

LSE IDEAS public lecture

# Each Age Gets the Inequality it Needs: 20,000 years of hierarchy

**Professor Ian Morris**

*Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs at LSE IDEAS for 2015-16*

**Professor Erik Berglof**

*Chair, LSE*

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Hashtag for Twitter users: #LSEMorris



Each age gets the inequality it needs:  
20,000 years of hierarchy



# Assiros, northern Greece, in the 1980s



# Not Greek farmers



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FORAGERS,  
FARMERS,  
AND  
FOSSIL  
FUELS

How Human Values Evolve

IAN MORRIS

A word from my  
sponsor:  
Princeton University  
Press, 2015

# The plan

1. What is hierarchy?
2. Foragers, farmers, and fossil fuels
3. The right amount of inequality
4. The shape of inequality to come



That's not fair!  
Monkeys demand equal  
wages for equal work

# Tanzania: left, Hadza hunters; right, Nyamwezi farm





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	Foragers	Farmers	Fossil Fuelers
Political Inequality	Bad	Good	Bad
Gender Inequality	OK	Good	Bad
Wealth Inequality	Bad	Good	OK
Violence	OK	Sometimes OK	Bad

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# Saints? Shoshone, 1930s



# Bullies? Russians, 1890s

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'Terrific – it will inform, stimulate,  
and challenge you'

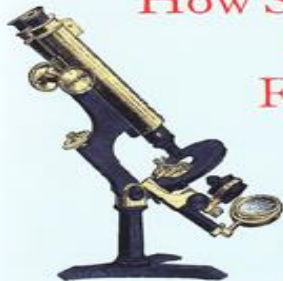
DARON ACEMOGLU

Co-author of *Why Nations Fail*



# THE MEASURE OF CIVILISATION

How Social Development  
Decides the  
Fate of Nations



## IAN MORRIS

THE COMPANION VOLUME TO *Why The West Rules – For Now*

## Profile Books, 2013

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# Aboriginal Australian group (late nineteenth century)



