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# Campaign Strategy for Transformative Democracy

## The First Steps

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## Existential Threat to Civilisation:

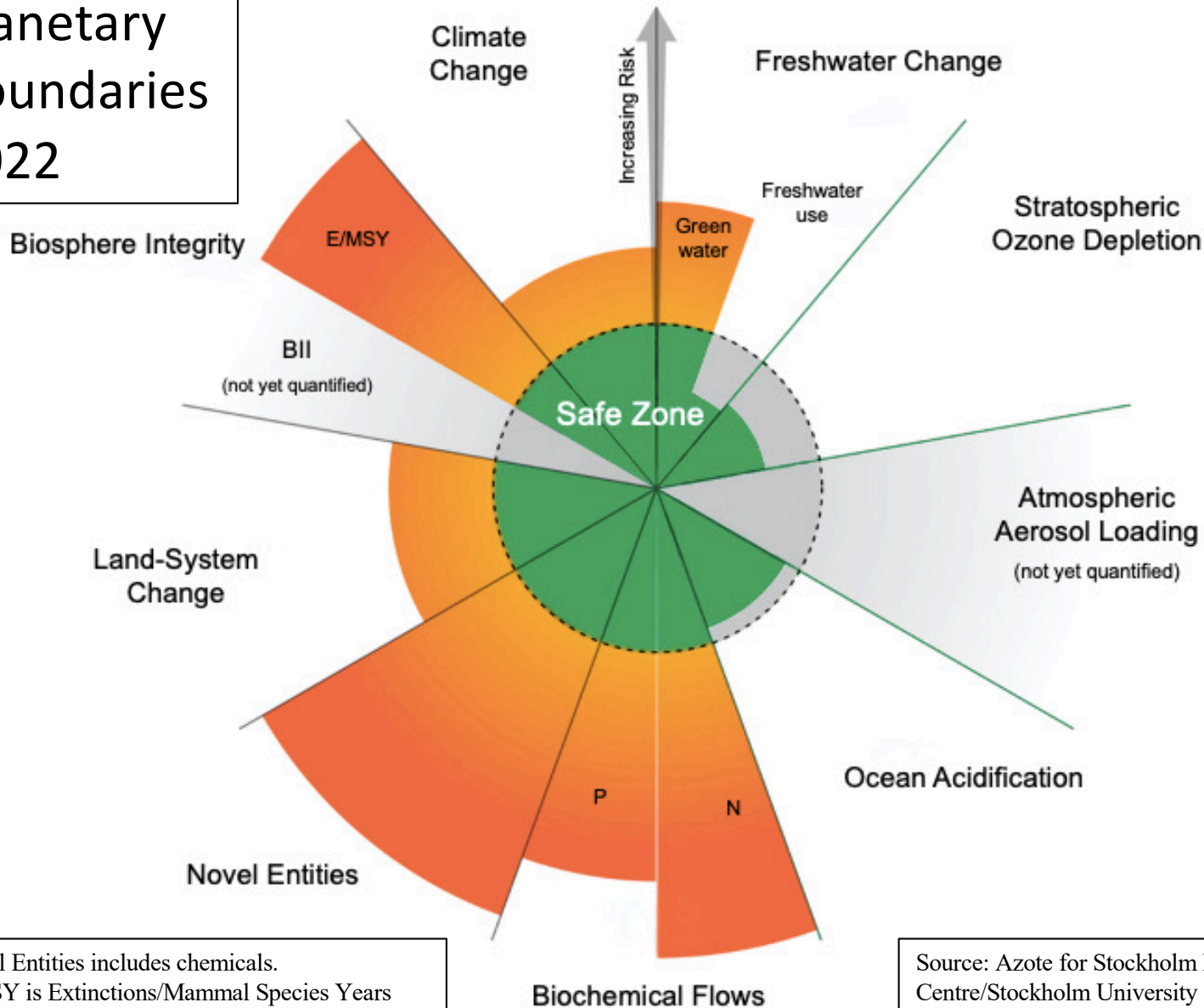
Climate Change can be halted, but time is running out  
Technological change is the (relatively) easy part



