



**Where are we
going?**

**Philosophy in the
Anthropocene**

8. Refugees



Climate Change Will Create 1.5 Billion Migrants by 2050 and We Have No Idea Where They'll Go



OPINION

California fires, rising seas: Millions of climate refugees will dwarf Dust Bowl by 2100

Yvette D. Clarke and Michael Shank | Opinion contributors

Published 1:22 PM EST Nov 6, 2019

“Climate refugee” is likely a new term for most Americans. Also referred to as environmental migrants, climate refugees are people who are now forced to seek refuge from a life-threatening impact of the climate crisis.

Sport

Culture

Lifestyle

fe Energy Pollution

more than 1 year old

ating climate change could lead migrants a year entering EU by

otted temperature rises against the number of tions and are predicting that as the southern eats up the number of people migrating to the EU riple



Article | [Open Access](#) | Published: 29 October 2019

New elevation data triple estimates of global vulnerability to sea level rise and coastal flooding

Scott A. Kulp  & Benjamin H. Strauss

Nature Communications **10**, Article number: 4844 (2019)

304k Accesses | **6886** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

This quantity is comparable to the positive vertical bias of the principle digital elevation model (DEM) used to assess global and national population exposures to extreme coastal water levels, NASA's SRTM. CoastalDEM is a new DEM utilizing neural networks to reduce SRTM error. Here we show – employing CoastalDEM—that 190 M people (150–250 M, 90% CI) currently occupy global land below projected high tide lines for 2100 under low carbon emissions, up from 110 M today, for a median increase of 80 M. These figures triple SRTM-based values. Under high emissions, CoastalDEM indicates up to 630 M people live on land below projected annual flood levels for 2100, and up to 340 M for mid-century, versus roughly 250 M at present. We estimate one billion people now occupy land less than 10 m above current high tide lines, including 250 M below 1 m.

Climate migrants

- Economic gap between richest and poorest countries is 25% larger today than it would have been without climate change (Marshall Burke et al, 2019)
- For India, it would've been 30% larger, Nigeria 29%...
- International Organization for Migration: 25 million and 1.5 billion people will have to leave their homes by 2050 (2019).
- World Bank: 140m by 2050; UN: 200m
- Climate migrants do not have refugee status...
- “This study shows how Europe will be impacted by one of the most serious impacts of climate change. Hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people will be exposed to coastal sea level rise and shifts in extreme weather that will cause mass migrations away from the most vulnerable locations. We know from human history that such migrations often lead to conflict and war, with devastating consequences. The huge potential costs of migration-related conflict are usually omitted from economic models of climate change impacts in the future.” – Bob Ward, writing on a 2017 *Science* article by Anouch Missirian and Wolfram Schlenker

