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Overconsumption and Overexploitation as a Result of Overproduction.

In the present world of today after so many years of the human population and the people in power trying to ignore and avoid the multiple environmental problems faced every day by the everyday people, we have now reached the tipping point in which we could no longer act like they don't exist just because we feel like there are other more pressing issues. Before diving into certain issues and suggesting solutions on what might help we first have to talk about how the different countries see social equity, environmental justice, and green economy. Social equity is mainly concerned with justice and fairness, while Environmental justice is said to be the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. A green economy is an economy that is produced as a result of reducing the environmental risks and ecological scarcities as it aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment. Based on what is going on in the world today we can see that social equity is not regarded as important because of who or what is getting justice and what can be quantified as being fair or unfair. Environmental justice is something that different cities, states, and countries are beginning to pay attention to as this is an essential part of trying to build a green economy. The only question now is what are we trying to sacrifice as the people of a community and country in order to attain the goals we have set for ourselves and our plans to achieve a green economy for everyone.

The focus of this writing is based on how overconsumption is a result of overproduction which leads to the overexploitation that causes climate change. In trying to focus on some of the main problems that cause the most damage, it was noticed that one problem can always lead to another, that then goes on to cause another problem which has been the situation of the cities we live in today and the world as a whole. Overconsumption according to (Pan, 2019) refers to the consumption behavior that causes consumers to purchase or consume more products than planned, and produces a psychological reaction of regret or embarrassment. These products are usually made with non-renewable resources that usually end up in a landfill after one use. What makes the act of overconsumption worse is the fact that the products created are toxic to both the people who make them, and people who consume them. Some of the toxic materials used in making the products are known to cause cancer and other severe illnesses but the people are still made to work under unfavorable conditions as most of the factories are coal-fired which cause serious levels of pollutants, but due to poverty levels, the workers are still most likely to work the 16 hr shifts a day to produce these products just for the products to be discarded after a one time use. An example of this product is the mardi gras Bead.

Unfortunately recognizing global warming and climate change is not a primary concern for many nations which is why it has been put off for so long especially since according to (Brown, 2003) “Political leaders, diplomats, and the media have been preoccupied with terrorism and the Iraq conflict those were certainly concerning matters but they diverted America from addressing the environmental trends”. This was until it began to personally affect each city, state, and country individually no one paid attention to a large number of environmental issues at hand which had multiplied over the years and gotten more and more difficult to combat. The production and consumption of consumer goods are tied in with fossil fuels and Co₂ as this is what is needed to

make them. In order to satisfy the consumption needs of people, production has had to grow at a certain rate but I think the reverse was the case in the beginning because once the industrial revolution came about and there came methods that allowed people to produce products faster. This led to the consumer population buying more and more things that they do not need but want which as a result led to overconsumption. Due to other factors like population growth the manufacturing industry has now had to produce things at a faster rate to feed the needs of society. Unfortunately, fossil fuels are not the only product overconsumed nowadays. Food is another product that has been and is still being overconsumed by the human population. Another issue on the topic of overconsumption and overproduction is that due to economic globalization the burden of why there is an addition of Co₂ emissions and other pollutants are currently being shifted from one country to another as nobody wants to be blamed for it. According to (Harriss and Shui, 2010) “the burden of additional Co₂ emissions and other environmental pollutants has been shifted from the developed consumer countries to the developing producer countries in a process known as offshoring.” In my opinion, the country that consumes the products should be held accountable for the Co₂ emissions that were produced as a result of the product being made regardless of where it was manufactured as consumers are one of the major drivers of emissions and without them, there would not be the need for overproduction of products. America is one of the countries that according to (Harriss and Shui, 2010) gets the benefits of the purchased goods while the exporting country gets credited with the Co₂ emissions produced during manufacturing. The United States of America with the status of being a world leader as a result of manufacturing and production of goods through the access of cheap fossil fuels while ignoring the climate consequences of emitting Co₂, but American overconsumption meant that from the year 2000 to 2008, the united states consistently outspent

its national income which has led to an unsustainable increase of national debt at least during that time.

Overconsumption although spoken about like an issue that only affects the people who live in the cities of developed countries. This is not true as “over the last several decades, diminishing natural resources, pollution, over-consumption, and the exploitation of the natural environment have led to climate change events that disproportionately affect Indigenous people.” (Billiot,2019) as they have documented and observed climate changes through warming temperatures, fluctuations in water quantity and quality, biodiversity loss, coastal erosion, uncharacteristic weather patterns, melting and thinning of snow, ice, and permafrost, as well as pollution”. Another issue is the extraction and exploitation done on the land of the indigenous people as during the Bakken Tar Sands Project, the Bakken’s shale oil extraction came at a very high environmental cost to the people due to the impact it had on the land use, wildlife habitat and most especially the water resources as according to (Billiot,2019) “for every gallon of gasoline made from tar sands, 5.9 gallons of freshwater are used for extraction and processing which was three times more resources needed than for traditional oil”. Although oil extraction contributes to financial stability it also creates a ton of environmental justice issues.

Water is one of the natural resources on this planet earth that is overproduced to be overconsumed by both the manufacturing industry and the everyday human in the homes which as a result causes it to be exploited as it is one of the human basic needs but it can also be considered as one of the most wasted product in the world. I agree with Brown that water wastage can be curbed if households were to receive a fixed amount of water for basic needs at a low price, but once water usage exceeds the fixed amount the price would escalate I think this would be an effective way to discourage waste in the community and the same idea could be

implemented at factories just at a larger scale which would require factories to clean up after themselves and recycle their wastewater to contribute in the production of a more sustainable environment. “Overpumping of water creates an illusion of food security which enables the farmers to support a growing population” (Brown 2003) In my opinion I consider this as a short term solution as the water in the aquifer is not been replenished as fast as it is been used

Another major issue presently is that countries like the United States of America are creating their bubble economy as it is based on the overconsumption of the earth’s natural capital. Once the natural resources in an area have been overexploited and depleted people are quick to move on to the next area rather than trying to replenish the area which is another major issue because at a certain point there are going to be no new areas left for exploitation.

In answering the question of if humans do consume too much I think the answer is yes. Why because ever since the industrial revolution came about and people became more innovative, and the middle class came about. I do not think that the production rate of products has completely slowed down to a time before the industrial age and because of the production rate over-exploitation of natural resources have continued to increase with the rate of production as a product consists of so many different materials some or most of which are toxic but cheap are used. Overproduction is the leading cause of overconsumption because I believe that if things were produced in a more environmentally conscious way and only a specific amount was made people would learn to understand that they have to handle the product with care rather than discarding it at the slightest inconvenience. They would now be forced to find a way in fixing and reusing it till the end of its life cycle as there is no more available. This would enable the human population to adapt to the way things are. Yes! We would complain at first and try to get

our way but sooner or later we would accept the changes as these changes would be made to benefit the life of every individual in one way or another.

Yes, changes are hard and difficult for the human race but to survive we have to make the difficult decisions and choices in order to be able to first stop the damages done in its tracks and start the reversal process to a future that doesn't overproduce for a community to make the community more likely to over-consume just for the sole purpose of making money.

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