

Exploring degrowth at a societal level: between theory & practice

Dr. Leah Temper
McGill University



“Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist.”

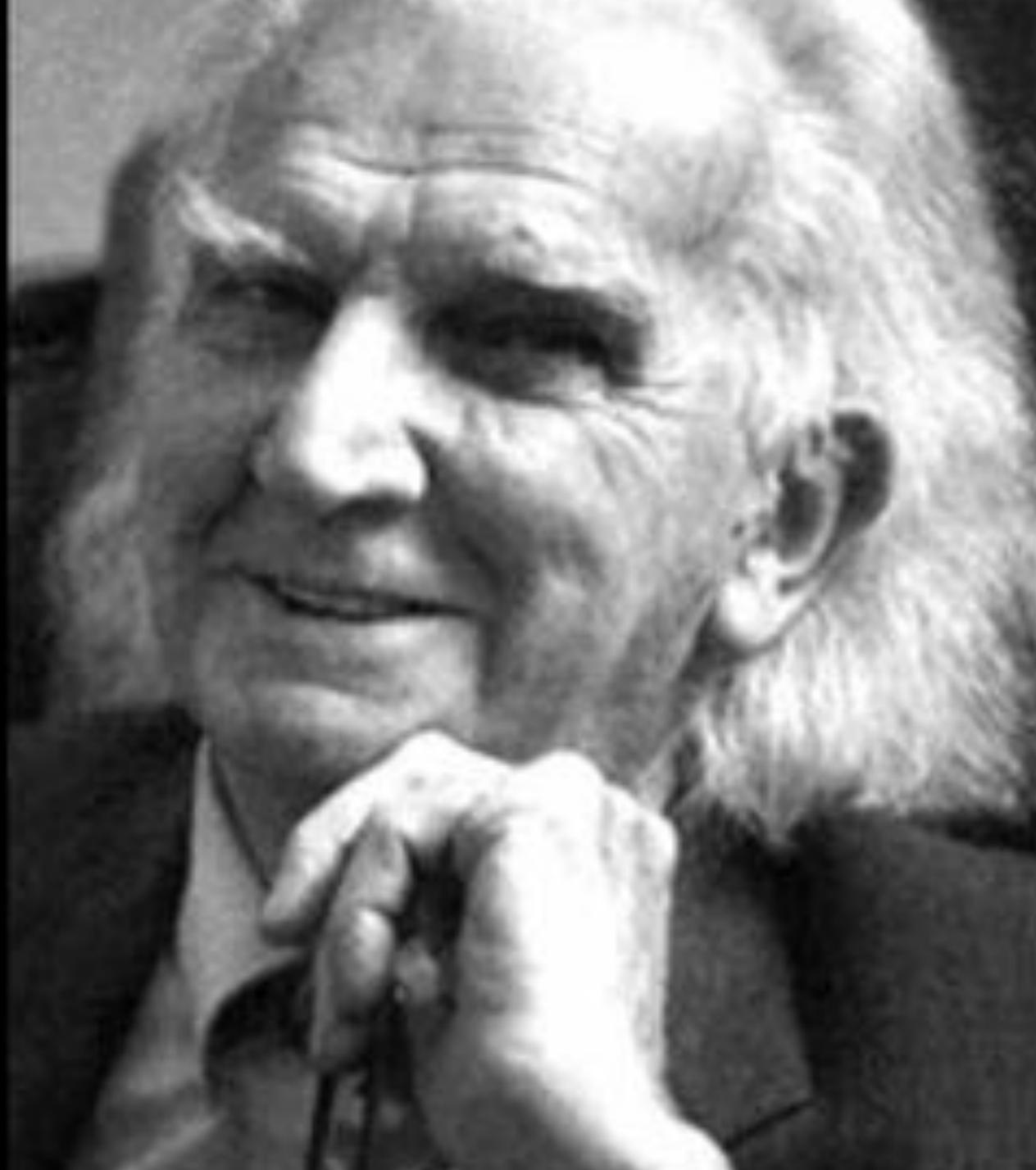
