

Blame the rich? Norwegian consumption-based accounts of household archetypes

Topic: Consumption-Based Accounts of Household Types

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In the global effort to cut emissions of greenhouse gases, a key question is how the responsibility for the various emissions is to be distributed. Thus, understanding the various mechanisms through which human activities lead to emissions directly and indirectly and how different groups contribute to these is important.

Based on the Norwegian household consumption survey and additional physical data, we present six household archetypes that represent the footprints of the super-rich, high-income earners, and households in the lower income deciles. We use multi-regional input-output analysis combined with bottom-up approaches to calculate archetype footprints. In addition, we estimate the carbon footprint of private investments based on a novel approach taken by the World Inequality Database. In this approach, the full burden of the emissions associated with private investments is allocated to those with ownership interests in the investing entities.

Preliminary results indicate that when including contributions from private investments, the 1 % wealthiest Norwegian households have a carbon footprint of 155 tons CO₂ equivalents on average. This is more than 6 times higher than the average Norwegian household at 25 tCO₂e/hh. We produce results in cooperation with the non-profit organization "Future in our Hands", which employs this analysis to inform Norwegian net zero policies.

With this study, we hope to contribute to shaping the research on the carbon footprint of wealth and investment; and inform the research community about the lessons learned from the political process of working towards the reduction of the footprints of the wealthiest households.