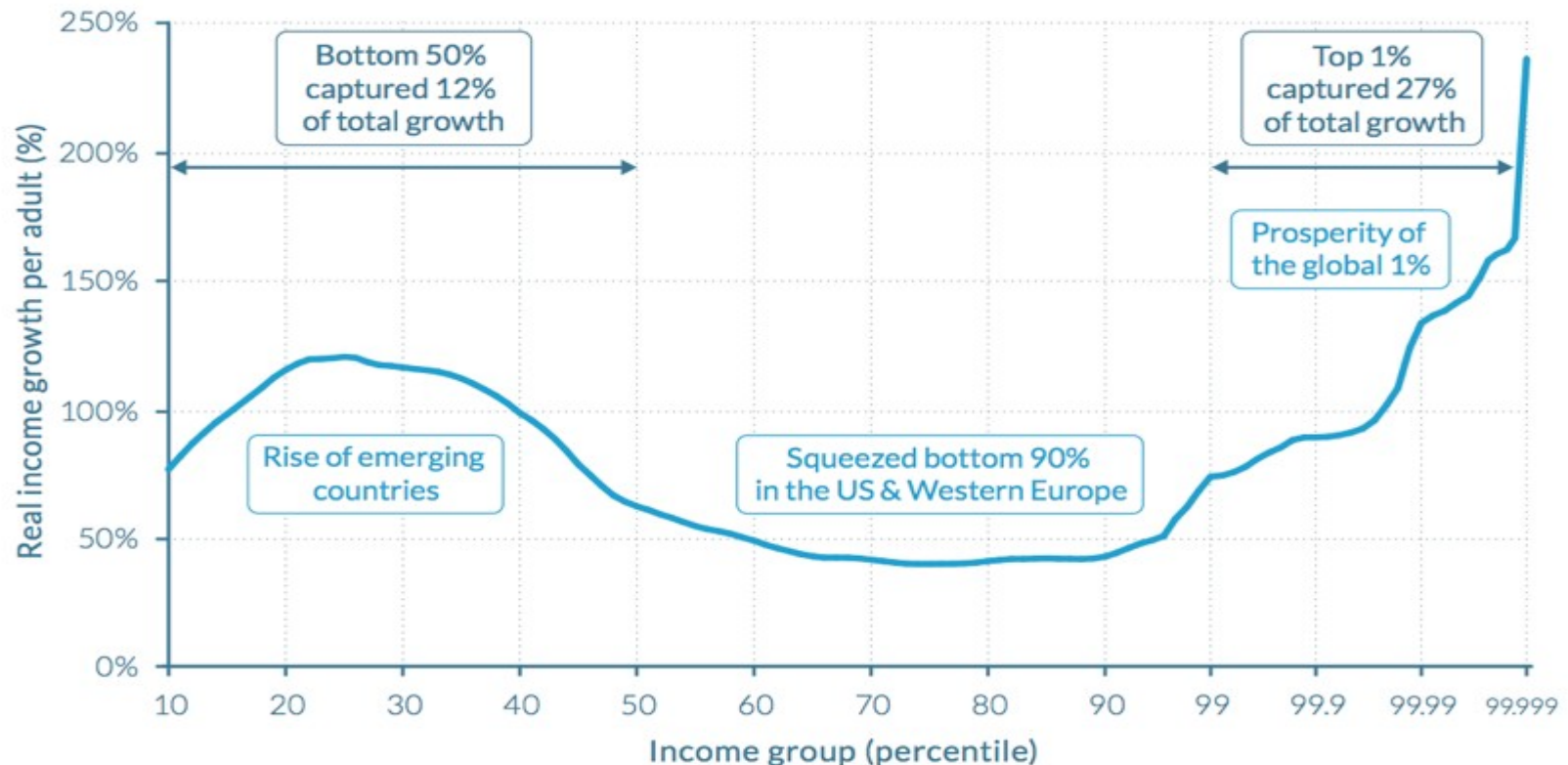


The planet needs a politics of living labor

Thomas Coutrot

Congrès CGT, Dijon, 12/05/2019

Roaring social inequalities

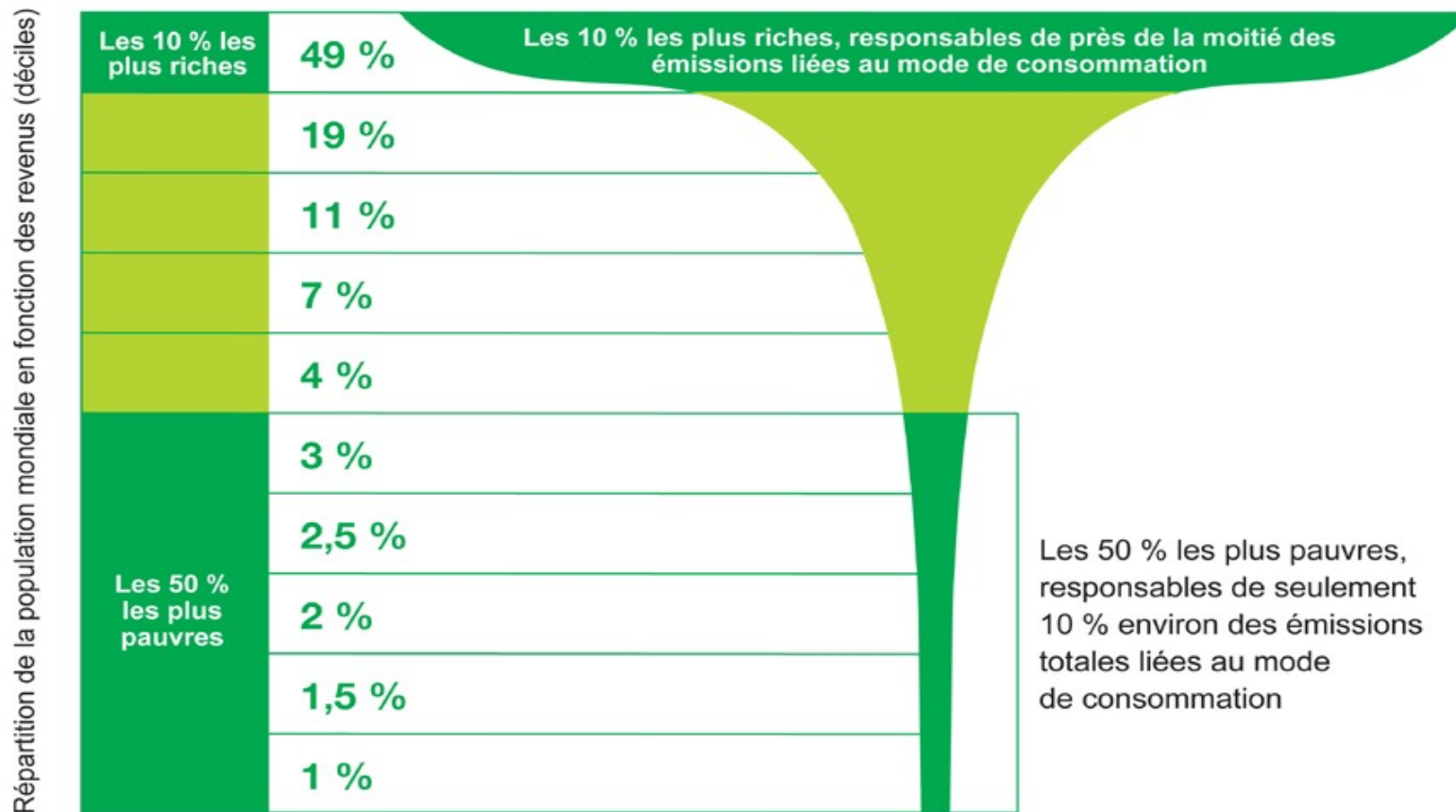


Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for more details.

On the horizontal axis, the world population is divided into a hundred groups of equal population size and sorted in ascending order from left to right, according to each group's income level. The Top 1% group is divided into ten groups, the richest of these groups is also divided into ten groups, and the very top group is again divided into ten groups of equal population size. The vertical axis shows the total income growth of an average individual in each group between 1980 and 2016. For percentile group p99p99.1 (the poorest 10% among the world's richest 1%), growth was 74% between 1980 and 2016. The Top 1% captured 27% of total growth over this period. Income estimates account for differences in the cost of living between countries. Values are net of inflation.