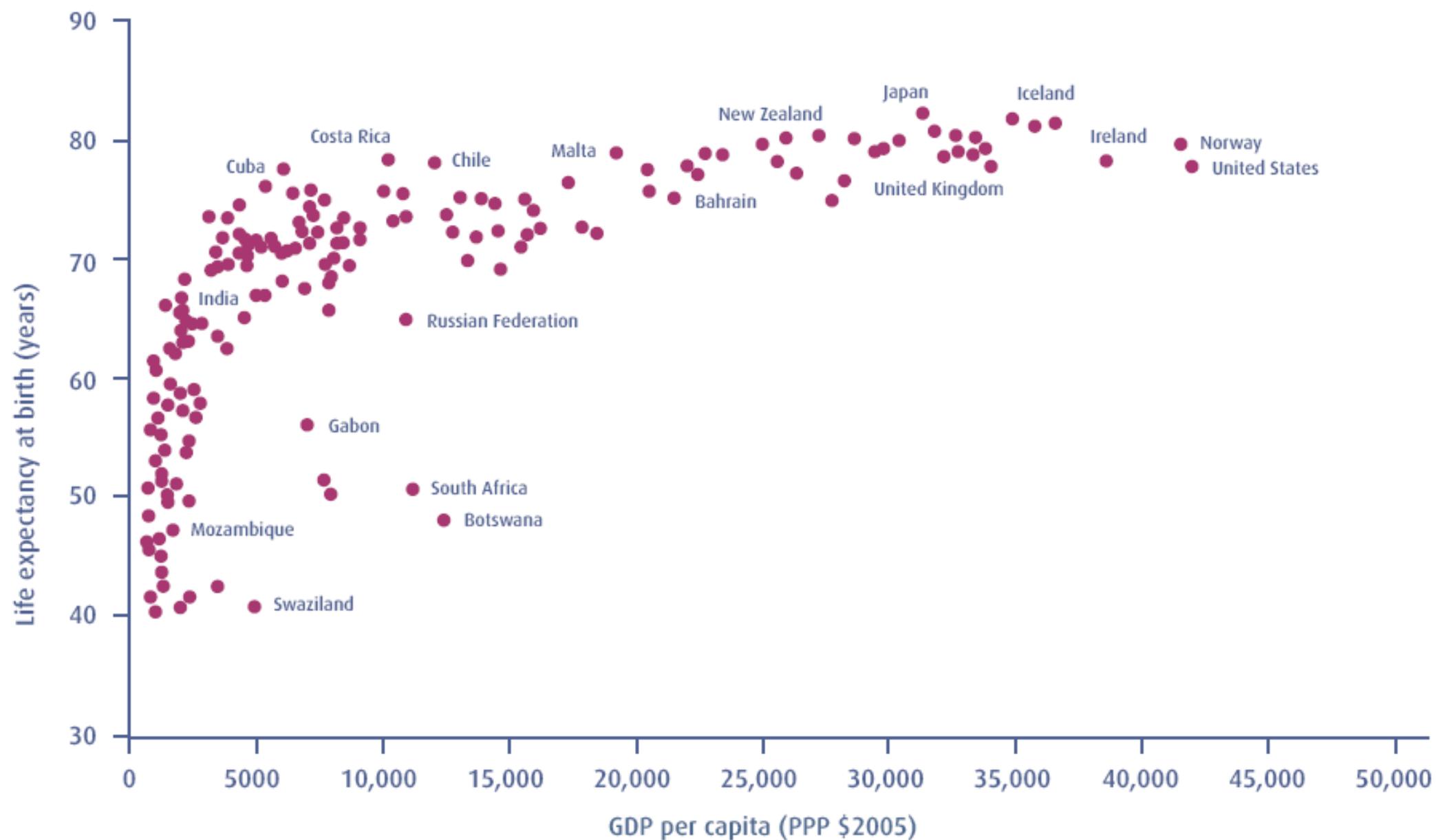
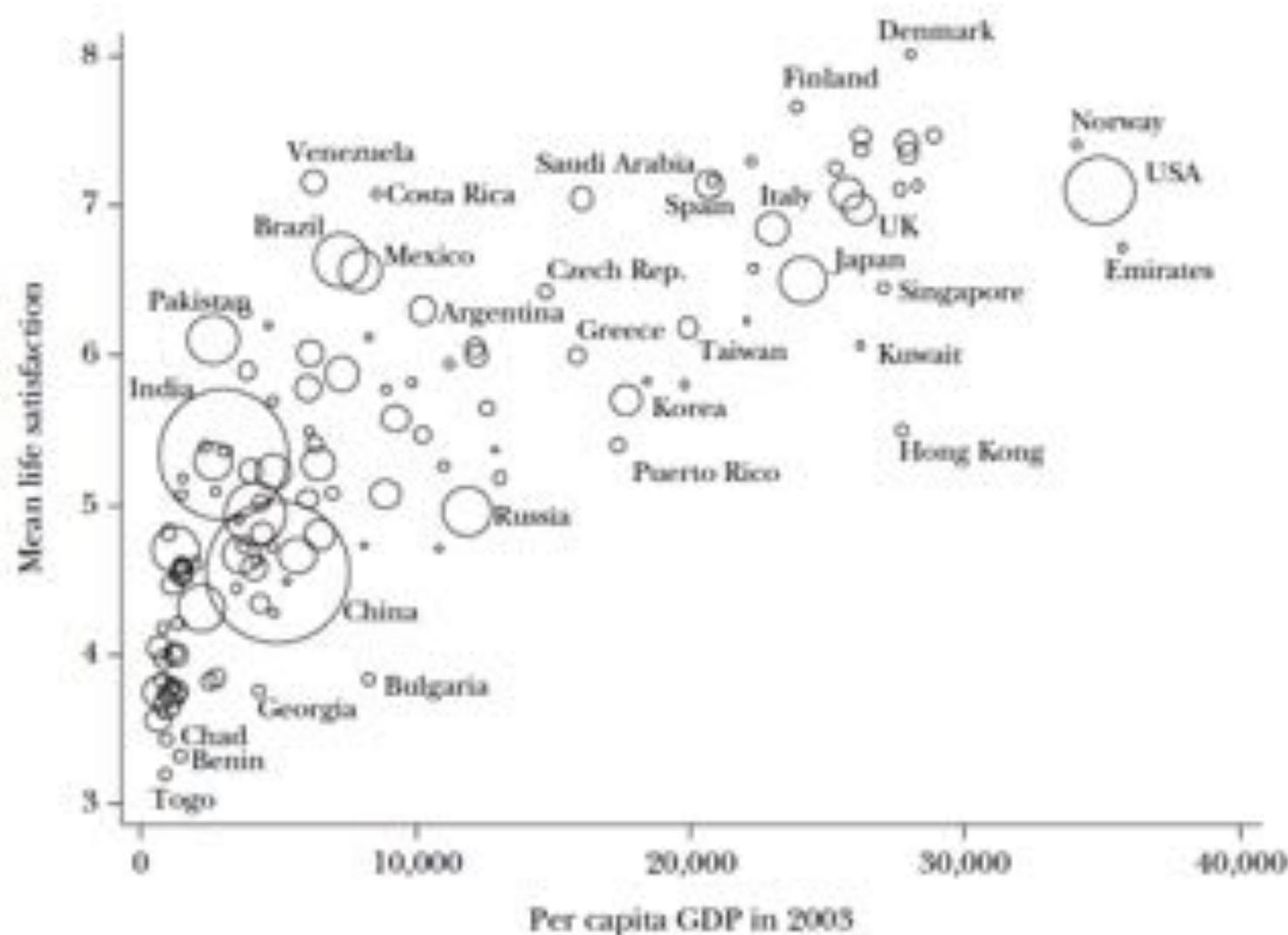


