

Title	Social Limits to Growth
Author	Fred Hirsch
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Brief Introduction	<p>Preface</p> <p>This book suggests that the current impasse on a number of key issues in the political economy of advanced nations is attributable in part to an outmoded perspective on the nature, and therefore the promise, of economic growth. The critique has some important immediate—mainly negative—implications for policy, and it opens up a wide range of consequential policy issues. It is for the reader to judge whether the theme developed here has sufficient validity and promise to justify the further analysis and inquiry called for by the approach put forward. Although the book has been a long time in the making—five years from first outline to final typescript—it represents little more than a starting point. It is devoted essentially to the frame in which the issues are seen and to the inferences for policy that follow and that need further investigation.</p> <p>The support of the Twentieth Century Fund has made this book possible. The Fund financed my work from April 1972 until September 1974, while I was a research fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford. From its initial acceptance of the project through the slow journey to eventual completion, the Fund exercised unusual understanding and patience with the problems associated with a work of this kind. My appreciation for the support of the Fund, and particularly for that of its director, M.J.Rossant, therefore extends well beyond the conventional acknowledgment. I can only hope that the project has justified and not qualified the director's often expressed view that foundations should take chances.</p> <p>Nuffield College provided the ideal environment for the work, and I express my warm thanks to the Warden and Fellows for offering me a research fellowship and for their hospitality and intellectual stimulus during my stay.</p> <p>I have an unusually long list of individuals to thank for the personal help they gave me; presumably the extent of my indebtedness reflects the fact that I was immersing myself in a new branch of a subject. From the beginnings of the project, I have received invaluable guidance, stimulation, and criticism from Tibor Scitovsky. On a number of points, I doubt whether I have satisfied his exacting standards yet, despite the usual disclaimer, he is in one sense responsible for the errors that follow, in that without his interest and continuing encouragement I am not sure that I would have persisted.</p> <p>Another major acknowledgment is due Kenneth Boulding. His comments on the draft manuscript as a reader for the Fund contributed by general encouragement and much useful, constructive criticism. I am also grateful for comments and criticism of sections of the draft manuscript at various stages by Brian Barry, John Flemming, John Goldthorpe, Richard Lecomber, Ian Little, Donald Moggridge, Mancur Olson, and Donald Winch; and by Walter Klein, Robert H.Nelson, and Peter Reuter of the Twentieth Century Fund staff, as well as two anonymous referees.</p> <p>I am grateful to Arun Newell and Christopher Trinder for research assistance, to Stephen Carse for his work on checking of references, and to Theodore E.Young for editorial work. I am also grateful for the help given by my present secretary, Karen Kavanagh. As with my previous books, my wife, Ruth Hirsch, played a major part in the practical production process.</p> <p>F.H.</p>