

“What is the role of Institutes for Advanced Studies in strategic research and leadership of free thought?”



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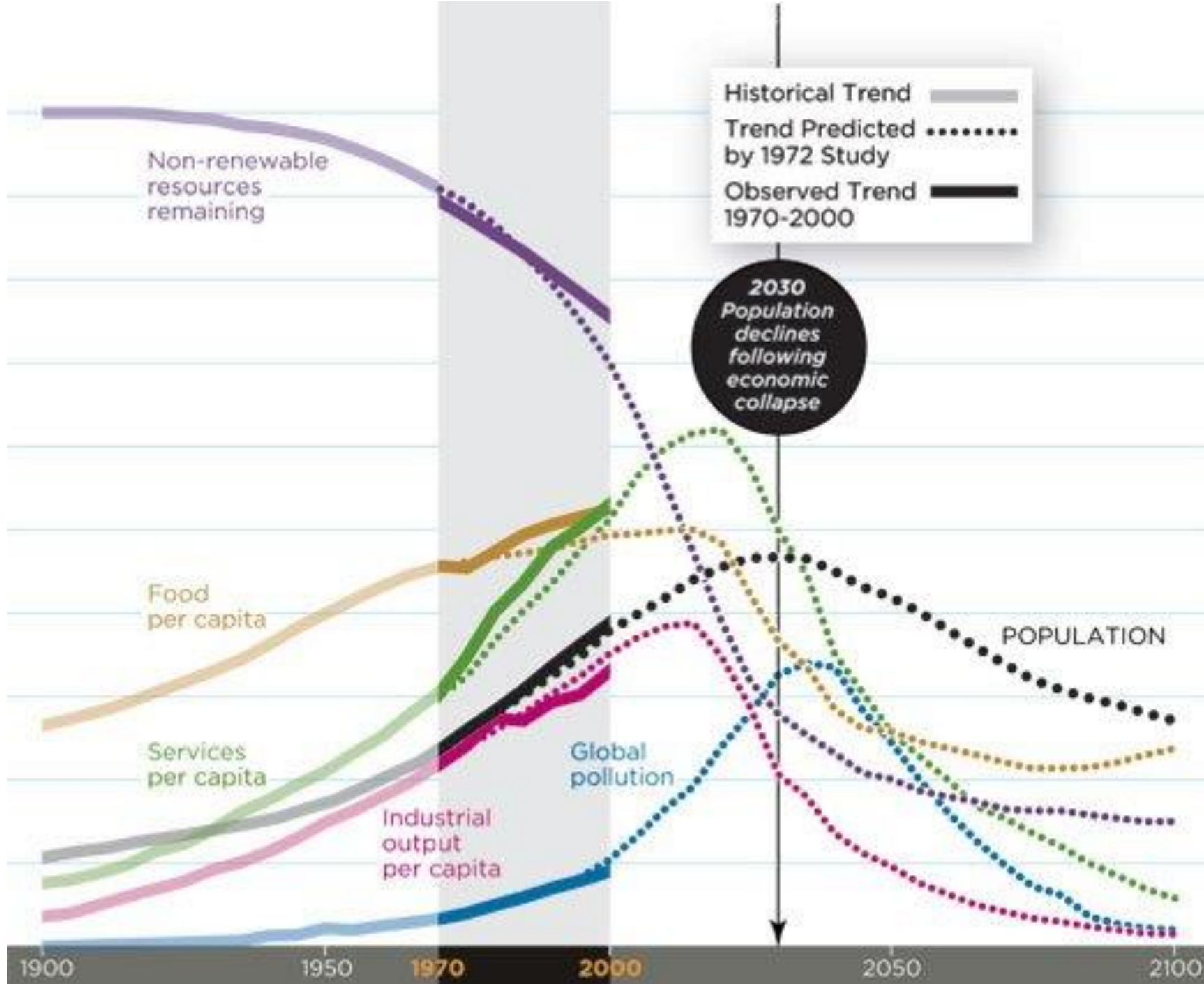
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outline

1. Global context
2. Scientific context
3. What IASs do
4. Some problems and potential actions

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A comparison of Club of Rome previsions (Meadows & al. 1972) to actual data, adapted from (Turner, 2008)

Turner G. A Comparison of the Limits to Growth with Thirty Years of Socio-Economics and the Environment. *CSIRO Work Pap Ser.* 2008;(June):52.

Rationalization and its discontents

- (Information & Transport) Technology > a global world, inter-connected
- Scientific approach > more efficiency in (over)exploitation of resources, including people
- Evolution based on competitive growth > more competition at global scale > inequalities and tensions.

The World is under high tension.

Stress > Agression > Violence > Damage > Retaliation > More Stress

Can science help?

- "Societies have problems, universities have departments" (for good reasons)
- Emergent problems are un-disciplined and require a transdisciplinary approach (unlike building technology)
- Crises are when classic solutions & models don't apply: they need out-of-the box approach

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Rationalization and global competition in Science too

