

**People and the Planet:  
Call for evidence  
Strengths and Weaknesses  
in Recognizing  
Key Interconnections  
Across Scale  
in Times of Transition**

For the Royal Society  
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London SW1Y 5AG

Personal submission by  
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Population Geography Instructor, Vancouver Island University, Elder College.

Articles include

*Regression Modeling to explain variations in Infant Mortality Rates;*  
*Spheres of Influence: Testing Alternative Indicators to Define Census*  
*Metropolitan Areas;*

*Global and Local Population Change: Similarity across scale;*

*Migration between Core and Peripheral Areas;*

at <http://www.wminfomatics.com/PopGeog/articles.html>, and

*Independence of Analysis by Statistical Agencies: A Case for Disclosure of Advice*  
*to Decision Makers*

at <http://www.wminfomatics.com/WP/home.html>

**October 2010**

*Dear Madame, Sir,*

Thank you for allowing an time extension for me to make a submission to the Royal Society's call for evidence regarding "People and the Planet".

I should mention that my request for an extension was required, in part, because of the reaction by decision makers to my dispassionate assessment of the best available evidence regarding population change.

As a Population Analyst for an Official Statistical Agency (British Columbia Statistics, also known as BC Stats), I have found strengths and weaknesses in the different population modeling methods used by Statistics Canada's and BC Statistics' to the regional level, highlighting an opportunity to improve the reliability of population estimations and projections.

Recent activities include efforts to: maintain the "long form" with Canada's national census; remove section 13 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act which allows advice to the head of a public body to be refused to be disclosed; and to address the recommendation to close the only high school in a town of 10,000 people, made without public consultation, based on population forecasts using what the consultant referred to as "obtuse" methods, that "may be" disclosed.

I mention these as examples of a top down decision making process developed to promote and maintain an ill-informed, easily led, dispassionate community, rather than a educational process meant to inform a consulted people.

Having served as the Population Analyst with the responsibility to be the provincial expert on migration for BC Statistics, I found the Official Population Statistics for British Columbia were changed outside of models without informing citizens and clients. "Looking good" to decision makers was more important than scientific evidence.

Within, BC Statistics Population Section of the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services there was a disdain for indigenous peoples, peoples with mixed ancestry, and those engaged in the "dirt" ministries such as agriculture, forestry, and mining. Indeed ground truthing was considered confrontational. Rather than informing, decision makers and their auxiliary can create scapegoats to deflect attention away from incompetence.

Herein lays the challenge for groups of "experts" who provide policy guidance regarding "People and the Planet". There is evidence that top down decision making without open dialogue results in self-serving policies favouring broad sweeping generalizations at the national and global level in contempt of detail and people at the local level.

I am encouraged by the Royal Society's emphasis on scientific evidence as verifiability provides a key (educational) interconnection across scale, population density, and class, during a time of transition.

## **Evidence sought**

Regarding the 7 questions posed, I have chosen to focus on

### **3) the strengths and weaknesses of different population modeling methodologies,**

In order to better understand, the strengths and weaknesses of different population modeling methodologies, may I suggest a comparison of two Official Statistical Agencies estimating population for the same regions.

Two such Official Statistical Agencies are BC Statistics and Statistics Canada. Both use different population methods and models to estimate population, by single year of age and sex at the regional level.

Examining the different methods, and indicators, as well as the differences in the results, provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of different population modeling methodologies.

This is a unique opportunity to compare two Official Statistical Agencies providing population estimates at the regional level.

See <http://www.wminfomatics.com/WP/home.html>

Thank you for your call for evidence regarding “People and the Planet”.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Munroe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

William Warren Munroe