

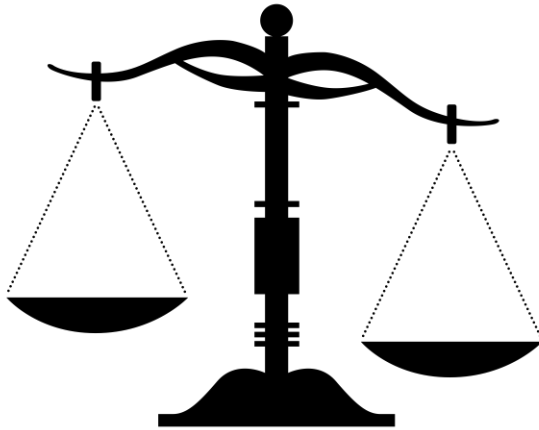


BUDDHIST ECONOMICS

“Creating an Equitable, Sustainable Future”

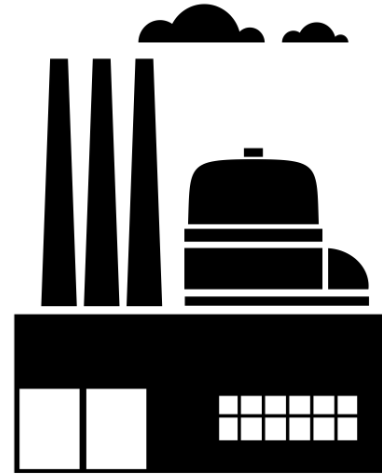
CLAIR BROWN, University of California, Berkeley

CRITICAL PROBLEMS



Created by Ferran Brown
from Noun Project

Inequality



Created by Re Jean Soo
from Noun Project

Climate Change

BUDDHIST ECONOMICS

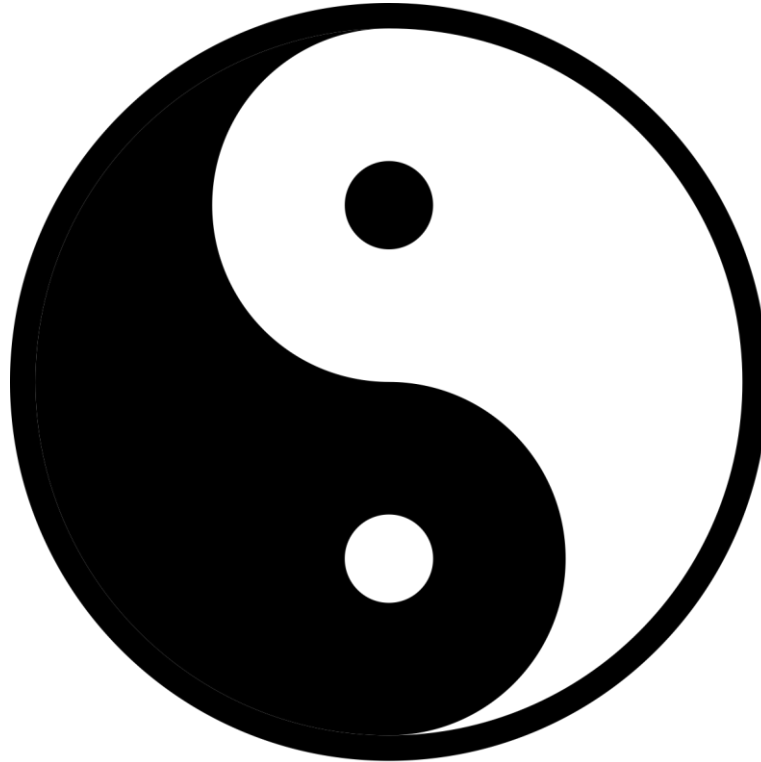
1. INTERDEPENDENCE

With Each Other & Nature



2. IMPERMANENCE

Everything changes



3. COMPASSION

Reduce suffering



Created by Chris Homan
from Noun Project

Barry Commoner

Founder of modern ecology

- Interdependence is one of the four laws of ecology:

“Everything is connected to everything else. There is one ecosphere for all living organisms and what affects one, affects all.”

Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Random House, 1971).

FREE MARKET ECONOMICS

3 Beliefs

1. More is better



2. People are selfish and rational



3. Goal is maximize income



All markets are structured: Who structures them?

- Big Business for big profits (forget the common good)
- Governments for the common good:
 - Rules & incentives structure markets, along with social programs.

