

What if the very rich started polluting like the rest of us?

Level: Bachelor

Start: anytime from April 2023

Duration: 2-3 months (12 EC)

Project form/methods: quantitative analysis of literature data

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Background

Recent literature has shown that the top 1% wealthiest people globally (i.e., people with a net worth that exceeds 11 million US dollar) are responsible for 17% of all GHG emissions, both through their high consumption levels and investments (Chancel, 2022). This has led to warnings about wealth being a key driver of pollution, meaning that the wealthiest individuals have a key role in reaching safer environmental conditions (Otto et al., 2019; Wiedmann et al., 2020). What would the environmental consequences be if this group could reduce emissions to the average level of the top 5% or 10%? Can maximum emissions be connected to the income and net worth that are required for a good life?

Project description

In this project you will create an overview of the current global inequalities in GHG emissions and energy consumption and how they relate to wealth. Based on literature, you will explore how GHG emissions of wealthy individuals can be reduced. You will use this knowledge to compose a set of simplified emission reduction scenarios and estimate their climate change mitigation potential at the global scale.

References

- Chancel, L. (2022) Global carbon inequality over 1990-2019. *Nature Sustainability* **5**, 931-938
- Otto, I.M. et al (2019) Shift the focus from the super-poor to the super-rich. *Nature Climate Change* **9**, 82-87
- Wiedmann, T. et al. (2020) Scientists' warning on affluence. *Nature Communications* **11**:3107