



# laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

21 October 2019 | Draft

## African Leadership Breaking the Deadly Silence on Future Migration Courageous insight on a vital issue that European politicians and the UN fear to evoke

- / -

Deadly silence

Breaking the silence?

Overcrowding versus Overpopulation?

Population "bomb" versus Population "bombing": a challenging metaphorical nexus?

### Deadly silence

It is curious to note how systematically international authorities and political leadership have avoided any discussion of future migration from Africa -- beyond the immediate future. This includes the careful crafting by statistical agencies -- typically in the habit of offering estimates on other matters through to 2050, or even to the end of the century. This peculiar situation is reviewed in detail in a separate document. This includes such estimates in the light of assumptions that can be readily made and fruitfully challenged in honest debate (*Anticipating Future Migration into Europe (2018-2050): Beyond the irresponsibility of current political and humanitarian short-termism*, 2017).

The systematic dishonesty implicit in such avoidance has been only too evident in the carefully crafted [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) as finalized by UN Member States (New York, 13 July 2018) in preparation for the [Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (Marrakech, December 2018). A critique of that exercise in short-term avoidance was presented at that time (*Global Compact Enabling Complicity in the Ultimate Crime against Humanity: institutionalizing global myopia in anticipation of excessive population growth*, 2018).

The pattern is otherwise evident in the dramatic media coverage of the rescue efforts in the Mediterranean -- promoted as of the most utmost urgency by humanitarian organizations lacking any long-term perspective, as argued separately (*Civil Society Coalition for Cultivation of Short-term Bias: international complicity in avoidance of consideration of long-term human suffering*, 2019). Given such arguments, it is extremely puzzling that arrangements are not made to ferry any migrants from shore to shore rather than awaiting the tragedy of their possible deaths -- seemingly now the price of a ticket for successful migration.

More curious is the manner in which European countries, concerned by the effects of migration, continue to indulge in sale of arms and munitions to arenas of conflict. This ensures the destruction of the infrastructure and livelihoods of peoples in distant countries -- thereby ensuring continuing pressure for migration, as discussed separately (*Evaluating the Grossness of Gross Domestic Product: Refugees Per Kiloton (RPK) as a missing indicator?* 2016). The impossibility of reasonable debate has been variously framed in terms of the "headless hearts" versus the "heartless heads" (Paul Collier, *On Immigration, Head to Head: Al Jazeera*, 7 August 2015; David Jimenez, *How Europe's 'Headless Hearts' Made Refugee Crisis Worse, The American Conservative*, 27 September 2017).

### Breaking the silence?

It is in the above context that a remarkable statement with regard to the longer-term challenge of migration has been made by the leader of an African country, otherwise esteemed by Emmanuel Macron as President of France. As President of Niger, [Mahamadou Issoufou](#), warned -- in an interview calling for "responsible parenthood" -- that the population boom will undermine climate adaptation (Patrick Wintour, *Niger's president blames explosive birth rate on 'a misreading of Islam'*, *The Guardian*, 17 October 2019).

As president of a country with an average of [more than seven children per woman](#), Issoufou asserted in that interview that:

**A misreading of Islam led to Niger's explosive birth rate**, hampering the country's fight to adapt to the climate crisis and preserve its shrinking resources...

With respect to responsible parenthood, Issoufou notes that if an educated person reads the *Qur'an*, Islam says you should only have children if you can take good care of them and properly educate them. It is with that understanding that he has successfully endeavoured to raise awareness, with the collaboration of religious leaders, leading to a gradual reduction of birth rate.

One might ask whether any equivalent "**misreading of Christianity**" over centuries continues to encourage unconstrained population growth, especially in countries in which missionaries have been so active ("*Be Fruitful and Multiply*": *the most tragic translation error?* 1995). Christianity has proven to be remarkably resistant to any implication that increase in population runs the risk of resource overshoot, with deadly consequences in terms of social unrest -- already only too evident.

Whilst Catholicism has indeed made frequent reference to "responsible parenthood", this does not extend to the insight offered by Issoufou. Pope Francis has been even more explicit -- but without developing his argument to the same fruitful conclusion (*Catholics don't have to breed 'like rabbits', says Pope Francis*, *The Guardian*, 20 January 2015; *Stop Breeding Like Rabbits? The Pope Misses the Point on Contraception*, *Time*, 20 January 2015).

