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HIST 329

4/20/2018

The Limits to Growth or *The Limits to Panic*

In 1972, a group of brilliant minds met together in an attempt to fix an unrecognized problem concerning overproduction and growth. Other than these individuals, few people at this time were concerned with earth sustainability. These individuals created a model, which accounted for various factors, in order to predict the outcome that would come from human development. What they concluded was that in 100 years the earth was going to face global decline in human capacity and industrial capability. In essence, if humans didn’t adjust their growth and consumption methods, the world will face outbreaks of food shortage, pollution, and resource depletion. It comes as no surprise to learn that the “Limits of Growth” model received major criticism from economists and similar people. Today, there is a split debate on whether the model proved to be correct after 40 years or remains incorrect and irrelevant. I will be analyzing the latter argument, using an article from Bjorn Lomborg titled *The Limits to Panic*.

Bjorn Lomborg argues that The Club of Rome was wrong, because they overlooked the resourcefulness of humans. They didn’t account for how capable humans are of adapting and overcoming the new obstacles and that with time they will learn new capabilities. If humans were to stop increasing innovation and production, then that will lead to failure. While many have argued that The Club of Rome correctly predicted these past 40 years, Lomborg claims that this is not the case. He states that food supply has yet to collapse with 1.5 billion hectares of plowable land being used but there is another 2.7 billion in reserve. Even malnourishment has significantly decreased, from 35% of the world’s population at that time down to 16%. Pollution also is not nearly as severe as The Club of Rome speculated. Lomborg states that in 1900 about 1 out of every 500 people died each year from air pollution. However today, that number has dropped 4 times lower to 1 per 2,000 people. Contrary to the opinion of the Limits to Growth, pollution mortality rates are decreasing not increasing.

Today, Bjorn Lomborg believes that the Limits to Growth has changed the perception of the sustainability of global capitalism. He believes that fear was incorrectly imbedded into world leaders which causes them to make foolish decisions. For example, because of fear of over-population, China enacted a harmful restriction for a one-child policy, with India forcing sterilization. In addition, today focuses on practices such as recycling which is shown to offer little positive impact. Another large issue is climate change. Climate change is currently a hot topic, which some argue that capitalism and growth are killing the planet.

In *Limits of Panic,* Lomborg argues that in today’s society issues similar to the ones created by The Club of Rome are distracting from actual threats to human life. One example provided is poverty. Poverty is arguably the greatest threat to human life and the only real solution is growth. In order for lower class society to endure, economic growth must be maximized. Underdeveloped countries especially need to grow in order to neutralize poverty. Another example given by Lomborg is disease. Curable diseases account for 15 million lives a year, which is an astounding 25% of all deaths. As with poverty innovation and growth is the easiest solution for this issue.

Contrary to the opinions of the Club of Rome, world growth must be encouraged not growth limits. Global trade and innovation will help save human lives and shape a better future. For this to happen countries and individuals must maintain a mindset that they can accomplish what has yet to be accomplished and to never hold back from their visions for a better world.