

49 Critical Problems with Clarifications

POAD 9117 5

March 28, 2010

1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Mar 21, 2010 6:48 am



The impact that humans have on the planet is exacerbated by exponential growth. If there is not enough resources to go around, there are direct consequences for society, the economy and the environment. For example, not enough food means people who cannot afford it miss out, more land will be degraded to try and find more land for agriculture.



re: 1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:17 am



The annual percentage growth rate of the world population has been in steady decline for almost fifty years. So where is the exponential growth? And why, if exponential growth, does not seem to exist based on this measure could it be a problem? Even China is now encouraging people to have more than one child.



re: 1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:10 pm



Is the growth in consumption per capita expanding exponentially? Or is the issue about local pockets of explosive growth and a concentration of peoples in some regions or nations?

http://architecture.suite101.com/article.cfm/urban_development_in_cities



re: 1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:50 pm



There was a fear in the 1960's of exponential growth - but I think that is not so much a concern now - is it?



re: 1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Yesterday 10:36 pm

Perhaps it is less about the number of people but the excessive lifestyles that more people aspire to live, making any population growth have greater impacts.

e: 1) Explosive population growth with consequent escalation of social, economic, and other problems.

[kmc dye](#) Today 1:58 am

Interesting insight - so would you say that the emphasis in this statement is on "consequent escalation" rather than "population growth"?

The reason I draw out this distinction is because after the split in the Club of Rome and Forrester and company produced the Limits to Growth models people such as Bucky Fuller and his protoge Medard Gable started to become call Forrester Doctor Death because of his policy recommendations regarding his concern with population growth. As it was related to me by Medard Gable, this came from at least one particular speech in which after looking at the alarming "exponential" population growth a member of the audience asked Forrester something about the tradeoffs and his gruff response was something to the effect that it would be better if a bunch of the population in particular places died now in order to curtail the exponential rate. Having met Forrester and his grop - I am thinking that Forrester was probably referring to "death" as a variable in his Systems Dynmamics models and did not grasp the inhumane tone of his response. But my brief interaction with Forrester also did enough to convince me that although he made amazing contributions - he was a real jackass.

Anyway this split in the Club of Rome had a lot to due with attitudes towards humanity and how to engage it - and how one positioned oneself with respect to a concern with "exponential population growth" was to some extent a touchstone for the different approaches.



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2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Mar 21, 2010 6:48 am



The inequality of global development, in the Western sense, means that millions of people around the world are trying to live in a market based world without the capacity to do so. If the rest of the world shared their extravagant wealth with less fortunate countries, many (but not all) of these problems could be fixed.



re: 2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.



[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:21 pm

The economic evidence is that income inequality between nations is decreasing.



re: 2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:10 pm



I beg to differ with this see the work by Wilkinson. and Pickett. 2009 The Spirit Level: why more equal societies almost always do better. Allen Lane. London.

It makes the case that the gaps between rich and poor are widening!



re: 2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:51 pm



I read an interesting view of what "poverty" means, and it includes dimensions beyond money alone.

Do you consider poverty to be more than a lack of money? If so, do you see this type of broader "poverty" spreading today?

See the work of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef:

<http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/background/maxneef.htm>



re: 2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Thursday, 11:46 pm



I would measure poverty in terms of wellbeing. Health, freedom, equity, a place to live and time for leisure etc.

On a global scale I most certainly think that the gap between the "rich" and "poor", in their broadest sense, is widening, or at least not getting better, which is what we should see in a developing world.



re: 2) Widespread poverty throughout the world.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 11:54 am



The gap between rich and poor people within many countries is widening. But the gap between rich and poor nations is narrowing. Both are part of development and explainable from Modernization Theory.



3) Increase in the production, destructive capacity, and accessibility of all weapons of war.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Thursday, 11:48 pm



3) Increase in the production, destructive capacity, and accessibility of all weapons of war.

The weapons industry is a multi-billion dollar one which makes money out of suffering. There should be an international body which monitors this to ensure that weapons are used only for national security.



re: 3) Increase in the production, destructive capacity, and accessibility of all weapons of war.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:12 pm



Are the existing entities inadequate?



re: 3) Increase in the production, destructive capacity, and accessibility of all weapons of war.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:12 pm



Or are you saying that there is no such agency?

4) Uncontrolled urban spread.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Mar 21, 2010 6:52 am



Population growth and migration to the city from rural areas are the main causes of urban spread. This has both social and environmental effects as people on the outer margins become isolated and as a city expands, new land needs to be taken over by



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.



[kmcdye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:22 pm

Why is urban spread a bad thing? Urbanization within a country is associated with positive economic development.



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:44 pm

Only in well controlled situations can this economic development be a long term sustainable consequence of urban sprawl.

In Western experience urbanisation causes:



- increased dependence on automobiles. This leads to carbon emissions, fossil fuel dependence, traffic and obesity.
- displaced farm land and habitat. Continual development encroaches on productive land (needed for a growing population) and biodiversity (needed for absorbing our growing carbon emissions).

With proper planning, high density urban areas can be much more sustainable than uncontrolled suburbs.



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:32 am

Another factor of uncontrolled urban spread is the ghettoization of poverty particularly endemic to developing countries. These countries generally lack the control or money to plan for the migration of impoverished people to cities.



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.



[kmcdye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:43 pm

So is the emphasis in his statement on "control" or on "spread"?





re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 23, 2010 6:42 am

Equal



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:01 pm

OK, but let's make sure that we work with Kelly's meaning here. Kelly, do you agree with what has been said from your perspective.



re: 4) Uncontrolled urban spread.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Thursday, 11:31 pm

Both "uncontrolled" and "spread" are equally important factors in this issue, both need to be looked at.



5) Generalized and growing malnutrition.

[tony_made](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:57 am

Malnutrition is a major problem in many developing countries. Although malnutrition is not always occurred among the poor, it is certainly linked to poverty where people are having difficulty to get access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene. Malnutrition might result in severe problems such as brain damage and blindness. Moreover, if it happened in early stage of life (between 0-2 years), it can reduce mental and physical development during childhood which affects the performance at school and latterly reduces ability to work as the cause of lower income during adulthood. It means that poor people without proper access to healthy environment, health care and good food is likely would generate a deprived generation. To overcome this problem, World Health Organization suggested interventions to prevent malnutrition: improved water supply, sanitation and hygiene; health education for a healthy diet; access, by the poor, to adequate amounts of healthy food; ensuring that industrial and agricultural development do not result in increased malnutrition (WHO).



http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/diseases/malnutrition/en/

<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/malnutrition>



re: 5) Generalized and growing malnutrition.



[kmcdye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:25 pm

Getting "access to adequate amounts of healthy food" as a solution to malnutrition seems tautological. Is there some insight there?



re: 5) Generalized and growing malnutrition.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:29 am

Promoting well being through access to healthy local food makes sense. Systemic

approaches avoid dualisms.

We need to eat food that is local and grow food that is local.

Search results from the entire ABC site...

1. Food Chain - Late Night Live - 28-January-2010 -

Australia's future as a food producing nation is being challenged by climate change. The new edition of the <em

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/latenightlive/stories/2010/2804046.htm> - 28 Jan 2010



re: 5) Generalized and growing malnutrition.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 1:08 pm



Two points

- Local food is not part of Tony's statement. That is your statement.
- Local food is a solution - not a clarification of a problem statement.



6) Persistence of widespread illiteracy

[tony_made](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:58 am

Likewise malnutrition, Illiteracy problem often linked to poverty and disadvantage situation where the possibility of poor people to attend school is relatively low. Lack of spending in education because of the limitation of government revenue and weakness of policy commitment from government to create an adequate and effective education environment with good facilities, well-trained teachers and standard curriculum are factors contribute to create illiteracy. Illiterate people cannot read or write, but the further impact can reduce the quality of their life: they cannot find better paid job, cannot understand their rights as citizen, or their legal obligation, don't know how to participate to have their interest to be heard.



<http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php->

[URL_ID=10506&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=10506&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<http://www.sil.org/literacy/lit90/illit.htm>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001776/177609e.pdf>



re: Persistence of widespread illiteracy



[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:27 pm

and illiteracy (and lack of secondary schooling) tends to be associated with higher rates of ethnic discrimination.



re: Persistence of widespread illiteracy



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:23 pm

How does this issue relate to information overload? Are you talking about "functional illiteracy" in nations where most citizens can read but instead rely upon radio and TV for their news? Is the illiteracy issue that you are addressing a matter of "not caring" more than "not being able" to read?



re: Persistence of widespread illiteracy



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:49 pm

Why is reading and writing more important than oral cultures? I believe that we are moving back to an oral culture anyway.



