



# laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

7th March 2010 | Draft

## Mapping the Global Underground Articulating Insightful Population Constraint Consideration (IPCC)

-- / --

### Introduction

- Misleading framing of challenges in terms of superficial causes
- Problems arising more or less directly from overpopulation
- Problems underlying failure to address underlying problems
- Illusory promotion of technical solutions -- whether available or to come
- Individual motivations in the misleading narrow framing of challenge
- Undeclared collective motivations in misleading narrow framing of challenges
- Role of religious dogma and faith-based governance
- Dependency analysis
- Mapping the Global Underground -- for an unconscious civilization
- Experimental strategies
- Population Precautionary Principle
- References

Produced on the occasion of disastrous coastal flooding in France, leading to unprecedented loss of life and homelessness, and on the occasion of the announcement by the United Nations of the appointment of a panel to review the operations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The period was also witness to further revelations of religious institutional cover-up of abuse of children in their care.

### Introduction

Questions are being asked regarding the methodology and procedures of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) leading up to the traumatic change of climate at the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) (Copenhagen, 2009) -- a specialized successor to the [Earth Summit](#) (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and to the [Rio+10 Summit](#) (Johannesburg, 2002). The procedures are those which gave rise to the claimed worldwide 'consensus' of scientists regarding what has been presented as the most important challenge facing the future of human civilization. In the wake of revelations that the IPCC allowed faulty data into its *Fourth Assessment Report* (2007), the United Nations has announced in February 2010 that it will [commission an independent panel](#) to review the IPCC's operations and recommend any needed changes.

Of particular interest, although rarely mentioned, is the manner in which that consensus was built on the seldom-mentioned [Kaya Identity](#) -- with explicit avoidance of the implications of one of the four components on which it was constructed (Well Sharp, [Getting climate policy back on course with the Kaya Identity](#). 8 December 2009). The IPCC report had declared: '*Admittedly, there are many possible combinations of the four Kaya identity components, but with the scope and legitimacy of population control subject to ongoing debate, the remaining two technology-oriented factors, energy and carbon intensities, have to bear the main burden...*'. How untrustworthy can "science" become in the light of such explicit negligence -- even if such factors are only mentioned in passing? The problematic use of single metrics, including the Kaya Identity, is discussed elsewhere ([Uncritical Strategic Dependence on Little-known Metrics](#), 2009).

Curiously in the [State of World Population](#) (2009), published by the [United Nations Population Fund](#) (UNFPA), the UN draws a link for the first time, between demographic pressure and climate change. As noted by Bronwen Maddox ([Taboo is Broken: it's time for action on population, backed for once by the US](#), *TimesOnline*, 19 November 2009), the report states:

*Slower population growth... would help build social resilience to climate change's impacts and would contribute to a reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions in the future.*

However **the timing of this unprecedented acknowledgement ensured that the link could not be effectively considered in either**

**the climate change models on which the Copenhagen negotiations were based or in the months of negotiations preceding the event.**

There is every reason to believe that this dimension will be excluded from consideration in the problematic post-Copenhagen negotiations. With respect to the final agreement at Copenhagen, as noted by [Kevin McCracken](#) (*Move over, make room for millions more*, *The Age*, 3 March 2010):

Despite the number of humans on the planet, with an obvious impact on greenhouse gas emissions and the task of achieving reductions, there was not a single mention of "population" or "population growth" in the final 1300-1400 word accord.

A search of the website of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reveals that terms like "overpopulation" and "population control" are specifically deprecated (*Journalist's Notebook: What's in a Word?* 1999). The UNFPA is responsible for an annual report (*The State of World Population: unleashing the potential of urban growth*, 2007; *The State of World Population: culture, gender and human rights*, 2008). The population policies of the UN have notably been affected by the faith-based perspective of the USA, and possibly by that of other faith-based permanent members of the UN Security Council. It is probably fair to say that UNFPA has put more effort into minimizing or denying the challenge of overpopulation, or reframing it "positively" (as in the subtitles of its various annual reports) rather than in addressing it.

In a comment on the Copenhagen process, this was cited as an example of the classic case of looking for lost keys under the street light, rather than in the shadows where they fell -- because it was easier to see under the light (*United Nations Overpopulation Denial Conference: exploring the underside of climate change*, 2009).

**The concern here is with the dangerous tendency to frame challenges simplistically and inappropriately, avoiding the issues by which they are engendered.** Hence the concern here with articulating 'another IPCC', namely an **Insightful Population Constraint Consideration** -- as a responsible 'IPCC approach' to a change of climate

At the time of writing, a freak storm in France has flooded some coastal towns with the loss of over 50 lives. Little is made of the fact that the dikes behind which many houses were built (on land susceptible to flooding) were 200 years old but had not been maintained. Nor that permission continues to be given to build on such land -- there and elsewhere. A *BBC News* headline reads: *Weak sea walls blamed for French storm disaster* (1 March 2010). This title is reminiscent of the much deprecated superstitious beliefs blaming disaster on malignant spirits inhabiting mountains and the like.

The BBC report indicated: *A local governor said the walls dated back to the time of Napoleon and needed to be replaced with taller barriers.* Focus is avoided on how inappropriate official administrative procedures had been considered acceptable, as with the well-known process whereby they are bypassed (typically with official complicity), or on why people had not objected more strongly -- or that expressed concern had been ignored. National appeals are made for support for the victims of the disaster -- for those who chose to build in vulnerable places. Costs are estimated to be of the order of 1,000 million euros. At best subsequent inquiry will determine that people acted legally, if imprudently, and that only minor reprimands are appropriate. In the aftermath, to the extent that such questions are being asked, **the possibility that this pattern applies with respect to other issues is carefully avoided.** Arguably the pattern is even more evident in Greece -- currently in the midst of economic disaster.

