Moving toward post-capitalist and post-growth futures: a global 'consumption class' perspective

23 March 2016

Undisciplined Environments

Stockholm

Marko Ulvila

Kristoffer Wilén

Plutocene or Anthropocene?

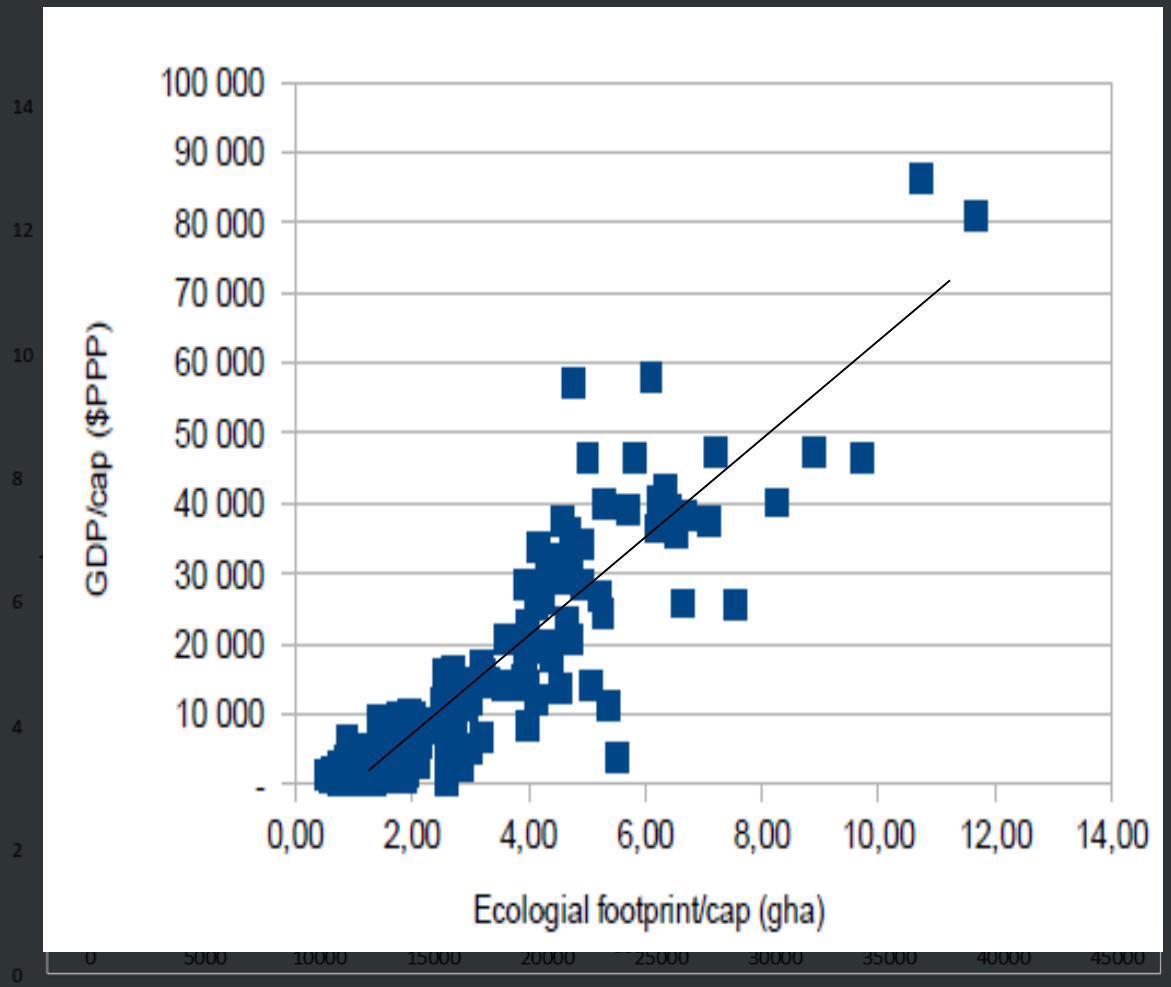
VANDANA SHIVA:

"I consciously avoid calling our age the Anthropocene. The anthropocentric worldview is the cause of so much of the ecological destruction in our time. To continue to put humans at the center is to perpetuate the hubris at the root of the ecological destruction of the earth—and, with it, our own future. As Einstein said, you cannot solve a problem with the same mindset that caused it. The democratic Anthropocene Purdy proposes is insufficiently democratic because it leaves out the earth's rights and the rights of nonhuman species as equal members of the earth family. What we need is **earth democracy**—the democracy of all life on earth.

https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/new-nature/vandana-shiva-vandana-shiva-response-new-nature

Economy ≈ environmental harm

GDP's relation to the environmental damage

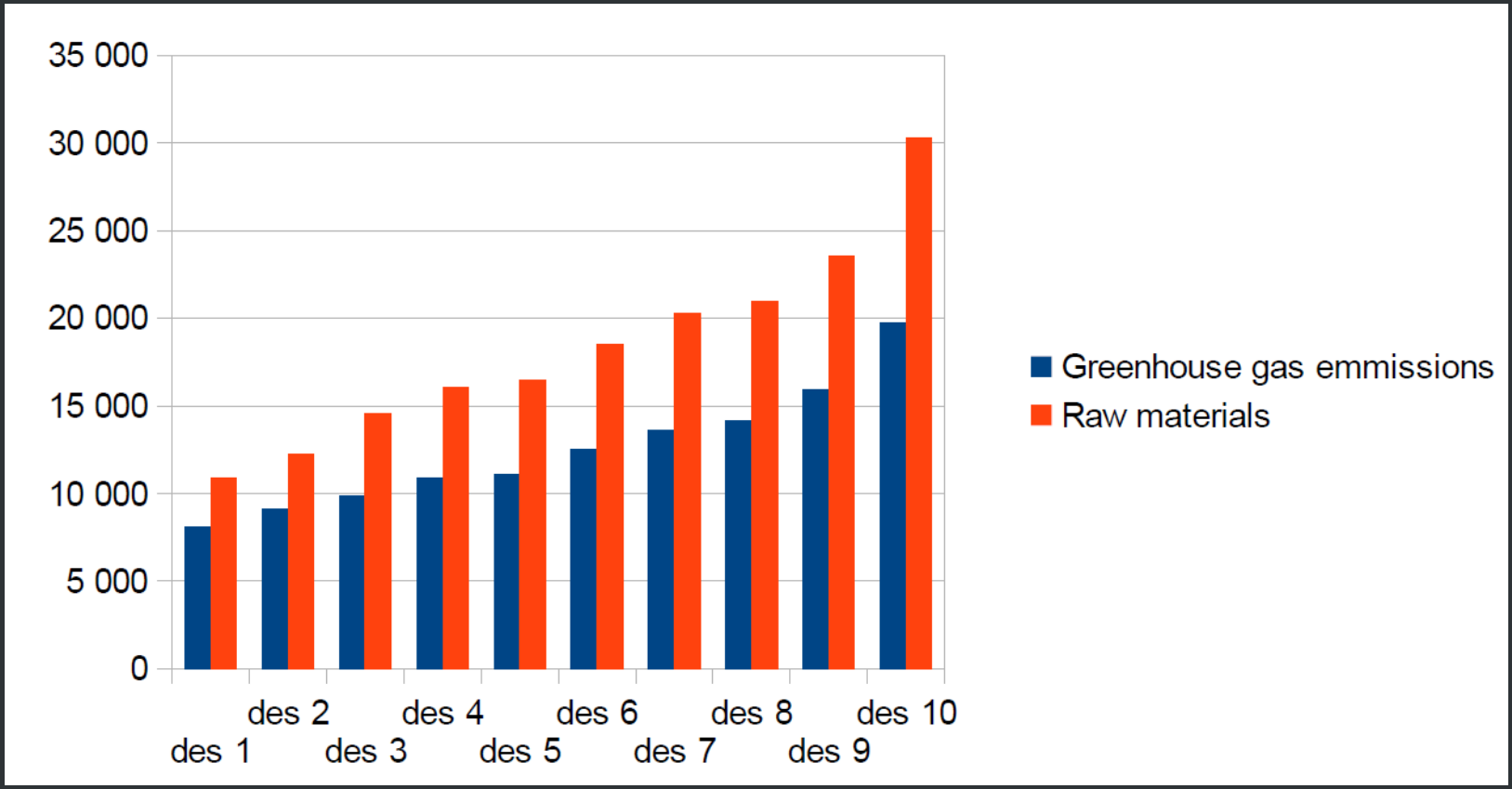


The greater GDP/cap the greater ecological footprint/cap

=> GDP an excellent measure for ecological damage!