The Uninhabitable Earth

A STORY OF THE FUTURE

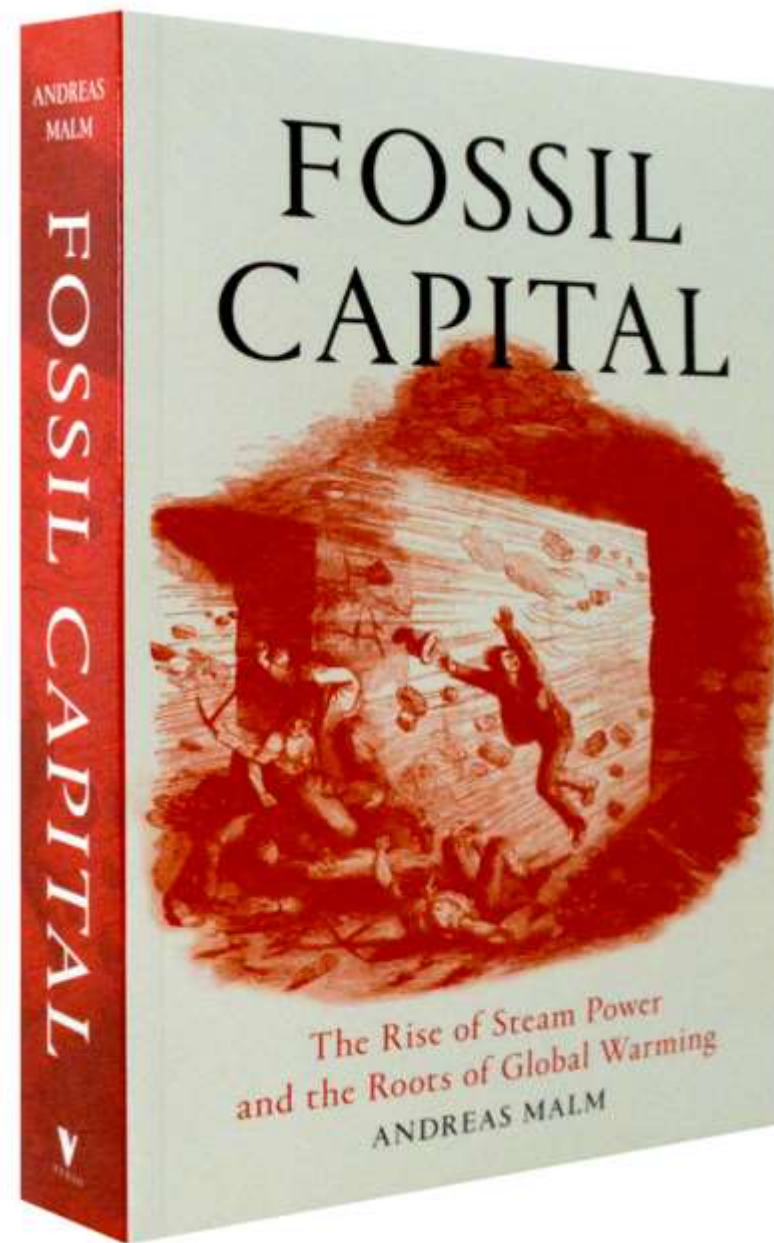
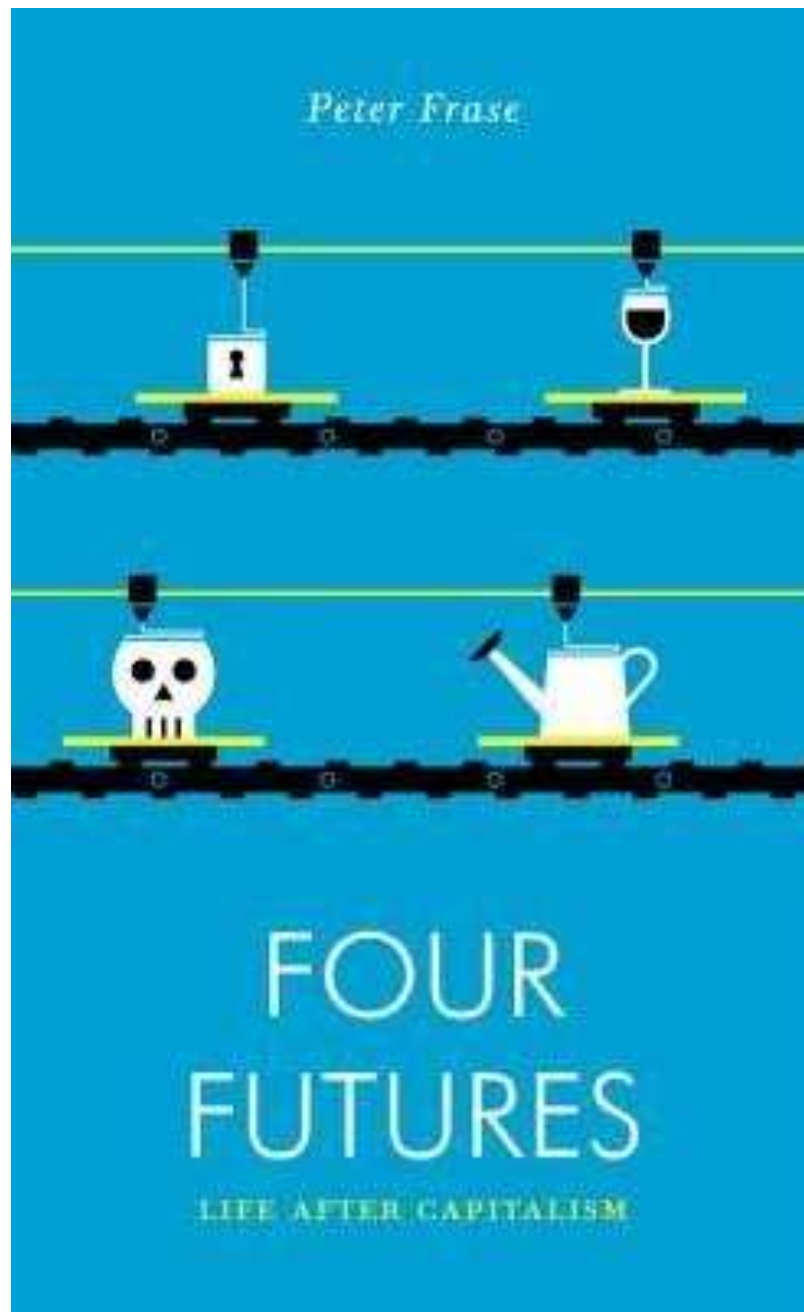
David
Wallace-Wells



‘Two hundred million was the entire world population at the peak of the Roman Empire, if you can imagine every single person alive and living anywhere on the planet at that time dispossessed of their home and turned outward to wander through hostile territories in search of a new one. The high end of what’s possible in the next thirty years, the United Nations says, is considerably worse: “a billion or more vulnerable poor people with little choice but to fight or flee.” A billion or more. That was the entire global population as recently as 1820