Figure 8 **Life expectancy at birth vs average annual income**¹⁶



Life Satisfaction and Per Capita GDP around the World



Source: Penn World Tables 6.2.

Note: Each circle is a country, with diameter proportional to population. GDP per capita in 2003 is measured in purchasing power parity chained dollars at 2000 prices.

In sum

- No absolute decoupling
- No dematerialization
- Energy cannot be recycled and materials only to a small extent.
- Improvements in resource productivity might lead to Jevons' Paradox/rebound effect.
- 3% growth means a doubling in size every 25 years.
- Convergence to a European average of 16 tons per person/year would multiply Material Flows in the world by 3.

Degrowth Definitions

“Voluntary transition towards a just, participatory, and ecologically sustainable society.” (1st Paris Degrowth Conference)

Degrowth looks for alternative ways to bring about wellbeing, social justice and ecological sustainability in our society through equitable downscaling of production and consumption.

Degrowth as a proposal for radical change, a “missile concept”, a provocation. Putting a pig on the tracks of a one-way future consisting only of growth (Ursula K. Le Guin)



GROWTH

(MORE OF
THE SAME)



STEADY
STATE

(THE SAME)



RECESSION

(LESS OF
THE SAME)

DEGROWTH,
SIMPLY
DIFFERENT



Degrowth is a radical
collective
re-imagining of our
economy

**What economies do we want and need to
improve well-being, thriving and flourishing
together with the community of life?**

Technologically appropriate and sovereign

LOW←TECH MAGAZINE
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REPAIR MANIFESTO

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT

IF YOU CAN'T FIX IT, YOU DON'T OWN IT.

REPAIR IS BETTER THAN RECYCLING
Making our things last longer is both more efficient and more cost-effective than mining them for raw materials.

REPAIR SAVES YOU MONEY
Fixing things is often free, and usually cheaper than replacing them. Doing the repair yourself saves you money.

REPAIR TEACHES ENGINEERING
The best way to find out how something works is to take it apart.

REPAIR SAVES THE PLANET
Earth has limited resources. Eventually we will run out. The best way to be efficient is to reuse what we already have.

Low-tech Magazine refuses to assume that every problem has a high-tech solution.

No ticket required

Library visits
100.2 million



Movie attendance
112.2 million



NHL attendance
4.8 million



Canadians visit the library almost as much as we go to the movies and 20 times more often than we attend Canadian NHL games each year.

Sources: Canadian Urban Libraries Council, "2010 Canadian Public Library Statistics"; Statistics Canada, Motion Picture Theaters, 2010; ESPN, NHL Attendance Report, 2011–2012

What we carry



62%
have a
library card

64%
have a
passport

Nearly two out of three Canadians have library cards—about as many as have passports.

Commons



IMPACT 05/31/2018 05:46 am ET | Updated Feb 25, 2019

Estonia Is About To Roll Out Free Public Transport Across The Whole Country

"It's beneficial for the whole of society."

Adam Forrest On Assignment For HuffPost



Dossier de presse

Crea la teva
energia
renovable



Solidarity, Care & Reproductive Economies

Unpaid childcare is Australia's largest industry - it needs to be acknowledged

Putting a dollar figure on unpaid childcare - valued at more than \$345bn in Australia - encourages governments and employers to factor it into their planning

POINTE-SAINT-CHARLES

IL FAUT SAUVER
LE BÂTIMENT 7

« ON A GAGNÉ ! »

MICROBRASSERIE,
ÉPICERIE ET FONDERIE

D'AUTRES PROJETS
À LONG TERME

Le bâtiment 7, c'est l'histoire d'une bande de militants qui ont tenu bon contre les promoteurs immobiliers dans Pointe-Saint-Charles. Leur mission : sauver un vieux bâtiment industriel de la démolition pour le redonner à la communauté. Récit d'un projet qui finit bien, couronné de deux prix au cours des derniers jours.

UN DOSSIER DE SUZANNE COLPRON

IL FAUT SAUVER LE BÂTIMENT 7



Young Agrarians Land Matching

Published on September 1, 2016 — in 2016/Fall 2016/Grow Organic/Land Stewardship

How to degrow?

who's flying

part one splitting 'airs

let's take a look at the spread of all flights by uk residents



70%
of all flights

are taken by just

15%
of people!

that's 3 out of 20 people nabbing most of our sky



there's more



57%

more than half of us don't fly at all in a year!