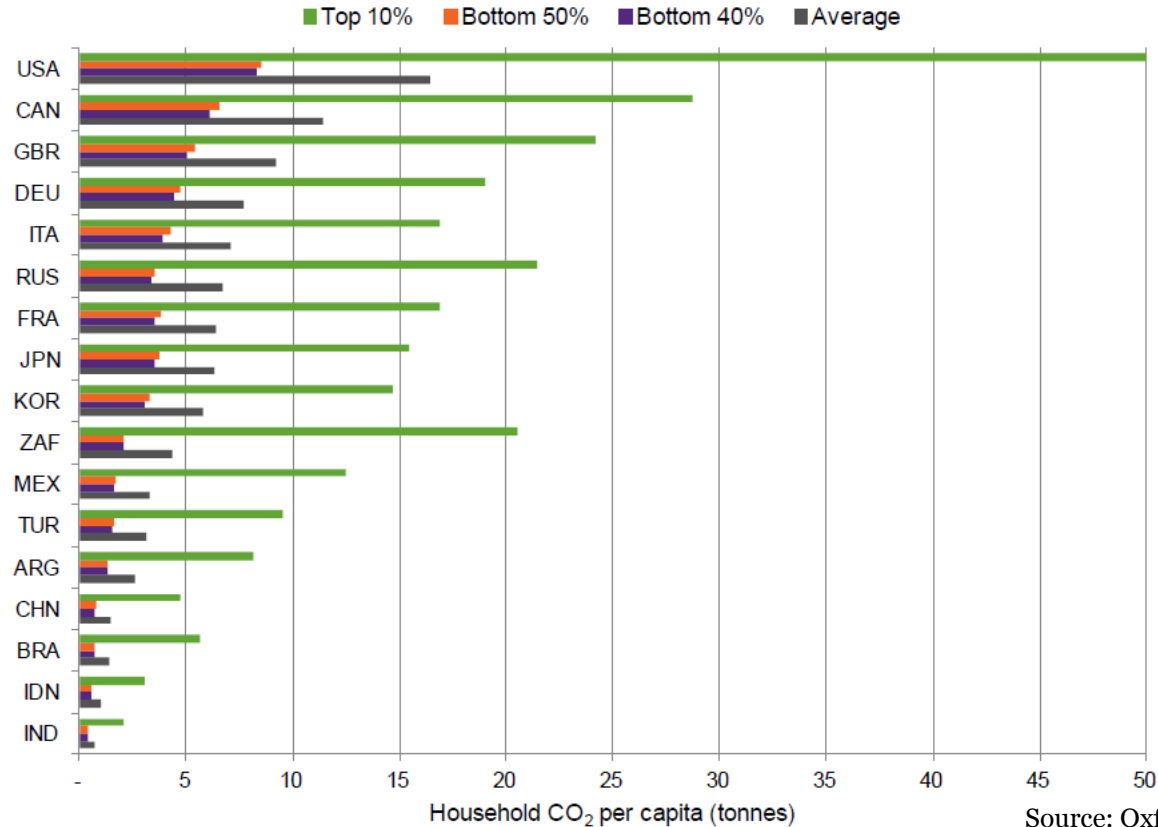
Data and Evidence: 4 Observations

1. Inequality and CO₂ emissions go together.
2. GDP growth has increased inequality—rich grab increased GDP.
3. CO₂ emissions increase rapidly with income.
4. Helping people and the environment makes you happy.

1. Inequality and CO2 emissions go together

- The rich (both countries and people) are big polluters.
- Countries choose their level of inequality and their carbon footprint.

Per Capita Lifestyle Consumption Emissions in G20 Countries



Source: Oxfam Report 2015

Handout: Selected Country Data (various years)

- GDP and CO₂ emissions (per person) are not directly related in rich countries.
- GDP per person and inequality are not directly related.
- Developing countries need to increase standard of living.

