

Overpopulation and surplus people (half academic version)

The idea of controlling population growth is closely related to racism and xenophobia. The “surplus population” tends to be poor rural, and dark skinned; according to overpopulation’s rhetoric there are too many Africans, peasants, Peruvians, Muslims, Chinese, etc. High number of children in these populations (whether if truly the average number of children per family is relatively high or if it is just a prejudice discourse) is used to explain their poverty, lack of education and other negative traits [1, 2]. “Their” numbers that amount to the “too many people in the world” are blamed for environmental destruction, climate change, poverty and social problems. “Their” numbers doesn’t affect only them, but it affects “us”.

It is obvious that family planning and the right of women to control their bodies and decide on the number of children they want to have is extremely important. However, it is even more obvious that the XX % of the population that gains around a dollar, or even 10 dollars a day are not the reason for the global environmental deterioration. Having a high number of children for poor, rural population is a survival strategy. When you have no secure income source, no health insurance and no hope for pension, you better have enough children to support you in your old age, considering none of them will have enough money to take care of you on their own.

The new radical idea of Half-Earth or ‘nature needs half’ theories (<http://natureneedshalf.org/>) take this further [3]. Instead of teaching humanity to live peacefully with nature, they call for increasing the Protected Areas networks to cover 50% of earth, emptying it from people [4].

Our environmental crisis is not related to the number of humans, it is related to consumption! There are not too many humans in the world, definitely not to many Africans, peasants, Peruvians, Muslims, Chinese, etc. there are too many over-consumers in the world, too much meat production and too much waste dumped.

1. Mamdani, M., *The myth of population control: family caste and class in an Indian village*. 1972.
2. Hartmann, B., *Conserving racism: the greening of hate at home and abroad*. 2004.
3. Wilson, E.O., *Half-earth: our planet's fight for life*. 2016: WW Norton & Company.
4. Büscher, B., et al., *Half-Earth or Whole Earth? Radical ideas for conservation, and their implications*. Oryx, 2017. **51**(3): p. 407-410.

Questions

In general, does the text give a good overview of the problems related to the common view of overpopulation, or do you think there are better ways to cover this issue?

Does this need more background info?

Is it easy and interesting to read? Does the English need editing? Can you suggest edits?

Are parts of the text irrelevant, repetitive, or should be rephrased or deleted?

Are there any relevant issues that are not covered by this text? Would you be able to add them or just list them to be added by us?

Can you suggest a person or an institution that might have the right experience and perspective to rewrite this text? Are you happy to forward this text to them?

Do you know of any academic work related to the subject that can be added to this text?

This is the academic version of this issue, but it still needs more research and citation. Are you interested in improving it, or in writing the shorter, non-academic version? If not, could you suggest what parts are the most relevant to be kept in the shorter version?

Any other comment?

What are the counter arguments to this topic?

How does this correlate to the main points of the mind map?