



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITY HALLE-WITTENBERG

Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences
Chair of Economic Ethics
Prof. Dr. Ingo Pies

Ethics and Economics of Institutional Governance

*Lecture 13
Winter Term 2025/26*

Overview

Ethics and Economics of Institutional Governance: 14 Lectures (L)

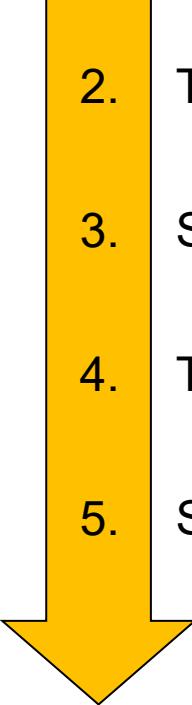
Introduction (L 1)

1. The Ordonomic Approach (L 2 + 3)
2. The Social Structure of Modern Society (L 4 + 5)
3. The Semantics of Modern Society (L 6)
4. Societal Learning Processes for the Reciprocal Adaptation of Social Structure and Semantics (L 7 + 8 + 9)
5. Case Study on Climate Policy (L 10 + 11)
6. Applications: The Ordonomic Line of Argumentation (L 12 + 13)

Summary and Outlook (L 14)



Structure of Last Lecture

- 
1. Where was Marx wrong?
 2. Trade unions between class struggle and social partnership
 3. Social insurance
 4. Tax incidence
 5. Sketches of further applications



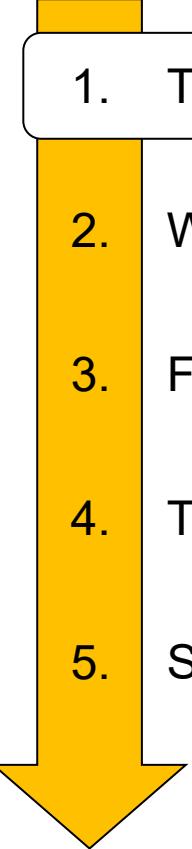
What have we learned?

The most important lessons of the twelfth lecture are:

- Marx and Engels have misdiagnosed capitalism. They saw capitalism as a system for the exploitation of workers. In reality, capitalism is a system for benefitting workers, whose productivity – and thus their wage level and living standard – is sustainably increased by investment (in capital and innovation). If at all, capitalism is a system for the “exploitation” of companies.
- Trade unions that engage in class struggle and exert monopoly power increase unemployment. They put their members (= insiders) better at the expense of outsiders. Trade unions that engage in social partnership increase productivity and employment, so that insiders and outsiders benefit from higher wages.
- In the long term, the costs of social security are borne exclusively by the employees themselves. (Policy does not decide the level of non-wage labour costs, but only the split of gross labour costs into entrepreneurial social security contributions and net wages.)
- The taxation of capital reduces the employment of capital as well as the wage bill. Workers bear a large part of the tax burden.
- Arguments of disgust are misguided in political discourses.
- The rental market for apartments is characterized by numerous counter-intuitive effects. If they are not seen through, democracies may suffer from discourse failure and end up in spirals of intervention.
- Gender (pay) gaps do not automatically prove discrimination.



Structure of Today's Lecture

- 
1. The Malthusian logic
 2. What does democracy mean?
 3. Freedom of thought and speech
 4. Terror (perception)
 5. Sketches of further applications



Malthus: Historical Diagnosis vs. Forecast of Future

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766, † 1834), Anglican pastor, was the holder of the first chair of political economy in England. He published his "Essay on the Principle of Population" in 1798. There he developed a crisis theory of population growth. His central idea:*

Thomas R. Malthus



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Agricultural productivity grows (at best) linearly, while population grows exponentially.

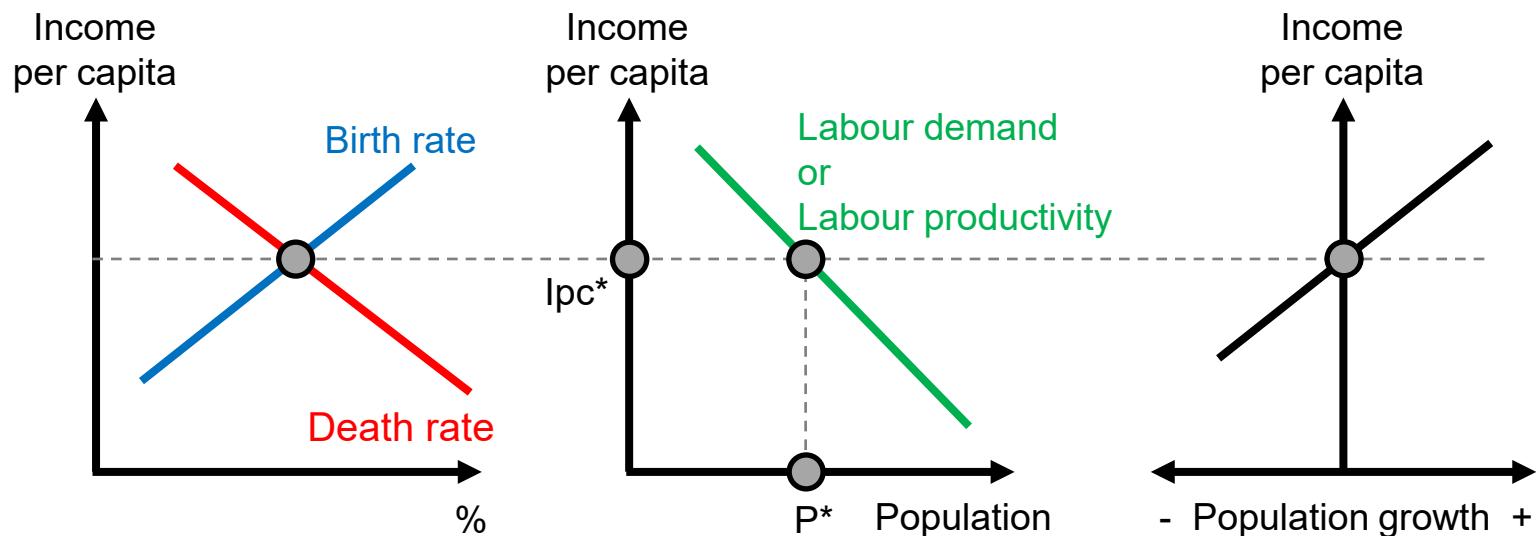


His central idea proved to be dead wrong as a forecast for the future of humanity. But it formulated a very precise insight in the fate of humanity during the last ten thousand years, before we escaped the **Malthusian trap**.



The Malthusian Logic (I)

With hindsight, we can reconstruct the Malthusian logic with the help of formal models.



Equilibrium as starting point:

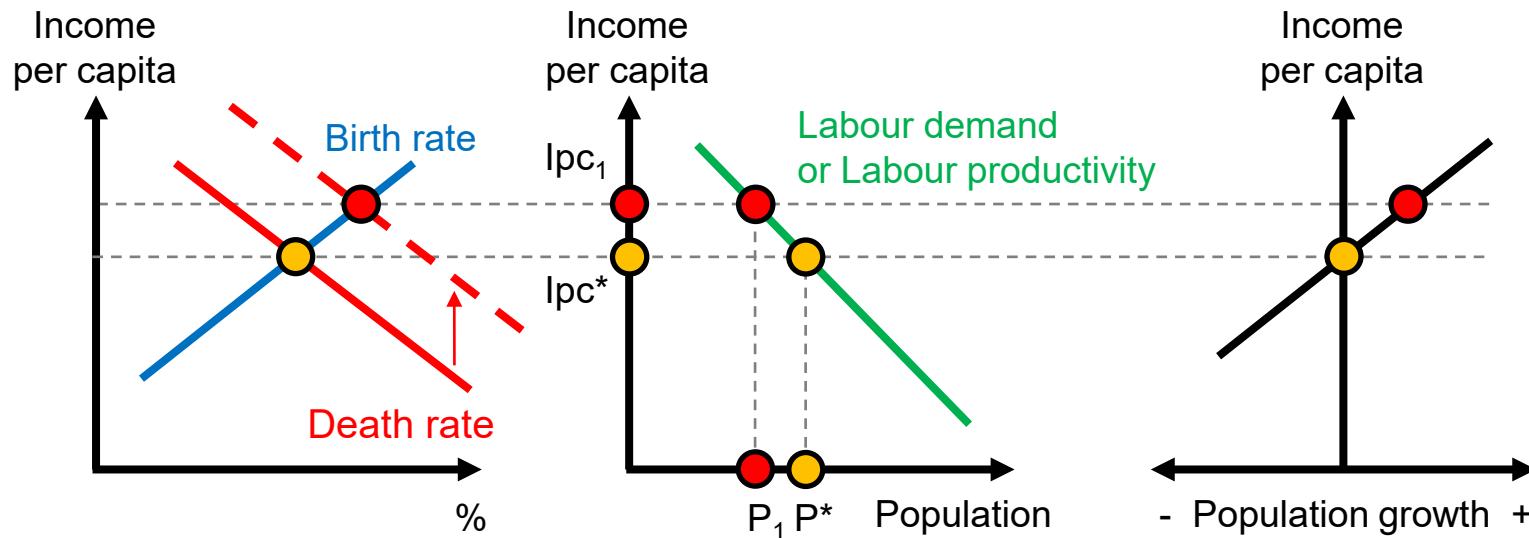
- Left chart: At the intersection of birth and death rates, the population is constant.
- Right chart: The growth rate of the population is zero.
- Medium chart: Here you can see the equilibrium values for per capita income (Ipc^*) and population (P^*).



The Malthusian Logic (II)

Comparative Statics I: Effects of a plague

A higher death rate sets into motion a process of adaptation with short-run and long-run equilibria. (Income rises for a while as long as there is more land per capita.)



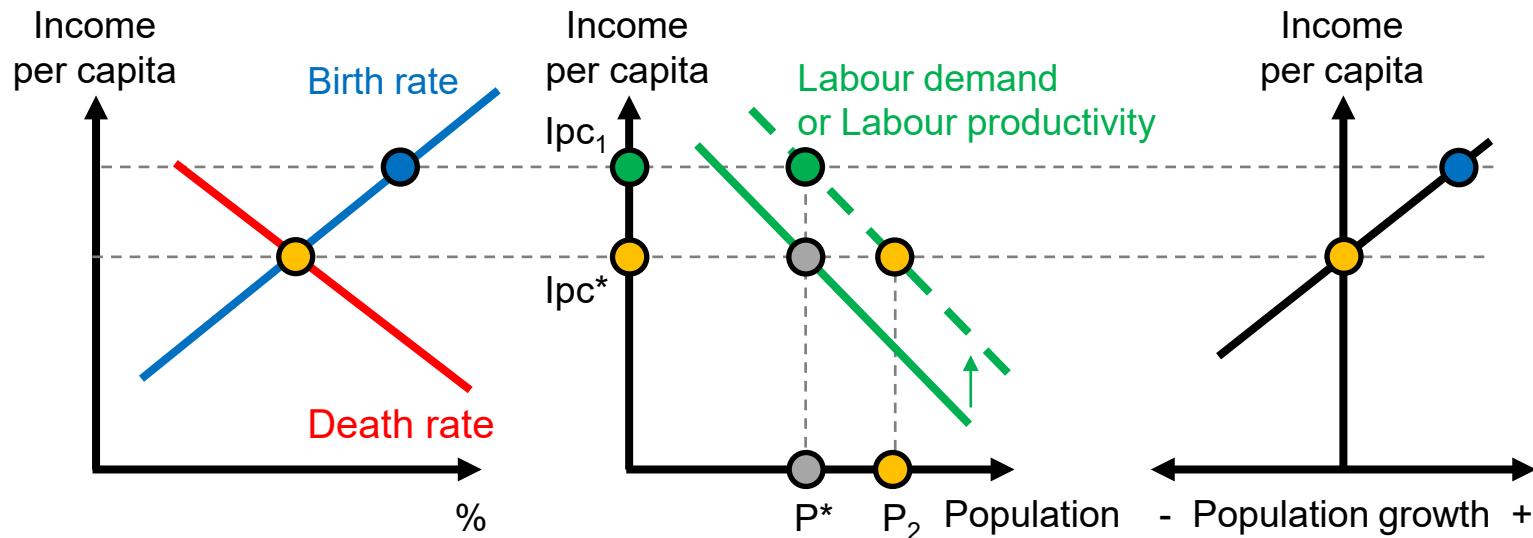
- Left chart: The death rate increases (short-term: red point)
- Medium chart: The population decreases to P_1 . Per capita income rises to Ipc_1 (short-term effect).
- Right chart: The higher per capita income causes the population to grow again (medium-term effect).
- Long-term effect: Population and Ipc return to the old (orange) starting equilibrium (P^* and Ipc^*).



The Malthusian Logic (III)

Comparative Statics II: Effects of innovation

Important insight: Malthusian society becomes populous, while individuals remain poor. Only post-Malthusian society allows per capita income to rise continuously and permanently.



- In the short term, per capita income rises to Ipc_1 . (Middle chart: green points)
- In the medium term, however, the birth rate is rising. Population growth becomes positive. (Left and right chart: blue points)
- In the long term, the orange points are realized: the population has increased to P_2 . But per capita income has fallen back to the old equilibrium level (Ipc^*).



The Empirics of Malthusian Society

In the Malthusian Economy productivity produces people not prosperity

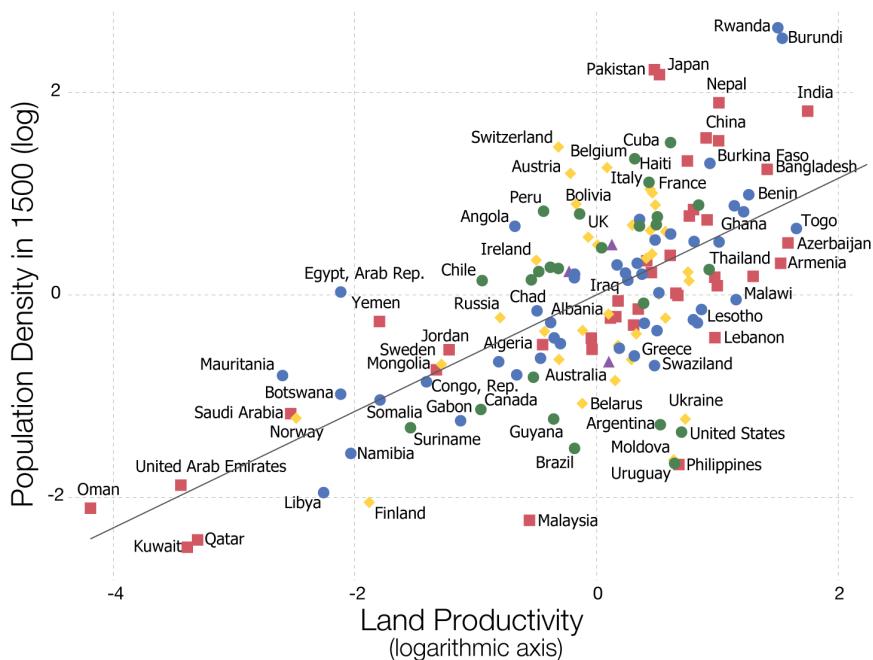


This figure depicts the partial regression line for the effect of land productivity on income per capita in the year 1500 CE, while controlling for the influence of land productivity, absolute latitude, access to waterways, and continental fixed effects.

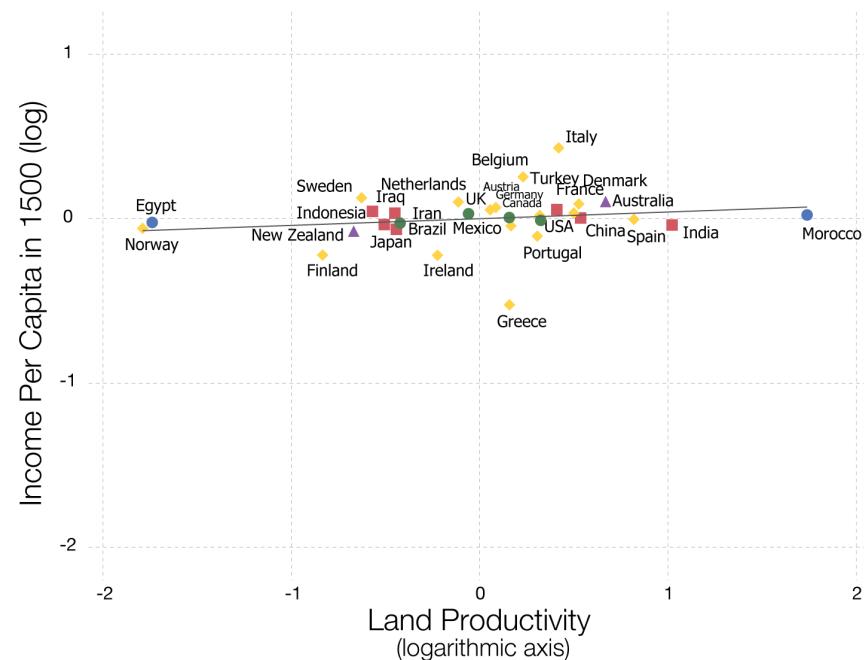
The x- and y-axes plot the residuals obtained from regressing land productivity and income per capita, respectively, on the aforementioned set of covariates.

The color represents the continent of the country: ● Africa ◆ Europe ■ Asia ▲ Oceania ● Americas

The partial effect of land productivity
on population density in 1500 CE



The partial effect of land productivity
on income per capita in 1500 CE



Data source: Quamrul Ashraf and Oded Galor (2011) – *Dynamics and Stagnation in the Malthusian Epoch*. American Economic Review, 101(5): 2003-41.

This is a data visualization from OurWorldinData.org. There you find more visualizations and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the author Max Roser.

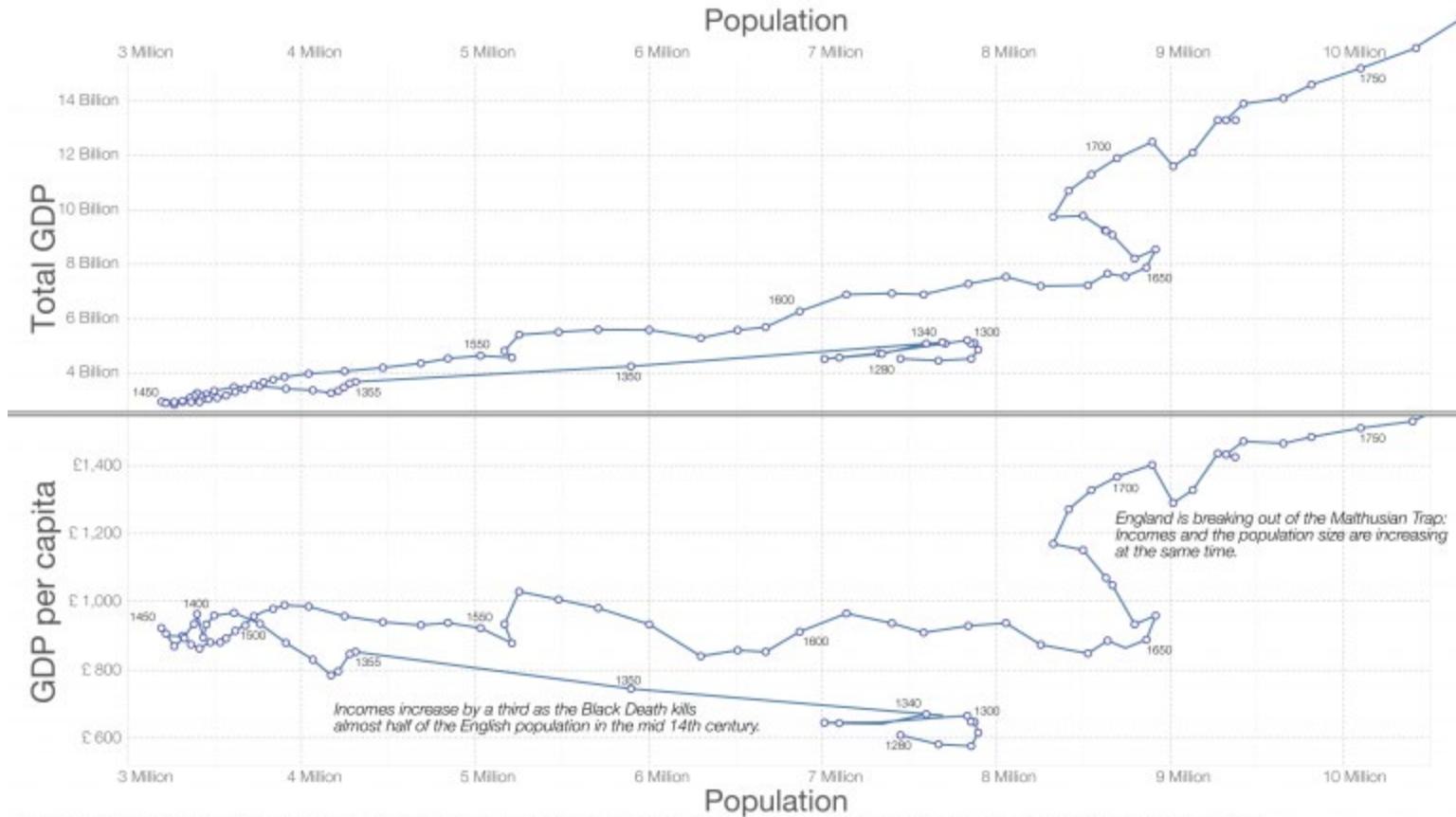


England in the Malthusian Trap, 1200-1700

The Malthusian Economy: GDP, GDP per capita, and the size of the population in England from 1280 to 1770
GDP is adjusted for inflation and expressed in 2013 prices.

Our World
in Data

Before sustained economic growth was achieved the English economy was trapped in a 'Malthusian Economy', productivity increases lead to population increases so that per capita the output did not increase. And vice versa, population decreases, such as the strong decline due to the plague in the mid-14th century, lead to increasing output per capita for those that survived the Black Death. For reference and in the same prices: GDP per capita in 2015 was £28,161 in the UK.



Data source: Broadberry et al and Bank of England. Data prior to 1700 refers to England; data thereafter refers to the UK. Averages over 5 year intervals are shown here.

