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## How to stop economic growth

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### ABSTRACT

The answer to how to stop economic growth must be political rather than economic. Economic growth made by men has an impetus which can only be stopped by a deliberate choice. It takes national and international decisions to stop it. In order to organize a moratorium on economic growth (which eventually must lead to a stop on growth) I suggest to create blocks of nations in the world. The European Union can function as a model for such a block. The E.U. is on its way of becoming a supra-national government which was created to ensure a level playing field for its members. Now it is meant to create economic growth for its members, in the future its administration should be used to stop it. Blocks should agree on the targets to reach a durable economy. Globally or between certain more advanced blocks a date should be set to stop economic growth after that date. Each block should implement the goals to reach a durable economy and prevent products reaching its market that violate the goals of durability. Blocks in developing countries cannot be expected to stop economic growth. They need that growth for two reasons. Eventually they must reach the level of existence in the more advanced block and secondly they must have the time to improve the standard for durability of their products. They need the aid of the developed countries to reach a higher but also more durable level of production, but this aid comes with a quid pro quo, In the meantime they must do their utmost to stop wars in their regions and conduct a responsible population-policy to reduce the growth of their population and let it reduce on the long term.

### KEYWORDS

Economic growth moratorium; supranational blocks; sustainable development

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## 1. Introduction

An often long discussion takes place on *why* we should curb economic growth and preferably stop it, but I have not read a proposal on *how* to do this. We shall need the United Nations at some stage, but the United Nations does not have the clout to enforce certain necessary rules. Political Regimes differ too much to reach global solutions. Crucial in this respect is the difference between democracies and authoritarian led regimes. Stopping economic growth will have such a fundamental impact on the inhabitants of all regimes, democratically or authoritarian led that you must have the guarantee that society will obey the new rules. Democracies will have difficulty in reaching decisions on the rules which must be adopted, but when adopted you can be reasonably sure people will follow the new rules. For authoritarian regimes decreeing the rules can be done with a stroke of the pen, getting them adopted in society will remain doubtful.

A basic difference in the world is that between developed and developing countries. Asking the developing countries to stop growth now is impossible, because they need it to reach the level of development the developed countries are on now.

These differences lead me to the proposal to divide the world in blocks. In this respect I take on Guizot's brilliant idea. He published a little book in 1828 in which he maintained that Europe's superiority in the world was founded on the plural character of European culture. That culture depended on the common goal to further civilization (Guizot, 1839).

So in the ideal future blocks trade and communicate with each other pursuing the common goal of durability while at the same time monitoring imports and political decisions made by other blocks.

To maintain peace and arbitrate in cases of conflicts between blocks we need the United Nations for two things. First it must set up a charter that ensures durability. And secondly they must create a court to settle conflicts between blocks.

## 2. Economic Growth

Since I published my last book (in Dutch) I am (re)reading books from my own library. So I took the English version of Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* from the bookcase (Mannheim, 2013). Some fifty years ago the book made a great impression on me. Here, I thought, we have the two dimensions of political thought: ideology deals with the present and utopia with the future. Now I discover that I read Mannheim badly. His book is a plea for a sociology of knowledge, ideology is and remains a lie and utopia refers as Thomas More, the inventor of the term already indicated, refers to nowhere-land. Ideology is indeed a useless term. It does not indicate more than a system of political arguments for which political philosophy suffices. The use of the term utopia is a different matter. The advocacy for a final settlement of the international economy has become louder and those who use common sense agree that economic growth and a durable economy cannot go together. If we want a durable society we must stop economic growth. And a durable society is a utopia accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

Many in and outside government insist that you can have economic growth and a durable society. I think this view is an illusion. According to the current definition of economic growth it means a growth of national production in real terms and hence a greater use of natural resources. Indeed those who raise the alarm about the effects of economic growth point out that the pace of the depletion of natural resources quickens under the influence of this growth.

J.M. Keynes published in 1926 his *The End of Laissez Faire* (Keynes, 1926). It was a trail blazer in the sense that Keynes insisted that the modern economy needs a measure of planning. In 1945 the Neo-Keynesians took up this

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<sup>1</sup> A recent conference in Brussels was on the subject *Beyond Growth*.

idea in a big way.<sup>2</sup> They thought they had discovered the magic formula to solve not only unemployment but also poverty by taxing the proceeds of economic growth for the social welfare in society. So economic growth became a priority for many governments. So we can see that giving up the priority is a blow to many politicians and economists and many so still stick to the old target which is to solve social problems by revenues derived from economic growth.

