Parfitian Population Ethics

I am currently working on a paper that synthesizes Derek Parfit’s last views on how to avoid the *Repugnant Conclusion*and presents the general features of a plausible theory of population ethics based on Parfit’s suggestions. The paper argues that a plausible theory of population ethics provides only partial orderings and implies that some outcomes are non-determinate in their ranking. The paper shows, first, how the combination of what Parfit calls “imprecise equality” and the “Wide Dual Person-Affecting Principle” allows one to avoid both the *Continuum Argument* and the *Improved Mere Addition Parado*x. Second, the paper shows how this is enough to in principle also refute Gustaf Arrhenius’s impossibility theorems. Third, the paper suggests that a plausible theory of population ethics must allow for non-determinacy, that whatever the substance of the theory is, it can only provide partial orderings of outcomes, and that Arrhenius’s adequacy conditions should be revised in light of non-determinacy. Finally, the paper illustrates how one can apply normative theories that allow for non-determinacy and also infer formal constraints on the theories in light of the consequences of their application.