

Josef Baum, 5thForum WAPE May 29-30, 2010 Suzhou City, China

**Strategic issues for socio-
ecological transitions in the 21st
Century**

**- There will be “*Eco-Socialism*”
or no Socialism**

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Greenland Ice Sheet: here today...



Source: Sivan Kartha
Stockholm Environment Institute



⇒ 2°C is already risking
catastrophic impacts

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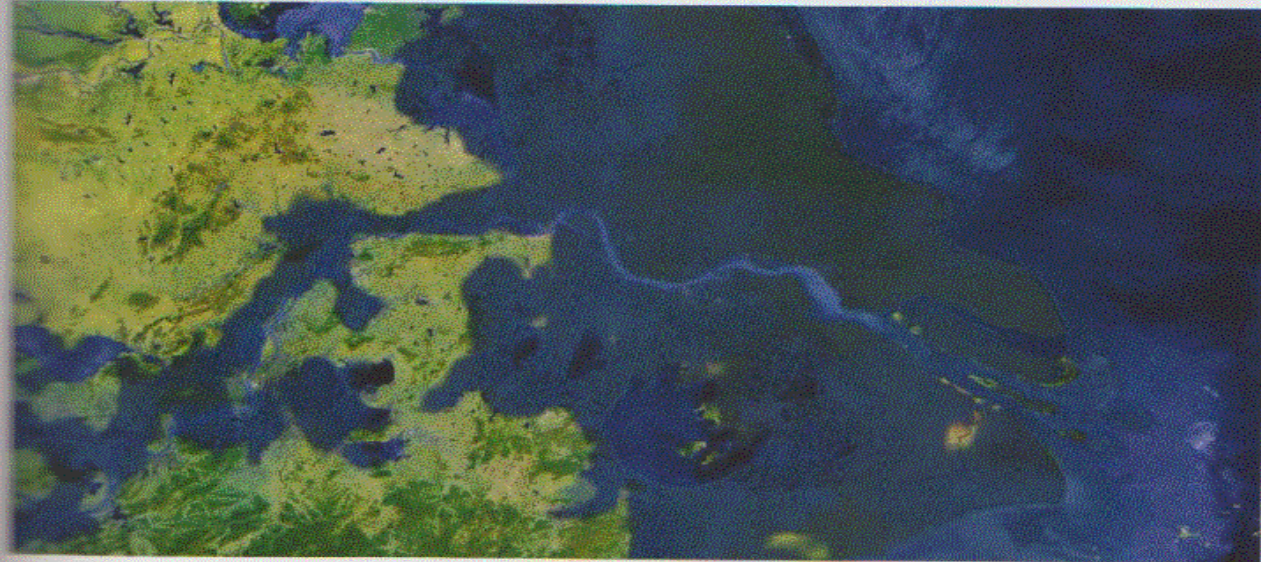
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Melting of all the Greenland Ice

→ sea level
rises
at 6 m!

*From: Al Gore -
An Unconvenient
Truth, 2006, p 204*

In Shanghai and the surrounding area,
more than 40 million people would be
forced to move.



There will be “Eco-Socialism” or no Socialism

“Until very recently, the discussion revolved around the kind of society we would have. Today, the discussion centres on whether human society will survive”

Fidel Castro in his blog at the end of the Copenhagen conference December 19, 2009

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There will be “Eco-Socialism” or no Socialism

“The transition from capitalism to socialism is the most difficult problem of socialist theory and practise. To add to this the question of ecology might, therefore, be seen as unnecessarily complicating an already intractable issue”

Foster J. B. (2009): The Ecological Revolution

In Europe we are currently looking at **financial debts....**

...but what about **ecological debts**, what about over exploiting of resources and implications to climate change, and so erosion of conditions of existence of future generations?

The financial crisis, which hits Greece and maybe other southern European states, **is marginal in comparison with the impacts of climate change predicted for Greece, southern Italy and southern Spain (droughts, water scarcity, desertification...).**

Hypotheses - in module form:

1. We are living in an **era of various connected simultaneous crises**:
 - the financial crisis,
 - a (cyclical) world economic crisis,
 - a crisis of increasing hunger,
 - a crisis of supply of (cheap) energy;
 - a crises of global political institutions,
 - and an environmental crisis (complex in itself).

2. The most fundamental is the climate issue...

...because of irreversible erosion of conditions of existence of future generations.

When an effective counter-strategy will not be implemented a deep and long climate crisis (probably **not in the next years but in some decades**) will unfold.

Every lost day will aggravate the problems and will need stronger measures

3. The climate crisis is one part of a general environmental crisis

The climate crisis is the most important but only one part of a general crisis in the relation between society and nature (other fields are e.g. loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion).

The point is that emissions in the form of ten of thousand substances as by-products of **output** of production (“external effects”) and human activities

4 Crisis on the **input** side: We see “**peak oil**”....

On the **input** side of production (resources) on the current path we see or will see “**peak oil**”.

This does not mean absolute scarcity but relative. The era of “cheap” fossil energy is on peak.

...and peak of almost everything

and peak of most resources And this is
also true for many other important
resources.

5. The “simple” solution: **circular economy +renewable energy**

The basically simple but in fact complex solution for the emission (output) side on the one hand (see 3.) and simultaneously for the input (resource) side on the other hand (see 4.) is some **circular economy** (circular in relation to flow of matter). For effective mitigation of climate change we need **renewable energy** and a **tremendous increase in resource productivity** - significantly bigger than economic “growth” (measured somehow), in a scale absolutely unprecedented in human history).