# The age of foragers: here, twentieth-century hunter-gatherers from Botswana



# A bad combination: Louis XIV among the foragers

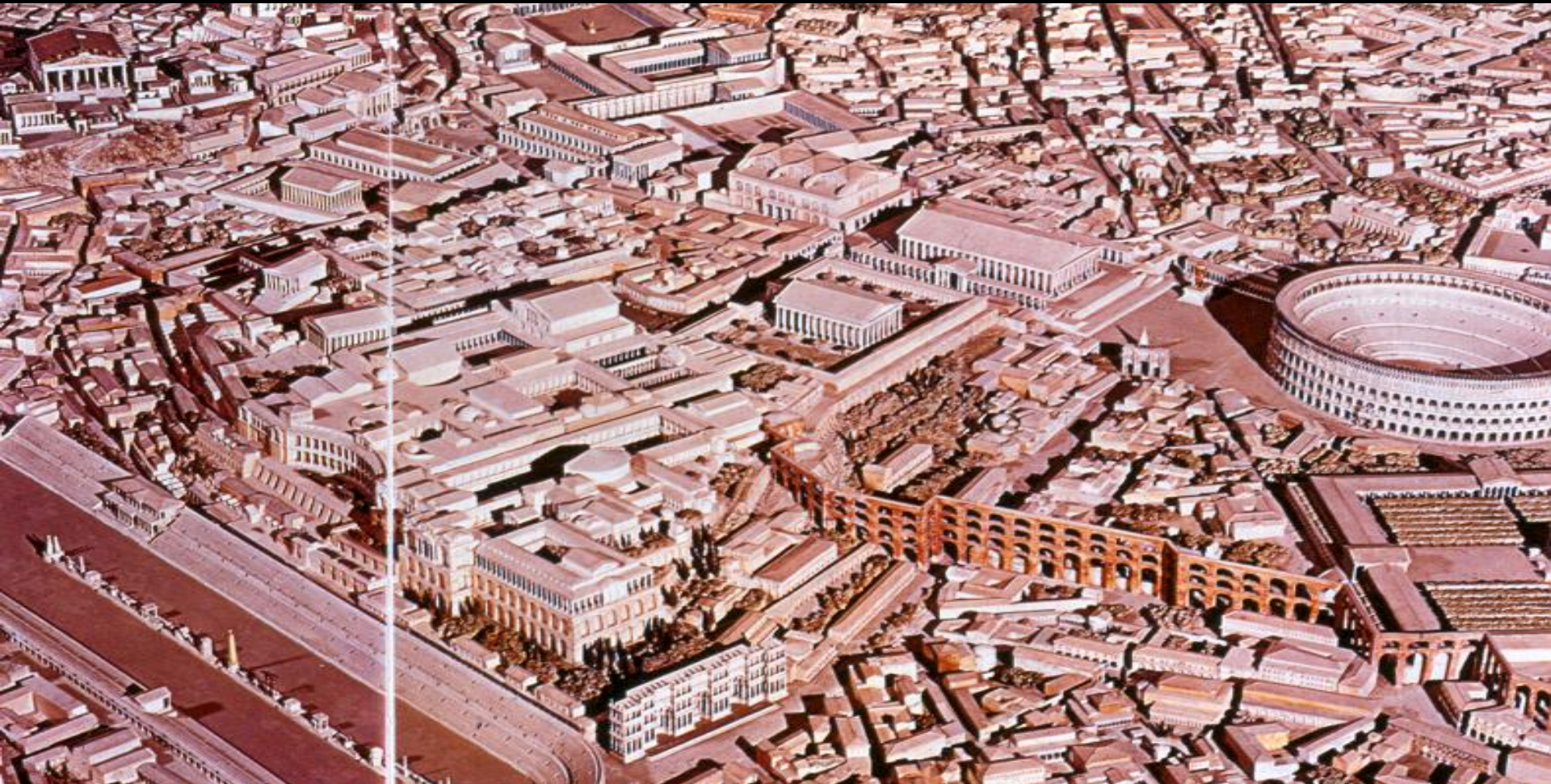




Affluent foragers: Kwakiutl  
(Kwakwaka'wakw)  
settlement and ceremony,  
British Columbia, c. 1900