12%

and only a small minority of our flights are for business

afreeride.org
#afreeride

a free ride

© International flights by UK residents from British airports, Source: OAG Statistical Review, July 2016.
Public expenditure of and attitudes towards air travel, Table A100002, 2016.
OAG National Travel Survey 2015, Table 10/01/15

a first class problem

Most of us only take one or two flights a year at most, but **we're taxed the same as the tiny minority who fly all the time.**

Here's a better way: replace the current tax on flights with **a fairer system** that taxes people according to how often they fly.

introducing the frequent flyer levy

a

Everyone gets one tax free return flight each year.

c

Tax kicks in at a low rate from the second flight, then goes up a notch for each extra flight in that year.

d

The extra money is set aside to support greener alternatives to flying.

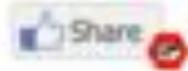


**'No country
would find 173
billion barrels
of oil in the
ground and
leave them
there'**

Justin Trudeau
- Nov 5, 2018



Norway won't drill in Arctic archipelago for billions of barrels of oil



Tweet

8



April 10, 2019

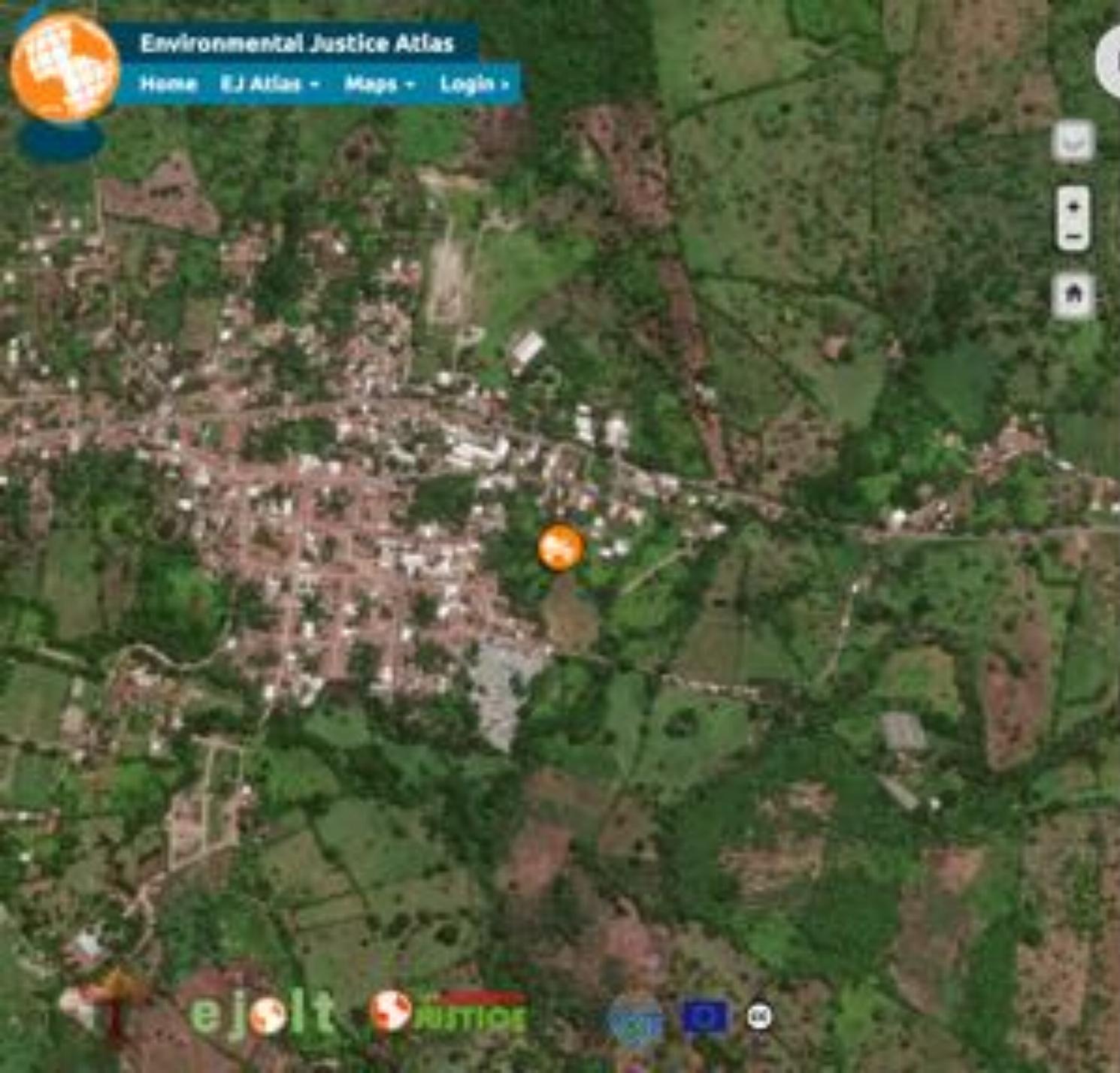
MARY JO DILONARDO



El Salvador makes history as first nation to impose blanket ban on metal mining

Campaigners celebrate victory for 'water over gold' after country unanimously ushers through historic bill to end all forms of metal mining





Pacific Rim at El Dorado mine, El Salvador



Human rights violations, killing of men and women activists, at World Bank's CIADI; finally the company had to leave.

Description

