

A Sustainable Macro-economic Vision for the Global North

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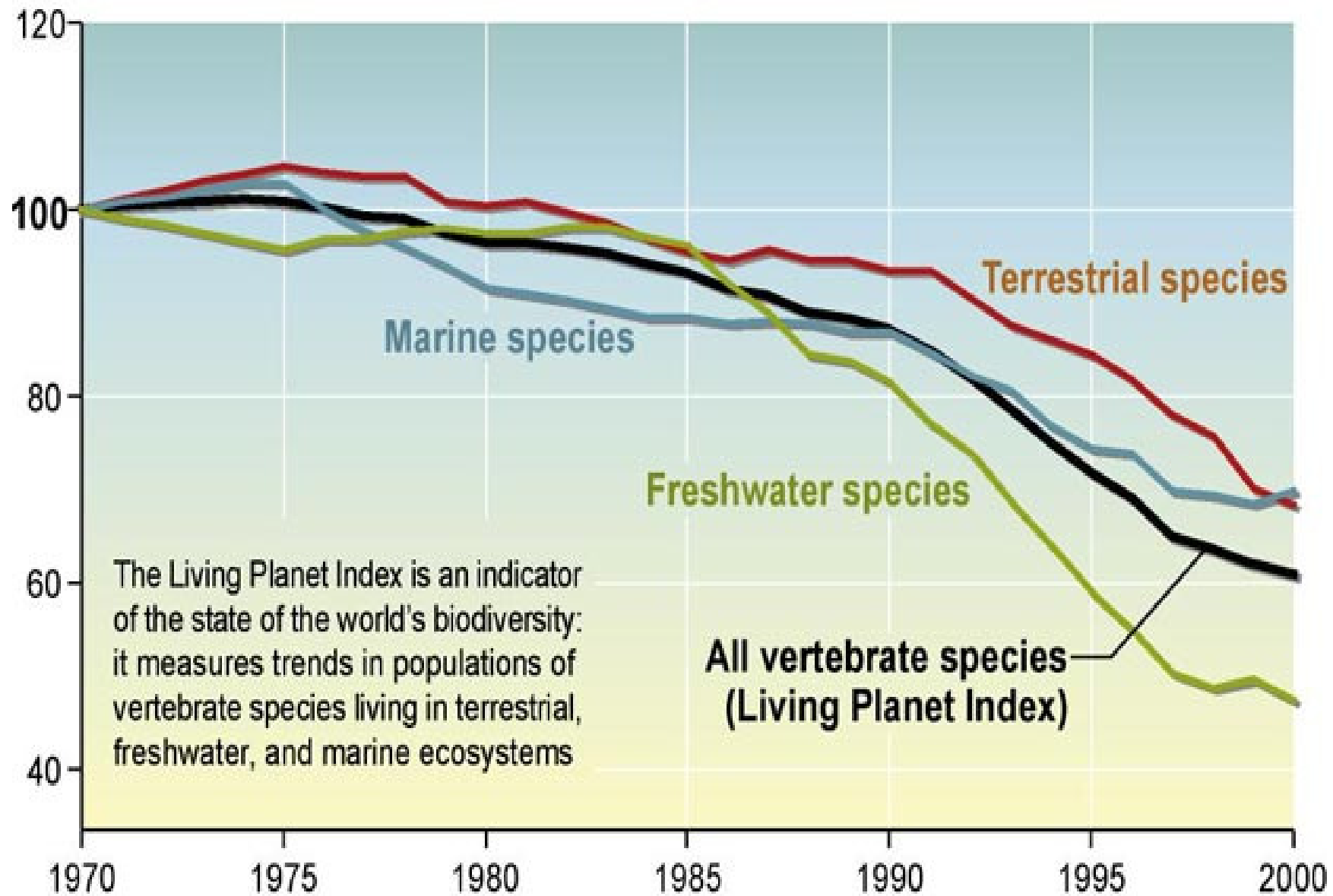
BOSTON COLLEGE

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



new
american
dream

The logo for the Center for a New American Dream, featuring the words "new", "american", and "dream" stacked vertically. "new" is in a small blue font, "american" is in a larger blue font, and "dream" is in a green font. A stylized sunburst icon is positioned above the letter "i" in "american". The logo is flanked by a green horizontal bar above and a blue horizontal bar below.



ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Source: WWF, UNEP-WCMC

Economic and Unemployment Crisis

- European unemployment now at 10%.
- US unemployment officially at 10%, but including underemployment it's twice that.
- In the US, there are 6 seekers for every available job.
- US economy will have to create 500,000 jobs a month for almost 2 years to get back to pre-crash levels.
- Sustainability measures **must** address the labor market.

Future Economic Conditions: profitability will decline, making a BAU solution less likely



Major aims of Macro-Sustainability

Reduce consumption demand and adjust to reduced labor demand

Generate high productivity growth

Enhance equality and reduce poverty

Green tech shift: to a closed loop/clean production and consumption system.