At the same time it is becoming increasingly evident that global governance, now and as is envisaged, is incapable of responding to either challenges of the moment or to the 'crisis of crises' expected to come. The vigorous claims made to the contrary are imbued with ever higher orders of bluster and spin -- increasingly the prime characteristic of global governance. Presented as evidence to the contrary, the capacity to manage major projects avoids recognition that such projects are typically specialized and sub-systemic in relation to the global management capacity that is required. The vulnerability of projects of larger scope increases in direct proportion to the increase in scale beyond the narrowly defined projects of proven viability -- as the cost overruns on organization of the Olympic Games most obviously demonstrate. Remedial global action may not be as scalable as is so readily assumed.

## **Misleading framing of challenges in terms of superficial causes**

The concern here is the manner in which the causes of disaster are sought amongst the most immediately obvious suspects -- a tendency highlighted and deprecated in many movies. This might even be caricatured by claims of aggression by a tree attacking an automobile on the side of a road -- as the explanation of a road accident -- justifying the removal of roadside trees. This is a failure of [critical thinking](#).

The process of 'damage limitation' would seem to require that responsibility be as narrowly defined as possible, whether with respect to hierarchical responsibility, sectoral responsibility, or willful negligence over an extended period of time. The pattern recalls that of lynch-mob psychology -- the need to focus blame and act against those so blamed -- in order to provide a scapegoat whose punishment can create a credible illusion of having cleaned the system.

Narrowly isolating blame in this way provides an easy weapon for any political opposition with which to attack elected authorities and their policies. Again it avoids the need for attention to underlying issues which might well be unpopular and problematic for all political parties.

The argument is dramatized in the case of sexual abuse of those in Catholic educational institutions, whether around the world or currently in Germany and Ireland. The approach is to frame it as the responsibility of particular individuals, in particular institutions, and of their particular superiors -- and only when evidence is available in the form of specific, courageous complaints. The possibility that disposition towards such abuse may be inherent in the culture of such institutions, in their organization, or in the character of many who choose to work there, is ignored. Perhaps more problematic is the manner in which hierarchical responsibility is limited -- 'where the

buck stops' is carefully managed. The emphasis is on cover-up at all costs. As a matter of extreme irony, those at the highest level of responsibility -- on whose 'watch' the abuse occurred over decades, and who are upheld as the epitome of spiritual values -- are in process of beatification and sanctification. The question is **with respect to what other issues do such patterns of cover-up apply.**

## Problems arising more or less directly from overpopulation

The concern here is whether many problems dramatically faced by society are not appropriately to be traced back to overpopulation. If that is at least potentially the case and worth exploring, the question thereafter is what are the problematic processes preventing discussion of such a possibility.

Examples of interconnected problems, typically ensuring suffering and death, include:

- **Starvation resulting from lack of food:** The starvation of millions is a matter of daily record. Pathetic statements are made that food resources are available, although it is only too evident that such resources are not delivered where they are needed. Religions blame others for this failure. It might be asked whether the world has ever demonstrated the capacity to ensure delivery of food on a global scale, however much this capacity may be claimed. Specific instances and responses may be cited -- but **without evidence that this capacity can be scaled up to the global level**, notably to the extent of the requirement in the future. There will be no lack of food, nor of food production capacity -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a food shortage, it is faced with an excessive number of people.**
- **Shortage of water:** Again this is a matter of daily record. Many walk for hours to replenish necessary supplies. Adequate water supplies for irrigation can be extremely problematic, even in the most developed countries. Shortage of water is predicted to be a major future provocation for violence. Religions blame others for this situation. Much is made of the capacity of technology to ensure access to water -- whether by construction of wells, pipelines, or desalination. Such technologies have long been available. There is however no indication that already stretched resources can be adequately applied to their development. Again there is **no evidence that water supplies can be scaled up to the level required globally**, notably to the extent of the requirement in the future. There will be no lack of freshwater -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a water shortage, it is faced with an excessive number of people.**
- **Illness resulting from lack of health care:** The poor health conditions of millions, and the death of children, is a matter of daily record. Again it is argued that health care (including vital medication) is potentially available. Again it is only too evident that such services are only made available in a tokenistic manner. Religions blame others for this situation -- notably despite the deaths of millions directly resulting from their resistance to use of contraceptives in Africa. Much is made of the advances in medical care, notably by the pharmaceutical industry, but with **little evidence that societies already stretched for resources can deliver health care globally to the level required**, notably in the light of future challenges of ageing populations. There will be no lack of health delivery facilities -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a health delivery challenge, it is faced with an excessive number of people.**
- **Environmental degradation:** Increasing numbers are progressively degrading the environment in a manner that is only too evident -- whether in terms of waste disposal (notably marine pollution), construction in 'green zones', forest 'clearing' (resulting in deforestation), extinction of species, pollution (air, water, noise, etc). Religions blame others for this. Wherever priorities are determined, much is made of the absolutely essential need to continue to exploit the environmental systems -- beyond their recovery capacity -- to safeguard livelihoods, jobs and sustenance, or to ensure construction of homes. The pattern is one of continuing encroachment and the erosion of areas initially protected. Analyses of the development of this process typically focus on the very near future when the results will be less problematic. The **global consequences in 30-60 years -- the environment for the next generation -- are not discussed**. Of particular concern are unforeseen environmental dependencies which may emerge, currently exemplified by the die-off of pollinating bee populations in the USA. Australia has a number of dramatic examples of mistaken past introduction of species (rabbits, cane toads, etc). Environmental degradation will be manageable -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face an environmental disaster, except as a consequence of an excessive number of people.**
- **Shortage of arable land:** Millions are unable to obtain land on which to grow food for their daily need. Religions blame others for this situation. Much is made of the current and future capacity of technology to produce food, notably with the universal use of genetically modified foodstuffs, growth in vats, and the like. It is accepted that rural populations will migrate to cities, as they are already doing. **The challenges of how the land is used, whether it can withstand sustained use of agrotechnology over future decades in the light of loss of topsoil and the long-term effects of fertilizers, are all avoided**. Potentially more problematic is the loss of any relation to the land by populations increasingly displaced from the land -- where the occupations available to them in urban environments may be such as to lead to social unrest -- especially if delivery systems and economic models prove to be inadequate. There will be no lack of arable land -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a land shortage, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Overcrowded settlements and slums:** Notably due to lack of land, millions aggregate in settlements that are monuments to insalubrity and degrading living conditions. Religions blame others for this situation. Much is made of the technological solutions and the increasing sophistication of the building industry. Again the limited capacity to deliver such solutions, with current levels of population, is only too evident in developing countries and their shanty towns. The challenge is highlighted in disaster situations and refugee camps where even the capacity to deliver tents is highly problematic. The problem even became evident in the USA

following the unprecedented recent spate of home repossessions. **No attention is given to the probable level of the problem in 30-60 years** -- or to the consequences of the education and socialization of generations in such contexts. There will be no lack of housing facilities -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a housing shortage, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**