Economic growth is a process which became evident at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution started in Great Britain. This Industrial Revolution was of course caused by human activities, but the outcome was not controlled by government. It was rather applauded as the result of human ingenuity and economists in the past became only alarmed when there was a temporary hitch in the process of growth.

So shall we have to wait till economies will stagnate, because of lack of resources or shall we try to consolidate what we have developed since 1945, if only because going on in the old way will lead to wars about resources, to vast streams of migrants who cannot stay where they are now, because the hotter climate has turned their arable land into deserts? And if we think ahead into a future not that far away planet earth may become inhabitable to all human beings. I suggest we use the expertise economists have developed and use it for the purpose of consolidation. Whether we can stop our planet getting hotter remains to be seen, but we can at least try by living within our means. My proposal how to do this is simple, at least on paper: we set a date for a ceiling on economic growth globally.

### 3. Blocks

As blocks I regard the European Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the Arab League,, the Organization of African Unity and the Union of American States. China can function as a block in its own right and perhaps North America( the U.S. and Canada) should be considered as a separate block. Whether Russia can function as a separate block remains to be seen. Its leaders are pursuing an imperialist dream of restoring the empire of the Tsars, but its economic performance, compares to that of China for example, is poor. I hope they will join the E.U. after realizing the folly of war (against the Ukraine). Most blocks already have some regulation for domestic relations between members in the block. These rules must be specified and enlarged to meet the requirements of a durable society.

### 4. Rules for a Durable Society

- The common goal of all blocks must be to stop economic growth at a certain level, but as members of a world-civilization we may add:
- That we ban wars, because they destroy resources and hinder the cooperation of peoples. In Europe the idea has sunk in that wars have become obsolete as a political measure. Putin and many others have not realized that as a world population we must work together to save our necks and that wars lead, as Normal Angell already concluded in 1910, to defeat for all the parties involved (Angell, 1913).
- The emission of certain gases has led to the empirical statements that they cause (or add to) climate change and to the earth becoming hotter. So we must not only be efficient in the way we use energy, but we must produce energy under 'green' conditions by using wind and sun. The great number of wind turbines which are raised all over the world indicates that at least this message has been understood.
- The conservation of nature is an important goal, but what is nature? Do we mean the parks, forests we cultivate or the fields or landscapes not yet touched by man of which the forests along the Amazon or in the Congo are

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<sup>2</sup> The Neo-Keynesians (such as Paul Samuelson) enthusiastically adopted Keynes economic analysis, but I wonder whether Keynes would have always agreed with their ideas. The Neo-Keynesians tolerated 2% inflation to reach full employment. Keynes considered inflation as robbery

a dwindling example? The general rule should be that we help nature, but do not interfere with it as little as possible. As everybody says in chorus: do not cut down trees in forests which you have not planted yourself and cultivate nature with respect, whether you planted the trees yourself or heather fields that grow by themselves.

- Recycle waste products if you possibly can. This measure has a direct impact on natural resources.
- The most important recommendation should be that you as politicians promote democracy. If the public cannot be convinced that working for a safe world in which we cooperate and do not fight each other, we can better stop worrying and wait for the cataclysm.

Three last introductory remarks: 1. stopping economic growth does not mean that we cannot go on refining our production processes. Better does not necessarily mean more and if refinement off at the agreed ceiling simply because even this type of growth has an impact on our planet. 2. it is important to emphasize that the goal is to create a durable world, not a durable block. For generates economic growth without using more natural resources I still would have it topped this each blocks must reach a level on which it can trade and negotiate with other blocks on equal terms.

If each block keeps to the requirement for reaching a durable society it can only be possible if it reaches that goal in its own way. It is important that each block can provide the essentials its inhabitants need and if only for this reason it must control its borders. However, the danger is that a block, when it will put a ceiling to economic growth, and will become vulnerable to cheap imports, in reaction will turn into a fortress of protection. That reaction must be avoided by a frequent consultation between blocks.

