



Anti-Motherhood Crew Marches on as Western Peoples Disappear

Westerners are disappearing, plagued by fertility rates that, unless something changes, will send them the way of the dinosaurs. Despite this, the anti-motherhood agenda marches on, with the latest example being a “regretting motherhood” debate raging in Germany.

The debate is said to have been sparked by Israeli sociologist Orna Donath, who published a 2015 work called *Regretting Motherhood*. It relates the testimonials of just 23 women who, [writes](#) the AFP’s Coralie Febvre, “love their own kids but would, truth be told, prefer not to have had them.” Febvre calls the sociologist’s work a “study,” even though slightly fewer than two dozen subjects is hardly a scientific sample. Donath doesn’t seem driven by scientific curiosity, however, but instead by what many would interpret as a desire to justify oneself: She was tired “of hearing that she ‘would regret’ not having a child,” Febvre relates.



Febvre begins by asking, “Is it possible to regret becoming a mother?” But that’s the wrong question. A mafia hit man might regret not having whacked someone in ‘87; a prolific philanderer might regret not having seduced another 50 women. People can regret most anything. The real question is: Are they regretting the right things?

What we regret is dictated by what we value, by what we consider important; then, if we believe we’ve failed to achieve what’s important in life or satisfy its dictates, we have regrets. And what appears largely missing from the motherhood debate in the United States — and it’s certainly missing from Febvre’s article — is even an acknowledgement that people may be valuing the wrong things and hence be having the wrong regrets. But this would require understanding that since Moral Truth exists, there is an objective hierarchy of importance; instead, our current debates reflect today’s (quite prevalent) relativism, the notion that good and bad, important and trivial, are all just a matter of preference. So who is to say? (Of course, if everything is relative, who’s to say having regrets is a “bad” thing?)

So, disconnected from Truth when making moral decisions and prioritizing, people here are left with nothing but emotion to use as a yardstick. Thus is the motherhood debate not about the importance of the status and the social codes encouraging it, but concerns how the women in question “feel” about motherhood and the social pressure placed on them. For example, Febvre writes of Germany, “A mother who returns to the office without taking maternity leave for a year — or often three — opens herself up



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to being branded a ‘Rabenmutter’ (raven mother) — women who dump their kids in childcare so they can pursue their personal goals.”

Now, some might quip that “personal goals” sounds an awful lot like a euphemism for selfishness. But what isn’t even asked about Febvre’s example of “patriarchal” social pressure is: Is it really a bad thing?

As a writer once pointed out, stigmas are the corollaries of values; if you’re going to value certain things, it follows that their opposites will be devalued. And since society is always going to value certain things, it will always be imposing stigmas. So all that’s left to ask is whether our values, and thus our stigmas, are correct.

Answering this intelligently requires seeing the big picture and not just the little pictures of individual wants, desires, and personal fulfillment. And the reality is that however much social pressure there is militating for motherhood in Germany, it’s not nearly enough. Native Germans have an already cratered fertility rate of 1.3 children per woman; with the replacement rate being 2.1, this is what demographers call demographic-death-spiral territory (“Mutti,” meaning “Momma,” Merkel reflects this, as the German leader is a childless “momma”).

Yet the even bigger picture is that Germany itself largely reflects the entire West. Febvre quotes one Barbara Vinken, who conducted an analysis of German motherhood, as saying, “It’s not like in France, where you can have a glass of champagne during your pregnancy, limit the time you breastfeed and go back to work and adult life three months after giving birth”; Febvre then describes that nation as Germany’s “far more fecund neighbour.”

Yet this is somewhat deceptive. France’s [overall fertility rate](#) is 2.1 — right at replacement level — but the rate for *non-Muslim* Frenchwomen is 1.9 (Muslims in France: 2.8). Even more significant is that France, along with Ireland, nonetheless has the *highest* non-Muslim fertility rate in Europe; the average in Europe is only about 1.6. In other words, those who forged Western civilization are erasing themselves.

There are certainly enough people today who fancy this a good thing, but it is definitely a real thing. And no serious conversation about parenthood, families, and population can be undertaken without considering it. Again, though, the debate we hear in America focuses mainly on the “me,” not the “us.” Febvre implicitly criticizes those complaining about “‘whining’ young women ... obsessed with their own fulfillment”; she also frowns on weekly *Die Zeit*’s argument that “‘traditional’ motherhood was being ‘devalued’ by the push for women to contribute to the economy.” But is the latter, in particular, not plainly true?

In general, Febvre laments the debate’s focus on women and motherhood, implying that it’s a relic of a bygone, patriarchal era (you know, the time when Westerners weren’t poised for extinction). Yet the focus is there for good reason, part of which is that rapidly declining Western fertility rates are correlated not with a radical change in fatherhood, but *motherhood*. Fathers are still largely doing what they always have, going to work and being breadwinners. What has changed is the push to get women to do likewise, as if the sexes are interchangeable cogs. But men aren’t women, and fathers can’t be mothers (and if they’re good fathers, they’re already doing their part).

Moreover, as the excellent documentary *Demographic Winter* points out, while there are several factors associated with declining fertility rates, the greatest predictor of family size today is the number of children *women say* they desire. It’s not hard to understand: When women are conditioned to assume



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masculine ambitions and priorities (e.g., career-building), their hopes and dreams no longer lie in the domestic realm. They then postpone or even forego child-rearing and sometimes have just one child — or none at all.

This is why demographer Philip Longman, a liberal, mind you, maintains that the only solution to the demographic-winter situation is “patriarchy, properly understood.” After all, it is only patriarchal groups in the West — devoutly religious people, be they Christians, Jews, or Muslims — who reproduce in any great number today. As for regrets, of course some mothers regret having kids. And it’s obvious that we’ll have more such women when social engineers instill little girls with careerism.

No matter how enlightened we fancy our “values,” if we extinguish ourselves, they’ll likely die with us. Of course, none of this will matter to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” types, to those interested only in bread and circuses, the next buzz, and the reflection in the mirror. For the rest of us, though, we may want to consider that debates about motherhood should go beyond the “me.”



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