- **Global warming:** Whether as a result of increasing impacts of human activity or not, flooding is experienced and sea levels are expected to rise. Religions blame others for this situation. Many deny the changes are significant. Whilst rise and fall of average temperature on the planet is a matter of geological record, humans have long demonstrated a capacity to adapt to such changes -- at lower levels of population. With much higher levels of population a potentially secondary challenge is likely to severely constrain adaptive capacity. The case of the Maldives islands has been widely made. Whereas in the past humans could migrate to other lands, there are no longer places to which they can migrate that will sustain even a minimum lifestyle. Any consequences of global warming are manageable -- by a limited number of people.
- **Overexploitation of non-renewable resources:** This phenomenon has been widely documented, notably with respect to depletion of energy resources and groundwater reserves. Religions blame others for this situation. Much is made of the capacity of technology, now and in the future, to develop replacements for those resources currently seen to be reaching limits of availability. Whilst this may well be the case, the economics continue to be such that it is cheaper to exploit natural resources than to develop and deliver those replacements -- if it is indeed possible to do so. Again **unexamined assumptions are made with regard to the viability of systems dependent on a new pattern of resources.** There will be no lack of non-renewable resources -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a resource shortage, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Inequality of access to resources:** Whilst a limited proportion of the population live lives unaffected by accumulating problems, millions have increasingly limited possibility of access to resources -- even the minimum resources for subsistence. Religions blame others for this situation. As noted above, much is claimed regarding the theoretical capacity to make such resources available. Little is said regarding the increasing inequality with which they are available, namely at a cost which the vast majority may well be unable to afford. Visions for the future typically focus on the sophistication of a high-technology world available to the few. They avoid reference to the challenges to be faced by the majority -- even if certain technologies become widely available (as with mobile phones). There will be no restricted access to resources -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a resource shortage, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Unemployment:** Millions have no opportunity of earning a living and feeding their families. Religions blame others for this situation. It is becoming increasingly clear that the economic models in place or envisaged are unable to ensure adequate employment for more than a percentage of the 'working' population, therefore undermining the possibility of many to ensure a sustainable livelihood. This is increasingly affecting the adequacy and viability of social safety nets, especially for the elderly and those destined for that condition. Whilst efforts may be made to increase the working age, this does not address the lack of jobs nor the situation that is likely to emerge within the next 30-50 years, namely for the children and grandchildren of the current working population. There will be no lack of employment -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a job shortage, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Inadequacy of social safety nets:** It is already evident that safety nets are inadequate, even in the most developed countries. Such safety nets are typically absent in most developing countries. Religions blame others for this situation. Funds are increasingly limited. This situation can only become much worse over the next 30-50 years -- in the period when many now entering the working population hope to retire. There will be no lack of social security -- for a limited number of people.
- **Ignorance:** Millions live lives that offer them no opportunity to educate their children to even a minimum standard. Religions blame others for this situation. Combined with the lack of job opportunities, even for the adequately educated, this has the effect of demotivating many, contributing to the emergence of an alternative culture alienated from much that education represents. The dynamics of this condition result in another form of 'education' with every potential for increasing hostility to conventional values and those representative of them -- and therefore increasing the propensity for social unrest. Little attention is given to the kind of cognitive skills from which individuals could benefit if obliged to survive in such an environment. There will be no educational challenge -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a challenge of increasing ignorance, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Injustice:** In a world of increasing inequality and ignorance, millions suffer from a variety of forms of injustice. Religions blame others for this situation. It is increasingly evident that the legal system is overloaded, even for those who can afford the process. Resources for legal aid are increasingly limited in relation to need. It is increasingly evident that those with resources can manipulate the system to guarantee impunity for anything of which they may be accused. At the same time, the legal system is under increasing pressure to build cases on inadequate evidence in order to achieve convictions and clear the backlog. There is no discussion of how the situation will evolve over the decades to come. There will be no lack of justice -- for a limited number of people. **Humanity does not face a challenge of injustice, it is faced by an excessive number of people.**
- **Destabilizing levels of immigration:** Tensions continue to rise in countries receiving immigrants and endeavouring to adjust to a multicultural influx. Such tensions are aggravated in the many situations where there is anyway a shortage of jobs, housing and other facilities. Where integration and assimilation is unsuccessful, societies are fragmented into classes reminiscent of the

challenges of apartheid. Religions blame others for this situation. Little if any attention is given to how the situation may evolve over the next 30-50 years. There will be no constraint on freedom of movement -- for a limited number of people.

- **Violence:** In a world of increasing injustice, inequality and ignorance, violence proliferates within the family, in the streets, between communities and between nations -- notably over matters of territory and resources. Religions blame others for this situation -- whilst actively or tacitly promoting crusades, jihads, blessing of weaponry by military chaplains -- and *Gott Mit Uns*. There is every expectation that such violence will increase, irrespective of the penalties. There will be no rising threat of social unrest -- for a limited number of people.

## Problems underlying failure to address underlying problems

Of particular interest is the nature of the failure to address issues such as those above -- and of the factors which contribute to such avoidance. This is reminiscent of attitudes associated with smoking (notably by the medical profession), gambling, substance abuse (drinking, drugs), sexual promiscuity and infidelity, susceptibility to bribery, and the like. These attitudes have been the subject of careful examination by such as Alcoholics Anonymous. However it is quite clear that there is little if any impetus to explore such patterns in general, irrespective of their particular manifestations.