## 5. The European Union as an Independent Agency

### 5.1. Consolidation and Autonomy

To a pessimist the European Union looks like an odd jumble of states that lacks political clout. To Boris Johnson, the engineer of Brexit, the E.U. is totally inefficient and that was an important argument for leaving the Union. As an optimist I argue that Johnson misunderstood the purpose of the Union which is to combine a plurality of national cultures with a common European goal for working together and as an observer I maintain that the trend, economic and political, is unmistakably towards a European unity of purpose. Putin helped us Europeans, by his aggression towards the Ukraine, to cement our unity. The aggression has made us realize that we need the E.U. to remain independent and the delivery of tanks and other weaponry is proof of this sense of unity. And even regardless of the Russian aggression the E.U. has managed an impressive legislative web to ensure that there is a level playing field for the economies of the member states and (as an optimist) I ask myself why don't we use this legislative web to decide to install a European ceiling on economic growth.

Two concepts are important for each block: *consolidation* and *autonomy*. *Consolidation* means that all the blocks together or only the advanced blocks (those blocks which already have a clear internal structure and a well-developed economy) get together to set a date for the installation of a ceiling on growth which means that from that date blocks are not being able to grow economically beyond that date. *Autonomy* means that each block must see to it that products essential for the economy of the block must be produced within the block.

### 5.2. Prices and Recycling

It is clear that the effect of a ceiling on economic growth will raise prices, at least initially. The more so, because you will have to support the weaker members of society. Now you can use the money which you receive by topping of economic growth after it reaches the ceiling, but will that be enough? Recycling waste may also raise prices and

the transition from large scale industrial- to bio-farming will also be expensive. So it seems inescapable that we will have to tax the well-to-do even further than we do already. It is hard to guess the need for adjustment if we apply the ceiling and that unavoidably leads to protests in society. These protests in itself make a strong case for democracy. From the standpoint of the decision makers it seems an attractive idea to be able to ignore protests and push through measures regardless of the protests, but it does not work this way. Democracy means listening to your opponents till you reach the point of a reasonable compromise which is acceptable to the majority of the population. Authoritarian regimes often excel in building up a military industry, but have a poor record when dealing with civilian goods and the reason is that in military matters they can dictate the terms of production while with civilian goods they need the initiative of civilian producers which they ignore or which is not there. The history of the Soviet Union shows laughable examples of the production of long underwear when mini-skirts were in fashion.

Being a child during the Second World war I remember the care my mother took in saving the remnants of a meal and to repair things we now would regard unrepairable. Now we throw away tons of food and indeed there is a retro-element involved in the recommendation to recycle. We have become so careless in what we throw away that the amount of waste becomes a problem itself. Scrap iron is an essential element of producing steel and undoubtedly many resources can be saved in the industrial process. Yet recycling has its limits. Unlike renewable energy many natural resources cannot be recycled and there the call must be to make a strict economical use of resources.

The introduction of bio-agriculture is an urgent issue in the E.U. European agriculture in its present state has disturbed the balance between cultivation and our habitat. If we look at the Dutch case we formerly had an easy rule about the numbers of cows which a farmer could keep. The area of grassland he had determined the number of cows. Now they are kept in large sheds and they only see their meadows as a symbolic gesture. Now the number of cows is limited by the price of soya-imports. The argument of farmers that they provide food for the Dutch population is only partly true. The Dutch export of agricultural products that reaches the world at large, exporting powdered milk to China and calves to Ireland, is second in the world. We (me too) used to be very proud of this performance. Now we face the unbalance between the condition of our forest and grassland that produces grass but no longer is an hospitable environment for insects and wild flowers. Wild nature does not exist anymore in the Netherlands and the lesson is that the Dutch must not only cultivate agriculture, but also nature. The lesson also applies to the E.U. in general.

Many Dutch farmers want to stop farming or they emigrate to Canada, where as competent producers they are more than welcome. It is only fair that government helps farmers, who want to stay in business by assisting them to make the transition to bio-farming and also those who want to stop by buying them out, for in the past the government has financed the enlargement of their herds.<sup>3</sup> A consolidation in the hands of fewer farmers will meet the old rule that the extent of grasslands determines the number of cows, but will not help to rejuvenate the soil. For this we need not fewer, but more farmers.