7) Expanding mechanization and bureaucratization of almost all human activity.



[tony made](#) Mar 21, 2010 2:40 pm

Expanding mechanization and bureaucratization in all human activity will hinder public participation in a democracy.



re: 7) Expanding mechanization and bureaucratization of almost all human activity.



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:16 am

Is what we are doing here a form of mechanization?



re: 7) Expanding mechanization and bureaucratization of almost all human activity.



[kmc dye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:42 pm

Yes.



8) Growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth throughout the world.

[tony made](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:59 am

Neo-liberal and capital market has spread across states but the benefit has not reached the majority of people around the world; their living standard hasn't change or even decrease while a small population is gaining profit from booming stock markets, giant mergers and frantic financial speculation. The most comprehensive study of personal wealth shows the contrast of wealth inequality which reports in 2000 the richest 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets, and that the richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world total. On the contrary, the bottom half of the world adult population owned only 1% of global wealth. Furthermore, wealth is heavily concentrated in North America, Europe, and high income Asia-Pacific countries where people in these countries collectively own approximately 90% of total world wealth.



<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/218/46555.html>

<http://www.globalpolicy.org/social-and-economic-policy/global-injustice-and-inequality/inequality->

[of-wealth-and-income-distribution.html](#)



re: 8) Growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth throughout the world.

[kmcdye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:26 pm

Income inequality is decreasing between countries but increasing within countries.



re: 8) Growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth throughout the world.

[kmcdye](#) Yesterday 1:16 pm

Should we have two different statements? Or are you taking the statement to imply the dynamics which links both these trends?



9) insufficient and irrationally organised medical care



[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:52 pm

• The problem is that funds are spent on curing diseases created by the way we live our lives. We need to design ways to promote the health of society and the environment.



re: insufficient and irrationally organised medical care

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:32 pm



This seems to mirror the idea that we pay more for someone to put out a fire than to prevent one. It seems that globally there is a focus on diseases that could move from undeveloped nations into developed nations. Public health on this level seems to make sense with contagious diseases, yet maybe we have a different attitude to life-style diseases. Is this where you see the "irrationality" focused?



re: insufficient and irrationally organised medical care



[kmcdye](#) Yesterday 12:48 pm

You seem to broaden the statement to include wellness - which is not necessarily medical care. Please rephrase the statement to match your view of the problem.



10. hardening discrimination against minorities

[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:53 pm



As we compete for resources we use categories to exclude those who are less powerful . I think the term 'minority' is inappropriate , because the majority are in fact powerless and a minority is very powerful. See the statistics: We need to ask whether it is right and fair to allow over half of the world 3 billion people to live on less that US\$2.50 per day? Eighty percent of humanity live on less than US\$1. The rest of the planet lives well at the expense of this younger generation, let alone future generations.

“As many as 9.7 million children die each year before their fifth birthday, largely due to preventable

causes like measles, malaria and diarrhoea. That is 26,000 children every day,” UNICEF President and CEO Caryl Stern.”

At a glance we see 1 million displaced in Congo 2008-2009 ; 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe water. According to UNICEF 4million people rely on antiretroviral in Africa. The number of people suffering from HIV has increased by 45% over the past year . If one adds to the statistics the suffering caused by violence and poverty in Africa alone, then the numbers escalate.



re: 10. hardening discrimination against minorities



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:39 pm

Is this a consequence of passive apathy and malaise on the part of a "majority," or is it a more active malignant discrimination? Who is wishing this to be the case?



re: 10. hardening discrimination against minorities



[kmcdye](#) Yesterday 12:47 pm

Please change the word "minorities" to something you feel is more appropriate.

11. hardening prejudices against differing cultures



[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:55 pm

Powerful stakeholders discriminate against 'the other', in order to justify competition for scarce resources.



re: 11. hardening prejudices against differing cultures

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:45 am

Said argues that Huntington's categorization of the world's fixed "civilizations" omits the dynamic interdependency and interaction of culture. ...

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clash_of_Civilizations - Cached - Similar

To draw on some of my current notes on this topic :



In response to the war in Iraq the following comment was made (Derrida and Habermas, 2003:292):

“There is no doubt that the power of emotions has brought European citizens jointly to their feet. Yet at the same time, the war made Europeans conscious of the failure of their common foreign policy, a failure that has been a long time in the making. As in the rest of the world, the impetuous break with international law has ignited a debate over the future of the international order in Europe as well. But here, the divisive arguments have cut deeper, and have caused familiar fault lines to emerge even more sharply....”

These points apply not only to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also to the proxy war waged by Israel against Palestine and the challenge of reducing carbon emissions.

As the Copenhagen summit loomed, the arguments developed as to why it was in the interests of capitalists in USA to engage in reducing their emissions became more important. In the future it will become even more important to ensure that the capability to think in terms of triple bottom line accountability is achieved. Sustainability is important for the sake of the planet but also because dinosaur businesses will become extinct. The incentive to change is to be part of the new economy.

Narrow pragmatism, could encourage businesses to change, in the first instance, but we need to aim for understanding that:

“In this world the reduction of politics to the stupid and costly alternative of war or peace simply doesn’t pay. At the international level and in the framework of the UN, Europe has to throw its weight on the scale to counterbalance the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States. At global economic summits and in the institutions of the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. It should exert its influence in shaping the design for a coming global domestic policy....” (Derrida and Habermas, 2003:293)

“This raises the question of European identity. Only the consciousness of a shared political fate, and the prospect of a common future, can halt outvoted minorities from the obstruction of a majority will. The citizens of one nation must regard the citizens of another nation as fundamentally ‘one of us’....The EU already offers itself as ‘a form of governance beyond the nation state’, which could set a precedent in the post national constellation. And for decades, European social welfare systems served as a model....why shouldn’t it issue a further challenge: to defend and promote a cosmopolitan order on the basis of international law against competing visions?” (Derrida and Habermas, 2003:294).

“the reciprocal acknowledgement of the other in his (sic) Otherness- can also be a feature of common identity. (Derrida and Habermas, 2003:294)

Whilst the European Commission has recently made statements (ABC News Oct 30, 3009) about the importance of subsidising developing nations so that they will be able to undertake cuts in their emissions and inviting other developed nations to follow suit, it remains at the level of rhetoric. The Kantian notion of a cosmopolitan ethics needs to be translated into practice.

Conversation can create shared meanings where none existed before. It can enable us to make connections and it can enhance creativity. According to Barrett (2009) : “It is not just about taking them out and crossing someone off our list-it’s about changing the atmosphere....”



re: 11. hardening prejudices against differing cultures

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 1:05 pm



Is prejudice universally a bad thing? Within a culture that espouses itself as multicultural I can see that prejudice is a problem. But in cultures that espouse themselves to be mono-cultural - why is prejudice a bad thing? Isn't that imposing our world view on them? In other words - could you be more precise about the nature of the prejudice which makes it a problem. The French, for example, are very prejudiced against me because I do not speak French well at all. But I still like their pastries and think Foucault was a genius and they enjoy taking my money when I visit them.



12) Affluence and its unknown consequences.

No Clarification

13) Anachronistic and irrelevant education.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Yesterday 12:00 am



Classrooms and curriculums have done little to address the changing, globalising world we live in. Important elements required for a citizen to be able to adapt to change.



re: 13) Anachronistic and irrelevant education.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:10 pm



There are some cultures which employ education to maintain their traditions and isolate themselves to a large extent from the world. For example, the Mennonites, and the Amish, are not interested in connecting to the changing world. Do you mean people that want access to such education should have it? Or that everyone needs to keep up with the changing world and therefore need education to do it?



14) Generalized environmental deterioration.

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Yesterday 12:15 am



Humanity's impact on the environment has been greater than any other organism, altering the earth to an unrecognisable point. Although we are aware that we rely on environmental systems for our survival, we continue to degrade them.



15) Generalized lack of agreed-on alternatives to present trends

No Clarification

16) Widespread failure to stimulate man's creative capacity to confront the future

No Clarification

17) Continuing deterioration of inner-cities or slums.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:59 am



Most cities, whether they are either highly developed or developing, exhibit a propensity for a highly uneven spatial distribution of physical, human and social capital which includes areas of concentrated disadvantage, inequities, and chronic poverty. Slums are characterized by a lack of basic services, inadequate housing conditions, poor health conditions, lack of security, social exclusion, and low potential for individual human development.



re: 17) Continuing deterioration of inner-cities or slums.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:11 pm

Is this a declining trend? Does the problem exist more in the US than in Europe at this stage?



re: 17) Continuing deterioration of inner-cities or slums.



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 11:52 am

I take the statement to mean that regardless of the location of slums - they all exhibit separation by class and ethnicity which creates zones of chronic poverty.