As factors worth considering, the following might be explored:

- **Beliefs:** A particular set of beliefs or philosophy of life may be held to justify such behaviour and active avoidance of its consideration as problematic.
- **Benefits:** Such patterns may be intrinsic to the viability of a lifestyle otherwise rendered problematic by any combination of other factors.
- **Tradition:** Reinforcing any beliefs may be cultural traditions legitimating such behaviour and honouring those who engage in it.
- **Hope:** Beliefs may also be reinforced by expectancy of future alleviating circumstances whether in the form of 'technological breakthroughs', 'human ingenuity' or 'divine intervention'. Such may notably be the case where accumulating disasters are expected to 'force the hand' of divinity in fulfillment of prophecy (*Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon a heartfelt response to systemic negligence*, 2004). More problematic, with respect to hope, is the extent to which it is used as an opiate to avoid responding in new ways to very challenging situations (*Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset*, 2008). The point has been strongly made with respect to despair (Robert Jensen, *Abe Osheroff on the Struggle for a Better World: getting rid of hope and faith*, *Transcend Media Service*, 8 March 2010).
- **Fatalism:** An assumption that 'whatever will be will be' and that there is little point in endeavouring to worry about the longer term future, no matter how bad it may be for the next generation, including one's own children.
- **Selfishness:** This is the attitude which restricts attention to the condition of one's own and avoids any concern for those elsewhere.
- **Powerlessness:** The feeling may be that there is little that anyone can do.
- **Attracting unwelcome attention:** The sense may be that calling for attention to issues may attract attention from authorities and others that would endanger one's own livelihood.
- **Absence of funding:** For reasons highlighted below, there are typically no funds available for research or investigative reporting on such matters -- in fact any effort to do so within an institutional framework would typically be condemned, and any effort to do so outside such a framework would tend to jeopardize future career opportunities. Understandably, institutions, and those working within them, typically lack courage to place their survival at risk.

## Illusory promotion of technical solutions -- whether available or to come

In this context, political and religious leaders point to the potential of technical solutions to alleviate the above conditions in the near future -- optimistically engendered by the continuing 'inventiveness of the human spirit', despite arguments to the contrary (Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Ingenuity Gap: how can we solve the problems of the future?* 2000) . These technical 'fixes' take three main forms:

- **Better delivery systems:** Here reliance is placed on the capacity to deliver resources and remedial skills. As noted above, this argument is fundamentally flawed as is evident from the failure of such delivery mechanisms through a series of UN 'development decades' (a concept now notably abandoned). Any improvements made to the capacity of such systems have been rapidly overwhelmed by the rising population placing extra loads on the systems. This lack of capacity is only too evident immediately following any crisis, whether an earthquake (as in Haiti), flooding (as in New Orleans), 'temporary' refugee camps, slum areas, and the like.
- **Better organization:** Here reliance is placed on improvements to the management of local and regional areas, notably when faced with disaster. This argument is fundamentally flawed as is evident in recent extreme disaster recovery situations: the medium and long-term effects of the tsunami in the Bengal Sea on coastal areas and the condition of New Orleans long after the Katrina

hurricane. Arguably the latter is an indication of the flawed logic so evident in the 'reconstruction' of Iraq.

- **Technical innovation:** Here reliance is placed on innovations in energy systems (fusion, hydrogen, renewable, etc), desalination, nanotechnology, medication, etc. However, as with 'better delivery systems', it is only too evident that each such improvement raises issues of access to such facilities (eg HIV medication) and their unforeseen side effects (as with the introduction of species). [Hope is notably placed on such innovation because it avoids the messy challenge of complex psychosocial problems that technicians are only able to 'address' with more destructive weaponry.]

Evidence is also presented for the declining birth rate in many industrialized countries. Ironically this is seen as a justification for subsidizing couples to produce children -- in countries that are endeavouring to prevent immigration from impoverished parts of the world (as with Australia, Germany and Spain).

## Individual motivations in misleading narrow framing of challenges

The following are indicative of the range of motivations for avoidance of any exploration of underlying problems, notable pressures to ensure unchecked population increase, irrespective of availability of resources:

- **Fundamental desire for children:** Partly as a consequence of biological instincts and stimuli, this desire typically transcends any rational consideration -- including the availability of resources.
- **'Point of sale':** In those cultures increasingly encouraged to act spontaneously on 'point of sale' stimuli, this attitude may extend to procreation in the spirit of the moment.
- **Expression of identity:** Bearing children may be felt to be of fundamental significance as an expression of the identity of one or both parents, notably the desire to continue the 'name' or bloodline. This may be of dramatic significance, epitomized by desperate efforts to perpetuate aristocratic dynasties.
- **Reinforcement of bonds:** Long-term relationships are increasingly vulnerable, as evidenced by high divorce rates (notably in developed countries) and disinclination to commit to them formally, as evidenced by increasing preference for cohabitation (notably in developed countries). In such circumstances procreation offers a tangible means of sealing a bond -- irrespective of the later risk to the children of broken and one-parent families.
- **Providing a guarantee of care:** Given the fragility or absence of social safety nets, bearing children increases the probability of care and support of the parents in their later years -- if only by exploiting obligations associated with the parent-child bond.
- **Ensuring a labour force:** For farmers and those whose livelihood is dependent on manpower, bearing many children is a means of increasing the numbers of people employed cheaply within that enterprise. The obligation to work in the family enterprise may be strongly reinforced through the parent-child relationship, bypassing conditions typically of concern to labour unions and labour regulations. A variant is evident in families who derive their livelihoods from begging. Clearly a mother with babe in arms is more effective at attracting donors.
- **Community status:** In some cultures the capacity to bear many children, and to support them, is a basic indication of virility and social status. A striking example has been provided by the President of South Africa who has fathered 20 children. As a role model, this might well be considered a pattern to which many in African cultures could aspire.
- **Assumption of social support:** In societies where a strong case is made for social safety nets and support mechanisms, the consequences of bearing children are increasingly held to be those of society rather than of the (extended) family or the parents. Parents are in this respect 'care free' (if not 'careless') in their engagement in production of more children than they are capable of supporting. In some situations, if the parents are unemployed, the social security payments and other benefits may well render employment unnecessary to ensure a living wage.
- **Religious dogma:** Those of particular religious beliefs may be encouraged to bear children in fulfillment of a divine edict laid down in scriptures. Procreation is then held to be a sacred duty.
- **Ethical perspective:** Any termination of pregnancy may be considered tantamount to murder. Prevention of pregnancy may be considered as interference with natural processes (possibly divinely ordained in the light of theological interpretation).