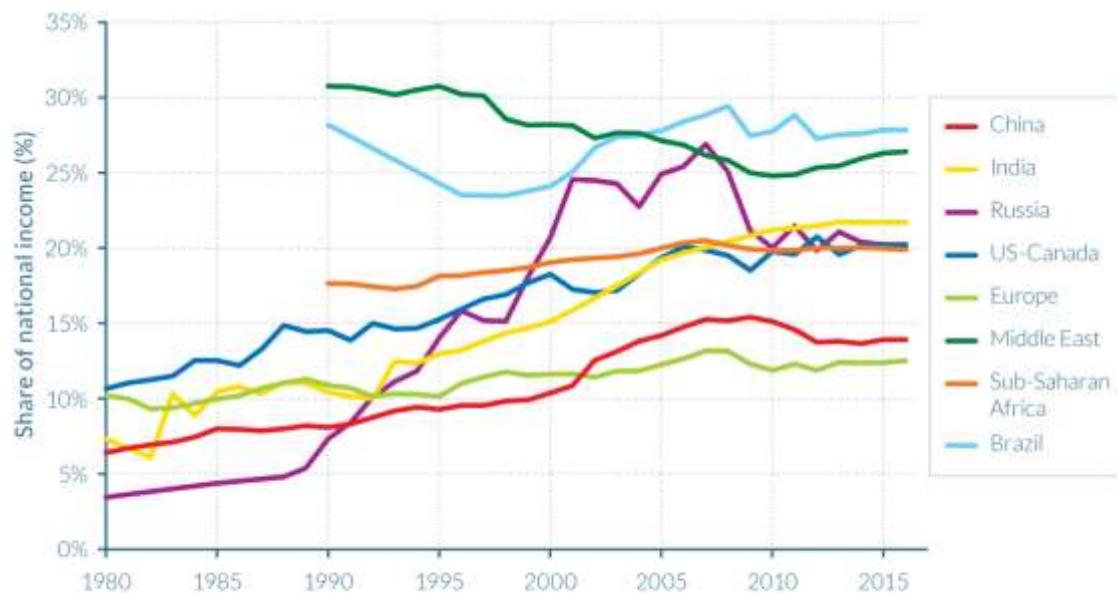
... the true numbers will almost surely fall short of them, and scientists tend to trust projections in the tens of millions rather than the hundreds of millions. But that those bigger numbers are only the far upper reaches of what is possible should not lull us into complacency’

- David Wallace-Wells, *Uninhabitable Earth*



Other warnings

- Peter Frase, *Four Futures*: faced with either an era of scarcity or abundance, the political choices are between hierarchy or equality – ‘socialism’ or ‘exterminism’
- Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital*: capitalism based on carbon extraction. But: ‘the victims of the systematic violence known as fossil fuel combustion may simply be *too far away* from the perpetrators to topple them’.
- John Lanchester, *The Wall*: post-Brexit fears of rising nationalisms and insularity

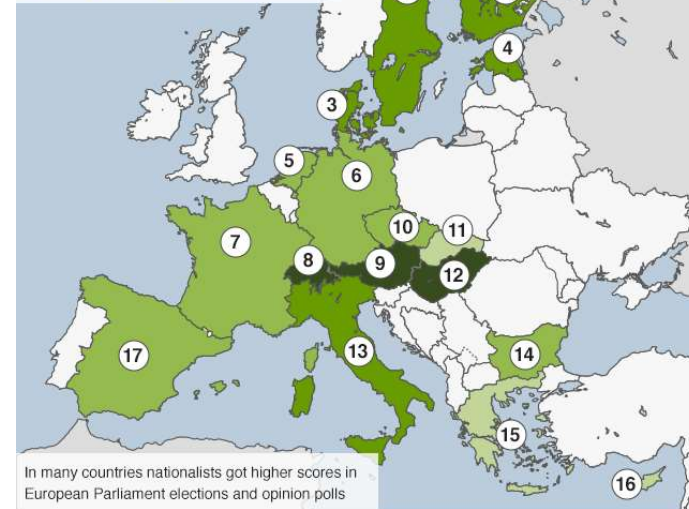


Source: WDI, world (2017). See w2018.wid.world/methodology.html for data series and notes.
In 2016, 14% of national income was received by the Top 1% in China.

Rise of nationalism in Europe

% of votes won by nationalist party in most recent national elections

1-8 9-16 17-24 25+



In many countries nationalists got higher scores in European Parliament elections and opinion polls

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Sweden
Sweden Democrats 17.6% | 10 Czech Republic
Freedom and Direct Democracy 11% |
| 2 Finland
The Finns 17.7% | 11 Slovakia
Our Slovakia 8% |
| 3 Denmark
Danish People's Party 21% | 12 Hungary
Fidesz 49% , Jobbik 19% |
| 4 Estonia
Conservative People's Party 17.8% | 13 Italy
The League 17.4% |
| 5 Netherlands
Freedom Party 13% | 14 Bulgaria
United Patriots 9% |
| 6 Germany
Alternative for Germany 12.6% | 15 Greece
Golden Dawn 7% |
| 7 France
National Rally 13% | 16 Cyprus
ELAM 3.7% |
| 8 Switzerland
Swiss People's Party 29% | 17 Spain
Vox 10.3% |
| 9 Austria
Freedom Party 26% | |