18) Growing irrelevance of traditional values and continuing failure to evolve new value systems.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 11:12 am



The challenge of finding common platforms for proceeding in synchrony, when needed, in a pluralist world.



re: 18) Growing irrelevance of traditional values and continuing failure to evolve new value systems.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:13 pm

Are the traditional values more a matter of retaining the old than finding the new? Is this the erosion of the nuclear family in the US? Is this the confrontation of fundamentalism by other cultures in the broader world?



re: 18) Growing irrelevance of traditional values and continuing failure to evolve new value systems.



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 11:49 am

I believe the framing of this statement is intended to be at a global level, intercultural primarily. The biggest source of conflict is ethnic and cultural - between different traditional value systems - each not in consonance with co-existence.



19) Inadequate shelter and transportation.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 11:38 am

In developing countries, there is both low capital formation especially in housing stock as well as a lack of a key driver of capital formation - transportation. One in five people live in poor housing, 20% of spending by cities is on transportation. Housing shortage is higher in the city but more severe in terms of conditions in rural areas. The primary problem in urban transportation is increasing congestion, while the primary problem in rural transportation is a lack of infrastructure and poor maintenance. In both urban and rural cases the transportation problem is generally weak institutions and poor or no planning. This creates a bottleneck in socio-economic development and national integration.



re: 19) Inadequate shelter and transportation.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:15 pm



Is transportation all that helpful? Yes, transportation within a city is helpful, but intercity highway and mass movement of people by rail ... is this something that should be encouraged or discouraged? Is the problem that we have transportation (or that we lack it), or is the problem the deeper fact that we need to move people across distances that are far greater than what can be readily walked?



re: 19) Inadequate shelter and transportation.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 11:47 am



In rural areas - I believe that the most basic problem with respect to development is moving goods, transporting food and goods to markets and secondly fostering the ability of a nation to become integrated rather than having isolated pockets of population.

In the city, in many cities in the developing world, there is already too much (of the wrong kind of) transportation - in the sense that the main problem is congestion.



20) Obsolete and discriminatory income distribution system(s).

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:12 pm

Contrary to 19th and 20th century trends, now global income inequality is declining across nations but rising within nations.



Systems strongly correlated with this are:

Increasing autocracy and ethnic discrimination within a country tend to increase income inequalities and ought to be considered obsolete with respect to development.

Between countries - foreign direct investment is often associated with increasing ethnic discrimination and income inequality. Open trade and globalization are in great dispute as to whether they help or hinder development within developing countries and how that affects income inequality.

Secondary schooling tends to decrease ethnic discrimination and income inequality - and may be the most important 'system' involved in income inequality.



re: 20) Obsolete and discriminatory income distribution system(s).



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:17 pm

Are you saying that the world needs a stable and strong middle class? Is this were the squeeze is causing global harm? Or are you saying that we need to flatten out the disparities entirely?



re: 20) Obsolete and discriminatory income distribution system(s).

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 11:42 am

The evidence is that there is convergence in GDP across nations which seems positive. The problem is within countries income disparities tend to be strongly associated with ethnic discrimination and foreign investment tends to be associated with ethnic discrimination.



I don't think the statement says anything directly about the middle class.

And I'm not saying what needs to be done about it - it is simply an observation of a challenge.



21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 18, 2010 5:57 pm

<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/NaturalResources.html>



Growing populations, a consumer-and-throw-away social ethic, and expanded industrial manufacturing all speed up the use and waste of both renewable and non-renewable resources. The point is that the speed is moving faster and faster. Best efforts are directed at trying to slow the rate of growth.



re: 21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources



[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:14 pm

Why is slowing growth as opposed to decreasing waste and resorce switching better?



re: 21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 1:54 pm

As growth continues, the opportunities to balance the equation with efficiency alone continue to decline. We are still headed toward the edge of the cliff. Until we stop growth, we cannot come to a balance point. With static growth and 100% recycling, we can hope to reach equilibrium.



re: 21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources

[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:11 pm

<http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:UVfgEAaX8CEJ:www.hm->

treasury.gov.uk/d/Executive_Summary.pdf+stern+review+on+the+economics+of+climate+change&hl=en&gl=au&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEShuTDkKkcBV6ZzHik7uv4DInqWeLqcvkkgP_FGqgCwy9EfEjUKniDRJmuGrXAPgG8faMRMwdpoB-Yns91DJsMKWITangRgBlGPzktGUnfjwKI7j8WJMj9mtKDRppGaQvWQQRkp&sig=AHIEtbQKswzC6zQFUD-oeai0IZ1QH_5P4g



re: 21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources

[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:13 pm

If you have a look at the executive summary of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate change you will see evidence to support an immediate reduction in carbon emissions to avoid creating an unliveable environment.



In a reply Anthony Giddens has written the Politics of Climate Change to argue that economic solutions will not be achieved without state and civil society working actively to bring about change. If you go the London School of Economics website- next post - you can follow the argument.



re: 21) Accelerating wastage and exhaustion of natural resources

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:33 pm

Is Climate Change really part of this statement? This statement is about exploitation of resources. Climate Change is a result of exploit certain resources in deleterious ways.



22) Growing environmental pollution

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 18, 2010 5:56 pm

http://environment.about.com/od/pollution/Environmental_Issues_Pollution.htm



The issue is really one our limited capacity to regulate our neighbors ... locally and globally. Some neighbors simply don't care --- we are past simply not understanding. Air pollution from a truck or car isn't that different than from a factory ... people just feel that if someone can do it, then everyone should be able to do it. So we have pollutants in air and water that flow into everyone's lives, and into the ground that flow into the lives of future generations. Europe and Australia seem to be leading the global sustainability effort.



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:16 pm

How does "the limited capacity to regulate neighbors" square with the conservative notion of 'self responsibility' when it comes to pollution? Could it also be viewed as a limited capacity for individual self-control?



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 21, 2010 3:07 pm

I meant neighbors in the most expansive sense .. including corporate neighbors and national neighbors. Self responsibility and corporate responsibility and national responsibility (collective responsibility) are all involved.





re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 3:49 pm

Is controlling others the only way? Can you envision a way in which everyone is inspired towards self-control? Not that it is feasible - just can you imagine the necessary circumstances?



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:43 am

Self, corporate, and national responsibility/control for any kind of sustainability, if feasible, could only be imagined in a world of some kind of shared values. Al Gore spoke to our spiritual crisis which might serve to address the necessary circumstance.



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[kmc dye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:41 pm

The notion of "shared values" would seem to fly in the face of the notion of "pluralism". It is perhaps a deep division in world views which goes back to the ethical conflict between the emergence of the individual in the polis and the communitarian ethos of the polis in ancient Greece circa 400 B.C.. Perhaps a hybrid architectural form of such a value system of "shared" and "pluralist" - that is both centralized and decentralized is the notion of Federated or Confederated system.



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:23 pm

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/publicEventsVideos/publicEventsVideosPrevious.aspx>

This is a pod cast from Sir Nicholas Stern at the London School of Economics on the need to reduce environmental pollution through reducing emissions



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:25 pm

We need to rethink our freedom to use resources in ways that enhance the risks for everyone and the next generation



re: 22) Growing environmental pollution



[jeresnick](#) Wednesday, 11:30 pm

Is it necessarily about control, or can these problems be addressed economically, e.g. by trying to build environmental damage costs into the market, such as is being done with carbon emissions trading?



23) Generalized alienation of youth



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 18, 2010 5:56 pm

<http://d08.cgpublisher.com/proposals/237/index.html>

I am not talking simply about "tune in and drop out" alienation that was POPULAR in the 60's, but a fragmentation of a sense of being a part of something. I think that it comes from overload of too many options, and from social movements that hype ethos and fragmented actions over collective actions. Youth don't feel a part of a larger collective than that of a local tribe. And tribes collide.



re: 23) Generalized alienation of youth

[kelly.mackenzie](#) Mar 21, 2010 5:39 am



Youth don't have a respectable platform to speak on to have their voice heard. This is why they feel alienated. But you are right, there are too many issues for them to deal with whereas if they saw them as an interconnected system of issues, collectivism could occur.



re: 23) Generalized alienation of youth

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 11:09 am



Would you say that "disengagement" is an apropos term to depict this?



re: 23) Generalized alienation of youth

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 1:51 pm



I am not sure that youth who are alienated need ever have been engaged in the first place. They may simply look in the window and then decide that it isn't there house. I think that the view is more like watching trains roll by and not feeling like any of them are worth catching.



re: 23) Generalized alienation of youth

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:44 pm



So my question is - that alienation implies that youth were at one time engaged. Disengagement - can be a state in which they were never engaged to start with. Would you consider adjusting this statement to use "disengaged?"



