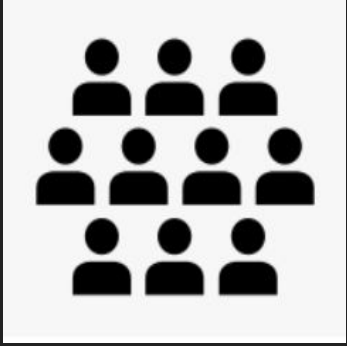
Attempts to do so (anti-pronatalism) are also often erroneously confused with, and undermined by, negativism about having children (anti-natalism).



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# Pronatalist Pressures



Cultural  
Pressures



More  
Followers



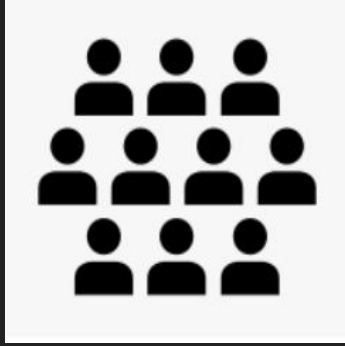
More  
Consumers



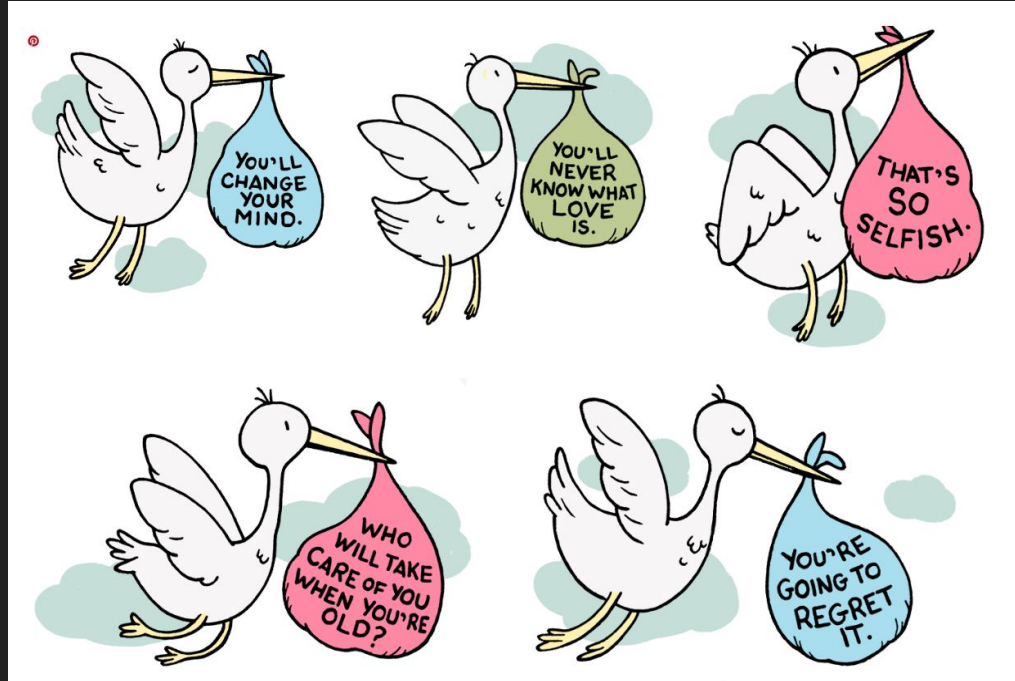
More  
Taxpayers



# Cultural Pressures



Cultural  
Pressures



**My So-Called Selfish Life**

# Religious Pressures



More  
Followers



Iran ends provision by state of  
contraceptives and vasectomies



The Islamophobic roots of population  
control efforts in India



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



Texas Law That Bans Abortion Before  
Many Women Know They're Pregnant  
Takes Effect