Arguably Catholicism remains peculiarly hypocritical on the matter with respect to climate change (*Papal Concern for Climate Change and Refugee Care: a means of concealing criminal systemic negligence?* 2015). The failure of Christianity to emphasize a **precautionary principle**, in its advocacy of unconstrained family size, can only be recognized as epitomizing "irresponsible parenthood" in practice. It is understandable that there is a high degree of ambivalence within the papacy regarding such matters. **Pope John XXIII**, as one of thirteen children, was recently canonized by Pope Francis as one of five. Pope Francis could not be more explicit than in his message to the Italian National Association of Large Families ("*Society Needs You*", *Pope Francis Tells Large Families*, *Inside the Vatican*, December 2014).

Usefully recognizing the existence of a nexus of issues, Issoufou argued that population increase is likely to have an increasingly direct impact on European politics -- warning that migration may exceed the levels it reached during the second world war. Issoufou further declared:

We have a 4% annual increase in population... The population will double in the next 17 years. By 2050 we may have the second biggest population in Africa apart from Nigeria... In Africa there are **1.3 billion people today** ... [there will be] 2.4 billion by 2050. That means **30 million young people** per year entering the labour market. If we do nothing to keep people in Africa by creating jobs domestically, there will be a huge wave of migration as people look for jobs elsewhere.

Issoufou warned that the Sahel will be one of the main contributors to the predicted **230 million migrants by 2050**, a figure he points out will be far larger than the mass migration caused by the second world war, noting that:

There is a growing risk of anger across Africa as the people come to realise the root cause of this evil. As people come to understand the causes of climate change, it could lead to the finding of solutions, but equally it may lead to anger and social turmoil.

*The Guardian* report of the interview with Issoufou included indications of development aid intended as a response to the challenges of poverty. Missing however is any sense of the adequacy of such aid in relation to the burgeoning crisis -- both now and over future decades. Clearly decisions on aid are made in terms of short-term political pressures. Such decisions necessarily fail to take account of long-term pressures on coping capacity.

Indeed it can be argued that remedial capacity -- and whether it can be ensured -- is not a feature of any current focus on performance, as separately argued (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009). Performance indicators are carefully crafted to ignore that challenge (*Remedial Capacity Indicators versus Performance Indicators*, 1981).

The probability of social turmoil, as the constraint on resources increases, can be usefully explored through an only too comprehensible thought experiment (*Resource Insights from Plus or Minus 12 People on a Liferaft*, 2014). In a period in which "radicalism" of any kind is conflated with terrorism, the experiment highlights the **emergence of radical questions challenging conventional assumptions** -- a phenomenon that can be explored more generally (*Coping Capacity of Governance as Dangerously Questionable: recognizing assumptions and unasked questions when facing crisis*, 2019).

Appropriate to this sense of "breaking the silence" by African leadership is the report of a recent Uganda National Family Planning Conference (*Family planning is key tool for economic growth, religious leaders say*, *UNFPA Uganda*, 17 October 2019). Religious leaders from the Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Pentecostal factions highlighted there the need for responsible procreation to reduce teenage pregnancies and maternal deaths, and increase household incomes to achieve socio-economic transformation. Unfortunately this is not a message emerging from the silence of the international community on this matter. There is an irony to the complicity of UNFPA in reporting that consensus given the constraints on UNFPA policies in that regard -- under extreme religious pressure via complicit national governments.

## Overcrowding versus Overpopulation?

**Human overpopulation:** Efforts to frame the wider long-term challenge in terms of "overpopulation" have long featured in highly controversial debate -- with insights of past decades long set aside as essentially suspect (Turbay Ayala and Lord Caradon, *Declaration on Population: The World Leaders Statement*, *Studies in Family Planning*, 1, 1968, 26; John L Farrands, *Challenge of Overpopulation: now for some real problems -- Don't Panic, PANIC*, 1993).

Panic with regard to the effects of climate change "towards the end of the century" provides a curious substitute -- with rising temperatures even suggesting the metaphor of a psychosocial equivalent, whether "towards the end of the century" or earlier (*Climate Change as a Metaphor of Social Change*, 2008). A headline at the time of writing is indicative of a convergence of global "overheating" in both senses of the term (*World in Flames: why are protests raging around the globe?* RT, 21 Oct, 2019). The latter cites a longer-term study of the self-reinforcing nature of the process (Alex Braithwaite, et al, *The conditioning effect of protest history on the emulation of nonviolent conflict*, *Journal of Peace Research*, 52, 2015, 6).