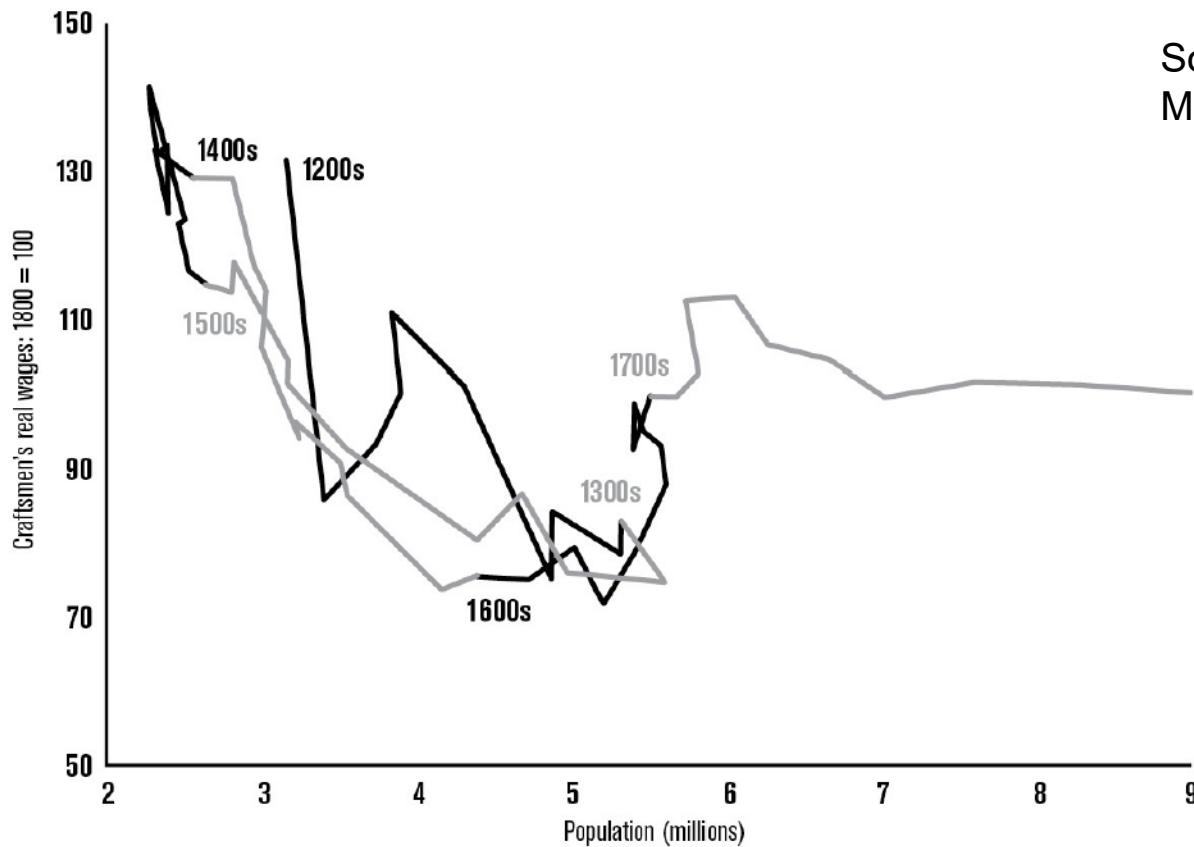
The visualization is available at OurWorldinData.org where you find more visualizations and research on global development.

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England in the Malthusian Trap

Population and Prosperity in England, 1200–1800



Source: McAfee (2019; p. 11):
More from Less

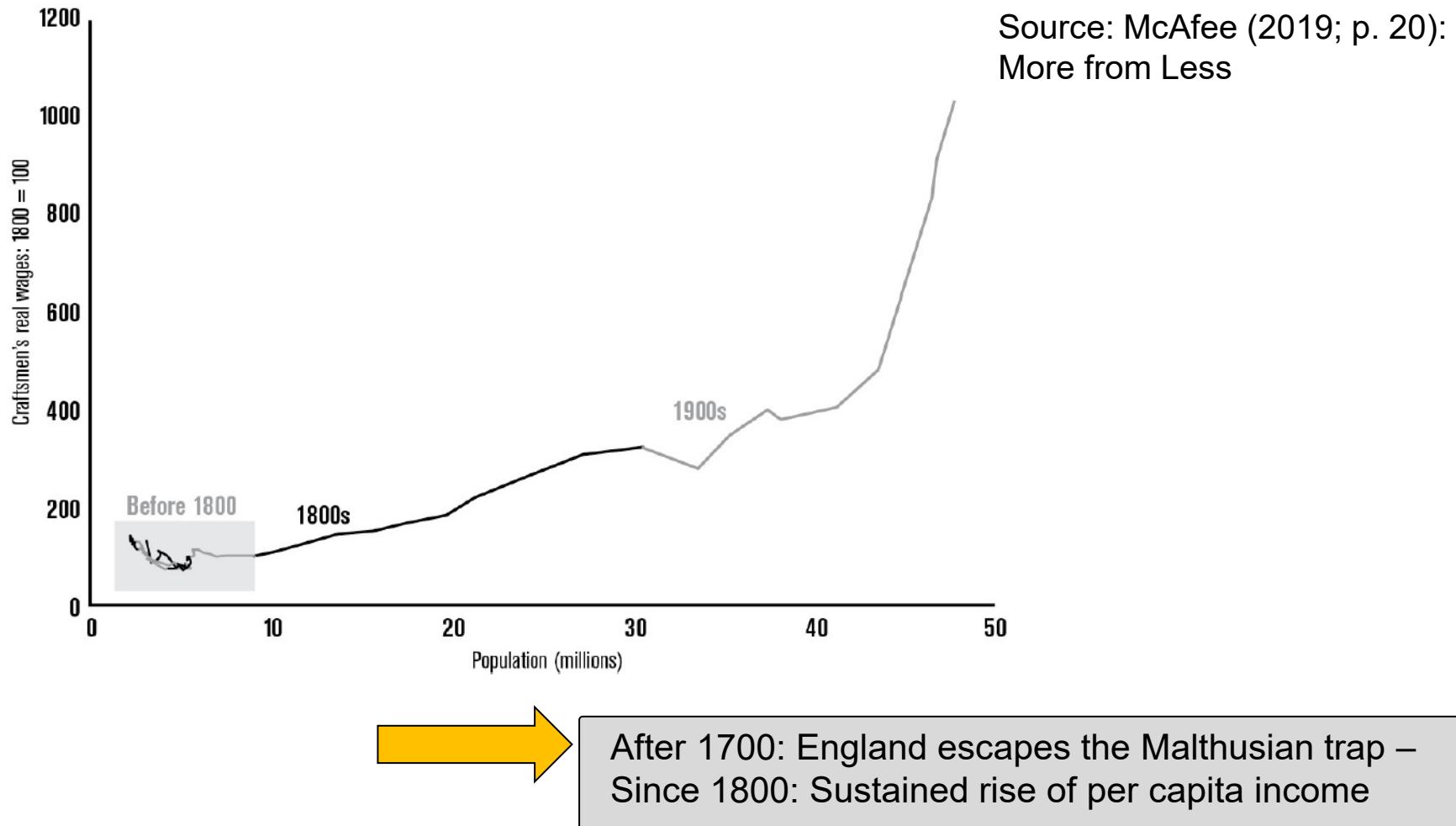


A catastrophic century: 1300-1400 (plague) –
population declines, but income per capita grows



England after the Malthusian Trap

Population and Prosperity in England, 1200–2000



The Morality of Malthusian Society

Gregory Clark (2007): *A Farewell to Alms*:



„This Malthusian world ... exhibits a counterintuitive logic. Anything that raised the death rate schedule – war, disorder, disease, poor sanitary practices, or abandoning breast feeding – increased material living standards. Anything that reduced the death rate schedule – advances in medical technology, better personal hygiene, improved public sanitation, public provision for harvest failures, peace and order – reduced material living standards.“ (p. 27)

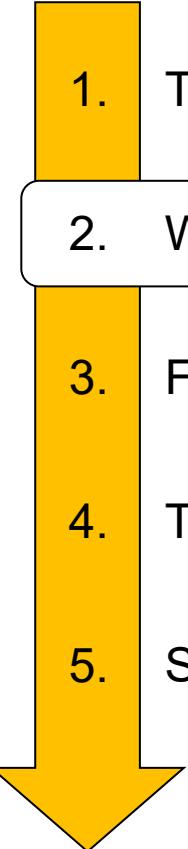
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We have grown out of this Malthusian trap by replacing its situational logic via a process of economic dynamism through systematic knowledge generation– first in Europe, then spreading to more and more continents and now covering almost all countries of the world.



Structure of Today's Lecture

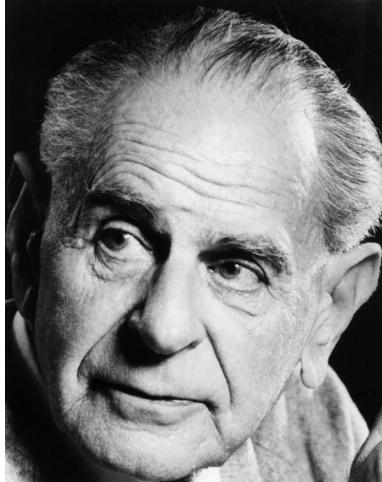
- 
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An Alternative View of the Concept of Democracy (I)

Karl R. Popper (1902; † 1994) is one of the most important philosophers of science of the 20th century. His 1988 essay contains the following self-report:*

Karl R. Popper



„In »The Open Society and its Enemies« I suggested that an entirely new problem should be recognised as the fundamental problem of a rational political theory. The new problem, as distinct from the old »Who should rule?«, can be formulated as follows: how is the state to be constituted so that bad rulers can be got rid of without bloodshed, without violence?“

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/43/Karl_Popper.jpg



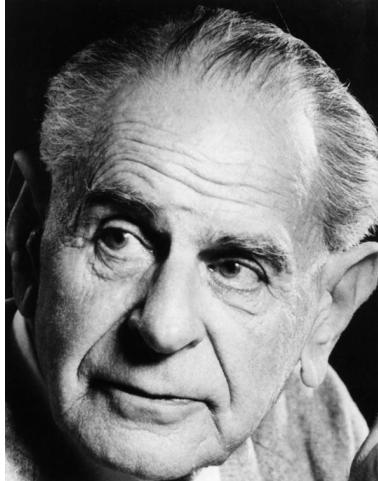
Popper places the peaceful change of government at the center of his concept of democracy: that the population can vote out the ruling politicians (or parties), so that there is competition for the popular vote.



An Alternative View of the Concept of Democracy (II)

Karl R. Popper (1902; † 1994) is one of the most important philosophers of science of the 20th century. In his 1988 essay, he argues against proportional representation:*

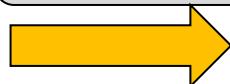
Karl R. Popper



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/43/Karl_Popper.jpg

„The old theory and the belief that the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people constitutes a natural right, or a divine right, form the background of the usual argument in favour of proportional representation. For if people rule through their representatives, and by majority votes, then it is essential that the numerical distribution of opinion among the representatives mirrors as closely as possible that which prevails among those who are the real source of legitimate power: the people themselves. Everything else will be not only grossly unfair but against all the principles of justice.

This argument collapses if the old theory is given up, so that we can look, more dispassionately, and perhaps without much prejudice, at the inescapable (and possibly unintended) practical consequences of proportional representation. And these are devastating.“



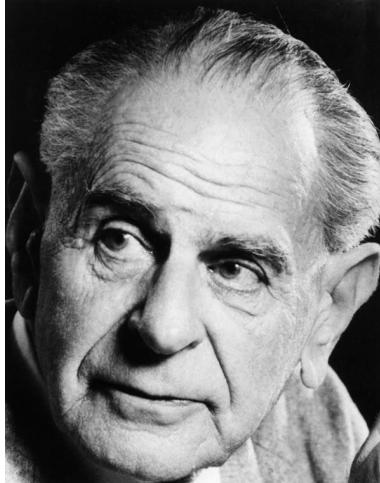
The general equilibrium of a parliamentary system with a 5% threshold consists of about 18 parties. Moreover, coalition governments are watering down responsibilities. And parliamentarians are subjected to party discipline.



An Alternative View of the Concept of Democracy (III)

Karl R. Popper (1902; † 1994) is one of the most important philosophers of science of the 20th century. In his 1988 essay, Popper compares two systems:*

Karl R. Popper



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/43/Karl_Popper.jpg

„The point is that in a two-party system the defeated party is liable to take an electoral defeat seriously. So it may look for an internal reform of its aims, which is an ideological reform. If the party is defeated twice in succession, or even three times, the search for new ideas may become frantic, which obviously is a healthy development. This is likely to happen, even if the loss of votes was not very great.

Under a system with many parties, and with coalitions, this is not likely to happen. Especially when the loss of votes is small, both the party bosses and the electorate are inclined to take the change quietly. They regard it as part of the game—since none of the parties had clear responsibilities. A democracy needs parties that are more sensitive than that and, if possible, constantly on the alert. Only in this way can they be induced to be self-critical. As things stand, an inclination to self-criticism after an electoral defeat is far more pronounced in countries with a two-party system than in those where there are several parties. In practice, then, a two-party system is likely to be more flexible than a multi-party system, contrary to first impressions.“



The majority voting system promotes learning processes because there are clear incentives to draw conclusions from mistakes.



David Deutsch: Choices (I)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. It is based on Popper and explains his concept of democracy.

David Deutsch



<https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/speakers/david-deutsch.jpg>

„[L]et us reconsider collective decision-making in terms of Popper's criterion ... Instead of wondering earnestly which of the self-evident yet mutually inconsistent criteria of fairness, representativeness and so on are the most self-evident, so that they can be entrenched, we judge such criteria, along with all other actual or proposed political institutions, according to how well they promote the removal of bad rulers and bad policies. To do this, they must embody traditions of peaceful, critical discussion – of rulers, policies and the political institutions themselves.“ (p. 344)



Democracy organizes learning processes.



David Deutsch: Choices (II)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. It is based on Popper and explains his concept of democracy.

David Deutsch



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„In this view, any interpretation of the democratic process as merely a way of consulting the people to find out who should rule or what policies to implement misses the point of what is happening. An election does not play the same role in a rational society as consulting an oracle or a priest, or obeying orders from the king, did in earlier societies. The essence of democratic decision-making is not the choice made by the system at elections, but the ideas created between elections. And elections are merely one of the many institutions whose function is to allow such ideas to be created, tested, modified and rejected.“ (p. 344 f.)



Democracy requires institutional embedding.



David Deutsch: Choices (III)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. It is based on Popper and explains his concept of democracy.

David Deutsch



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„The voters are not a fount of wisdom from which the right policies can be empirically ‘derived’. They are attempting, fallibly, to explain the world and thereby to improve it. They are, both individually and collectively, seeking the truth – or should be, if they are rational. And there *is* an objective truth of the matter. Problems are soluble. Society is not a zero-sum game: the civilization of the Enlightenment did not get where it is today by cleverly sharing out the wealth, votes or anything else that was in dispute when it began. It got here by creating *ex nihilo*. In particular, what voters are doing in elections is not synthesizing a decision of a superhuman being, ‘Society’. They are choosing which experiments are to be attempted next, and (principally) which are to be abandoned because there is no longer a good explanation for why they are best. The politicians, and their policies, are those experiments.“ (p. 345, emphasis in original)



Democracy is useful for evaluating experiments.



David Deutsch: Choices (IV)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He explains the error of thought of empiricism in the political sphere – and elucidates Popper's epistemical conception of democracy:

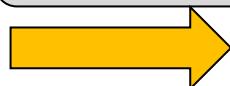
David Deutsch



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„The conditions of ‘fairness’ as conceived in the various social-choice problems are misconceptions analogous to empiricism: they are all about the *input* to the decision-making process – who participates, and how their opinions are integrated to form the ‘preference of the group’. A rational analysis must concentrate instead on how the rules and institutions contribute to the *removal* of bad policies and rulers, and to the creation of new options.“ (p. 345, emphasis in original)

„[I]t is indeed important that no member of the group be privileged or deprived of representation. But this is not so that all members can contribute to the answer. It is because such discrimination entrenches in the system a preference among their potential *criticisms*. It does not make sense to *include* everyone’s favoured policies, or parts of them, in the new decision; what is necessary for progress is to *exclude* ideas that fail to survive criticism, and to prevent their entrenchment, and to promote the creation of new ideas.“ (p. 346, emphasis in original)



Democracy is an epistemological process.



Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Lehrstuhl für Wirtschaftsethik
Prof. Dr. Ingo Pies

David Deutsch: Choices (V)

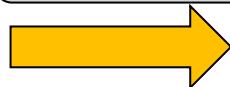
In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He explains the working conditions of democracy:

David Deutsch



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„Unfortunately there are political phenomena that can violate Popper's criterion even more strongly than bad electoral systems – for example, entrenched racial divisions, or various traditions of political violence. Hence I do not intend the above discussion of electoral systems to constitute a blanket endorsement of plurality voting as the One True System of democracy, suitable for all polities under all circumstances. Even democracy itself is unworkable under some circumstances. But in the advanced political cultures of the Enlightenment tradition the creation of knowledge can and should be paramount, and the idea that representative government depends on proportionate representation in the legislature is unequivocally a mistake.“ (p. 349)



Democracy only works under certain conditions.



David Deutsch: Choices (VI)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He describes the process of scientific consensus-building:

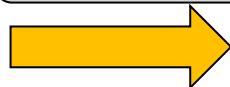
David Deutsch



<https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/speakers/david-deutsch.jpg>

„In science, we do not consider it surprising that a community of scientists with different initial hopes and expectations, continually in dispute about their rival theories, gradually come into near-unanimous agreement over a steady stream of issues (yet still continue to disagree all the time). It is not surprising because, in their case, there are observable facts that they can use to test their theories. They converge with each other on any given issue because they are all converging on the objective truth. In politics it is customary to be cynical about that sort of convergence being possible.

But that is a pessimistic view.“ (p. 350)



Science converges through critical search for truth.



David Deutsch: Choices (VII)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He emphasizes the analogy to the process of political (and moral) consensus-building:

David Deutsch



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„Throughout the West, a great deal of philosophical knowledge that is nowadays taken for granted by almost everyone – say, that slavery is an abomination, or that women should be free to go out to work, or that autopsies should be legal, or that promotion in the armed forces should not depend on skin colour – was highly controversial only a matter of decades ago, and originally the opposite positions were taken for granted. A successful truth-seeking system works its way towards broad consensus or near-unanimity – the one state of public opinion that is not subject to decision-theoretic paradoxes and where ‘the will of the people’ makes sense. So convergence in the broad consensus over time is made possible by the fact that all concerned are gradually eliminating errors in their positions and converging on objective truths. Facilitating that process – by meeting Popper’s criterion as well as possible – is more important than which of two contending factions with near-equal support gets its way at a particular election.“ (p. 350)



Politics converges through critical search for truth. Process matters!



David Deutsch: Choices (VIII)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He clarifies what dissent is good for:

David Deutsch



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„The purpose of deferring to the majority in democratic systems should be to approach unanimity in the future, by giving all concerned the incentive to abandon bad ideas and to conjecture better ones. Creatively *changing the options* is what allows people in real life to cooperate in ways that no-go theorems seem to say are impossible; and it is what allows individual minds to choose at all.
The growth of the body of knowledge about which there is unanimous agreement does not entail a dying-down of controversy: on the contrary, human beings will never disagree any less than they do now, and that is a very good thing. If those institutions do, as they seem to, fulfil the hope that it is possible for changes to be for the better, on balance, then human life can improve without limit as we advance from misconception to ever better misconception.“
(p. 351, emphasis in original)



Political dissent is the starting point (and inspiration) for the democratic process of creating political consensus.



David Deutsch: Choices (IX)

In his book "The Beginning of Infinity", David Deutsch (2011) explains how science works. He gives the following summary of the concept of democracy – and of Popper's thesis of the epistemic superiority of majority voting:

David Deutsch



<https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/speakers/david-deutsch.jpg>

„It is a mistake to conceive of choice and decision-making as a process of selecting from existing options according to a fixed formula. That omits the most important element of decision-making, namely the creation of new options. Good policies are hard to vary, and therefore conflicting policies are discrete and cannot be arbitrarily mixed. Just as rational thinking does not consist of weighing the justifications of rival theories, but of using conjecture and criticism to seek the best explanation, so coalition governments are not a desirable objective of electoral systems. They should be judged by Popper's criterion of how easy they make it to remove bad rulers and bad policies. That designates the plurality voting system as best in the case of advanced political cultures.“ (p. 352)

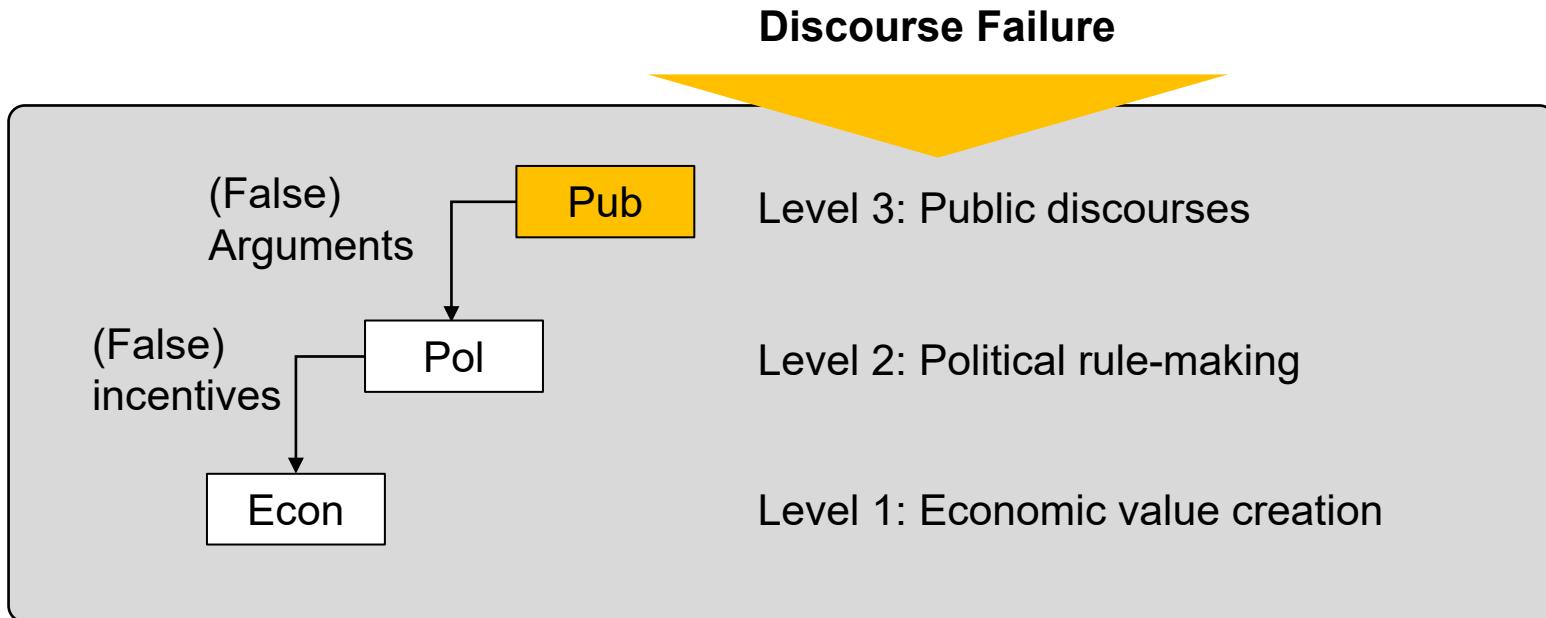


Science and politics are analogous processes of critical truth-seeking and rational consensus-finding.