(data from NEF 2012)

Household income correlates with environmental impact



Finnish GHG emissions and raw material usage per consumption unit in 2012 according to the income deciles. Note: For GHG 1 euro consumed = r=0.89 and natural resource usage r=0.91.

Source: Finnish Bureau of Statistics 2014

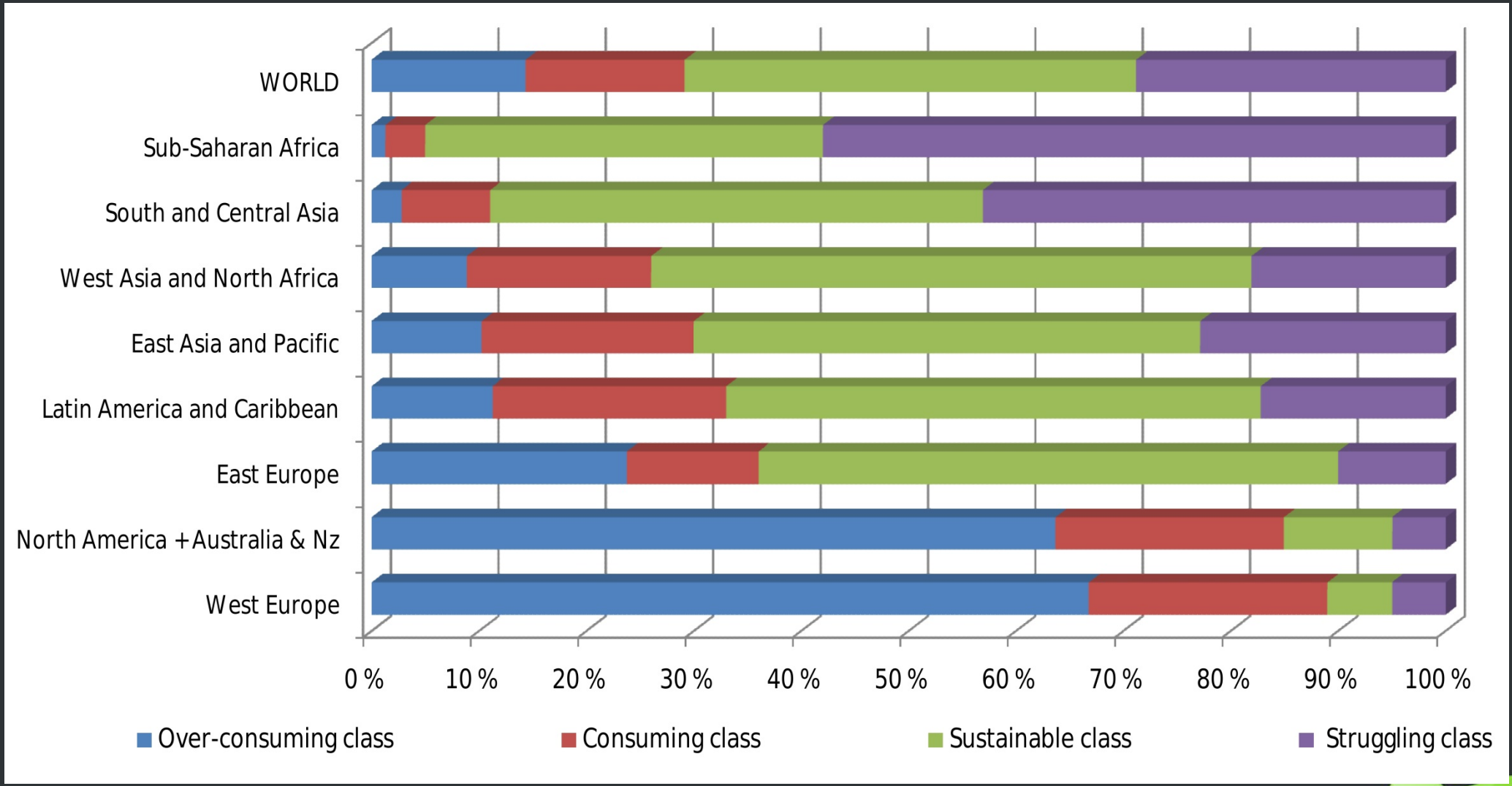
A perspective of income-based classes/metabolic groups