Specifics of Macro- Sustainability

Reduce consumption demand;
enhance high-tech self-providing

Adjust to reduced labor through shorter
hours of work

Reduce enterprise size and scale up a
small-green sector

Accelerate growth and transmission of
ecological knowledge through open-
source-like processes

Enhance and diffuse ecological and
business skills

***Plenitude:
the new economics
of true wealth***

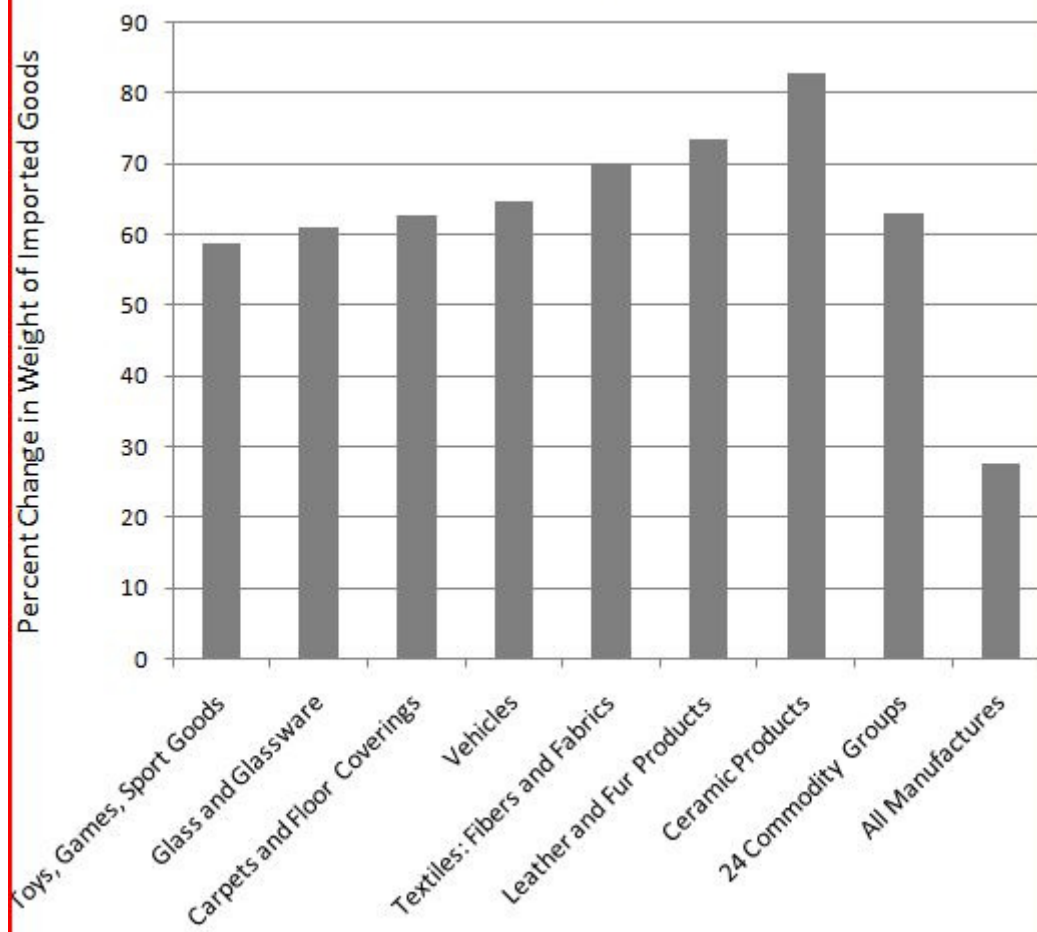
***forthcoming
May 2010
The Penguin Press***