Why is the Correct Concept of Democracy so Important?

When the concept of sovereignty looks at the input (who should rule?), then one asks the wrong questions and runs the danger that misguided arguments might promote the institutionalization of misguided incentives.



Relevant examples:

- Democracy deficit of the European Union?
- Democracy deficit of the capitalist enterprise?



Democracy vs. Tyranny

Friedrich Nietzsche (* 15.10.1844; † 25.8.1900), philosopher and aphorist.



http://zitate.net/friedrich_nietzsche.110.jpg

"Hundred-year quarantine. – The democratic institutions are quarantine institutions against the old plague of tyrannical desires: as such very useful and very boring."

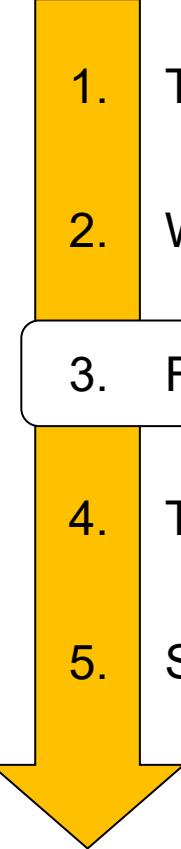
Friedrich Nietzsche (): Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister, mit einem Nachwort von Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow, Frankfurt a.M., zweiter Band, Der Wanderer und sein Schatten, Aphorismus 289, S. 568, emphasis in original



What is the right place (and priority) of politics in our daily lives?



Structure of Today's Lecture

- 
1. The Malthusian logic
 2. What does democracy mean?
 3. Freedom of thought and speech
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 5. Sketches of further applications

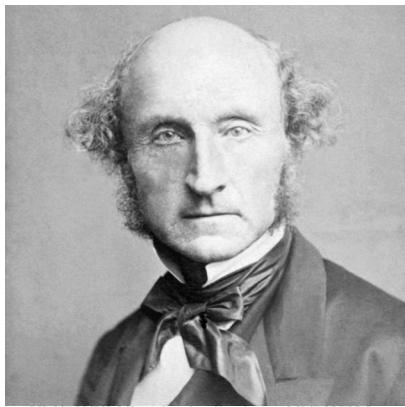


John Stuart Mill and his Arguments for Freedom of Speech

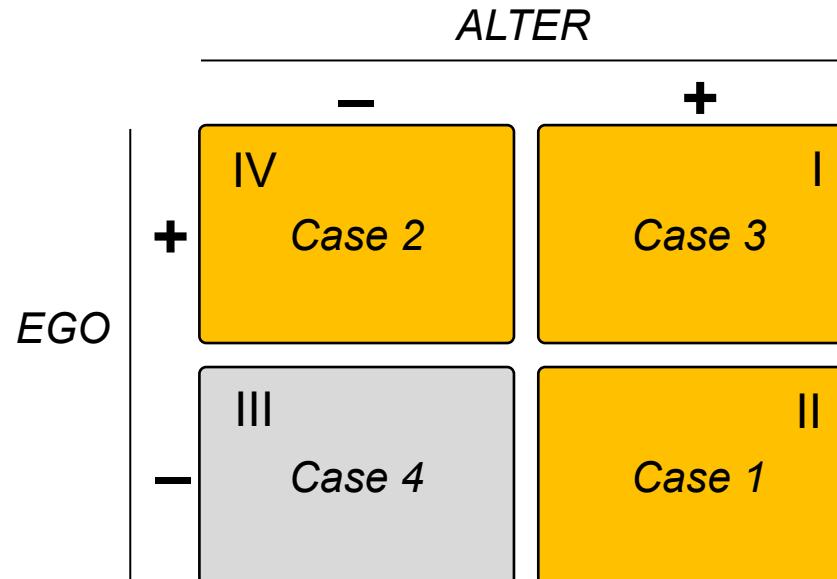
John Stuart Mill (* 20. Mai 1806; † 8. Mai 1873) is one of the most important thinkers of the 19th century. He was a philosopher, politician and economist. He developed a classic justification of freedom of thought and speech – the book "On Liberty" (1859).

Starting point: Mill distinguishes three cases – who is right?

John Stuart Mill



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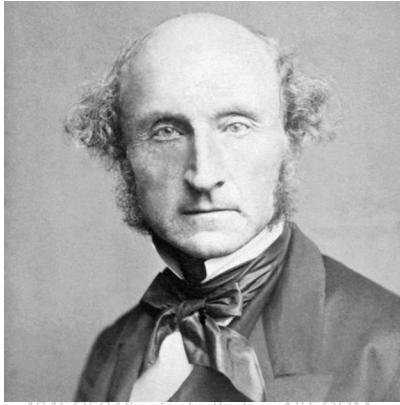


Mill's First Argument

Case 1: I am wrong – Citation according to Reeves and Haidt:

<https://heterodoxacademy.org/library/all-minus-one/>

John Stuart Mill



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„[T]he opinion which it is attempted to suppress by authority may possibly be true. Those who desire to suppress it, of course deny its truth; but they are not infallible. They have no authority to decide the question for all mankind, and exclude every other person from the means of judging.“ (p. 6 f.)

„The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth“. (p. 6)



Restricting freedom of speech is a presumption of knowledge and blocks learning processes.

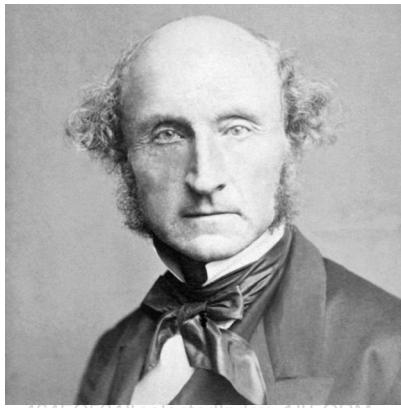


Mill's Second Argument

Case 2: *I am right – Citation according to Reeves and Haidt:*

<https://heterodoxacademy.org/library/all-minus-one/>

John Stuart Mill



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„However unwillingly a person who has a strong opinion may admit the possibility that his opinion may be false, he ought to be moved by the consideration that however true it may be, if it is not fully, frequently, and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth.“ (p. 20)

„He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion.“ (p. 21 f.; emphasis by I.P.)



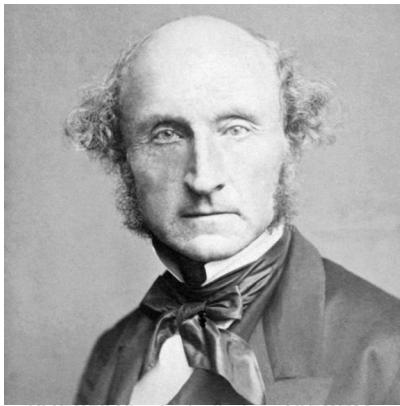
It is not just a question of being right, but also of proper understanding. This is often only gained by a critical examination of false ideas.



Mill's Third Argument

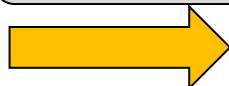
Case 3: *EGO* and *ALTER* are both (partially) right – Citation according to Reeves and Haidt: <https://heterodoxacademy.org/library/all-minus-one/>

John Stuart Mill



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„Popular opinions, on subjects not palpable to sense, are often true, but seldom or never the whole truth. They are a part of the truth; sometimes a greater, sometimes a smaller part, but exaggerated, distorted, and disjoined from the truths by which they ought to be accompanied and limited. Heretical opinions, on the other hand, are generally some of these suppressed and neglected truths, bursting the bonds which kept them down, and either seeking reconciliation with the truth contained in the common opinion, or fronting it as enemies, and setting themselves up, with similar exclusiveness, as the whole truth. The latter case is hitherto the most frequent, as, in the human mind, one-sidedness has always been the rule, and many-sidedness the exception. Hence, even in revolutions of opinion, one part of the truth usually sets while another rises. ... EVERY OPINION WHICH EMBODIES SOMEWHAT OF THE PORTION OF TRUTH WHICH THE COMMON OPINION OMITS, OUGHT TO BE CONSIDERED PRECIOUS, WITH WHATEVER AMOUNT OF ERROR AND CONFUSION THAT TRUTH MAY BE BLENDED.“ (p. 32 f.; emphasis in original)



One-sidedness can only be avoided if all sides are considered.



Ordonomic Quintessence

The justification for freedom of speech is epistemological: attempts to restrict it are intolerant, inconsistent, imprudent, ill-judged – and prevent collective self-enlightenment.



- Progress in knowledge is based on the exchange of arguments: of criticism and counter-criticism.
- Progress of knowledge is blocked by restrictions on freedom of speech.
- The sorting out of (bad) ideas does not have to take place at the beginning of discussion, but at the end – as a judgment and not as a pre-judgment.
- The right position solidifies intellectually and degenerates into dogma if it is not kept vital by competition of ideas.
- One only really understands one's position when one also knows the possible counter-arguments.
- All participants in the discourse should be aware of their own fallibility – and not want to win, but to learn: the mental model matters!



Nietzsche on the Tribalistic Nature of Man – and Pitfalls of Discourse

Friedrich Nietzsche (* 15.10.1844; † 25.8.1900), philosopher and aphorist.



<http://thezaz.nationallampoon.com/files/2009/08/04-friedrich-nietzsche.jpg>

„Running at a foe. — How good sound bad music and bad reasons when you are getting at an enemy!“

Friedrich Nietzsche (1881): Morgenröte. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile; 5. Buch, Aphorismus Nr. 557.
<http://www.zeno.org/Lesesaal/N/9781489556875?page=224>



The mood of self-righteousness leads to discourse failure and error!



Productive Discourses Need the Right Attitude

Friedrich Nietzsche (* 15.10.1844; † 25.8.1900), philosopher and aphorist.



<http://theazaz.nationallampoon.com/files/2009/08/04-friedrich-nietzsche.jpg>

„Why the stupid often get so bad. – Our heart responds to objections from the opponent, against which our heads feel too weak, by suspecting the motives of his objections.“

Friedrich Nietzsche (): Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister, mit einem Nachwort von Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow, Frankfurt a.M., zweiter Band, Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche, Aphorismus 39, S. 335.



Source of intentionalist and moralistic fallacies



Structure of Today's Lecture

1. The Malthusian logic
 2. What does democracy mean?
 3. Freedom of thought and speech
4. Terror (perception)
5. Sketches of further applications



2001: The 9/11 Attacks on the World Trade Center



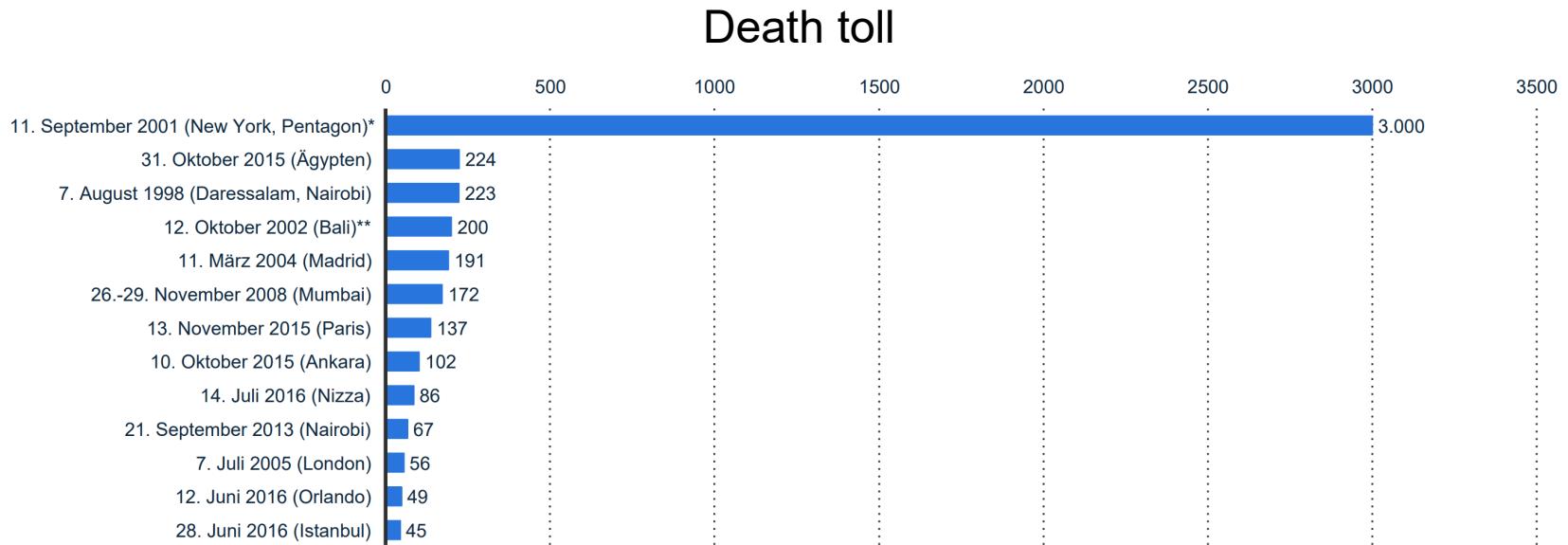
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=0%2bARwwAi&id=CF353FB510340B24A54311D1040E0DC0BAB35A93&thid=OIP.0-ARwwAiQ9euZ-UE51bJRWFEDA&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.india.com%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2017%2f09%2f9-11-1-1.jpg&exph=415&expw=700&q=9%2f11&simid=608018470933236612&ck=38D9E1123CB39DD923BD81F72C27DC90&selectedIndex=8&ajaxhist=0>



The Attacks of 11 September 2001 are Something Very Special

From a purely quantitative point of view, even serious mass attacks have killed less than 10% of the deaths of 11 September 2001.

Number of people killed in major attacks by islamistic terrorists (1993-2019)



<https://de.statista.com/statistik/studie/id/36718/dokument/terrorismus-statista-dossier/>

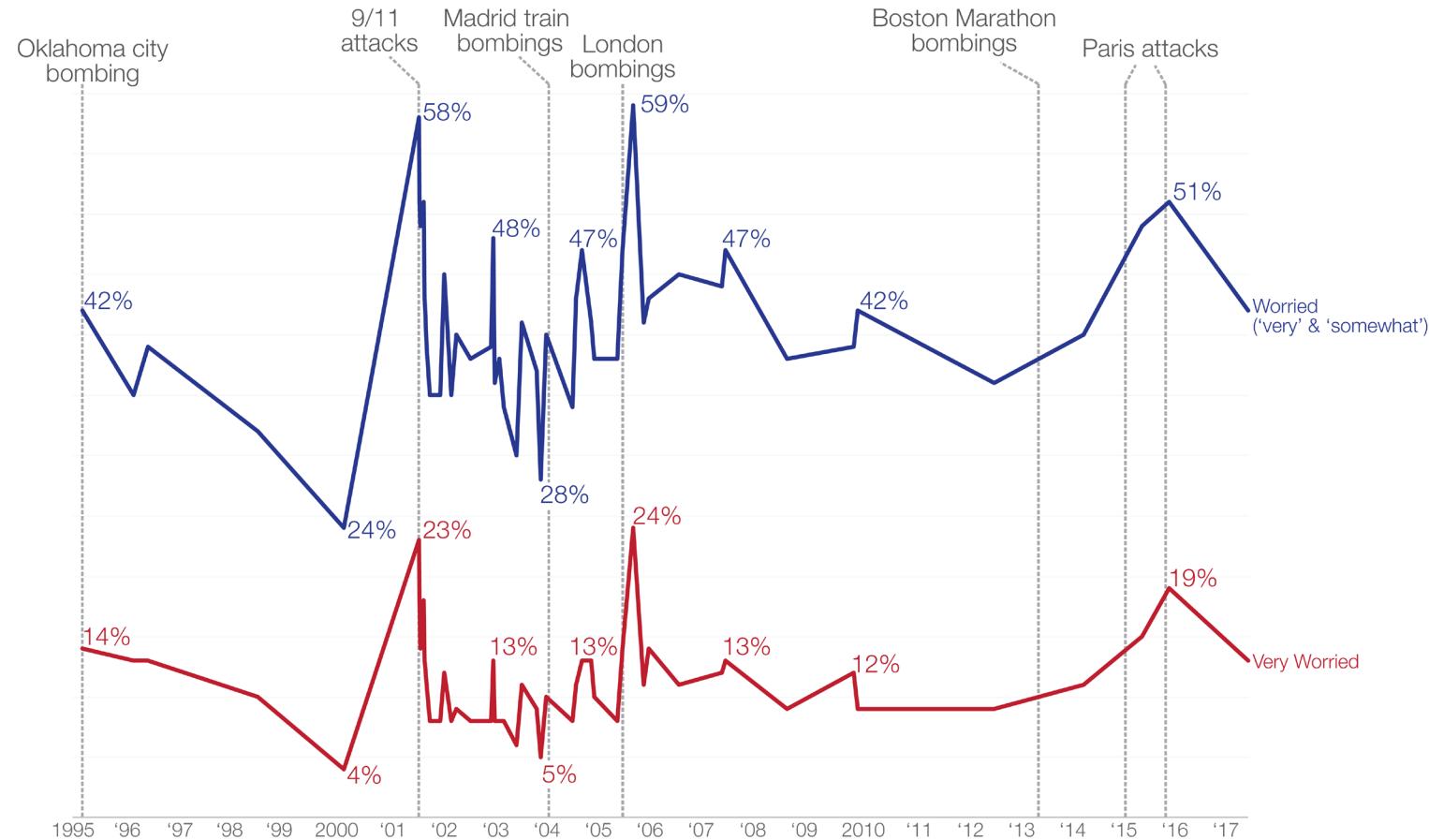


U.S. Citizens Fear Terrorism

Share in the US who are concerned about being the victim of terrorism

Citizens in the United States were asked the question: "How worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried or not worried at all?"

Our World
in Data



Data source: Gallup Poll (2017) & Gallup Analytics.

This is a visualization from OurWorldinData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under CC-BY by the authors.



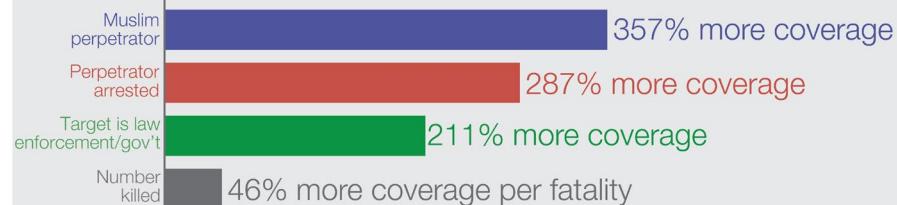
What does Media Coverage Depend on?

What determines the amount of media attention a terrorist attack receives?

Our World
in Data

The strongest determinants of the amount of media coverage a terrorist attack received in the United States during the period from 2006 and 2015. This is shown as the average increase in the number of news stories an attack receives based on its characteristics.

All media sources (major and local outlets)



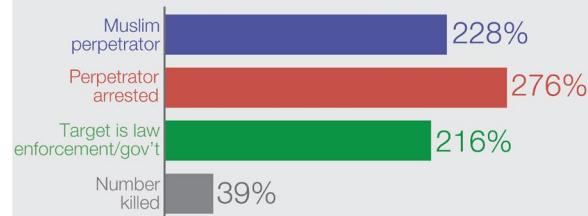
Major media sources

Five media sources are referred to as 'major' in the original study: CNN.com, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and USA Today.



Non-major media sources

'Non-major' sources, in this study, are several thousand local newspaper outlets from across the US.



During this 10-year period there were two attacks which dominated media coverage: the Boston Marathon and the Fort Hood attacks. This shown result held true regardless of whether these dominant events were included or excluded.

