Yet while there is a general relationship between population and other FEEEP components, precisely how a given population or changes in a population influence the environment, for example, is case-specific and dependent upon many variables.[5] Technology will play a key role, both in the creation of environmental concerns, such as the increasing use of motor vehicles and emissions from their use, and in the technologies developed and deployed to reduce environmental stress, such as waste management or emission controls. In light of this, the further in the future population and demographic projections are made, such as forecasts of global figures for the years 2100 and 2150, the more difficult it becomes to understand FEEEP interactions and linkages, and the crystal ball progressively fades. The potential impact of a future population becomes more uncertain as more assumptions on possible new technologies are made. This is a critical point, as differences in view of neo-Malthusian "catastrophists" and prophets preaching of a coming gaia are often derived from differences in technological innovation assumptions.

In addition to total population or growth of population, the distribution of population is an important factor in FEEEP analysis. A prominent feature of future projected population growth is increased levels of urbanization and the continuing growth of "megacities". Population growth rates, and the rise in relative percentages of urban dwellers will place increasing pressure on the economic infrastructure. In the APEC economies' much of the urban growth will be in the developing Asian economies where urban population is projected to significantly in the early part of the next century. Rapid urban population growth could exacerbate urban pollution problems, as well as contributing to social tensions. In countries with less-well developed safety nets and a large degree of polarization in incomes, political and social stability could

socio-economic and environmental feedback loops will substantially affect demographic trends.

[5] Specifying a future population has its own problems. Depending on assumptions made, such as contraceptive use and the average age of marriage, a wide range of potential populations may be generated for any future date. The mid 1997 world population is estimated to be 5.9 billion. Whether the current global population will triple or quadruple, before it levels out, is a matter of speculation. The 1994 U.N. population projections for the year 2025 range from a low of 7.6 billion to a high of 9.0 billion. Source: The United Nations, The Sex and Age Distribution of the World Populations, The 1994 Revision, New York, 1994. An earlier publication, The United Nations, World Population Prospects, The 1992 Revision, New York, 1993, had global population estimates for 2025 ranging from 7.8 billion to 9.1 billion.