The consequence at this time is that "overpopulation" itself is not recognized as a potential issue for the future -- with techno-optimists enthusiastically propounding their belief in the ingenuity of humanity to adapt to rising population levels. As variously noted, the issue is subject to a process appropriately named as "shunning" -- given the religious arguments which typically justify that perception (*Institutionalized Shunning of Overpopulation Challenge: incommunicability of fundamentally inconvenient truth*, 2008). The point can be emphasized otherwise (*Prohibition of Reference to Overpopulation of the Planet Draft: proposal for an International Convention*, 2018).

There are of course economic arguments, most notably concerns with "replacement" in ageing populations, which reinforce any such resistance. Curiously these fail to consider the social consequences now giving rise to resistance by those deprecated as "populists". The perceived need for such replacement in the future is itself curiously unrelated to the anticipated levels of **technological unemployment** resulting from automation -- naively reframed through assumptions regarding "retraining". (*UN Report: Robots Will Replace Two-Thirds of All Workers in the Developing World*, *Futurism*, 11 November 2016; UNCTAD, *Robots and industrialization in developing countries*, *Policy Brief*, 50, October 2016).

Rather than as a welcome solution to the challenge of "replacement", the anticipated arrival in Europe of "millions" of migrants over the decades to come could well be paralleled by the anticipated degrees of automation for which such migrants could not be effectively "retrained". It is strange that the replacement argument is not explored in terms of technological unemployment.

**Overcrowding:** As an abstraction "overpopulation" is meaningless to most and a focus of controversy for only some. More intriguing is the experiential reality for many of "overcrowding". This is evident in housing, public transport, traffic congestion, **excessive tourism**, **prison overcrowding**, health services, **crime response**, judicial delays, and access to facilities in general -- epitomized by queuing (ironically in the democratic voting process itself. It is tragically evident in refugee camps. It is experienced in the increasingly limited "coping capacity" of institutions faced with increasing numbers -- despite efforts to ignore the more dramatic future implications. This is a challenge which has become ever greater in living memory, as argued separately (*Local Reality of Overcrowding -- Global Unreality of Overpopulation*, 2019).

However, just as the implications of "overpopulation" are set aside as "mythical", the future implications of "overcrowding" are similarly set aside in the expectation that humanity will adapt -- irrespective of any progressive erosion of quality of life. This allows an analogous point to be emphasized otherwise (*Prohibition of Reference to Overcrowding: draft proposal for an International Convention*, 2019).

## Population "bomb" versus Population "bombing": a challenging metaphorical nexus?

There is a classic use of the metaphor "population bomb" -- long discounted in the negligent debate framing overpopulation as a myth (Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb: population control or the race to oblivion*, 1968). This merits confrontation with the reality of the term in bombing populations -- currently engendering a massive flow of refugees. Notable reference has also been made to threats of "bombing populations back to the Stone Age" (Nick Cullather, *Bomb them Back to the Stone Age: an etymology*, *History News Network*, 10 June 2006). Also of relevance is the religious acceptance of "bombing unbelievers" as explicitly accepted by Islam in the light of divine injunction, but only by implication in Christianity's complicity in the **just war** framework (with its extensions to political ideology).

Curiously the metaphor could be said to feature in the anticipation of the civilizational crash to which doom-mongers refer -- with "bombing" a slang reference to many forms of crash (*U.S. Quietly Drops "Financial Bombshell": Wall Street Banks Have \$2 Trillion European Exposure*, *Wall Street on Parade*, 3 January 2017; *EU Bank Bombshell: one in four banks has disappeared since financial crisis*, *Daily Express*, 24 October 2017; *WikiLeaks Bombshell: emails show Citigroup had major role in shaping and staffing Obama's first term*, *Wall Street on Parade*, 11 October 2016).

Any such use of military metaphors calls for critical review (*Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998). Given its specific military use, the latter notes the close relation between use of "projects" and "projectiles", and the confusing use of "mission" by missionaries and in agenda promotion more generally. Marketing, and the language of strategic competition, relies heavily on such metaphors. Also of significance is the questionable use of "targeting", as discussed there (*Case study: use of "targets" and "bullets"; Mutual targeting in a democratic process*).