24) Major disturbances of the world's physical ecology

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 18, 2010 5:52 pm

<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss1/art11/>



I think mostly about loss of coral reefs, but loss of forests is the land-side equivalent. When we loose enough of them, we loose more than the biological species that they support. We loose the capacity to control the impact of tides and heating of soil and balancing the oxygen and co2 in the air. It is not only a matter of running out of things, it is a matter of changing the nature of the physical earth as we deplete ecosystems. The dust bowl and the desserts of some nations also illustrate this ...



re: 24) Major disturbances of the world's physical ecology

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:13 pm



Would you say that undesirable Climate Change is perhaps the largest disturbance of concern?



re: 24) Major disturbances of the world's physical ecology

[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:11 pm

I agree with Tom and refer the class to the Stern Review - The economics of Climate Change.



re: 24) Major disturbances of the world's physical ecology

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:16 am

The following is a useful resource:

Flannery, T. 2005. The weather makers. The history and future impact of climate change. Text Publishing, Melbourne



Our own complicity should be factored in see

McIntyre-Mills, J. 2008d 'Part 3 Ethics, Energy and Climate Change. Systemic Ethics: Social, Economic and Environmental Implications of Eating our Yellow Cake in South Australia'. Systems Research and Behavioural Science, Volume 25. No 2 225-248. ISSN 1092-7026



re: 24) Major disturbances of the world's physical ecology

[Tom Flanagan](#) Wednesday, 10:13 am

Kevin, I am not sure what scale of geography will represent climate to you ... I do feel that "micro climate" is certainly impacted. It can become global, as per the current perspectives on the causes of global warming. If we fracture the biosphere into tiny, isolated pockets, then the species in those pockets lose some of their gene pool, and this can lead to both speciation and extinction. When we lose species ... such as plants with roots that hold soil, we can change the physical features of the earth. So, to answer your question, do you see the Dust Bowl in the US as an example of climate change? If so, then we do agree.



25) Generally inadequate and obsolete institutional arrangements.

No clarification

26) Limited understanding of what is "feasible" in the way of corrective measures.

No clarification

27) Unbalanced population distribution.

No Clarification

28. Ideological fragmentation and semantic barriers to communication between individuals, groups, and nations.

[jeresnick](#) Wednesday, 7:45 pm

Globalization has brought with it new challenges of understanding between cultures, as societies that formerly evolved in relative isolation are now confronted with one another. Hence, there is a need to contend with ideological differences and semantic barriers between cultures, if we are to achieve peace and co-operation.



http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf_extract/XVI/2/113

<http://www.blurtit.com/q757653.html>



re: 28. Ideological fragmentation and semantic barriers to communication between individuals, groups, and nations.

[phjones](#) Thursday, 7:21 pm

Ironically, the intensive pace of globalization forced on citizens by global trade and offshoring labor, mass emigrations, and cheap travel have led to more conflict and fragmentation. With loss of national solidarity, subgroups form with allegiances to ever smaller ideological communities. The tension has reached the point to where the most recent project of globalization may fail, as predicted by several thinkers and historians.



The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World

http://www.johnralstonsaul.com/SUM_Collapse.html

Deglobalization <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/deglobalization-is-a-word-to-avoid-2010-03-25>



re: 28. Ideological fragmentation and semantic barriers to communication between individuals, groups, and nations.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:16 pm

Ideological fragmentation sounds like there is an interest in ideological unification. Do you take it to mean that there should be a universal ideology? or that "fragmentation" is the natural state of things and we just need to cope with it. If the later - isn't more apropos to change the word "fragmentation" to "diversity."?



re: 28. Ideological fragmentation and semantic barriers to communication between individuals, groups, and nations.

[jeresnick](#) Today 12:04 am

In the context of the CCPs outlined in the Predicament, which are not constrained by national, ethnic, or cultural boundaries, ideological differences (whether called fragmentation or diversity) present a potential challenge to effective co-operation. I don't think ideological unification is necessarily the objective, but it does seem as though some kind of common value-base must be established in order to foster the necessary co-operation.

e: 28. Ideological fragmentation and semantic barriers to communication between individuals, groups, and nations.

[kmc dye](#) Today 12:49 am

So should we take "fragmentation" to mean "lack of common value-base"? Sounds like a drive for a "New World Order." That's kind of what the Axis powers tried to do in WWII isn't it? They wanted to have a common value-base. To me "fragmentation" does not quite capture how you've clarified it above as "contend with ideological differences and semantic barriers between cultures". Because the way you've clarified it starts with the premise of diversity and says we need to learn how to cope with it. "Fragmentation" tends to imply we have to somehow defragment - which to me does not respect pluralism. Yet - in this last post of yours you suggest perhaps a Federated architecture to the approach in forging some common values base intersecting diverse ones. The problem is that certain values systems eschew that notion entirely.



29. Increasing a-social and anti-social behavior and consequent rise in criminality.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 6:14 am

Disintegration of historical bonds of solidarity have led to the splintering of social groups, and the rise of individuals and transient groups formed in reaction to threats (real or perceived) and opportunities. The US in particular has seen bizarre trends in violent criminality, but not necessarily a concomitant rise. Countries with large populations in extreme poverty, such as Mexico, have demonstrated increasing violent crime. According to the US Bureau of Justice statistics, violent crime peaked in 1993 and has remained relatively stable on a national average basis. However, locations of crowded poor people throughout the US (and throughout the world) suffer from extreme and continual violence, such as in the favela communities in Brazil and other slums. The underlying causes of antisocial behavior are clearly inseparable from and are outcomes of larger trends of poverty, family and community breakdown and generational disruption, and poor governance.



Refs: US Dept of Justice statistics <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/>

Christakis, A Retrospective Inquiry <http://www.globalagoras.com/files/ANCretrospective.pdf>



re: 29. Increasing a-social and anti-social behavior and consequent rise in criminality.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:19 pm

In contrast to the theory of 'disintegration of social bonds' leading to asocial behavior we could also cite the overly tight social bonding capital which leads to gangs, ethnic cleansing, and intercultural conflagration. Do you mean more specifically - disintegration of bridging social capital as opposed to



bonding social capital?



re: 29. Increasing a-social and anti-social behavior and consequent rise in criminality.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 1:25 pm

Actually, I'm not sure I agree with the implied consequence in the original statement. What is criminality? It is defined by the legal structures of a given state, and many states (US) have created a web of laws that serves to generate more criminals.



And by characterizing behaviors we are only looking at superficial outcomes of deeper social trends. While each nation has its own historicity to consider, the mass emigrations of the 20th century has led to an unprecedented mix of cultures everywhere, and along with generational changes and the postmodern disposition toward valorizing the future, we have both novel solidarities arising alongside the collapse of old bonds.



re: 29. Increasing a-social and anti-social behavior and consequent rise in criminality.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 1:38 pm

That was almost poetic Peter.



re: 29. Increasing a-social and anti-social behavior and consequent rise in criminality.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:25 am

Once again the excellent reference to the work by Wilkinson. and Pickett. 2009 The Spirit Level: why more equal societies almost always do better. Allen Lane. London.



The book makes the case that when democracies have smaller gaps in wealth between the rich and the poor that crime statistics become lower.



30. Inadequate and obsolete law enforcement and correctional practices.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 6:24 am

Some of the largest counties in the world have attempted to manage crime by imprisoning a large proportion of residents (compared to smaller countries, regardless of crime). Largely due to the increasing number of laws and the political interests in enforcement, the US and China in particular rely on severe corrections policies to manage population and to reduce crime statistics. Due largely to obsolete and ineffective drug consumption laws, US now imprisons 25% of the world's prison population, or 2.3 million people (2009). Privatization of prison management has converted the prison system to a profit enterprise, creating new incentives for criminalizing behavior to improve corporate profits by increasing prison population.



Ref: America's Forgotten War <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9286922>

Andrews, NH. (2007). Sunbelt Justice:

Politics, the Professions, and the History of

Sentencing and Corrections in Texas since 1968.

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2007/andrewsn58742/andrewsn58742.pdf>



re: 30. Inadequate and obsolete law enforcement and correctional practices.

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 11:59 am



It is difficult to look at correctional practices without taking into account poverty, race, and mental illness. In the US we are using prisons to house people we don't like, people who can't afford adequate legal help, and those can't afford mental health care. As you point out this is a boon to corporate prison profits.



re: 30. Inadequate and obsolete law enforcement and correctional practices.