INCOME LEVEL	BASIC NEEDS	ENVIRONMENTAL HARM	CLASS / METABOLIC GROUPS
Low	Not met	Small	Struggling
Moderate	Met	Moderate	Sustainable
High	Met	Considerable	Consuming
Very high	Met	Very big	Over-consuming

The four classes / metabolic groups

Class	*Income* *USD ppp*	*Size* *bn*	*Transformation scenario*
Struggling	<750	2	Empovernment
Sustainable	750-7.500	3	Steady-state
Consuming	7.500-14.000	1	Gentle degrowth
Over-consuming	>14.000	1	Immediate degrowth

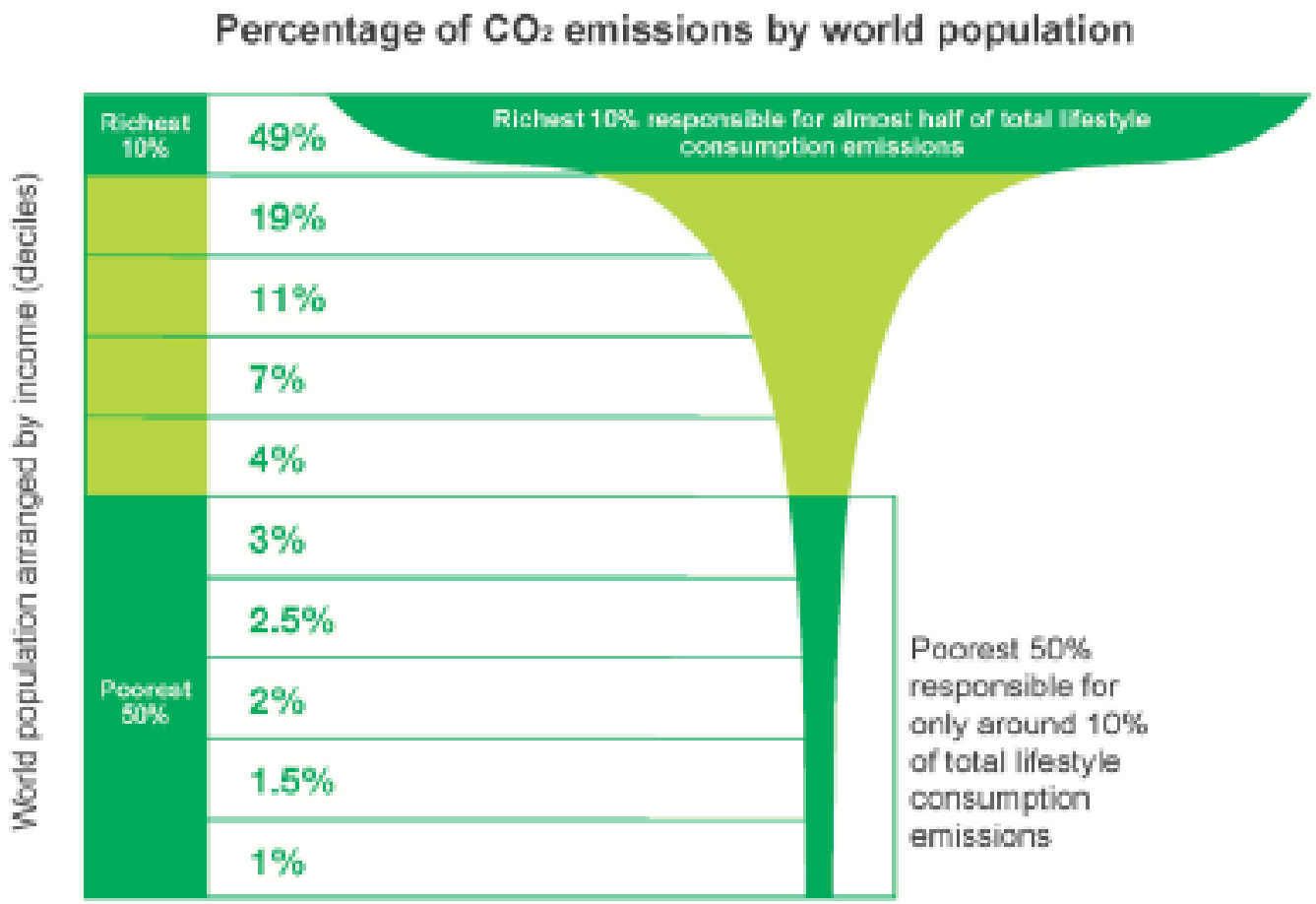
Global distribution of the classes/metebolic groups