Last updated: April 2019

BBC



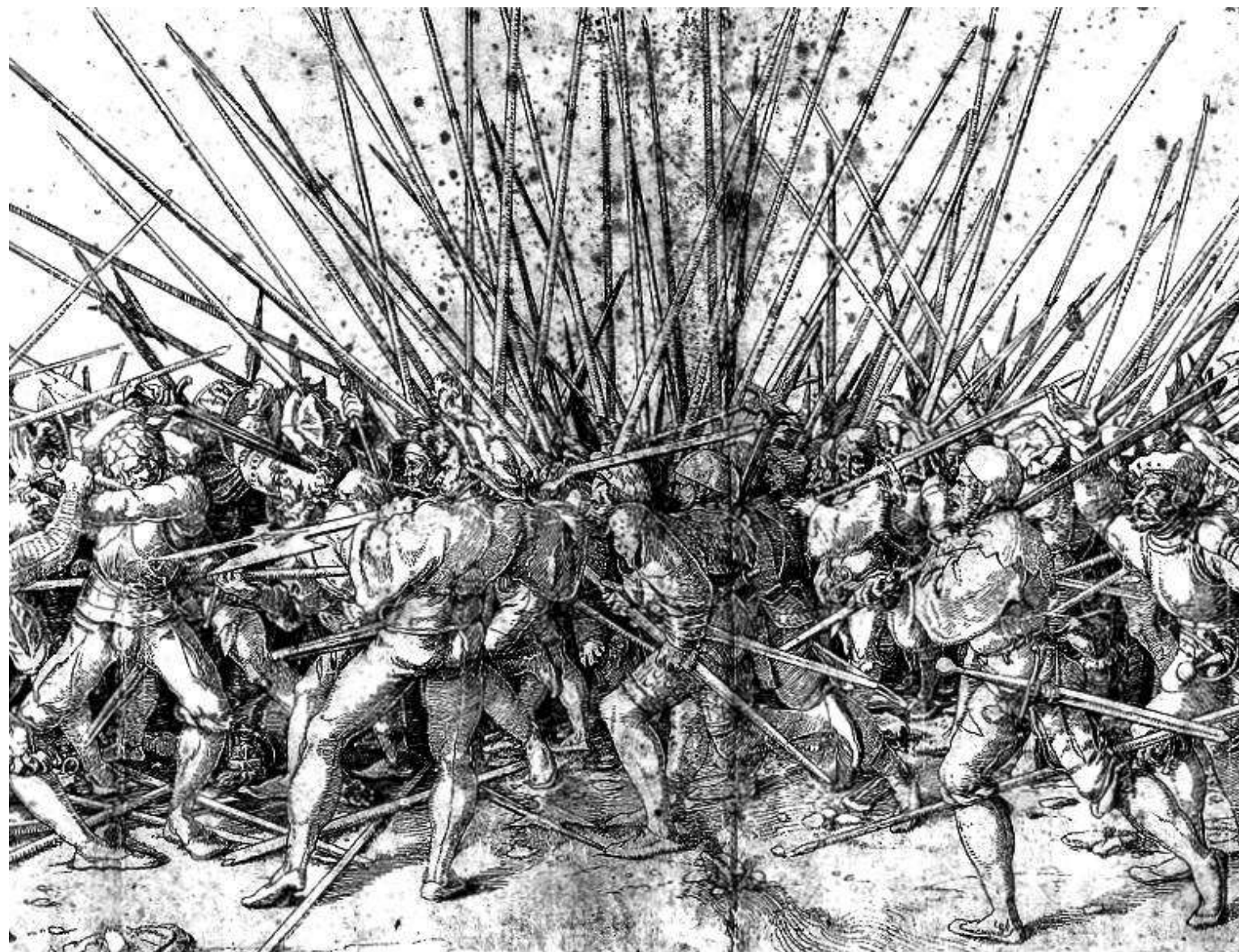
‘recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world’



‘a violation of right on one place of the earth is felt in all’ – *Perpetual Peace*

To Perpetual Peace (1795)

- The 'Age of Revolution' – from French Revolution to rise of Napoleon
- European wars and colonialism: Spanish Succession, Seven Years' War, Peninsula War later...
- *Sapere aude!*
- Traditionally only philosophers have dreamed of perpetual peace. War seems innate to the human condition. But what would be its conditions?
- Kant sets out six preliminary conditions for peace, followed by three definite articles
- Key ideas: republicanism, international cooperation, cosmopolitanism





Over to you

Let's discuss in small groups:

*What are Kant's
recommendations for
international peace?*

Are you convinced by them?

1. No peace settlement which secretly reserves issues for a future war shall be considered valid
2. No independently existing state ... shall be able to be acquired by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift
3. Standing armies shall gradually be abolished entirely
4. The state shall not contract debts in connection with its foreign affairs
5. No state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state
6. No state shall allow itself such hostilities in wartime as would make mutual trust in a future period of peace impossible.



Republicanism

1. The civil constitution of every state shall be republican
2. International right shall be based on the federalism of free states
3. Cosmopolitan right shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality

Republican principle of egalitarian freedom: ‘according to principles of the *freedom* of the members of a society (as human beings)’, with all subjects dependent on ‘a single, common legislation (as subjects)’, and as equals before the law (‘according to the law of the *equality* of the latter (as *citizens of the state*)’).

‘freedom is the ability to act in ways in which one does no one any wrong in so acting’. These are inalienable and innate rights

Against ‘wars of extermination’ and colonialism



‘if ... the agreement of the citizens is required to decide whether or not one ought to wage war, then nothing is more natural than that they would consider very carefully whether to enter into such a terrible game, since they would have to resolve to bring the hardships of war upon themselves (which would include: themselves fighting, paying the costs of war from their own possessions, meagrely repairing the ravages that war leaves behind, and, finally, on top of all such malady, assuming a burden of debt that embitters the peace and will never be repaid’.