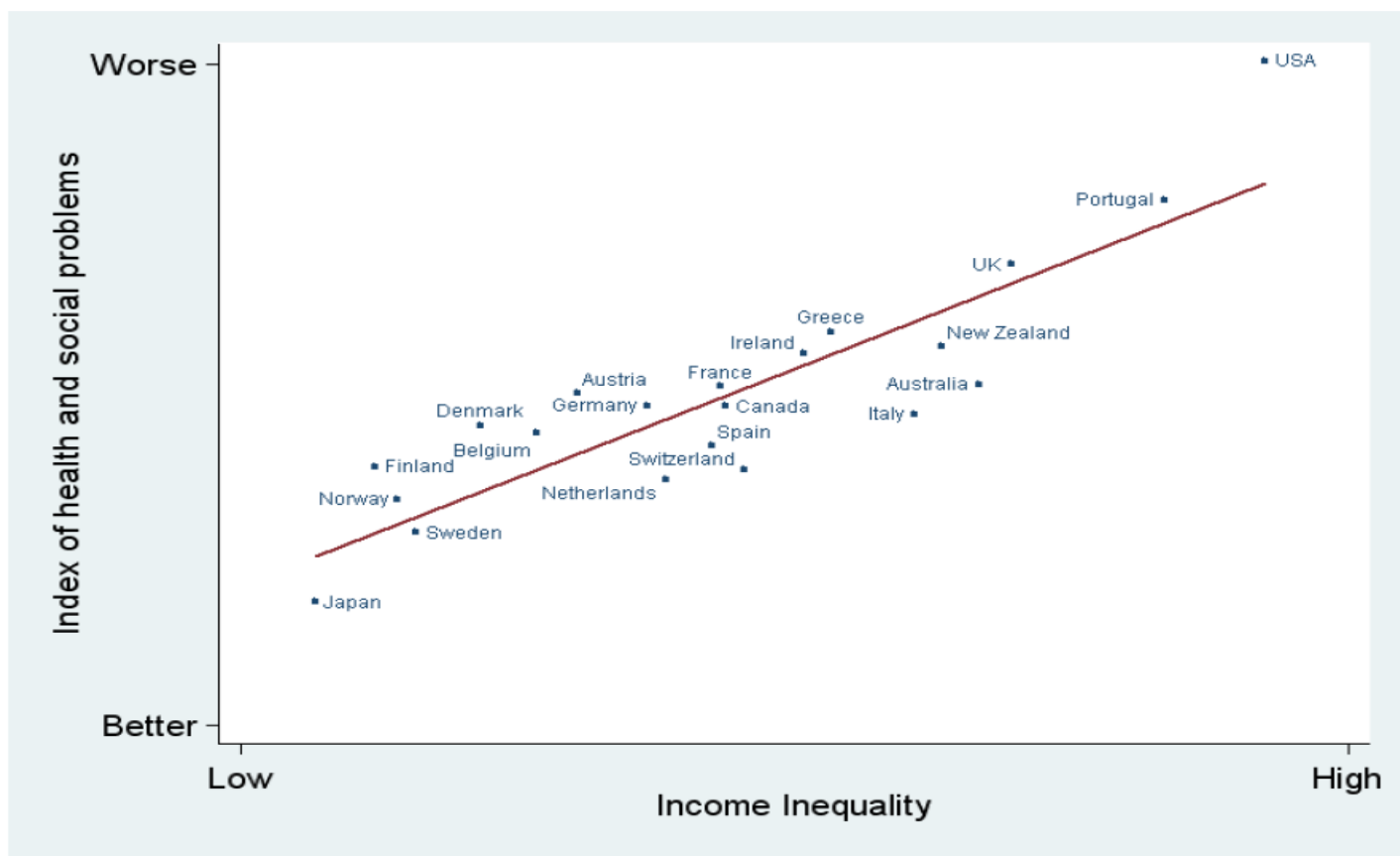
2. Inequality reduces well-being

- People feel worse off as inequality grows (invidious comparisons)
- Well-being index worsens as income inequality increases across rich countries.

Health and Social Problems are Worse in More Unequal Countries

Index of:

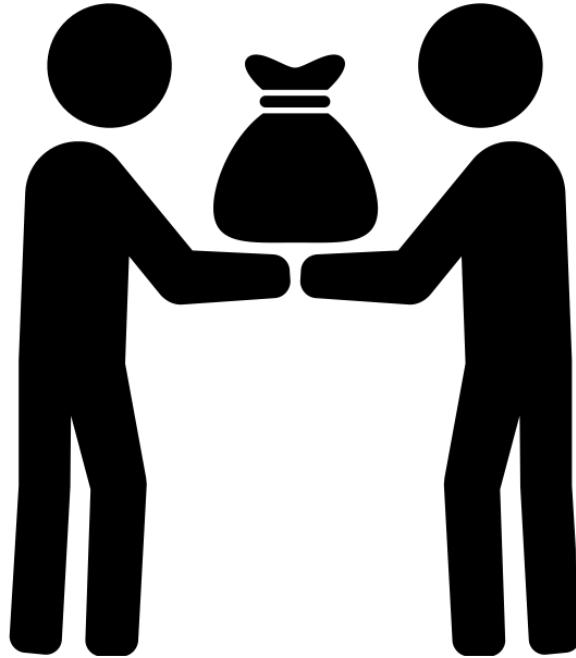
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility



GOAL: transfer well-being (and income) from the rich to people in need.



Altruistic or Selfish? Interdependent or Individualistic?