Marketing campaigns of any kind can be specifically framed in terms of "bombing the population", most notably through use of "**carpet bombing**", despite its disastrous history:

- Many companies... attempt to cover their bases by carpet-bombing the population with ads in the Sunday paper, national magazines, on large public job boards, on radio or television, and at career fairs. (Hank Stringer and Rusty Rueff, *Talent Force: a New Manifesto for the Human Side of Business*, Pearson Education, 2014, p. 69)
- Until 1982, commercial broadcasters operated under a non-binding self-regulatory standard of no more than 9.5 minutes per hour of advertising during prime-time and children's programming. Even with that standard commercial broadcasters were lambasted for carpet bombing the population with ads. However, today that looks like a veritable noncommercial Garden of Eden. (Robert W. McChesney, *The Political Economy of Media: enduring issues, emerging dilemmas*, NYU Press, 2008, p. 266)
- Google bombing refers to black-hat SEO practices aimed at increasing a webpage's rank for a specific Google search by

exploiting its algorithm. Google bombing generally involves artificially inflating the number of pages that link to a page and the words used in the link's anchor text. ([Google Bombing](#), [WordStream](#); [Why Google Bombing is a Double-Edged Sword for Marketers](#), [ppcexpo](#)).

- ...why spark conversation and engage people with stories, ideas and interesting (and relevant) information when you can carpet-bomb the hell out of them with boring chest-beating 'me-to' messages? (The latter, of course, being a lot easier to achieve)... Are you a conversation-starter or a carpet-bomber? ([Conversation versus carpet bombing](#), [Marketing Magazine](#), 27 July 2010)
- The term Carpet Bombing in Facebook ads refers to an ad campaign that aims to reach as many people as possible in a certain location. This may seem counterintuitive because most ad strategies focus on targeting a specific group of people. However, the beauty of Facebook Carpet Bombing lies within targeting as many people as possible and retargeting them with the most accuracy possible. (Marcus Svensson, [What's Facebook Ad Carpet Bombing and Why Does It Matter?](#) [Medium](#), 27 September 2017)

In the case of governments of purportedly Christian persuasion, use of carpet bombing (whether literal or metaphorical) would tend to be upheld as an act undertaken with compassion (whether regretfully or otherwise). Curiously a quite distinctive use is also made of the bombing metaphor in the so-called [love bombing](#), as notably characteristic of some cults.

Given the newly recognized use of such internet marketing campaigns with respect to political agendas in anticipation of elections, the process can be seen as a feature of [noopolitics](#) and [memetic warfare](#) -- themselves only recently recognized ([Noopolitics and memetic warfare within the noosphere](#), 2014). As presented by [Wikipedia](#), noopolitics is an information strategy of manipulating international processes through forming in the general public a positive or negative attitude by means of mass media. The aim is to reframe external or internal policy (of a state or block of states) such as to create a positive or negative image of ideas and promulgated moral values (David Ronfeldt and [John Arquilla](#), [The promise of Noöpolitik](#), [First Monday](#), August, 2007; A. V. Baichik and S. B. Nikonov, [Noopolitik as Global Information Strategy](#), 2012).

As yet to be clarified is the extent to which "memetic warfare" is a primary characteristic of noopolitics, as might be readily assumed (Brian J. Hancock, [Memetic Warfare: the future of war](#), [Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin](#), April-June 2010). The massive deployment of "fake news" at this time can be seen as an instance of memetic warfare ([Varieties of Fake News and Misrepresentation: when are deception, pretence and cover-up acceptable?](#) 2019). Any reference to "back to the Stone Age" may then be usefully compared with the sense in which memetic warfare involves an effort to "[dumb down](#)" any opposition to an analogous degree. "Bombarding" is a common reference with respect to media and advertising.

So framed, it can then be argued that populations have long been subject to subtle forms of "bombing". This would then appear to have been intricately related to the proselytizing missions of Christianity and Islam -- however these can be potentially understood as having engendered and reinforced a "misreading" of sacred texts (as indicated above). How are such missions to be distinguished from "carpet bombing", as it has come to be understood in marketing terms?

Ehrlich's "population bomb" could then be understood as partially engendered and reinforced by the forms of "carpet bombing" intricately entangled in spreading a religious message -- however that may be otherwise esteemed as a divine directive. In that sense the engagement of the religions with what have been framed as the "evil" beliefs of those first exploited in the colonial enterprise calls for a degree of clarity which is currently lacking -- given the manner in which those populations have been reinforced in patterns of irresponsible parenthood.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

For further updates on this site, [subscribe here](#)