The deposit of nitrogen oxide and the amount of ammonia in the Netherlands are a big issue in Dutch politics. There are two aspects of this which are of interest. The first is that the European Commission, backed by the Dutch courts, has ordered the Dutch government to adopt measures to bring the amount of the deposits down, but the Dutch government has great difficulty in obeying this measure, because of the resistance to the measures proposed. The second is that the resistance has galvanised in a new movement the *Farmers-Citizens –Movement* (*BBB: Boeren-Burger-Beweging*). The movement is represented in parliament by one member: a middle aged woman, not glamorous but with a lot of common sense. She managed in galvanising the Dutch provinces. Under her management

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<sup>3</sup> The number is of course a relative issue. A Californian farmer once asked me how many cows a Dutch farmer had. I guesse 250 (probably too high). He answered: I have 25.000.

the movement gathered many votes in all provinces at the recent election for the provincial estates.<sup>4</sup> In the next section I will discuss resistance against government –national and European – which is a matter for concern, but the *BBB* might develop into something useful and constructive. At the moment a solution of reducing deposits of nitrogen oxide in the Netherlands seems far away. It is interesting to notice that the European Commission insists that a solution must be reached.

As to an influx of migrants in the E.U no solution is in sight. The borders of the E.U are open to any migrant who tries his luck. Undoubtedly the influx will become larger and reach proportion that something has to be done. However migrants which have arrived in the European Union can at present not be sent back, when the authorities decide that they have no right to stay. So a way must be found to close the European borders effectively and let those who want to migrate to the European Union apply for admission in their native country. Closing the borders obviously can only be done at the European and not the national level and I predict that the E.U will take measures to control its borders effectively. I am in favour of adopting the Canadian model according to which the E.U will allow entry to those which fit the need of the E.U. and close the European border to others. An exception should be made for political refugees. The difficulty is that it is hard to distinguish between those who are persecuted and those who want to leave their home countries for economic reasons. The authorities of the European Union must decide whom they are going to admit as genuine refugees *before* they are admitted in Europe. For economic migrants I suggest to the countries the migrants are leaving that the E.U should open schools in these countries where youngsters come from. When admitted they can prepare for a new career in the E.U.

### 5.3. *The Resistance of Firms*

The fear is that firms will leave a country when the regulation of their activities becomes too strict. Whether this will happen when these rules are issued by the European Union remains to be seen. It may have been profitable to shift your activities from the Netherlands to France, but when the rules are the same in both countries that advantage disappears. An obvious candidate is Great Britain which now is outside the Union, but they in that situation face the regulation from the outside. And there is another consideration which may carry weight with directors of firms and that is that they know the experience of the workforce they employ which in countries as the Netherlands and France is well-trained. What can they expect in South America or even China? And of course even then they cannot escape the rules of the European Union when they want to import their products in the E.U.

There is also the prospect of regulation elsewhere. The idea of blocks is that other blocks outside the E.U. will install rules to stop economic growth. Firms may expect regulation in countries and continents in the world outside Europe. Within the E.U. firms will have the alternative of innovation in producing more and even cheaper products. Perhaps firms will consider it a loophole to make products that use less natural resources than before and even make them cheaper and better and so evading the criteria of measuring economic growth in terms of costs and amount of natural resources. The reduction in the amount of natural resources is a positive effect, but the cheapening of prices constitutes a loophole till we find a way of pricing the negative effects of economic growth such as the emission of noxious gases or deforestation. Then the cost of these negative effects should be used to tax employers accordingly. The authorities of the European Union will be well-advised to find a way to put a price tag to these negative effect and not add the outcome of these cleaning activities to the national income as is done at present. At present inventions and new forms of organization are the main forces which stimulate growth. So there is every reason to stop their influence beyond the ceiling. Firms must get accustomed to the fact that better does not necessarily means more.

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<sup>4</sup> In the Netherlands the members of the First Chamber are chosen by the Provincial Estates. The *BBB* got sixteen of the 75, which was a high number compared to other parties.

#### 5.4. Individuals

Individuals will and already have reacted against what they regard as attempts to restrict their freedom, but those who are successful in their work as independent actors or as members of a firm probably will not. In essence the protests seem to have little to do with the challenge of market conditions. All members of modern society seem to have a deep seated revulsion against the consistent threat of disciplining our behaviour as Freud noticed in an essay he wrote in 1930: *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (generally known in its English translation: *Civilisation and its Discontents*) (Freud, 1930). The uncomfortable feeling that the world in which we live appears to us as becoming strange and unfamiliar does not necessarily lead to protests, but as the feeling is widespread many individuals may be receptive to it.

