

Malthusian theory of Population



Part 1

Introduction

- ❖ Thomas Robert Malthus wrote his essay on ‘*An Essay on the Principle of Population*’ in 1798 and modified some of his conclusions in the next edition in 1803
- ❖ In his work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus examined the relationship between *population growth and resources*
- ❖ Malthus's has written many papers on *economic and political issues of his time*

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- ❖ In *opposition* to the *popular 18th century European view* that society was *constantly improving*, he wrote about the *dangers of excessive population growth*
- ❖ He had also some important things to say about *Economic Development*
- ❖ The Malthusian version of economic growth represents in several respects *a refinement of the general classical theory*

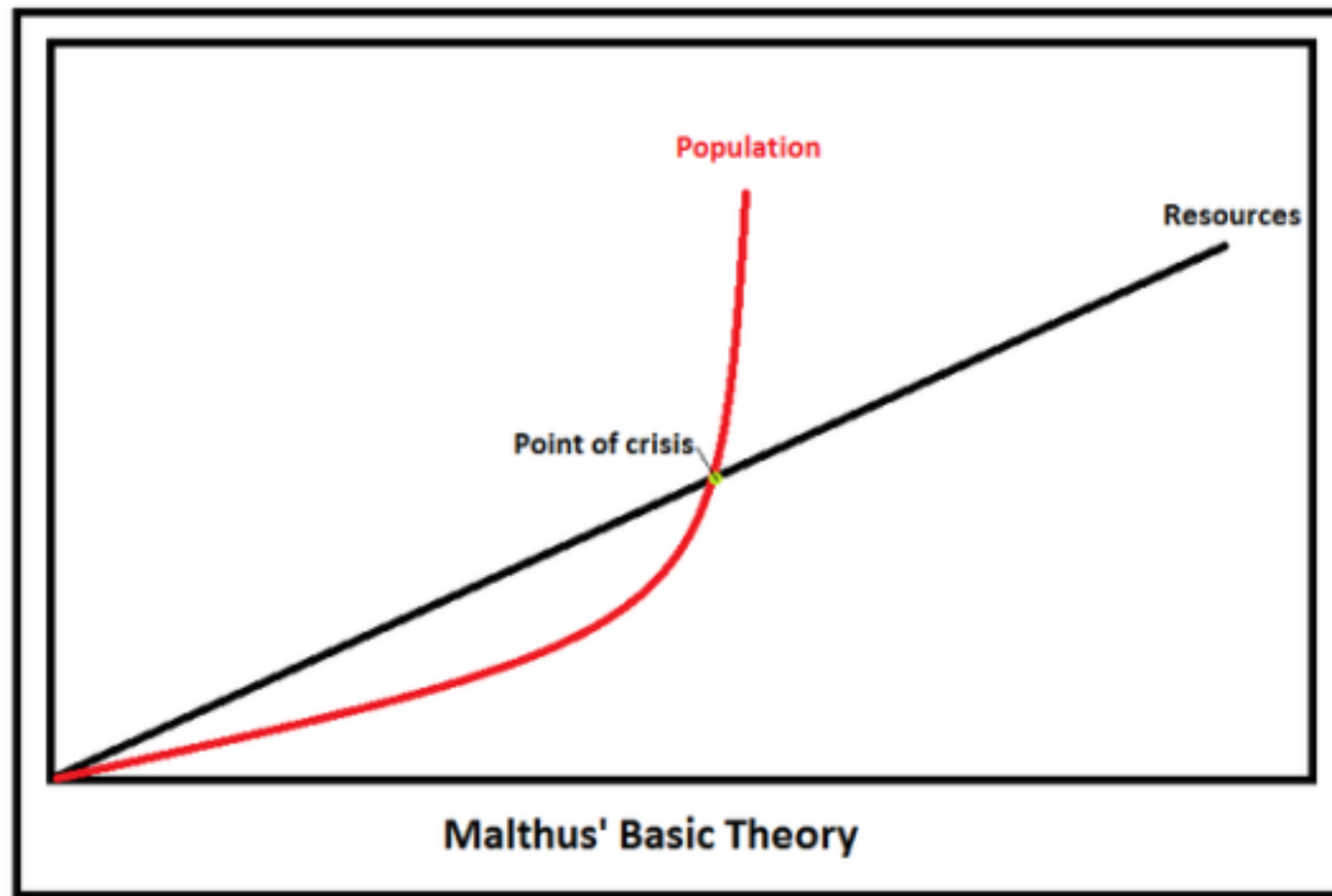
Malthusian Theory of Population

- ❖ The most *well-known* theory of population is the *Malthusian Population theory*
- ❖ In which he wrote that *population growth* occurs *exponentially*, so it increases according to *birth rate*
- ❖ On the other hand, *food production increases arithmetically*, so it only increases at *given points in time*

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- ❖ For example, if every member of a *family tree reproduces*, the tree will continue to *grow with each generation*
- ❖ Malthus wrote that, left unchecked, populations can outgrow their resources

This can be seen in the figure below:



Population and Food Supply

- ❖ As discussed earlier the Malthusian theory explained that the *population grows in a geometrical fashion/exponentially*
- ❖ For example, in the sequence 2, 10, 50, 250, 1250, *and so on*
- ❖ The population would *double in 25 years* at this rate

- ❖ However, *the food supply grows in an arithmetic progression*
- ❖ Food supply increases at a *slower rate* than the population
- ❖ That is, the *food supply* will be *limited* in a few years
- ❖ The *shortage of food supply* indicates an *increasing population*

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