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Text

Reader comment (“rtc1”) to Brady Dennis, “Changing climate imperils global food and water supplies, new U.N. study finds.” Washington Post (Aug 8, 2019).

URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/08/08/solving-climate-change-requires-fixing-forests-food-landmark-un-report-finds/>

Accessed: Aug. 8, 2019.

“After decades of overconsumption, our society needs to shift toward healthy, ecological, plant-based farming.”

Why doesn’t anyone talk about the real problem? The issue isn’t too many cows, it’s too many people. In 1950 there were 2.5 billion people on this planet. Today there are 7.7 billion. We have tripled our numbers in 70 years - less than a single lifetime. This is insanity. Tofu and tree planting aren’t going to save the planet. Any measure to mitigate climate change must include population control. Either WE decrease our numbers rationally or nature will do it brutally.

Analysis

Conclusion: A significant cause of our ecological crisis is overpopulation.

Premises: (1) data on population growth since 1950. (2) “Tofu and tree planting” won’t solve the ecological crisis (at least not alone) – this is really just re-phrasing of the conclusion (the 1st premise offers some small support in the way of a correlation: growing population correlates with growing pollution).

Secondary conclusion: Population decline will happen no matter what (given the ecological crisis), and we have the choice of doing it rationally, or letting nature do it brutally (through famine, disease, and so on).

Evaluation

There is no evidence given that our current levels of population are not supportable; similarly, there is no indication that a natural decrease in population growth is already underway, and that human population itself will soon peak. One could argue that lifestyle changes (tofu, urban dwelling) could indeed be adequate for solving these problems.

This argument would be improved by offering evidence that the ecological crisis requires population reduction; as such it is merely stated, as a conclusion, with a gesture at support.