PLENITUDE

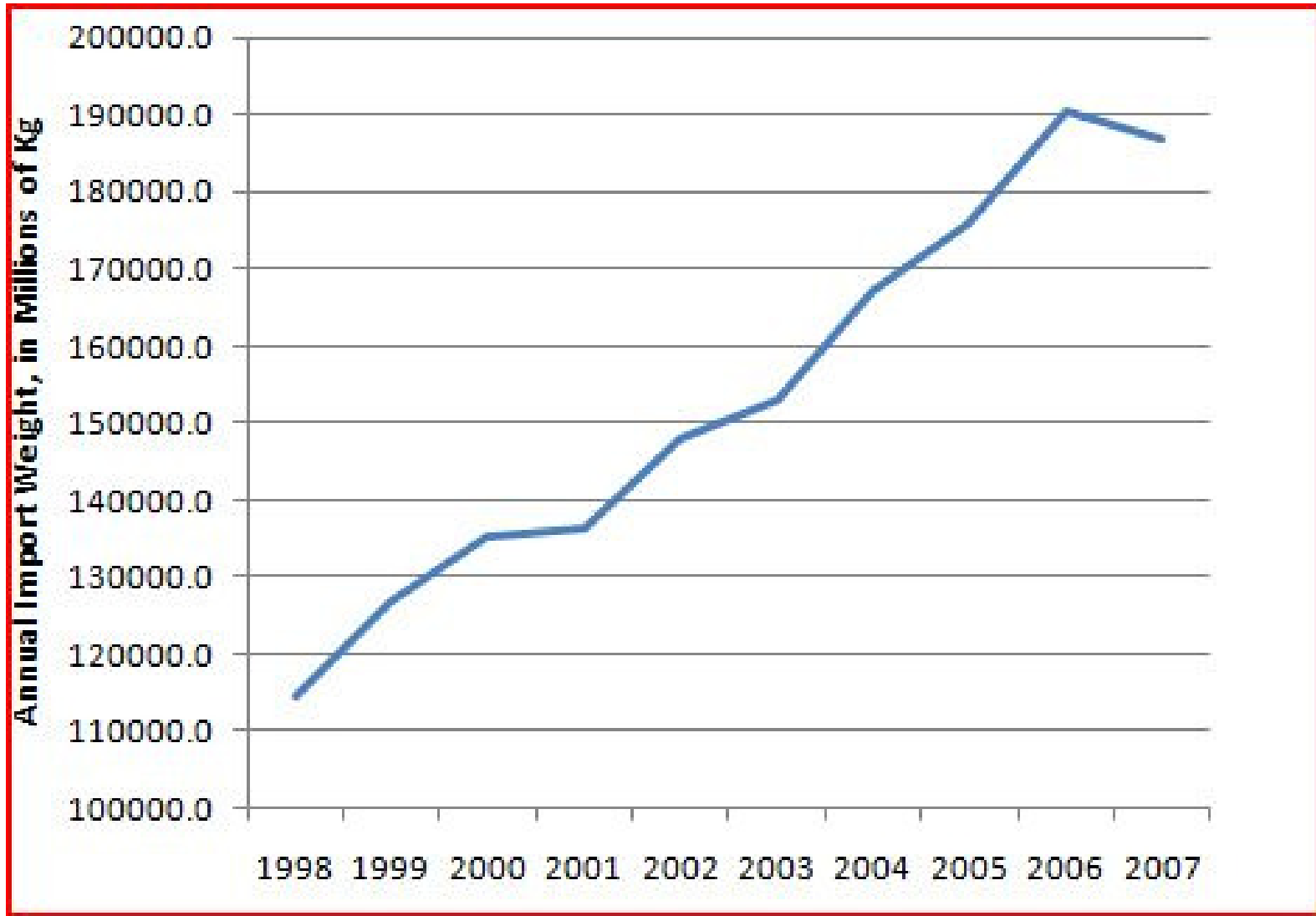
juliet b. schor

the new economics of true wealth

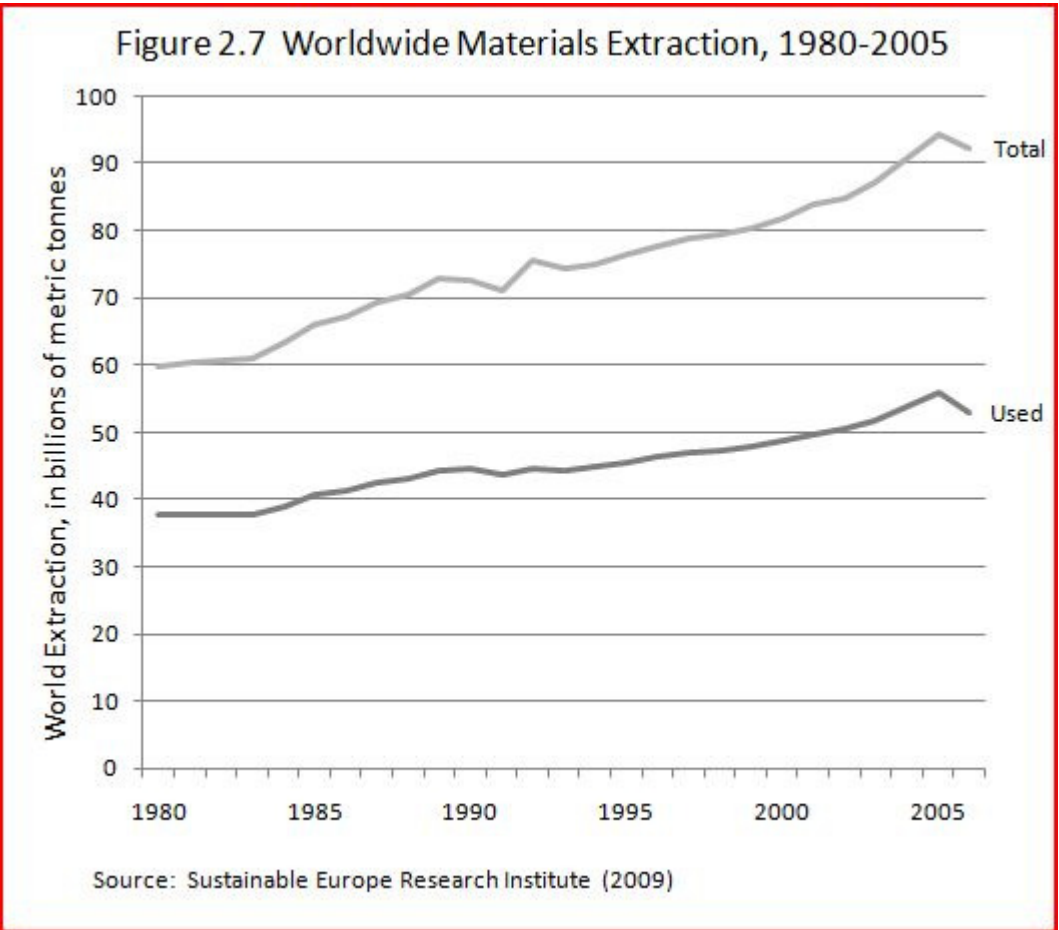
Figure 2.6 The Growing Weight of Imported Goods