6...and a tremendous increase in resource productivity -

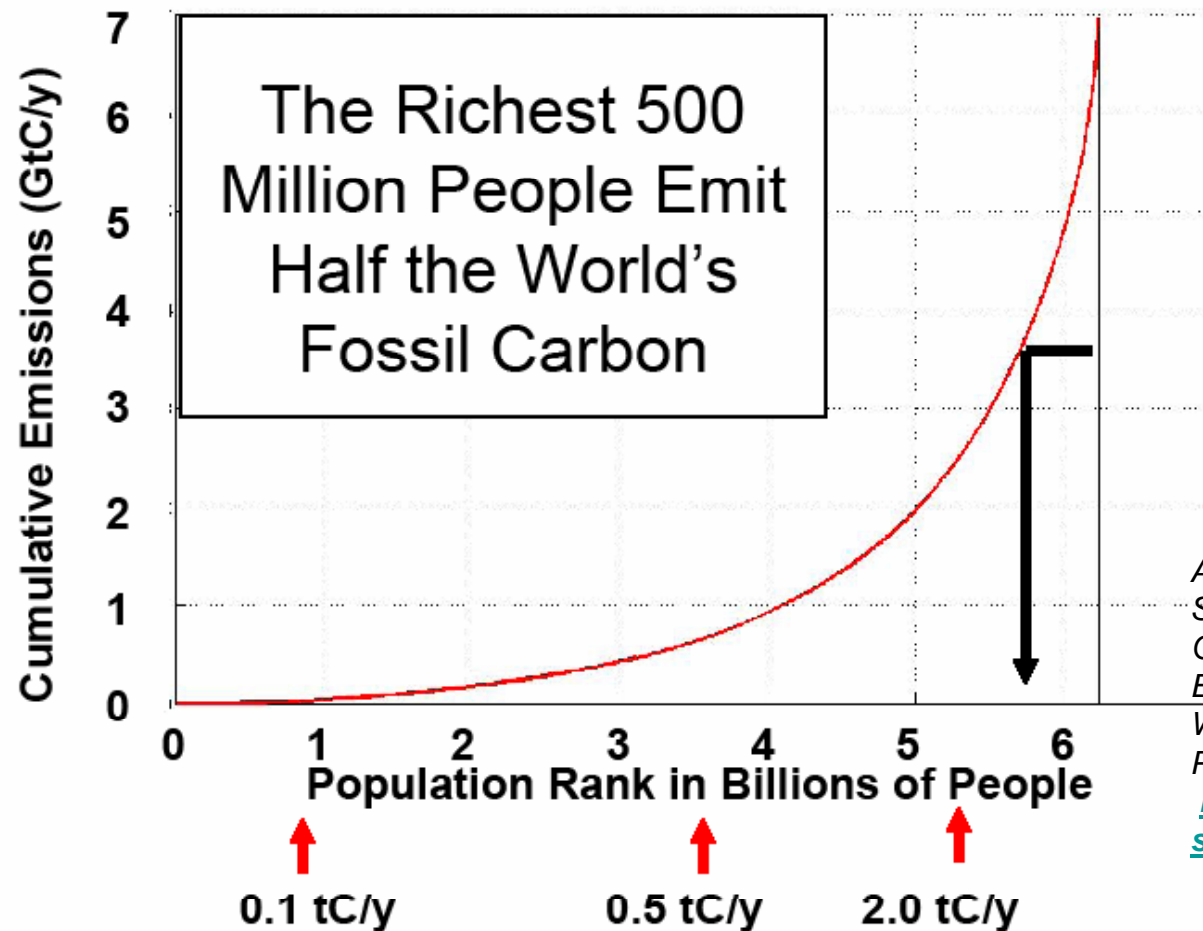
We need **circular economy** and **renewable energy** and a **tremendous increase in resource productivity** - significantly bigger than economic “growth” (measured somehow), **in a scale absolutely unprecedented in human history**

7. Distribution issues more important than technologies and markets in climate change

It also a matter of (new) technologies and their implementation and diffusion, but the (new) social organization will be decisive for success. We have to **look on the current status of distribution, which is blocking a take-off.**

“Burden sharing”/“effort sharing” will gain increasing importance on all scales: regional, national, continental and especially global

Climate crisis and global distribution

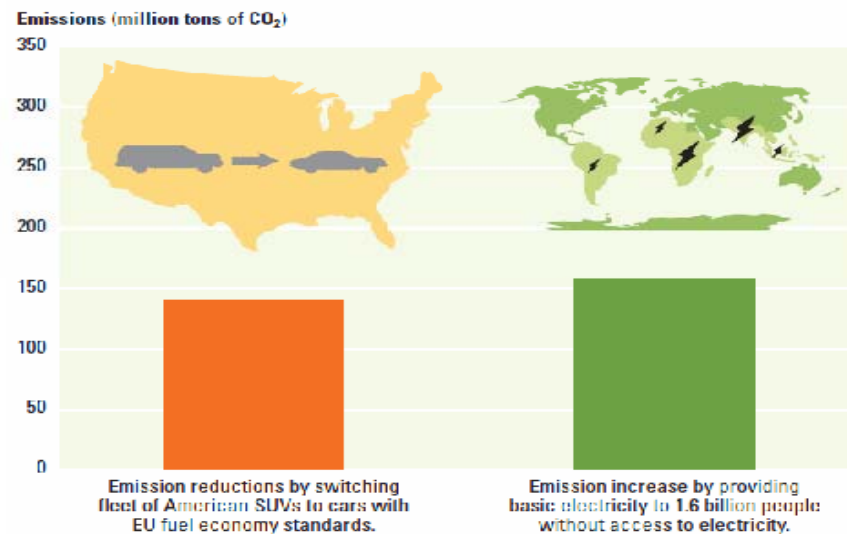


Aus: Pacala S.W.: *Equitable Solutions to Greenhouse Warming: On the Distribution of Wealth, Emissions and Responsibility Within and Between Nations*. Princeton, at IIASA, November 2007

<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/iiasa35/docs/speakers/speech/ppts/pacala.pdf>

„Small changes in rich countries allow carbon neutral access for the poor“ (Worldbank Development Report 2010)