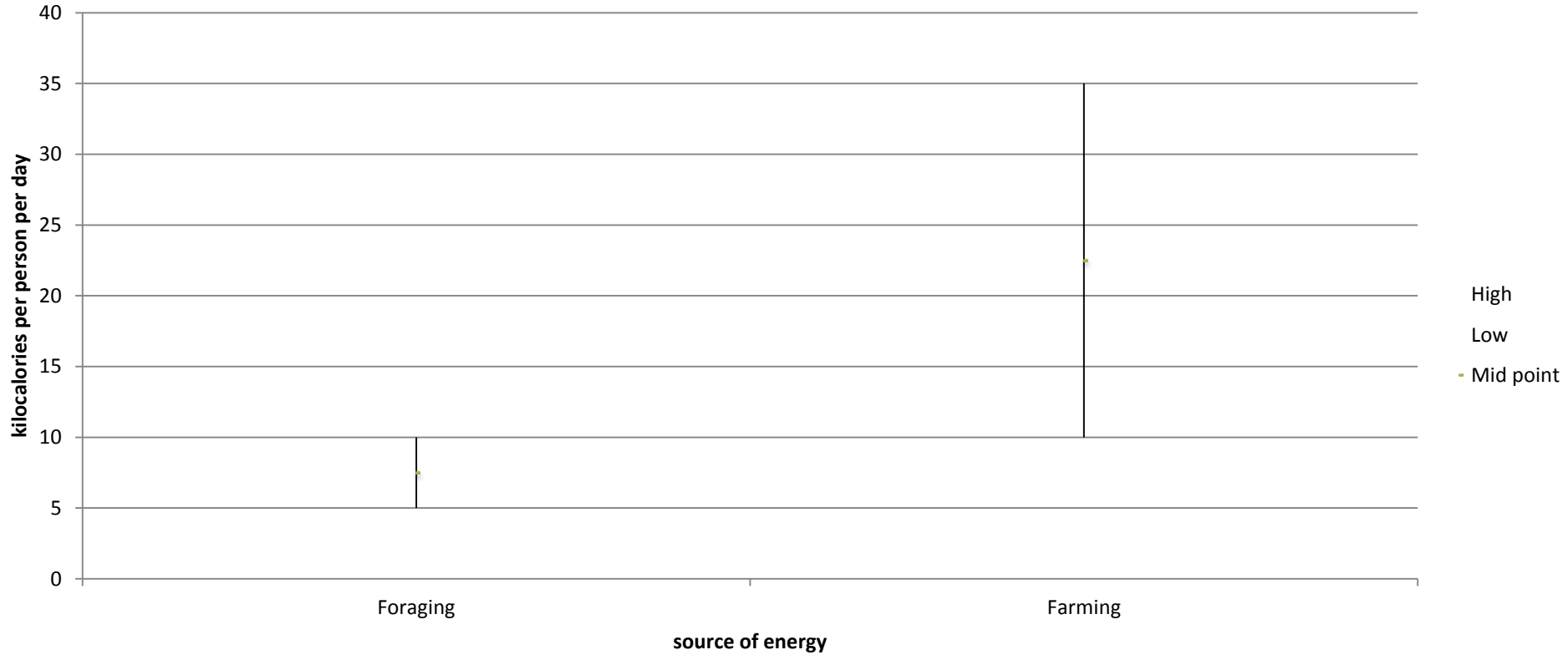




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# energy capture per capita





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# An increasingly attractive option: forced labor

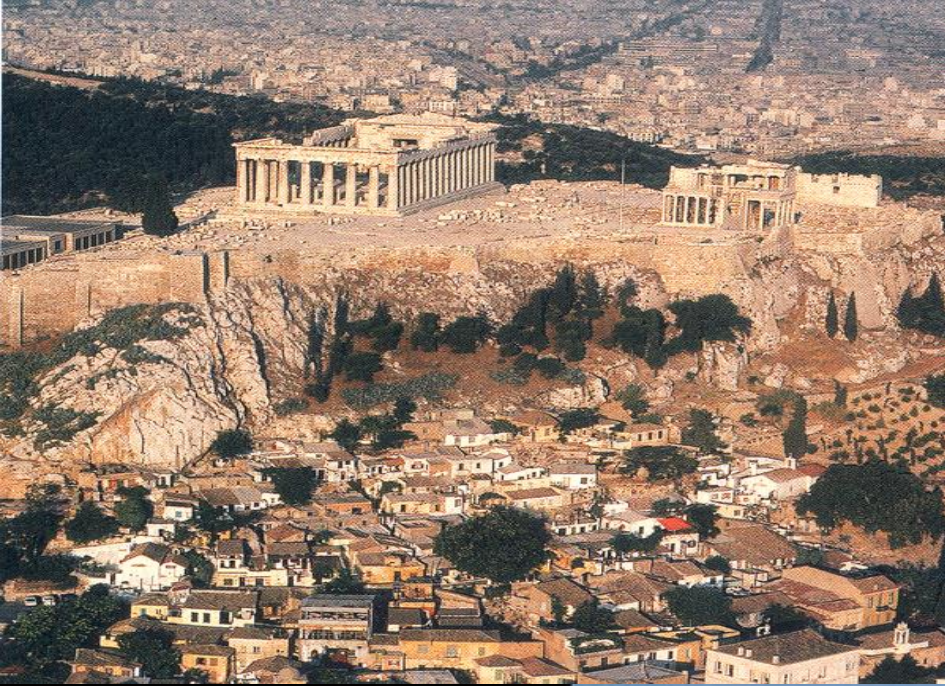


# Really rich: Tutankhamun of Egypt (1341-1324 BC)



# Another bad combination: !Kung San serfs





Affluent agrarian, maritime,  
commercial city-states: left,  
fifth-century BC Athens;  
below, Venice in 1720





