

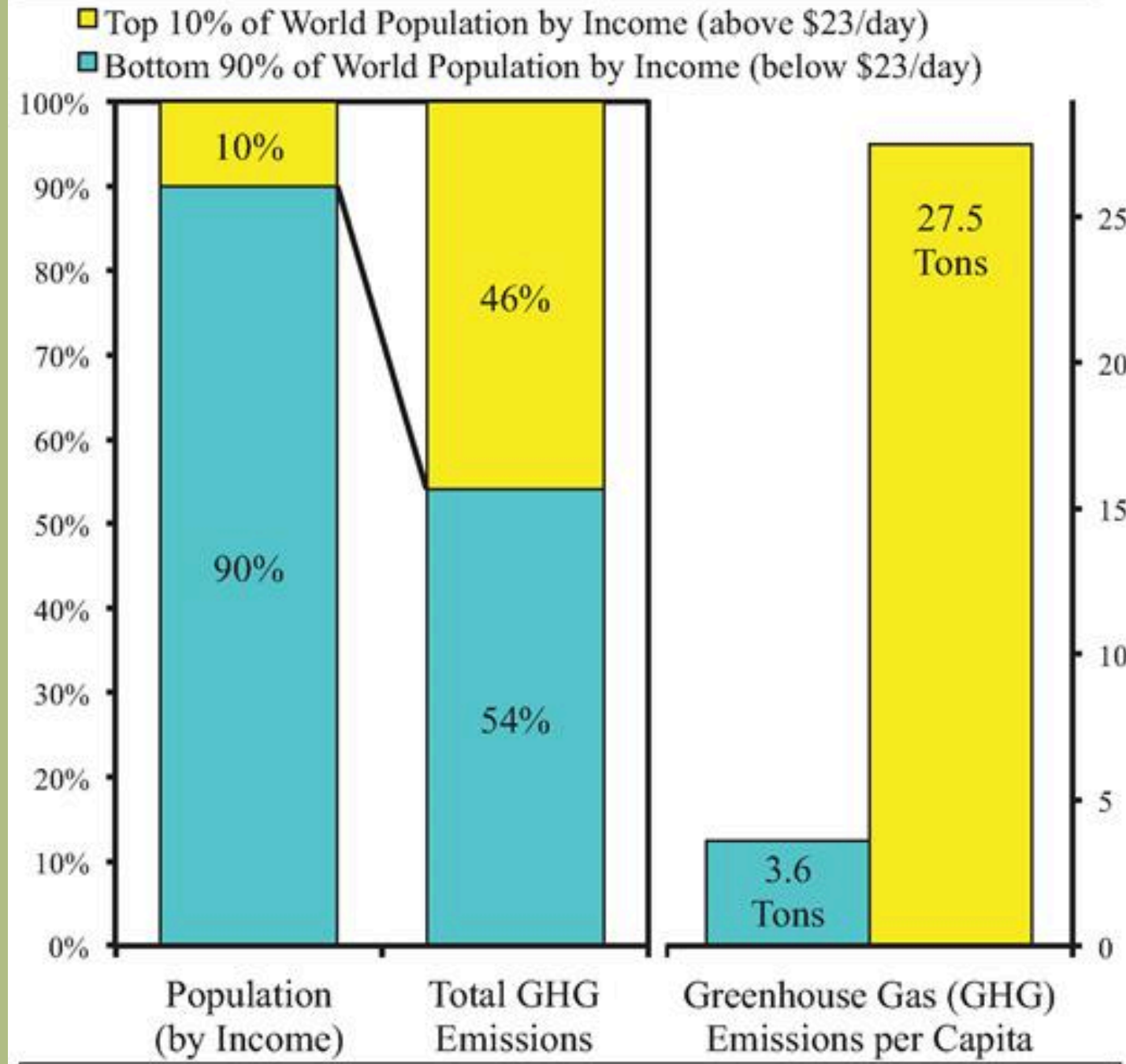
*A Joint Struggle Against Oppression:
Liberation, and the Environment*

