

TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE HUMANKIND



Jan Greguš

1 Department of Philosophy, Masaryk University, Brno

2 Center of Prenatal Diagnostics, Brno

3 Center of Outpatient Gynecology and Primary Care, Brno

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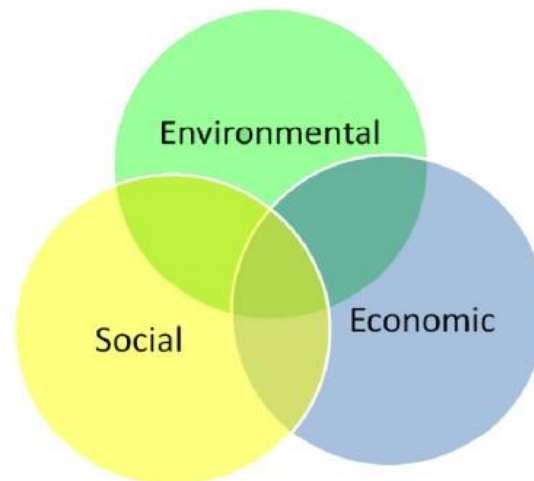
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Sustainability as an Ideal (Concept)

The goal of sustainability is to “create and maintain conditions, under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations.” (NEPA 1969)

A sustainable approach protects the environment, strengthens communities, and fosters prosperity

A sustainable approach derives from a systems-based approach built on **three pillars of sustainability**



Unsustainability as a Fact

The goal of sustainability is to **maintain equilibrium between humankind and nature**

Humankind is not getting any nearer to this goal. On the contrary, it is going the opposite way despite (scientific) warnings:

- *The Population Bomb* (1968)
- *The Limits to Growth* (1972)
- *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity* (1992)
- *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice* (2017)
- *Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency* (2019), etc.

The main causes of unsustainability = human numbers, production and consumption



Sustainable Humankind

Estimations for a long-term sustainable humankind are based on various criteria and assumptions:

- **1.5 – 2 billion** (Daily et al. 1994)
- **3 billion** (Pimental et al. 1994)
- **2 billion** (Daily et al. 2010)
- **3.1 billion** (Lianos and Pseiridis 2016)
- **3 billion** (Tucker 2019)
- **0.5 – 5 billion** (Dasgupta 2019)

Obviously, more studies, discussion, and general consensus on the ideal number are needed. Nevertheless, one thing is crystal clear – humankind is far beyond being sustainable.



Unsustainable Humankind

In 2021, the human population is **7.9 billion and rising**, with growth of **over 80 million a year**

No sign of slowing down in the foreseeable future (despite slowing population growth & fertility decrease)

Current medium-variant projections are **8.5 billion (2030)**, **9.7 billion (2050)**, and **10.9 billion (2100)**

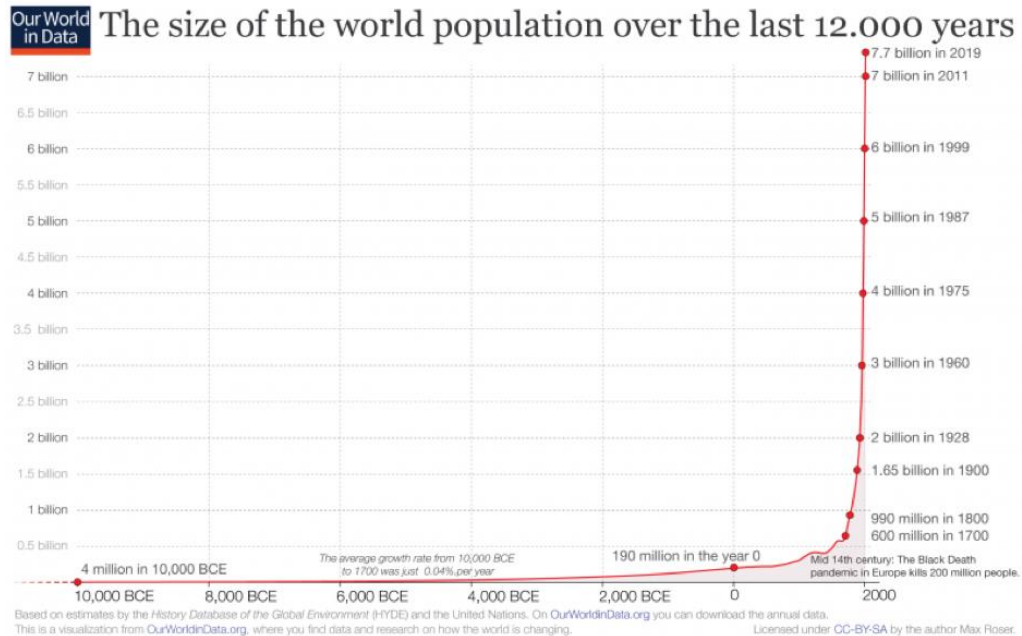
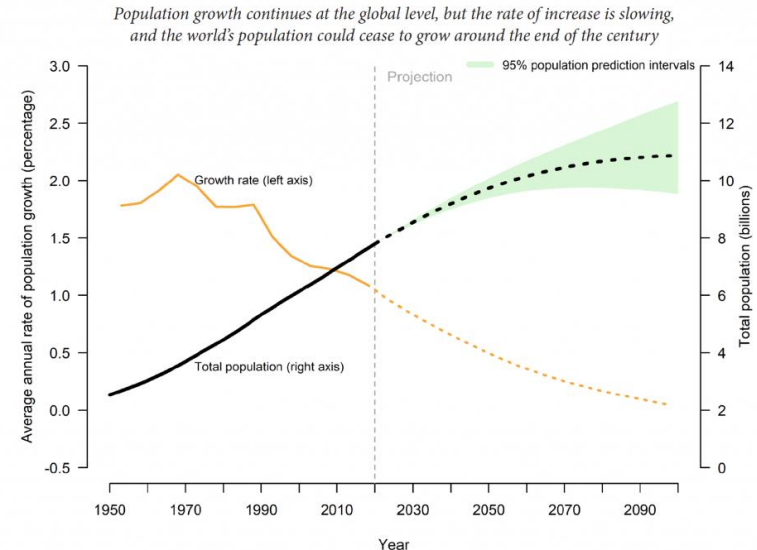