# Existential Threats to Civilisation: Environmental

## Anthropocene has replaced Holocene

### Planetary Boundaries 2022



Novel Entities includes chemicals.  
E/MSY is Extinctions/Mammal Species Years

Source: Azote for Stockholm Resilience  
Centre/Stockholm University

# Existential Threat to Civilisation: Nuclear War



The hands of the  
Doomsday Clock  
can be pushed back  
...a bit



# Threats to Civilisation: Poverty & Social Inequity

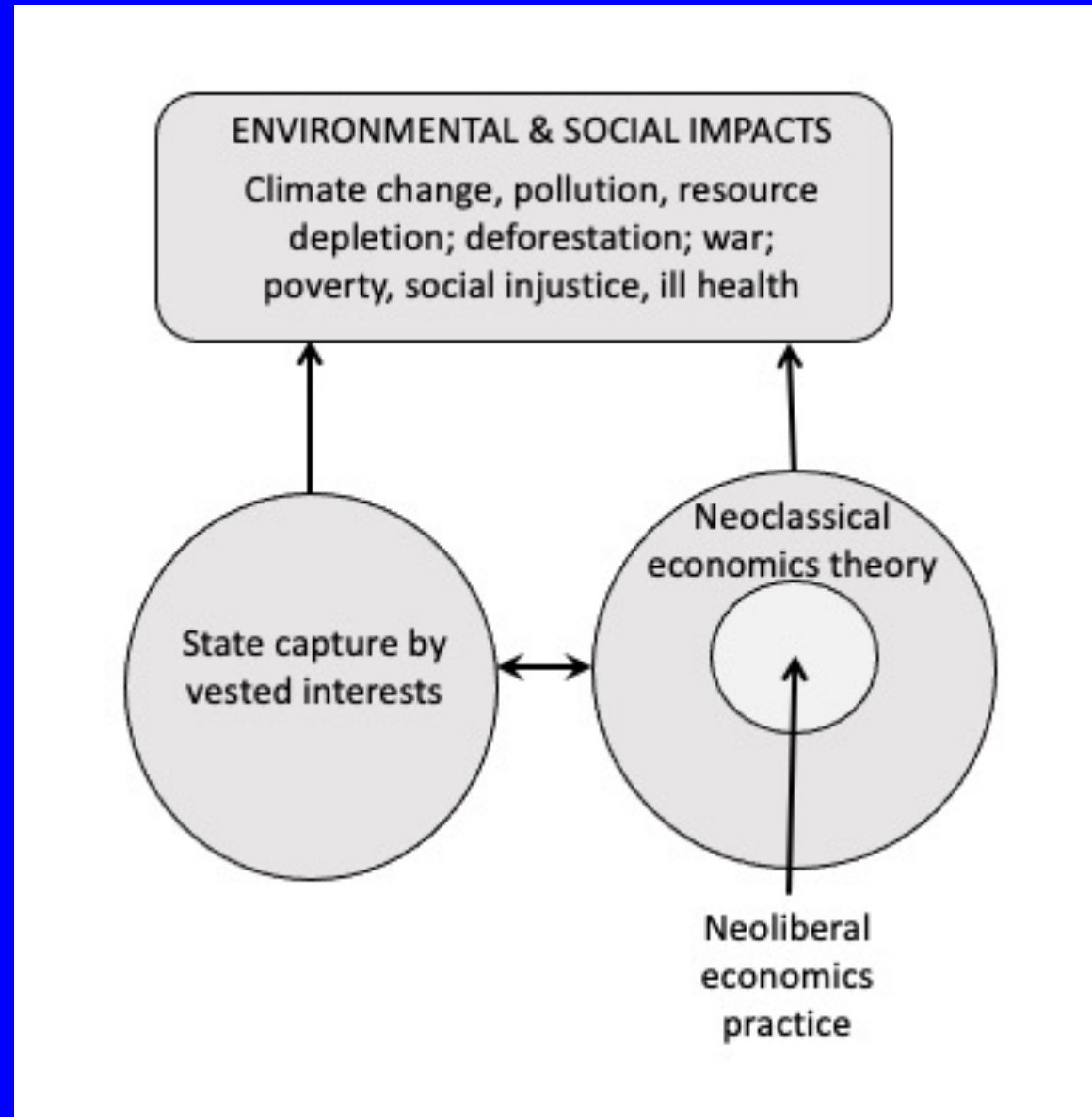
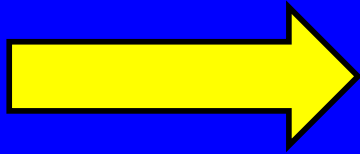


The increasing gap between rich and poor – in wealth, income and political power – causes poverty, injustice, crime, loss of trust in ‘democratic’ government, and desperate people choosing autocratic rulers.