SMALL CHANGES IN RICH COUNTRIES ALLOW CARBON-NEUTRAL ENERGY ACCESS FOR THE POOR

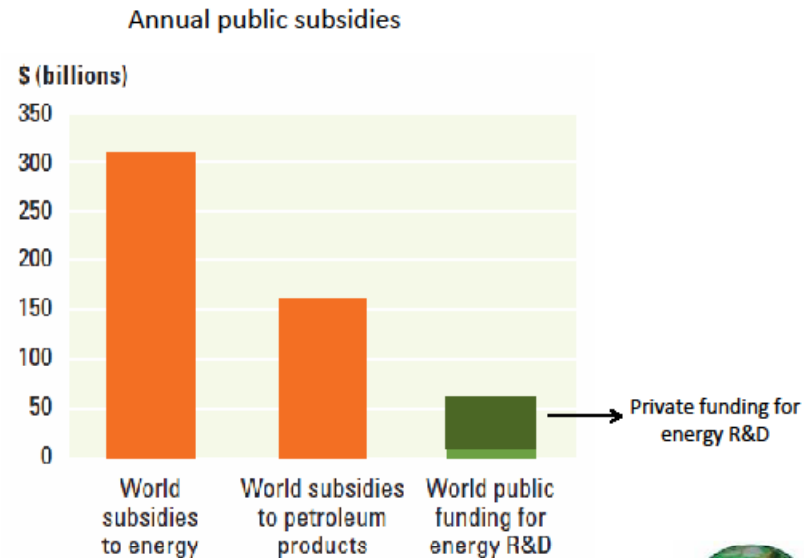


Source: WDR team calculations based on BTS 2008.



Subsidies to fossil energies – funds for RD for renewable energies

INVEST IN NEW ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES



8. Greenhouse gases correlated with accumulation of capital

Since the industrialisation accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased tremendously and also

disparities on the national and continental level, and especially on the global level (See “The Great Divergence, Pomeranz (2000)). —

Not “we all” have caused the environmental mess. The causation is very differentiated, and so the responsibility to clean up the mess.

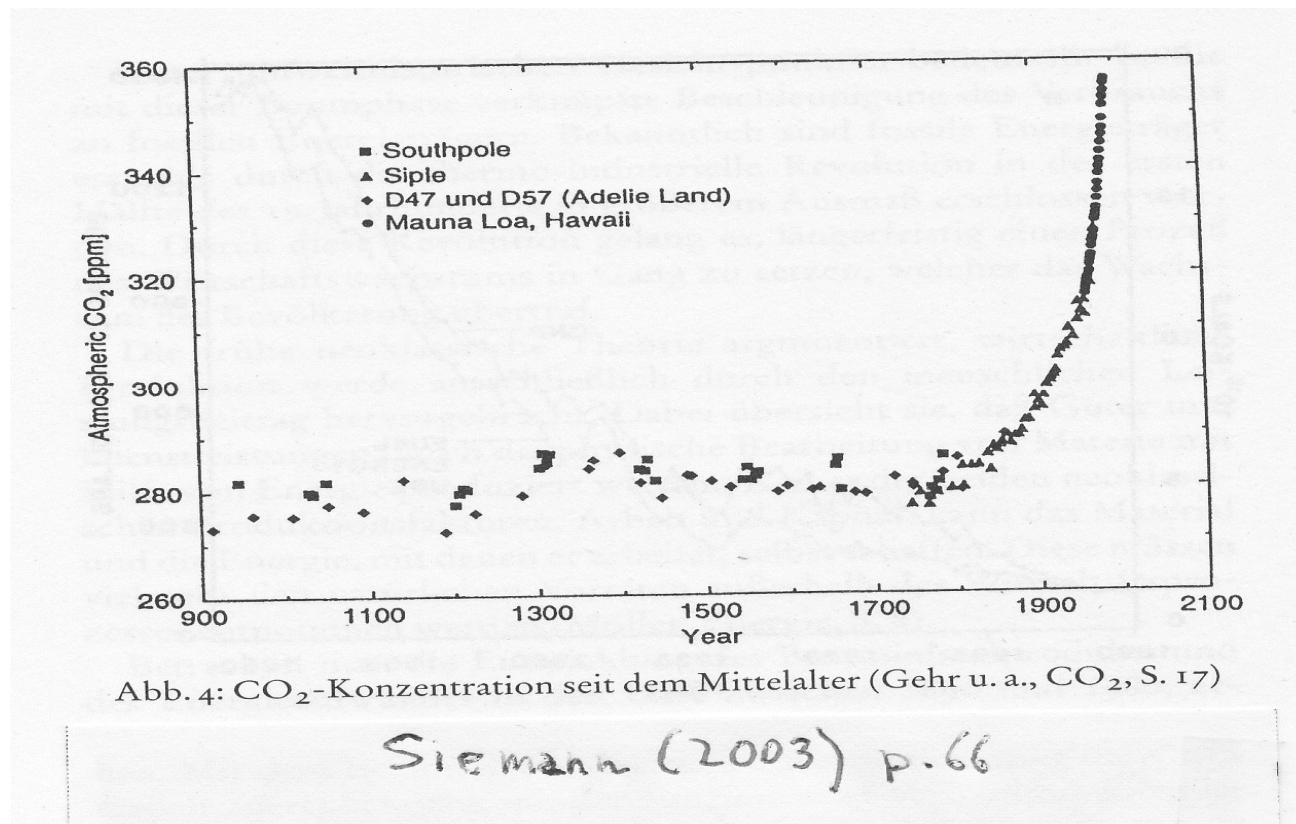
9. The fundamentally new: "**deadlines**"

There are "**deadlines**" for the solution to the climate issue, which has become an existential question of humanity. It is the well-known scientific consensus that a global increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius is threatening the foundations of civilisation.

And to avoid this development and by a fair burdensharing it is necessary to **reduce the use of fossil energy by 80 - 90 % until 2050 in industrial countries**. This is a **tremendous challenge never seen in history before**.

