



WIC Hybrid Colloquium

Population Catastrophe: Explosion, Implosion, and Replacement

Wednesday, April 5th, 2023
11:00 – 12:30 (CEST)



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David Weil

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Abstract:

Worries about the size and composition of the population have occupied scholars, governments, and popular discourse for more than a century. In the early 20th century, concern focused on the low fertility of social classes or ethnic groups viewed as having superior attributes. After World War II, the dominant fear was catastrophic overpopulation in poor countries. More recently, sub-replacement fertility and population aging have become salient issues in a large number of countries. These worries arise from a common source: the end of the homeostatic demographic regime of high mortality and high fertility that described human population for most of history. This lecture tells the story of this demographic transformation, including its economic, social, and cultural dimensions. It is a sprawling story that encompasses technological change, feminism, eugenics, science fiction, nationalism, the rise of the welfare state, and the private decisions of billions of individuals.

About the presenter:

David N. Weil is the James and Merrill Tisch Professor of Economics at Brown University and a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research. Weil has written widely on various aspects of economic growth and his textbook on the topic has been translated into six languages. He has also written on assorted topics in demographic and health economics including the population aging, Social Security, and the gender wage gap. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1990.

The Wittgenstein Centre is a collaboration among the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and the University of Vienna.

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