## Undeclared collective motivations in the misleading narrow framing of challenges

The following may be seen as examples of what cannot be readily addressed or questioned -- the 'unsaid' -- within current public discourse as it is variously crafted within intergovernmental and national arenas, and by the media (*Global Strategic Implications of the 'Unsaid'*, 2003):

- **Growth:** The framing of 'economic growth' as the key indicator of a healthy economy offers a curious collective echo of some of the individual motivations above. Less readily recognized is the extent to which social models now depend on growth for their sustainability. This is most evident in the need to produce an ever increasing number of consumers -- without which such growth could not be sustained. In this sense the global economic model is increasingly indistinguishable from a vast [Ponzi scheme](#). In this

respect the former Director of the United Nations Population Division [Joseph Chamie](#), argues that:

[Bernie Madoff](#)'s recent Ponzi scheme has drifted out of the world's headlines. However, there is another even more costly and widespread scheme -- 'Ponzi Demography' -- that warrants everybody's attention. While it may come in many guises, Ponzi demography is essentially a pyramid scheme that attempts to make more money for some by adding on more and more people through population growth. (*Is Population Growth a Ponzi Scheme? The Globalist*, 4 March 2010)

- **Social security:** To ensure the social security of ageing populations, ever increasing numbers of working taxpayers are required. It is unclear how long this pattern can continue, as indicated by the increasing impatience of the unemployed young and the pressures to increase the working age of the elderly to postpone payment of retirement benefits.
- **Public debt:** Much is made of the burgeoning national debts of many countries, especially the most developed. Any hope of reducing that debt is increasingly dependent on future taxpayers. Reducing their numbers would increase the difficulty of an already impossible task.
- **Undesirable jobs:** Many developed countries depend increasingly on (temporary) immigrants to perform 'dirty' jobs which their populations find undesirable and are unwilling to perform.
- **Faith-based governance:** The views of many religions on procreation influence the policy of governments, despite the supposed 'separation of church and state'.
- **Competitive procreation:** Ethnic and religious groups whose long-term integrity and survival are felt to be threatened by the relative increase in the numbers of other groups may be encouraged to increase the numbers of children they bear. This becomes a process of competitive procreation. Yasser Arafat is widely cited as declaring: *The womb of the Arab woman is my strongest weapon.*

## Role of religious dogma and faith-based governance

Advocates of particular religions readily obscure their responsibility for any of the above matters by embedding their opposition in discussion on the politics of economic development -- whose inequalities and injustices are indeed partially a consequence of some of the above. With fewer people these challenges would however be easier to resolve. With more they become more difficult. It is however strategically easier to focus on issues arising from the above rather than on the underlying causes of those issues for which religions have a responsibility as previously discussed (*Root Irresponsibility for Major World Problems: the unexamined role of Abrahamic faiths in sustaining unrestrained population growth*, 2007) under the following headings:

Table: Assessment of faith-based death warrants effectively authorized

- Problem displacement
- Misleading focus on proximate causes
- Euphemisms and spurious rationalizations
- Maximizing suffering -- or 'optimizing it'?
- Methodology for requisite analysis
- Assertion of moral authority

It might be asked whether there is a fundamentally hypocritical contradiction between the advocacy of unconstrained procreation on the part of followers by priests that in some religions are required to commit to [celibacy](#). This commitment is variously seen as fundamental to the avoidance of suffering and to enhancement of spiritual development. This then implies a cynical lack of consideration for the spiritual development of their followers to whom they minister as exemplars.

Religions have developed considerable skill in blaming others for difficulties for which they themselves have some responsibility. These strategic positioning games are of trivial significance in comparison with the suffering sustained by the underlying negligence -- in which religions are complicit to some degree. Their active suppression of any discussion of the consequences of unchecked procreation might well be considered as effective admission of their responsibility for the consequent suffering. Whether or not this is the case, if religions consider themselves innocent with respect to such suffering, why are they so directly instrumental in blocking any discussion of the matter?

In the light of the injunction common to the [Abrahamic religions](#), to 'Go Forth and Multiply' (*Genesis 1:28*), it might even be asked whether the interpretation of 'multiply' should not be more correctly understood in the **qualitative terms** of the 'highest common multiple' (noted above) rather than in the **quantitative terms** of which the world has become an unfortunate victim (cf *'Be Fruitful and Multiply': the most tragic translation error?* 1995).

## Dependency analysis

How directly or indirectly dependent the above causes of suffering are on religion is a matter that merits detailed analysis by an intergovernmental panel -- comparable with the quality of analysis devoted to the determination of the reality of climate change for the IPCC (irrespective of its dependence on human activity). This could benefit from insights from technical studies of the [small world hypothesis](#), [root cause analysis](#), and [influence tree analysis](#) -- as well as the [dependency graphing](#) (see [dependency diagram](#)) used in the

analysis of complex projects for vulnerabilities.

At present the issue is systematically obfuscated, even by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Efforts are made to displace attention onto secondary or derivative issues -- of which climate change may well be one example (*Climate change used as a fig leaf -- to conceal a more challenging issue?* 2010) . Policy is constructed on the optimistic belief that economic development of developing countries will constrain the rate of population increase. The global effect cannot as yet be proven -- even assuming that such development can be achieved. As noted by Kevin McCracken (*Move over, make room for millions more*, *The Age*, 3 March 2010):

While the world would be better off without those additions, it is not so much the projected global increase that is the worry. The problem is that the great bulk of it will occur in countries least capable of handling it -- where population pressures are already all too clearly present.