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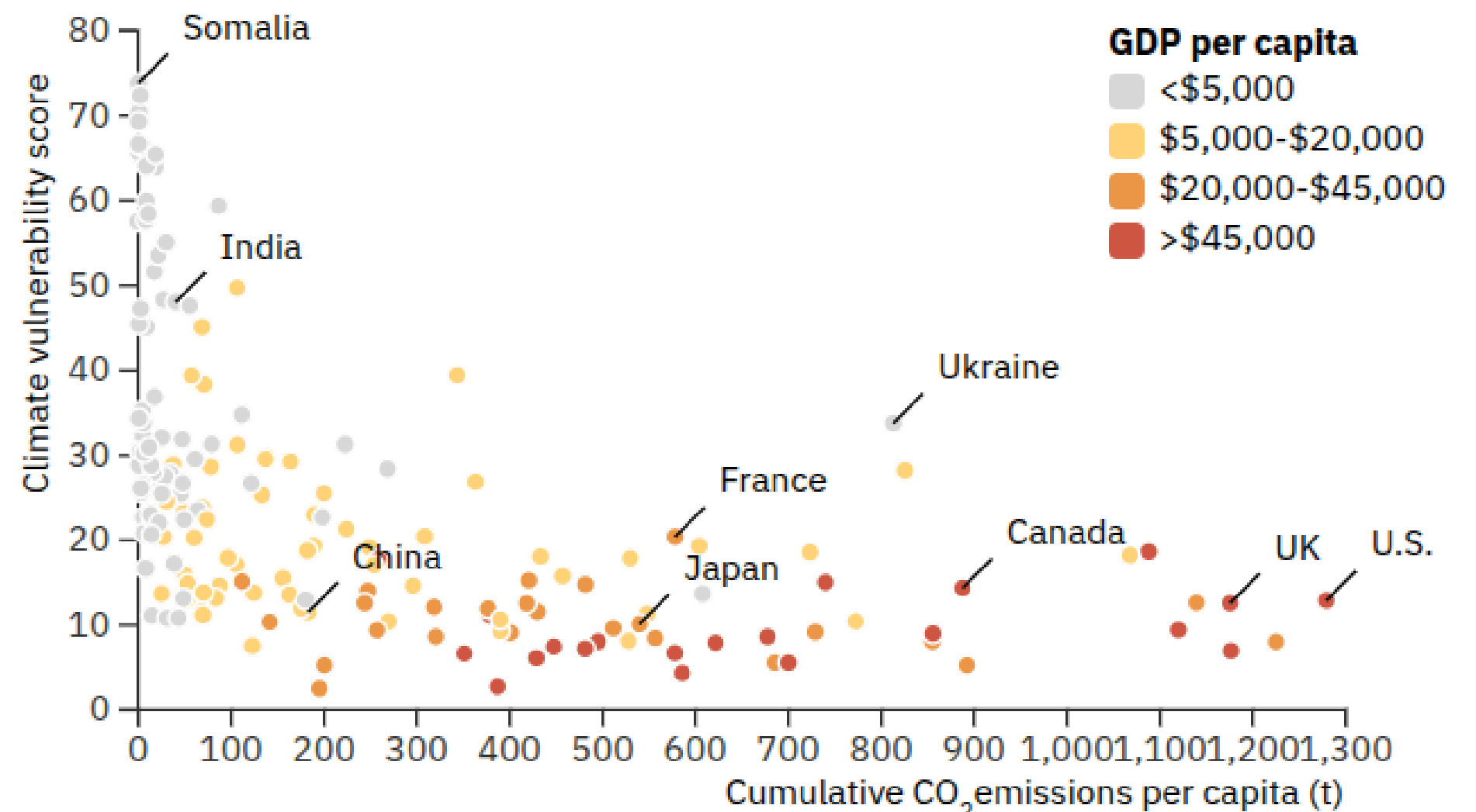
Motivation for the work

An Example of Global Inequality in Resource Use:



Resource use by the wealthiest 10% of world population produces almost as much GHG emissions as the bottom 90%. To raise everyone to the average standard of living of those earning >\$23/day would require ~5 times total GHG emissions.