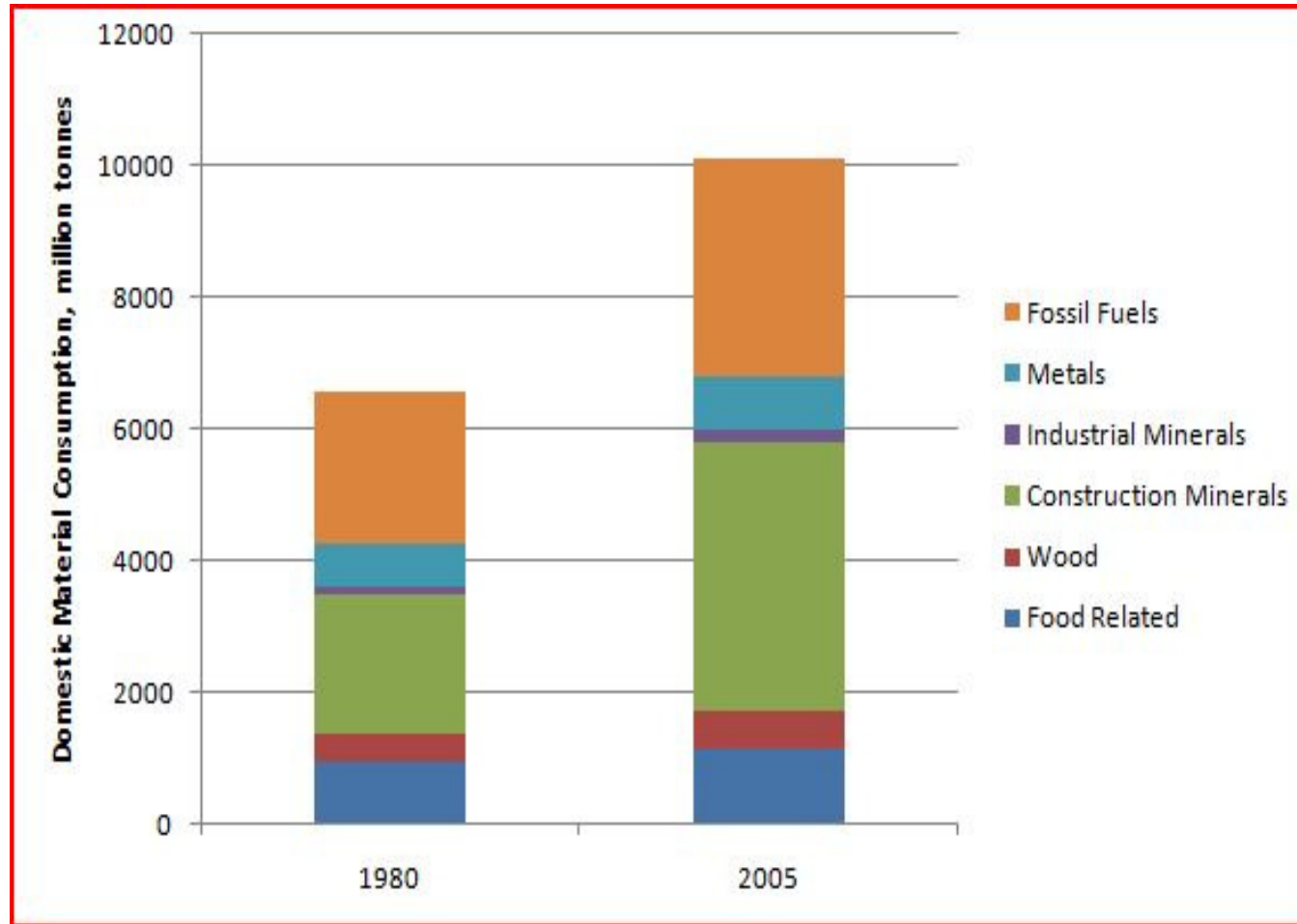


Sources: US Bureau of Transportation Statistics, WISERTrade (2009)