Data source: Kearns et al. (2019). Why do some terrorist attacks receive more media attention than others?
This is a visualization from OurWorldinData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

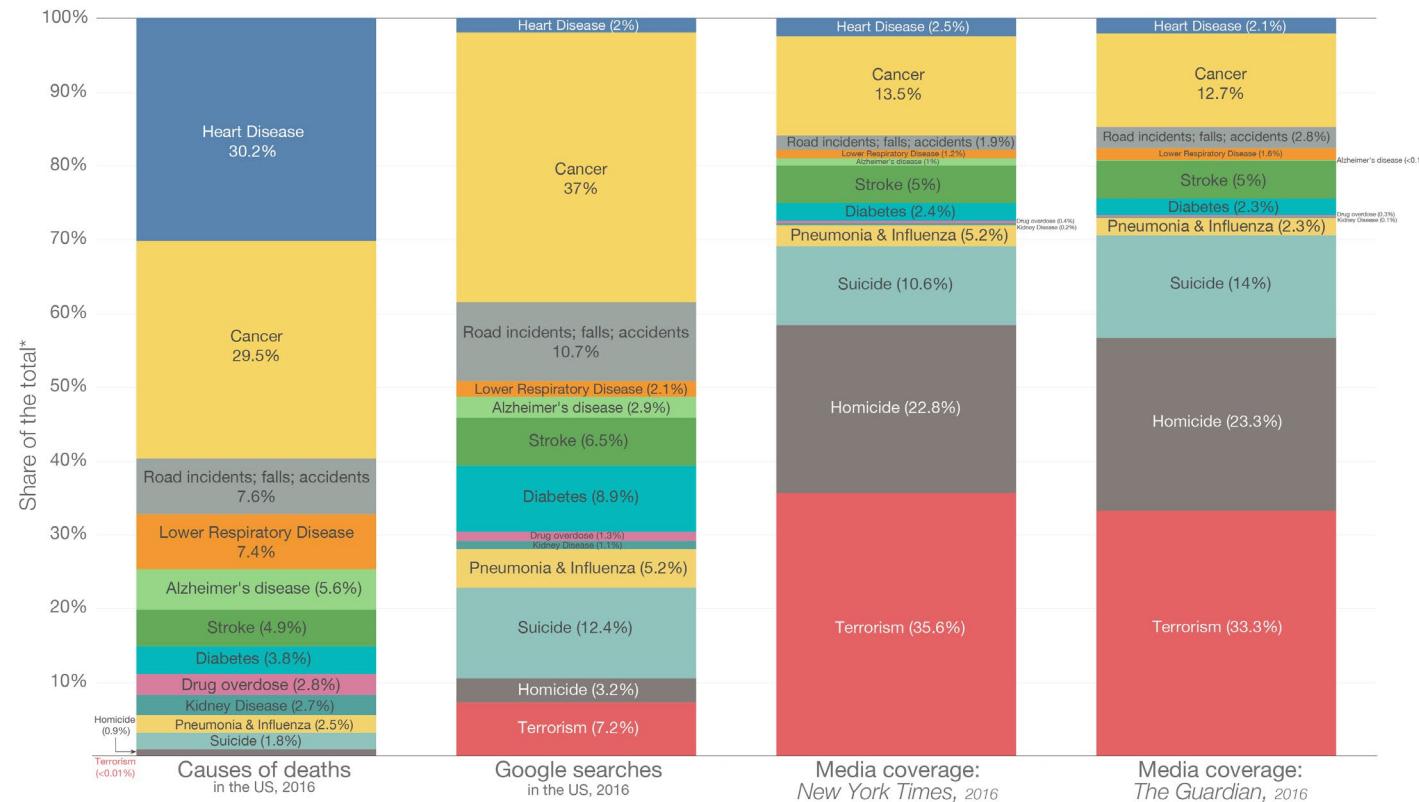
Licensed under CC-BY by the authors.



Causes of Death in the US: Do Media get the Picture Right?

Causes of death in the US

What Americans die from, what they search on Google, and what the media reports on



*This represents each cause's share of the top ten causes of death in the US plus homicides, drug overdoses and terrorism. Collectively these 13 causes accounted for approximately 88% of deaths in the US in 2016. Full breakdown of causes of death can be found at the CDC's WONDER public health database: <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>

Based on data from Shen et al (2018) – Death: reality vs. reported. All data available at: <https://owenshen24.github.io/charting-death>

All data refers to 2016.

Not all causes of death are shown: Shown is the data on the ten leading causes of death in the United States plus drug overdoses, homicides and terrorism.

All values are normalized to 100% so they represent their relative share of the top causes, rather than absolute counts (e.g. 'deaths' represents each causes' share of deaths within the 13 categories shown rather than total deaths). The causes of death shown here account for approximately 88% of total deaths in the United States in 2016.

This is a visualization from OurWorldinData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under CC-BY by the authors Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser.

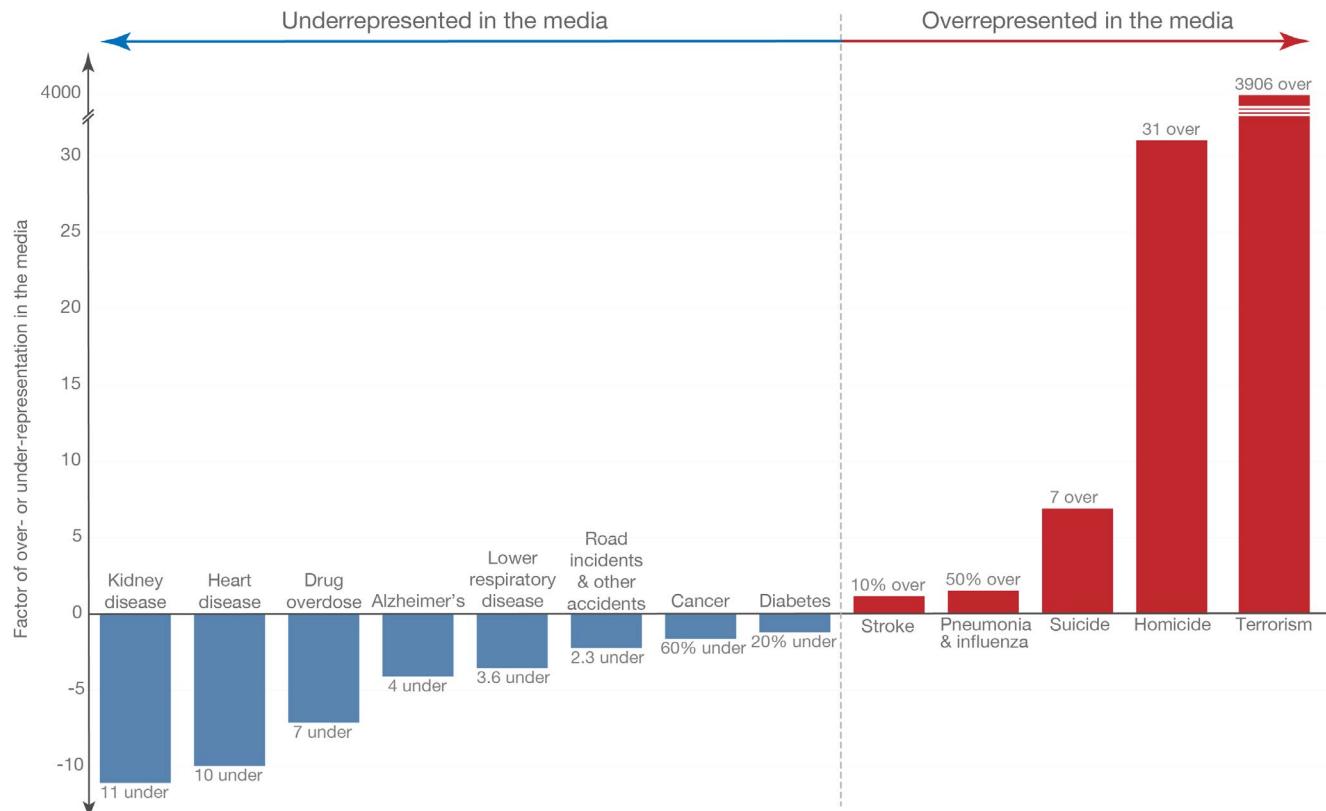


„Media Bias“ in Reporting?

Does the news reflect what we die from?

Our World
in Data

Comparison of the share of deaths from 13 different causes in the US to the share of media coverage these topics get in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* newspapers.



Source: Based on data from Shen et al (2018). Death: reality vs. reported. Full data available at: <https://owenshen24.github.io/charting-death>
This is calculated based on the ratio of each cause of death's proportion of total deaths (in the 13 categories) to each causes' share of media coverage. The figure shows the factor by which each cause of death in 2016 is over- or underrepresented in the media (e.g. homicides are overrepresented by a factor of 31 in the media relative to its share of deaths).

Media coverage data is measured as the annual average over the period from 1999 to 2016. The causes of death shown here account for approximately 88% of total deaths in the United States in 2016.

This is a visualization from OurWorldInData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under CC-BY by the authors Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser.

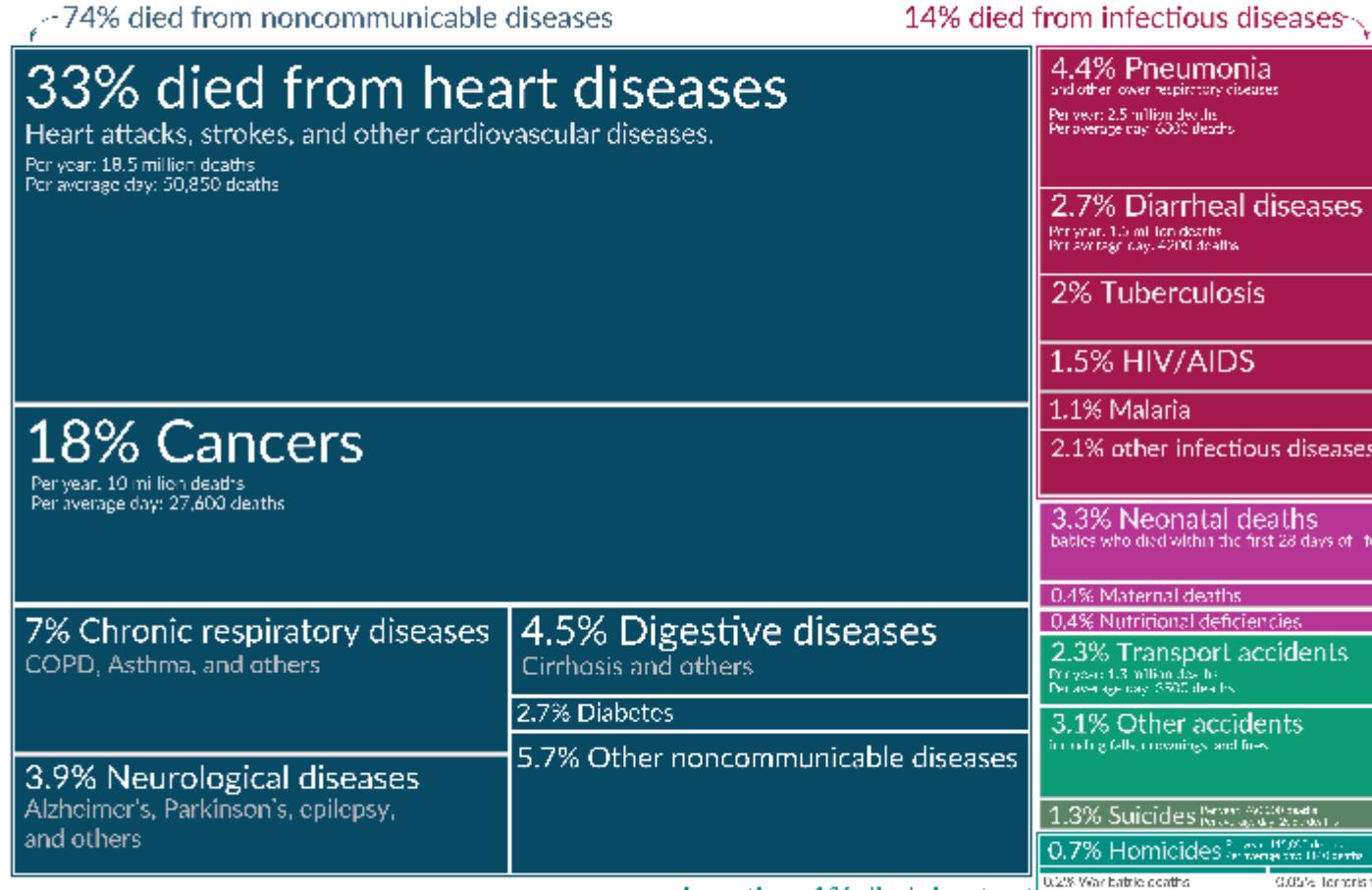


Numbers in Perspective

What do people die from? Causes of death globally in 2019

The size of the entire visualization represents the total number of deaths in 2019: 55 million.
Each rectangle within it is proportional to the share of deaths due to a particular cause.

Our World
in Data



Data source: IHME Global Burden of Disease and Global Terrorism Database.
[OurWorldInData.org](https://ourworldindata.org) – Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

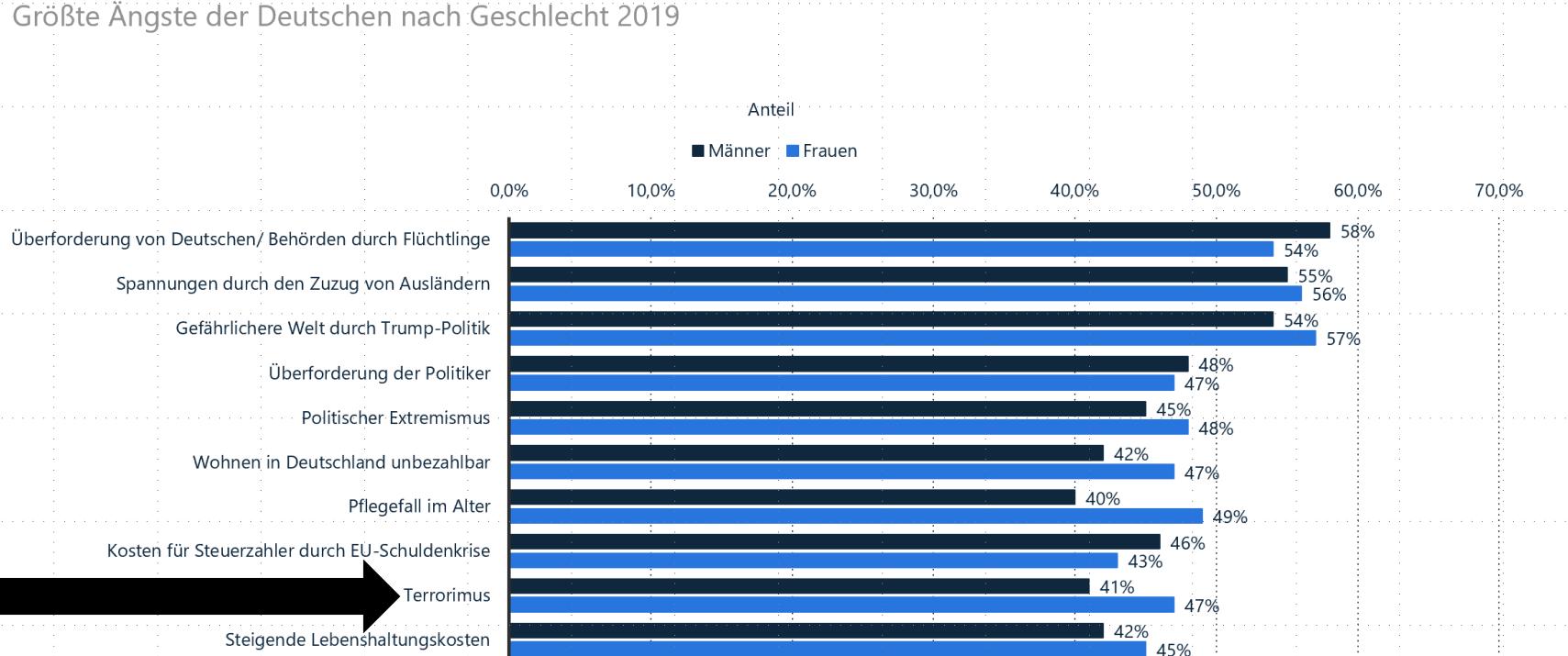
Licensed under CC-BY by the author Max Rose



The Fears of German Citizens

Größte Ängste der Deutschen nach Geschlecht im Jahr 2019* (Häufigkeitsverteilung)

Größte Ängste der Deutschen nach Geschlecht 2019



Hinweis(e): Deutschland; 2019; ab 14 Jahre; 2.446

Weitere Angaben zu dieser Statistik, sowie Erläuterungen zu Fußnoten, sind auf [Seite 93](#) zu finden.

Quelle(n): R+V Versicherung; [ID 779030](#)

Umfragen zu Terrorismus

statista



Fact Check: Pay Attention to the Proportions of the Problem!



#84843523

<https://gamesageddon.com/stock/media?id=85175922>

Vieles ist wahrscheinlicher, als seit 2000 bei einem Terroranschlag in Europa getötet worden zu sein

Bildquelle:
<https://www.suedkurier.de/nachrichten/panorama/Warum-vieles-wahrscheinlicher-ist-als-Opfer-eines-Terroranschlags-zu-werden;art409965,8657606>

1,13 mal so wahrscheinlich ist es, durch einen **Blitz** zu sterben

88 mal so wahrscheinlich ist es, zu **ertrinken**

814 mal so wahrscheinlich ist ein tödlicher **Verkehrsunfall**

941 mal so wahrscheinlich ist es, einen **Herzstillstand** zu haben

1149 mal so wahrscheinlich ist es, zu **ersticken**

2045 mal so wahrscheinlich ist ein tödlicher **Unfall im Haushalt**

3789 mal so wahrscheinlich ist ein tödlicher **Schlaganfall**

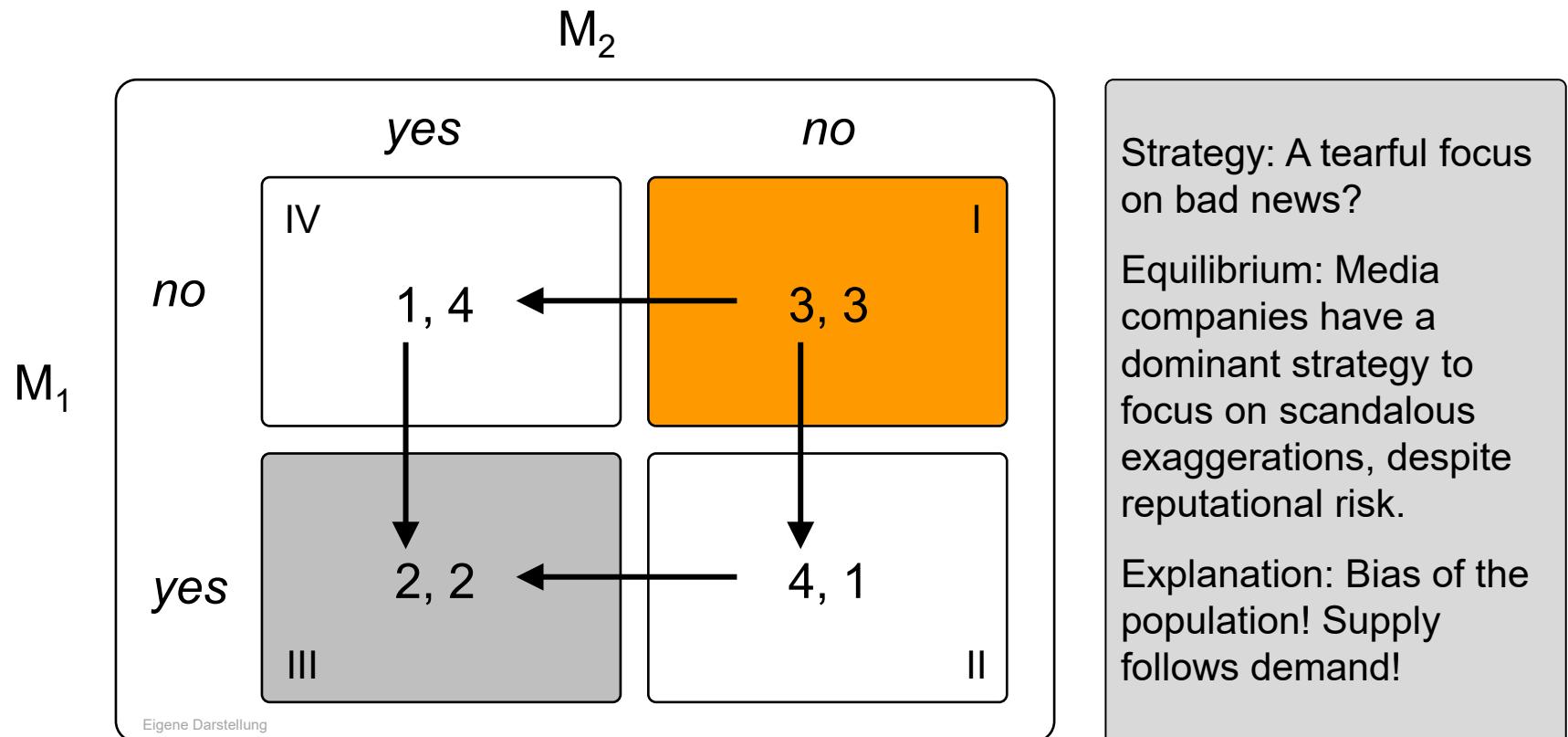
3797 mal so wahrscheinlich ist es, durch eine **Grippe** zu sterben

Reference year: 2016



Media Companies in a Social Dilemma

News magazines and newspapers compete with each other for customers. Tearful headlines and bad news arouse greater interest among readers. A stronger focus on bad news is therefore their dominant strategy.