Source: Ulvila & Pasanen, 2010.

A Plutocene? Plutogenic climate destabilisation?

Figure 1: Global income deciles and associated lifestyle consumption emissions



Source: Oxfam

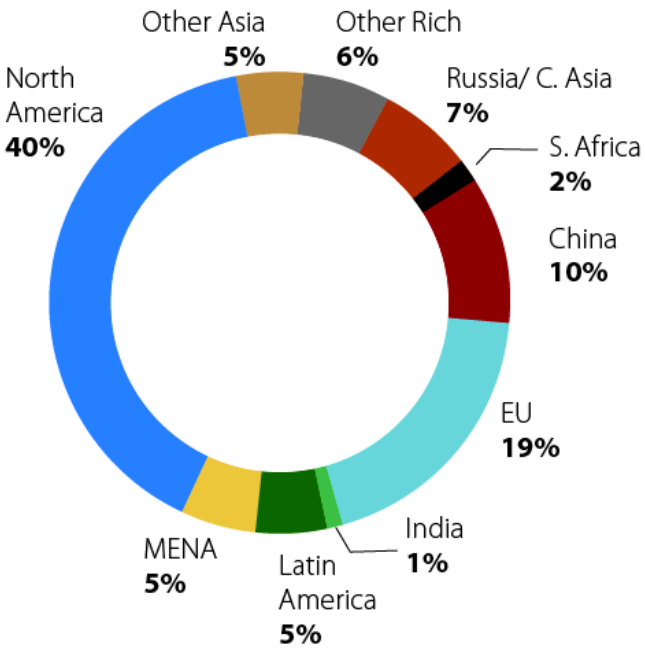
The richest 700 million high polluters cause 50 % of the emissions, poorest 50 % cause 10 % of the emissions.

Source: Oxfam 2015.

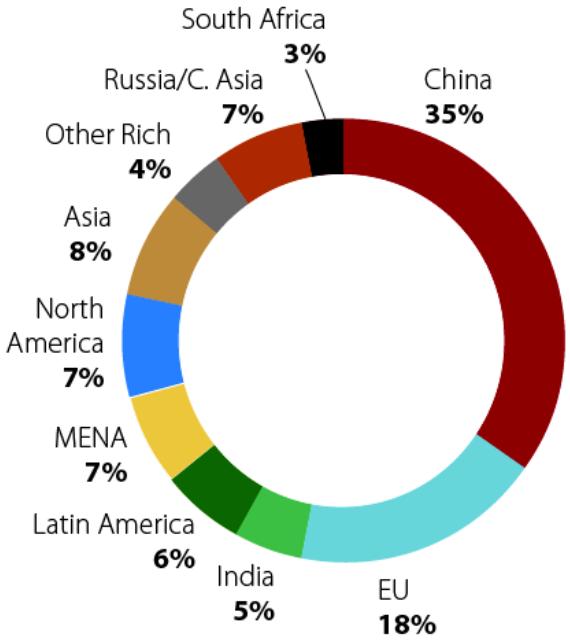
National or regional breakdown of GHG emitters