The distinction between *negative* and *positive* freedom may clarify the kind of freedom we should want. Negative freedom means the freedom of restraint. It is the simple definition of freedom everybody will understand, but it is not to be helpful for our purpose, because a further regulation of our lives is necessary. Positive freedom means that we accept the regulation and the duties they imply and work and act within the framework of these rules. That obeisance can create a sense of freedom, but many people will find that hard to believe.

### 6. The European Union and International Relations

Commerce between blocks that have fulfilled this goal can be easy. Each block will demand for its own protection that other blocks stick to the common goal and the specification for products this implies. Then there can be a free exchange of products and services. What shall we do with those blocks or countries that have not been able, or not yet been able to fulfil this obligation? Let me view this situation from within the European Union.

The E.U. should be as much as possible be autonomous in its needs and as a recognition of this the E.U. (and its predecessors) already promote the policy that the E.U. produces the food it needs. Within the new durable setup this policy should also be established for industrial products, not only for security reasons, but also because in a durable situation the more self-sufficient the E.U. or any other block is in satisfying its needs, the more efficient it is in the use of energy and the quality of its products. Let me quote two examples to show how this can work. At present India exports very cheap jumpers to *inter alia* the E.U.. There is a good case for stopping these imports within the E.U. . Under pressure of European buyers the working conditions for Indian women who make these products have improved, but they are still grossly underpaid. Here there is a good case for stopping the import of these cheap products. And there are other cases to be considered where labour or nature are being abused. What about the trees of the Amazon forests for instance? Uncertified timber may not be imported in the E.U., but attempts to stop this illegal import of timber are not very efficient.

Another case is the great number of containers which reach Rotterdam from China each year. We must find a way to restrict this long distance commerce. In this case closing the borders of the E.U. to Chinese products seems a bad idea. If the Chinese are capable to produce sophisticated electronic products cheaper than we can in Europe the only way to meet the Chinese is by producing these wares ourselves and this seems to be the lesson for all the blocks in the world. Be as autonomous as possible in serving your needs. That will be an important step towards saving our planet. There will be enough opportunity for international trade, even over long distance, but we must return to a situation we, as Europe had fifty years ago, when we produced industrial products largely within Europe. Cheapness is an important element in products, but within the E.U. it must be balanced by considerations of autonomy.

### 7. The Case of the United Kingdom

Like many Europeans and certainly the Dutch I have regarded Brexit as a mistake. After World War Two Britain

thought that it could play an independent role in industry and trade and when it was discovered that it could not play this role with success it had to wait till de Gaulle left the scene before it was permitted to join the Union. It is a mystery to me why more than half of those who could vote decided to leave the Union again, inspired by the mesmerizing influence of Boris Johnson. Nothing has changed since the U.K. joined and then left the Union. And at least to me it is evident that Britain needs the stimulus of the E.U. to develop its own industry and trade. The agrarian economy of Britain is in a good shape, but its industry is not and the poverty of large sections of the industrial towns throw a sad shadow on England and perhaps a little less on Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Of course the U.K. can export its products to the E.U. under the new conditions. However, the conditions of this trade will be set in Brussels and not in London. And it will be an illusion that the U.K. can re-exported products that come from elsewhere in the world under a reduced tariff. It is to be hoped that the E.U. and the U.K. can find a profitable way of exchanging products and when the E.U. starts to function as a block the U.K. must become a member of that block which means the exit of Brexit in reality if not in name.

## **8. A Guide to a Development Policy for Blocks who as yet cannot fulfil the Conditions of Durability**

Since centuries we find well-developed civilizations next to societies that until recently never went beyond the status of a tribal society. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution trade between civilizations have intensified and the tribal societies have been left behind (except in the case of the slave trade). So the African continent for instance has difficulty in catching up with the developed part of the world. The developed blocks in the world have an interest in helping a continent such as Africa to reach the level the developed blocks are on, economically and institutionally. So aid is in the interest of the donors. If we look at Africa the issue of youngsters migrating to Europe is clear. Employers welcome them as potential labourers, but to the society at large they constitute an increasing problem for the receiving countries, but their native countries are also poorer when the young and energetic leave them. What can be done?