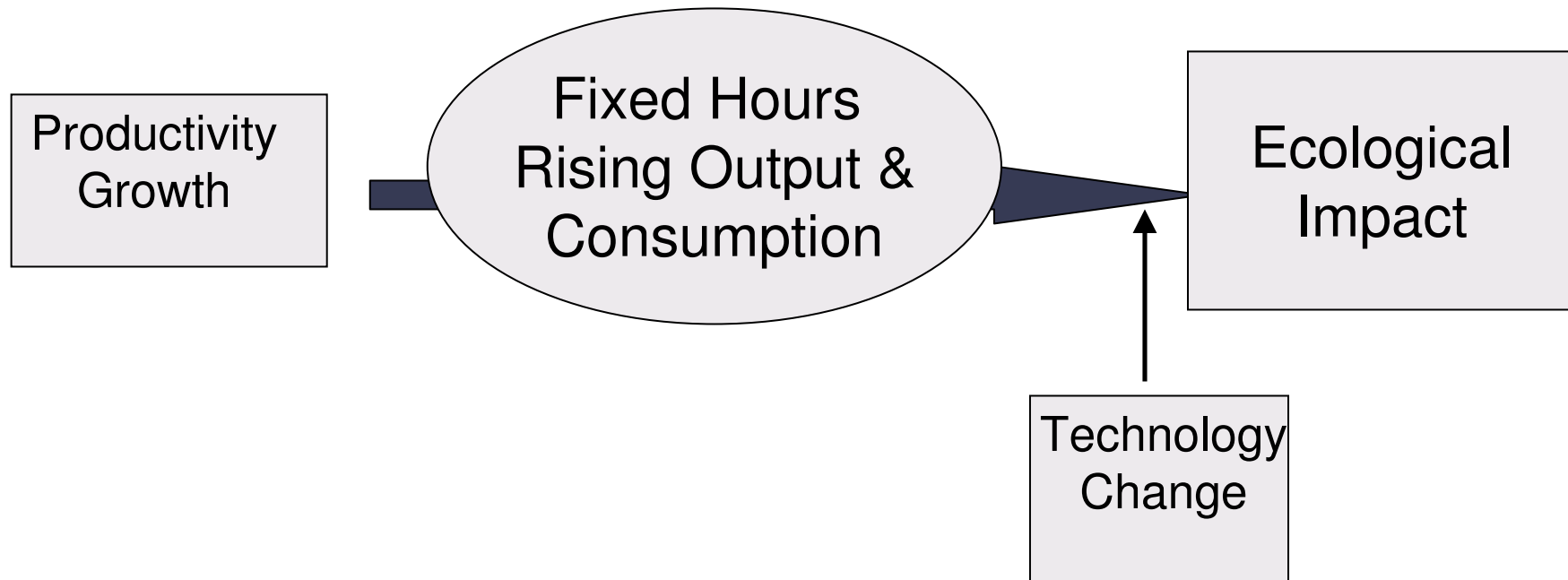
**1. 45% increase in materials extraction
worldwide 1980-2005**





North American extraction has increased by about 66% over this period, even excluding imported goods

From Productivity Growth to Ecological Impact: when hours do not fall (end of pipe solution)



Explanations for fixity of hours: labor conflict, per person benefits costs, other factors

Reducing Ecological Impact: pull demand out of the system in ways that enhance well-being