# Economy-Driven Pressures



More  
Consumers



**S. Korea to Boost Child Care Subsidies to Tackle Low Birth Rate**



**Japan is trying really hard to persuade women to start having babies again**



**"Baby shortage" could spell economic stagnation for UK**



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

# Political Pressures



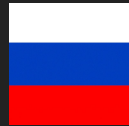
More  
Taxpayers



**Hungary's anti-immigration PM to give mothers of four or more life tax exemption**



**Poland to launch demographic plan "based on pro-family policy, not migration"**



**Before Election, Putin Offers \$8.6 Billion to Russians to Have More Babies**



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

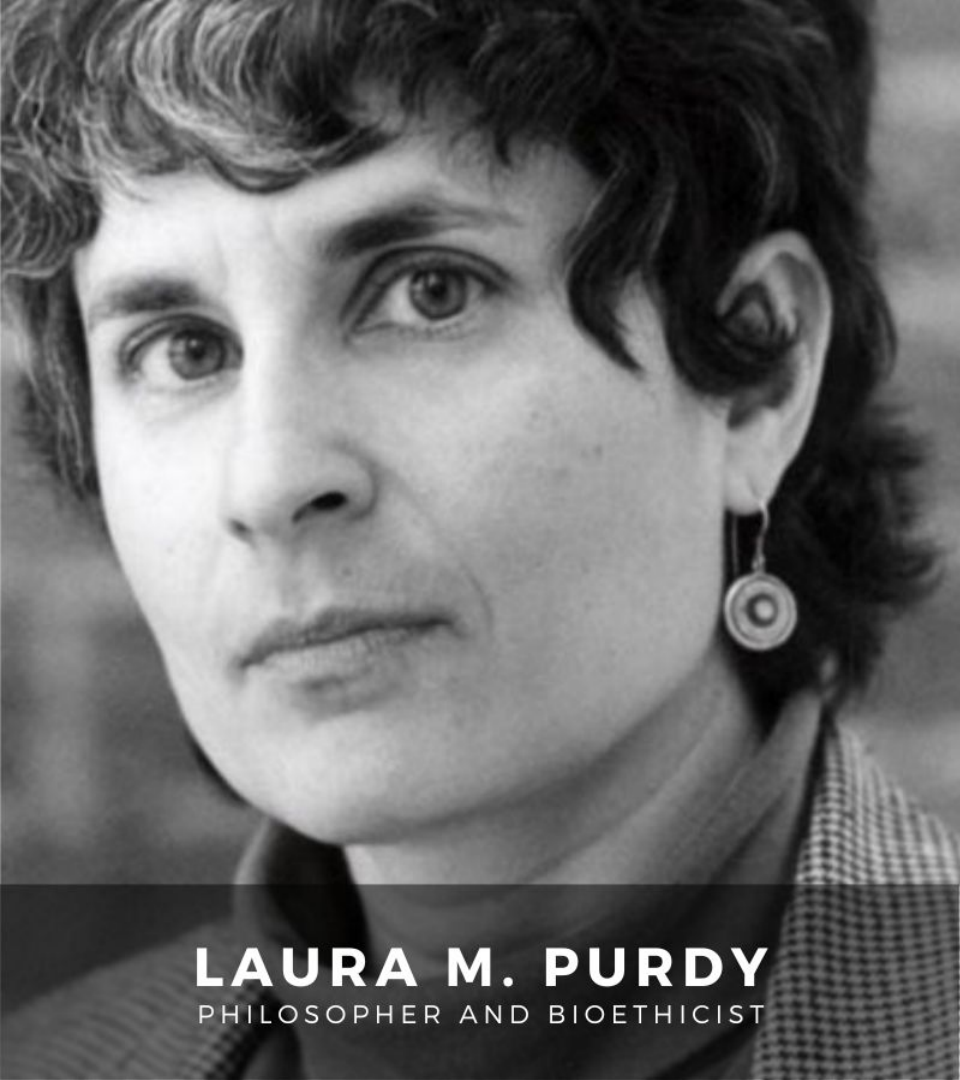
# Population Engineering Goes Both Ways



**Efforts to  
prevent  
reproduction**



**Efforts to  
promote  
reproduction**

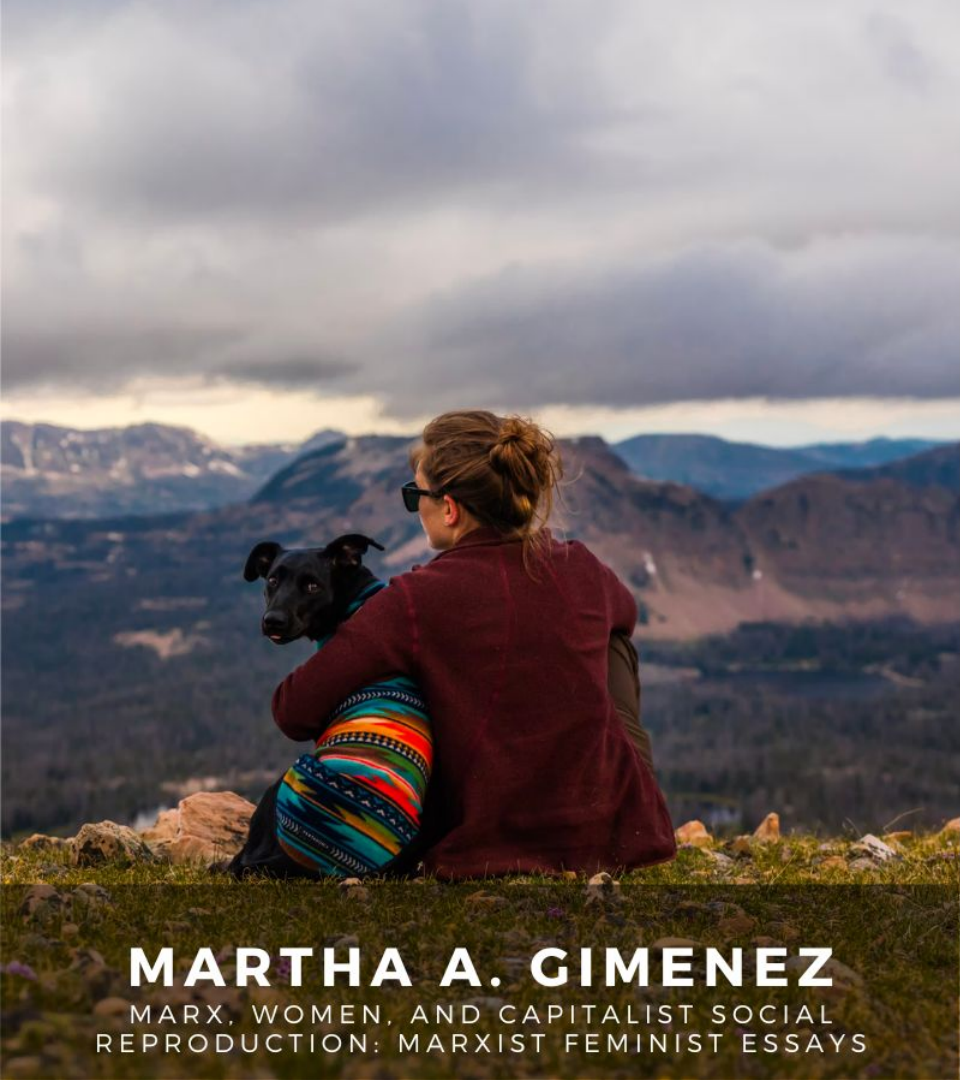


**LAURA M. PURDY**  
PHILOSOPHER AND BIOETHICIST

”

Pronatalism's chief characteristic - and its moral Achilles heel - is that it undermines autonomous decision-making about childbearing.