Roaring ecological inequalities

Pourcentage des émissions de CO₂ dans la population mondiale



Source : Oxfam, « Inégalités extrêmes et émissions de CO₂ », 2015

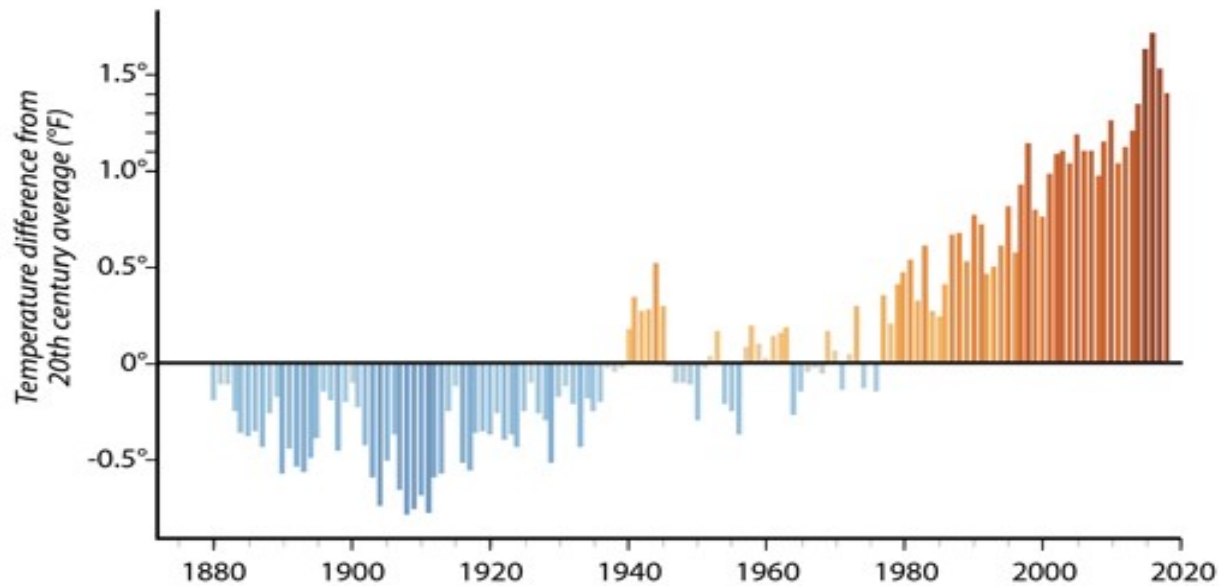
Global warming

It's Getting Warm in Here

Twenty of the warmest years on record were in the past 22 years.