A BIT DARKER FOR FATHER CHRISTMAS IN THE 1930S



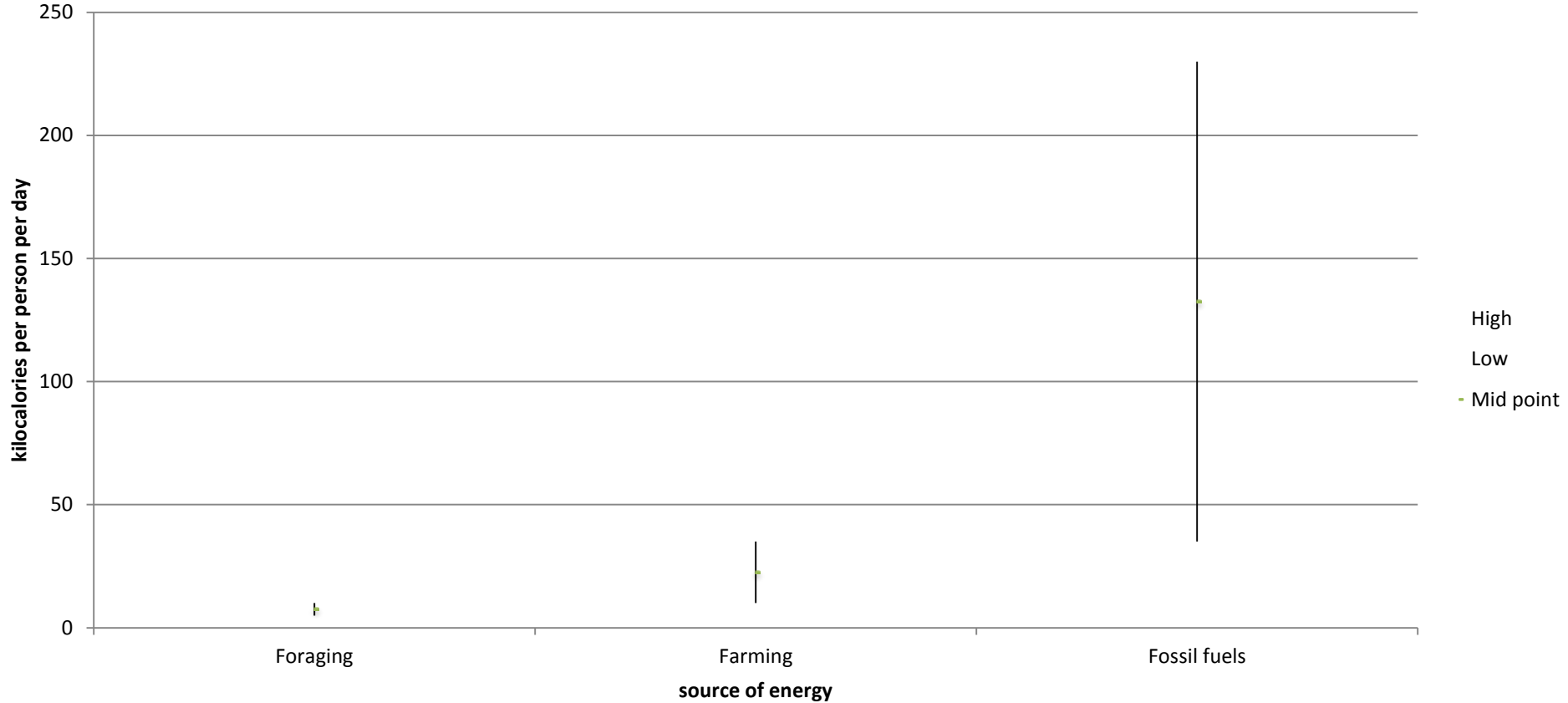
Really big fossil-fuel cities: Tokyo, around 35 million people in 2016



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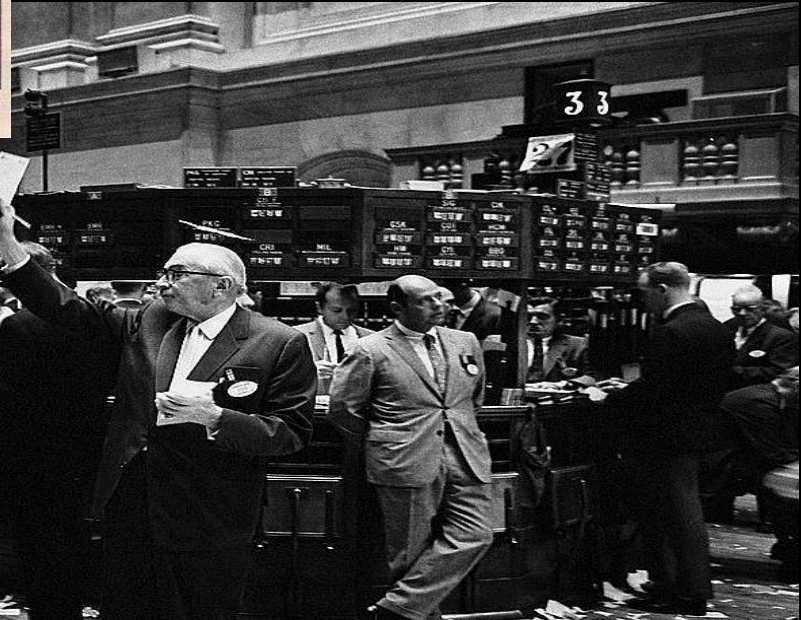
# Energy capture per capita





**ВЕЛИКИЙ СТАЛИН-ЗНАМЯ ДРУЖБЫ НАРОДОВ СССР!**

How to run a fossil-fuel society:  
left, the Soviet way, c. 1950;  
below, the American way, 1963



# The mighty fallen: Dominique Strauss-Kahn, May 2011



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# 7 Facts About Bill Gates

BILL GATES EARNS \$250 EVERY SECOND. THAT'S ABOUT \$20 MILLION A DAY AND \$7.8 BILLION A YEAR.