Policy options have now been reframed, notably through the UNFPA, in terms of dependency on the empowerment of women to enable them to choose to constrain fertility (*State of World Population: facing a changing world -- women, population and climate*. 2009). There is indeed considerable data that show that where women are empowered (e.g. educated, have freedom to choose their own futures, etc.), they choose to have fewer children, hence birth rates go down. Moreover, many other indicators of well being improve, including the nutrition of children. The global effect of this potential cannot as yet be proven, especially given the current inequality of women even in the most developed countries as well as the time lag before any such process would become impact on population growth. Displacing immediate discussion of population onto the ideal possibility of empowering women, where this has long been a fundamental challenge, might readily be understood as cynical delaying tactic.

## Mapping the Global Underground -- for an unconscious civilization

The case for recognizing the degree to which humanity's global civilization functions to a significant degree in an unconscious mode has been made by [John Ralston Saul](#) (*The Unconscious Civilization*, 1995). There is then an argument for endeavouring to 'map' the underground in a readily accessible way. There is a long tradition for mapping underworlds, dating back to mythological times (see [List of underworlds](#)). In more recent centuries the 'map' of [Dante Alighieri](#) (*Inferno*) is widely known. A different form of mapping has been undertaken by psychoanalysts regarding the [collective unconscious](#), as by [Carl Jung](#) (*Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 1959). The following exploration follows from a concern with associating the real with the imaginary in the light of compleity theory (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007).

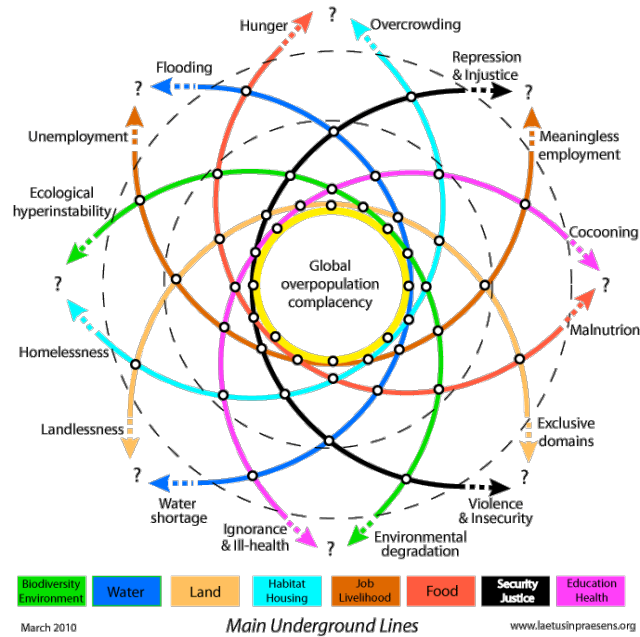
If however the map is to widely readily recognizable features, then there is a case for basing it on a well-known map. The [London Underground Map](#) -- indisputably the best known map of the 'underground' -- offers the possibility of a template with which other patterns of significance can be associated. The map has been successfully and elegantly used as a vehicle for other significance, most notably by [Kit Grover](#) (*Putting Shakespeare on the Map*, 2007) on behalf of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#) to display relationships between dramatic themes in the set of plays it performs (see [map](#)).

The release by the [London Transport Museum](#) of a *World Metro Map* (2003) promotional poster strongly based on the London diagram has however been approved -- although itself subject to copyright. However, compared to the exercise below, this might be more appropriately compared with an 'overground map'. A further curiosity is the commission accorded to [Yinka Shonibare](#) for the production of a *Global Underground Map* (2006) using a map of the world, with the colours of the Tube map, to reflect the diversity of London and the users of London Underground. The countries of the world were given a subtle shift of identity by implying new relationships between them based on the colours of the tube lines. Presumably these implied relationships were the reason it appears to have been quickly withdrawn from circulation. London appropriating the world in its image -- but refusing to be appropriated as an image of the world by others?

Despite the copyright restrictions (discussed [below](#)), it was the intention to bypass these by using lines at other angles (and different colours) in the construction of a *Global Underground Map* -- as others have done. A complex *Musical Theatre History Tube Map* has, for example, been produced by [John Howrey](#). However, in constructing the map below, the choice was made to focus on the use of curves in a manner which highlights the points made above.

## Global Underground Map

of *The Unconscious Civilization* (1995) described by John Ralston Saul



**Design features and possibilities:** Some of the design features are:

- **Lines:** representation of the main challenges of daily life as underground 'lines', effectively: a food line, a water line, a job line, a health line, etc. Clearly other (secondary) 'lines' could be added to the map. This approach echoes the extent to which people increasingly have to 'stand in line' for access to such services. Complementary extremes, typically of excess and deficiency, are highlighted at opposite ends of each line.
- **Connections:** ensuring that all 'lines' intersect with all other 'lines', to suggest the degree to which most systemic features (discussed above) have impacts on other systemic features
- **Stations:** no effort has been made (as yet) to name the marked stations at which people 'descend' into the underground world of daily reality or 'ascend' from it into the make-believe world at their destinations. Rather than clutter the map with station names, use could be made of mouse-over facilities in the web version.
- **Centre:** all 'lines' travel through the central zone from and to the 'outer' regions. The centre is the focus of the make-believe world and the satisfaction to be derived from the qualities it offers. It is the complacency of experience in the central zone which engenders the pressures on the rest of the system -- especially through engendering ever increasing numbers of people
- **Zones:** other than the central zone, the map distinguishes three other 'zones', most notably the outer zone -- at which the consequences of negligence and complacency are most manifest and most problematic. It is in the outer zones -- the outermost suburbs of an increasingly urbanized world -- that the largest proportions of the population experience the reality of their daily lives

As is not evident from the *London Underground Map*, the proportion of 'Londoners' obliged to travel the system each day is not displayed in any way. Many lines are in reality subject to overcrowding at times when people are obliged to travel. In 2007 a record number of over 4 million passengers travelled the network in one day (*Tube breaks record for passenger numbers*, 27 December 2007). A single station, Victoria, handles some 76 million passengers a year. It is useful to reflect on the proportion of people obliged to pass from the living reality of the 'underworld' into the 'world of make-believe' at any particular intersection between 'lines'.

