

## Correspondence

### Response to ‘Moral panic about over-population’ (Radstats #105)

*Brian Quinn*

In the 2-page scene-setting article before the paper Moral Panic about Over-population, the authors made clear their intense dislike for the campaign group Population Matters (PM), referring to their ‘old-style conservative policies’, ‘controversial political agenda’, annoying behaviour and ‘unsavoury policies’. I have no knowledge of PM and am prepared to accept RadStat’s opinion on their behavioural style. However, I do think that this personal animosity has been allowed to cloud the authors’ logic on the question of the impact of population on climate change and the environment.

Even just thinking about the UK, it is surely patently obvious that the lifetime carbon footprint and consumption implications of a decision to bring another human being into the world make a joke of any thoughts of fewer flights, energy-saving light bulbs, and cycling to work. Yet not having one more baby is never included in the list of handy suggestions for greener living. Instead, politicians and trendy professionals revel in producing large broods and expect us to gurgle at their family-orientation.

For the RadStats authors to dismiss the ‘apparent simplicity’ of this obvious fact by saying it ‘ignores the specific capacity of human beings to develop new technology’ puts them into the same territory as the climate change problem deniers who say it doesn’t matter if humans are warming the planet because we can leave it to future technologists (or God) to sort it out later.

Really, I expect better of ‘radical’ rationalists than wishful thinking.