In a monarchy, ‘declaring war is the easiest thing in the world’, because the head of state is also ‘the owner of the state’ who ‘can decide to wage war for insignificant reasons as a kind of game for amusement and can, for the sake of decency, indifferently leave its justification up to his diplomatic corps, which always stands ready for such tasks’

Cosmopolitanism

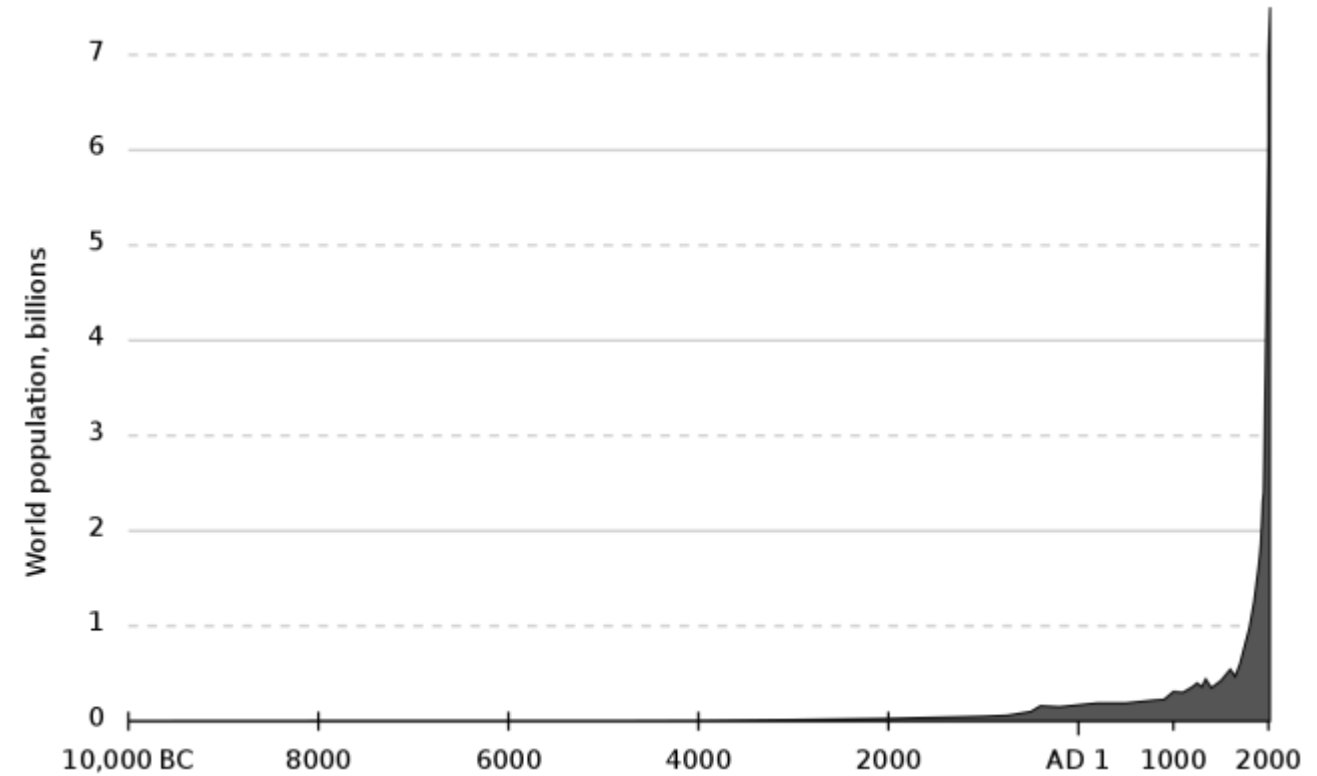
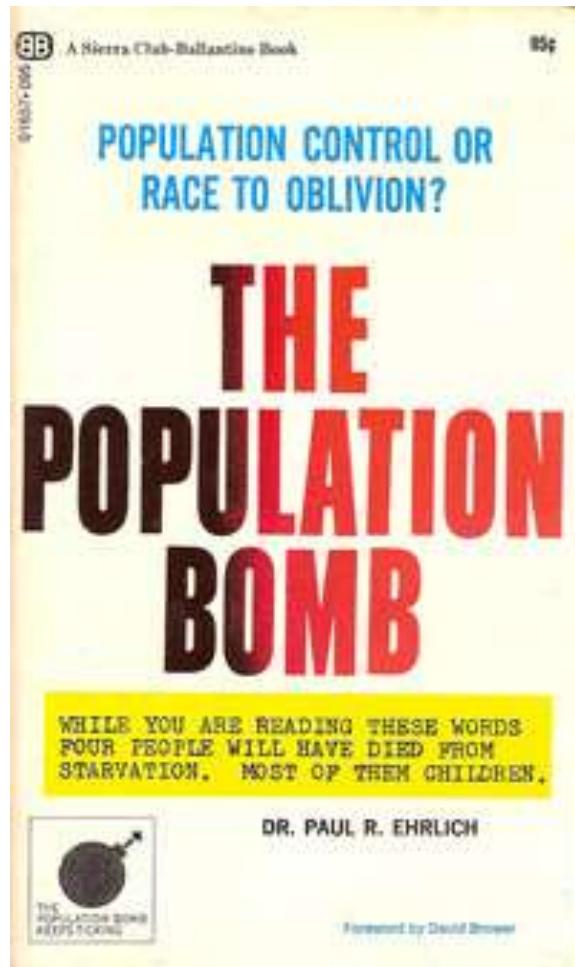
- ‘the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on the other’s territory’
- ‘right to visit, to which all human beings have a claim, to present oneself to society by virtue of the right of common possession of the surface of the earth’.
- ‘If one compares with this the *inhospitable* behavior of the civilized states in our part of the world, especially the commercial ones, the injustice that the latter show when *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which to them is one and the same as *conquering* those lands and peoples) takes on terrifying proportions ... the native inhabitants counted as nothing to them’
- ‘The growing prevalence of a (narrower or wider) community among the peoples of the earth has now reached a point at which the violation of right at any *one* place on the earth is felt in *all* places.’