Accumulation of pollutants e.g. CO₂ – greenhouse gases

(exponential) processes



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10. Only short windows of opportunity

To achieve the 2 degree Celsius target - accorded in Copenhagen –we have still only short windows of opportunity for acting.

Currently **we have still options**, we can act (pro)actively. If we exceed the thresholds we will shift to a reacting mode (We would enter “**new territory**”(IPCC).

11. We need the remaining fossil energy for the construction of a low carbon economy

To achieve the 2 degree Celsius target and not to exceed thresholds there is only a certain amount of greenhouse gases that can still be emitted. This **certain amount of greenhouse gases remaining for use mainly is to use to rebuild and renew** all infrastructure, energy production, building, transportation **in a low carbon technology mode.**

12. Only fair solutions are feasible solution

Because of the great divergence on earth effective low carbon policy will be only possible on **principles of justice, fairness and equity considering historical responsibility**

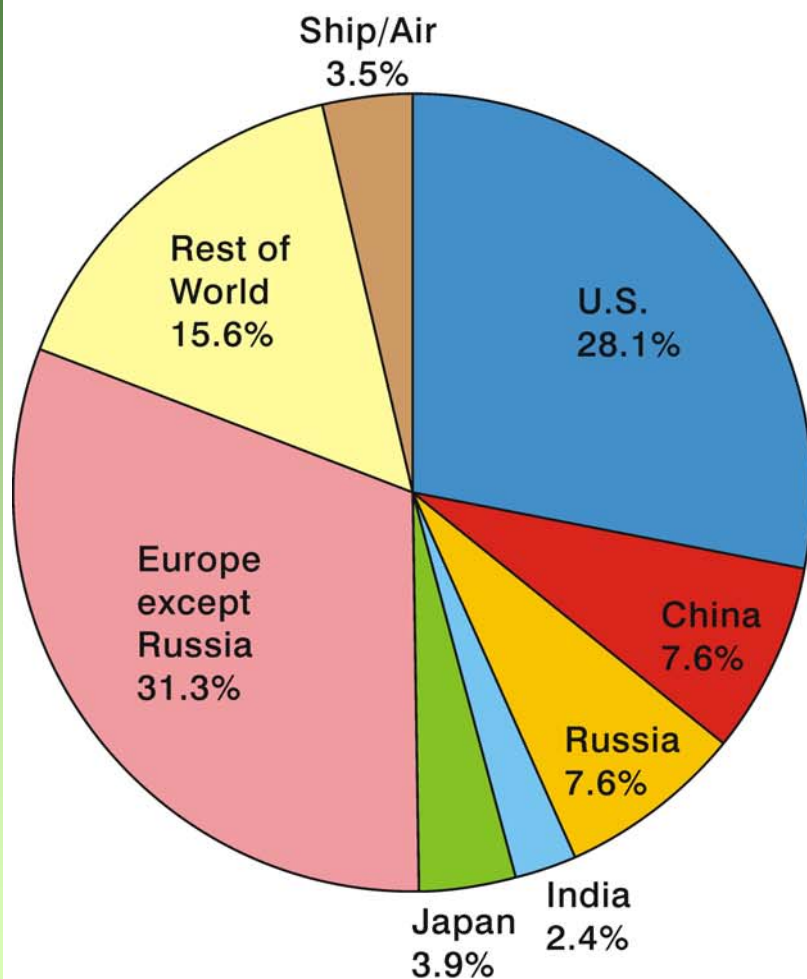
Wilkinson-Picket gave evidence that a more fair distribution is correlated with more efficiency.

So comprehensive low carbon has **to solve the environmental problem, the efficiency issue and the distributional problem simultaneously within a historical short time.**

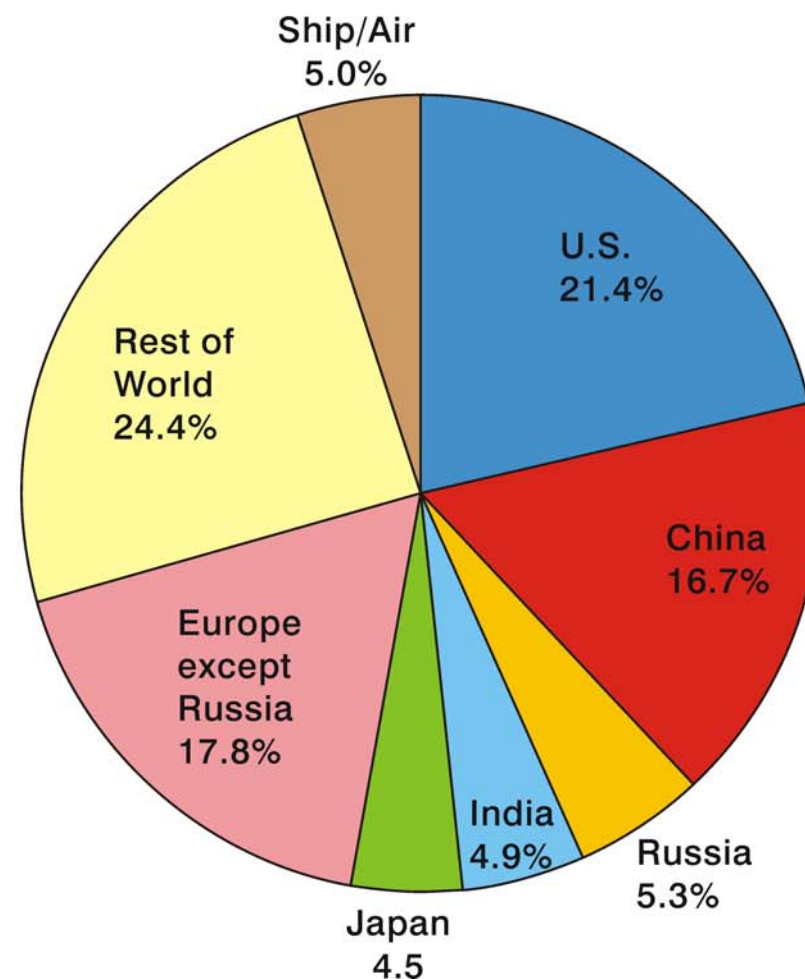
Fig. 5

Fossil Fuel CO₂ Emissions

Accumulated Fossil Fuel CO₂ (1850-2004)