3. People are altruistic as well as self-regarding

- Psychologists & neuroscientists confirm:
people act with altruistic as well as selfishness.
- Altruism: unconditional caring about others with no ulterior motive.

4. Helping people and the environment makes you happy.

- Neuroscientists: helping others makes you happy; enjoying nature makes you happy.
- Eudaimonic happiness comes from helping others, good relationships, contributing to community.
 - Hedonic happiness from buying stuff doesn't last long.
 - Buddhism—Happiness comes from within, not from consumption. Grasping makes us suffer.

WHAT CREATES HAPPINESS?



Helping others



Caring for the planet

A Buddhist Economy can create
a healthier, happier world

INDIVIDUALS

1. Live Mindfully with Love, Compassion & Wisdom



2. **IMPT:** Work Together & Take Action



Created by Francielly Costantin Senra
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Created by Alberto Venegas
from Noun Project

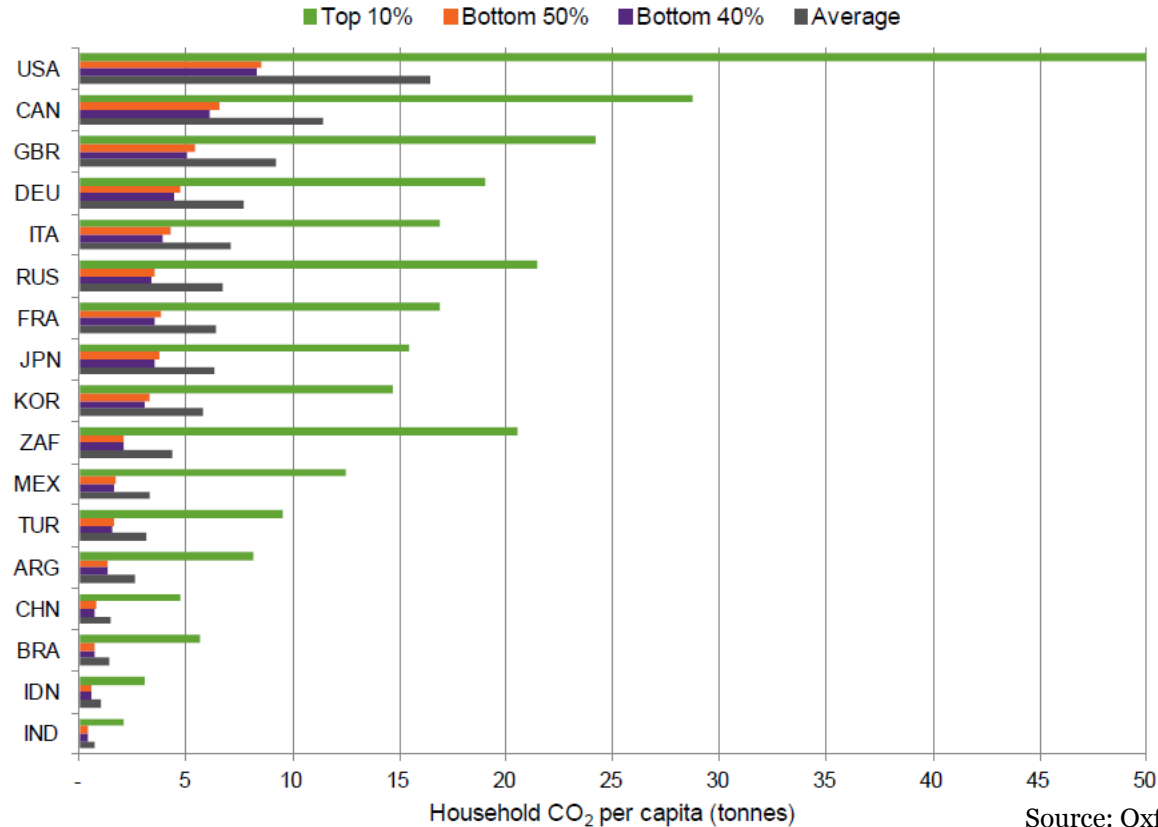
Consume Less:

Live with nature, buy only what you need.

- UN Benchmark: 2.1 tCO₂e per person per year by 2050
 - United States avg per person of 16.4 tCO₂e yearly compared to European Union avg of 6.7 tCO₂.
 - “Typical” US person emits 8.5 tCO₂e yearly.

People in US have exceptionally large carbon footprint.