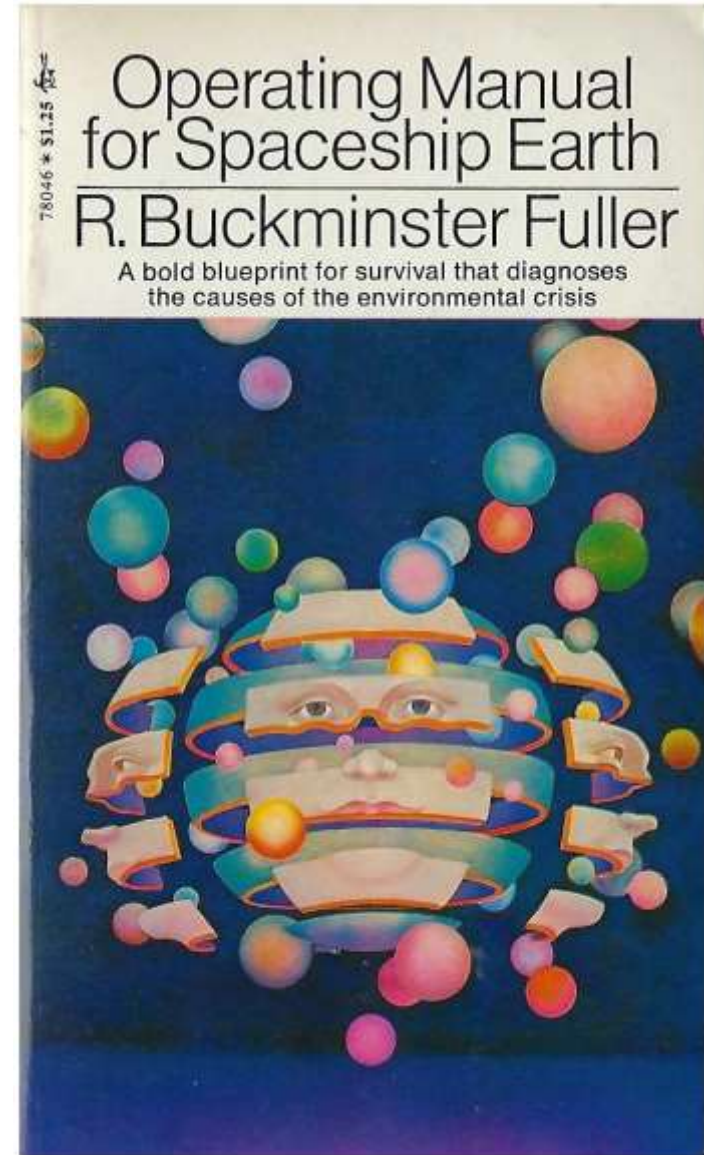
Onora O'Neill (b. 1941)

- Anglo-Irish ethical philosopher, in a Kantian and applied tradition
- Cross-bench member of House of Lords, former Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission; Berggruen Prize
- “Lifeboat Earth” (1975): Are those who survive a famine in some way to blame for the deaths of those who starve?
- Argument: given ‘persons have a right not to be killed unjustifiably ... we have a duty to try to prevent and postpone famine deaths
- If we do nothing, ‘we shall bear some blame for deaths’



Context

- Malthusian ‘population explosion’ in developing world since 1950s: Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (1968). Predictions of mass starvation from 1970s...
- Buckminster Fuller and others: ‘spaceship earth’ – global agreement can share the world’s resources fairly and rationally
- Garrett Hardin, “Lifeboat Ethics: the Case against helping the poor” (1974): lifeboat of wealthy nations surrounded by poor swimmers...
- ‘We are all the descendants of thieves, and the world's resources are inequitably distributed. ... [But] We cannot remake the past. ... Without a true world government to control reproduction and the use of available resources, the sharing ethic of the spaceship is impossible. For the foreseeable future, our survival demands that we govern our actions by the ethics of a lifeboat, harsh though they may be’ (Hardin)



Lifeboats

- Self-defence is the right not to be killed... this includes instances where killing is neither direct, single-handed, intentional or knowing
- Well-equipped vs under-equipped lifeboats
- Our era is one of 'economic and technological interdependence': we bear responsibility then where others are preventably killed
- First-class passengers and stowaways: all the same
- 'any distribution of food and water which leads to a death is a killing and not just a case of permitting a death'