[kmclye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:35 pm



Focault wrote of the emergence of the distinction between the disciplines of psychoanalysis and the security apparatus which criminalized what we now call the mentally ill during the time of asylums. Perhaps we have, at least functionally reverted to that pre-disciplinary bifurcation.



re: 30. Inadequate and obsolete law enforcement and correctional practices.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:54 pm



It seems that some crimes are punished while others are not recognized or are readily forgiven. Is this issue related to a need to "train" criminals not to be criminal ... in addition to the disparity in rates of imprisonment?



re: 30. Inadequate and obsolete law enforcement and correctional practices.

[kmclye](#) Yesterday 12:46 pm

What is implied by "obsolete?" The prison system seems quite capable of reinforcing ethnic and class differences. It is fairly efficient at it.

31. Widespread unemployment and generalized under-employment.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:32 am

Several concurrent trends have led to an ever-worsening predicament, which could have devastating consequences globally. The right and ability to fair work has been fought for over centuries. As the 20th century significantly improved living conditions with widespread employment in developed countries, the rise of IT-enabled work delivery and global wage arbitrage have led to a corporate profit chase at the expense of workers and communities.



After each of the 21st century recessions, employment has lagged or stagnated, as corporations continue to move labor offshore to ever-cheaper sources. This deflationary spiral will continue until corporate employers can no longer raise sufficient demand for their products and they shut down, resulting in more layoffs.

Skilled workers remain underemployed and less-skilled workers unemployed. A long deflationary trend could very likely sustain a global depression, creating a crisis of basic employment in the largest countries. This continuing deflationary and unemployment cycle may be the ultimate cause of anti-capitalist revolution, even in places as unlikely as "capitalist" China.

Source: <http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/unemployment/page/2/>

WSJ Article 'Lost Decade for Private Sector Jobs'

<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2009/12/01/a-lost-decade-for-private-sector-jobs>

Economist "Mish" Shedlock:

<http://globeconomicanalysis.blogspot.com/2009/03/deflationary-depression-returns-to.html>



re: 31. Widespread unemployment and generalized under-employment.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 3:35 pm

Protests against NAFTA, the Seattle protest against the World Trade Organization (and annual ones afterward) are premised on the notion that Free Trade & Globalization are increasing income inequality between nations. But a longitudinal study of income inequality suggests that open trade actually decreases income inequality between nations, while foreign investment seems to increase intra-country income inequality.



See pgs 14-15 in Structural Modernization, Autocracy, Dependency and Change in Income Inequality: A Longitudinal Study, Kassebaum & Jenkins. 2003.

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/6/6/5/pages106652/p106652-1.php



32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 11:45 am

Throughout much of the world the multiple impacts of these interconnected issues are deeply affecting the social response to governance and policy. Citizens want "change" without sharing solidarity with respect to the focus and form of change. Political parties have become deeply and increasingly polarized, both reflecting and contributing to political dissatisfaction. Regardless of class, citizens have become discontented with government, economic and social policy. Much of this discontent may draw directly from the individual uncertainty experienced by people as they attempt to make sense of their current situation and possible futures.



Socionomic theory and generational theory also show that this time in history represents an inflection point, known as the Fourth Turning (of generations) and the Kondratieff Winter (long economic cycle where the accumulation of debt from Spring – Autumn is paid off.) These theories suggest that discontent is a general response to the implicit social awareness that the party is over.

Why the Tea Party Movement Matters:

<http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1964903,00.html>

Strauss and Howe, The Fourth Turning: http://www.fourthturning.com/html/turnings_3.html

Kondratieff explained http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kondratiev_wave



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:30 pm



While it is difficult to put a percentage on it, to what extent do you think that discontent is intentionally fomented by political elites for their own purpose versus a discontent honestly felt by the populace at large? After all - a few years ago two of the most impoverished and troubled countries in the world, Nigeria and Venezuela - both scored as having the happiest populations.



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[phjones](#) Mar 21, 2010 1:19 pm

A thoughtful question Kevin, and to one we'd have to suggest considering each different culture's situations. While from a Root Cause identification perspective I'd like to discover such a trend, I don't have evidence that this is the case. This is a larger social mood.



I consider the Tea Party a symptom, even if it is fomented and co-opted. There are even deeper discontents on the left, its just that they are more social and intellectual than the US Right.

I can make the general observation and apply the best theory according to my experience. I'm not sure happiness and discontent are polar - Scandinavians are pensive culturally, but are quite contented politically. But Middle Eastern cultures are underemployed, internally divided, and exhibit discontent.



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 1:37 pm



You make clear that this question probably must be addressed on a case-by-case basis.



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:27 pm



I suspect that even conservatives are discontent. Progressives or liberals seek change more rapidly that it arrives, and conservatives cling to yesterday even as it slips away. The discontent, such as that may be, seems to be directed toward national leadership. Does this understanding fit with your perspective?



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:04 pm



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/mar/13/the-spirit-level>

Please see the book review on The Spirit level - why more equal societies almost always do better. It is based on epidemiological data - international data- which shows the impact of inequality on mental health.



re: 32) Spreading "discontent" throughout most classes of society.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:36 pm



Janet - your comment suggests you believe that inequality is the major cause of discontent. However, inequality is a different critical problem.

33. Polarization of military power and psychological impacts of the policy of deterrence.

 
[jeresnick](#) Wednesday, 7:40 pm

Given that this document was written in the 70's, I'm going to assume this is referring to the cold war, where the US and the USSR had become the world's two major military powers after world war 2. This polarization led both parties to believe that security lay in a policy of deterrence, leading to an ongoing escalation of threat. The effect of this on civilian populations was to cultivate ongoing feelings of fear and anxiety, and aggression towards "the other".



<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=aim.041.0225a>

<http://bit.ly/bUV7kG>



re: 33. Polarization of military power and psychological impacts of the policy of deterrence.



[jeresnick](#) Wednesday, 7:41 pm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War



re: 33. Polarization of military power and psychological impacts of the policy of deterrence.



[kmcdye](#) Yesterday 12:37 pm

So what would you adjust this statement to now - to make it more apropos?



re: 33. Polarization of military power and psychological impacts of the policy of deterrence.

[jeresnick](#) Yesterday 11:27 pm

I would suggest that, with respect to psychological impact on the civilian population, the threat of terrorism and the ensuing "war on terror" is more relevant now. Also, the escalation of rhetoric between the US and Iran over the past few years seems to have similarities to the cold war.



re: 33. Polarization of military power and psychological impacts of the policy of deterrence.

[kmcdye](#) Today 1:10 am

- maybe "assymmetric conflict" is better than "polarization" now.

Interesting observation on the Iranian cold war analogy.

34) Fast obsolescing political structures and processes.

[phjones](#) Thursday, 6:41 am

The world's nations are nearly all experiencing ongoing crises of governance, economic and trade policies, monetary and currency regimes, and political party organization. There are national political systems we might identify as exceptional (Canada, Australia, Brazil). These exceptions have stable currencies and a more diverse political parties than the majority of G20 nations. The G20 are generally in the midst of a long-term crisis that is being resisted by current political leadership. For example, US political parties can be considered obsolete remnants of historical organizations, and have evolved into self-reinforcing bodies of power holders funded by corporate interests and unresponsive to popular demands. US political institutions in particular - Supreme Court, Congressional representation, Executive agencies, its global military, its currency and trade regimes, and its opaque electoral system - have proven unresponsive to the democratic requirements of citizens. Since the US has been the global leader among democratic regimes for most of a century, the crisis of its leading institutions, and the possibility of totalitarian nations such as China replacing the US on the global stage, suggest that historical political regimes are obsolescing with respect to global and human evolution.



Breakup of Euro Monetary Union

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601085&sid=aVW11LBGT.08>

Robt F. Kennedy Jr. Was the 2004 Election Stolen?

http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was_the_2004_election_stolen

Ohio election fraud District Court lawsuit (Jones is a pro se litigant in the motions to intervene)

<http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/litigation/klbna.php>

US Corporatism: US Supreme Court makes corporate personhood law of the land, overturns a century of precedent to enshrine corporate speech rights

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens_United_v._Federal_Election_Commission



re: 34) Fast obsolescing political structures and processes.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:27 pm

On the other hand the republic form of democracy codified in the US constitution seems to be pretty stable - looking back through the centuries. For example, I think Madison was a genius in how he address the problem of the tyranny of the majority. But now the information and communication systems are eliminating the basic premise on which he based the design - which was that at that time the communities were so far apart, isolated in local cultures, and local value systems, and having a slow communication speed between them.



What's wrong with the Chinese model? Seems like they are getting it right?



35) Irrational agricultural practices.