**The rich have the resources to shrink the gap, given the political will.**

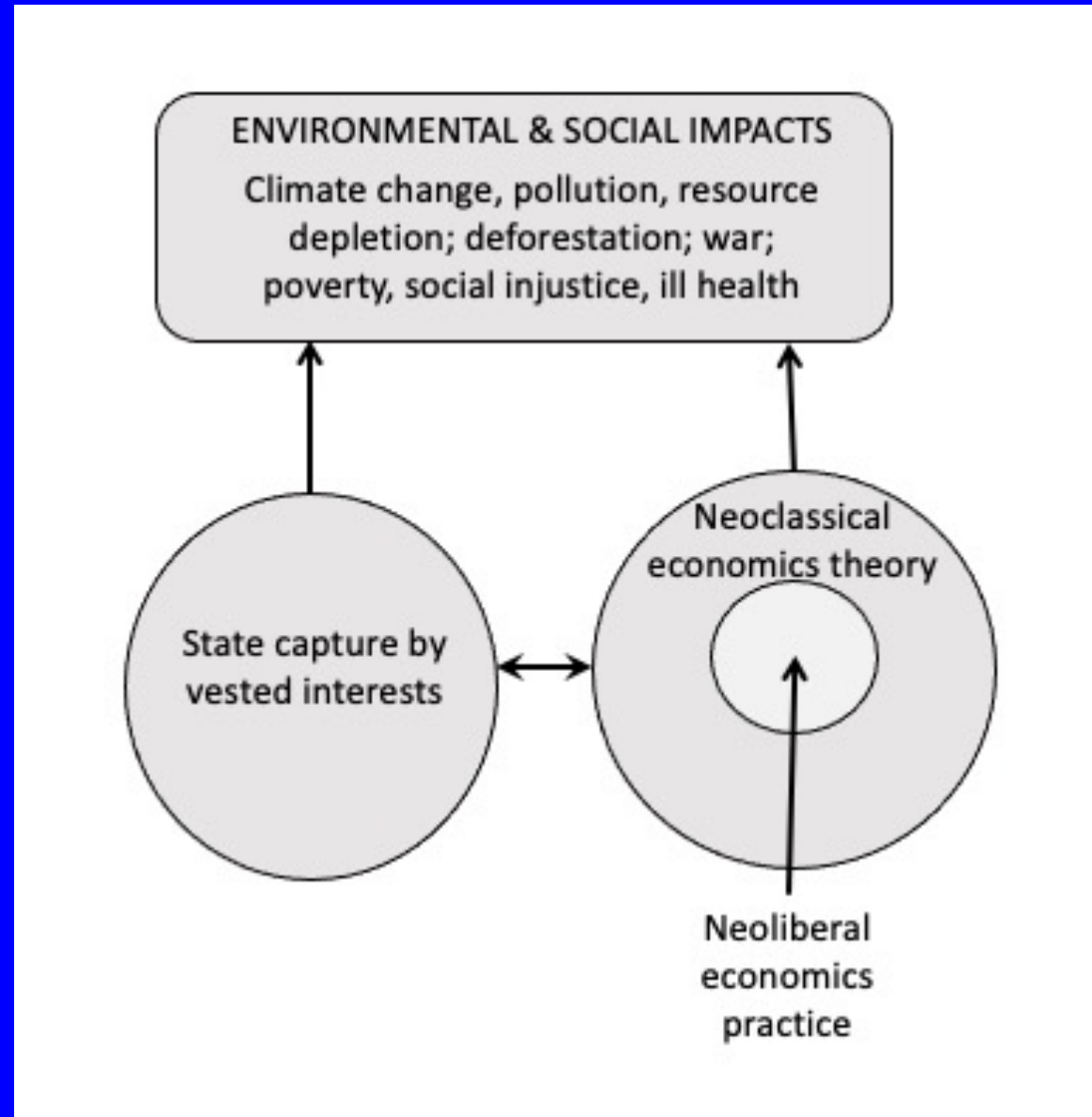
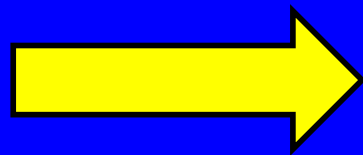
# Community Campaigns address Specific Issues