The company in conflict is the Canadian Pacific Rim Mining Corporation, a trans corporation active in the mining sector. The accusation regards the activities of company in the Department of Cabañas, in El Salvador. Pacific Rim carried out activities in the area, the effects of which implied that affected communities deny selling their lands and leaving them to Pacific Rim for extractive activities, the damages that the mining could have provoked. Indeed, a report about the project El Dorado from the International Union for the preservation of Nature, these fears, and demonstrated the risks of environmental impacts such as acid reduction, water pollution, and impacts on agriculture and health. The intention of Pacific Rim Corporation is to exploit a gold mine in Cabañas, and the pressure it exerts aim generated conflicts, increased social divisions, and prompted threats and violence against the opposition to the project. These events, including the murder of several environmental activists, among others still need to be dealt with in depth. Pacific Rim despite its failure to provide the required studies and reports, strongly denied the allegations and demanded 301 million dollars to El Salvador before the World Bank.



FT Magazine Environment

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Why the world's recycling system stopped working

China's refusal to become the west's dumping ground is forcing the world to face up to a waste crisis



Philippines ships 69 containers of rubbish back to Canada

Politics
Ottawa announces plans to ban single-use plastics starting in 2021 at the earliest

PM says list of banned items in Canada still needs to be firmed up
CBC News · Posted: Jun 10, 2019 9:48 AM ET | Last Updated: June 10