The eight 'lines', provisionally included in the *Global Underground Map* above, bear fruitful reflection in relation to:

- recent scientific recognition of '[nine planetary boundaries](#)' and a hypothetical matching set of 'nine remedial boundaries' (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009)
- the 'circular' presentation recalling the nine 'circles' of hell distinguished in Dante's *Inferno*: [limbo](#), [lust](#), [gluttony](#), [greed](#), [wrath](#), [heresy](#), [violence](#), [fraud](#), and [betrayal](#) (potentially of relevance in relation to the 'nine remedial boundaries')
- the possibility of dramatizing the *Global Underground Map* as with the *Dante's Inferno video game* (see official [game website](#)), even enabling the number and attribution of 'lines' to be interactively modified, as with station names
- the very extensive mapping initiative of [Robert Daoust](#) (*Map for an Algonomic Pain Management*, 2009) combining several mapping approaches, including that of the *I Ching*.

**Copyright restrictions on map construction:** Very appropriately for the argument here however, the use of the *London Underground Map* as a template (as originally intended) is severely constrained by copyright (as discussed in the [Wikipedia entry](#)). Some efforts to use it have been prohibited, as with that in which the station names have been innocently presented as anagrams (*London Underground anagram map*, 2006). This attitude is indicative, as a metaphor, of the constraint on any possible global recognition of a map of civilization's 'underground'. To the extent that such a map exists, its use has been constrained by some form of copyright or financial constraint -- possibly even 'classified' as secret.

Although made and distributed with funds from taxpayers, the copyright holders restrict usage in a manner which is charmingly

reminiscent of the archetypal underworld holder of the ring in *Lord of the Rings* -- Gollum -- for whom that ring, the 'One Ring', was his own 'precious' property. A cultural hazard in the development of any system, such as the London Underground, is the loss of any sense of humour, despite claims to the contrary -- as indicated by the following.

<b><i>The Hazards of System Building</i></b> Matthew Melko, System Builder (Presented at the Foundation for Integrative Education Conference, Oswego, New York, 1969; reproduced in <i>Main Currents in Modern Thought</i> , vol. 269 no. 2)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. You identify with your system. It cost you blood to build it, and if it is attacked, it is your blood that is being shed.</li><li>2. You cannot tolerate tentativeness, suspension of judgment, or anything that does not fit the system.</li><li>3. You cannot apprehend anyone else's system unless it supports yours.</li><li>4. You believe that other systems are based on selected data.</li><li>5. Commitment to systems other than your own is fanaticism.</li><li>6. You come to believe that your system entitles you to proprietorship of the entities within it.</li><li>7. Since humour involves incongruity and your system explains all seeming incongruities, you lose your sense of humour.</li><li>8. You lose your humility.</li><li>9. You accept all these points -- insofar as they apply to builders of other systems.</li><li>10. So do I. (P.S. I hope I believe in the cult of fallibility)</li></ol>

This institutional pattern is also a valuable reminder of the period in the history of maps when they were considered a secret asset to ensure the competitive advantage of the owner -- notably in seeking to travel and colonize the world. The metaphor is also appropriate in contrasting the effort of London to position itself through public relations and spin as the creative cultural centre of a complacent world in anticipation of the 2012 Olympic Games -- whose own exclusive symbolic representation of the values of the human spirit it itself subject to severe copyright restrictions.

The dangers of such outmoded attitudes to cultural property have been argued elsewhere (*Future Coping Strategies: beyond the constraints of proprietary metaphors*, 1992). The contrast with the [open source](#) philosophy is especially telling (Eric S. Raymond, *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*, 1997).

In a further twist to the metaphor, one might ask how London authorities had the wit to consider constructing railways underground in the first place when they are no longer capable of resolving their current overcrowding problems by considering a further phase in such development. A recent report indicates the extent to which they now consider it necessary to sacrifice greenbelts to ensure public housing on the outskirts of London (see Greater London Authority, *The Mayor's London Plan [to 2031]*, 2010; Huw Morris, *Report calls for London planning changes to boost food supply*, *PlanningResource*, 6 January 2010; Ian Abley, *Double the population of London - serious growth in the Thames Gateway*, 2008). The possibility of avoiding such destruction, and lengthy energy-consuming commutes -- enabling hundreds of thousands to live a few minutes from the centre -- is not even examined (*From Lateral Thinking to Voluminous Thinking: unexplored options for subterranean habitats in dense urban areas*, 2007).

## Experimental strategies

**Exploration of paradoxical and negative strategies:** It is increasingly apparent, as the climate change debate has recently demonstrated, that 'normal' approaches to collective threats are ineffective. There is a case therefore for exploring a range of 'negative' and paradoxical strategies as previously indicated within the context of the [Global Strategies Project](#) (*'Positive' vs 'Negative' strategies*, 1995; *Paradoxical merit of negative strategies*, 1995). More speculatively there is a case for introducing a degree of provocation (*Liberating Provocations: use of negative and paradoxical strategies*, 2005).

The point might be made by suggesting a complete shift in the strategies of bodies like [Friends of the Earth](#), [Greenpeace International](#), and [Earth First](#). The argument has been separately developed (*Wanted: Enemies of the Earth and Greenwar International*, 1992) to the effect that:

Their purpose would be to focus attention on the efforts of those who are endeavouring to degrade or destroy the Earth in one way or another, since at this time such people do not have institutions which allow them to be explicit and upfront about their intentions and the consequences of their initiatives. If the Earth is to be the scene of an archetypal battle between its Friends and its Enemies, then it is only fair that the heroes on both sides should be appropriately honoured.