HE CAN DONATE \$15 TO EVERYONE ON EARTH AND STILL BE LEFT WITH \$5 MILLION FOR HIS POCKET MONEY.

IF HE DROPS A THOUSAND DOLLARS, HE WON'T EVEN BOTHER TO PICK IT UP BECAUSE IN THE 4 SECONDS IT TAKES TO PICK IT UP, HE WOULD HAVE ALREADY EARNED IT BACK.



MICHAEL JORDON IS THE HIGHEST PAID ATHLETE IN THE U.S. IF HE DOESN'T DRINK AND EAT, AND KEEP HIS ANNUAL INCOME AT \$30 MILLION, HE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR 277 YEARS TO BECOME AS RICH AS BILL GATES IS TODAY.

U.S.'S NATIONAL DEBT IS ABOUT \$5.62 TRILLION. IF BILL GATES WANTS TO PAY THE DEBT BY HIMSELF, HE WILL FINISH IT IN LESS THAN 10 YEARS.



IF YOU CHANGE ALL OF BILL GATES MONEY TO \$1 BILLS, YOU CAN MAKE A ROAD FROM EARTH TO MOON 14 TIMES BACK AND FORTH.



IF BILL GATES WERE A COUNTRY, HE WILL BE THE 37TH RICHEST COUNTRY ON EARTH.

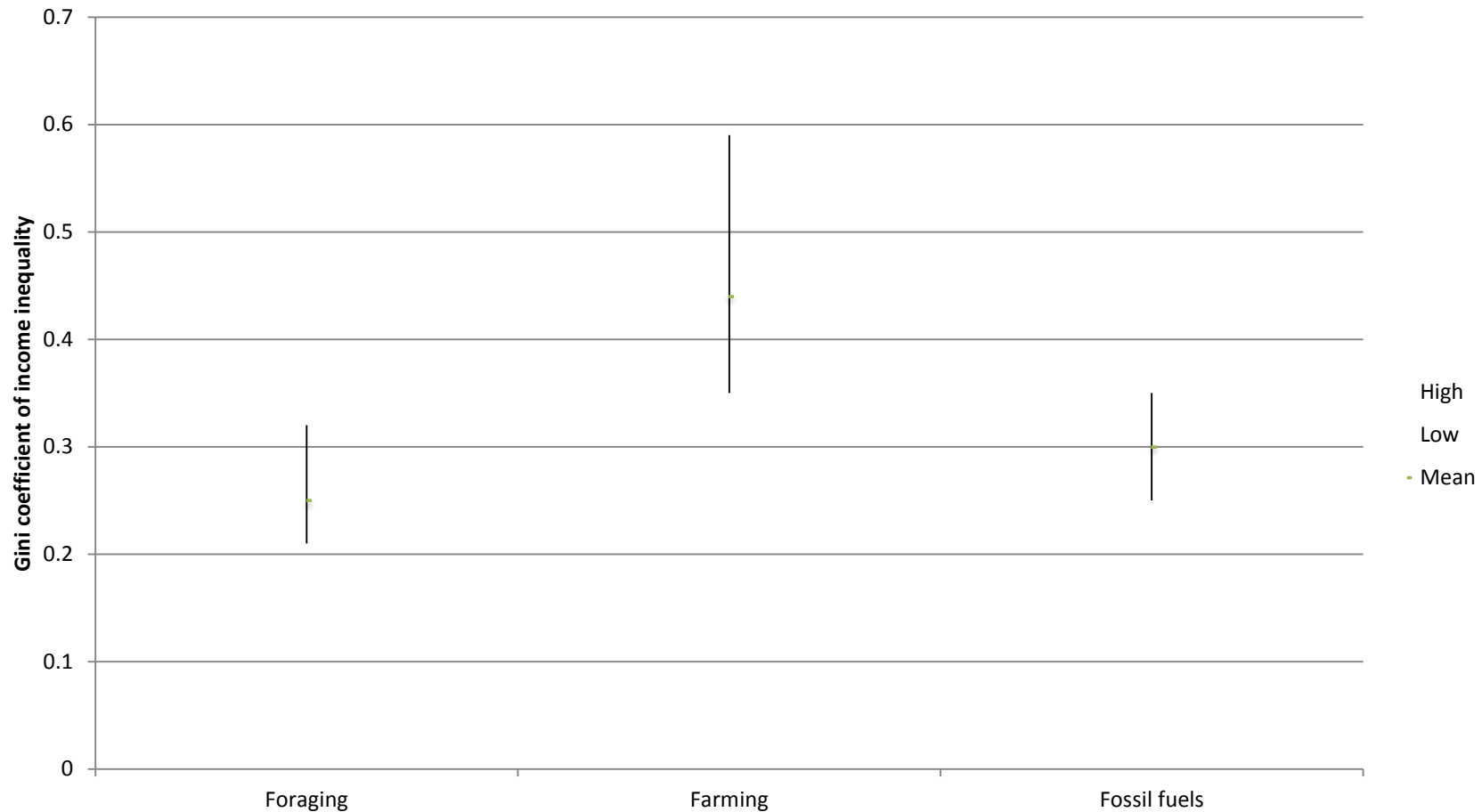
# A fossil-fueler lost in the farming world