Over to you

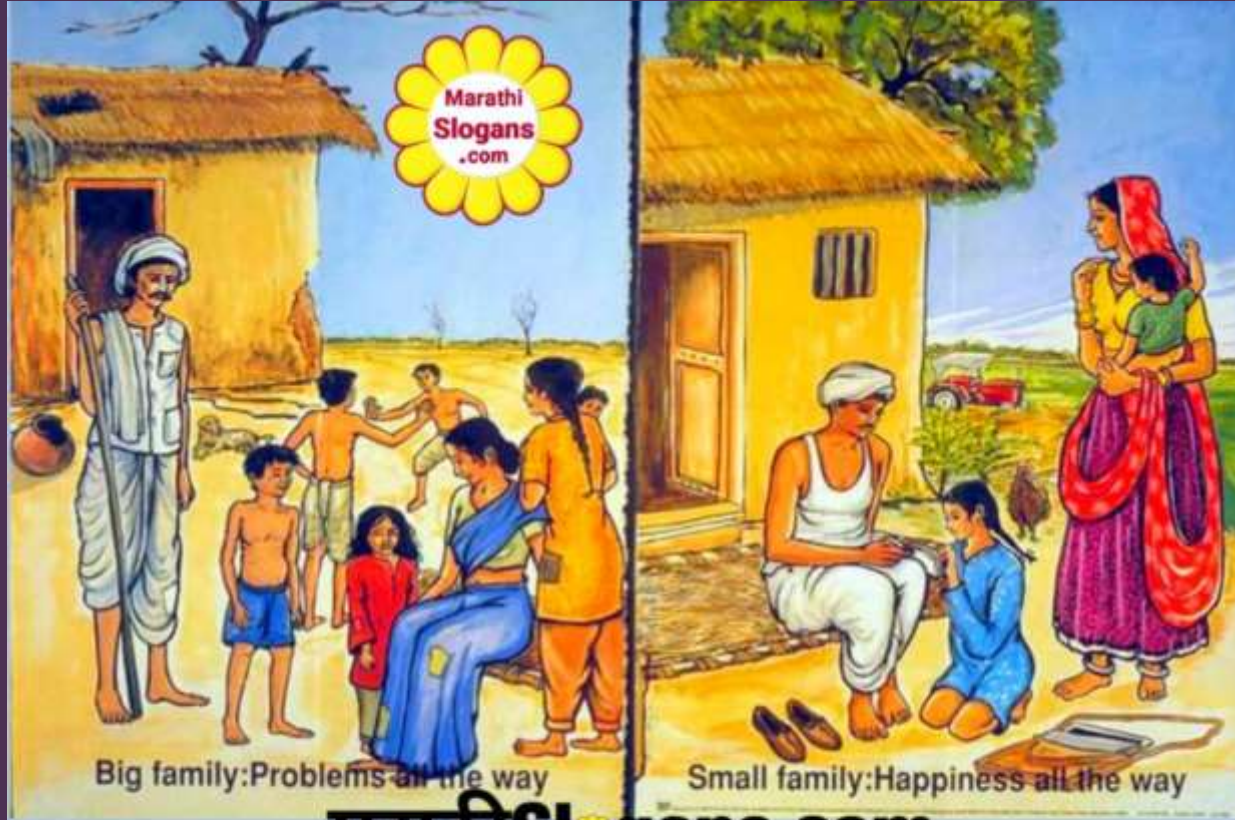
‘It is the policies of the present which will produce, defer or avoid famine. Hence if famine comes, the deaths that occur will be results of decisions made earlier.’

How does O’Neill argue that we in developed nations are also responsible for who lives and who dies?

Are you convinced?

How might the argument apply today?

- ‘They do so in supporting or opposing legislation affecting aid and foreign investment, in supporting or opposing certain sorts of charities or groups such as Zero Population Growth, in promoting or opposing ecologically conservative technology and lifestyles.’
- ‘Global scarcity is not here yet. But its imminence has certain implications for today. If all persons have a right not to be killed and a corollary duty not to kill others, then we are bound to adopt pre-famine policies which ensure that famine is postponed as long as possible and is minimised. And a duty to try to postpone the advent and minimise the severity of famine is a duty on the one hand to minimise the number of persons there will be and on the other to maximise the means of subsistence.’
- ... from a minimal ‘conservation and pollution control’ to ‘complete rationing of energy and materials consumption’.



मराठीSlogans.com

छोटे कुटुंब सुखी कुटुंब,
मोठे कटुंब दखी कटुंब.