2004 Portions of CO₂ Emissions



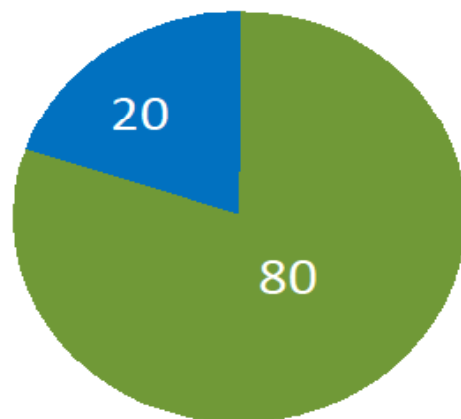
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Historic responsibility for accumulation of greenhouse gases

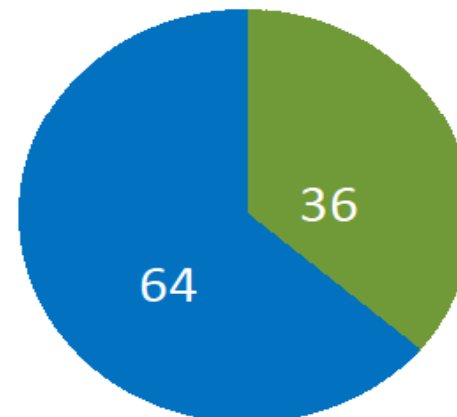
THOSE MOST IMPACTED DIDN'T CAUSE THE PROBLEM

Future share of impact costs



High-income countries
1.1 billion people

Historical cumulative emissions

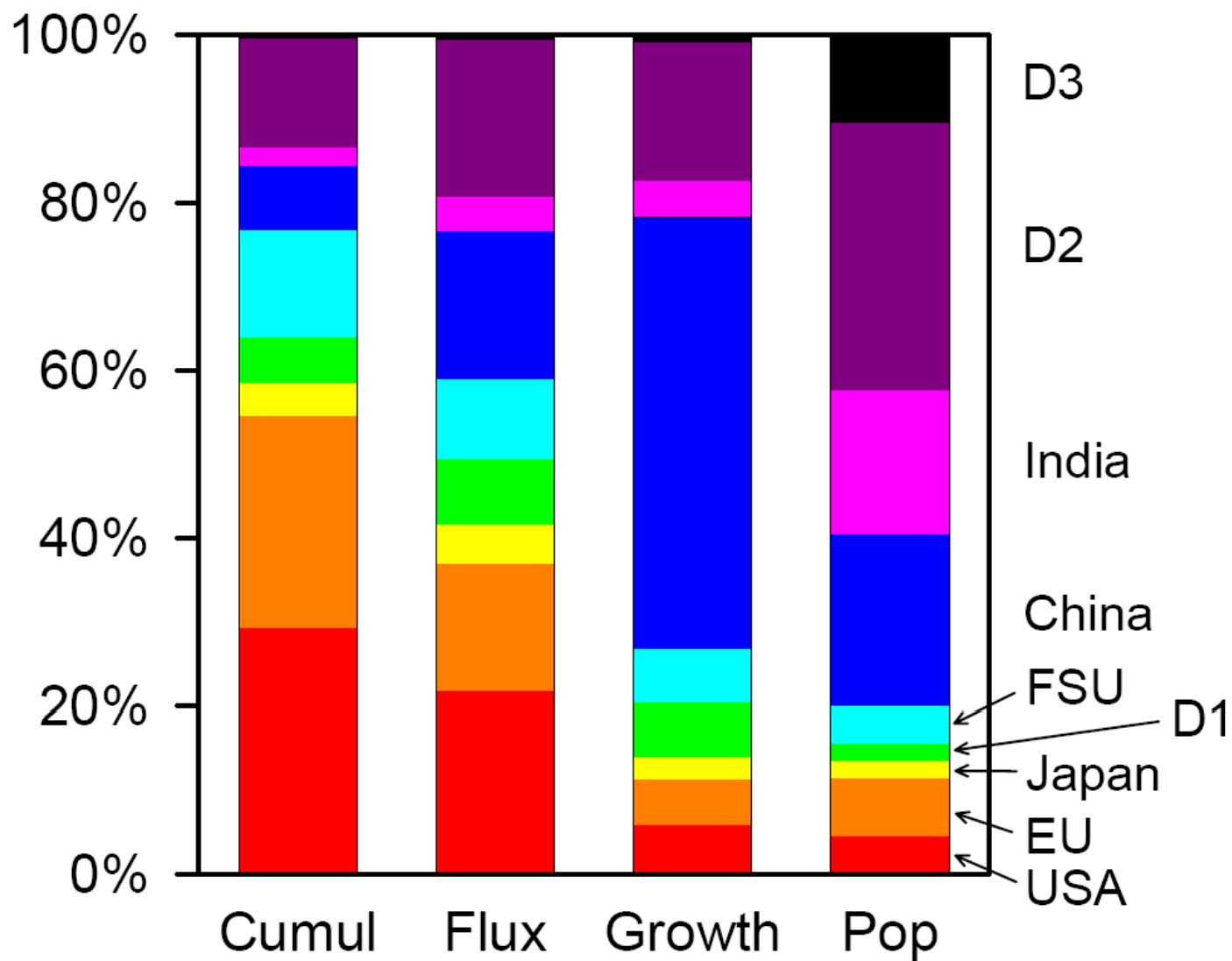


Developing countries
5.6 billion people

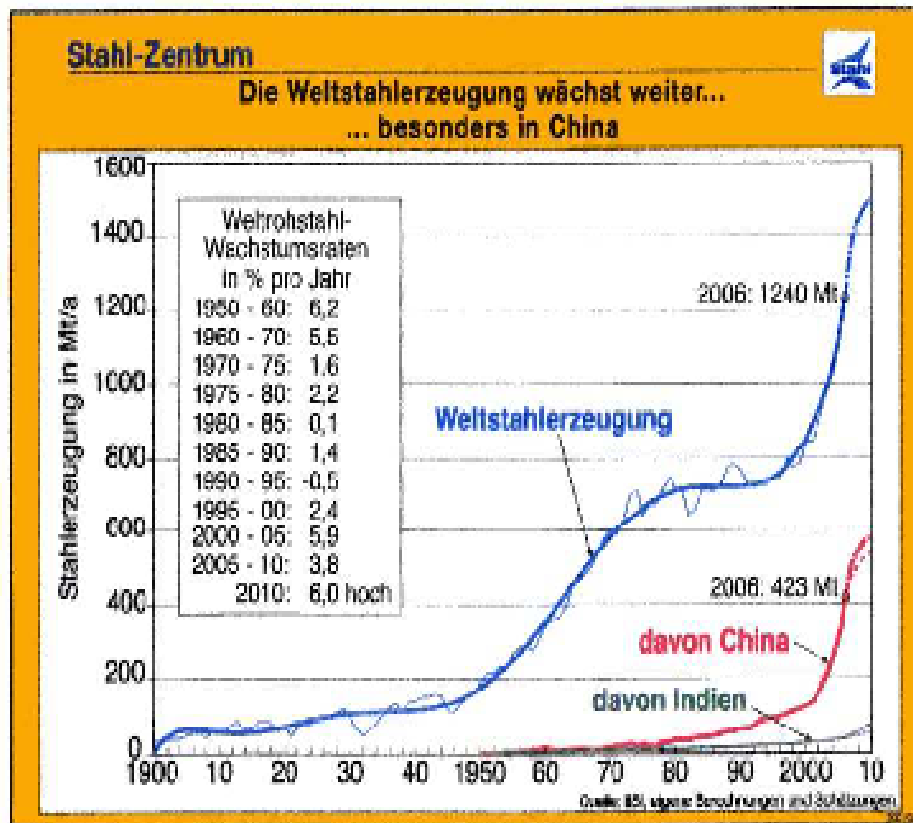


Source: Müller and others, 2009

Fig. 5



Global megatrends of socio-ecological development (pronounced in the years since 2000)



- ← **WORLD STEEL PRODUCTION**
- (Global) industrialization with some exponential processes
- Example of a particular resource and emitting intensive sector
- China's **per capita** is still only around one third of Japan or Austria

Aus: Ameling Dieter (20./21.9.07): Die Rolle Südost-Europas im Umfeld globaler Stahlmärkte.
Vortrag Stein/Nürnberg. Stahlinstitut

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13. Equality will have a revival

So the basic historical issue of the left, equality and fairness, and equal human rights for all people on earth will have a revival because it is necessary to safeguard the living conditions for mankind .

And the principle of (global) solidarity will be become the agenda (central with the left).

14. Also the “rich” will loose substantial: The relations of power are less asymmetrical

We have the new situation that not only the poorer ones, but also the “rich”, or the developed countries would probably also loose a lot by further climate change (e.g. sea level rise). So “gated communities” will be less efficient in the future.

So the relations of power are less asymmetrical than in former decades.

15. Will capitalism manage climate crisis ?