Negative strategies which might be strongly advocated might include:

- encouraging massive increase in unconstrained birth rates, seeking official support for such promotional programmes and appropriately rewarding those families who achieve 'double-digit' child-bearing -- possibly with the promotion of the necessary tax advantages and social security benefits
- encouraging waste of every form and in every location and celebrating individuals, communities and countries most successful in this respect -- acknowledging the funds saved by avoiding waste disposal and recycling
- encourage destruction of greenery, green belts, wilderness areas, and wildlife of every form -- promoting tax and other advantages for those who enable destructive forms of development

The purpose is of course to elicit active opposition to strategies and to give real focus to arguments and programmes to the contrary.

**Identifying patterns of resistance:** Given the subtle means whereby any consideration of population constraint has been blocked in the past, there is a strong case for:

- undertaking research on how, and by whom, such proposals have been blocked in the past, whether in an academic context or with respect to institutional programmes, as with UNFPA itself
- undertaking 'sting operations', namely proposing articles, research programmes and institutional initiatives in support of population constraint, but solely with the objective of tracking the manner in which these are blocked

As a principal actor in blocking such consideration in the past, and in denying such influence, the Catholic Church is now at an extreme disadvantage following revelations of the degree of cover-up of sexual abuse by its officials on children in their care. It is however the institutional pattern of systematic cover-up that is significant -- not the abuse by isolated individuals ('bad apples'). In that light, it might appropriately be asked what issues in relation to population increase are also subject to such long-term policies of cover-up and denial -- as originally alleged to be the case with respect to Galileo's claims regarding the movement of the Earth around the Sun.

## Population Precautionary Principle

The evidence for climate change, on which there is supposedly a universal scientific consensus, is not as strong as that for the range of problems resulting from population pressure -- [population overshoot](#). Typically these are misleadingly named as 'shortages' of the resource in question -- rather than 'longages' of population ([Garrett Hardin, \*From Shortage to Longage, Population and Environment\*, 1991](#)). Such 'shortages' would not exist at lower population levels.

A situation has however been created in which any debate whatsoever of issues relating to population is considered to be hazardous -- as though responsible people were incapable of dealing with hazardous matters, as discussed previously ([Overpopulation Debate as a Psychosocial Hazard: development of safety guidelines from handling other hazardous materials](#), 2009).

Whether or not technical means can be found to maintain sustainably -- and even increase -- the current global population, it is clear from the evidence that these means have not yet been found. People are currently faced with dire shortages, whether food, water, land, shelter, etc. Statistics are repeatedly reinforce this point. Immediately remedies are neither available nor in the pipeline. If they are, the resources to ensure their distribution to where they are urgently required are severely stretched by other priorities. Whilst those other priorities may indeed be challenged, politically it is naive to believe that priorities will be significantly changed to enable such distribution, other than in a token form. The situation is exemplified by the number of citizens of the USA obliged to live in shanty towns following home repossession.

A case therefore needs to be made for the articulation of a **Population Precautionary Principle** as a variant on the existing [Precautionary Principle](#). This might be formulated to the effect that

*If resources to support an increasing human population are not available, it is a crime against those yet to be born to encourage their birth -- a premeditated crime against humanity -- until the availability of adequate resources can be demonstrated in practice on the appropriate scale.*

Briefly, if you cannot fix it now, don't make it worse until you can. It needs to be recognized the extent to which promotion of births under resource-constrained circumstances is a perversely vicious strategy ensuring the suffering of many ([Begetting challenges and responsibilities of overpopulation](#), 2007). It is effectively an effort to exert pressure on the balance of priorities of governance already much challenged by existing realities and increasingly incapable of responding to the challenges of the future.

Under those circumstances, **where the ideal of making a desirable level of resources readily available has not yet been demonstrated to be feasible, in reality rather than in theory, it is a major error of governance -- if not a crime -- to fail to at least consider the means of restricting the requirement for resources to a sustainable level.**

The need for such precaution is obvious -- and unchallenged -- in many readily comprehensible technical instances:

- safe vehicle speed is typically indicated on roads. Whilst faster speeds may be possible they may well lead to loss of life -- as with speed indications around sharp curves. Higher speeds could of course be possible on better quality roads -- but only if, and when, the roads are upgraded
- pipes are typically rated for water pressure below that at which they may rupture. Higher pressures could of course be possible in stronger pipes -- but only if, and when, they are upgraded
- any journey in a vehicle requires an adequate fuel supply or the opportunity to replenish the tank on the journey. Longer journeys could of course be undertaken with larger fuel tanks -- but only if, and when, they are upgraded

Many will indeed uphold the current practice of unconstrained population increase, possibly arguing that birth-rates are sinking dangerously below replacement level in some regions. But there are fiscal measures that can be put in place for their wishes to be fulfilled. A prime example is the official [church tax](#) imposed -- whether nationally or locally -- on members of some religious congregations in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Sweden and some parts of Switzerland. For those whose beliefs favour unconstrained population increase, such monies could be allocated to child support where it is required. To the extent that the funds proved to be inadequate, the level of tax could be appropriately increased. The requirement that all should be obliged to support the social and financial consequences of the beliefs of some should be challenged -- where most face a challenging financial future.

---

## References

John L. Farrands. Challenge of Overpopulation. In: Don't Panic, Panic: the use and abuse of science to create fear. Melbourne, Text Publishing, 1993 [[text](#)]

Garrett Hardin. From Shortage to Longage. *Population and Environment*, 12, 1991, 3, pp. 339-349 [[abstract](#)]

Thomas Homer-Dixon. The Ingenuity Gap: how can we solve the problems of the future? Jonathan Cape, 2000

Carl Jung. Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Princeton University Press, 1959

John Ralston Saul. The Unconscious Civilization. Anansi, 1995

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

- Journalist's Notebook: What's in a Word? 1999 [[text](#)]
- The State of World Population: unleashing the potential of urban growth. 2007 [[text](#)]
- The State of World Population: culture, gender and human rights. 2008 [[text](#)]
- State of World Population: facing a changing world -- women, population and climate. 2009 [[text](#)]



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

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