

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Problems

It is a simple premise: The earth has finite resources. Human population, and thus consumption of those resources, cannot increase forever. Eventually, demand will outpace Earth's supply of food, water, fuel, and land, and mass-extinction will ensue for us, and possibly for all life. We will literally eat ourselves to death. This simple premise and its intuitive conclusion are at the heart of a branch of economics founded by eighteenth-century English scholar, Thomas Malthus, who wrote *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, furthermore inspired two famous naturalist to form the theory of natural selection that were developed by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. Malthus warned that if the global population continued to grow faster than the available food supply, it would lead to worldwide famine. More recently, in 1968 the biologist Paul Ehrlich wrote *The Population Bomb*, a book that highlighted overcrowding in cities and sparked a fear of overpopulation after claiming that hundreds of millions of people would starve to death.

Nowadays, there are 7,6 billion people in the world, and not all of them are superheroes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. But even though rising population figures are good for box-office receipts, it is a real-world trend that has sparked alarm and controversy for decades. And, while it is still a somewhat peripheral concern in contemporary politics – unlike climate change – overpopulation has nevertheless become the contemporary crisis in modern blockbuster film-making. As a movie-plot issue, population crisis exists between a plausible future and an imagined dystopia, offering Hollywood a force of morality dilemma that exceeds the brute power of pure evil's wrecking balls.

Anthony and Jonathan Russo, the makers of *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018) actually grappled with a double-pronged population crisis in the latest instalment in the Marvel's Avengers series. First, they had to ram dozens of standalone superheroes, from Doctor Strange to Black Panther, into a tolerable length of film, and second, only anxiety over population growth could provide sufficient moral complexity for the franchise's big boss, Thanos.

"It's a simple calculus," Thanos declares with near flamboyance of Shakespearean, "This universe has finite resources, if life is left unchecked, life will cease to exist. It needs correcting." Thanos' mission of elimination on half living being on the universe has many precursors. In Ron Howard's *Inferno* (2016), an adaptation of Dan Brown's novel of the same name, wiping out half of humankind is the only way to save the world from impending doom, according to billionaire geneticist Bertrand Zobrist. For Zobrist, Dante's 14th-century epic poem *Inferno* is an apt metaphor of the present. A genocide, via a virus, is the only way to pull humankind out of hell. To thwart his plans, history professor Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) has to go on a puzzle-solving quest through Italy. Zobrist, like Thanos, is almost an anti-hero who accepts the necessity of doing bad in order to do good.

Concerns about overpopulation and the consequences have resonated with science fiction movie makers over decades, their versions of dystopia often featuring a crowded, squalid planet on the brink of destruction. Of course we should remain skeptical of such ideas. Regardless, it will be interesting to see how our population growth plays out over the next several decades and whether this growth becomes a major problem. The questions remain: Should we be concerned about overpopulation. If it does become a problem, what are the philosophical and moral consequences.

### **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

Based on the background above, the researcher identified the problem that Thanos use mass decimation over half of the population because he believed that overpopulation can bring the planet into extinction. The researcher assumed that controlling the population through extreme approach such mass decimation, coercive policy or eugenic is immoral.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Problems**

This research focuses on the critical issue of overpopulation that requires controversial demographic management along with moral assessment. The film titled *Avengers: Infinity War* will be objects of this research. To understand the core of the problem, this research will use three different theories from three different study that will be concluded in discourse assessment.

#### **1.4 Formulation of the Problems**

The research problem is formulated in the form of research questions, as follows:

1. What is the correlation between Thanos' action and the critical issue of overpopulation?
2. What are the motives to encourage Thanos' action on controlling social population through mass decimation?
3. What are the morality consequences on controlling population growth with coercive approach despite the critical issue of overpopulation?

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

In order to be able to reach the purpose of the research, the analysis steps are conducted in the following ways:

1. To analyze on overpopulation crisis reminiscence with Thanos' action
2. To analyze whether people should be concerned about overpopulation crisis and the problem that involving the philosophical and morality consequences.
3. To analyze whether the judgement by controlling population growth with mass decimation is substantial or unnecessary.

#### **1.6 Methods of the Research**

The research is conducted through a qualitative approach with a simple analysis of the critical discourse from the film. The analysis itself contains about the explanation from the idea, current critical events, and the relations between population growth and the society's perspective to know how the issue of overpopulation can be tackled with academic view of thinking.

#### **1.7 Benefit of the Research**

This outcome of the research is to contribute to the recent development and research on pragmatic approaches and in hope to be applied in the society about population growth especially Indonesia. This research is also dedicated to the people who have interest in philosophical ideology, the people who work in the government, and the students who are studying sociology.

## **1.8 The Systematic Organization of the Research**

In accordance to the title of the research above, it consists of four chapters. The order of the presentation is written as follows:

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

It consists of: the background of the problems, identification of the problems, the limitation of the problems, the formulation of the problems, the objectives of the research, the framework of the research, The methods of the research, the Systematic organization of the research.

### **CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES**

It consists of: the Malthusian theory, the Social Darwinism theory, and Juergen Habermas' theory.

### **CHAPTER 3: OVERPOPULATION CRISIS AS THE CRITICAL ISSUE ON THANOS' ACTION FROM AVENGERS INFINITY WAR**

It consists of: Thanos motives explanation using Malthusian theory, Social Darwinism to explain Thanos action on violence. Third, Habermas' theory criticism to criticize Thanos rationality, argument, and understanding.

### **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION**

It consists of: an evaluation from the previous chapters and the implication of the evaluated result.

The chapters above are followed by references, scheme of the research, research poster, curriculum vitae, and other required attachments.