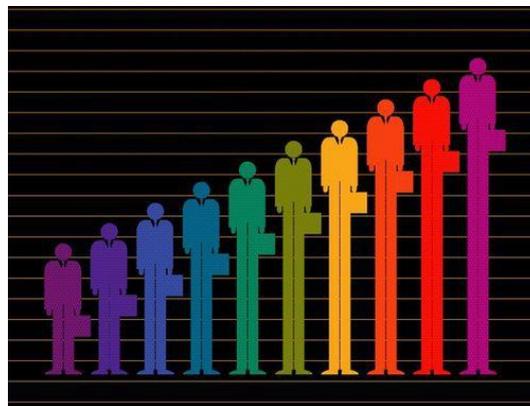


Translated from Harald Welzer: *Alles könnte anders sein - eine Gesellschaftsutopie für freie Menschen*. 2019.

For a long time we have

- ignored the *side effects* of technological progress.
- concealed the *concomitants* of constant growth.
- followed the instruction «*multiply and subdue the Earth*».
In just 200 years, the world's population has grown from 900 million to nearly 8,000 million people. By the year 2100, according to the UNO an estimated 10,000 - 11,000 million people are to live on our Earth.
- kept *thinking* as if there were still as few people on earth as there were 200 years ago.



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With regard to a *sustainable development* and our *consumer behaviour* the rich countries of the world are, as it were, «*developing countries*».

The steadily growing consumption is the *engine* that drives the steady growth of our economy.

This in turn results in major environmental impacts worldwide and the climate change and is increasingly endangering our natural basis of life and living together on earth.

The Global Risk Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum:

The five global risks of the coming years that are highest in terms of their *likelihood* are all environmental.

- Extreme weather events with great damage to property, infrastructure and human life.
- Governments and businesses fail to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Man-made environmental damages and disasters.
- Great loss of biodiversity and collapse of ecosystems with irreversible consequences for the environment, which leads to a severe depletion of resources for humanity and industry.
- Major natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and geomagnetic storms.



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Growth and Resources

So we have to face
the growth dilemma
 that is

Giving up on growing our current economy means the *risk* of economic and social collapse.

Maintaining growth means the *risk* of destroying global ecosystems that are our basis of existence.

» **We urgently need a *clear vision*, a *bold policy*, and a *truly robust strategy* to find the way out of the growth dilemma.** The growth dilemma is barely taken into account by *the normal policy-makers* and is mentioned only marginally in public debate.

Tim Jackson. Prosperity without Growth - Foundations for the economy of tomorrow. 2016



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» **It is clear that there are no simple answers to this** - none that could be proposed without proposing at the same time a transformation in the whole of the way we think, work and order our lives.

David Fleming, Surviving the Future: Culture, Carnival and Capital in the Aftermath of the Market Economy. 2016

» **The overriding goal, it seems, can no longer be *solely growth*. It must become a *truly sustainable development*.**

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman. Come on! - Capitalism, Short-terminism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet. 2017

» If mankind holds on to the idea that more and more has to be produced economically, then any progress that it makes on the one hand *for itself and the environment* will be more than destroyed

elsewhere.

Translated from: Maja Göpel. *Unsere Welt neu denken - Eine Einladung*. 2020

Entkopplung Wachstum und Ressourcenverbrauch

The conventional reaction to the growth dilemma is *the call for decoupling* of economic growth from resource consumption, including harmful environmental impacts.

The decoupling is to be achieved with more *efficient* production processes.

But we cannot just rely on *efficiency measures* because we have not yet succeeded in decoupling economic growth from resource consumption [in absolute terms]. The global results so far do not allow for optimism.

» **Global use of materials is accelerating. It has more than tripled since 1970. Moreover, the global economy is only 9 percent circular. Just 9 percent of the 92.8 billion tonnes of material that enter the economy are re-used annually.**

[The Circularity Gap Report 2019](#)

» Our persistent and ever-lasting extraction and over-utilization of non-renewable natural resources is causing increasingly pervasive global resource scarcity, which is causing faltering human prosperity, increasing political instability, economic fragility, and societal unrest.

According to Christopher O. Clugston. *Blip - Humanity's 300 year self-terminating experiment with industrialism*. 2019

» **Therefore, two different decoupling tasks must be pursued:**

(1) decoupling the production of goods and services from unsustainable natural consumption and

(2) decoupling the satisfaction of human needs from the imperative to ever more consumption.