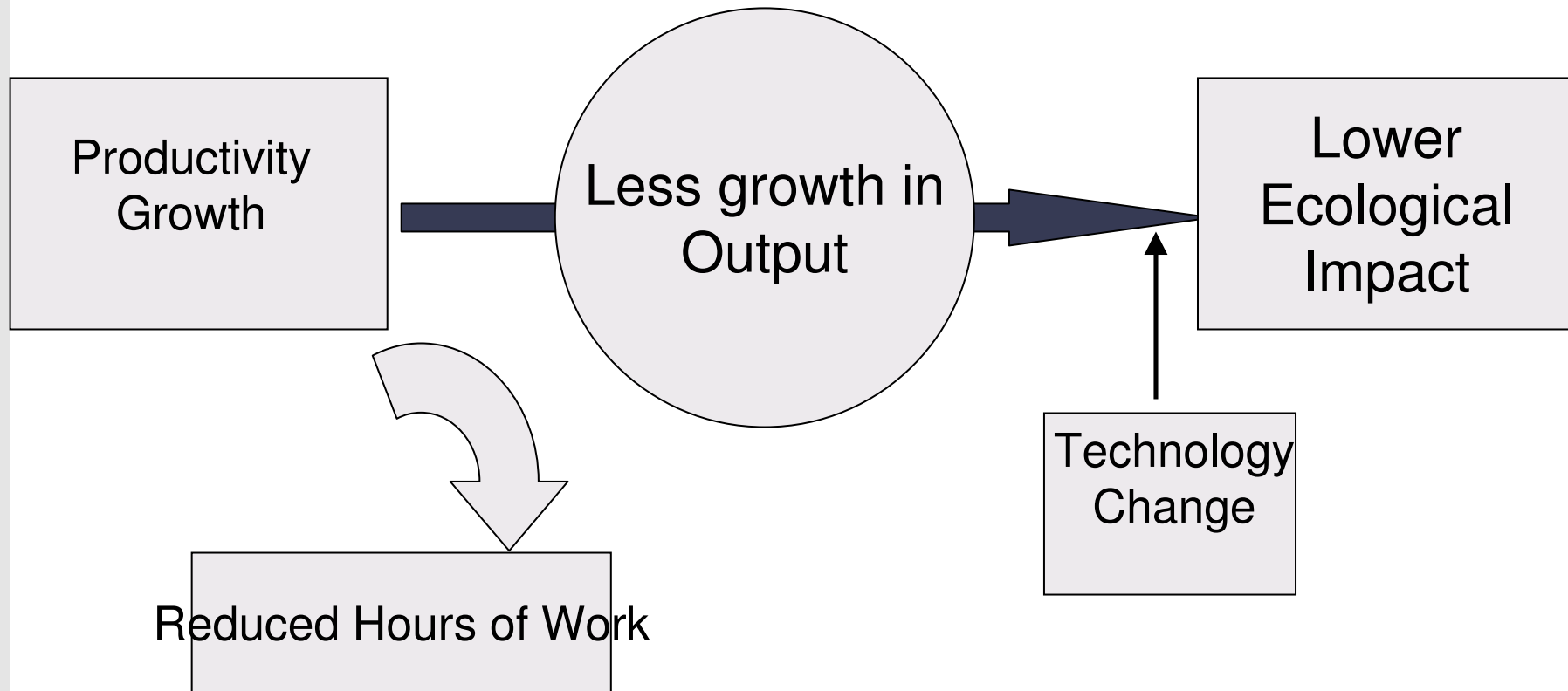
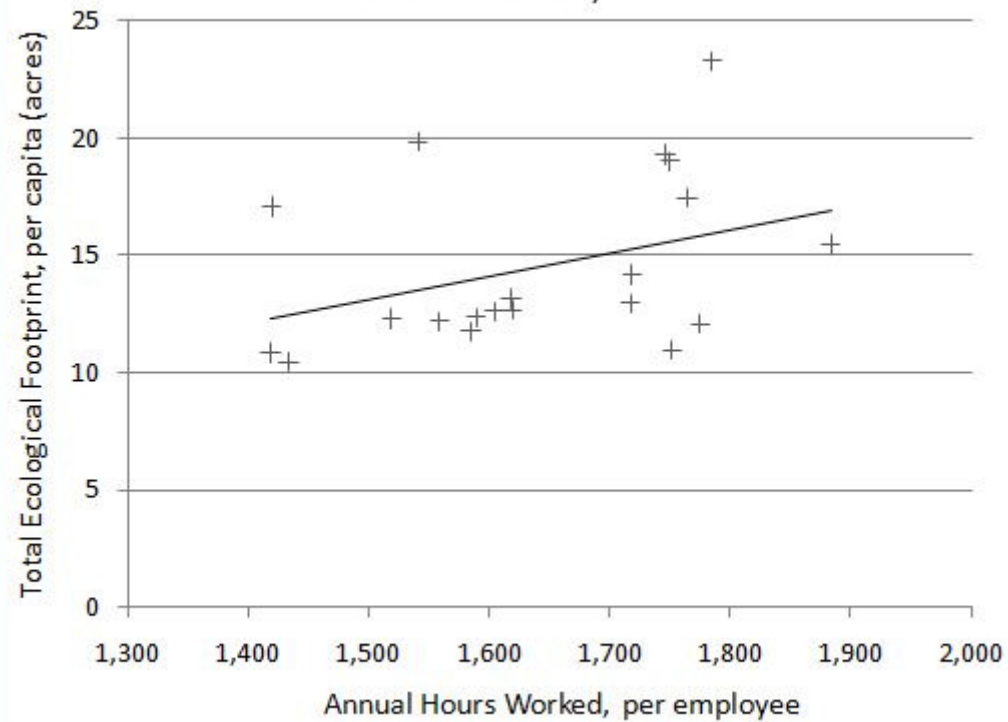