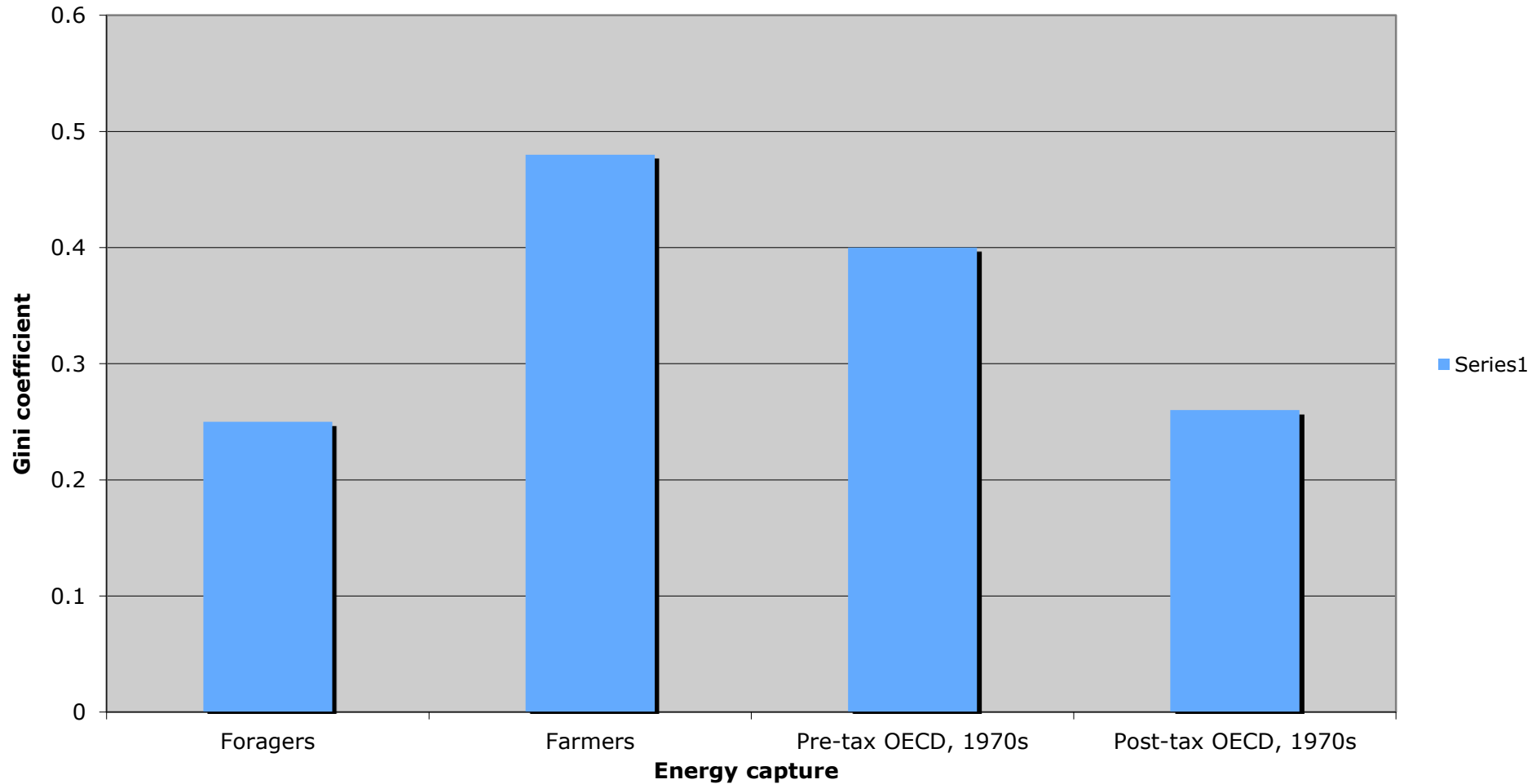
# The plan

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# the right amount of inequality