Some features of capitalism, by which managing the climate crisis is difficult:

- **the short sighted profit system generally,**
- **high discount rates devaluating the future,**
- **oligopolisation decreasing innovation,**
- **the immanent asymmetric distribution**

16. We need global solutions and a systemic alternative

The global characteristic of climate change entails global solutions and a systemic alternative. Individual, regional and partial solutions only can be steps to a comprehensive solution.

There is **no possibility of strategic coexistence with fossil capitalism**. We cannot be generously anymore only to control peanuts; the control of the whole bakery is necessary.

17. For higher resource productivity: Strong regulations, socializing core sectors

For achieving tremendous higher resource productivity and tremendous smaller emissions, and also for redistribution, sooner or later the profit system has to be moved back by increasing public property and strong regulations.

There is growing relevance of the commons. One important part of it is the usefulness of socializing (not only nationalizing) core sectors. We need new democratic governance structures of the commons.

18. A revival of planning will be on the agenda

- Under some conditions “markets” could be more efficient to achieve one goal. But the “invisible hand” hardly could achieve various economic and ecological aims. And it could not achieve this goals within a relatively short time.
- Note Sir Stern: “Climate change is the greatest market failure the world has ever seen.”
- So a revival of planning will be on the agenda. We should consider former experiences. And for various reasons it should be a **democratic planning**, and it should be a **“rolling” flexible planning**, new technological possibilities are available. This not mean the planning of pubs and handicraft but of core fields of economy .

