

Global Change

An Integral View on the Aggregation of Crises and Chances

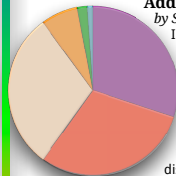
Today, several crises overlap and are experienced as nested global challenges. Not that crises appear alone; they are accompanied by a whole range of positive developments and potential. How the impacts of these problems relate to one another, and how policies to address them should differ or overlap, how wide a spectrum of responses, there are questions that have so far not been adequately discussed. Training and priorities of people who study one problem often differ from those of people who study the other. Because of the stakes involved in the consequences of many of the problems, most debates has become highly politicized. The lack of a meta-view is obvious, and that is where this map intends to help.

"We are now living in a period of significant transition – a foreshortened span of time, during which our surroundings and experiences will change more than during any era in history. Humanity has never lived through the convergence – and, in some cases, the collision – of global forces of such magnitude and diversity... One foreseeable outcome might be global instability; another, a planetary renaissance. In any case, during the next two decades, almost every aspect of life will be fundamentally reshaped."

The Arlington Institute

Addressing a Challenge

by Source Integral, Sept. 2009



Imagine there were only 100 people populating our world and they gathered to discuss the world's energy challenge:
30 of those people see the world as no more than the land occupied by their tribe. Their life is dedicated to daily survival. They attribute the rise in natural disasters and local pollution to the wrath of multiple gods or the evil works of people outside their tribe.

Another 30 squarely blame the West, after all they created the pollution... the West, and the West alone, should clean it up.

Yet another group of roughly 30 are consumed by a nationalistic desire to secure energy supply for "me and mine," for their own countries. They don't trust foreigners; they are unreliable and powered by suspicious motives. They want to increase domestic production and are relatively unconcerned with the type of energy that goes into their grid, plants, and cars.

Then there is a smaller group of 7 people, some of whom are engaged in a heated debate about whether climate change is an established scientific fact. The majority, who believe that it is, put forward a number of technological solutions.

Then there are 2 people passionately preaching to everyone that our planet is in peril, that we need to collaborate across national boundaries, across disciplines, and across sectors to save the planet or we may not survive.

The remaining person in the room takes stock of the situation and the perspectives presented. He thinks: "The world is faced with an evolutionary challenge. Not only do we have to develop the technologies to stem climate change; bring those technologies to market in near record time; and radically alter consumer behavior world wide; we have to engage in an unprecedented level of transnational collaboration to succeed. Less than 10% of the people in this room understand this. The rest don't understand, think it's someone else's problem, or are focused on surviving. I've got less than 20 years to motivate and mobilize these mostly disinterested people."

SOURCES

• United Nations Population Fund: Fast Facts on UNFPA.org
• John L. Petersen, A Vision for 2012 (2008 Fulcrum Books)
• James Howard Kunstler, The Long Emergency, 2005 (Atlantic Monthly Press)

• Including and Differentiating among Perspectives: An Integral Approach to Climate Change, Michael E. Zimmerman
• Evolution 101 Part 1 - The Magic 51% Number, Andrew Cohen

Economy and Finance

A Systemic Meltdown due to a Culture of Debt

Contrary to the widespread notion that banks are the sole party responsible for the financial crisis a meta-view reveals up to 25 causes. This chart already reveals that multiple crises influence each other and that many problems are larger than anything humanity ever had to deal with. The challenges also have to do with bureaucracy, red tape, lobbies, different developmental levels of those involved (memes) etc. The current scenarios might include a "double dip" and further systemic downswings, that might require new paradigm-shifting solutions instead of treating symptoms as done so far. Globally, a big wild card are the derivatives in the whole financial system, which are commonly estimated at \$600 trillion. In the case of Europe, this economic region would be best advised to be prepared for a scenario of 1€ = 2US\$, to limit the level of debt, to display independence and autonomy through approaching the BRIC countries, to not allow former Goldman Sachs personnel in EU and ECB core positions, and to define its own European position in relation to Iran/Israel/USA and Afghanistan. All of this would stabilize the European economy.

Next Economic Upswing

Upcoming Long Waves and Kondratieff Cycles

It currently becomes obvious that a debt-driven, oil-dependent and carbon-based consumer society cannot proceed, let alone grow. On the other hand several long wave theories claim that large economic cycles are kicked off by major innovations that give the economy a significant boost. Thus, the steam engine led to industrialization, and IT ushered in the information age. In this context the upcoming new Kondratieff cycle will produce considerable economic growth and new jobs. It is expected that this upswing is associated with Life Sciences and Healthcare – to be more precise psycho-social health.

Technology

A New Clustering of Innovation

A clustering of innovations will fundamentally alter the technological landscape: It is anticipated that the technological development of the coming 10-12 years might be up to 80 times the tech development of the 20th century as a whole. This includes progress in energy, in health care, bio technology, knowledge and complexity management, and many more fields.