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# The plan

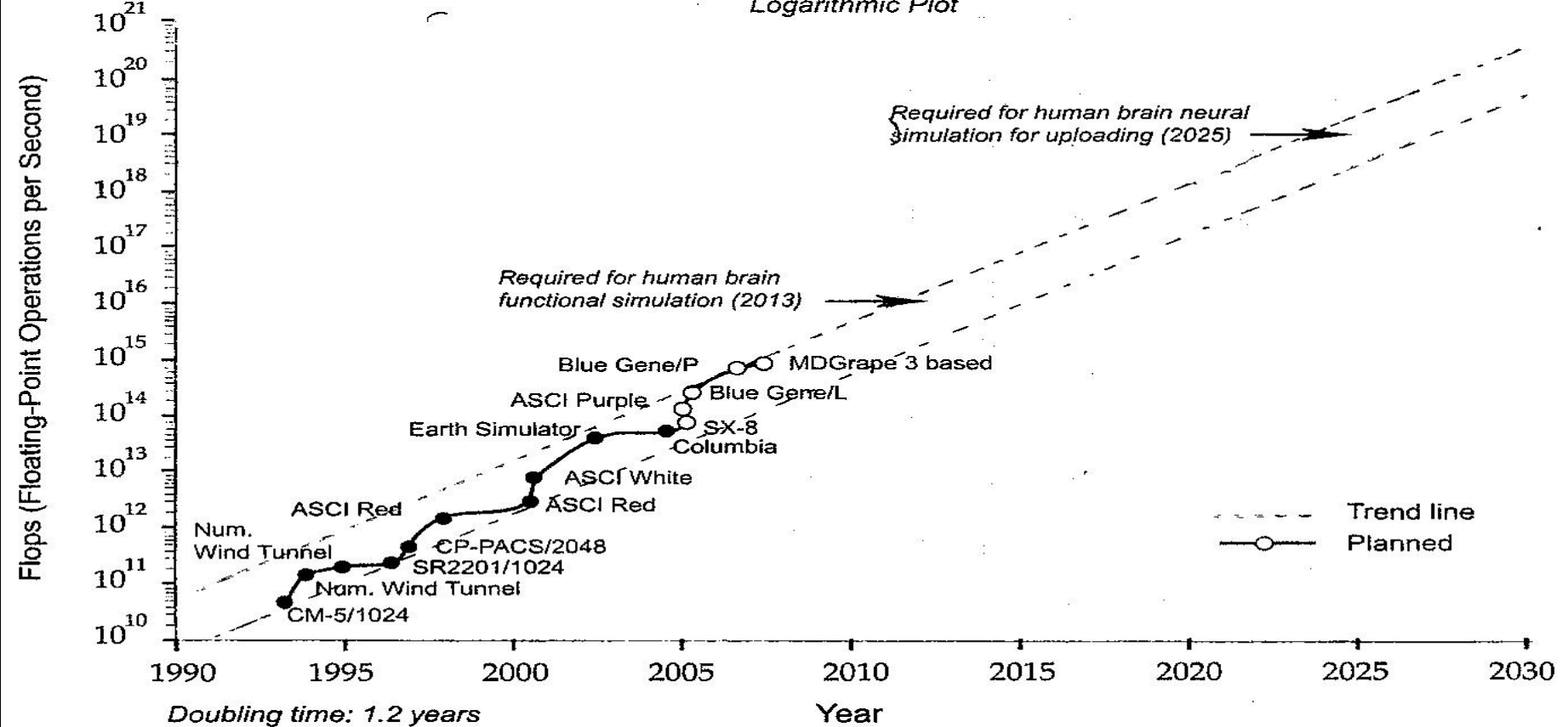
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Logarithmic Plot



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The rich are different ...



