

# A Green Economy is a Local Economy

Molly Scott Cato

TRANSITIONSTROUD

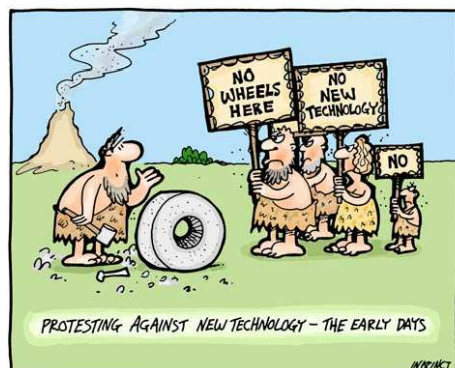


## Where are we going?



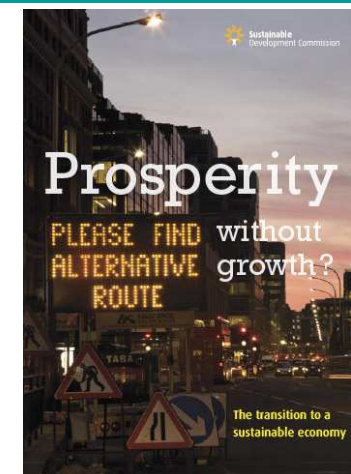
- How far can technology take us?
- How would we design a green economy?
- Transition Stroud: The power of community

## Part I. We need to change people's minds as well as their technology

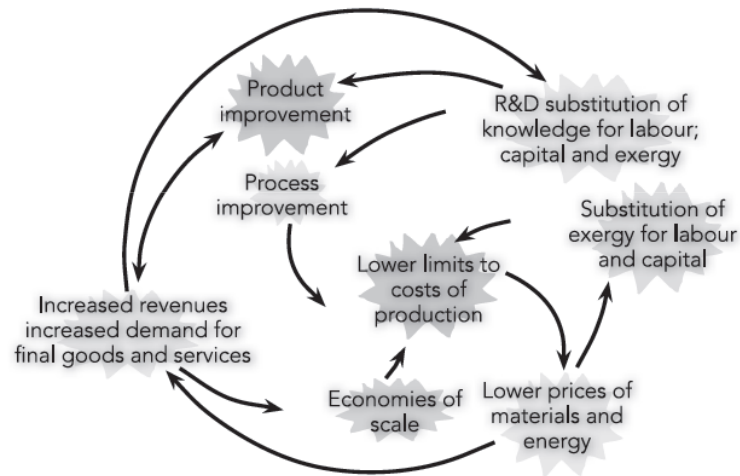


## The limitations of decoupling

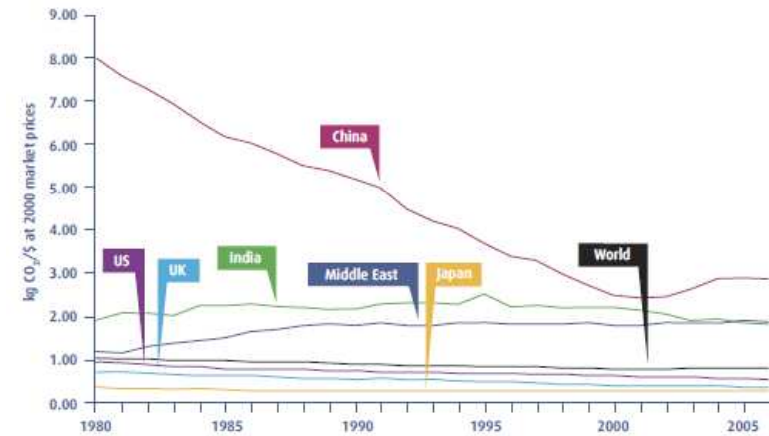
- 'Relative vs. absolute decoupling'
- 'It is entirely fanciful to suppose that 'deep' emission and resource cuts can be achieved without confronting the structure of market economies'