Community  
campaigns



# We must also Weaken the Driving Forces

Driving forces



# State Capture has undermined Democracy

According to Political Scientists & Political Economists

- ✦ Capture of the nation-state – government, opposition, public service, media, police, military – by powerful vested interests
- ✦ Captors include fossil fuel, armaments, finance, property/construction, pharmaceutical and gambling industries; also some religious organisations and some professions
- ✦ Captors may include foreign governments
- ✦ State capture is anti-democratic





# Examples of Capture of the Australian State: Fossil Fuels



- ✦ Retiring Ministers for Energy/Resources of both major political parties appointed to highly-paid jobs in fossil fuel industry
- ✦ Both the Chief of Staff and a senior political adviser to previous Prime Minister appointed from Minerals Council of Australia
- ✦ Huge donations to both major parties from fossil fuel industry
- ✦ Campaigns by News Corp against climate science and renewable energy
- ✦ Continuing support for mining & export of fossil fuels by both Labor and Coalition

*Note: While concerned about potential conflicts of interests in revolving door appointments and political donations, I do not question the motives of the people involved.*

# Example of Capture of the Australian State: 'Defence'



- ✦ Australian Strategic Policy Institute is funded by US & Australian governments and the weapons industry
- ✦ Former Defence Minister appointed president of a major contractor to Defence
- ✦ Before Australian government joined AUKUS and announced it would buy nuclear submarines, 5 'retired' US admirals were paid consultants to Defence
- ✦ Expansion of US bases and nuclear weapons-capable B-52s based in Australia

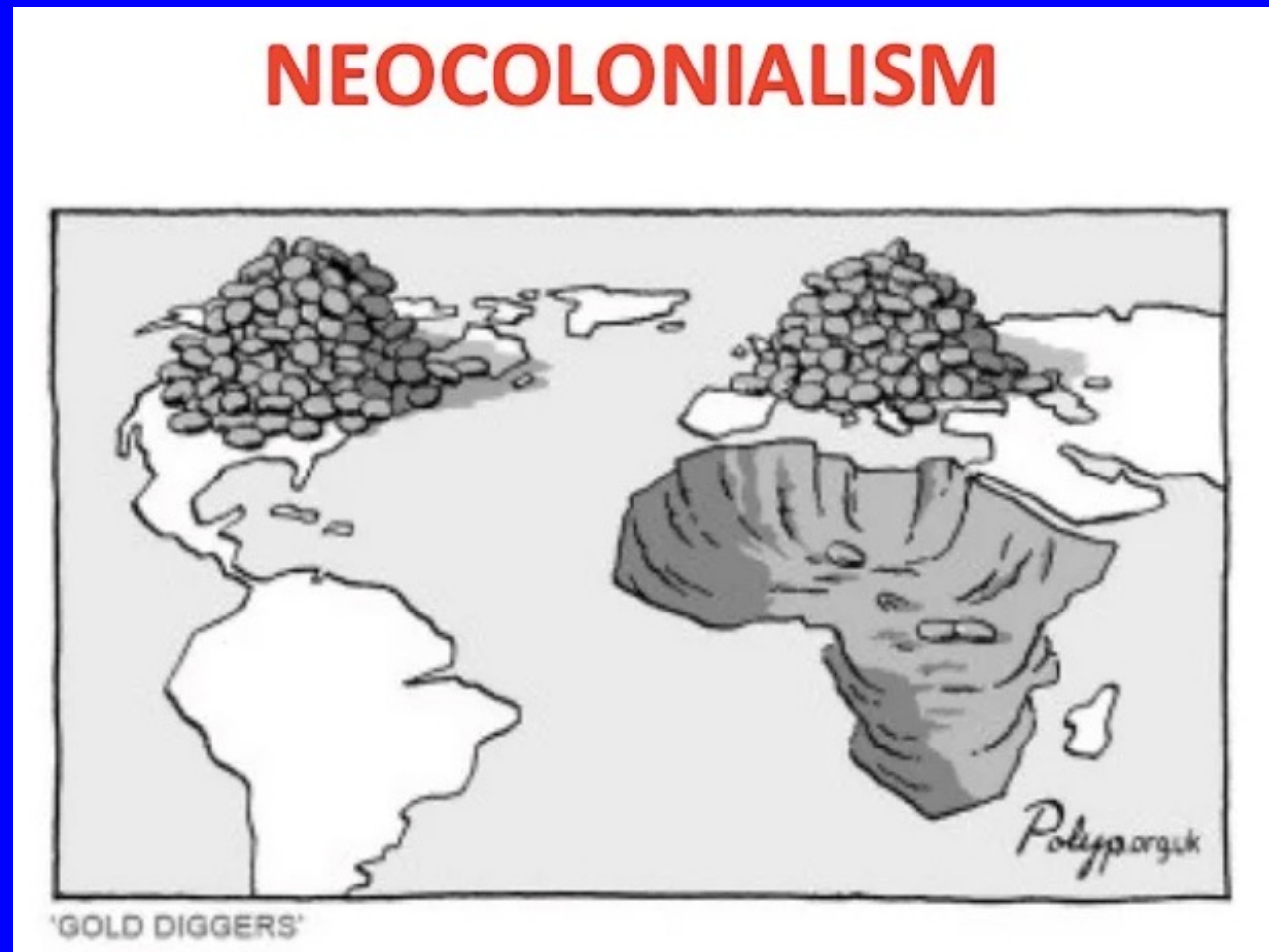
**Conclusion: Australia's Foreign Affairs and Defence strategies captured by the US military-industrial complex**