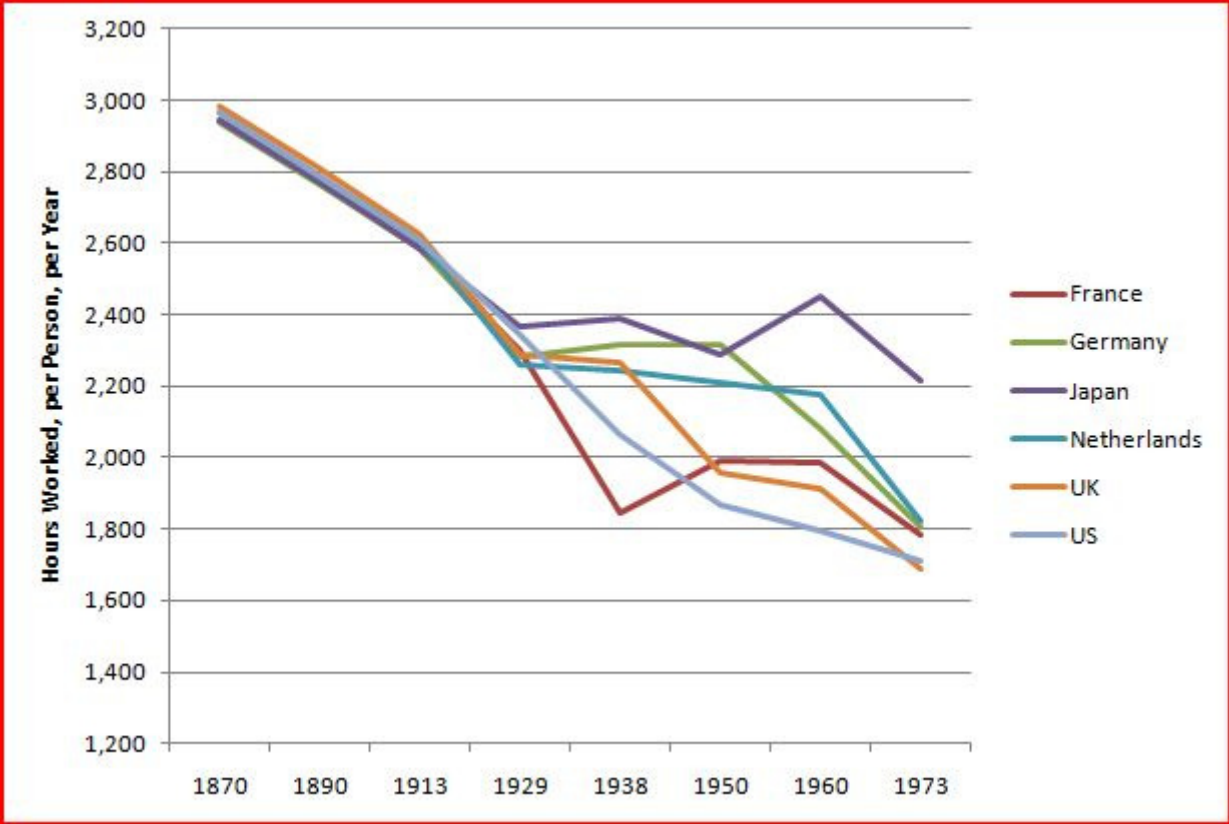