GLOBAL SURFACE TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES

*For land and ocean, annual average, 1880-2018**



**2018 data shows average anomaly through November.*

SOURCES: U.S. Global Change Research Program; NOAA

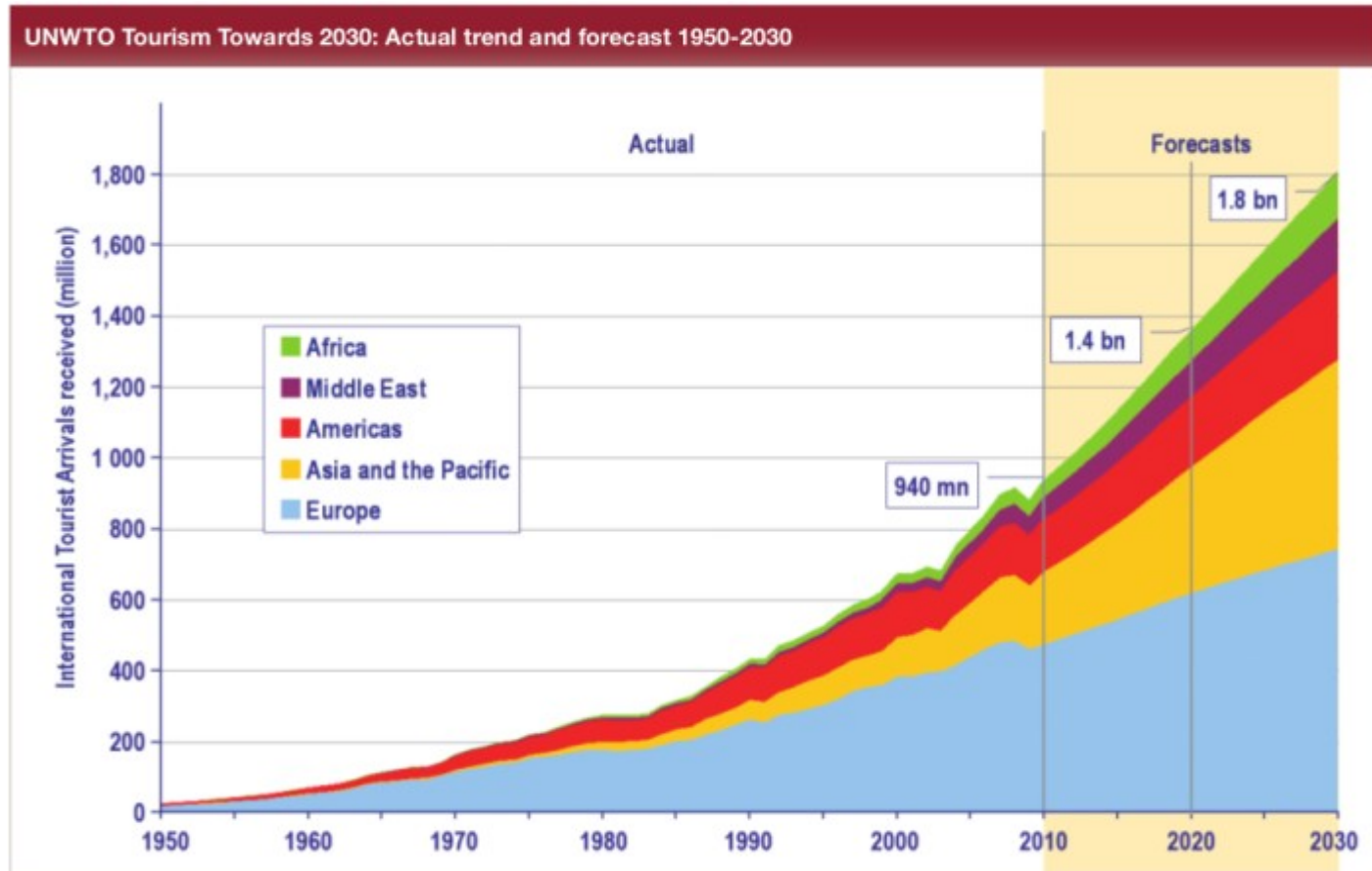
InsideClimate News

Biosphere in peril

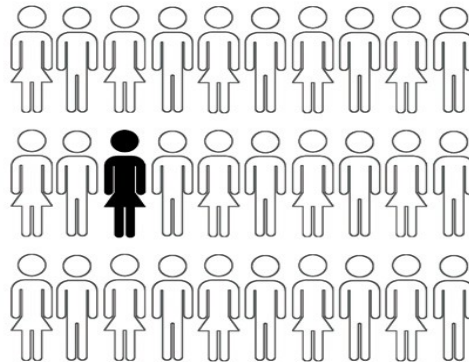
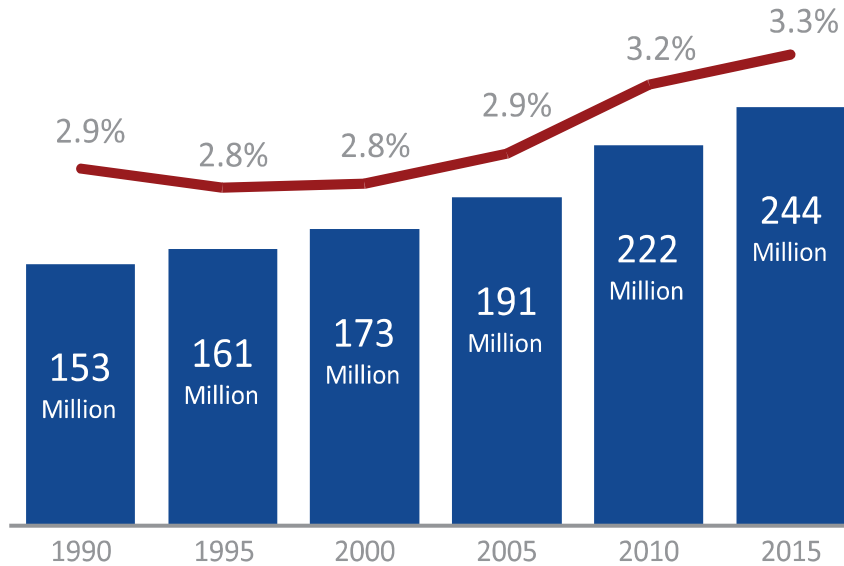
- « post-industrial », « immaterial economy »?
- Pollution (soil, water, air)
- Extinction of biodiversity
- Global warming