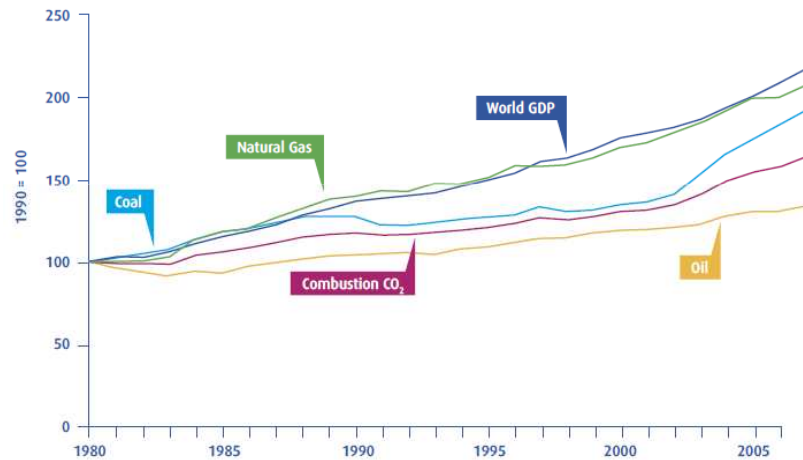
## Rebound effects



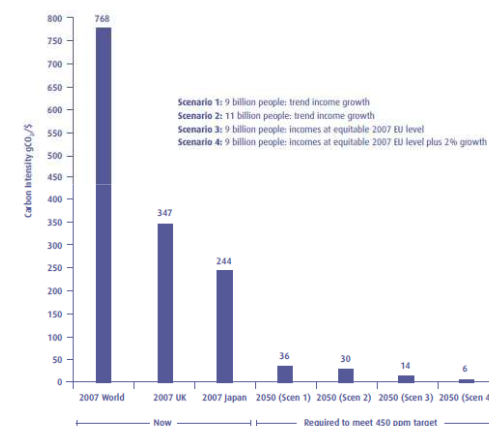
## CO2 intensity of GDP across nations: 1980–2006



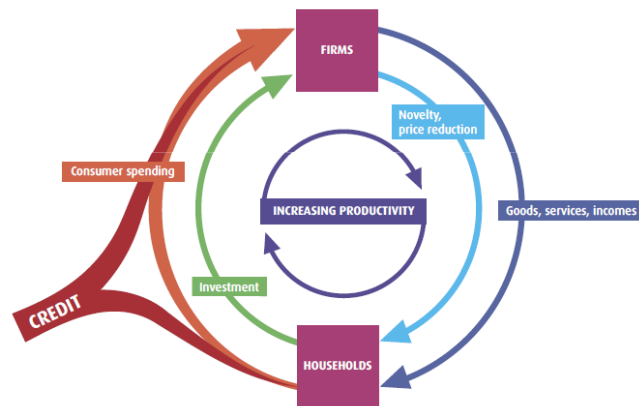
## Trends in Fossil Fuel Consumption and Related CO2: 1980–2007



## Carbon Intensities Now and Required to Meet 450 ppm Target



## The problem is structural



## Part II. What would a sustainable, provisioning economy look like?



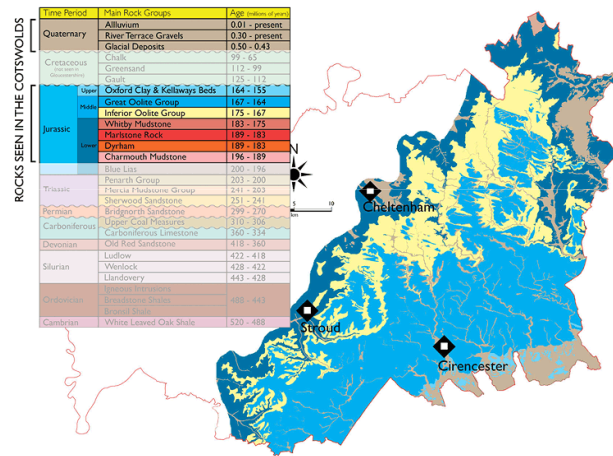
## What is a bioregion?