Maja Göpel. *The Great Mindshift*. 2016



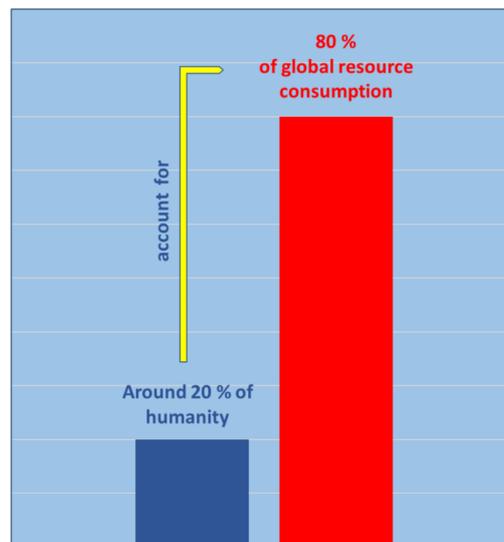
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So today we are faced with the Herculean task

- of satisfying the basic needs of what is soon to be 10 billion people worldwide
- while, *at the same time*, respecting the ecological limits of our planet.

In this context, it should be remembered:

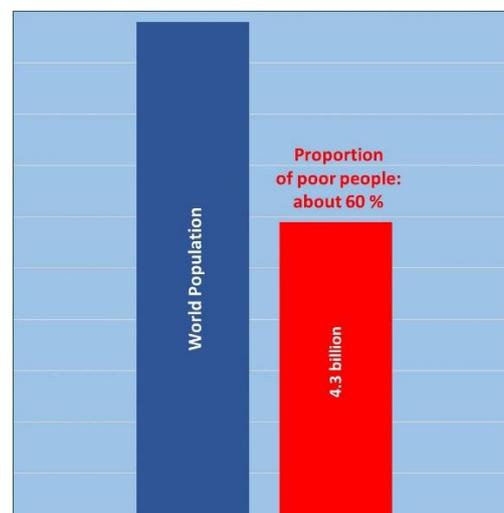
A minority of around 20 percent of the world's population, mainly in rich countries, currently accounts for around 80 percent of total global resource consumption.



The illustration shows the magnitude, exact data are lacking.

Today, around 4.3 billion people live in abject poverty and struggle to survive on less than the equivalent of \$ 5 a day.

Jason Hickel. The Divide - A Brief Guide to Inequality and its Solutions. 2017



Environmental Policy

» **The great fallacy of the environmental debate over the past 30 years has been the hope that an ecological turnaround can essentially be implemented with some *technological innovation programme within the existing economic order*.**

The continuing impressive development of prosperity has not been able to slow down climate change, resource consumption or the loss of biodiversity - on the contrary, all these pressures have increased massively.

Translated from: Uwe Schneidewind. Die Grosse Transformation - Eine Einführung in die Kunst gesellschaftlichen Wandels. 2018

» Today, Europe continues to consume more resources and contribute more to environmental degradation than many other world regions.

We do not only have to do more; we also have to do things differently. **Over the next decade, we are going to need very different answers to the world's environmental and climate challenges than the ones we have provided over the past 40 years.**

The European Environment - State and Outlook 2020. European Environment Agency. 2019

» **[Because] problems can never be solved with the same mindset that created them.**

Quote from Albert Einstein



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» **It is quite simply a fact that the current ways of life and economic activity have a comprehensive and deep impact on various ecosystems.**

Future generations and other living beings therefore face drastic and irreversible disadvantages.

To date, environmental and sustainability policy has far from succeeded in achieving a *sufficiently* strong reduction in ecological burdens.

Translated from: Institut für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (IÖW): Gesellschaftliches Wohlergehen innerhalb planetaren Grenzen, Texte 89/2018 im Auftrag des Umweltbundesamt Deutschland. 2018.

» Since [in the «free» market economy] public and common goods such as clean air, biodiversity, cohesion or justice have no price, they can be destroyed for free and the resulting costs be charged to the general public.