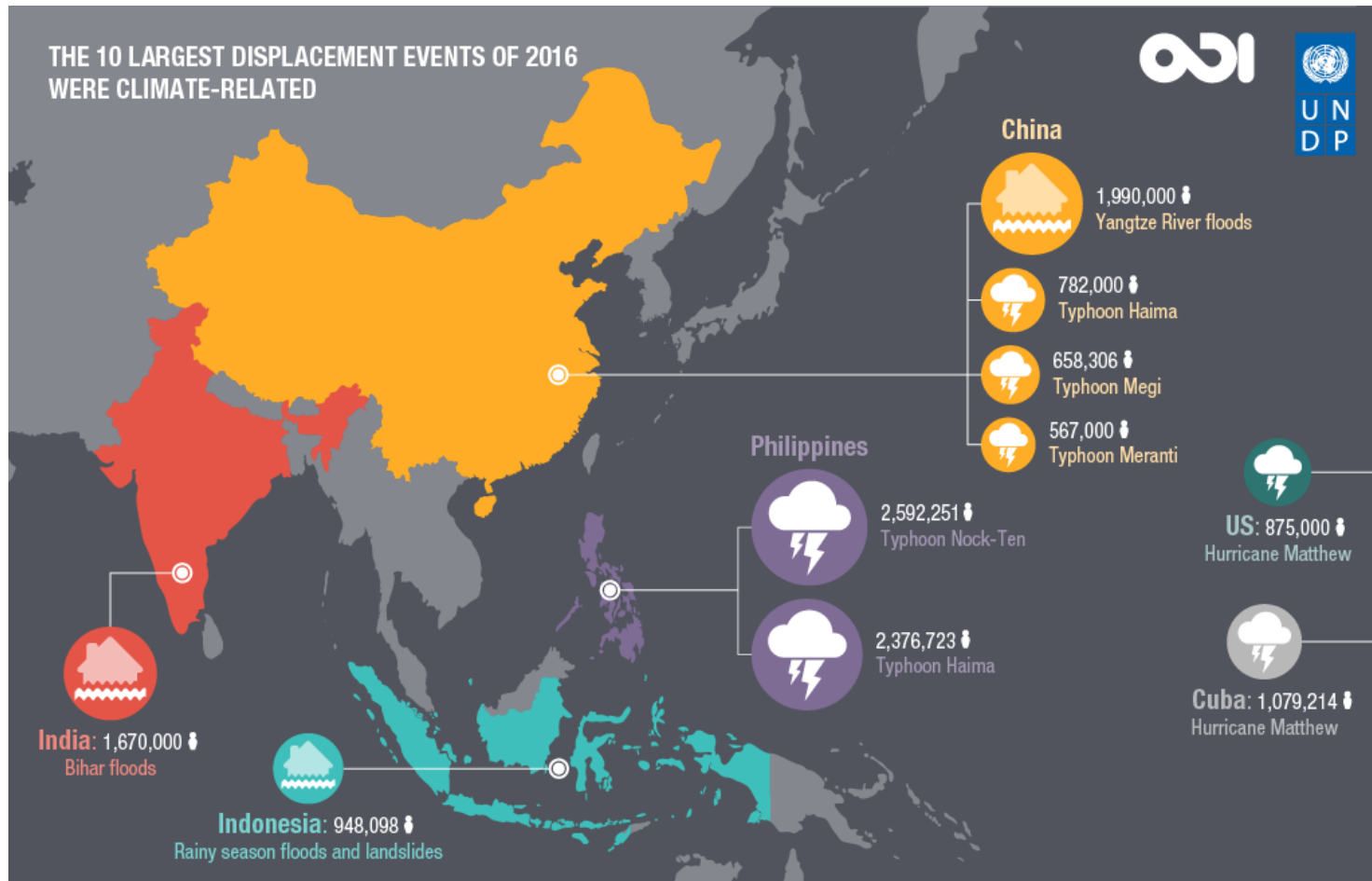
Tourism for the rich



Migrations for the poor



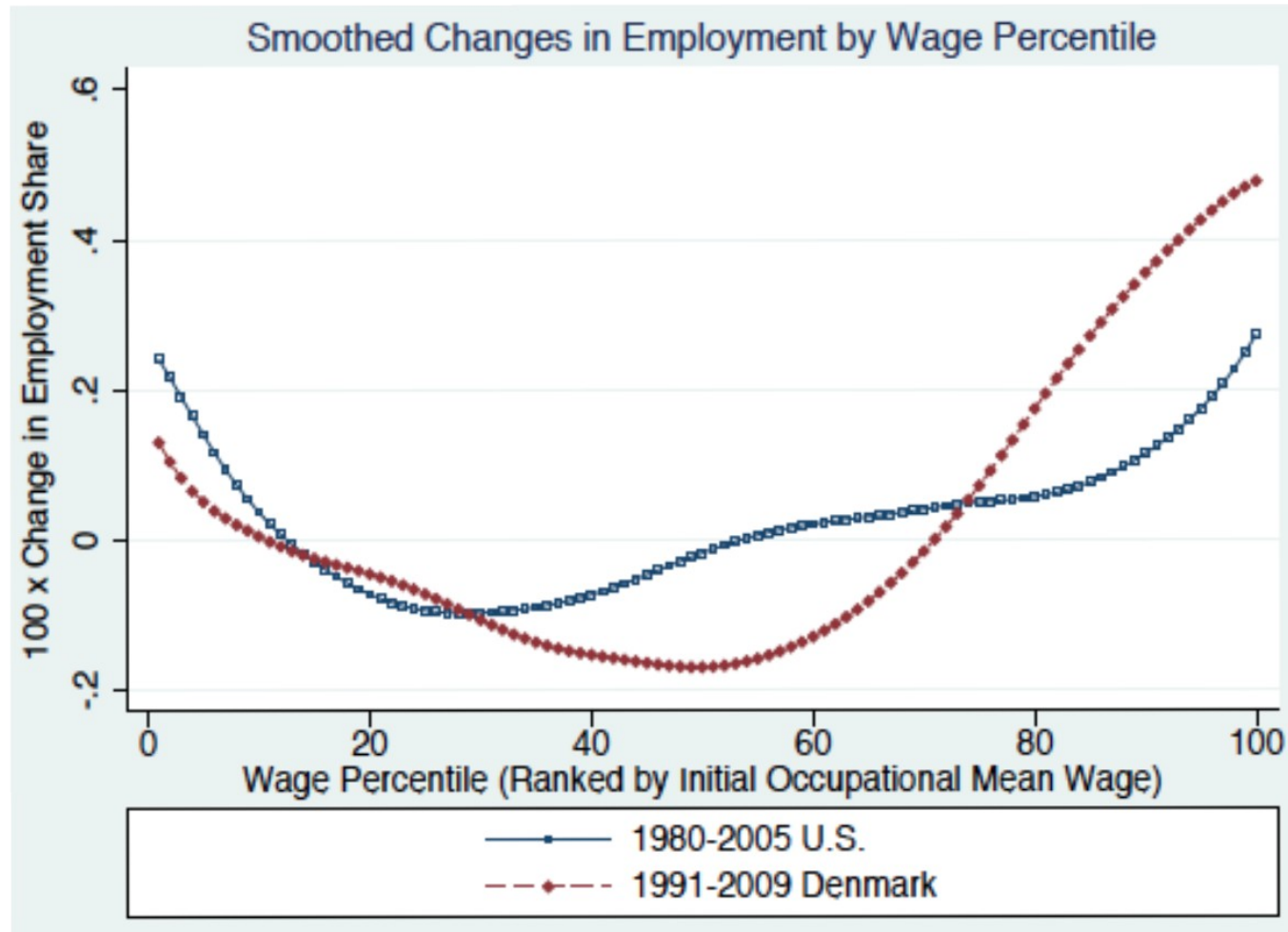
Migrations and climate



Labour markets : polarization of jobs

- well-paid jobs in financial and IT services : INCREASE
- precarious low-paid jobs in care services : INCREASE (migrants)
- middle-skill (blue collar) jobs : DECREASE

Polarization of jobs



« Globalisation and polarisation in the wake of Brexit »

Wolfgang Keller, Håle Utar, CEPR, 05 July 2016

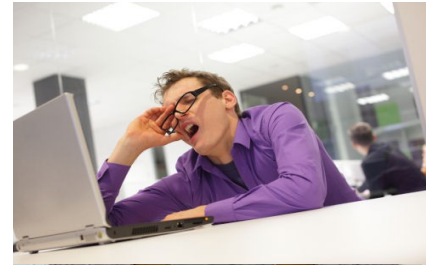
Routinization of labor and psychosocial risks

- lean production : standardization, control
- intensification
- loss of autonomy at work
- loss of meaning of work



