

Section III: The Answers (Chapters 10 to 25)

Chapter 10 Connecting the Dots

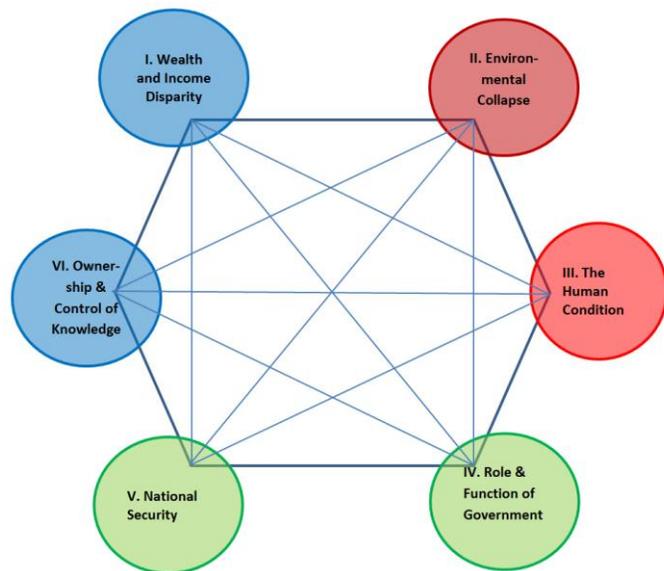
For 5,000 years, humans lived in the past tense: "Yesterday was the same as tomorrow." For the next 500 years people lived in the present tense: "Today can be whatever we want it to be." But now, for the next 50 years we must start living in the future tense: "Tomorrow's social, economic and political constraints must become today's reality."

On the basis of things we know to be true, I have suggested there are six issues we need to make a choice either to do something about now, or not. In short, that they are six essential issues for making the transition to living sustainably and peacefully on a crowded planet in the 21st Century:

- 1:** Is wealth and income disparity an issue?
- 2:** Is societal collapse an issue?
- 3:** Is the current state of the human condition an issue?
- 4:** Is the role and function of government an issue?
- 5:** Is national security an issue?
- 6:** Is ownership and control of knowledge an issue?

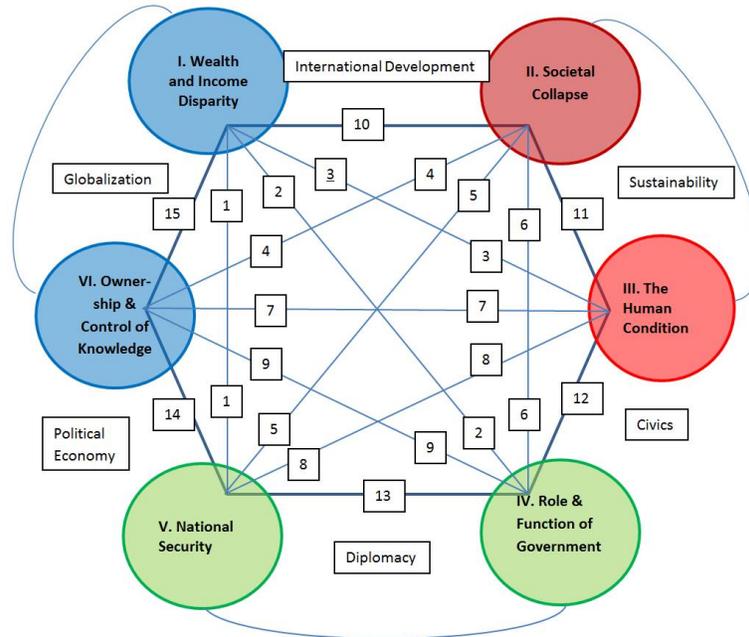
This was not a simple sequential series of yes or no questions. The six issues are inter-dependent. In the past, economic growth has improved the human condition by reducing inequalities, but now threatens societal collapse. We cannot regulate the environment without expanding the role of government. Unless the human condition is improved, national security will be threatened. Heightened national security challenges open information. Open information and knowledge is essential for reducing inequality.

All six issues must be treated simultaneously in order for the conclusions to be consistent with all of the facts. There is no grand solution if the individual solution proposed for one issue is incompatible with the solutions required for the other issues. While this requirement may seem impossibly complex, it is actually quite simplifying. There are not infinite possibilities. There are only a very limited number of arrangements which will satisfy a solution that is consistent with all the things we know to be true about each of the six issues and their relationship with each other.



Consider each of the 15 lines as a set of factual constraints. There is extensive knowledge about each line, in part because studying the relationship between two sets of concepts is one of the established methods of science. This creates a matrix which reflects the natural and social order of the world. Reducing any issue to a single ideological dimension – even

Capitalism or Christianity – is a violation of the fact that natural and social events reflect a dynamic interaction between – a set of separate considerations. Ideologies do not provide valid real-world solutions; they are alternative sets of theoretical ideas for suggesting possible strategies. The matrix is the underlying set of the factual pathways we need to know or discover for constructive practical problem solving.



Each the six circles correspond to an established area of scholarship. The two blue issues are subfields of economics, the two green issues of political science and the two red ones of the social sciences and humanities. The space between the blue and green is the discipline of political economy, between the green and red is civics, and between the red and blue international development. Between the greens is the area of diplomacy, between the reds is sustainability and between blues are the dynamic conditions of economic globalization.

The chapters of Section III are about each of the 15 relationships between each pair of the six issues. Two illustrative economic, political and social issues were selected as described in Chapter 4 in order to provide a specific focus for exploring the proposition that each one of the three is a function of the other two. In short that an empirical matrix is the appropriate context, not ideologies, for addressing the question of our time: How to live peacefully and sustainably on a crowded planet in the 21st Century. Viewed as a set of mutual constraints, there are only a limited number of solutions which will answer the question. The answer we seek is not an ideological debate, but an empirical, rational quasi-mathematical solution.

Many of the individual chapters are based on my Forums for a Future podcast available at www.kerenner.com or from [my blog](#). Some have been published as op-ed pieces published in the Tampa Bay Times, or in on-line journals. A short overview of Forum for the Future is also available for free as an [ibook](#).