

ONE-CHILD ETHICS AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR OVERPOPULATION CRISIS



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The Roots of Unsustainability

There are five roots of humankind's growth:

(1) Mortality decline

(2) Population momentum (a bulk of young people entering into the reproductive pool)

(3) Wanted fertility

(4) Unwanted fertility

(5) Coerced fertility

Obviously, root (1) is desirable and curbing it would be unethical and unacceptable

Targeting the Roots of Unsustainability

(4) Unwanted fertility + (5) Coerced fertility are addressed and combated by:

Voluntary family planning

- contraceptive prevalence as the greatest factor for a country's fertility rate
- essential, wanted, needed and doable; the greatest medical achievement alongside vaccination

Education and empowerment

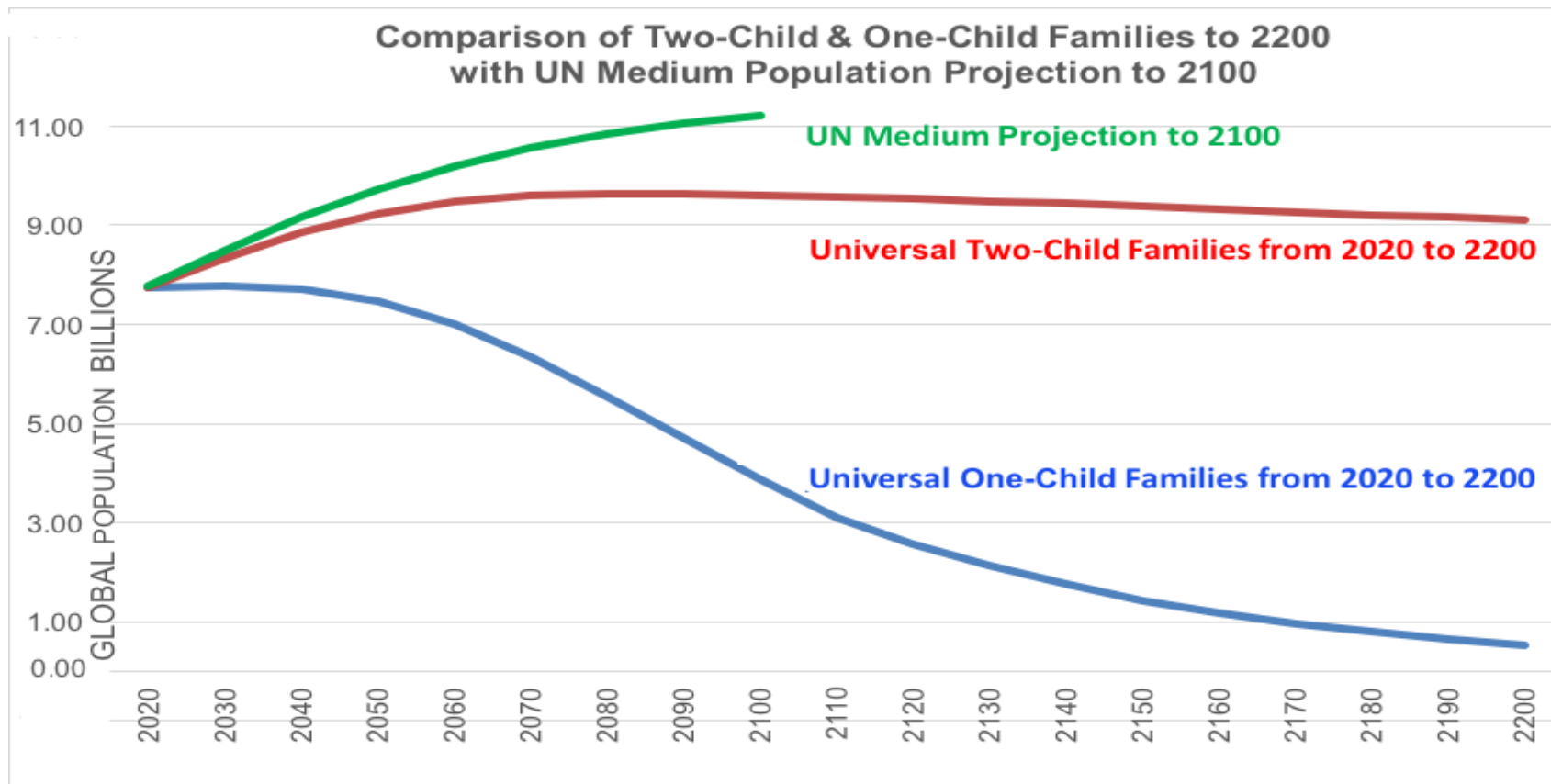
- girls' education (and women's empowerment) among the most powerful forces on the planet
- educated girls are healthier and wealthier; it benefits whole communities and economics