**MARTHA A. GIMENEZ**

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

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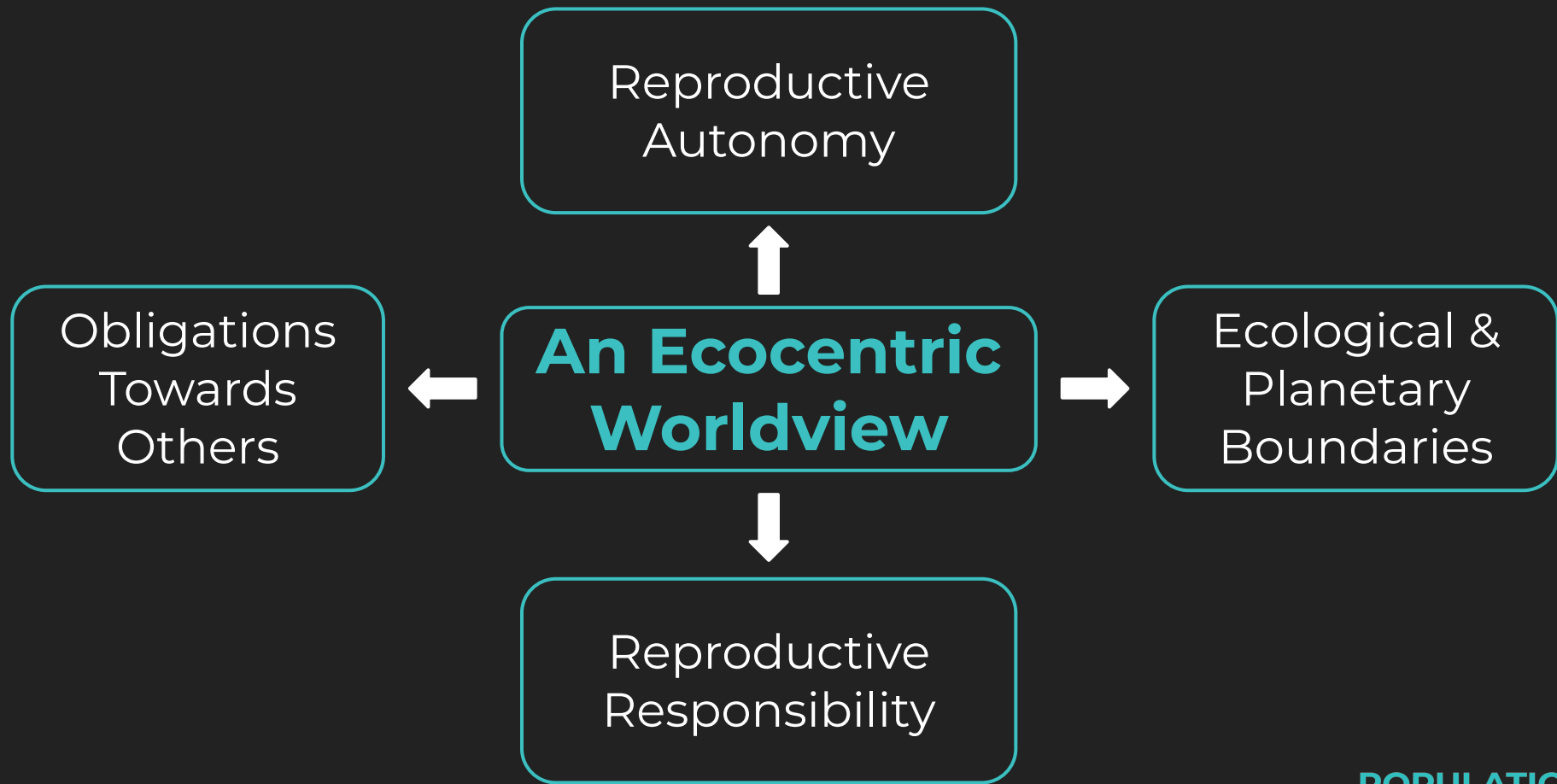
To be critical of pronatalism is not equivalent to condemning parenthood; it is to shed light on its prescriptive nature and propose that it would be socially and ecologically desirable that parenthood cease to be considered as a natural instinct and/or a religious or a social duty.

# Outline



- Deep-Time Perspective
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- Human Exceptionalism
- Pronatalism
- **An Ecocentric Worldview**





# Our Work at Population Balance

## Liberated Choices

We empower people to make liberated, informed, and responsible family choices free from the pervasive forces of pronatalism that diminish reproductive autonomy.



## 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 reverence and stewardship.



## Social Justice

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



# Our Work at Population Balance

## THE **OVER**POPULATION PODCAST



Listen to our Podcast

## Pronatalism & Overpopulation Challenging the Social Pressures to Procreate



Dr. Amrita  
Nandy  
(India)



Elisabeth  
Dimitras  
(Greece)

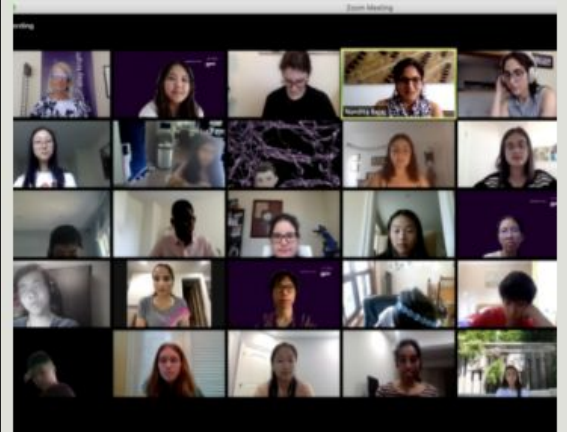


Laura  
Carroll  
(U.S.)



Orna  
Donath  
(Israel)

Watch Our Webinar



Invite us to Your Classroom



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Thank you!