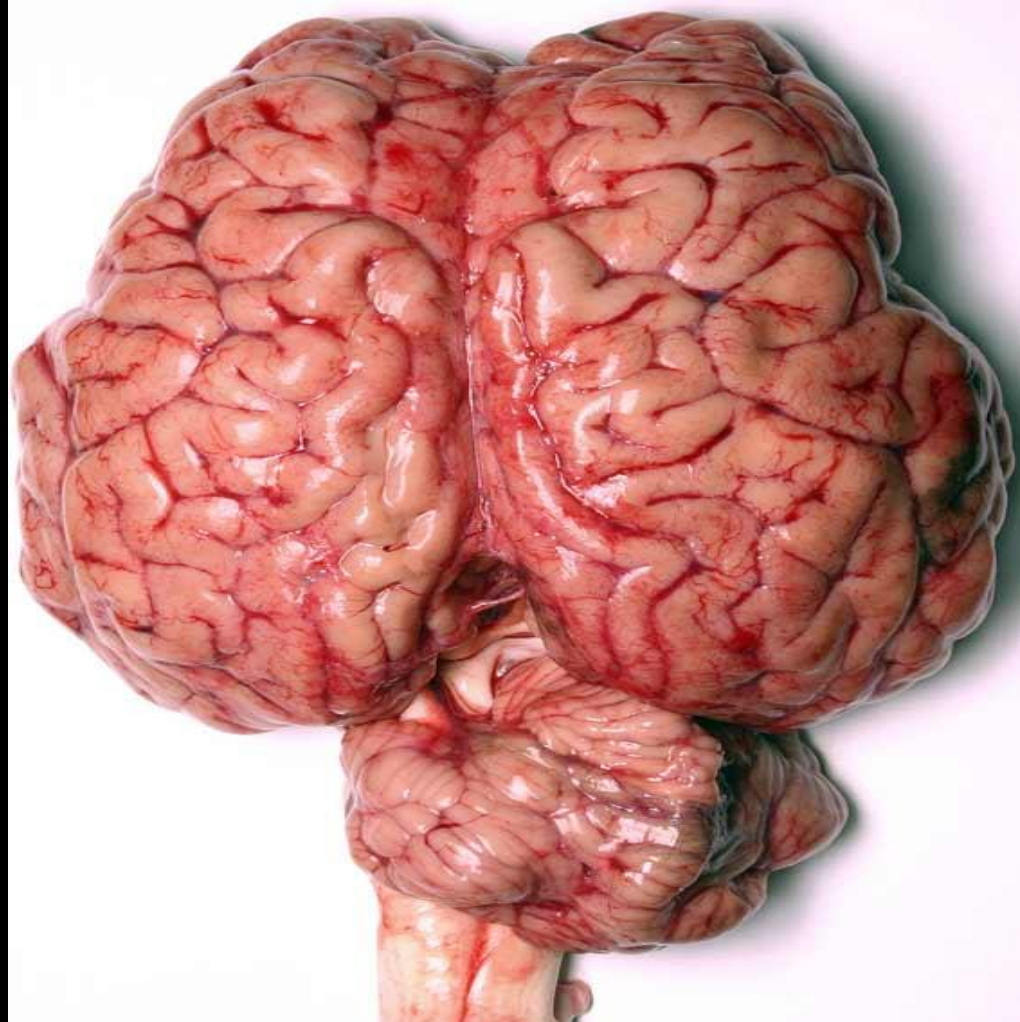


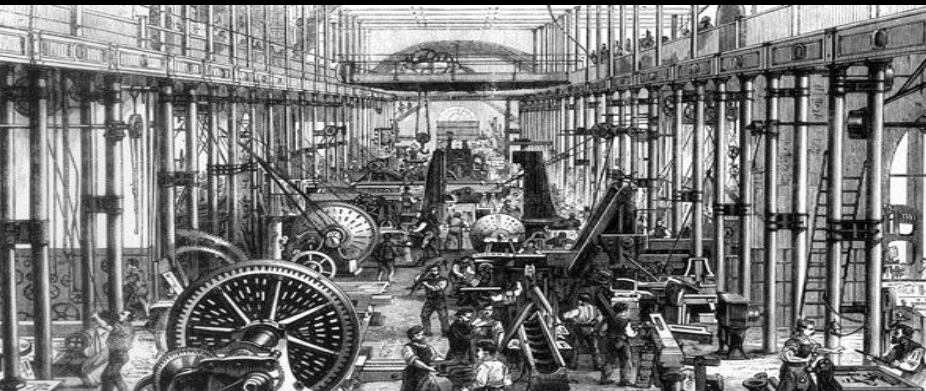
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# 2.7 pounds of magic: the modern human brain





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