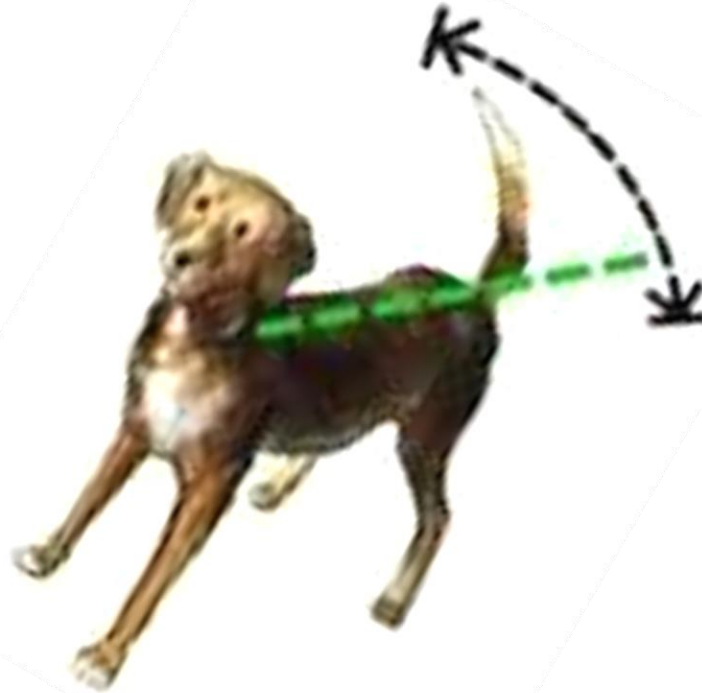
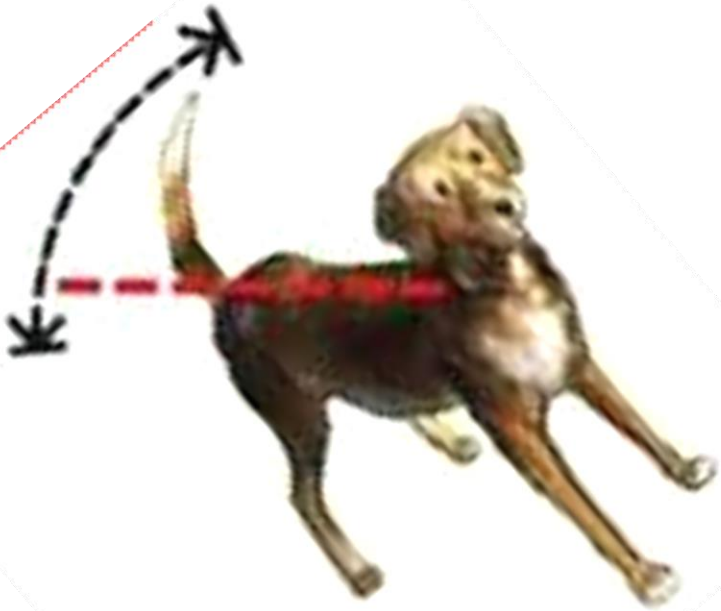
- "Managerialism" > academic time eaten by admin, grant application etc.
- Competition > Institutional nationalism (country/university/discipline)
- "Global" career pressure > Credentialism. Collateral HR damage.
- Uncontrolled growth (jobless PhDs, publication > haystack effect...)

- The system loses efficiency, relevance and quality standards:
 - Peer-reviewing (for papers & projects) is collapsing from overfishing
 - Quality of papers goes down (poor reviews, predatory journals, Minimal Publishable Piece, fraud, long-tail blockbuster effect).
 - Hyperspecialisation, knowledge silos
 - Competitive project-based approach > poor capitalization, negative externalities on organisations.

There are good aspects too: Wikipedia, digital libraries, open access, search engines, online courses...

evaluation

funding



"the tail wags the dog"

"why" do
we do
research?

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IAS : a good old-fashioned science model

- Unfragmented time
- Freedom of thought and "installations" for thought: away from institutional and disciplinary pressure, access to knowledge, people, resources
- Not evaluation-driven, no pecking-order
- Cross-fertilization with channelling processes, facilitation of border-crossing

IAS : a good *advanced* science model

➤ May produce precisely the transdisciplinary out-of-the box stuff that will help us address :

- Internal imitations of disciplines and departments
- Fundamental world problems
- Transdisciplinarity as an epistemic proof of validity ("vertical compatibility of explanation across scales and perspectives")

Complementary to universities!

("leadership of free thought and strategic research")

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IAS : an outdated business model... does not fit well the evaluation frameworks

- Unpredictable returns (no planned deliverables)
 - Returns (sometimes) distant in place and time from local funders's KPIs ("useless" for institutional nationalism)
 - Expensive and somptuary
 - Small (no economies of scale, limited visibility and outreach)
 - Non-thematic (open calls)
 - Can be subversive (refer IAS CEU)
- (and honestly, a system that may believe too much in the quality of the production of blue-skyed pampered scientists)



IAS : how can we survive in the current context of the evaluation frameworks?

- Unpredictable returns (no planned deliverables) > ?
- Returns (sometimes) distant in place and time from local funders's KPIs (useless for institutional nationalism) > **Proceedings of the IAS**
- Expensive and somptuary >
- Small (no economies of scale, limited visibility and outreach) > **become a real network infrastructure**
- Non-thematic (open calls) > **syndicate at network level to show critical mass on a given topic**
- Can be subversive (refer IAS CEU) > ? **(make this a sales argument?)**

Take away: Possible concrete steps to empower IASs to foster "free thought and strategic research"

- **Proceedings:** Paris IAS is working on it
- **Become a real network infrastructure:** share knowledge, procedures, access, networks, call, alumni [refer CAT: we can do] > EU funding: The Nordic alliance as a core for the future infrastructure?
- **Syndicate at network level to show critical mass on a given topic:** NAS (Network of Advanced Solutions – © @Camilla) grouping the fellows resources across IASs for topical conferences.
- **From interdisciplinary to intersectoral:** open partnerships and fellowships to thinkers, movers and doers beyond academia (they can think too!)

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