The Guardian

India bans imports of waste plastic to tackle environmental crisis

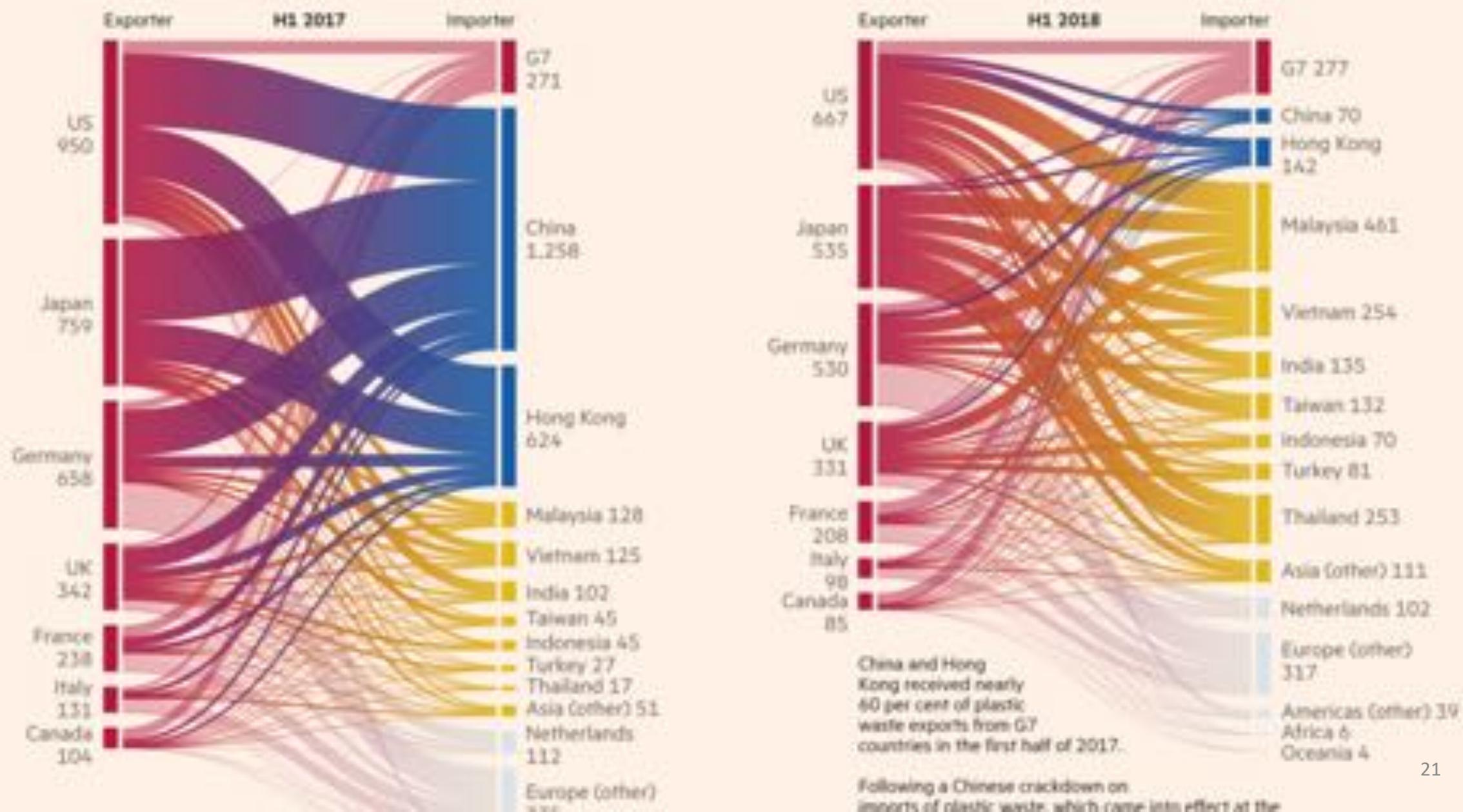
Tighter rules come a year after China implemented similar ban, prompting western nations to send rubbish elsewhere

Harry Cockburn | Thursday 7 March 2019 11:32 | [Like](#) [Click to follow The Independent](#)



How the global river of plastic waste changed course in just 12 months

Exports of plastic waste, pairings and scrap from G7 countries ('000 tonnes)



Chinese Anger Over Pollution Becomes Main Cause of Social Unrest

Bloomberg News

March 6, 2013, 11:00 AM GMT-5

Pollution has replaced land disputes as the main cause of social unrest in China, a retired Communist Party official said, as delegates to the country's legislature lamented environmental degradation.

China now sees 30,000 to 50,000 so-called mass incidents every year, Chen Jiping, a former leading member of the party's Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs, said yesterday. Increased use of mobile phones and the Internet has allowed protesters to show their anger more effectively, he said.

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World Map

2952 cases reported

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¡Esto no Vale! Isso não Vale
operations lead to socio-e

On the occasion of the Internatio
EN/JUSTICE - EJAtlas team relea
socio-environmental conflicts in t
mining and infrastructure project