Figure 4.2 Ecological Footprint and Hours Worked
Across Countries, 2005



Sources: Ecological Footprint from Global Footprint Network (2008); hours from The Conference Board and Groningen Growth and Development Centre (2008)

WORKING HOURS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1870-1973



WORKING HOURS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1973-2006

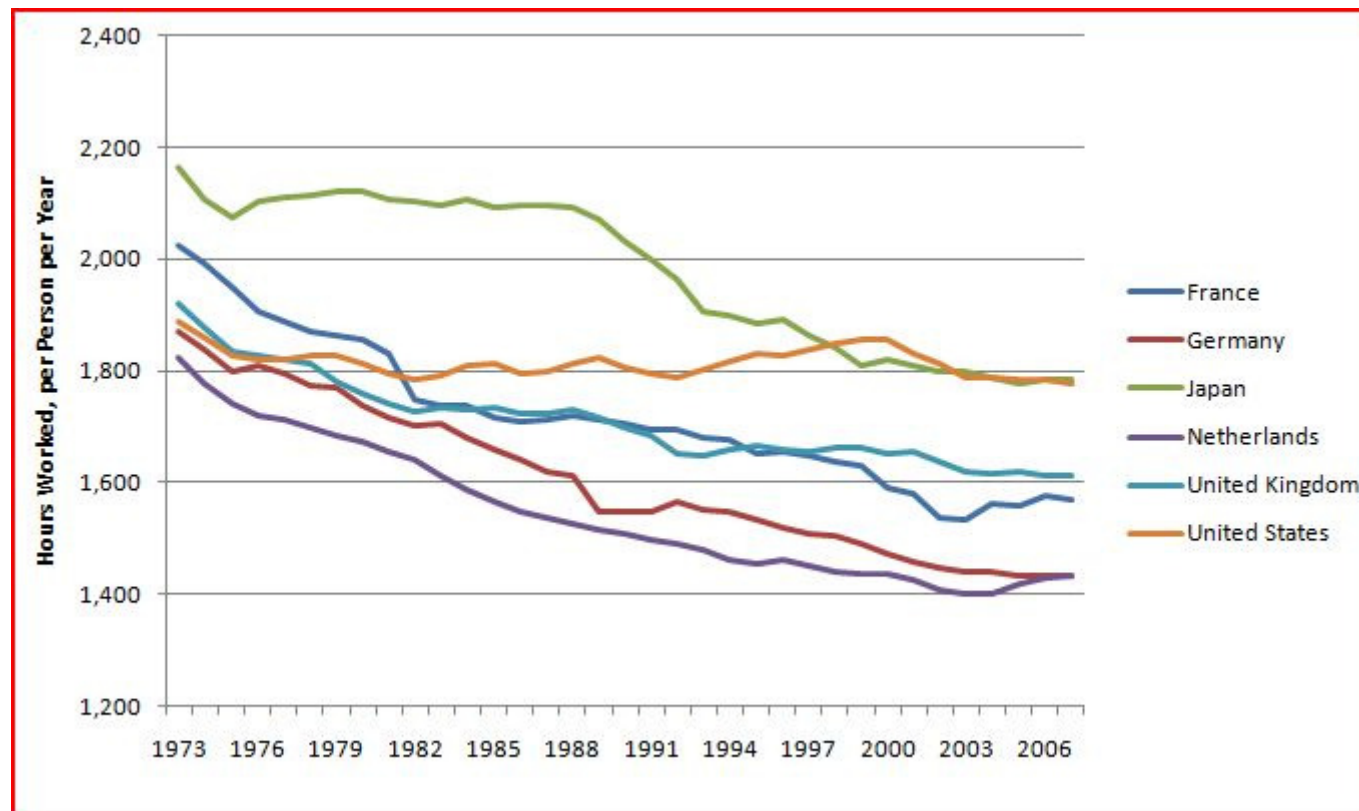
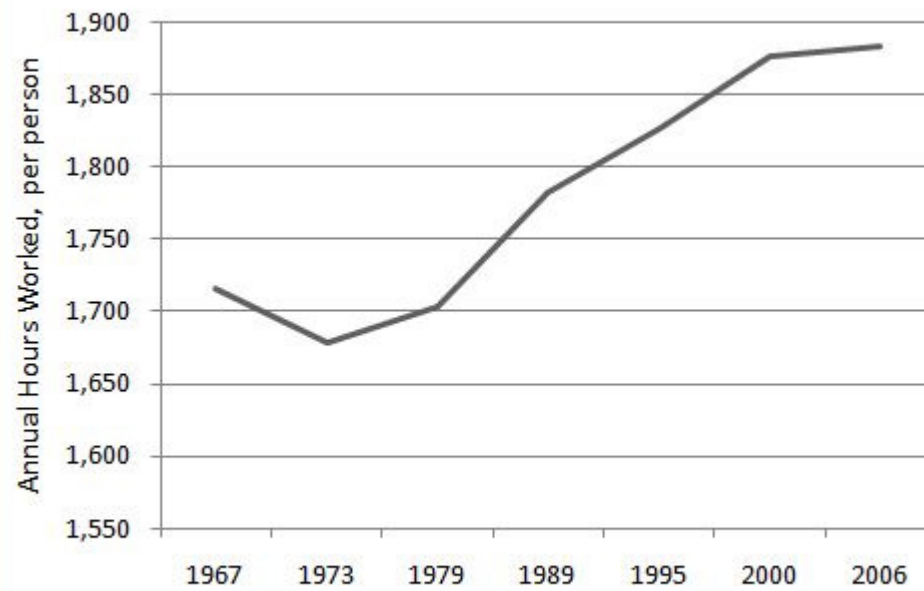


Figure 4.1 Annual Hours Worked, U.S. 1967-2006



Source: Mishel, Bernstein, & Shierholz (2009, Table 3.2)

The shorter hours solution

- 1. Reduces ecological impact**
- 2. Frees up time for individuals to learn new skills, build ecological knowledge and incubate small enterprises**
- 3. Frees up time for self-provisioning (but high-tech)**
- 4. Helps solve unemployment crisis**

A new consumption and temporal regime

**Less, lower impact consumption
(take time, not income)**

High-tech self-provisioning

**Incubating small businesses,
cooperatives and enterprises to
produce basic needs in clean
ways**



HIGH TECH SELF PROVISIONING

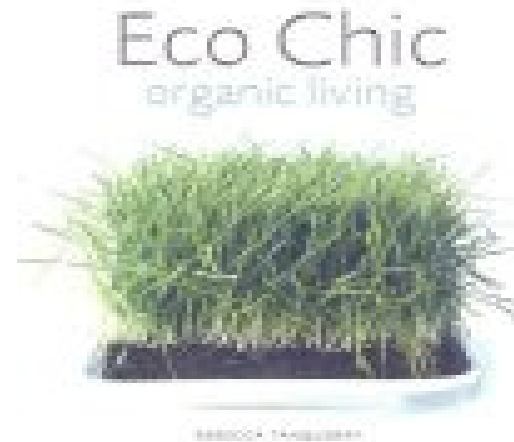
**High productivity use of time
released from BAU market to
meet basic needs**

**Urban food growing and
agriculture, permaculture**

**Alternative home construction
using low-cost, natural materials
(earth, straw, stone)**

Micro-generation of energy

**Small scale manufacturing using
“fab lab” technologies**



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Declining size of enterprise

The problem of ecological knowledge

**The need for an open-source process
to transmit knowledge**

**The potential for informal skill
diffusion and its impact on wage and
income distribution**