[charlesmorse](#) Wednesday, 5:43 am

Practices based on government subsidies, quotas, and monoculture farming techniques resulting in

unsustainable resource management



re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[Tom Flanagan](#) Wednesday, 10:07 am



How about clear cutting and burning forests to create pasture land ... or diverting rivers like the Colorado River to bring water into dry areas? I understand that irrigating deserts draws salts to the surface when the water evaporates away, and this makes the land unusable? Are you talking about both the small farmers practices and also the national strategies to boost production capacity in new farmland areas?



re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[mcin0120](#) Wednesday, 8:28 pm



<http://www.springerlink.com/content/p552342164357v6v/>

John Scott in 'Seeing Like a State' discusses irrational engineering - such as monoculture in agriculturewhich leads to increased vulnerability to starvation when crops fail.....



re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[charlesmorse](#) Thursday, 6:39 am



Both replies represent examples of unsustainable resource management or practice and both could/should/ought to be deemed irrational.



re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:30 pm



Do you feel that the word "irrational" is appropriate? For example, the agricultural practices that are being changed by Monsanto - are very rational and very calculated with respect to the interests of Monsanto. This does not imply that everyone likes it. Is a global rationality alluded to here? And if so - who is going to be globally in charge of what is rational and what is not?



re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[charlesmorse](#) Today 3:47 am



True and I am sure I should not be in charge of what is rational or not. To restate the case: Government policies, and financial support should be used to support sustainable traditional and scientific farming practices

re: 35) Irrational agricultural practices.

[kmc dye](#) Today 12:38 am

So in this case "rational" would mean "sustainable traditional and scientific"?

36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.



[charlesmorse](#) Wednesday, 5:53 am

Practices based on evermore expensive inputs of pesticides and chemical fertilizers create dependence

on these inputs resulting in the decline of soil productivity, increased erosion, and surface and ground water contamination. Insufficiently tested drugs and chemical additives also enter ground water causing known and unknown hazards to humans and other animals



re: 36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Wednesday, 10:04 am

Do you see this as a spirial problem, where biological resistance leads to increased doses, and when dose gets too costly, toward increased toxicity in new chemicals?



re: 36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.



[charlesmorse](#) Wednesday, 1:59 pm

Yes



re: 36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:39 pm

It can be argued that the use of DDT to eliminate malaria in the US was a great use of a horrible pesticide. If we used it today in the tropics we would end the suffering of millions of people. So, who is to determine what is 'responsible.'? That's a multicriteria value problem right? Would you consider adjusting the word "irresponsible"?



re: 36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.

[charlesmorse](#) Today 3:54 am

To speak of irresponsible use is not to deny the possibility of responsible use so I am not sure adjustment is necessary.

re: 36) Irresponsible use of pesticides, chemical additives, insufficiently tested drugs, fertilizers, etc.

[kmc dye](#) Today 12:31 am

So would you say that using DDT to eliminate malaria in the US was responsible? And if it is responsible - then - ought we deny such responsible use to Africa, Latin America and Asian countries suffering from malaria? I am not contending whether something is responsible or irresponsible. My point is that this statement seems to stem from some universal arbtrator of what is "responsible." I think the challenge is not in arbitrating what is "responsible." There are tradeoffs in most solutions complex problems. I think the question here is one of agency of determination by the stakeholders, not of judgment by a particular moral authority regarding what constitutes responsibility. Right now - if you asked people in malaria affected countries if they would exchange elimination of the disease for some long range environmental degradation from which the affected ecosystems may recover in about 50 years they would say "great." Is it morally responsible to allow millions of humans to die and stay in chronic poverty as a result in order to save an environmental impact? I find this particular case very difficult to adjudicate what is responsible. Anyone would. And it is not an unusual type of decision to render an opinion on what is the right thing to do. And that is why it is up to stakeholder engagement in the decisionmaking. But it is complex. Because in the case of DDT we violate the national sovereignty of the primary stakeholders by imposing international bans on DDT. This seems to be paternalistic and imperial behavior under the guise - that some other countries has determined that the

"responsible" thing to do is violate the will of the primary stakeholders. So I think what I'm looking for here is perhaps something about an engagement process rather than some kind of yes/no judgment regarding a moral criteria.



37) Growing use of distorted information to influence and manipulate people.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:02 pm

The 'science' of public opinion - its measurement and formation was fostered by publisher Walter Lippman in the early 20th century. Interestingly - I believe that he was also an intelligence operative.



That early development, which began with debates between Lippmann and Dewey about the nature of politics and journalism was followed soon thereafter by exploitation of these techniques in propaganda leading up to and through World War II.

I believe that Noam Chomsky navigates the history from there on to the next 50 years and explains how this works in his book "The Manufacture of Consent."



38) Fragmented international monetary system.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:05 pm

I'm going to adapt this statement to something a bit different than may have been the case in the early 1970's - because it seems now that the monetary system is too integrated. Indeed, in the latest fiscal crisis - it was the isolated (fragmented) economies which suffered the least.



What this statement means for the purpose of this class is a fragmented approach to the regulatory regime of the international monetary system.



39) Growing technological gaps and lags between developed and developing areas.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 11:52 am

<http://www.druid.dk/conferences/nw/abstracts1/maio.pdf>

This relates to a technology divide much like we now also face a digital divide. While technology exists for dealing with air pollution (for example), the technology is not equally accessible to all nations or all regions. Environmental technologies can be costly, and nations that haven't got the cash may just plain do without.



re: 39) Growing technological gaps and lags between developed and developing areas.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:57 pm



The technological gap in telecommunications allowed China and Africa to leapfrog to wireless technologies and avoid the huge infrastructure costs as experienced by the US and Europe. That gap seems to be lessening. It would seem we need to be more specific here.



40. New modes of localized warfare.

[jeresnick](#) Mar 22, 2010 9:02 pm

Widespread accessibility to communications and transportation technology, and the proliferation of light weapons has made it easier than ever before for a small number of individuals to inflict harm on a large number of people. Terrorism, militias, and guerilla warfare are increasingly common. The internet provides easy access to knowledge on how to construct homemade weapons, and allows like-minded people to find each other and form groups.



http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-68073-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/04/26/AR2005042601623.html>

<http://www.ronpaulforums.com/showthread.php?p=2192847>



re: 40. New modes of localized warfare.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:36 am

<http://www.watoday.com.au/world/israel-and-hamas-must-heed-un-report-20090916-frqq.html> Israel and Hamas must heed UN report. September 17, 2009 "THE United Nations fact-finding mission into the January conflict in Gaza, led by the respected international judge Richard Goldstone, has arrived at two straightforward conclusions: there is evidence that Israel and Palestinian armed groups committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. South African Judge Goldstone and Bishop Desmond Tutu have condemned the bombings of Palestinians as crimes against humanity.



Is it fair to wage war against people who are trapped within a walled area? The Israeli-Palestinian war is not understood by the majority of people. If they did, I cannot believe that the inhumanity would be tolerated. To simply label trapped people equals terrorists is inadequate.



re: 40. New modes of localized warfare.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 1:06 pm

Is it that the decentralization is problematic? Would it be less of a problem if it were globalized? Please clarify.



re: 40. New modes of localized warfare.

[jeresnick](#) Yesterday 11:13 pm

I think it would be difficult to say objectively that concentrated warfare is *less* problematic than



decentralized warfare, but concentrated warfare is a problem that has been around longer and is better understood, whereas localized warfare is a new and growing problem:

- "The Rwandan case is part of a larger pattern; since 1989 there have been global changes in the nature of violence and armed conflict. There has been a shift away from war between states involving major weapon systems, to intra-state war involving light weapons. Instead of wars being fought between states with well-organised armies equipped with major weapons systems confronting each other across defined geographic boundaries, today's violent conflict is usually an internal struggle with irregular forces using light weapons. This set of changes 'constitutes a remarkable break with the past' (Tilly, 1990:180)." [1]

- "The international disarmament agenda has focused on weapons of mass destruction and neglected light weapons. The threat of nuclear war has not disappeared – a threat captured in E.P. Thompson's warning of 'exterminism' – but it is one that has diminished, while light weapons proliferate." [1]

- "States are losing their monopoly of legitimate violence. 'The key narrative of the new world order is the disintegration of states' and the 'key language of that dissolution is ethnic nationalism' (Ignatieff, 1994:5). This implies the reversal of another historic trend: the disarmament of civilians in the process of Western state formation. 'Well-armed groups of citizens are forming all over the world' (Tilly, 1991: 7) and this process threatens to subvert democracy." [1]

[1]

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-68073-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

re: 40. New modes of localized warfare.

[kmc dye](#) Today 1:23 am

So a restatement of this particular "new mode" would be:

"disintegration of states as expressed in ethnic nationalism fomenting internal struggle, ie. "intra-state wars", with irregular forces using readily available light weapons, communications technology and accessible transportation". But what will the next "new" mode be.

As an example, the formal military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are having difficulty because the forms of insurgency are evolving very rapidly - not just that there is a particular mode.