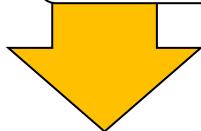


Ordinal scale: $4 > 3 > 2 > 1$



Structure of Today's Lecture

1. The Malthusian logic
2. What does democracy mean?
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4. Terror (perception)
5. Sketches of further applications



Food for Thought

(Almost) 200 Years of News-Based Economic Sentiment*

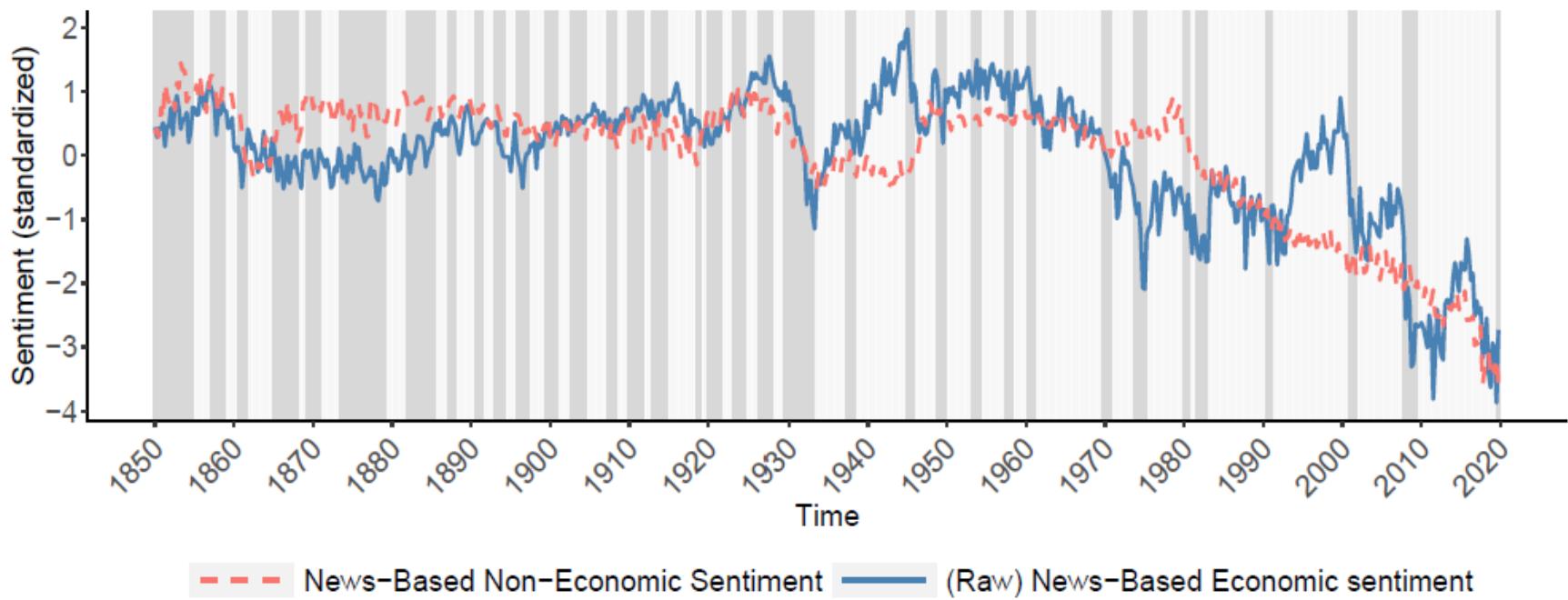
J. H. van Binsbergen[†]

S. Bryzgalova[‡]

M. Mukhopadhyay[§]

V. Sharma[¶]

December 2023

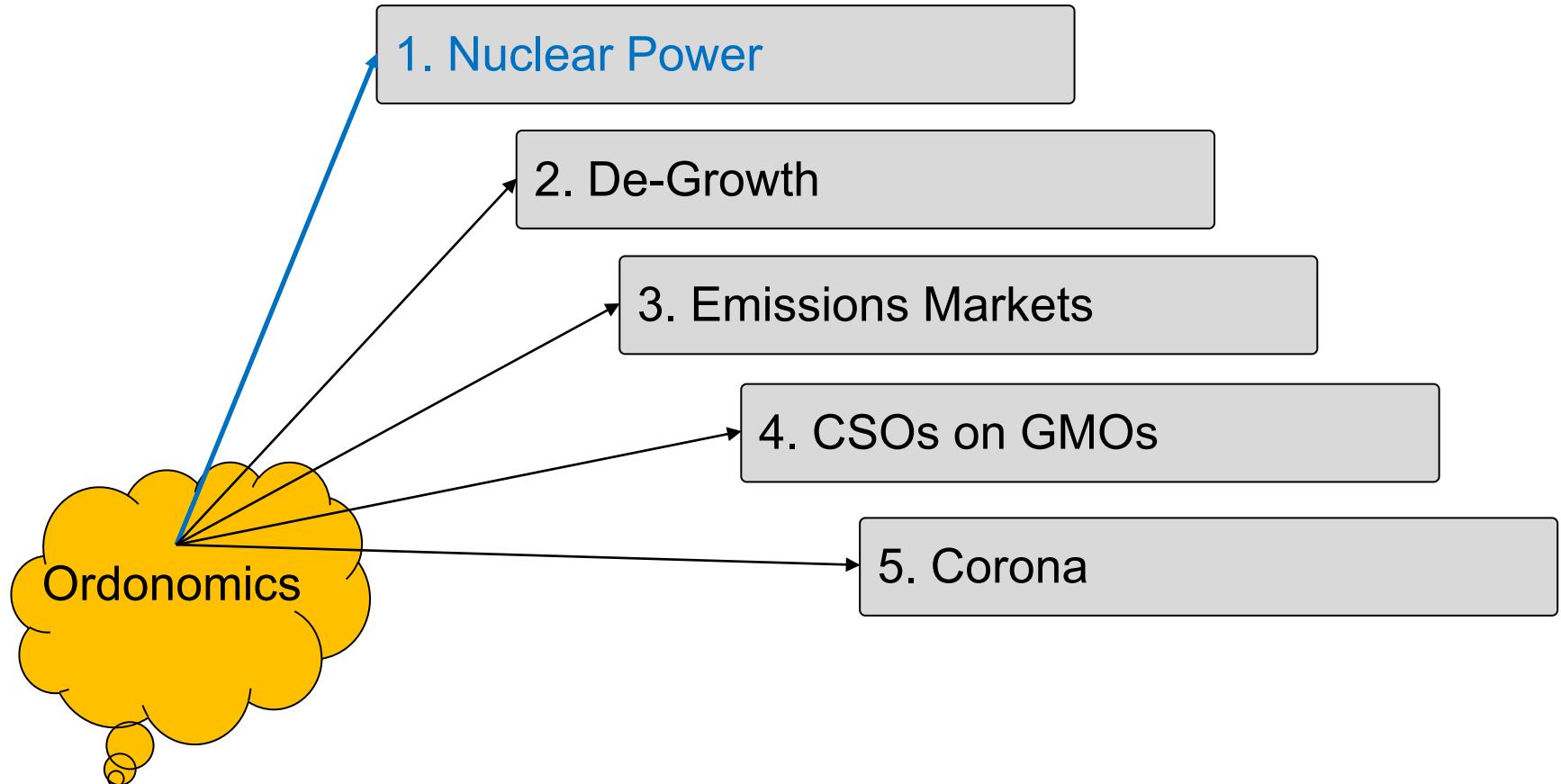


(b) Economic and Non-economic Sentiment



Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Lehrstuhl für Wirtschaftsethik
Prof. Dr. Ingo Pies

Sketches



Japan 2011 – Tsunami Catastrophe or Nuclear Disaster?

The sea quake claimed more than 22,000 lives. Some 470,000 people had to be evacuated.



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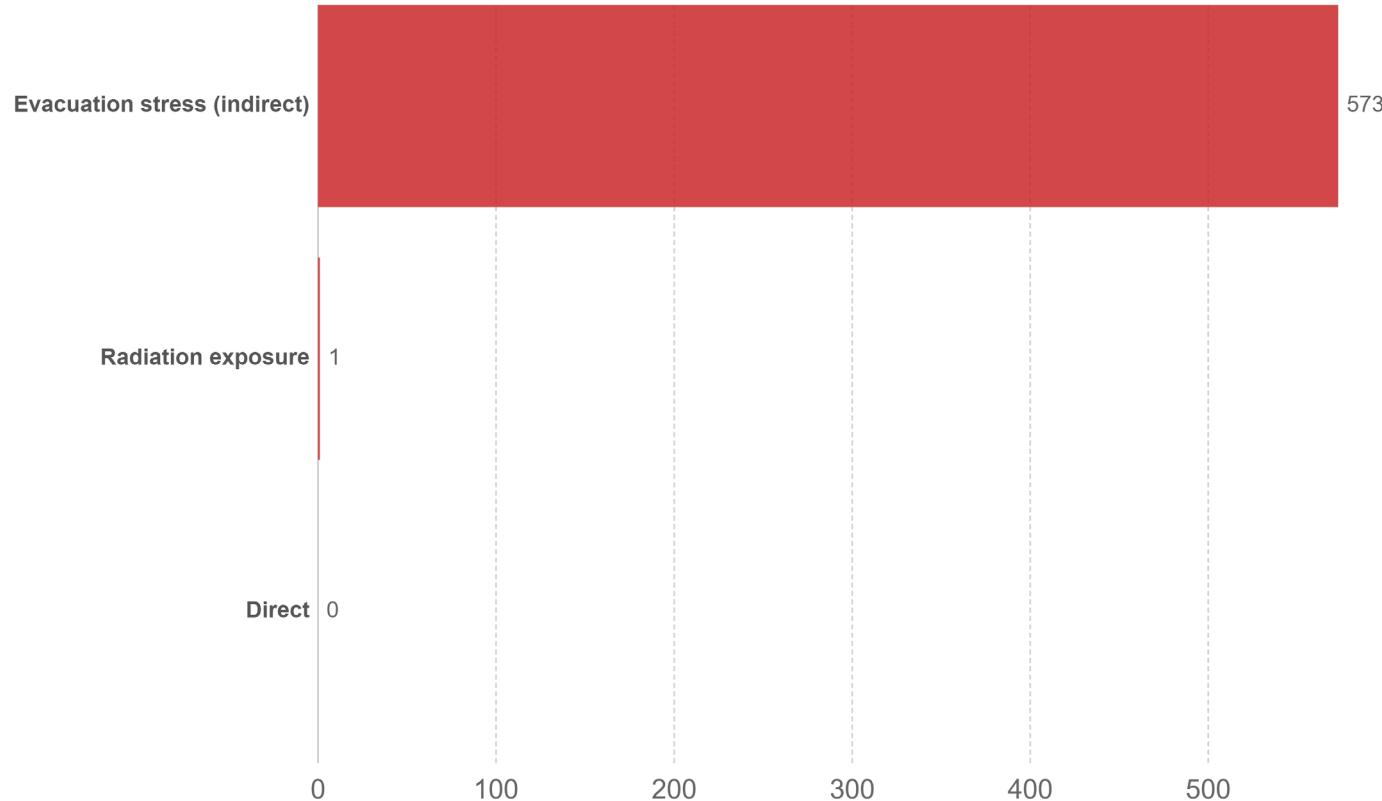


Official Empirics

The WHO has declared exactly one radiation death for the Fukushima nuclear disaster. By comparison, 4,000 to 60,000 deaths are attributed to Chernobyl.

Number of deaths from the Fukushima nuclear disaster

Our World
in Data



Source: WHO (2013; 2016); Government of Japan

Note: The World Health Organization (WHO) Report, five years on, suggests very low risk of increased cancer deaths in Japan as a result.

OurWorldInData.org/what-was-the-death-toll-from-chernobyl-and-fukushima/ • CC BY



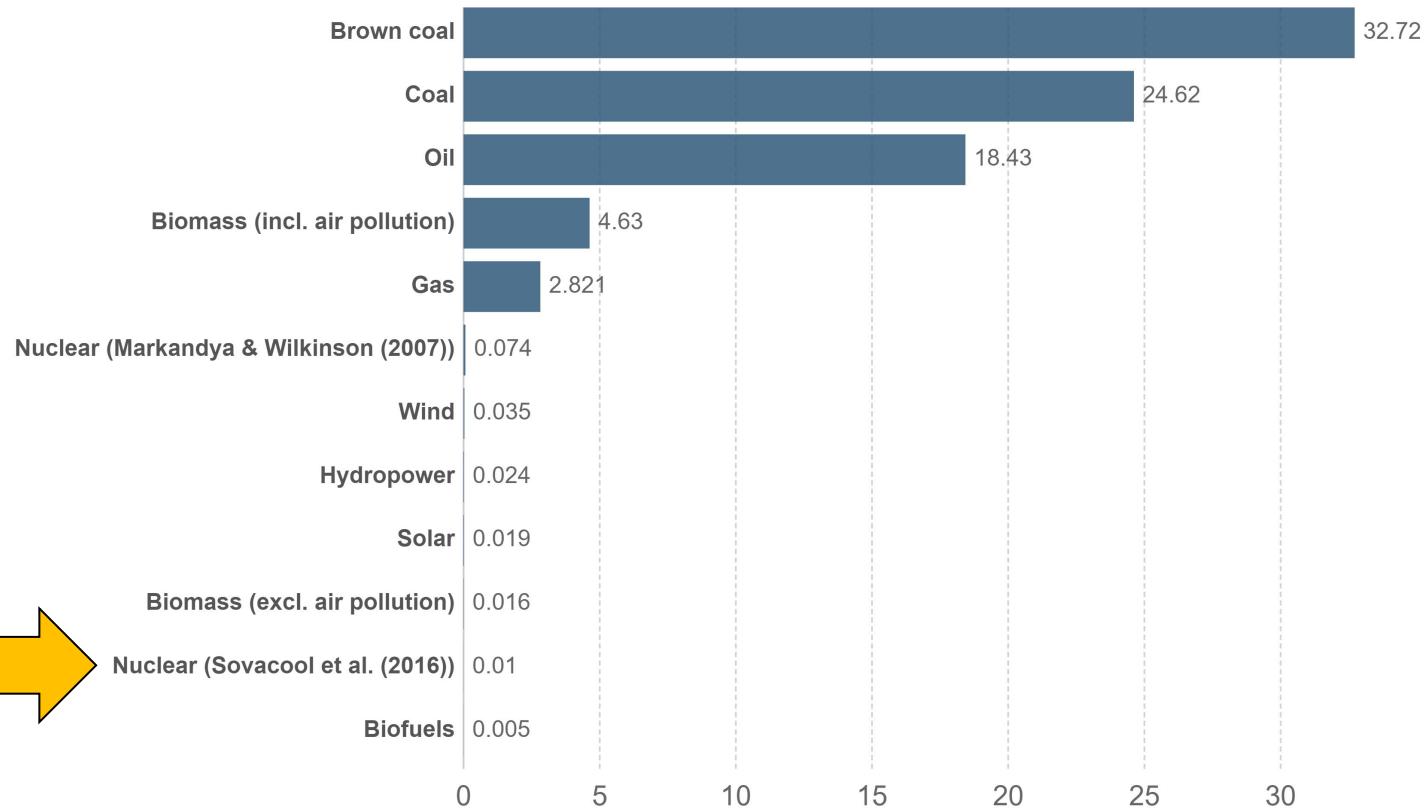
How dangerous is nuclear power?

Contrary to popular belief, nuclear energy is extremely safe and far superior to fossil fuels when it comes to deaths per terawatt hour.

Death rates from energy production

Our World
in Data

Death rates from energy sources is measured as the number of deaths from air pollution and accidents per terawatt-hour (TWh) of energy production.



Source: Markandya & Wilkinson (2007); & Sovacool et al. (2016)

OurWorldInData.org/energy • CC BY



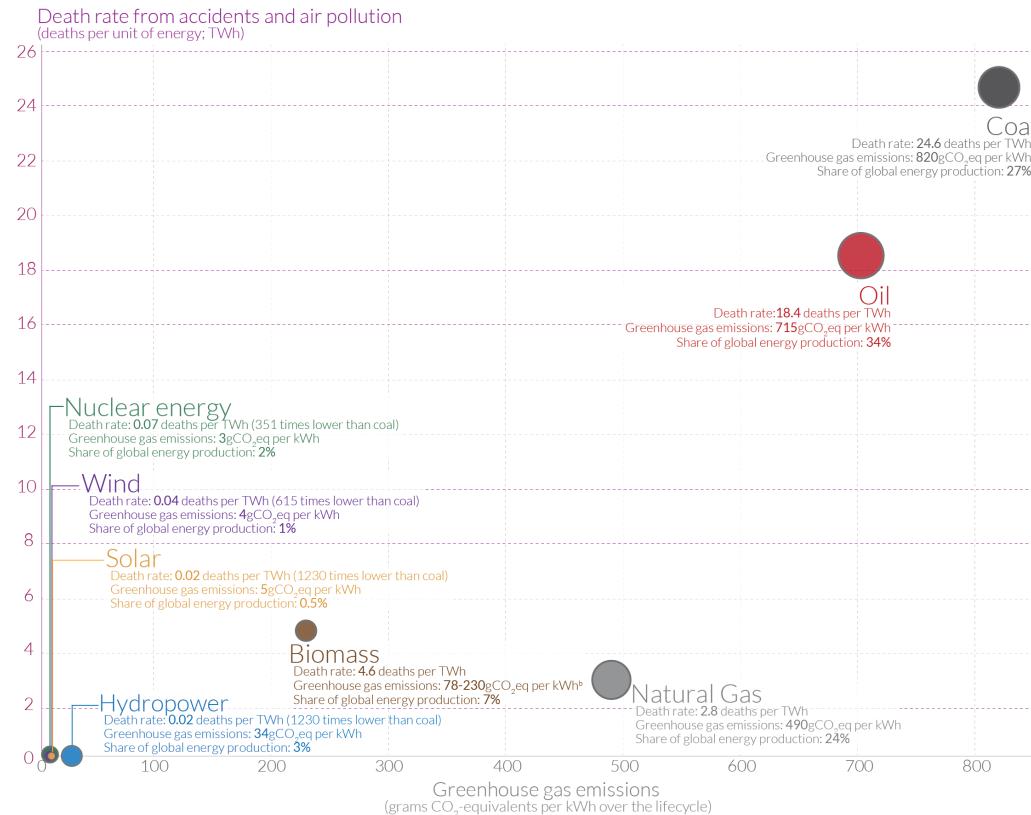
Alternative Energy Sources in Comparison

Ordinate: death rate per terrawatt hour; Abscissa: GHG emission over life cycle

What are the safest sources of energy?

Bubble size represents each source's share of primary global energy production in 2018^a.

Our World
in Data



^a Share of primary energy production in 2018 includes estimates of traditional biomass (the burning of biomass – wood, crop residues and dung – in households for cooking and heating). Figures may therefore not exactly match energy production figures from sources such as BP which only report on commercially-traded fuels and energy. Energy is shown in primary energy terms, which does not account for inefficiencies of fossil fuel combustion and is therefore not a direct measure of final energy demand.

^b Life-cycle emissions from biomass vary significantly depending on fuel (e.g. crop residues vs. forestry). LCA results also vary depending on treatment of biogenic sources: many LCAs treat these emissions as zero, as the CO₂ emitted was previously sequestered by crops. In the IPCC framework, biogenic sources are included because the CO₂ uptake by biomass is accounted for within the AFOLU (i.e., Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use) sector.

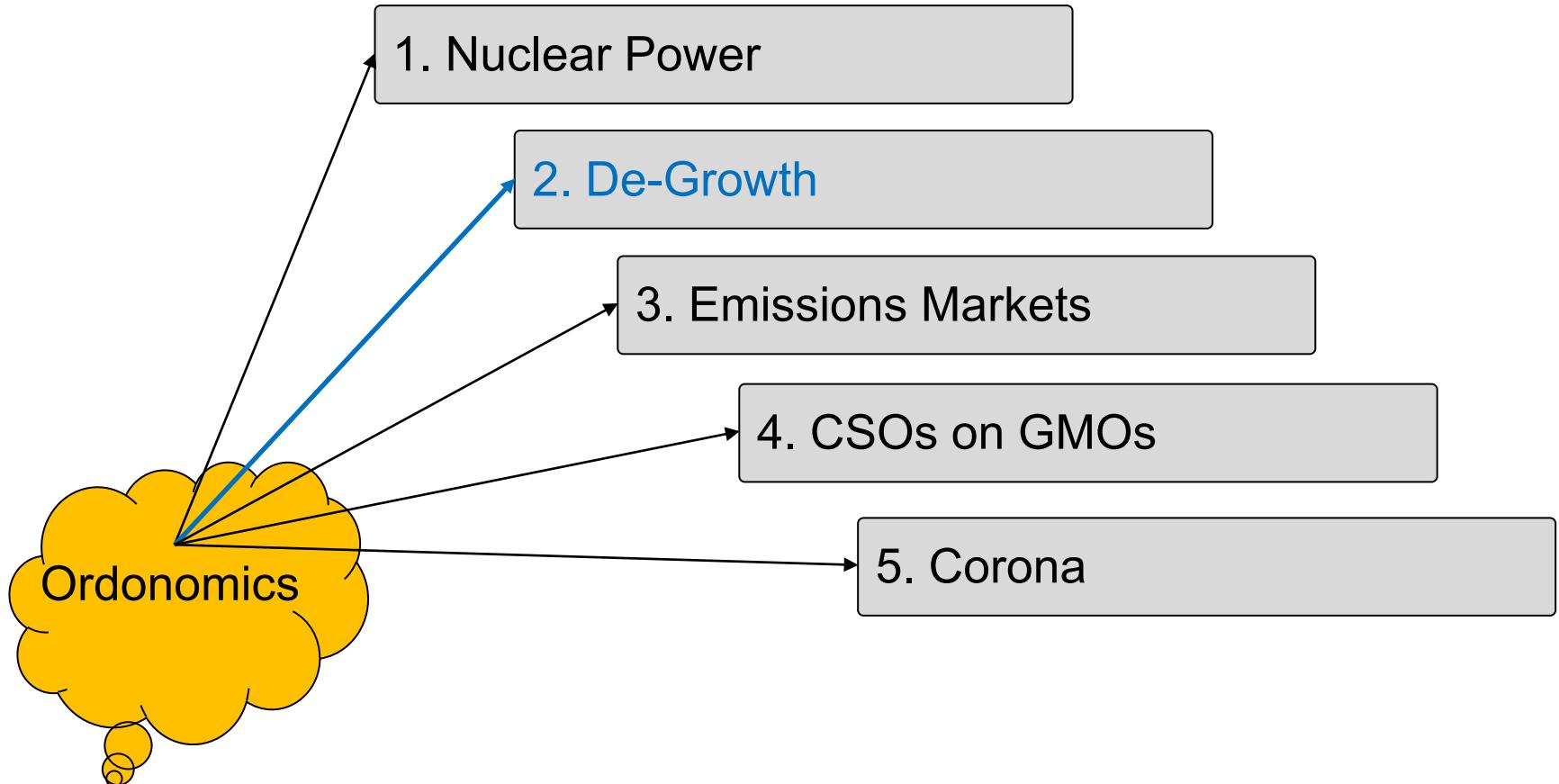
Data sources: Markandya & Wilkinson (2007); Sovacool et al. (2016); IPCC AR5 (2014); Pehl et al. (2017); BP Statistical Review of World Energy (2019); Smil (2017).