Per Capita Lifestyle Consumption Emissions in G20 Countries



Source: Oxfam Report 2015

Work Together to Create Change:

Engaged Buddhism

“Our collective compassion, mindfulness, and concentration nourishes us, but it also can help to reestablish the Earth’s equilibrium and restore balance. Together, we can bring about real transformation for ourselves and for the world.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Handout: Create Buddhist Economy with Known Policies

- Sustainable Shared-Prosperity Policy Index (SSPI)
 - Three categories
 - Sustainability
 - Structured markets
 - Government Programs

Goal: support meaningful life for all
in sustainable world

SSPI Rankings (Beta)

50 countries:

by ranking for SSPI.

by ranking for each category.

"To embrace and practice Buddhist economics, you need courage. Courage to change, courage to protect the environment, courage to promote justice, and courage to live with joy."

CLAIR BROWN, PH.D.
BUDDHISTECONOMICS.NET



BUDDHIST
ECONOMICS



CLOSING THOUGHTS

We need political will and courage to take action **now**
for people and the planet, over generations.

This is a lifetime commitment and process.

May we continue the journey together.



BUDDHIST ECONOMICS:

An enlightened approach to the dismal science

Clair Brown

Bloomsbury Press

Buddhisteconomics.net

Gratitude to Priya Iyer (UCB 2014) for creating deck, to IRLE for financial support, and to friends around the world for insight and support.

Equitable Global Solution

All countries

- Use clean energy and regenerative agriculture.
- Waste less food (30% wasted globally; 40% in US)
- Eat less meat.
 - Animals use 83% of farmland, cause 57% of food-related emissions, provide 18% of calories.

Rich countries reduce wasteful consumption; fly less; support sustainable development in poor countries.

Poor countries increase basic consumption; reduce population growth.

What about climate change?

- **Climate science:** Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions overheat the atmosphere, causing climate change and destroying the nine ecosystems that sustain the planet.
- **Morality:** Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* explains the immorality of emitting GHGs that harms the most vulnerable, poor people.
- **Economics:** We have the knowledge and resources to create a low-carbon economy.
- **Politics:** Stop burning fossil fuels. Use regenerative agriculture. All countries are harmed by GHG emissions, mostly caused by large or rich economies.

Solution is a political problem.

Paris 2015 (COP21)-- Not Enough.

- Need to stay under 1.5C to prevent catastrophic changes-- sea level rise, warm & acidic oceans, droughts, inadequate water supplies, deaths from overheating & disease.
- Current pledges will cause temperatures to rise 2.9C by 2100.
 - If countries do not act: temperatures rise 4.5C
- Top four emitters (China 27%, US 15%, EU 10%, India 7%) cause 59% of GHGs.

Lower your carbon footprint

Measure carbon footprint online & lower it.

- Drive electric car (charge with green energy) --- walk or cycle short distances; take trains, buses instead of planes; use videoconferencing instead of business travel.
- Insulate home & dress for weather; demand green products; conserve water.

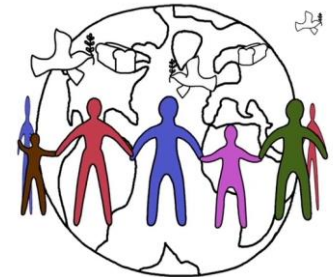
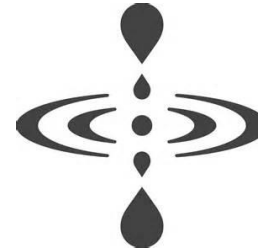
What Makes My Life Meaningful?

1. What is important to me?



Created by TukTuk Design
from Noun Project

2. What do I need to live a meaningful life?



FREE MARKET V. BUDDHIST ECONOMICS

Goal is to maximize average
national income (“more is
better”)

Goal is to provide well-being for
all
in sustainable world.

Subsidies to fossil fuel industry and to the rich (direct payments, in-kind payments)

- Direct fossil fuel subsidies worldwide *\$333 billion*
- Add social costs (indirect costs to human health & environmental damage): subsidies are *\$5.3 trillion* (6.5% of global output).
 - IMF for 2015
- Without taxing CO2 emissions, low-income families & regions indirectly (worse health & pollution) subsidize rich people's high-carbon, wasteful lifestyles.

Role of Government

- Rules, incentives **structure markets**, along with **social programs** to achieve goals
 - Transition to modern, low carbon, equitable economy.
 - Create an economy that supports meaningful life for all people and cares for Mother Earth.

Dalai Lama (Berkeley, Feb 2014)

- Preservation of the environment and dealing with global climate change require that we put the global interest before local or national interest.
- More needs to be done to close the yawning gap between rich and poor. It requires action based on truthfulness, honesty and transparency...we are dependent on others for our very survival.