FIGURE E.1. BREAKDOWN OF TOP 10, MIDDLE 40 AND BOTTOM 50% CO_2e EMITTERS

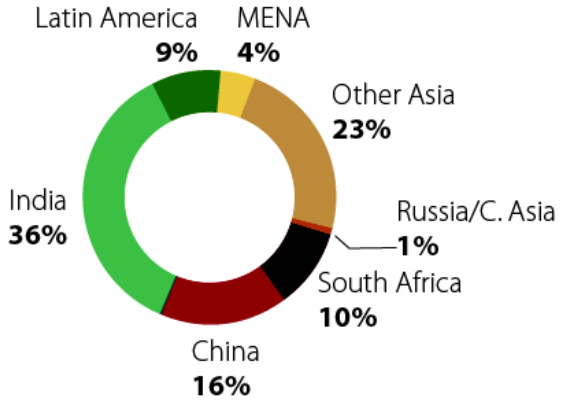
Top 10% emitters: 45% of world emissions



Middle 40% emitters: 42% of world emissions



Bottom 50% emitters: 13% of world emissions



Source: authors. Key: Among the top 10% global emitters, 40% of CO_2e emissions are due to US citizens, 20% to the EU and 10% from China.

Source: Chancel & Piketty, 2015.

Degrowth for the overconsuming class / metabolic groups

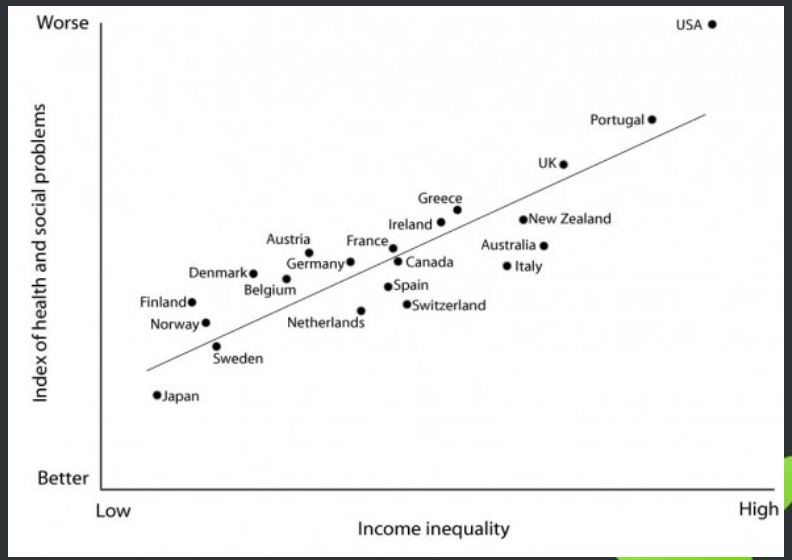
Multiple benefits of reducing the income of the rich:

1) Less direct environmental damage

2) Less damage from imitation

3) Less relative poverty

4) Better welfare for all



Enhancing power and resources of *the struggling class*

Right to food, vote, information

Peoples' control over natural resources

End of violence against women, *dalits*, indigenous people, poor

Land reform (both rural and urban)

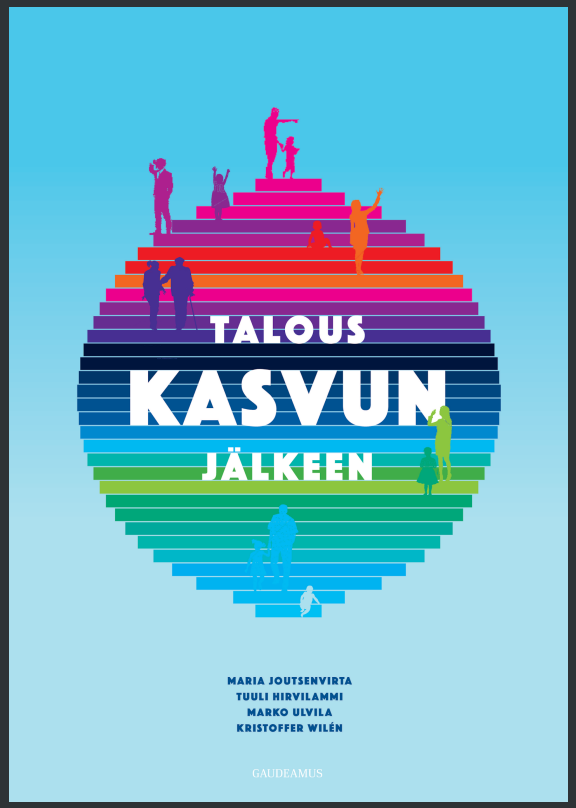
Transformative movements for the empowerment of the poor