Christian Felber. Change Everything. Creating an Economy for the Common Good. 2015

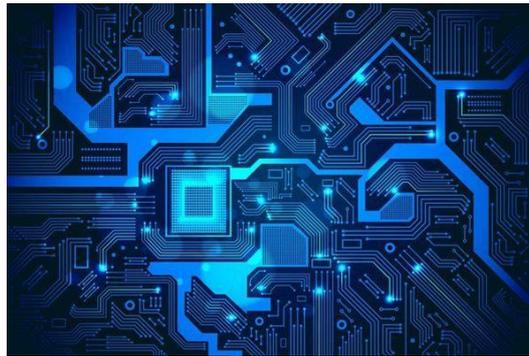
» The 500 largest private companies have an economic and political power that no king, no emperor, no pope has had on this planet. They have established a world dictatorship that is stronger than any state.

Take the climate debate: Despite all the promises made in Paris in 2015, the five largest producers even emit 28 percent more fossil fuels.

This shows the powerlessness of the states. Young people who are now taking to the streets are also aware of this.

Translated from the interview with Jean Ziegler to his latest book «Was ist so schlimm am Kapitalismus - Antworten auf die Fragen meiner Enkelin». Tages-Anzeiger, 12.07.201

Digitization



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» Overall, digitalization processes today tend to act as *«fire accelerants»*, exacerbating existing non-sustainable trends such as the overuse of natural resources and growing social inequality in many countries.

On the one hand, it must be plainly stated that the digitalization of business and everyday life has so far been marginally oriented towards sustainability aspects.

On the other hand, digitalization offers an enormous range of possibilities for supporting the Great Transformation towards sustainability.

Towards our Common Digital Future. 2019. German Advisory Council on Global Change.

» The combination of digital progress and capitalist ideology in a fully monetarised society obviously leads to a concentration of power among a few, mostly private, actors [...].

However, digitisation has contributed as much as nothing to solving the really big problems [...]. Because normally only ideas that can be made into money come onto the market. But most urgent problems are problems that affect the poor.

Translated from: Jonas Lüscher, Writer - Interview in the newspaper Tages-Anzeiger, 06.01.2018

Climate Change



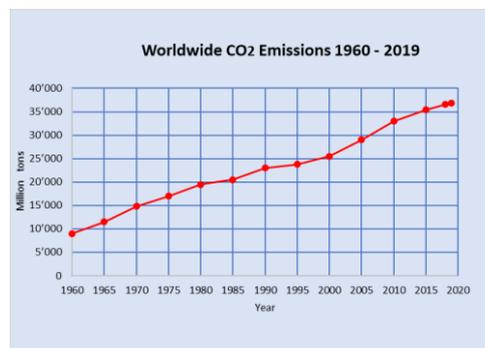
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Climate change is one of the most threatening consequences of the pursuit of everlasting economic growth.

» An average increase in global warming of 5 degrees worldwide, as predicted by the end of the century, means massive changes.

5 degrees in the other direction *as a comparison*, that was the last ice age. About two thirds of Switzerland were covered by ice at that time. That's the measure of change when we talk about 5 degrees.

Translated from the interview with Reto Knutti, climatologist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology ETHZ Zurich, REPUBLIK 23.11.2019



» In fact, China is the single largest emitter of carbon. This is, however, largely due to goods produced in China but consumed elsewhere in the world.

If we attribute the emissions to where the consumption takes place, North Americans consume 22.5 tons of CO_{2e} per year per person, Western Europeans 13.1, Chinese 6, and South Asia just 2.2.

Overall, we get the 50–10 rule: 10 percent of the world's population [the highest polluters] contribute roughly 50 percent of CO₂ emissions, while the 50 percent who pollute the least contribute just over 10 percent.

The citizens of rich countries and, more generally, the rich worldwide, bear an overwhelming responsibility for any future climate change.

Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Dufo. 2019. Good Economics for Hard Times – Better Answers to Our Biggest Problems.

» The goal of *halving* global emissions by 2030 represents the absolute minimum we must achieve if we are to have at least a 50 per cent chance of safeguarding humanity from the worst

impacts.

Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac. 2020. The Future We Choose - Surviving the Climate Crisis.

» **We are entering the «climate decade».** A ten year period where our collective actions will determine the kind of world our children and grandchildren will inherit.

The Climate Decade. Ten Years to Deliver the Paris Agreement. The GlobeScan-SustainAbility Survey. 2019

» Covid-19 has demonstrated that the foundations of prosperity are precarious. Disasters long talked about, and long ignored, can come upon you with no warning, turning life inside out and shaking all that seemed stable. **The harm from climate change will be slower than the pandemic but more massive and longer-lasting.** If there is a moment for leaders to show bravery in heading off that disaster, this is it. They will never have a more attentive audience.