19. Implications by climate change policy: A **healthier life, more quality of life (not sacrifice)**

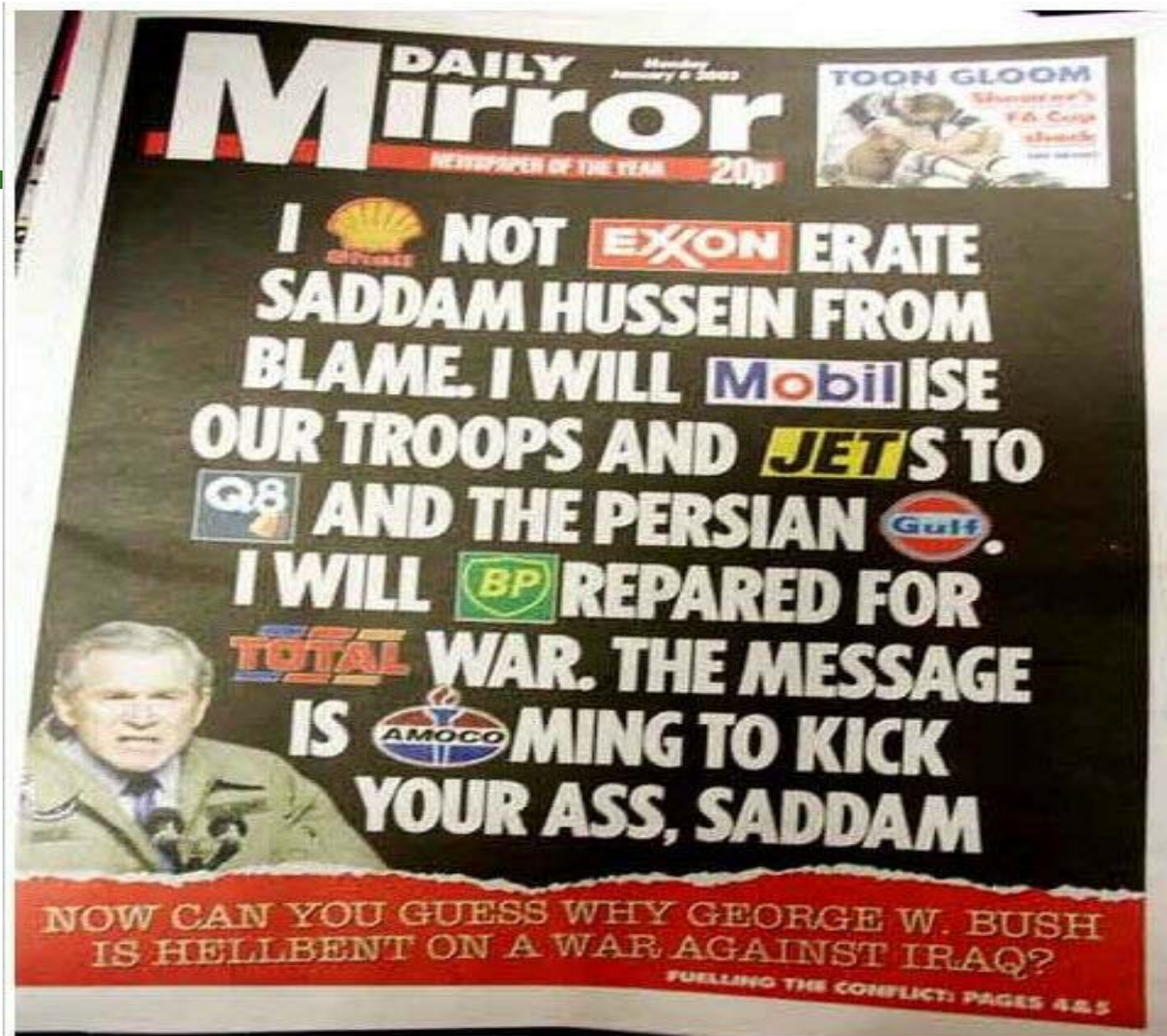
The necessary eco-social transition enhances risks (but definitely less than business as usual).

But at the end climate change policy brings a healthier life, more quality of life (not sacrifice), and by redistribution and participation more potential of innovation.

20. Another world, a new civilisation, ecosocialism is possible and necessary

Basically we can be optimistic. Kropotkin described the evolutionary development of nature as process of increasing cooperation. After periods of “competition” there has been some new stage “cooperation”: first “competition” between simple cells and then in an evolutionary jump uniting of cells and increasing “cooperation”, then again long periods of “competition” and new evolutionary jumps to higher, more complicated forms of life until man (homo sapiens). Will this pattern occur again in society? (See Elisabeth Sahtouris)

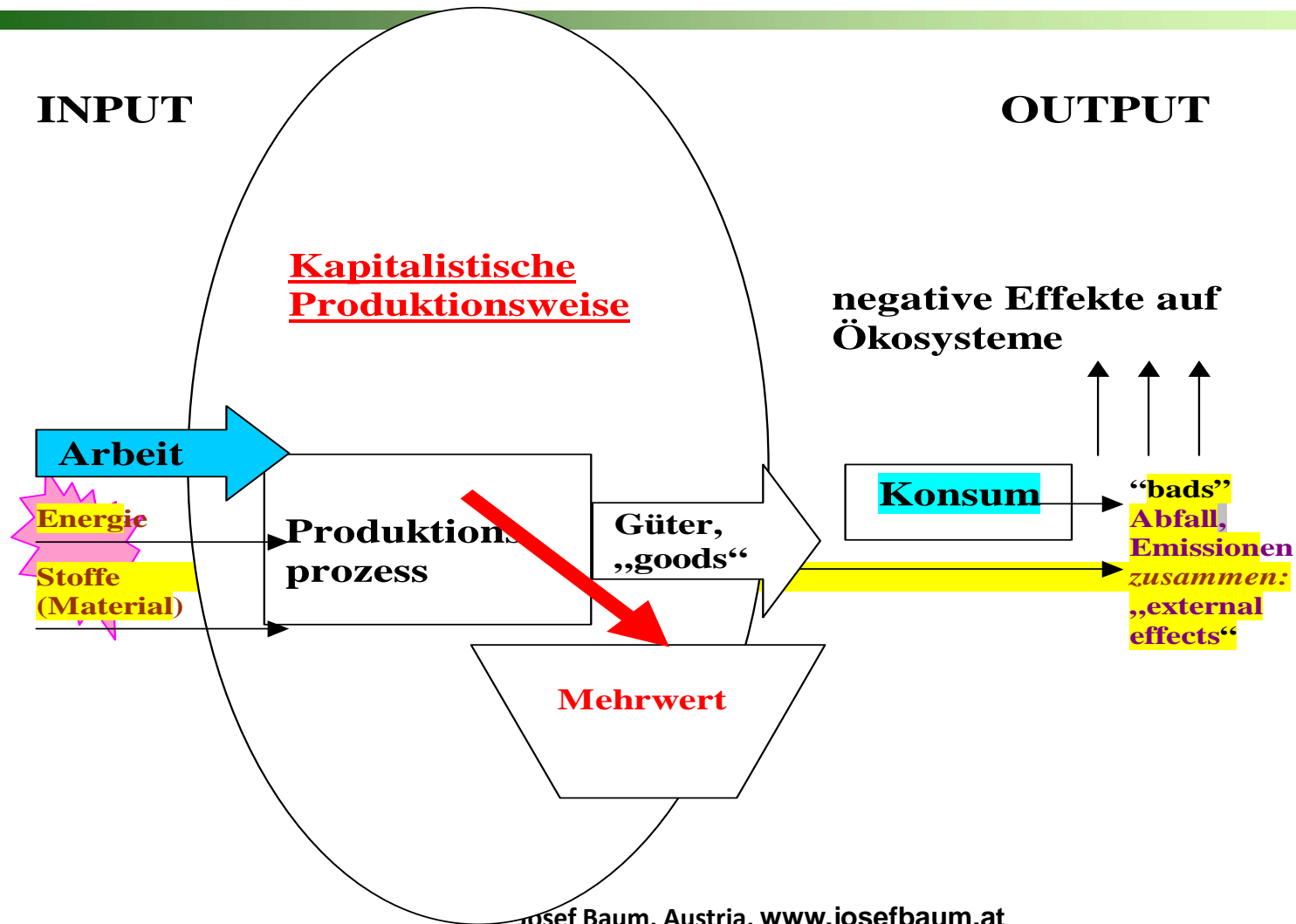
**Another world is possible, another world is necessary
for the safeguard of the living conditions of
mankind: a new civilisation: ecosocialism**