I think the intention here is that there is a mismatch in the pace of our ability to deal with mode changing - and that is what is built into the meaning of the use of the word "new" here.



41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:05 pm

Money and guns and the power to manipulate public opinion, voter participation, and media content has given the practice of civil discourse a sense of futility. The consequence has been to either give up

ones voice entirely or to surrender it to the loud and powerful.



re: 41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[kmcdye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:33 pm

Do you think it may also be something internal to the individual - a increased self-centeredness, disengagement, and just plain laziness?



re: 41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:10 am

I would be hard pressed to argue self-centeredness other than to comment that the dominant media promotes it. In response to to disengagement and laziness I believe them to be a symptom of resignation and powerlessness.



re: 41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[kmcdye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:52 pm

Adjacencies:

Resignation-(symptom of)>Disengagement, Laziness

Powerlessness-(symptom of)>Disengagement, Laziness

Dominant Media -(promotes)>self-centeredness



re: 41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 1:23 pm

Do you think that a perceived imbalance in information access locks many citizens out of a belief that their input will be seriously considered? Yes, I get the coercion aspect of the lack of participation, but does your view go beyond coercion? Does the Internet do anything to change the rules of the game here?



re: 41) Inadequate participation of people at large in public decisions.



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 23, 2010 6:43 pm

My optimism encourages me to go beyond coercion because I want to believe the internet has the power to change the rules of the game, but I'm not sure the stats are in yet.



42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:11 pm

I am reminded of the diatribes against the UN. World order and the rule of law need not be the end of sovereignty. What it ought to mean is respect for the sovereignty of other nations. An imaginative conception might include a respect for the good.



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:34 pm



To some extent Predicament of Mankind proposal and the Retrospective writing about it seem to suggest that there must be an unitary value system in order to approach a world order. This seems to fly in the face of pluralism of global society.



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:05 am



That would be the rub, but our continuing failure to evolve new value systems as the traditional grow irrelevant (CCP-18) does not mean that new values will or should be less than pluralistic. Traditional value systems, irrelevant or not, have grown in multiple cultural traditions and manage to share many similar values. The factor of religious triumphalism seems more intent on questioning the promulgation and motivation of another cultures values than in assessing the similarities.



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[kmc dye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:49 pm



While I realize that the following is a major oversimplification, nevertheless, it seems that we must embrace a paradox of a shared value system premised on plurality. How then do we accomodate people with value systems which disdain, decry, and bomb those with other value sytems? And, how do they accommodate the very notion of pluralism?



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:33 am



I think that pluralism needs to be supported to the extent that freedom and diversity does not undermine the rights of the next generation of life. We cannot live at the expense of future generations.

regards

Janet



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 23, 2010 6:37 am



I would go to the idea that a rational value system, is one that does not bomb those with other value systems and thereby does not live at the expense of future generations. That radical sects exist within every value system does not refute the idea that the shared values exist among diverse cultures.



re: 42) Unimaginative conceptions of world-order and of the rule of law.

[phjones](#) Yesterday 1:16 pm

I am unsure whether we have clarified this statement as of yet. The position Hasan seems to take here indicates not that a common value system is necessary - nobody agrees with all laws after all - but that the very notions of human ordering are unimaginative and probably violent and archaic. The common value system as envisioned by Appiah is that of cosmopolitanism, which Hasan clearly subscribed to. That assumes pluralism, but also respect for culture and individual choice, respect for rule of law, and preserving human values.

43) Irrational distribution of industry supported by policies that will strengthen the current patterns

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:19 pm

The current pattern is based on exploitation of workers and resources without regard to sustainability. Economic gain trumps all, dollars win, earth loses.



re: 43) Irrational distribution of industry supported by policies that will strengthen the current patterns

[kmc dye](#) Mar 21, 2010 12:36 pm

This statement seems to imply that there should be a 'rationality' of industry - which was the Soviet model - a model which failed because of the inability of centralized planning & rationality to foster markets.



re: 43) Irrational distribution of industry supported by policies that will strengthen the current patterns

[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 10:07 pm

It is hard to respond to this because 'irrational' is not defined. But it is fair to say that the social, economic and environmental policies support profit, not sustainable decisions. This approach is irrational!



re: 43) Irrational distribution of industry supported by policies that will strengthen the current patterns

[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:40 am

Irrational may not be defined but the implication is that the existing system, one motivated solely on material gain fits the description. I am not suggesting we follow the Soviet model, I'm pretty sure sustainability was not part of their rational.



re: 43) Irrational distribution of industry supported by policies that will strengthen the current patterns

[kmc dye](#) Mar 22, 2010 7:32 pm

So, does this imply a rationality that may be decentralized?

44. Growing tendency to be satisfied with technological solutions for every kind of problem



[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:58 pm

Instead of looking at the systemic, interrelated nature of issues we look for ways to find a 'quick technological fix'. The latest being Geo-engineering the planet's climate could be our ultimate act of hubris

as a human race unable to reduce our emissions and refusing to admit that our way of life is unsustainable. Lin (2009) argues that addressing the cause of a planet's ill health is better than treating the symptoms by means of 'geo engineering'. The issue is that our planetary health has declined so far that we will need to take drastic measures to prevent a decline into the end phase of disease management. The planet can be likened to a human body. We can either treat it with medicine or we can improve our life style. The use of aerosols and reflectors could impact on the ozone layer or lead to unintended side effects, according to Lin (op cit). He concludes that governance will need to take into account planetary concerns and cannot be limited to the nation state. But the dangers of allowing interventions to be made at a planetary level is very problematic.



re: 44. Growing tendency to be satisfied with technological solutions for every kind of problem



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 1:15 pm

What is the word which is an alternative to "technological"?

45. Obsolete system of world trade



[mcin0120](#) Mar 21, 2010 9:59 pm

Moving goods and using up energy to move them – motivation is profit not sustainability . No consideration of the opportunity costs of specializing in one crop or product.



re: 45. Obsolete system of world trade



[charlesmorse](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:21 am

Is the word opportunity used as a negative or positive adjective for costs?



re: 45. Obsolete system of world trade



[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:31 am

in this case I mean that we are not thinking about the costs associated with moving the goods. We need to make local goods and grow local goods.



re: 45. Obsolete system of world trade



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 1:42 pm

It seems like you are saying that the global free market is now obsolete because local economies are the sustainable alternative. Is it the buyer who is being irrational here, or the producer? Does the market tell us what will sell, and do we then fill that need? I sense that you feel we will short change ourselves if we follow this course of action. I do agree that shipping cost is a nontrivial factor, but I am not sure what precisely may be obsolete in our thinking.



re: 45. Obsolete system of world trade



[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:45 pm

Do you imply that the economic notion of Comparative Advantage is suspect?



46) Ill-conceived use of international agencies for national or sectoral ends

[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 11:59 am

http://www.probeinternational.org/catalog/info_pages.php?pages_id=4



International economic development projects can reflect the interests of developed nations in keeping other nations "undeveloped" -- or can foster agricultural focus that isn't good for local sustainability. Extractive industries ... minerals and fuels and forestry ... can strip land for comparatively short term local gains.



re: 46) Ill-conceived use of international agencies for national or sectoral ends

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:53 pm

Exploiting a nation for its resources is very well conceived from the viewpoint of the exploiter. And at the time they are doing it - it often makes a lot of sense to the developing country. "Ill-conceived" implies a 'conceiver' which we generally associate with an individual entity. Could you adjust this statement?

re: 46) Ill-conceived use of international agencies for national or sectoral ends

[mcin0120](#) Yesterday 7:25 pm

The Copenhagen summit made some steps in the right direction, but was unable to manage the diverse ideas. A process such as this could help to enable ideas to be summarised.

Also a process such as this could help to enable transparency across conceptual and spatial boundaries.

Have a listen to the podcast on Beyond Copenhagen

at :

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/home.aspx>

It provides a very upbeat view by Sir Nicholas Stern of the London School of Economics. He mentions that poverty and climate change are the two greatest challenges. He seems to think that rationality and dialogue will prevail. Anthony Giddens is more cautious because of the role of politics. How can we get people engaged ? The answer it through respectful, meaningful dialogue according to Al Gore in Assault on Reason and Habermas and Derrida in Philosophy in a Time of Terror.



The problem is that people do not know how to work with wicked problems that have many variables, are interrelated and have a value dimension. Wicked problems can be unravelled if we are able to find root causes on which we can all agree. The reason that the international agencies are working ineffectively is because they are following the zero sum approach - us versus them. This is the 'prisoner's dilemma' approach which underpins realist politics. We do not trust the other because if we do, we could come off worse- if the other thinks of themselves at our expense. But if both prisoner's trust each other , then both will be better off. The zero sum approach is based on a misconception that we are in 'separate life boats of nation states' rather than 'one space ship earth' see also Hardin, G 1968 The Tragedy of the Commons Science, 162:1243-1248.