# Neocolonialism is a Form of State Capture

Global South is captured by Global North by:

- \* Sovereign debt
- \* Trade that keeps them captive as a quarry or waste dump
- \* Subversion, coups and invasion by North's military-industrial complex

Anti-democratic,  
to say the least



# Dismantling the Methods of State Capture

- \* Political donations & election expenditure
- \* Revolving door jobs
- \* Concentrated media ownership
- \* Social media campaigns
- \* Think tanks (e.g. IPA; ASPI)
- \* Unpublicised meetings between politicians & lobbyists
- \* Loans by foreign governments & international agencies → debt
- \* Trade dependence
- \* Military alliances (what benefit?)



Dismantling state capture strengthens democracy

# Strategy to Reduce Prevalence of War and Risk of Nuclear War

- \* No national involvement in overseas wars unless approved by Parliament
- \* Armaments based on defensive defence strategy
- \* All nuclear weapons countries and alliances legislate no first use of nuclear weapons
- \* All non-nuclear weapons countries join UN Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (ALP has re-committed, but does nothing)
- \* Strengthen Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to place uranium enrichment and reprocessing of spent fuel in the civil nuclear fuel cycle under complete international control
- \* Create government Departments of Peace and university peace research centres
- \* National social defence program (civilian-based nonviolent defence)

# A Myth of Neoliberal Economic Ideology which has captured the nation-state

“Shrink the government and public service; leave major decisions and programs to the market”

## Refutation

- ✦ The market is controlled by the 1% many of whom represent vested interests; neoliberalism is profoundly anti-democratic
- ✦ The market failed during the GFC & the COVID pandemic
- ✦ Thanks to recalcitrant governments and industries, it's too late to rely on the market to solve climate change, although a carbon price would help
- ✦ Market measures to stop biodiversity loss or deforestation or over-use of freshwater are suspect, to say the least.

# A Myth of Neoliberal Economic Ideology

“Endless growth in consumption of energy, materials and land, and in population, on a finite planet is possible and desirable.”