A new opportunity to tackle climate change - Countries should seize the moment to flatten the climate curve. The Economist - May 21st, 2020

» The primary challenge is to stop the flow of money to oil, coal and gas and to establish a clear path towards de-carbonization. The «sustainability» of finance can be gauged by how far and how fast it shifts us away from the fossil fuel economy, **rather than simply allowing the financial sector to develop new «green» markets alongside a core business that continues to bankroll climate change.**

Oscar Reyes. Change Finance - Not the Climate. 2020.

» Contrary to most problems, climate change is not *complex*, the causes well known, the necessary answers clear. **The challenge we face is that we do not do what obviously should be done - urgently.**

Theodor H. Winkler. Living in an Unruly World. The Challenges We Face. 2019

Economy



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The incentives in today's economic system are still *one-sidedly* promoting the exploitation of nature and man.

» **Many people feel unhappy about the economic development in recent years.** And rightly so. The boom of the recent past was for the most part an alleged boom, caused mainly by an enormous inflation of the money supply - namely at the expense of an *increasingly unhealthy economic structure*.

By opponents and supporters as well, globalization used to be considered for a long time as a law of nature following an implacable logic. At the same time - at least in its current exaggerated state - it is a gigantic bubble that carries in its core its own destruction.

There are more rich people than ever in the world, yet there have never been so many poor people without hope for dignity.

Translated from Max Otte. 2019. Weltsystem Crash - Krisen, Unruhen und die Geburt einer neuen Weltordnung.

» **Have now - pay later.** In order not to be limited by what one can currently achieve by ones' means, the store of future possibilities is plundered in advance.

The current syndrome of indebtedness is not only an indicator of greed and impatience, but also of organised irresponsibility. The further debts are pushed onto the future, the starker the constraints will be on the options and freedoms of future generations.

Niko Paech. 2016. Liberation from Excess - The Road to a post-growth economy.

»... [it is] the conditions of any future economy that need to be redeveloped: For all the great achievements that we can look back on have only been at the price of not taking into account either the natural conditions or the living situations of people in other parts of the world.

Translated from: Harald Welzer. Alles könnte anders sein - Eine Gesellschaftsutopie für freie Menschen. 2019

» **Our current operating model is unsustainable. It simply has to change, and the time is now.**

[Swiss Private Bank Lombard Odier](#)

» **The ecological problems will increase and so will the social and economic upheavals.** [...] we need to ask ourselves what kind of economic system will serve the people and also maintain the ecological foundations. Today's does not.

Translated from: Interview with the economist Irmi Seidl. Der ökologische Umbau wird die Arbeitswelt verändern. Tages-Anzeiger. 15.02.2020



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- So, we have to move towards a sustainable life, even if there is no *master plan* on how to achieve the transformation of our present society - with its perpetual expansion - towards sustainable development.
- **We must move from the deeply internalized attitude of *competition and self-interest* to a basic attitude of *cooperation and common good*, if for example, we really want to curb global climate change.**

Overconsumption



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Our dilemma as environmentally-aware affluent citizens

If we wealthy people want to protect the environment, all we have to do today - so we consumers are told - is to go to the supermarket. There are now sustainable and environmentally-friendly products everywhere.

We can therefore seemingly consume more and more without any worries and thereby even do something good for the environment.

Almost no product from toilet paper up to cars is sold without the promise that one makes the world a little better.

«Buy me and make this world a little bit better» is the key message found among sustainable brand's marketing. It is argued that the market will fix the climate problem: One does not have to consume less, but only consume in a different way.

Now, however, the validity of this approach is being shaken daily by reports of the consequences of our actions.

What we consider *sustainable consumption* so often leaves behind poverty and environmental destruction elsewhere in the world.

Translated according to Marcus Jauer. Tages-Anzeiger 10.12.2018 und Sebastian Schoep. Tages-Anzeiger 06.06.2019



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Who really wants to change something, can't get around thinking about the dogma of «ALWAYS MORE

So, renunciation - but what does renunciation mean?

In rich countries, renunciation means [...] actually nothing more and nothing less than refraining from ruining the planet and in return preserving the basis of life in the future. - That's a big word, of course. Couldn't it be a little bit smaller? Unfortunately not.

Translated from: Maja Göpel. 2020. Unsere Welt neu denken. Eine Einladung.



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The question is not *how*?

The question is, *when* do we start to live sustainably?