Development aid at the moment is not terribly effective and one reason may be that aid is regarded by the donor as a kind of charity, instead of defining the *quid pro quo* involved in the aid. There is the prospect that the world population will become less in numbers, but whether the natural pace of demography will be enough remains to be seen. A consistent policy for reduction remains desirable everywhere in the world, particularly in Africa where the population is still growing. So it seems sensible that donors of aid ask leaders everywhere, but particularly in Africa to do everything to control growth of the population they are responsible for. Regional conflicts are notorious the world over. The Congo, one of the richest countries in terms of resources is wrecked by internal wars. The E.U. can help to solve these conflicts (and in secret many attempts are made by European leaders to help to solve the conflicts). Creating peace is difficult for local leaders and helping them is difficult as well. The only weapon donors can use in persuading receiving countries is to refuse to give aid, when African partners are clearly unwilling to face the issues just described.

Of course the E.U. as donor will be accused of neo-colonialism in this case and the least that can be said is that the term neo-colonialism is misplaced for the purpose of a *quid pro quo* policy in giving aid is the benefit of the world at large.

## **9. Conclusions**

### *9.1. Why should we try to stop economic growth?*

Because the global effects of economic growth look threatening even with regard to the near future.



## 9.2. How do we stop economic growth?

By putting a ceiling to economic growth per 'block'. The date to such a ceiling must be set after a strenuous discussion, within each block obviously, but also between blocks. The main function of the existence of blocks in pursuit of a durable lifestyle is to create a level field of communication between blocks.

## 9.3. The goals within each block for reaching a durable life style are:

- to bring down the use of oil and gas and replace these sources of energy by those derived from wind and sun and (possibly) by nuclear energy.
- By switching from industrial agriculture to a form of bio-farming that is to a form of agriculture that the earth can sustain. An important indicator is the quality of bio-diversity in agricultural regions.
- In order to save natural resources a major effort must be undertaken to recycle waste products of households, industries and farms.

## 9.4. The Renaissance of Laissez Faire

The upheaval caused by the decision of installing a ceiling on economic growth will have repercussions which are hard if not impossible to foresee. Two things seem to be clear, however. The first is that each block needs time to adjust to the new situation by taxing imports when necessary to protect its own economy. However, when the level field of trading has been reached government subsidies to support domestic products should be anathema. *Laissez faire* is the most efficient way of trading on the basis of quality not of cheapness alone.

To prepare a level field of competition each blocks must need time to prepare its economy for it. Some blocks already have a set of rules in place to regulate domestic production. These blocks must take the lead and negotiate a date when they can install a ceiling on economic growth. Let us assume that at this stage each block has put in order its domestic economy, but because we are living in a dynamic world negotiations between blocks constantly will take place judging products and procedures. So it is wise to ask the United Nations to install a permanent commission that will have the authority to mediate between blocks in case of disagreements. And when a block disobeys rulings agreed upon by itself or as part of a ruling by the proposed U.N.-commission other blocks can always prevent the imports of the disobedient partner in its attempt to enjoy a free riding.

This regime of sanctions cannot apply to those blocks that cannot accept a ceiling, because they need to develop their economy and their assets. Instead they should be helped so that they will be able to join the club of advanced blocks in the future. Help to the blocks in a state of development will not be without a quid pro quo. The developing blocks must fight corruption within their territories, fight the abuses of human rights and –when necessary - have effective schemes of birth control.

## 9.5. The Pursuit of Happiness

Jefferson regarded the pursuit of happiness as an 'unalienable' human right. He was a chief author of human rights.<sup>5</sup> I feel somewhat uncomfortable with proclaiming something a human right, particularly something so open ended as the pursuit of happiness, but of course happiness is important to all of us. Is society without economic growth an unhappy place? John Stuart Mill wrote a chapter on the stationary state in his *Principles of Political Economy*. He writes:

I confess I am not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to get on; that the trampling, crushing, elbowing, and treading on each other's heels,

<sup>5</sup> It was in Jefferson's Draft of the *Declaration of Independence*.

which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of human kind, or anything but the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress.

And, the best state for human nature is that in which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer, nor has any reason to fear to be thrust back, by the efforts of others to push themselves forward (Mill, 2020).

And, it is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition of capital and population implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be as much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture, and moral and social progress... (Mill, 2020).

A better answer cannot be given, as what we are going to do when there is no point anymore in pursuing gain for its own sake. As Mill already remarked in 1848 the stationary state can be regarded as a neighbourhood for relaxation, play and reflection. The only problem with it is that people get bored and will start to commit mischief. Human nature is a mixed bag of hate and love. We need Freud's *Eros* to keep people enjoying themselves and behaving properly.

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