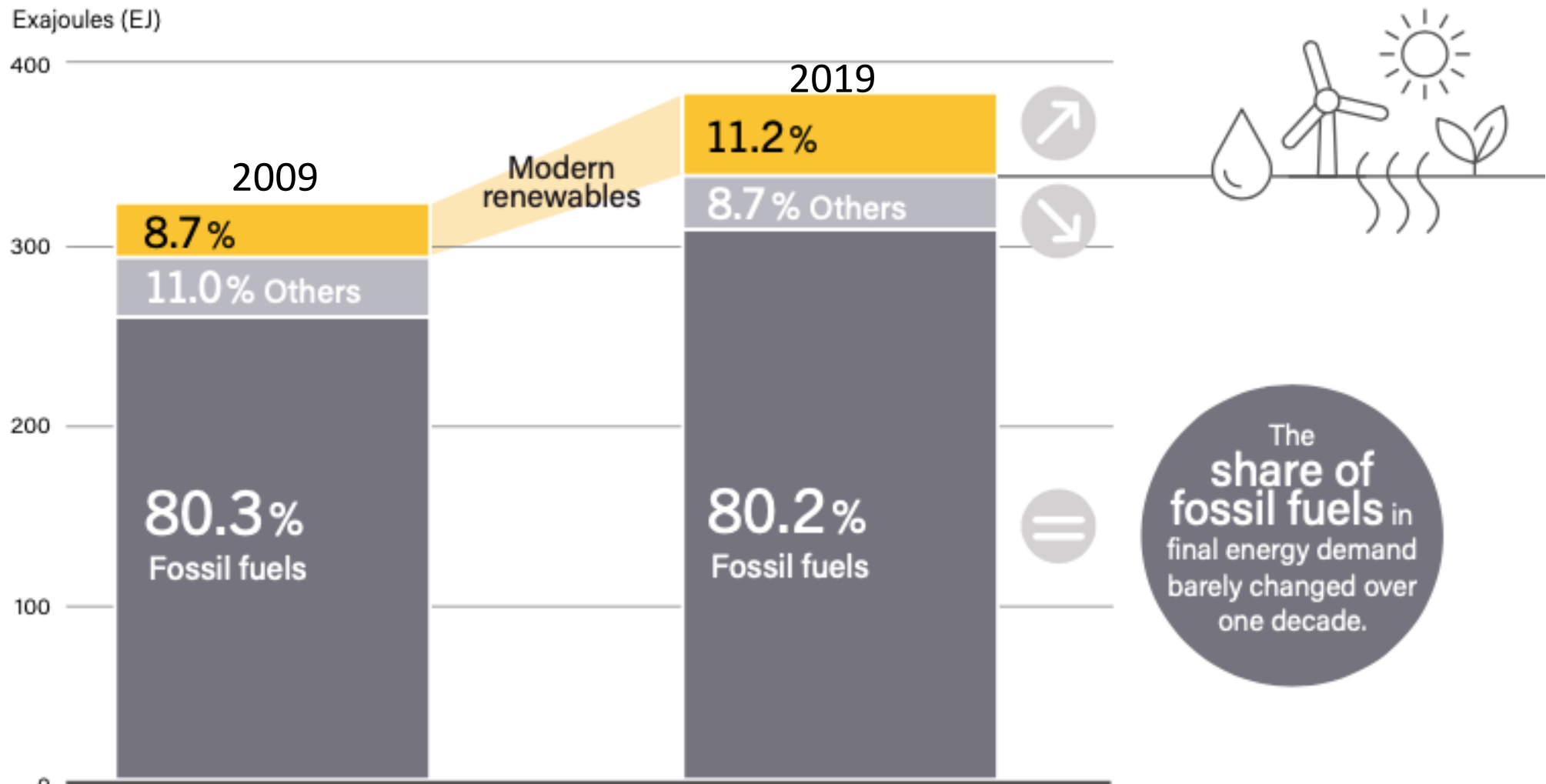
## Refutation

- ✦ We humans are totally dependent on natural systems which we are destroying by growth in consumption & hence production
- ✦ Beyond a certain level, additional consumption doesn't improve happiness or wellbeing

# Global Final Energy Consumption, 2009 & 2019

(All energy: Electricity, Transport & Heating by Combustion)

Source: REN21 (2021), Fig. 2



Renewable energy is chasing after a retreating finishing line



# From Neoclassical to Ecological Economics

## Planned Degrowth to a Steady-State Economy

- ✧ Planetary boundaries → SSE for human civilization → planned degrowth by rich countries to allow poor countries to develop
- ✧ Rich countries and rich individuals have by far the biggest environmental impacts – hence environmental justice & social justice must be addressed together
- ✧ Planned degrowth is measured in physical terms: energy; materials, land; population; the fate of GDP is irrelevant
- ✧ Planned degrowth is not a recession
- ✧ Both macroeconomic models and biophysical models suggest planned degrowth could be achieved with full employment and greater social equity
- ✧ Policies needed include working time reduction, job guarantee, wealth & inheritance taxes, stabilising population, universal basic services

# Universal Basic Services (UBS)

- ✦ UBS comprise expanded public housing, health, education, transport, child care, aged care, national and local parks (e.g. Denmark today)
- ✦ UBS can provide a social wage, reducing need for high monetary wage & economic growth, thus motivating and facilitating the transition
- ✦ UBS economic activities have relatively low material, energy and land requirements
- ✦ UBS can be implemented within a constrained market economy with priorities ecological sustainability & social justice



