

# **On The Possibility Of A Satisfactory Population Ethics**

2025-12-19

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[A] PAPER for 2012 (On the Possibility of a Satisfactory Population Ethics) by Gustaf Arrhenius as Arrhenius\_OTPOASPE\_2012.

[R] Start at 23:12PM EST, 2025-12-19.

[R] Before beginning this work, I would define population ethics as something like “ethical frameworks which describe emergent dynamics in the welfare of groups of individuals.”

[R] Start at 7:17AM EST, 2025-12-26.

[E] What does population axiology concern?

...how to evaluate populations in regard to their goodness, that is, how to order populations by the relations “is better than” and “is as good as”.

[T] Proceed through the references and indicate which you desire to download and examine further.

[E] What is Derek Parfit’s Repugnant Conclusion?

For any perfectly equal population with very high positive welfare, there is a population with very low positive welfare which is better, other things being equal.

[Q] What does “are elliptical for” mean with respect to two statements?

[R] It is easy to imagine someone reading the definition for the Repugnant Conclusion and falling into the trap of the hypothetical at the remark “for any perfectly equal population”.

[R] The only knob to turn, to crank down or up, is the population, in the Repugnant Conclusion, correct? Population size and interconnectedness seem to have a dynamical effect on population welfare. Is population size included in the “...perfectly equal...” stipulation?

[R] If we accept the Repugnant Conclusion, then any population axiology that is proposed cannot avoid but address it, as a condition of adequacy? My attempt to interpret: “A few theorists have argued that we should accept the Repugnant Conclusion and hence that avoidance of this conclusion is not a convincing adequacy condition for a population axiology.”

[R] Summary so far: There are population axiologies that have impossible results which show beliefs differ according to the size of a population and differ population welfares. Our beliefs should be consistent across population size and welfare. Many axiologies with beliefs that are inconsistent in this manner rule out as a condition of adequacy the Repugnant Conclusion. Some argue that the Repugnant Conclusion should be accepted.

[E] What is Derek Parfit’s Very Repugnant Conclusion?

For any perfectly equal population with very high positive welfare, and for any number of lives with very negative welfare, there is a population consisting of the lives with negative welfare and lives with very low positive welfare which is better than the high welfare population, other things being equal.

[R] I do wonder what “better than” means in this context. Perhaps this means “total welfare”?

[R] End at 7:55AM EST, 2025-12-26.