Once we understand this then organisations at the local and international level will operate differently. This is expanded pragmatism. An understanding that if we do not think about others we will all sink together.....



re: 46) Ill-conceived use of international agencies for national or sectoral ends

[kmedye](#) Today 1:12 am

How would you distinguish #46 from #47 - they seem to be very similar.



47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.

[jeresnick](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:33 pm

International agencies such as the United Nations Security Council have relatively little power compared to the power of individual governments of nations. There are little if any consequences for violating a security council resolution. The veto power of the five permanent nations often makes it difficult for the security council to take action.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council#Criticism

http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/un_paradox_4073.jsp



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Mar 23, 2010 1:25 pm

Do you consider religions as one of the international agencies, or are you specifically speaking of national governments.



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.



[jeresnick](#) Mar 23, 2010 7:47 pm

Tom - Not sure I understand your question - did you mean to write "religions"?



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.



[Tom Flanagan](#) Wednesday, 10:07 am

Yes, sorry for my typo.



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.



[jeresnick](#) Wednesday, 11:42 pm

No, I hadn't considered religions to be international agencies. I am considering the agencies covered in the definition found here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_organization



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.

[phjones](#) Thursday, 7:12 pm

I would include World Bank and IMF among these agencies, and they have a dangerous degree of power on developing nations, but almost none on developed nations.



I think its important to step back and ask what Ozbekhan's interest might be in international agencies having sufficient authority. Sufficient to what exactly? Is the implication that the national political systems are so outmoded that only a world government and strong agencies will be sufficient for building a global society and ensuring peace?



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 12:21 pm

To a large extent - I think we intentionally design overriding agencies to be somewhat weak. The US constitution splits powers into three branches to provide checks and balances so none of them get too powerful.



In international matters - anything that challenges national sovereignty is generally a no no.

Would you care to be more specific about the scope in which increased authority is warranted? ie. such as in the case of genocide we need more authority, but not in the case of civil war, more authority in international terrorism, but not in internal insurgencies and so forth.



re: 47. Insufficient authority of international agencies.

[jeresnick](#) Yesterday 11:52 pm

@phjones: I'm going to suggest that Ozbekhan's interest in the authority of international agencies, given the overall theme of the Predicament, derives from the view that global problems are increasingly interrelated and inseparable, and therefore we cannot rely on national governments, acting in their own best interests, to treat these problems holistically. I am not sure what *sufficient* means, but perhaps these agencies need to be stronger than they currently are in order to build a global society.

@kmc dye: Good point, and I'd agree that international agencies are intentionally designed to be weak so as not to challenge national sovereignty. As for the scope in which increased authority is warranted, I look at it in the context of the CCPs: what is the minimum authority that can be given to international agencies that will allow us to achieve the level of international cooperation necessary to deal with global-reaching CCPs?

re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.

[phjones](#) Yesterday 1:09 pm



Kevin, you seem to be suggesting in many of the comments that we might modify Ozbekhan's statements as they comprise the 49 CCPs. I acknowledge that there's an inherent conflict between the (arbitrarily assigned) CCP and our personal position. We may not agree with the statements as worded. But if we attempt to change the statement, we risk changing the authenticity and meaning of the original. To what extent is it fair to "own" the CCP?



re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.

[kmc dye](#) Today 12:34 am

Good question.



re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.

[phjones](#) Today 6:55 am

I might ask to clarify this statement in a practical way Jon. It appears that the intent of the problem statement is to note that people fail to recognize systemic complexity among problems. Leaders and media representatives insist on reducing complex problems to soundbite status (e.g., global warming) where they can then be obliterated with rhetoric. How might we advance a new rhetoric of insisting on public engagement of critical problem systems with discourse commensurate with their complexity?



48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[jeresnick](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:44 pm

We continue to invest more money in developing current non-renewable energy sources than we do in developing new renewable energy sources. For example, global investment in oil and gas exploration is expected to be \$439 billion in 2010 [1], while investment in the development of renewables was around \$120 billion in 2008 [2]. This is irrational because a) we know that stocks of non-renewable sources such as petroleum are in decline, and b) there is a large and mostly externalized environmental cost to consuming traditional sources of energy (coal, oil, gas).



[1] <http://www.heatingoil.com/blog/spending-on-oil-and-gas-exploration-and-production-to-rise-in-20101218/>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investment_in_renewable_energy

[3] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/mar/15/bp-shell-tar-sands-green-energy>



re: 48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[mcin0120](#) Mar 23, 2010 12:20 am

Odum, H.T. 1996. Environmental Accounting: Energy and Environmental Decision Making. Wiley. New York.



yes we are using so many resources to sustain a high standard of living. Odum draws a conceptual diagram showing the way in which a developed city exploits the environment in order to maintain a lifestyle that cannot be continued. But we can make the choice to do things differently.



re: 48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[kmc dye](#) Yesterday 1:10 pm

Irrational from who's perspective? Please modify the statement to indicate this.



re: 48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[jeresnick](#) Yesterday 10:53 pm

I think it is irrational from the perspective of anyone who has the luxury and interest to consider the wellbeing of humanity over a timeframe longer than the current generation. It may also be irrational from a classical economic perspective if one takes currently externalized environmental costs into account.



re: 48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[kmc dye](#) Today 1:29 am

So two shades of meaning here. One is the "formal" definition of rationality - from the perspective of economic decision theory. I think your insight here is very telling. Futurists in the 1960's and early 1970's were very influenced by Economists such as Kenneth Boulding. Hassan himself was a protoge of Lord Maynard Keynes while at the London School of Economics.

I've been testing what everyone thinks the use of the term "irrational" means - because I believe that many people call into question the legitimacy of basing policy formation on the economic notion of "rationality." I believe that the Club of Rome members were using this stylized meaning of the term - that based on a very formal notion of rationality.



re: 48. Irrational practices in resource investment.

[kmedye](#) Today 1:42 am

Your first point is also very telling. Who has "the luxury to consider the wellbeing of humanity over a timeframe than the current generation"? Of course the native Americans guideline to always consider the effect on the next seven generations is a longstanding mantra in sustainability circle. But there are two other - quite different types of interests which fit the bill here.

One is "the philosopher king." And while Hassan espoused stakeholder engagement (although "stakeholder" as a term did not really become popular for another decade or two after the Club of Rome) - he was himself a philosopher king in the ancient Greek sense, son of an Aristocrat of the last vestiges of the Ottoman empire in Turkey (prior to Attaturk), a believer in Supply Side Economics and the role of Big Government - that is Keynesian Economics.

So too, remember that Aleco's Father was a staunch communist by philosophy. And although Aleco suffered at the hands of the communist regime in Greece, he still, in his heart is a believer in the altruistic and communitarian credo of the communist program - albeit decrying the totalitarian implementations of it. But the link here is that the notion of "rationality" was that a central authority would figure out what was "rational" based on science. That was the Soviet model. That is why the eastern bloc produced many of the greatest systems scientist and methodologies in the world. We should not forget that systems science itself is so intertwined with this history - and it certainly was a strong influence on the thinkers of the Club of Rome.

This is why I am suspicious of the use of the terms "rational" and "irrational" in this context. It does not mean what most people think it means. It is not common sense - it has a very nuanced history to what it means.



49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.

[jeresnick](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:52 pm



We continue to view problems as isolated entities that can be addressed through isolated solutions. We tend to believe that current problems aren't necessarily any worse than problems that have existed at other times, and that humanity will just "muddle through" as it always has.

However, the problems we currently face may in fact be qualitatively different than anything we have faced in the past, because the complexity of our world has increased (where complexity is a measure of the "interconnectedness" of things). Solutions based on viewing problems in isolation are no longer likely to be adequate, and the solution to one problem may even exacerbate another if the systemic interactions are not considered.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ingenuity_Gap#Content
<http://www.homerdixon.com/ingenuitygap/theory.html>



re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.



[jeresnick](#) Mar 22, 2010 8:55 pm

second link should have been this:

<http://www.homerdixon.com/ingenuitygap/usatoday.html>



re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.



[kmcdye](#) Yesterday 1:13 pm

So - do you think it is even appropriate to separate out specific "Critical Problems"? Why not adjust this statement to be "Insufficient understanding of dysfunctional systems and solutions with unanticipated consequences".



re: 49) Insufficient understanding of Continuous Critical Problems, of their nature, their interactions and of the future consequences both they and current solutions to them are generating.

[phjones](#) Yesterday 1:09 pm

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