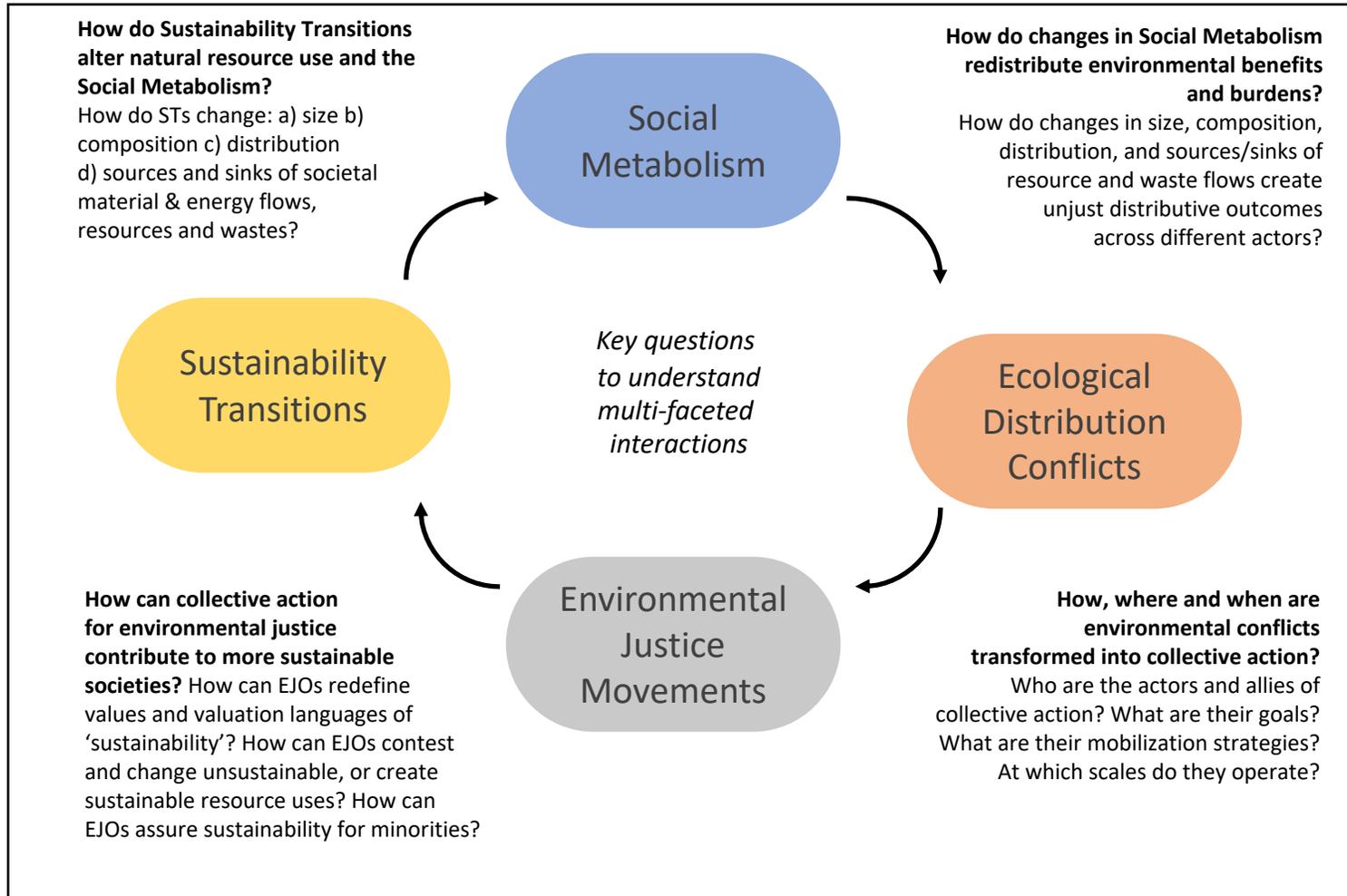
Blockadia: Keep Fossil Fue

On every continent there is an in
intensity of resistance movement

These interwoven spaces of resis
chain of extraction, transportation



Recently Updated Conflicts



Majority of Canadians support a ban on single-use plastics: poll

JANICE DICKSON >
OTTAWA
PUBLISHED JULY 24, 2019

TRENDING

1 OPINION

Top B.C. court quashes Victoria's ban on single-use plastic bags

MIKE HAGER >
VANCOUVER
PUBLISHED JULY 11, 2019

TRENDING

1 OPINION

Key Questions

- **What are the production/consumption systems we want as citizens? – democratic debate**
- **What is the good life?**
- **What are the incumbent interests that are invested in the status quo? How can we dismantle and counteract this resistance towards transformation?**
- **What new relations of power and socio-metabolic relationships will emerge?**

Thank you

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