The Women of Jagatsinghpur in Odisha (India) demanding their rights and opposing POSCO's factory plans

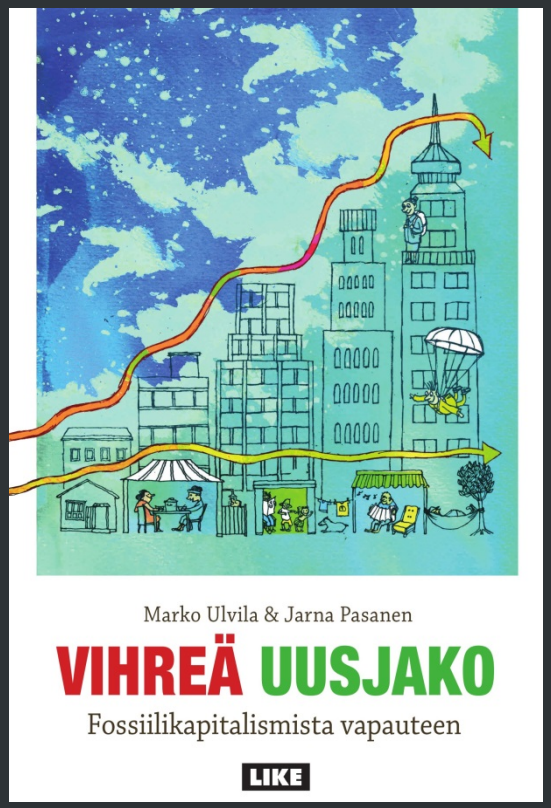
Respecting, protecting and promoting the ways of *the sustainable class*

- Role models for the rest of the world
- Global mapping of such low energy consuming livelihoods and ways of life
- Also a stake for greater share of power and resources

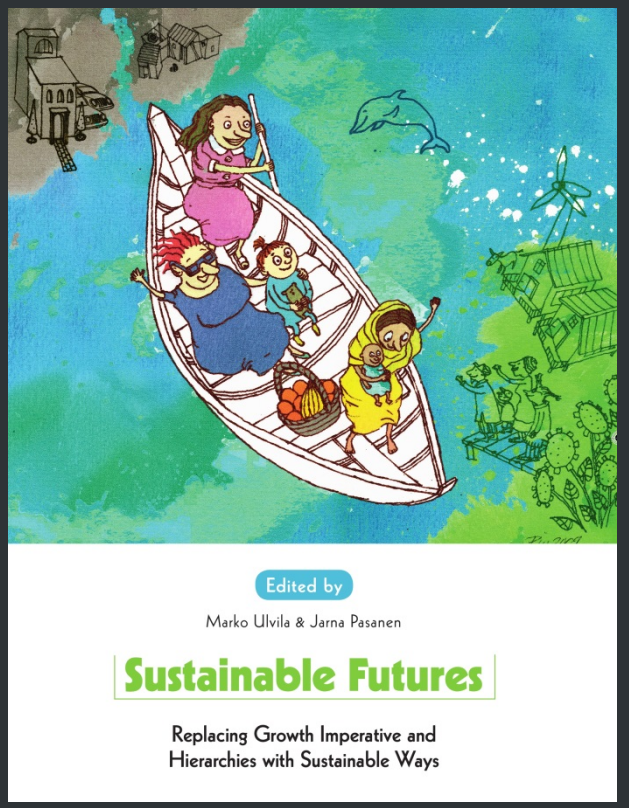
Warm thanks!



2016



2010



2009

This book is available at www.sustainablefutures.fi

marko.ulvila at iki.fi
(Siemenpuu Foundation)

kristoffer.wilen at gmail.com
(Hanken School of Economics)