Five figures of suffering at work

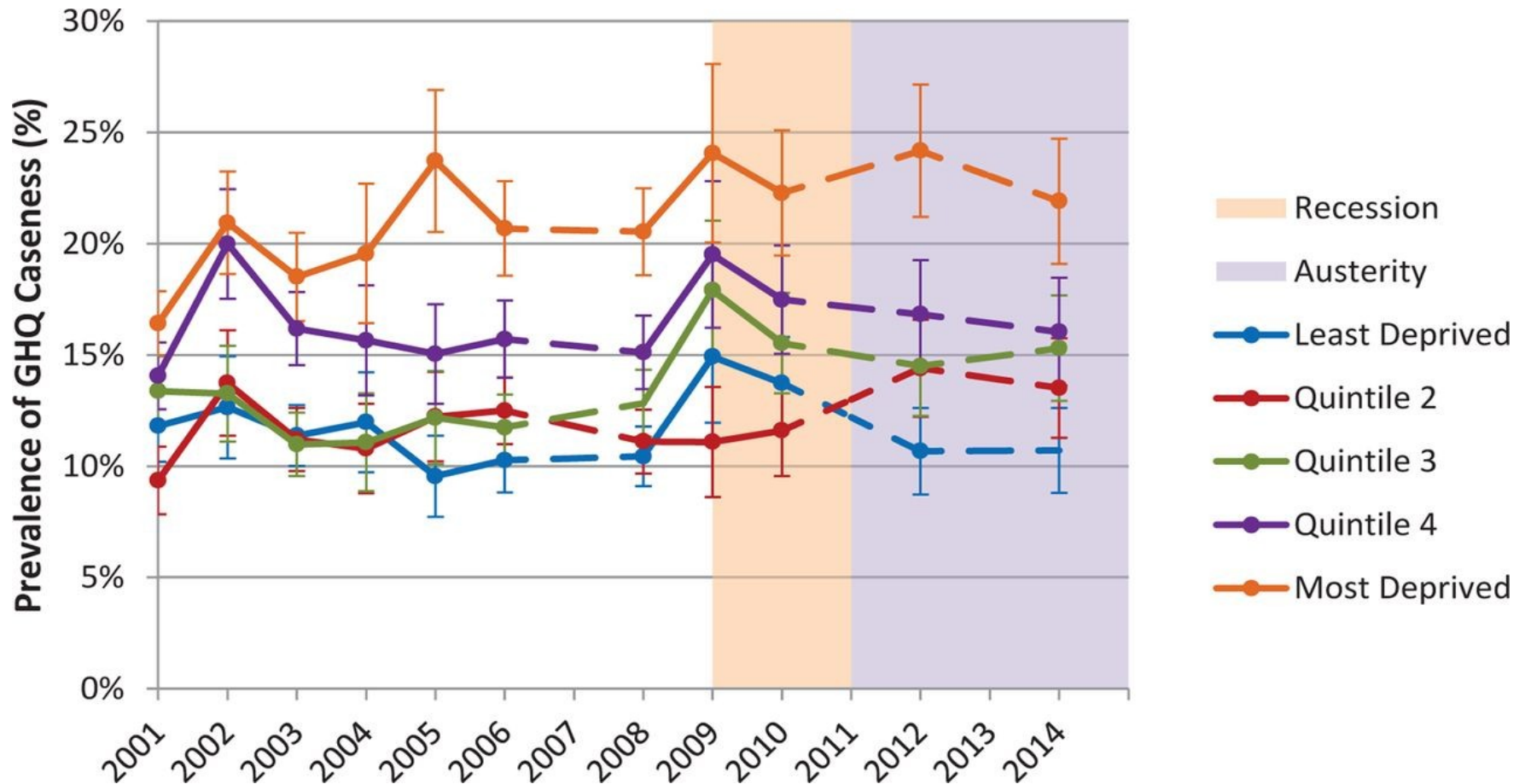
- « bullshit jobs » (highly skilled)
- invisible work (care workers)
- « travail empêché »
(low quality work)
- physical and psychological strain
- insecure jobs



Workers' health in danger

- musculo-skeletal diseases
- depression, burnout
- cancers (invisible)
- 3 Millions dead, 374 Millions injured each year (ILO)