- 'a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries'
- A *bioregion* is literally and etymologically a 'life-place'—with a geographic, climatic, hydrological and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and non-human living communities. Bioregions can be variously defined by the geography of watersheds, similar plant and animal ecosystems, and related identifiable landforms and by the unique human cultures that grow from natural limits and potentials of the region

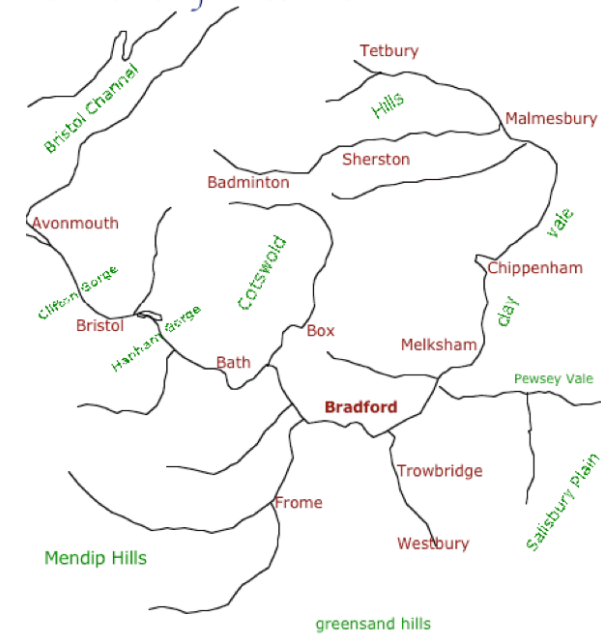
## An economic bioregion

- A bioregional economy would be embedded within its bioregion and would acknowledge ecological limits.
- Bioregions as natural social units determined by ecology rather than economics
- Can be largely self-sufficient in terms of basic resources such as water, food, products and services.
- Enshrine the principle of trade subsidiarity

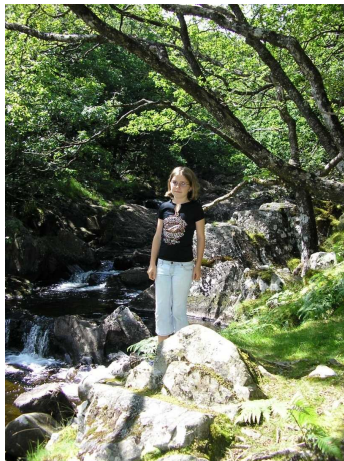
# The Cotswold Bioregion



## The course of the River Avon



## Key characteristics of the bioregional economy—



- Locality
- Accountability
- Community
- Conviviality

## Locality but not autarky

- Cultural openness and maximisation of exchange that can be achieved in a world of limited energy, within a framework of self-sufficiency in basic resources and the limiting of trade to those goods which are not indigenous due to reasons of climate or local speciality.





## Accountability as reconnection



- Your bioregion is your 'backyard'  
Each bioregion would be the area of the global economy for which its inhabitants were

## Community not markets

- Reclaiming of public space for citizenship and relationship.
- 'putting the economy in its place'
- Market as *agora*—public space for debate and sharing of ideas, not just commerce



## Conviviality instead of productivity



- I choose the term 'conviviality' to designate the opposite of industrial productivity. I intend it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment
- I believe that, in any society, as conviviality is reduced below a certain level, no amount of industrial productivity can effectively satisfy the needs it creates among society's members. (Illich, 1974).

## Part III. Living the theory: Transition Stroud



## A brief history . . .

- Transition Towns launched in Totnes in September 2006
  - if we wait for the governments, it'll be too little, too late
  - if we act as individuals, it'll be too little
  - but if we act as communities, it might just be enough, just in time.
- Transition Stroud launched in January 2007

## Three key concepts

- Resilience: 'the property of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically and then, upon unloading to have this energy recovered.'
- Ecological citizenship: intrinsic and ethical motivations towards protecting the environment
- Critique: the importance of political economy

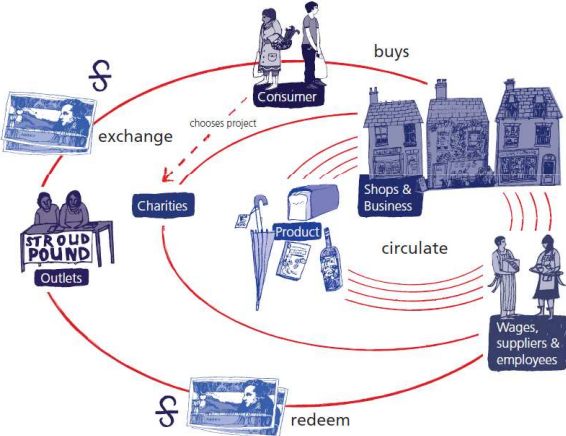
## Locality: Walking the Land



## Accountability: Stroud Community Agriculture



## Community: Stroud Pound



## Conviviality: Stroud Farmers' Market



## The Seeds of a Greener Future?