Evolutionary Impulse

Transcend and Include

The evolutionary process – from big bang to the present – is more than a random event. Any increase in the complexity of matter is accompanied by an increase in the degree of consciousness. The greater the one, the greater the other. The entire sweep reveals direction and even purpose in its unfolding. Matter, self, culture, worldviews etc. evolve and the world we live in and co-create begins to transform as we do. It is thus not a world in which the individual transforms and the world remains the same – but evolution of matter, self, culture, worldview etc. happens through us. This fundamental evolutionary impulse influences all elements of this map on all levels, from individual to collective...

Energy

The Beginning of the End of Oil

Global crude oil production has been on the same level from 2006 to 2009 – and every other year since fossil fuels have been used it has increased substantially. Production cost seems to rise so high that companies like Total expect to never pump more oil than what they are pumping today. Current policies are not only unsustainable but even dangerous as there is a risk that events will push us down the fossil energy ladder without having an alternative energy supply system in place. In opposition to the general thought about Peak Oil, look onto the ownership of oil (governments, not public companies), the developmental state of oil-exporting countries (pre-conventional) and the current technological upswing and green consciousness reveals that the Peak Oil curve might move down more gently than visualized in current charts. The overall industry trend currently shifts to natural gas. Countries like China start buying up resources in many parts of the world in a silent "Art of War" manner, in contrast to the US spending billions to be present in or close to oil countries with their military forces. The global challenge is not about oil. It is about energy itself.

Climate Change

Nature's Play or Societal Impact?

Scientific discourse in relation to human-triggered climate change is highly politicized. Climate change seems to happen, but whether it's net global warming is uncertain. Today, there is a bandwagon effect where almost all (science, politics, media) have jumped on the notion that we're experiencing global warming. Possibilities of a "small ice age", findings that the sun influences a warming of other planets as well remain out of consideration. Science has its theology and dogma, and in this case it meets political strategy, lobby influence and green activists. Some important factors are: a) to include multiple perspectives not only in regard to characterizing and proposing remedies for environmental problems, but also in regard to determining what counts as a serious problem in the first place, and b) to differentiate from one another the domains studied by various methods, e.g. natural science vs. policy formulation. In this context, the current climate change debate can be seen as critical: Even if scenarios about rising temperatures are plausible, an issue remains: Should resources be directed to adapting to coming climate change, or should they be directed to efforts to cut anthropogenic emissions like CO2?

Demographics

Low-Birth Rate vs. Populous Nations on One Planet

More people have been born on earth in the last 50 years than in all of the preceding 5000 years. Almost half of those now alive are under the age of 25 and most live in the developing world. Most of them know about the quality of life in the West. The number of countries with youthful populations in an "arc of instability" across Africa/Middle East will decrease but the populations of some of these states are projected to continue to grow rapidly. Most demographic issues relate directly to differing worldviews held by individual nations and regional groupings, to be considered in the overall picture.

Nature / Resources

The Challenge to Harvest More on Less Land

The degradation of ecosystems and the speed of species extinction led to scientists already referring to the current era as the "6th extinction event" (with five before over the course of billions of years). Continued economic growth with an additional 1.2 billion people by 2025 will put considerable pressure on global energy, food and water resources in the future.

Power Blocs

A Radical, Continental Shift of Influence and Power

A global multipolar system is emerging with the rapid rise of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). Other countries including Australia and South Africa are also included as part of a new G20 grouping. The relative and unprecedented shift in wealth and power from East to West seems to continue. The US will continue as the single most powerful country but with less dominance. Currently, it is uncertain if regional protectionism will increase with a number of trading blocks emerging to challenge global trade agreements. It also remains open whether the global powers will be capable of transforming existing global institutions in order to reflect the transformed geopolitical landscape.

Bridging Global Challenges and Opportunities

Think Tanks Individuals Corporate World Media Culture Religion

Worldview and Spirituality

A Consciousness Shift for Humanity

The current era seems to be a major transition and extraordinary jump and might include the evolution of a new worldview and consciousness in the process. The system as of now has structural and philosophical shortcomings that are not sustainable. A regular cycle to major shifts in biological or cultural evolution exists, and many signs point to the possibility that we are due for one now. This might include a redo of the whole paradigm, a complete change in the entire way life works. Thus the current "crisis" period offers the chance of a contribution to a consciousness shift for humanity. This could include more world-centric instead of ego- and ethno-centric worldviews, the ability to hold more perspectives than before the crisis as well as the expansion and usage of relationships and networks.

Social and Media

The Rise of Social and Collective Awareness

Social media play an increasing role and currently strengthen much of the global community and consciousness progress. They also play a large role in designing new communities that operate on a new economic / governmental / social system that is self-sustaining. In contrast to most current institutions that are built on competition, new initiatives are on the rise building prototypes of what a new world might look like – with help of social media.

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last update: December 29, 2009