# Job Guarantee (JG)

- ★ Federal government pays basic wage to all unemployed who wish to work
- ★ Jobs provided by all spheres of government & registered community groups
- ★ JG is NOT work for the dole. Workers can leave or rejoin the program at will
- ★ JG is much less expensive than Universal Basic Income

- ★ Jobs created are outside the for-profit market:

- protecting & restoring natural environment
- citizen science
- visitors and companions for the ill, less able & aged
- staffing reuse & recycling centres
- support for firefighters
- community activities and the arts
- guides for tourists in cities and national parks



- ★ JG acts as a buffer during economic booms and recessions

# Community Action

Building alternatives is necessary and valuable, but not sufficient for changing the system rapidly



## Benefits

- ✧ Community education
- ✧ Community empowerment through local projects: e.g. renewable energy; producer & consumer cooperatives

## Limitations

Government decides on infra-structure, urban & land-use planning, pollution control, standards (e.g. for buildings), public facilities, taxes, rules for banks, etc.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt told a delegation:  
“OK, you’ve convinced me. Now get out there and make me do it!”.

**Additional Community Action Needed:**  
Alliances to pressure governments and business on state capture & neoliberalism as well as on specific issues

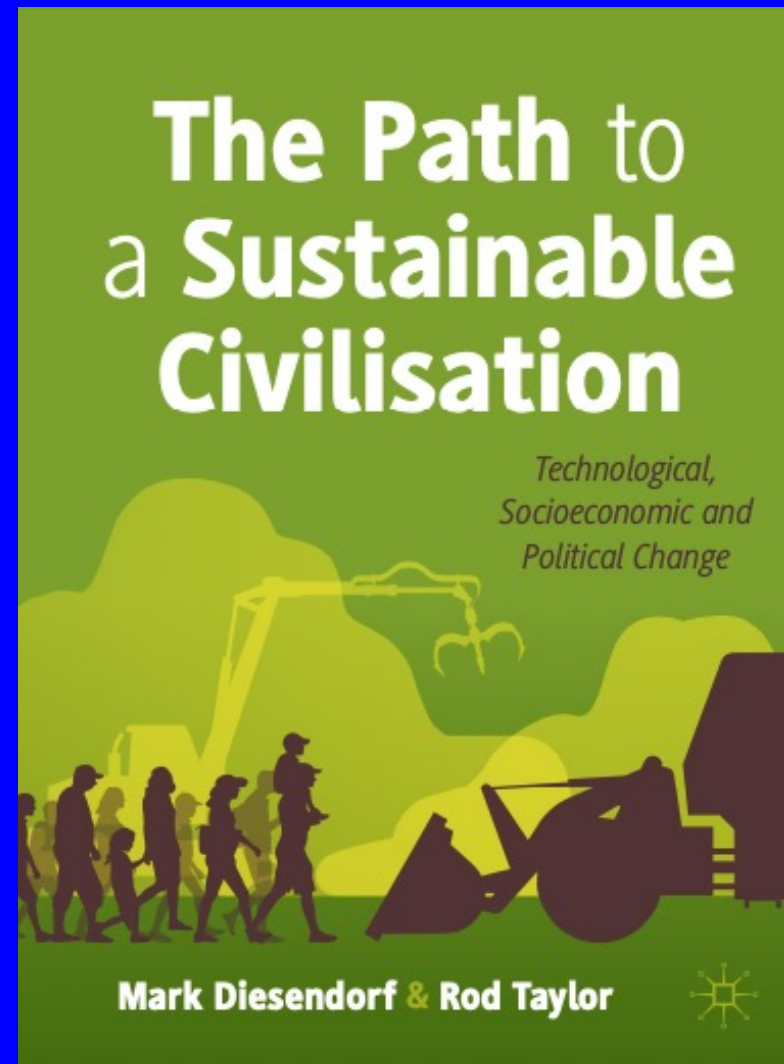


Tactics: nonviolent obstruction, strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, public education, media, lobbying, and legal actions

There may still be time to take the path to an ecologically sustainable, socially just civilization, but it will be tough!

We must overthrow the vested interests and the economic system that have captured most nations and even international organisations.

We must build better institutions of government and the economy.



Palgrave Macmillan, an imprint of Springer Nature, 2023  
<https://sustainablecivilisation.com>