Obviously, restrictive measures (forced sterilizations, one-child policy, etc.) are unethical and should be avoided; thus, they are not discussed here.



Targeting the Roots of Unsustainability

(2) Population momentum + (3) Wanted fertility also must be addressed. Why?



One-Child Ethics as the Only Way to Achieving Sustainability

But how to achieve that? How do we convince human beings to have smaller families?

Reproductive ethics of small families

- promotion and advocacy of a 2-child maximum per family, and ideally less (**one-child ethics**)

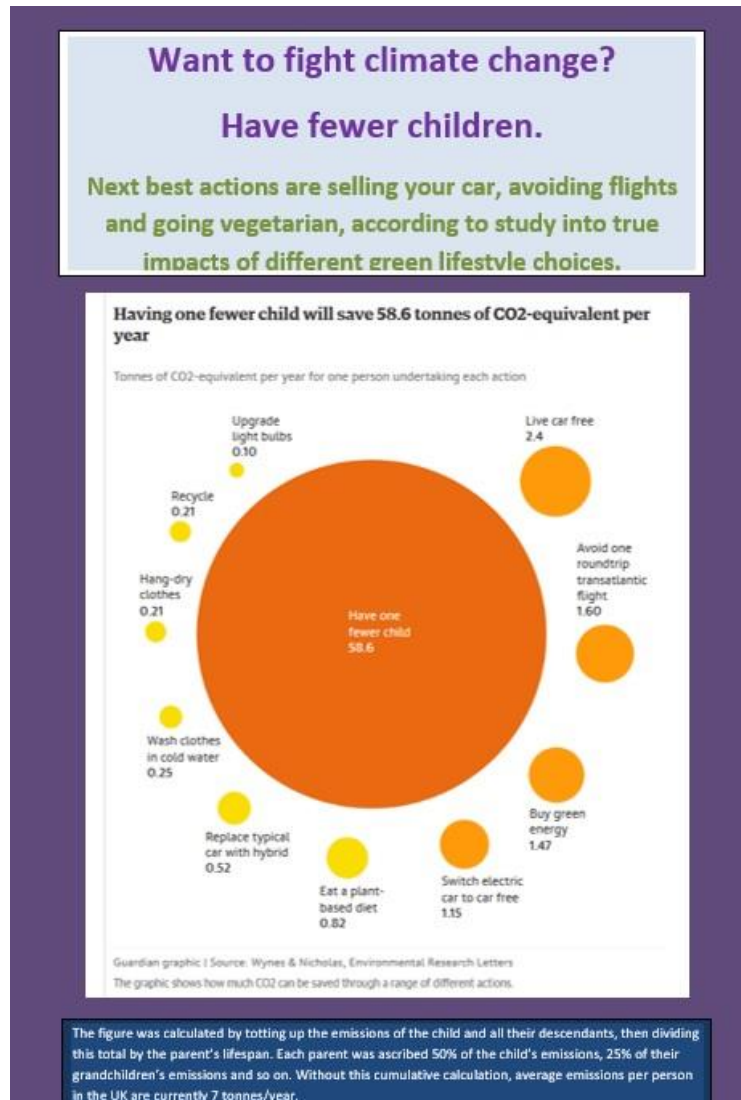
Environmental ethics and education

- illustrating **the consequences of our vast numbers** for the biosphere, and other living species
- pointing out that humankind is not the only species on the planet and that **other species have rights too**
- pointing out that **our future generations also have rights...**

... **to live in a world in which they can thrive and prosper** – something not possible in an overpopulated world depleted of nature resources, afflicted by climate change, etc.



