

ODE TO YOUTH

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Background: In 8000 BC, at the time when agriculture was discovered, the world's population was around 10 million. Over a long period, the population increased slowly. It took all of human history, until around 1800, for the world's population to reach one billion. Then the industrial revolution happened. People no longer died young. The increase in the number of inhabitants accelerated. Today, 8 billion people live on Earth.

Methods and Objectives: Background and data were obtained by looking at the work of Hans Rosling and Stephen Shaw's documentary "Birthgap-Childless World"; as well as the internet portals Small Circles Forward and Gravitas Plus: "World is One News". Are we living in the most populous time on the planet? What caused the huge increase in people who suffer from "unplanned childlessness"?

Results: Throughout history, there was an average of about six babies born per woman. It is specific to humans as a species. In 1965, the number of children born per woman dropped to five. Now it's about 2.5 and still going down. An educated woman chooses to have significantly fewer children. Her time is worth money, and having children could negatively affect her career and income. Women are now waiting longer to get married and have their first child, and they are spacing pregnancies more apart. Access to legal and safe abortions contributes to further declines in the birth rate. The world welcomes people who delay parenthood. This becomes a cultural phenomenon and spreads. Mass aging of society is inevitable. All the places in the world that, decade after decade, have been well below the required birth rate are on the way to population decline.

Conclusions : It is necessary to point out to young people the short duration of the "age of fertility"! The period of life spent in education and commitment to a career must be coordinated with the period of family and offspring formation. Society needs to make parenting worthwhile again.

Keywords: population, birth rate, childless, parenting