

PHILOSOPHY SPEAKER SERIES

PRONATALISM, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GENETICALLY OPTIMIZED BABIES

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A resurgence of concern about declining birthrates has fueled pronatalist policies and cultural narratives that valorize reproduction as a social good. At the same time, advances in reproductive genetics are expanding the possibilities for selecting embryos based on genetic profiles, including polygenic risk scores for complex traits. Once limited to rare disease prevention, embryo selection is increasingly marketed as a means of optimizing future offspring. This emerging landscape is shaped in part by pronatalist private-sector innovation and consumer demand, raising new ethical, legal, and social questions about the aims and limits of reproductive choice. Together, these forces situate embryo selection at the intersection of biomedical entrepreneurship, demographic anxiety, and moral reasoning about responsibility, health, and the future. This talk explores the connections between pronatalism, techno-optimism, and embryo selection and argues that while the technologies that are being financed and used by tech-elite pronatalists are new, the push to have as many babies as possible and the best babies possible is not.



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