OurWorldinData.org - Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.



Sketches



De-Growth

The most radical rejection of the Western model of civilization, apart from religious fundamentalism, is currently found in the vicinity of the international de-growth movement. For example, you can read the following self-declaration:

„The current economic and social guiding principle is "higher, faster, further" – it requires and promotes competition between all people. On the one hand, this leads to acceleration, overwork and exclusion. On the other hand, the way of farming destroys our natural livelihoods as well as the habitats of plants and animals. We believe that the common values of a post-growth society should be mindfulness, solidarity and cooperation.“

Specifically, the following demands are made, among others:

„... an orientation towards the good life for all. These include deceleration, time-wealth and conviviality“ ; furthermore: a "reduction of production and consumption in the global north, a liberation from the one-sided Western development paradigm and thus the possibility of a self-determined shaping of society in the global south“.

Source: <https://www.degrowth.info/de/was-ist-degrowth/>



Greta Thunberg

With the "Fridays for Future" movement she initiated, Greta Thunberg makes vociferous demands to tackle climate change effectively. In doing so, she uses arguments that formulate a radical criticism of growth.



Greta Thunberg

„People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is the money and the **fairy tales of eternal economic growth**. How dare you?“

Greta Thunberg, 23.9.2019 at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York
(Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok>)



Extinction Rebellion

*SPIEGEL interview with Roger Hallam, one of the co-founders of „Extinction Rebellion“:
„Wenn eine Gesellschaft so unmoralisch handelt, wird Demokratie irrelevant“ (13.9.2019).
Emphasis by I.P.*



<https://media.thetab.com/blogs.dir/35/files/2017/03/17038598-1296469630474017-2628412151049542341-o-3.jpg>

SPIEGEL: Democracy provides for ways to bring about the necessary changes: demonstrations, elections, parliamentary engagement. Why, instead, do you rely on illegal blockades and break the law?

Hallam: Because **this issue is bigger than democracy**, or whatever you want to describe what is left of it at the moment. **When a society acts so immorally, democracy becomes irrelevant.** Then there can only be direct actions to stop this.

<https://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/technik/extinction-rebellion-gruender-roger-hallam-wenn-eine-gesellschaft-so-unmoralisch-handelt-wird-demokratie-irrelevant-a-1286561.html>

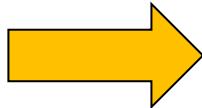


Reconstruction of De-Growth Argument with Practical Syllogism

The de-growth movement interprets growth as the cause of many problems and therefore calls for renunciation of growth, zero growth, and even negative growth. If we apply the “steelmanning” approach, the underlying considerations can be reconstructed as follows.

Argument for De-Growth:

1. The moral concern is to promote a societal cooperation at a global scale that enables all people to live a self-determined good life.
2. Growth is based on competition, stands in the way of desired cooperation and is ecologically questionable.
3. Moral reasons suggest abandoning further growth and even seeking to actively reduce production and consumption.



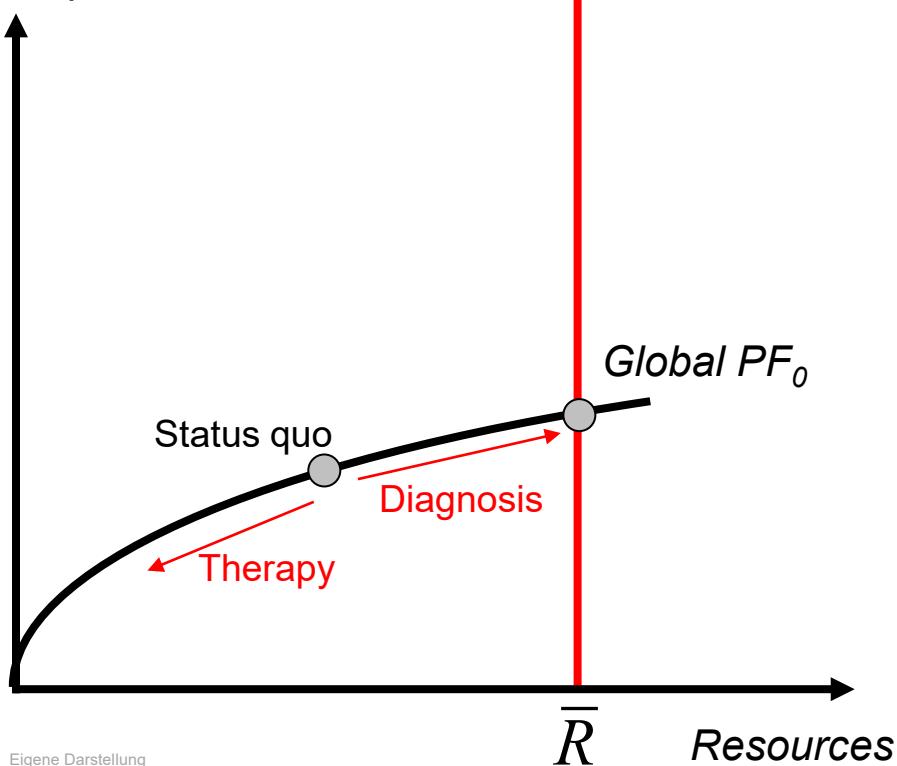
Is the positive premiss (2) in need of correction?
What is the assumed concept of growth?



The Perspective of the De-Growth Movement

The semantics of "limits to growth" warns against excessive resource consumption. The underlying idea is to assume "extensive" growth.

Global production
per capita



The Degrowth movement interprets growth **"extensively"**: as a **movement along** the global production function (PF).

It is feared that there is a critical level (\bar{R}) of resource consumption (red line).

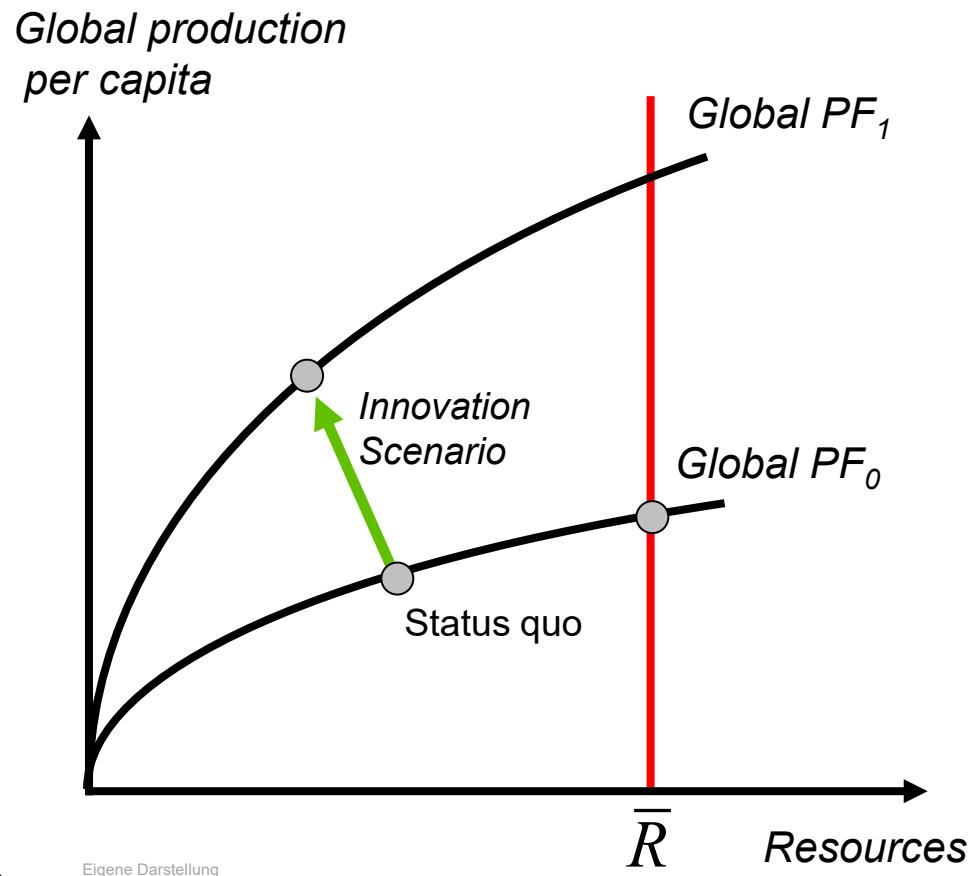
"Growth" has "limits" because it is essential to prevent the red line from being crossed.

This diagnosis corresponds to the therapy of reducing production (= economic de-growth).



Change of Perspective Towards “Growth of Limits“

Intensive growth is knowledge-driven. It is created by innovation. Innovation shifts the production function. This is why environmental problems can be solved through intensive growth, i.e. innovative win-win arrangements.



"Growth" should not be interpreted as a movement along the global production function, but as a **shift of the production function** ($PF_0 \rightarrow PF_1$)

That's why **intensive growth** is linked to the option of conserving resources. In this respect, it is really a question of 'growth of limits'.

You don't have to be afraid of any rebound effects, since (a) they improve living standards or (b) can be politically regulated.



Formulating a Counter-Argument with Practical Syllogism

The de-growth argument does not only propose aligning functional systems with standards of (small-group) community morality. It also presupposes a strict contrast between cooperation and competition and works with a concept of extensive growth..

Argument for De-Growth:

1. The moral concern is to promote a societal cooperation at a global scale that enables all people to live a self-determined good life.
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3. Moral reasons suggest abandoning further growth and even seeking to actively reduce production and consumption.

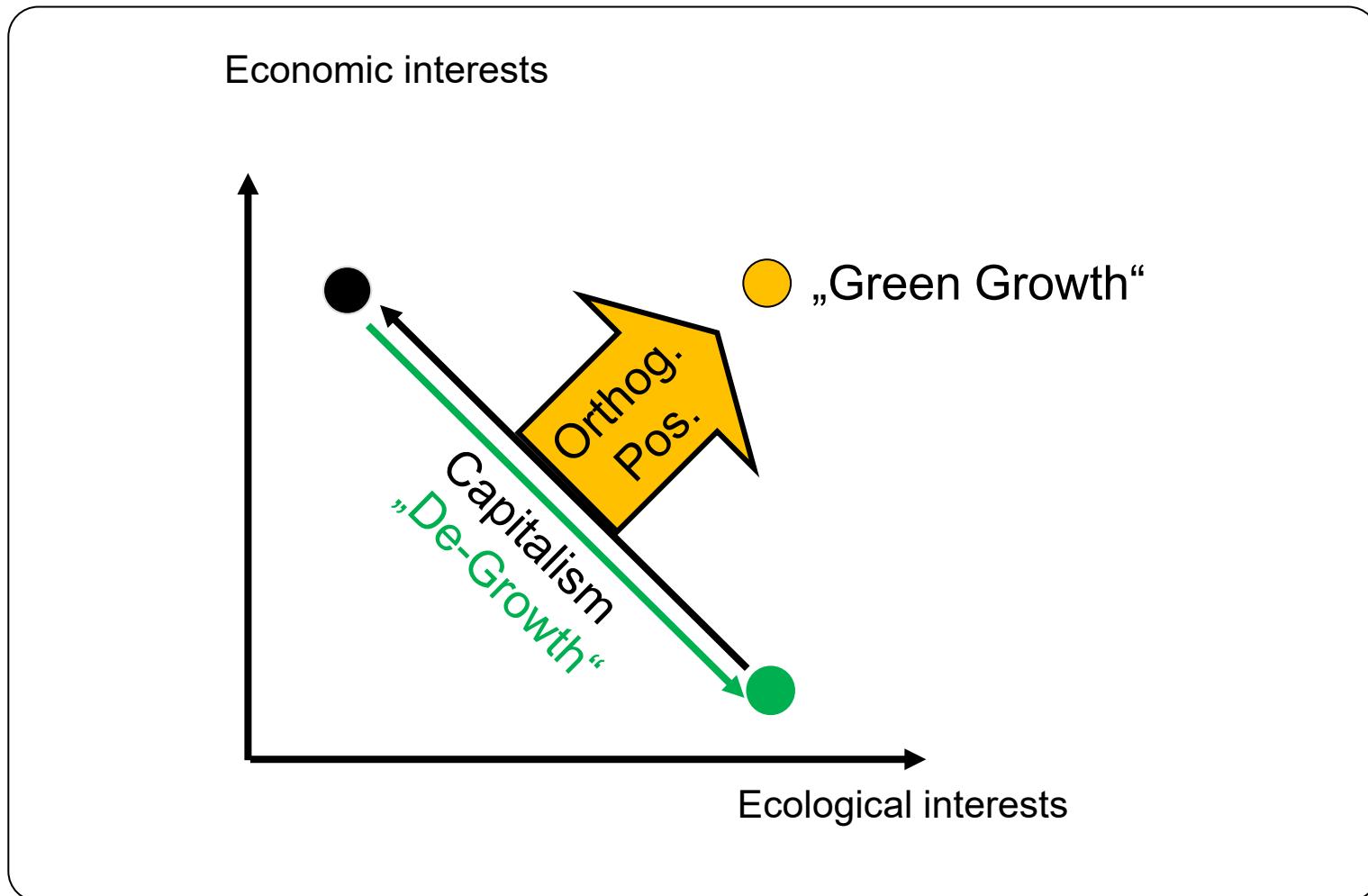
Downstream-Argument against De-Growth:

1. The moral concern is to promote a societal cooperation at a global scale that enables all people to live a self-determined good life.
- Δ2. Intensive growth, caused by innovation competition, does not stand in the way of the desired cooperation and can even be used to achieve ecological goals.
- Δ3. Moral reasons do not suggest that we have to abstain from further growth. They even speak against seeking to reduce production and consumption.

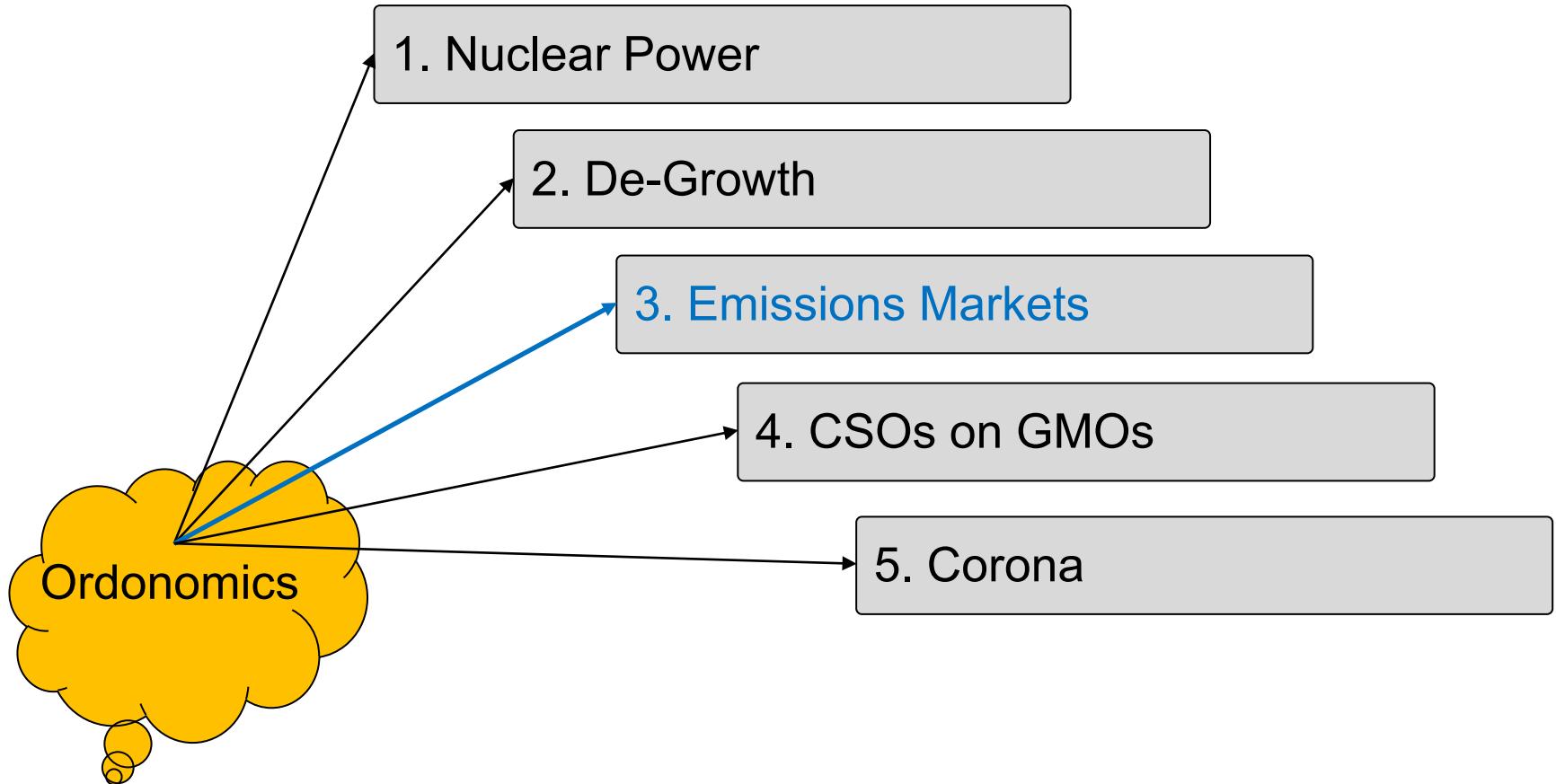


Solution to an Important Social Controversy of the 21st Century

*Change of perspective to the innovation economy: growth not as a problem, but as a solution.
This requires completely new governance arrangements.*



Sketches



Emissions Markets – Contra Argument as Downstream 1st Order

Some see (and morally reject) emissions trading of CO₂ allowances as “trading indulgences for environmental sins”. This critique can be reconstructed in the practical syllogism as follows.

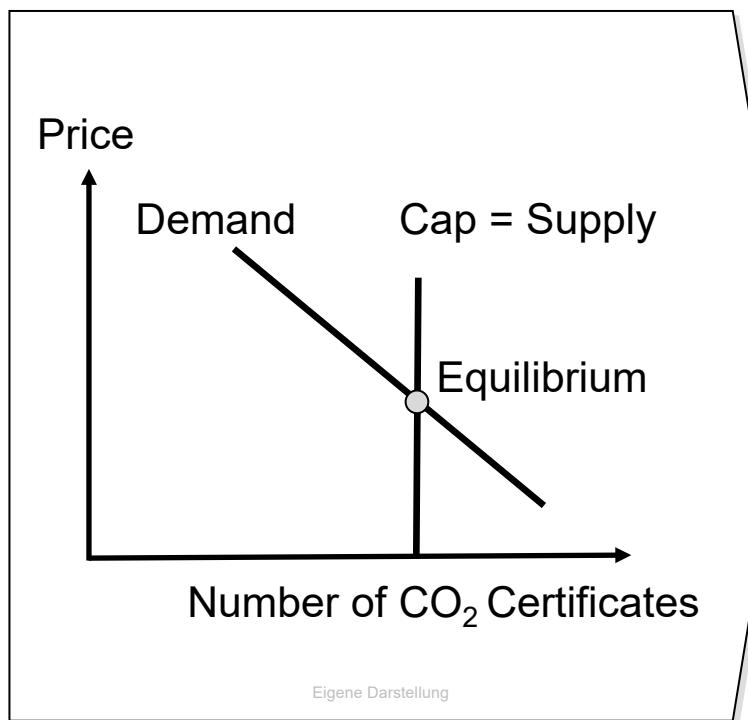
Argument against Emissions Markets:

1. In the light of scientific knowledge of climate change, it is a moral concern to reduce CO₂ emissions effectively.
2. Emissions trading is a zero-sum game because each seller faces a buyer, so the number of pollution rights remains constant.
3. Emissions trading is unsuitable as a climate-political instrument and is therefore morally rejected.



What are the Facts?

Emissions Markets are a brilliant idea. However, in order to understand this idea, one has to distinguish two phases of setting up an emissions market.



Eigene Darstellung

- The system of certificate trading is set up in two stages. In the first stage, the number of certificates is determined politically. In the second stage, an economic exchange process is organized for the specified amount of allowances.
- The first stage determines the climate protection effect (effectiveness). The fewer allowances are issued, the less CO₂ can be emitted.
- The second stage determines the costs of climate protection (efficiency). Trade ensures that CO₂ emissions are avoided where this is particularly cost-efficient. Furthermore, prices encourage innovation.

Advantage: By equalizing marginal abatement costs (across firms, sectors and countries), climate protection becomes economically cheap, so that one can afford more of it.



Argument for Emissions Markets – Downstream 1st Order

The original moral judgment can be criticized constructively because it is based on misunderstandings that can be factually corrected. Here, by mistake only the second trading phase is looked at, although a moral assessment would have to take into account both phases of a trading system for certificates. In addition, it is thus misunderstood that effectiveness and efficiency are systematically linked: the more cost-efficient climate protection is, the more one can afford it. Furthermore, market prices for emissions encourage innovation.