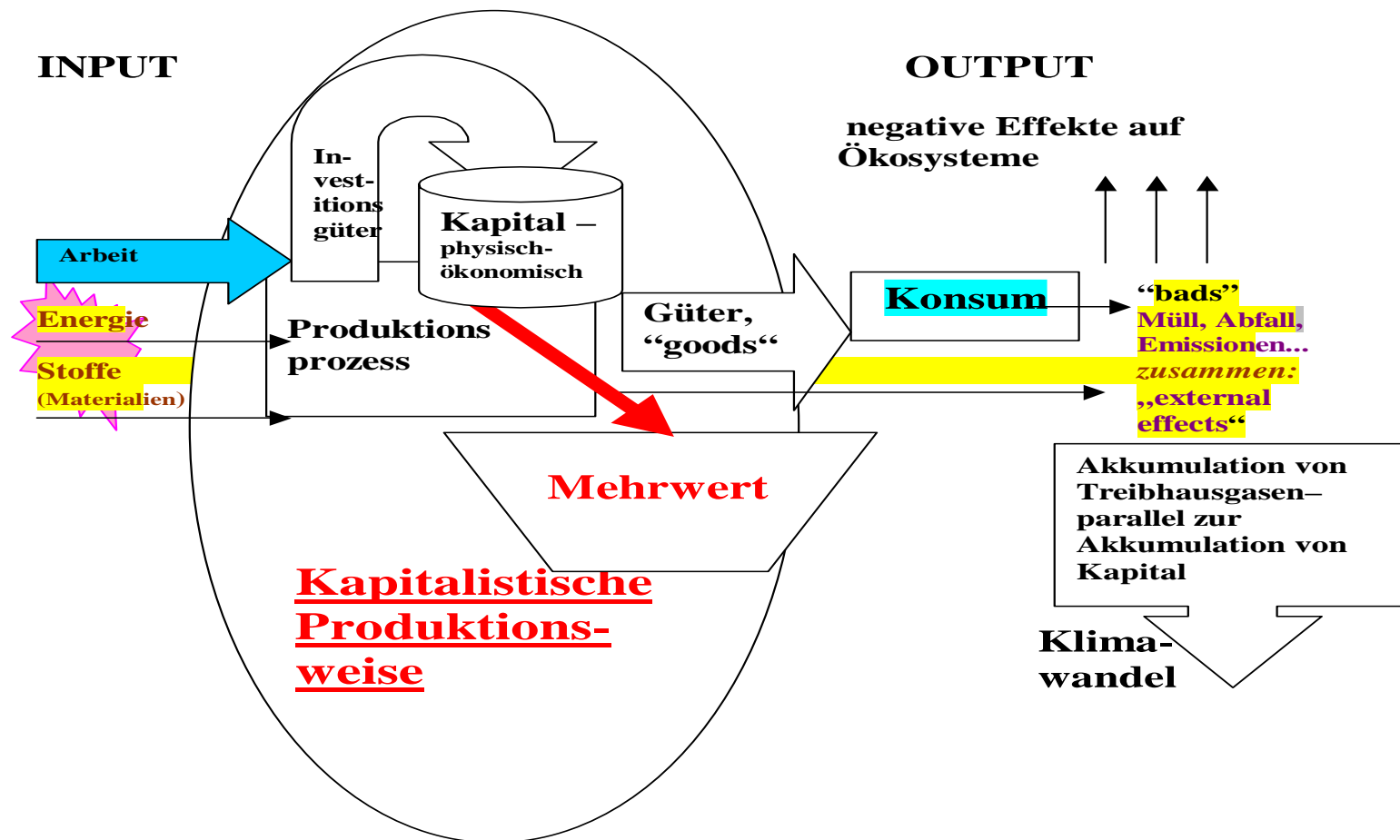
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Arbeit, Konsum, Materialflüsse, Mehrwertproduktion im Kapitalismus



Arbeit, Konsum, Materialflüsse, Mehrwertproduktion
im Kapitalismus
Gesellschaftliche Produktion – private Aneignung –
gesellschaftlicher Schaden



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Materialflüsse, Mehrwertproduktion and Krisenpotentiale im nichtnachhaltigen Kapitalismus

(ohne Dienstleistungen)

Gesellschaftliche Produktion – private Aneignung –
gesellschaftlicher Schaden

