

# **Kings, Slaves and the Future**

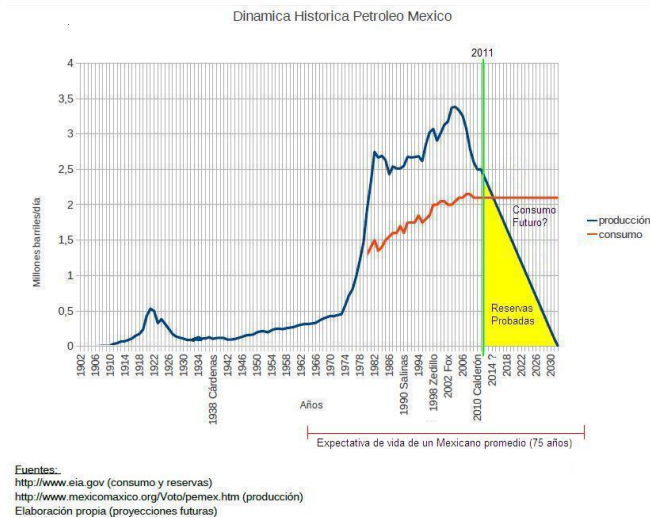
*Why it is not right to burn fossil fuels  
and how to stop doing it.*

May 2015

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1. In the old days, the wealthiest people were **kings**. They had a huge number of subordinates who would fulfill their every wish and desire.
2. Today, the wealthiest people are **consumers**. They have a huge number of „fossil slaves“ that fulfill their every wish and desire.
3. Consumers actually live even **better than kings** used to in the old days. There are many things accessible to them, that even kings couldn't have: air travel, central heating and air conditioning, supermarkets with a huge choice of products, internet and modern communication.
4. **Fossil slaves** make a whole range of luxuries available to consumers.
5. What is a fossil slave? It is the equivalent of energy that one person, working for you around the clock would spend. A human can be compared to a 100 Watt light bulb in his energy consumption. If you leave it on 24 hours, you get about 2.5 Kilowatt hours of energy use every day. In a year it is roughly 900 KWh that a human spends. Compare this to an energy content of a barrel of oil: 1700 KWh. One barrel of oil contains the energy equivalent of two full-time fossil slaves during a year. A barrel of oil produces 0.3 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. A ton of coal contains the equivalent of 8 energy slaves and produces 2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. So there are 4-6 fossil slaves in every ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
6. If you know the per capita emissions of a country, you can estimate the amount of fossil slaves that the average citizen of that country employs, year round:
  - Europe: 10 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year = 50 fossil slaves per person
  - Mexico: 6 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year = 30 fossil slaves per person
  - USA: 20 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year = 100 fossil slaves per person
  - India: 1 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year = 5 fossil slaves per person
7. In the old days, in a country, there used to be just one king. Today, in each country, there are millions of consumers! And since each consumer tends to have a number of fossil slaves, they number in the billions (150 billion currently, to be precise).
8. The bad thing about them is that they have **negative side effects**: As they “work”, they heat the planet, destroying species, homes and lives – mostly in places far away from the consumer.
9. The fossil age is just a flash in the pan on a geological timescale. But even on a “history of humankind” timescale, the fossil age is super short. Here is an example from Mexico:



As you can see, it will be over in less than a lifetime! If you think of your own family – how many generations back was your own family still used to a life without any fossil slaves? In most places this would be one or two generations. If we look into the future, unless you’re already past 60, chances are you will live to see the post-

fossil age. – If we manage to bring it to an end before it turns the planet into a hothouse unfit for most life known today.

10. Do we have a “**right**” to employ fossil slaves and **to live like kings**? Well, think about it from the perspective of your own great grandparents. Or your own grandchildren. Do you think they would agree that our luxuries are necessary? What would a person in Bangladesh (already affected by floods), on the Maldives (already affected by sea level rise), on the Philippines (already affected by super storms) or in Kenya (already affected by droughts) say? Do we have a right to live luxurious lives and destroy theirs? And what about all the animal and plant species that are going extinct because of global warming. Do we have a right to destroy them forever?
11. Consumption doesn’t make you happy
12. What is really the issue here is our **dependence on fossil slaves**. Some call it “carbo-addiction”. This is what we need to break. There is no point in trying to justify it. It would be like a drug dealer trying to justify the status quo. Or a person who’s “job” it is to saw on the branch that everyone is sitting on. That’s not a proper job. A new job must be found as quickly as possible. The same applies to carbo-addicted lifestyles.
13. The good news is that happiness and a good life wait for us after the end of our carbo-addiction – they can fortunately easily be had without fossil slaves. Just think about the essentials in life. Those don’t need fossils: clean water, healthy local food, health care, clothes, houses, transport, communication, electricity. All of these can be had by sustainable means, with clean energy only.

14. The [Future Box](#) can help to break our carbo-addiction faster than the rest of society and lead the way. By using it you become a pioneer that shows the way out of the fossil age – so that everyone else may follow in our tracks.
15. The Future Box is a voluntary 100% tax on fossil slave use. Whenever you buy fossil fuel or any products that need a lot of fossil fuels to be made, you pay the same amount that you are spending into the Future Box. The money in the box is then used for three different things: 1) Investing in zero carbon ways to meet your family's needs. (solar panels, bikes, water filters, insulating the house, retrofitting your heating system to renewable energy etc.) 2) Supporting the victims of climate change. Those that are already being affected by our use of fossil slaves have a right to support. This can be either relief efforts where disaster struck or prevention work to keep people out of the danger zone in the face of a changing climate. 3) Initiatives that work on structural change to make 1) and 2) easier or simply everyone's responsibility or default choice.
16. Using a Future Box is like **voluntarily renouncing some of your fossil slaves** and putting them to more productive work in the face of the climate crisis – the biggest challenge facing humanity in the present.
17. Let's take an **average German family** of four as an example. Besides 200 fossil slaves, this family already has 20 clean energy helpers. If we could make sure that these clean energy helpers focus on the most essential tasks for a healthy and happy lifestyle, we would actually get pretty far: 1 would carry clean water from the well, 1 would provide light at night and other electricity for the varied needs around the house, 3 would help grow and transport food, 2 would be there for providing health care services as needed, 1 would be supporting communication, 5 would be in charge of transport and 2 would help maintain the house or build a new one if needed. We still have about 5 spare clean energy helpers for other needs. This is the situation in Germany today. These clean energy helpers are already there! We just don't employ them to do the right things. They are mostly used to produce waste! And stuff that we toss away. And luxuries way beyond the imagination of any non-consumer. Our average German family could easily renounce a hundred of their fossil slaves! They would still be better off than kings in the old days!
18. *Methodological remark: these "lessons" can be interwoven, so as to produce more "Aha!" experiences where suddenly things connect and fall into place.*