



## Cumberland Lodge Colloquium Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016

### Population and Ethics: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Birth and Death

#### *Call For Papers*

<http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/populationethics>

Undoubtedly, many of the most pressing challenges of our age relate to changes in human population. Many people believe that the world is overpopulated and that population growth is causing significant social, economic and environmental harm. However, countries with low rates of population growth are struggling to cope with ageing populations and shrinking workforces.

Yet these issues receive little attention from academics, and public debate is often led by unconsidered opinion and ideological divides about the ethics of birth and death. This presents opportunities for interdisciplinary researchers to break new ground and make significant contributions to contemporary policy decisions.

This colloquium will explore different perspectives on moral issues relating to human population. Topics covered throughout the day will include: the morality of procreative decision-making, the changing shape of society, the relationship between human populations and the environment and the effect of demography on wellbeing and development. Our goal is to bring together scholars with an interest in these interrelated issues from theoretical and scientific perspectives with practitioners and policy makers, to spark debates and to stimulate collaborations. We hope to draw on a growing body of research on population and ethics in philosophy, demography, political science, anthropology, geography, sociology, ecology and reproductive health.

Keynote speaker – **Sir Partha Dasgupta** (University of Cambridge)

We are seeking to select up to 8 presentations, with a preference for work from early career researchers and postgraduates, that explore the following topics:

**The morality of birth:** Are procreative decisions moral decisions, and if so what norms and values govern them? How do these decisions interact with wider moral and political debates, or are they essentially private?

**The changing shape of society:** Shifting age demographics and family structures are altering the structure of our communities. How are these changes affecting the balance of responsibilities between generations and how should societies react?

**Human populations and the environment:** Are population controls an appropriate response to environmental change, or are consumption, technology and behaviour more important? Is it right to give priority to expanding human populations, when populations of other species are collapsing?

**Optimum demographics:** Is there such a thing as an optimum population size, and how should this be determined? Are there optimum levels for other demographic features, such as growth rate or age structure, that promote wellbeing and human development?

In order to maximise the impact of this emerging field of interdisciplinary research, participants will be able to contribute their ideas to a video on population ethics that we will be producing in collaboration with the Westminster think tank Common Vision – [www.covi.org.uk](http://www.covi.org.uk).

Successful applicants will have their registration fee and travel costs provided free of charge.

To submit a proposal, please send an abstract of 500 words or less outlining the content of your proposed presentation to [populationethics@cumberlandlodge.ac.uk](mailto:populationethics@cumberlandlodge.ac.uk).

**Deadline for submission:** 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016

**Notification of acceptance:** 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016

If you have any further questions, you are welcome to contact the Organising Committee at [populationethics@cumberlandlodge.ac.uk](mailto:populationethics@cumberlandlodge.ac.uk).

This colloquium is being organised by a committee of early career researchers and post-graduate students working in collaboration with Cumberland Lodge ([www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk](http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk)). Cumberland Lodge is a registered charity (No. 1108677).



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