Argument against Emissions Markets:

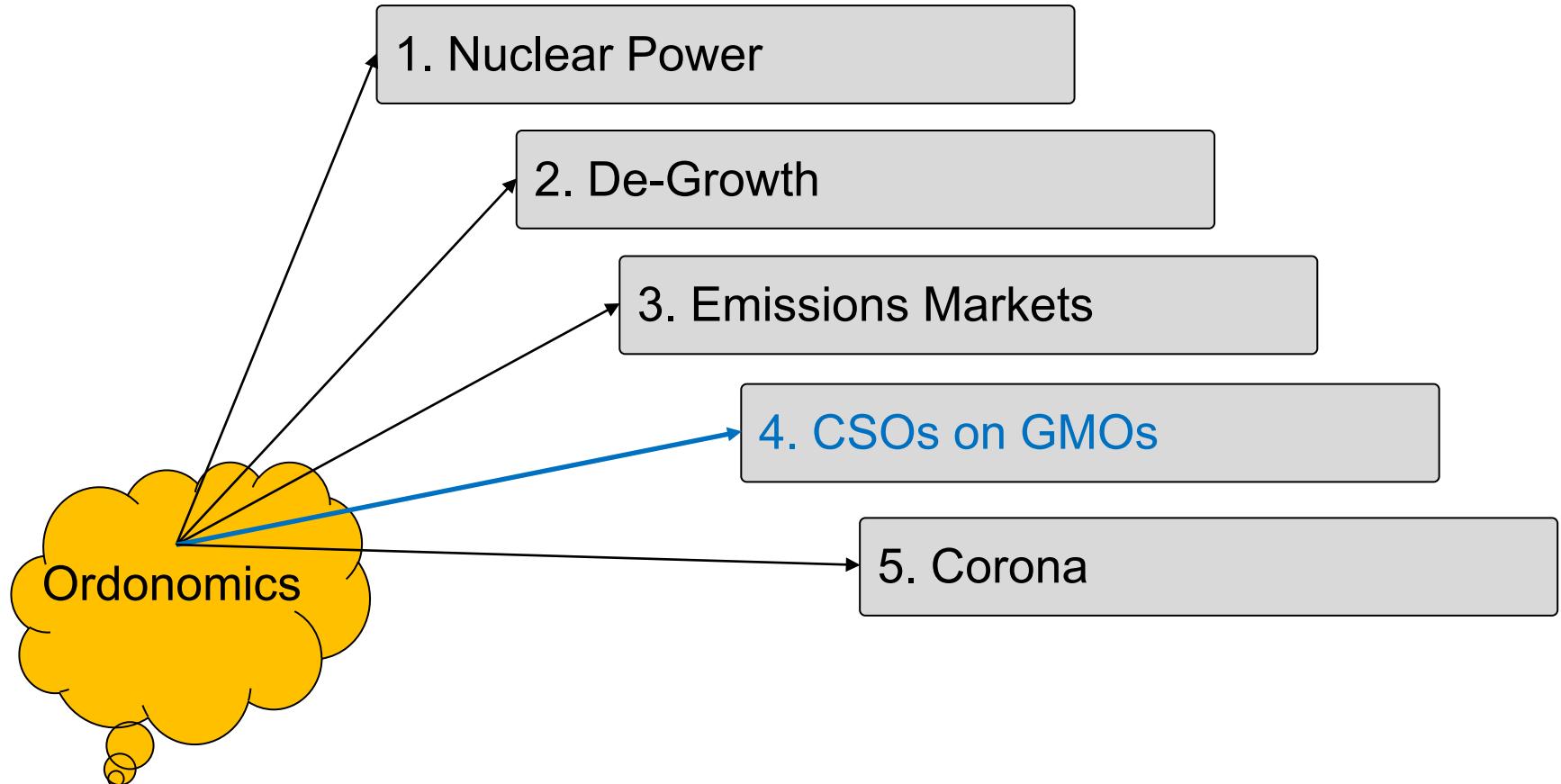
1. In the light of scientific knowledge of climate change, it is a moral concern to reduce CO₂ emissions effectively.
2. Emissions trading is a zero-sum game because each seller faces a buyer, so the number of pollution rights remains constant.
3. Emissions trading is unsuitable as a climate-political instrument and is therefore morally rejected.

Argument for Emissions Markets:

1. In the light of scientific knowledge on climate change, it is a moral concern to effectively reduce CO₂ emissions.
- Δ2. Emissions trading is an extremely useful tool for effectively reducing CO₂ emissions due to its effects on cost efficiency and innovative dynamism.
- Δ3. Emissions trading is extremely suitable as a climate-political instrument and is therefore to be morally supported.

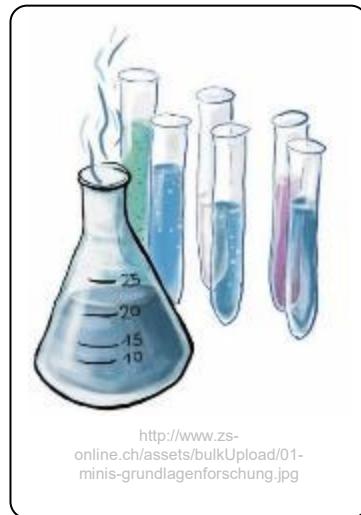


Sketches

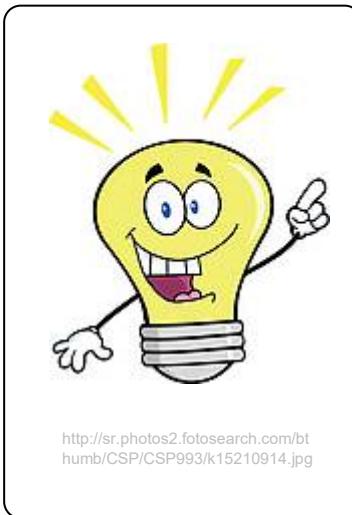


Bioeconomy: A Blind Spot?

Bioeconomy activities focus primarily on (a) basic research, (b) invention, (c) innovation, and (d) diffusion of new products.



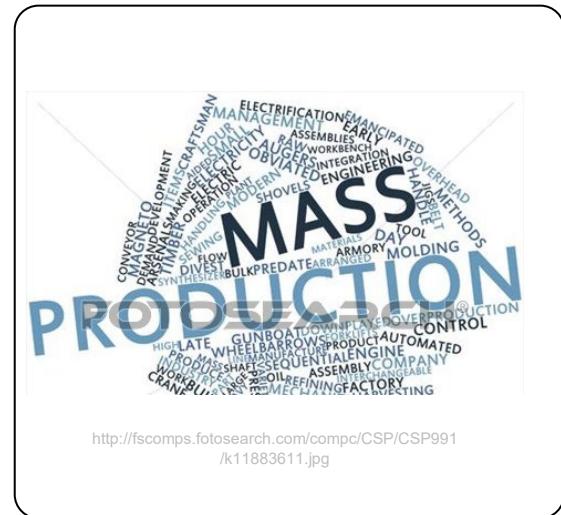
basic research



invention



http://us.123rf.com/450wm/ericulla/ericulla1105/ericulla110500004_9609355-neues-produkt.jpg



<http://fscomps.fotosearch.com/compc/CSP/CSP991/k11883611.jpg>

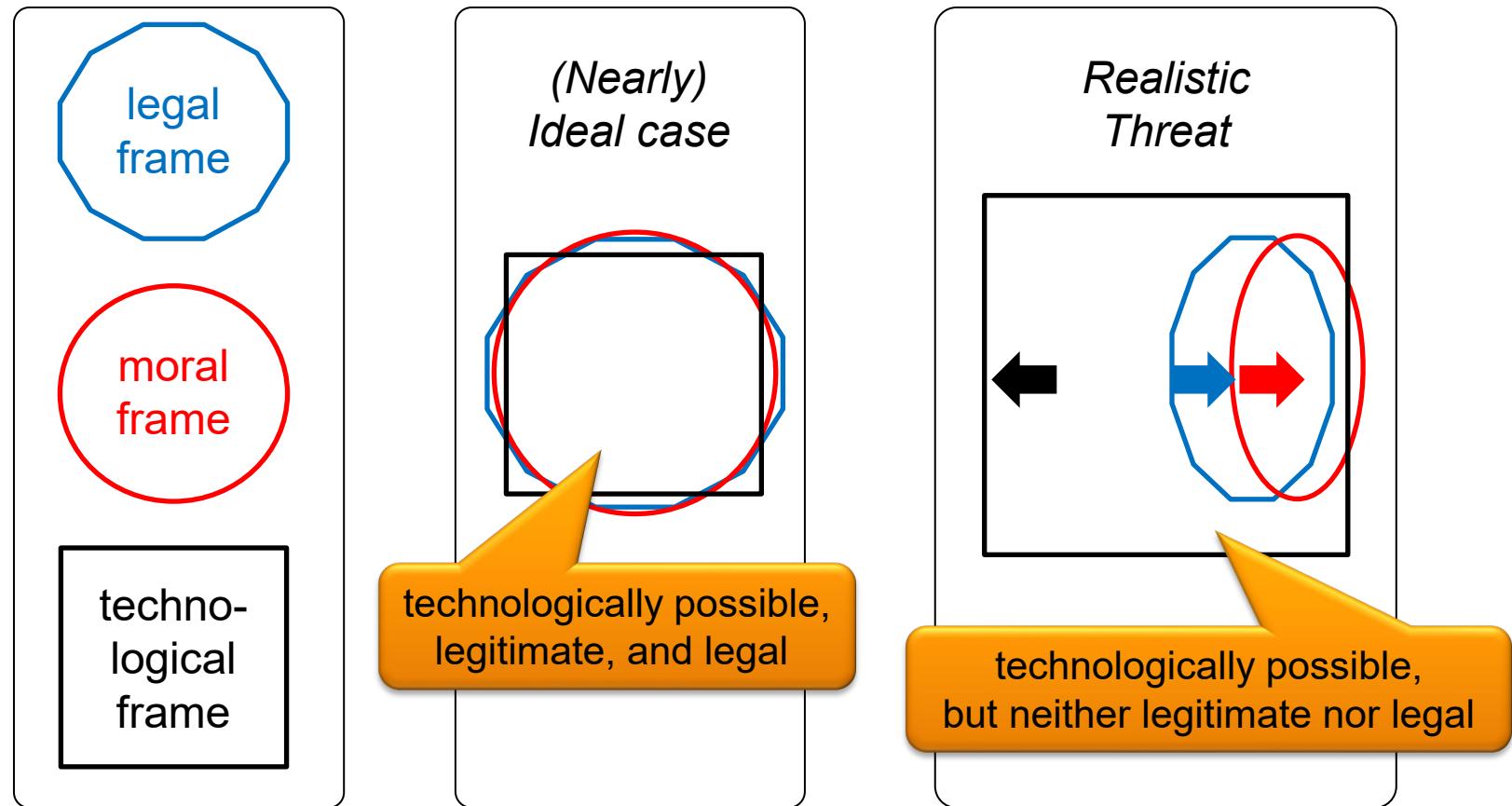
Challenge: The Bioeconomy rarely addresses issues of social acceptance (“legitimacy”) of new products and the underlying production technologies!

But why might that be important?



Modern Technologies Are In Danger Of Losing Public Support

Risks of the Bioeconomy: A dramatic increase in technological possibilities contrasts with a dramatic narrowing of moral and legal frames.



This is where the ordonomic approach comes into play.



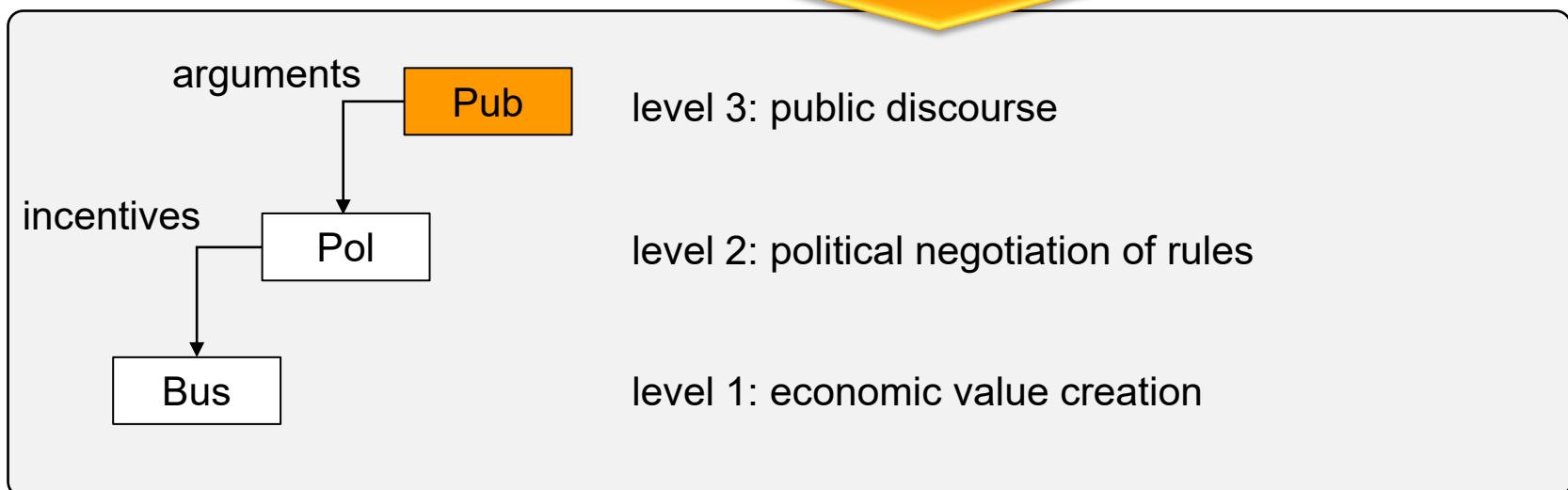
The Ordonomic Three-Level Perspective on the Ideal Case

Ordonomic proposition: Public discourses (level 3) drive the perception of morality and thus shape political processes (level 2) which define the rules of the business game (level 1).



David Hume (1739)

“It is on opinion only that government is founded.”

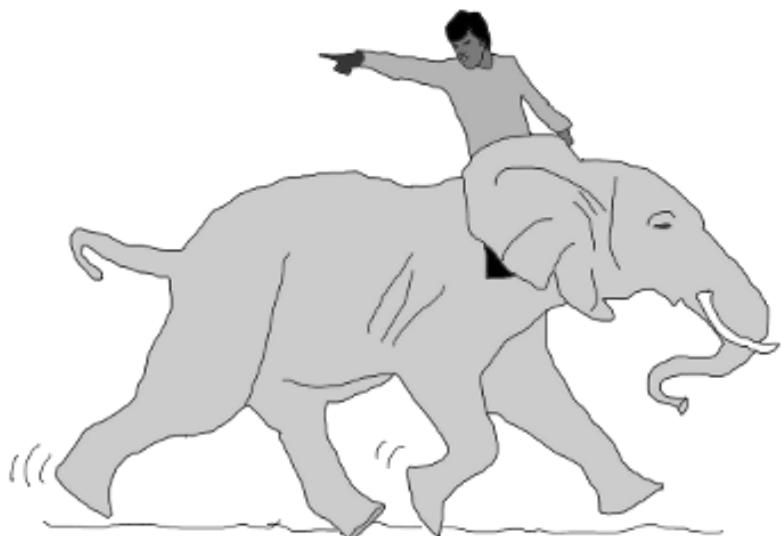


Legality follows (perceived) legitimacy.

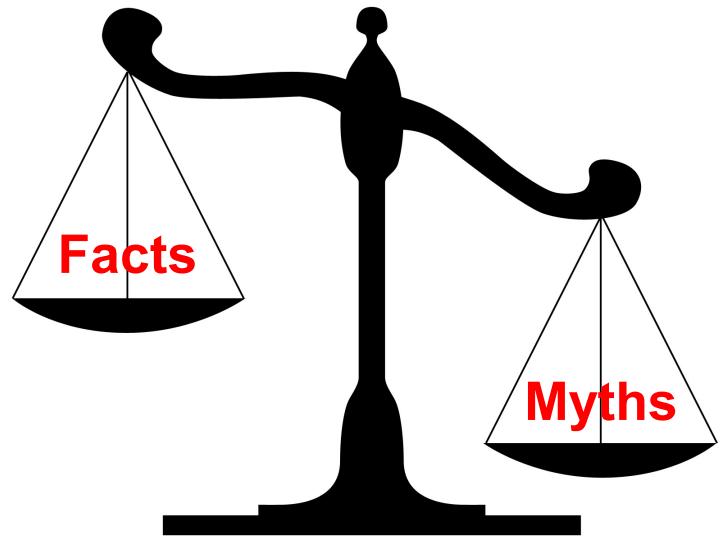


Discourse Failure

Emotional prejudice can inhibit reason-based arguments: people may believe myths and may disbelieve facts. This amounts to a discourse failure.



<http://www.pureandroid.com/wp-content/uploads/running-elephant.png>



<http://www.clipartbest.com/cliparts/RTd/Kaa/RTdKaakbc.jpeg>

Jonathan Haidt: “The relation between reason and emotion is analogous to the relation between rider and elephant.”

*Instead of a rational discourse, we often observe **discourse failure** due to moral emotions: Myths can dominate Facts!*



Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Chair of Economic Ethics
Prof. Dr. Ingo Pies

The Ordonomic Three-Level Perspective on the Non-Ideal Case

Ordonomic proposition: Public discourse failure (level 3) translates bad ideas (= moral disorientations) into bad rules (level 2) which lead to detrimental outcomes (level 1).

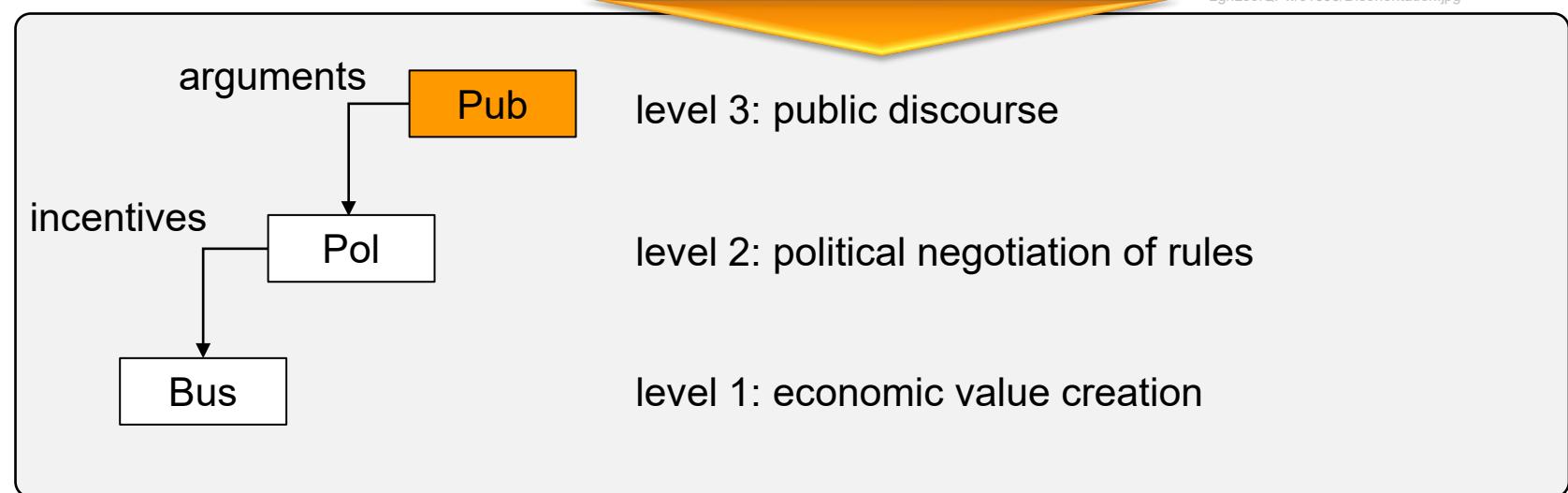


<http://quickbase.intuit.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/03/How-to-Turn-Bad-Ideas-Into-Good-Ones.jpg>



<http://4.bp.blogspot.com-/VA2hDCHi5FE/UyU6zFii6HI/AAAAAAAASQJ/2gnLsefQPw/s1600/Disorientation.jpg>

Discourse failure



Salto mor(t)ale: The three-level process becomes dysfunctional.



Salto mor(t)ale: A Striking Example

Public discourses on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) reveal that civil society organizations (have) become experts in emotionalizing campaigns that distort the facts.

<http://polpix.sueddeutsche.com/bild/1.1885482.1403298118/860x860/genmais.jpg>

http://d1mquhhbq1b1r.cloudfront.net/2014/02/12129186_preview.gif?1392197864

<http://cdn1.spiegel.de/images/image-166684-panoV9free-jzqt-166684.jpg>



<https://trennschaerfe.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/genmais.jpg?w=397>



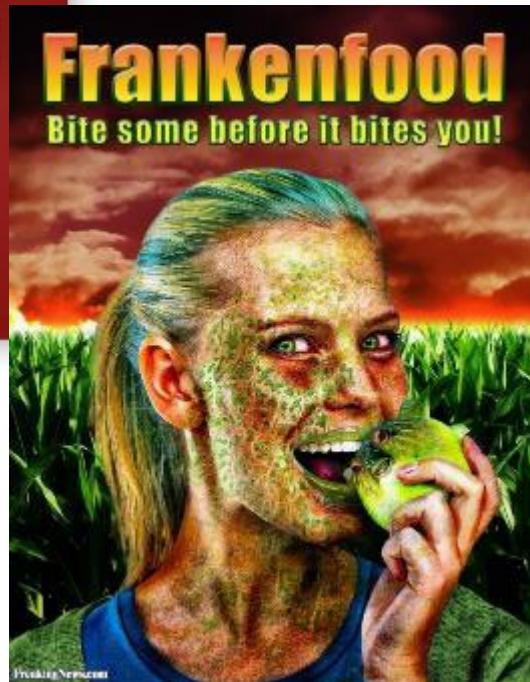
http://www.umweltinstitut.org/fileadmin/Mediatool/Bilder/01_Themen/04_Gentechnik/Gentechnik_bei_Pflanzen/Genmais_20Hazard_20farbig_05.jpg



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http://rv-mittlerer-oberrhein.bund-bawue.de/fileadmin/rv_mittlerer-oberrhein/grf/genmais.gif

Further Campaign Examples



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Gabi Waldhof

The Arguments of GMO Opponents

The strategy of the GMO opponents starts in the middle of the 1980s. The campaigns of CSOs are often moralistic.



<https://asta-ko.uni-koblenz.de/~unironisch/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Greenpeace-logo.png>



http://foe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/082417_FOE-logo.jpg



<http://www.gmofreeglobal.org/images/002.png>

The advocacy of the world's leading NGOs against GMOs boils down to essentially four arguments:

1. GMOs are harmful to humans.
2. GMOs are harmful to the environment.
3. GMOs serve only the interests of big business (and harm farmers).
4. GMO research is unreliable and inconclusive.



