



Club van Rome
Nederlandse
Associatie



Write your Master thesis about:

Limits to Growth, 1972-2022-2072

'Limits to growth', the illustrious report of the Club of Rome, appeared in 1972. In 2022 this will be exactly fifty years ago. The alarming report put the environment higher on the agenda, signaled the start of environmental policy globally, and raised public awareness. The VVM uses this golden jubilee to reflect on what has been achieved since then, and especially what has not been achieved, during National Environment Day in June 2022: what are the challenges for the next fifty years?

'Limits to Growth' was the first report to visualize the interplay of five critical factors: population growth, food production, industrialization, depletion of natural resources, and pollution. This was done in the form of scenario calculations for the period 1970-2170 with dramatic results.

The year 2022 marks the first fifty years of the report, and now we can see what the world is like today. What results were achieved and which lessons were learned? How did that go? What role has the report played? Why did it have such a significant impact on the public? Is the image of the world in the next fifty years still as dramatic as the calculations shown in the book, or is it even worse? And what does this mean for future developments?

Call for Students

In order to tackle this subject properly and from different angles, the VVM is looking for relevant research that has recently been carried out, or is currently being conducted on this subject. We hope to enthuse students to start working on this subject for their Master thesis, so we would like to hear from you if you are going to set up your research within this theme. You are encouraged to find a topic yourself, but you can also consult the topic list below for inspiration. So are you a Master student and are you enthusiastic to start your thesis about a relevant topic within this theme? Please contact us! Professor Peter Builtjes (peter.builtjes@gmail.com) is happy to provide additional supervision to Master students

We ask you to explain and submit your research in a maximum of half A4 via bureau@vvm.info. Preferably as soon as possible, but in any case before November 1, 2021.

We are happy to give this research a stage on National Environment Day in June 2022. This can be in the form of a presentation or a poster. There is also an opportunity to write an article in the Special of our Magazine 'Milieu': Limits to growth 1972-2022-2072. You will hear no later than the end of November whether and how we will give you a place in our program or in our special issue.

Topic List – Limits to Growth Research

Students are encouraged to come up with topics themselves. This list provides some suggestions for inspiration. Do not hesitate to come up with your own ideas! Your research topic can be both focused on the Netherlands or on international matters.

- 1. Resource scarcity and policy-making**
→ (e.g., lithium, cobalt) necessary for the energy transition or other societal aspects: (how) will this be a problem for the Netherlands/EU/or globally; what options are there for policy-making, how do we govern this?
- 2. Usefulness of Modelling**
→ e.g., analysing the work of Harald Svendrup who builds further upon the weather models made by MIT in the 70s; how can these be useful now?
- 3. Politics of Limits to Growth (in the Netherlands)**
→ can economic growth and creating more room for nature, agriculture, land for solar panels/wind turbines go together? How to deal with emissions? How do we create harmonious pathways forward?
- 4. Population Growth Issue**
→ population growth has over the years slowly moved to the background of drivers of resource exploitation; e.g., low income countries with high population growth contribute relatively little to climate change. What role does population growth play nowadays in climate models/climate governance? How important is this factor?
- 5. Food Security in a Changing World**
→ how do we guarantee food security for everyone? Are adjustments in diets (for who?) necessary? Are there technological solutions? Is “room for nature” threatening agriculture? Is the production of biofuels threatening food security?
- 6. Impact Limits to Growth Report**
→ what results did we achieve and which lessons did we learn? How did that go? What role did the report play? Why was its impact so significant? What does it mean for future developments?
- 7. Governing Geo-engineering**
→ what if we do not take sufficient policy measures in time to combat environmental degradation and climate change? What options are there for geo-engineering? How do we govern this? When is it ethically justified to take extreme measures like geo-engineering?
- 8. Sustainable Transition - Who is Responsible?**
→ which sectors play a large role in environmental degradation and climate change? Who is responsible for this? Which sectors can combat environmental degradation and climate change most effectively?
- 9. How to Reach the Public**
→ how do we make sure that people care about sustainability? How to reach people beyond the “environmental bubble”? How do we reach and stimulate society? What can be done to stimulate behavioural change?
- 10. Climate Justice**
→ how do we make sure that the burden of climate change is shared fairly in the future? What kind of policy exists regarding this topic, and what do we still need? How do we tackle climate racism and gender inequality? What role can climate justice and ecofeminism play?