Climate Change Emissions and Vulnerability⁴¹⁻⁴⁶



*Adapted from BCG, A Blueprint for the Energy Transition, 2023

Core Questions

- 1. What is the relationship between oppression and the environment?*
- 2. If we are to argue that environmental degradation and oppression are co-constitutive of one another, how must our approach to environmental philosophy need to change?*
- 3. Can an ecofeminist ethic lend itself to revolution or is it restricted to reform?*

Understanding Oppression

The logic of oppression: dualism and a logic of separation

Culture/Nature

Reason/Nature

Male/Female

Mind/Body (Nature)

Master/Slave

Reason/Matter (physicality)

Rationality/Animality (nature)

Reason / Emotion (nature)

Mind, Spirit/Nature

Freedom/Necessity (nature)

Universal / Particular

Human / Nature (non-human)

Civilized / Primitive (nature)

Production/Reproduction (nature)

Public/Private

Subject/Object

Self/Other



Val Plumwood : the logic of colonization

It is clear then that some men are by nature free and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is expedient and right.

-Aristotle

Understanding Oppression

OPPRESSION NAMES A HARM THAT COMES OUT OF INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE(S) TO MOLD, REDUCE, AND IMMOBILIZE A SELECTED GROUP THAT SATISFIES THE FOLLOWING FOUR CONDITIONS:

- THE HARM CONDITION:
- THE SOCIAL GROUP CONDITION:
 - THE HARM MUST BE A GROUP HARM;
- THE PRIVILEGE CONDITION:
- THE COERCION CONDITION:

Understanding Oppression

KEY TERMS + THEORIES

- EPISTEME—THE PARADIGMS THAT EXIST WITHIN A GIVEN SOCIETY THAT MAKE UP MEANING AND ALL IMPLICIT BACKGROUND ASSUMPTIONS AS A PREVAILING KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE
- DUALISM – “THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DEVALUED AND SHARPLY DEMARCATED SPHERE OF OTHERNESS” WHICH REIFY SOME “ESSENTIAL” ELEMENTS OF A PERSON THAT ARE THEN USED TO JUSTIFY THEIR LUMPING TOGETHER INTO A SOCIAL GROUP
- LOGIC OF PURITY – LOGIC THAT FOCUSES ON SEPARATION AND CATEGORIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLOITATION AND FRAGMENTATION TO MAINTAIN SUBORDINATION AND DOMINATION THROUGH LEGIBILITY

Environmentalism and the way forward



Does mainstream environmental philosophy work to uphold these ideas? Does our treatment of the environment?

Understanding ecofeminist ethics

Environment: any place in which biotic organisms take up and live; there are natural environments which are made up of organic materials whose existence is not wholly dependent on man's intervention and man made environments which have been entirely or largely constructed by man.

Sustainability: Sustainability as a system theory means a dynamic equilibrium in the process of interaction between a population and the carrying capacity of its environment such that the population develops to express its full potential without producing irreversible adverse effects on the carrying capacity of the environment upon which it depends

Grounded Normativity: an ethical framework whose conception is rooted in Indigenous place-based practices and TEK, it is informed by “an intimate relationship to place” (Simpson and Coulthard 2016, 254).



Ecofeminism – a philosophical tradition that argues the climate crisis is entangled with the oppression of women and other oppressed people

Ecofeminism

The west's treatment of the environment through the “raping and pillaging the planet” mirrors the instrumentalization and abuse of women across the globe

Nature has been placed at odd with ‘man’ making the interests of all living beings not categorizable as man are devalued

Dualism as linking postulates :

culture | nature → human | nature

reason | body → male | female

mind | body → human | nature

The environment as oppressed



Social group - a “collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life”

An ecofeminist ethics of care

“This philosophy is not about rights it is about responsibilities”

ecofeminism as a “contextualistic ethic.. Which sees ethical discourse and practice as emerging from the voices of people located in different historical circumstances.”

“New possibilities emerge in which all humanity is responsible and accountable”

“Sustainability becomes a necessary aim from an ecofeminist leadership stance.”

(SWANSON 2021, 100)





“For the master’s tool will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”

Audre Lorde 1979

Looking towards revolution

Key terms, theories and ideas

- “world” traveling
- revolution
- relationships for revolution



A continuous project

“One achieves liberty only through continual reaching out towards other liberties”
-Wollstonecraft

Where am I going?

- How do we move forward? What material changes need to happen and how can we develop an ecofeminist ethic further ?
- To whom do we have responsibilities to? How can we reconcile an ethics of care with the need for revolution?



If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.
-Combahee River Collective

Questions?