A Typical Quote

Source:

<https://www.ecowatch.com/europe-rejection-of-gmos-ignites-eco-farming-revolution-1882119738.html>



https://www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/styles/galleria_node_desk_1x/public/gmo_free_europe.jpg?itok=xbxFmeSu

Greenpeace Anti-GMO Campaign

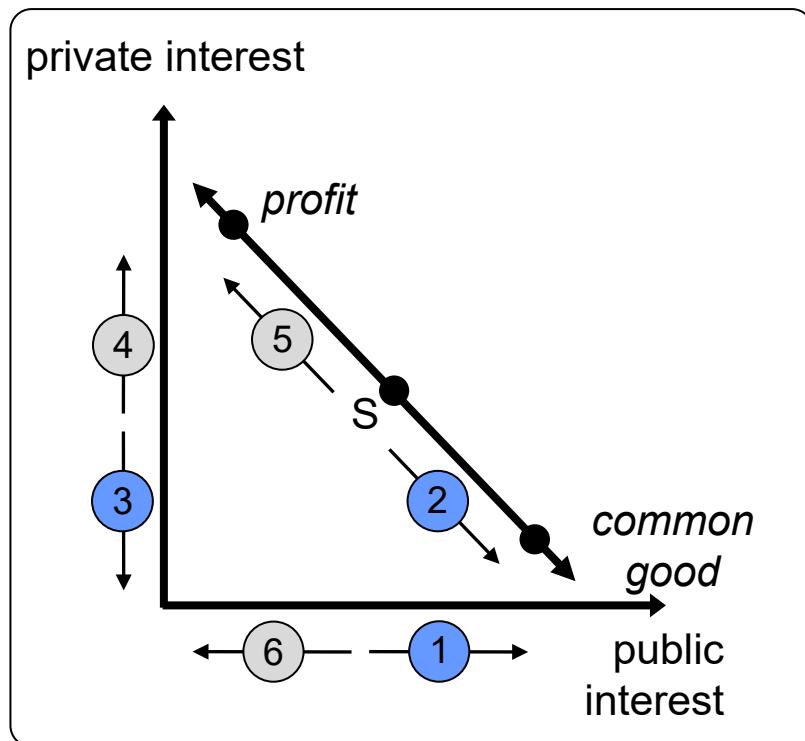
„[Genetic Engineering] is the wrong approach to food and agriculture because it encourages monocultures, intensification, and chemicals-use while undermining biodiversity. GE also shifts the power away from small and medium-size farmers to the major corporations and their patented genetic materials.“

Ecowatch (2015).

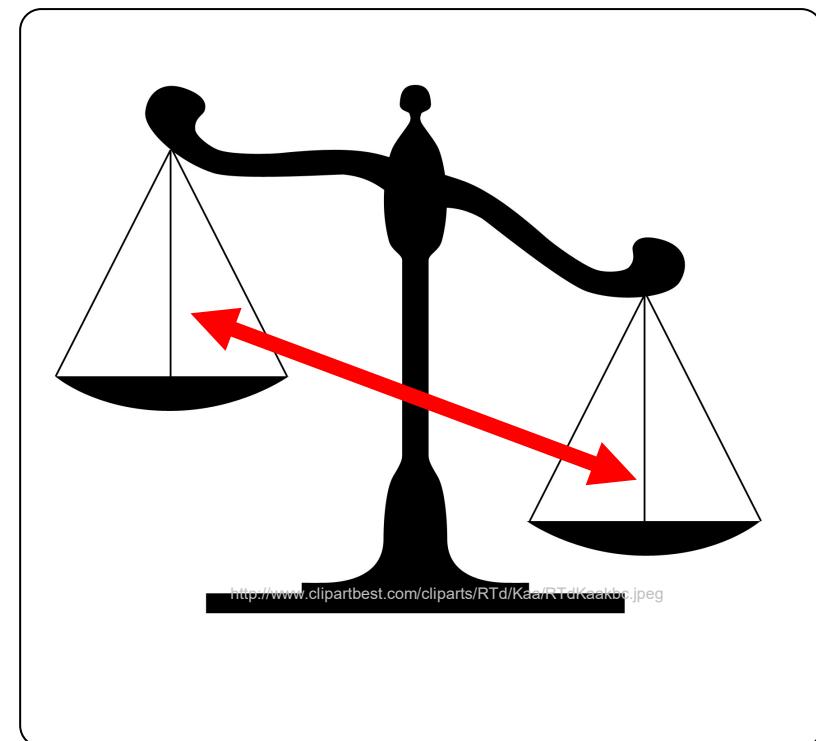


The Mental Model of Public Discourse (Failure)

Representatives of the bioeconomy must be aware that their activities (and arguments) might be perceived within a (publicly assumed) tradeoff between private and public interest. This can even reinforce emotional prejudices and thus turn the scale.



*Tradeoff paradigm (win-lose):
perception of a strict conflict between
private and public interest*



*We must identify and correct the mental
model of public discourse in order to
achieve a **fair balance of pros and cons**.*



124 Nobel Laureates Criticise Greenpeace for its Anti-GMO Strategy

On 29 June 2016, senior scientists call for Greenpeace to abandon its campaign against green genetic engineering. They see this campaign as a crime against humanity. This was almost non-reported in the German media.



http://www.csu.de/generated/pics/Christian_schmidt_d2a3061eb8.jpg

Richard J. Roberts
Initiator of the letter

"WE CALL UPON GREENPEACE to cease and desist in its campaign against Golden Rice specifically, and crops and foods improved through biotechnology in general;

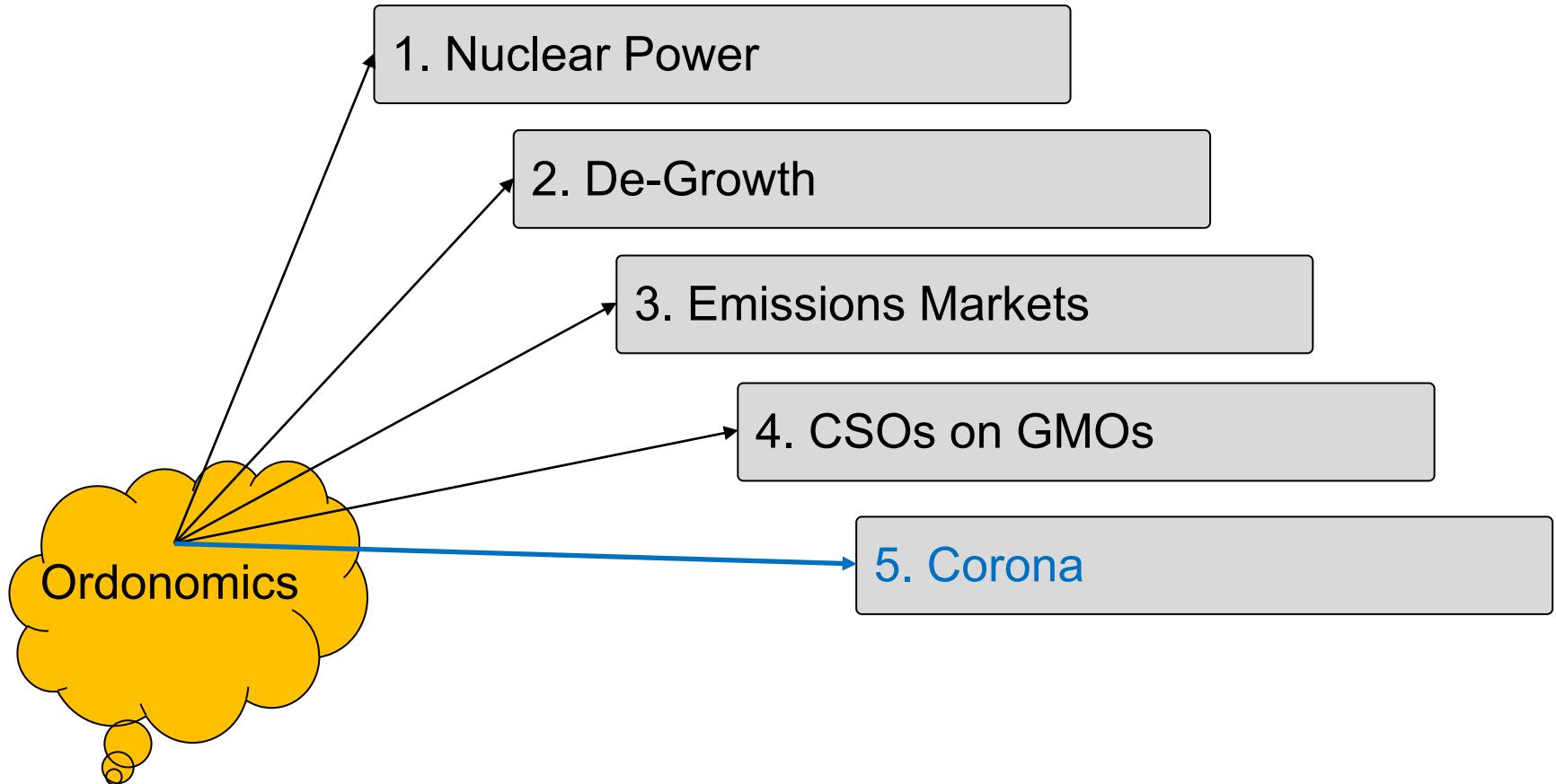
WE CALL UPON GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD to reject Greenpeace's campaign against Golden Rice specifically, and crops and foods improved through biotechnology in general; and to do everything in their power to oppose Greenpeace's actions and accelerate the access of farmers to all the tools of modern biology, especially seeds improved through biotechnology. Opposition based on emotion and dogma contradicted by data must be stopped.

How many poor people in the world must die before we consider this a "**crime against humanity**"?

Roberts et al. (2016, H.i.O.)
http://supportprecisionagriculture.org/nobel-laureate-gmo-letter_rjr.html



Sketches



Ethics in Times of Corona

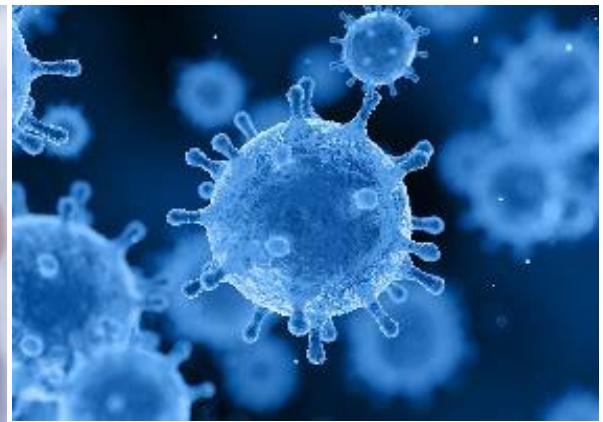
From an historical point of view, human morality evolved as a problem-solving device. But under modern conditions it might as well generate or intensify problems. Our moral sentiments are not well adjusted to the systemic challenges we face in modern politics, modern business, or modern science. Hence, moral sentiments can become an impediment to moral progress. This is the “moral paradox of modernity”.



Quelle: <https://news.utexas.edu/2020/04/08/more-of-us-need-to-think-about-morality-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>



Quelle: <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-what-are-the-lockdown-measures-across-europe/a-52905137>



Quelle: <https://www.bgn.de/corona/>



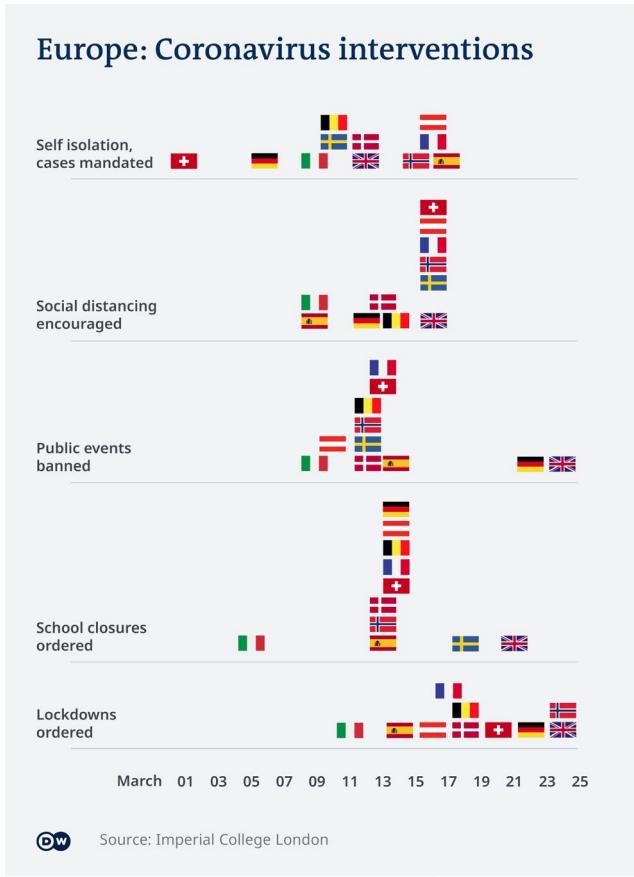
Ethics in Times of Corona – Ordonomic Reflections on (Dys-)Functional Morality



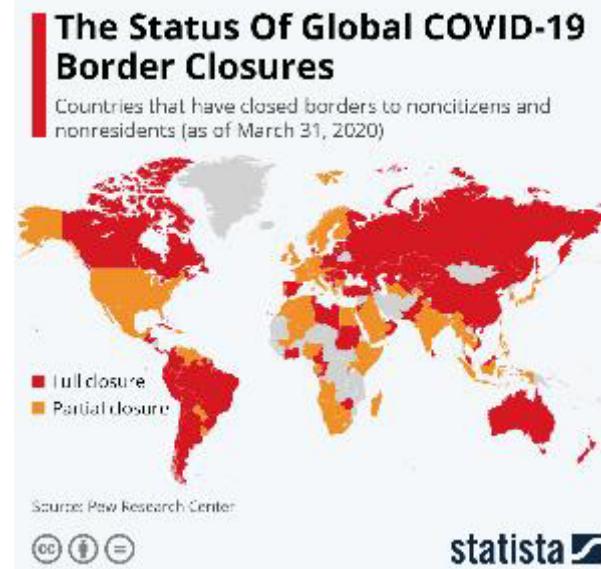
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(I) Empirical Observations on the Corona Crisis

(a) The Corona crisis is a global pandemic. (b) The crisis has been countered nationally rather than globally. (c) Despite still many huge uncertainties, we know for sure that absent world-domestic politics, uncoordinated national contributions will yield suboptimal results: more deaths and lower living standards than necessary.



Quelle: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/blogs/study/covid-19-global-pandemic/>



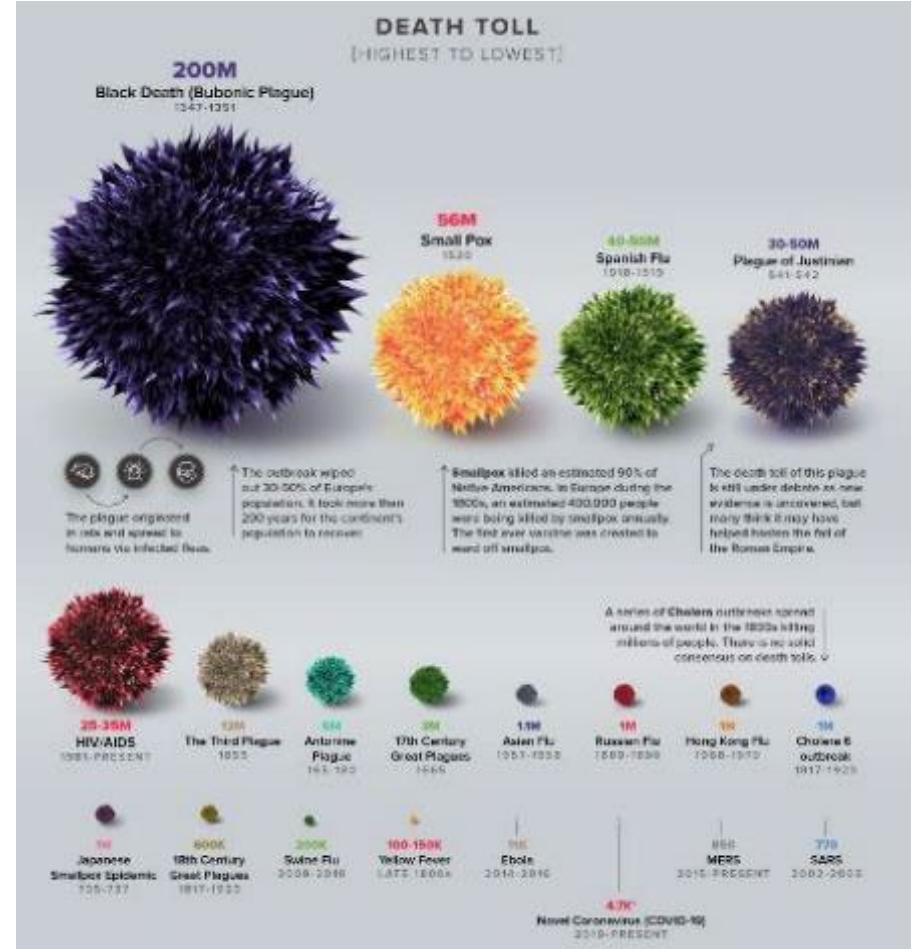
(II) Pandemics and Moral Sentiments

Pandemics are an integral part of human history. They have influenced the development of our moral sentiments, e.g. existential fear, disgust and xenophobia. In combination, all three of them lead to a moral disposition to evade infection by avoiding physical contact.



Quelle: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/the-fashionable-history-of-social-distancing>

For millennia, social distancing has been the only technology of saving your life during a pandemic. We have made little progress in this respect. Even in the 21st century, this ancient technology is still the major pillar of our fight against the new Corona virus.



Quelle: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/a-visual-history-of-pandemics>



(III) Individual Morality in Times of Corona

Individual morality is a force for good. But it can also have adverse consequences.



Quelle: <https://www.givingcompass.org/article/understanding-why-and-how-social-distancing-will-help-stop-coronavirus/>



Quelle: <https://time.com/5819816/coronavirus-social-distancing/>

1. There is evidence that social distancing began before governments mandated an economic lockdown. But of course a lockdown amplifies social distancing.
2. Hence, Individual morality and its inclination towards social distancing is an important success factor for an immediate reduction of the infection rate.
3. While mandating a lockdown can trigger social distancing, suspending the lockdown is unlikely to have an equally strong effect in the opposite direction. There is an important asymmetry. We can expect strong hysteresis, i.e. a ratchet effect. And this is likely to cause problems. People may have trouble in aligning their individual behavior to objective risk calculations. Here, individual morality can have adverse consequences. Returning back to normal might take a long time – and perhaps might not even be an option.

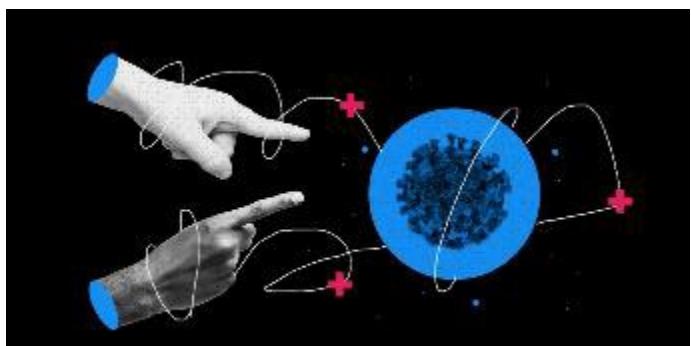


(IV) Group Morality in Times of Corona

Group morality is even more ambivalent than individual morality.



Quelle:<https://www.givingcompass.org/article/understanding-why-and-how-social-distancing-will-help-stop-coronavirus/>



Quelle:<https://www.thelily.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fwhy-shaming-people-who-didnt-stick-to-social-distancing-is-counterproductive%2f%3f>

1. The feeling of being endangered triggers strong instinctive reactions. The spectrum covers intense feelings of solidarity with your in-group and a readiness to fight external enemies.
2. In a pandemic, however, there are no external enemies. This causes cognitive dissonance and may trigger searching for scapegoats, which can turn violent. Pest pogroms are a case in point. Moral panics can lead to genocide.
3. Against this background, we can formulate two hypotheses:
 - a. Moral sentiments of group solidarity have encouraged national responses and at the same time discouraged global responses.
 - b. Our natural disposition for blaming and shaming, exemplified by a collective thrill of pillorying, may very well amplify the already existing tendencies of political polarization. The recent upsurge of conspiracy theories supports this theoretical expectation.



(V) Towards a World-Domestic Institutionalization of Prudent Risk-Management

Future Perfect: If we are lucky, after successfully having endured the Corona crisis, we will have learnt the following lessons.

1. National media tend to ignore the plurality of global challenges. This leads to underreporting on and even negligence of major existential threats. We need a wider perspective in order to better understand and appreciate the advantages of international coordination and cooperation.
2. Distinctively different problems like climate change, international pandemics, but also financial crises as well as global food security share common features with regard to the underlying problem structure.
3. We cannot afford to wait for global altruism to emerge. Instead, we must build institutions that encourage moral behaviour. **This requires a paradigm shift for implementing moral progress.** We must learn to distinguish between playing a given game better and playing a better game, between optimization and governance.
4. Specific examples: (-) EU behaviour amplifying global food price increases.
(+) System of investigative procedures after airplane crashes to improve flight safety.
5. We need an institutional architecture for a world-domestic politics that includes prudent risk management. Moral progress at a global scale does not require motivational altruism. It just requires effective altruism, and that can be brought about by market incentives that channel individual behavior towards the common good.



The Ordonomic Take-Home Message

Moral sentiments can become an impediment to moral progress. This is the “moral paradox of modernity,” the central problem addressed by the ordonomic research program.

In general, morality is a force for good. But it also has a dark side. As a case in point, moral sentiments can interfere with risk literacy. This is of particular importance in times of pandemics. Risks require insurance for creating resilience. It is exactly here that our morality has a blind spot. We tend to overlook that markets can foster resilience and that we can enlarge the circle of moral sentiments from motivational altruism to effective altruism if we make use of market institutions for organizing solidarity with strangers.



Quelle: <https://www.irmi.com/articles/expert-commentary/why-link-risk-management-and-ethics>



Quelle: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/blogs/study/covid-19-global-pandemic/>



Quelle: <https://www.pbs.org/news/our-lives-re-fashionable-history-of-social-distancing>