Increase in mental health inequalities

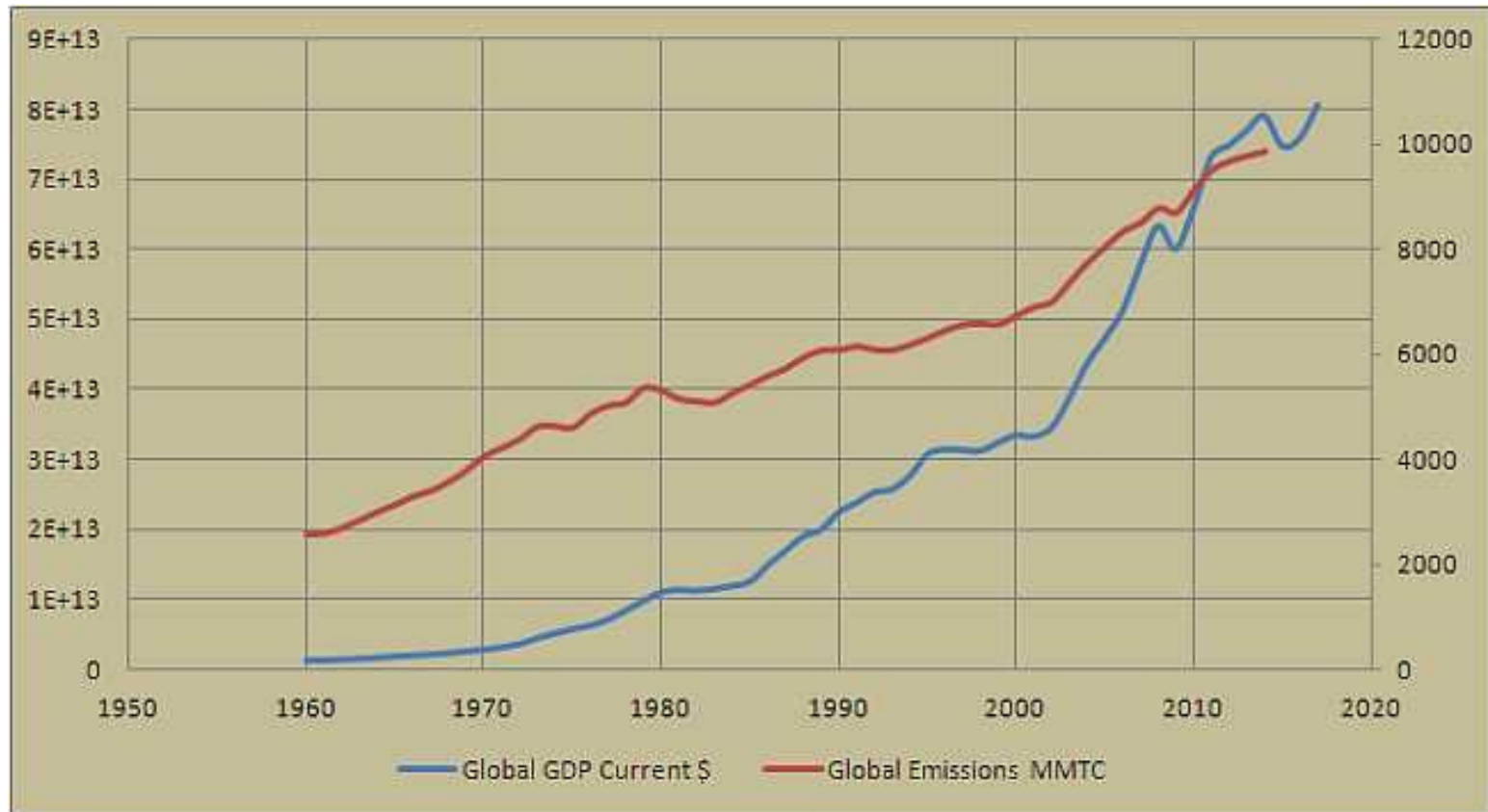


« Trends in gender and socioeconomic inequalities in mental health following the Great Recession and subsequent austerity policies: a repeat cross-sectional analysis of the Health Surveys for England »

R.M. Thomson, C.L. Niedzwiedz, S. V. Katikireddi, British Medical Journal, August 2018 - Volume 8 - 8

Green New Deal ?

No decoupling between GDP and CO2 emissions



Goodbye Fordism

- Fordist deal



disempowerment at work vs purchasing power

- global financialization
big corporations write off the deal
- now wanted
end of consumerism (North, China)
meaningful and self-directed work
- no way back to fordism
« Green New Deal » also means liberated work and industrial democracy,
beginning with the taming of finance and big business



The huge perils feed parallel resistances

- against inequality & lack of democracy
(Indignados, Occupy, Gilets Jaunes...)
(but also right-wing populism!)
- against ecological demise
(peasants struggles, youth for climate)
- against the degradation of work
(defense of public services,
unions for a healthy work,
collaborative coops,
« liberated management » ...)



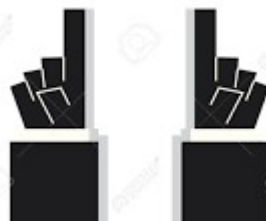
A common cause: living labor ?

- Living wage !
- Decent work !
- Living labor ?

To work is to create

- to work = to cope with the unpredictable
- « living labor »: commitment, creativity, cooperation, care.... : what cannot be standardized
- not only for money but for values (« work well done »)

**WORK
WELL DONE**



The social power of living labor

- necessary for profit, but not fully controllable by capital
- vital for workers
- empowered by :
 - the shift of values (towards democratic justice)
 - the self-defence of life (care for others and for nature)



A politics of living labor ?

- on our strategic agenda:
 - what matters for us in our work ?
 - who should decide why and how we work ?
- as workers... but also as humans, consumers, citizens, Earth inhabitants
 - what is the meaning of our work ? what should it be ?
 - what does it do to our health ?
 - to the users of our work ?
 - to democracy ?
 - to nature ?

A politics of living labor ?

- a natural alliance of struggles : not abstract solidarity but common interest in defending life
- « climate jobs », « just transition », « climate justice »...
- « we are not defending life, we are life defending itself » !