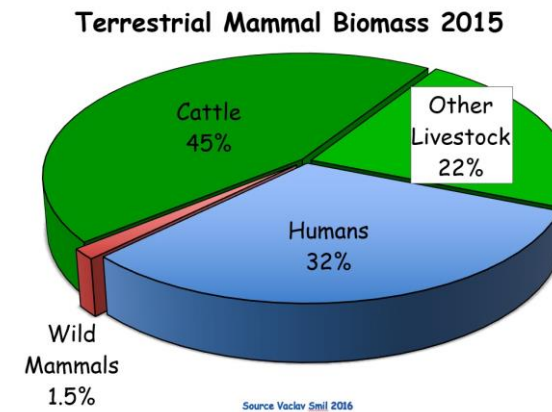
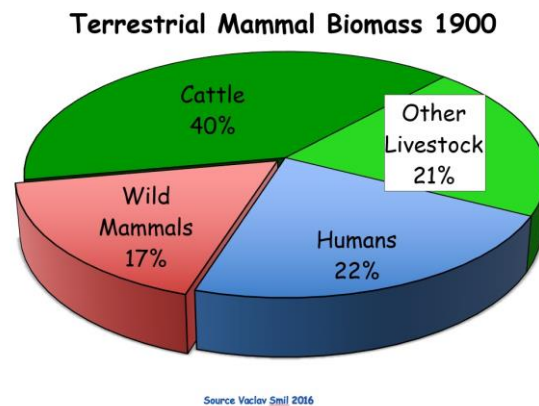
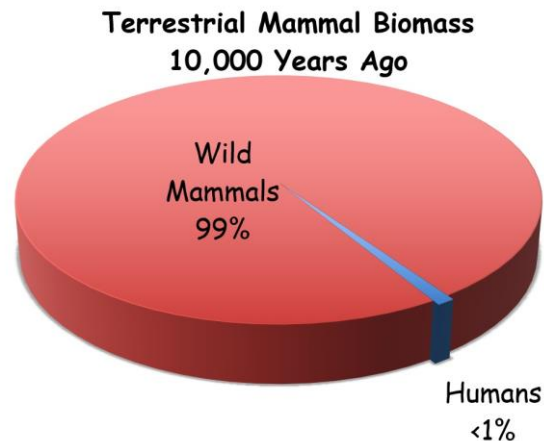
Figure 1. Population size and annual growth rate for the world: estimates, 1950-2020, and medium-variant projection with 95 per cent prediction intervals, 2020-2100



Data source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*.

Ills Caused by Unsustainable Humankind

- climate change
- environmental degradation and **pollution**, resource depletion, increase in municipal waste
- **biodiversity loss**, deforestation, desertification
- mass species extinction (**species genocide**)



Ills Caused by Unsustainable Humankind

- **water scarcity**, food insecurity, starvation, malnutrition
- **pandemic emergence**, inadequate healthcare services
- increased poverty, slowing economic growth, inadequate housing
- **forced migration**, climate refugees
- radicalization, extremism, widespread conflict, **resource-driven wars**

- **major obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

Sustainability Is Achievable,

but requires a sustainable humankind.

Without a sustainable humankind, there can be no sustainability in general, no sustainable development in particular, and finally, no chance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



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To Achieve Sustainability, We Must:

- 1 stop population growth,
- 2 stabilize humankind, and then
- 3 lower it to long-term sustainable numbers –

This is our ongoing ethical responsibility to future generations and other species.