母亲和儿童的健康



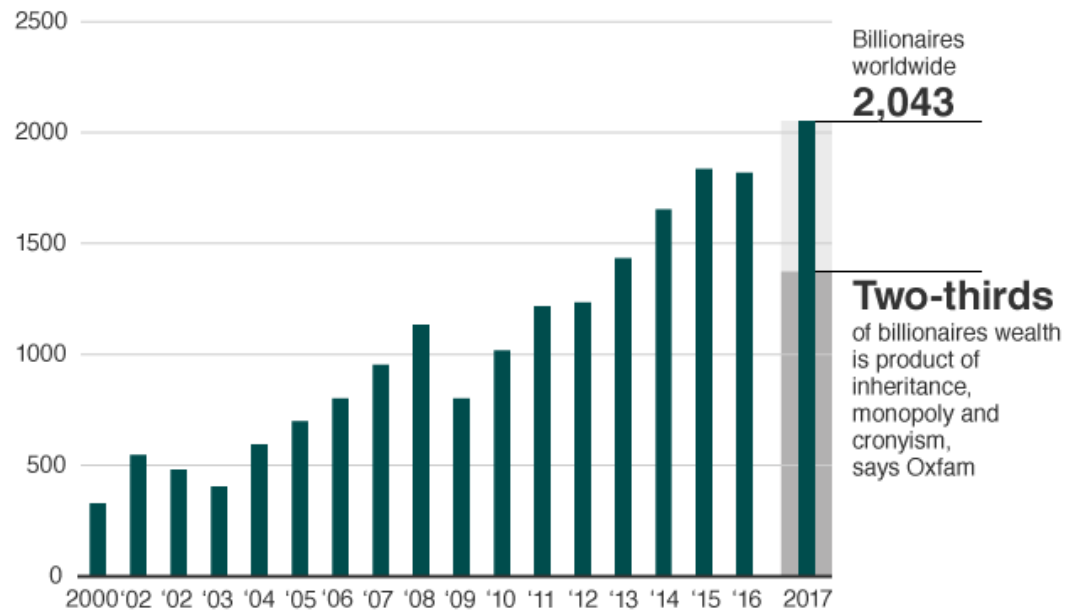
chineseposters.net

Problems

- Presumes the certainty of knowing future famines, which hasn't been demonstrated – and in which case did not come to pass as predicted
- Discusses foreign investment and commodity pricing...
- But towards the end, lets the West off the hook in terms of geopolitical inequality and the effects of colonialism
- With climate predictions: much more universal scientific consensus on the devastating impact of climate change
- Do we have sufficient resources to feed and shelter all? Based on the current distribution of capital, we do not have enough to feed and shelter even many working families in Britain
- 'Moral philosophers are reluctant to face up to this problem; soon it will be staring us in the face'

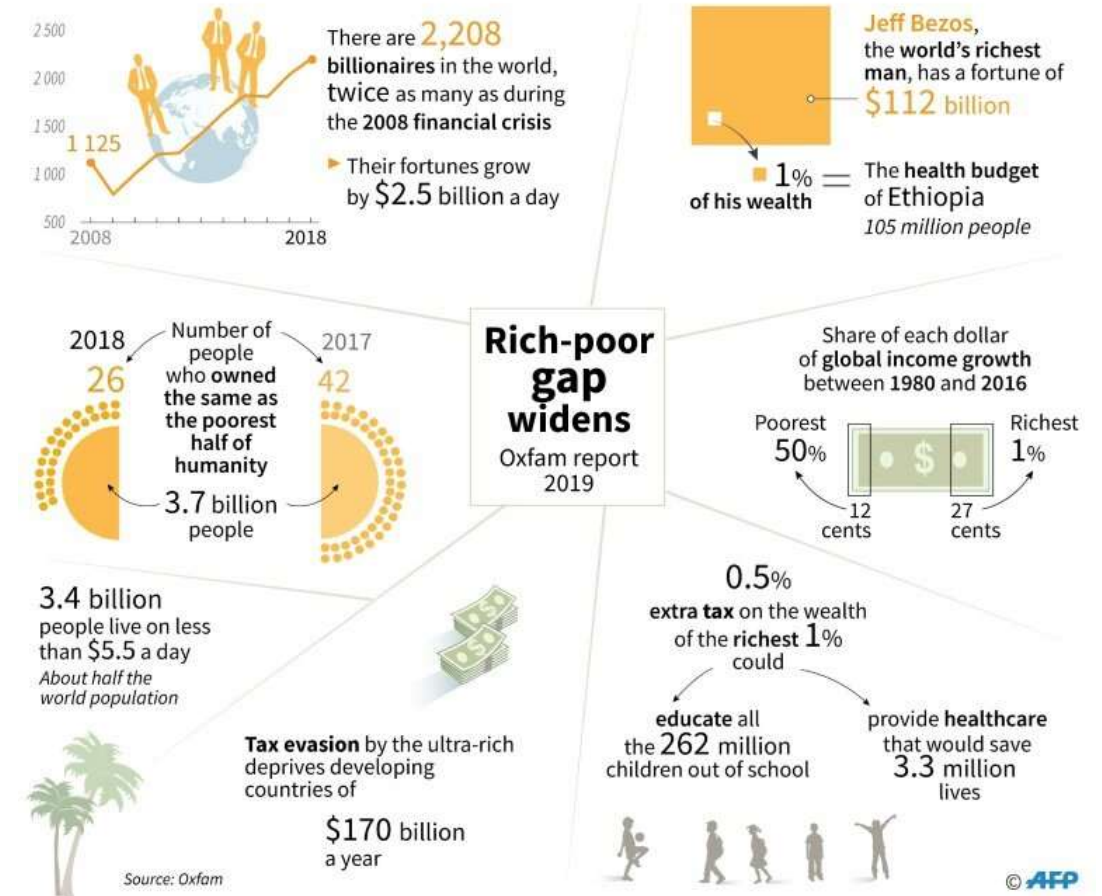
Number of billionaires keeps growing

Oxfam report shows the richest 1% of the world's population is worth more than the other 99%



Source: Oxfam

BBC





To think over

What is your response to forecasts of many millions of climate migrants over the coming decades?

Do we have a moral obligation to reduce preventable deaths?

If so, what does that obligation then demand of us?

Can or should we distribute our resources more equitably?

What should governments be doing now to mitigate future crises?

Next week: Gender, sexuality and difference

Two readings:

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949) – Introduction
- Iris Marion Young, “Polity and Group Difference” (1989)

Over the last century in the West, there’s been a marked improvement in the political and social rights of women

Equal rights have been demanded and achieved by gay rights campaigns

‘Identity politics’ and difference are now fundamental political causes

The question: how then might we speak of a universal citizenship that’s based on plurality and difference?

How far have we still to go in achieving genuine equality in the 21st century?