One-Child Ethics as the Only Way to Achieving Sustainability



Further Measures

Lengthening generations

= women delaying their first child (e.g., until their thirties)

- **another effective measure against population momentum**
- gynecologically controversial topic (pregnancy and delivery complications increase with higher age), but given its positive demographic effect, it must be openly discussed

Child-free women

- there is a segment of women who may never want to get pregnant and have children
- this is **absolutely legitimate** – it is a woman's right, **not a duty to have children**
- parenting is hard and may not be suitable for everyone
- **staying child-free (not child-less) is a valid option**

Such women should not be stigmatized but supported in their decision to stay child-free.

Conclusion

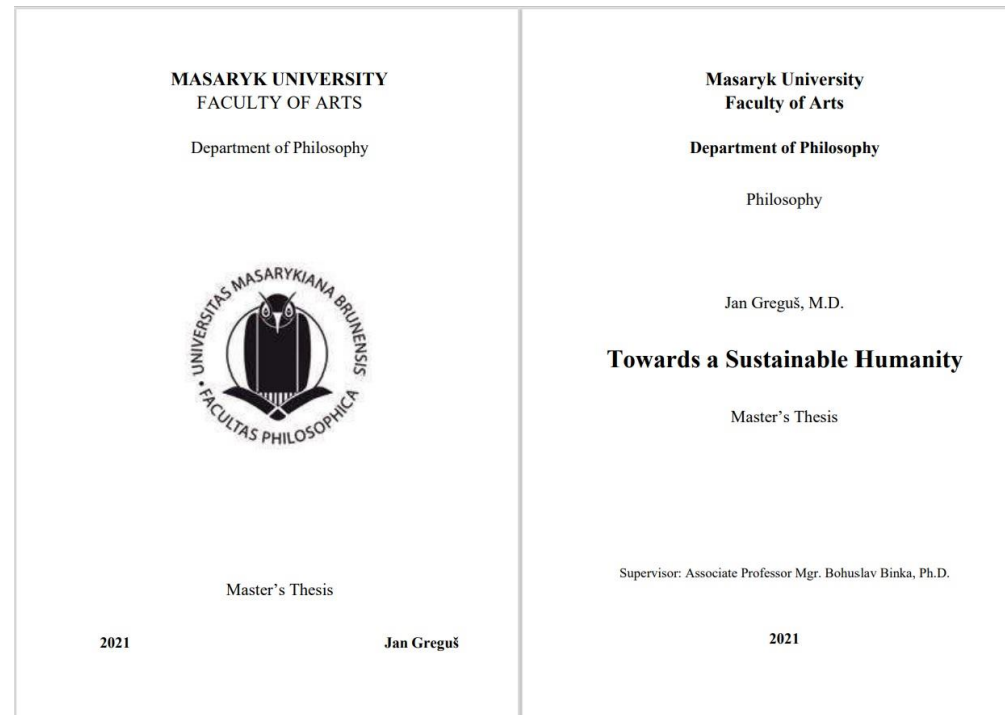
Sustainable humankind is possible and achievable, but requires targeting all four roots of humankind's growth including population momentum and wanted fertility.

This can be done through promotion of small families, ideally promotion of one-child ethics.

While it is not likely for voluntary one-child ethics to be globally accepted and embraced in the foreseeable future, it should be widely circulated and promoted among gynecologists and other healthcare providers to emphasize that this is ultimately the only ethical solution to our overpopulation predicament.

Thank You For Your Attention

If you are interested to learn more, you can read the Master's Thesis Towards a Sustainable Humanity:
It is available in full on MUNI: [https://is.muni.cz/auth/th/uc2qu/Towards a Sustainable Humanity.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/auth/th/uc2qu/Towards_a_Sustainable_Humanity.pdf)



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