



# **GRASSROOTS UNDERSTANDINGS OF SUFFICIENCY: CRITIQUE, SOLUTIONS, LIFESTYLE CHOICES**

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# RESEARCH QUESTION

What does sufficiency signify for persons active in the Finnish degrowth /sufficiency network 'Kohtuusliike'?



Photo: <https://www.kohtuusvaarassa.com/>



# METHODOLOGY

- In depth semi-structured interviews (1–3h, on average 1.7h) and participant observation
- 16 participants from southern, mid- and eastern Finland
- Participants conducted a quick carbon footprint test. Result: 1.3 – 3.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e /person/yr (<https://lifestyletest.sitra.fi/>)
- Analytical framework: Phenomenography (e.g. Marton 1981, Marton and Booth 1997, Åkerlind 2005)



# THE DEGROWTH /SUFFICIENCY NETWORK 'KOHTUUSLIKE'

- Loose Finnish grassroots network connected to the international degrowth movement
- A few hundred participants on the e-mailing list
- Local groups and activities, annual national seminar
- Degrowth is translated to Finnish as 'kohtuus', literal translation is very similar to 'sufficiency'



Photo: <https://www.kohtuusvaarassa.com/>



# PRELIMINARY CATEGORIES: SUFFICIENCY AS...

Criticism

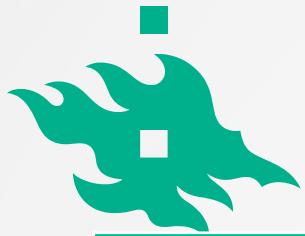
Advocacy  
/solution

...



# PRELIMINARY CATEGORIES, TABLE FORMAT 1/2

Topic \ Category	Criticism	Advocacy / solution
<i>Cross cutting</i>		
Focus	State of (mainstream, affluent) society	Fundamental shift to sufficiency
'Think global act local'	Globalisation, international trade, unfairness	Local, small scale, (global) justice
Nature relation	Humans separate from nature, instrumentalism	Humans as a species among others, intrinsic value, (deep) nature connection, symbiosis, reciprocity, sacredness
Limits	Set by the economy	Set by ecological carrying capacity
<i>Structure, society</i>		
Economic system	Growth-based economy, capitalism	Degrowth, steady state
Prevailing culture	Overconsumption	Enoughness, focus on needs, doing less, avoiding, reducing, simplifying, idle
Work	Harming ecosystems -> climate change and biodiversity loss	Supporting a flourishing environment, restoration



# PRELIMINARY CATEGORIES, TABLE FORMAT 2/2

Topic	Categories	Criticism	Advocacy / solution
<i>Structure, society cont'd</i>			
World view		Antropocentric	Ecocentric
Way of organizing		Individualistic	Community
<i>Agency, individual</i>			
- Transport		Private car use, flying	Walking, (e-)biking, public transport. Car sharing or renting, using biogas. Avoid unnecessary driving . No car, driver's licence or flying. Less travel abroad.
- Housing		Large living space, high indoor temperature utilizing polluting energy source. Excessive warm water use, frequently new appliances,	Smaller living space, low indoor temperature, renewable energy, living offgrid. Composting toilet. Recycling, second hand furniture.
- Food		Large food markets, from far away imported or processed food. Meat rich diet.	Vegetarian/vegan diet, having some fish or meat. Local food. Avoiding food waste. Picking berries and mushrooms.
- General		Using fossil fuels	Using muscle power



“I do read all news and articles from a wholly new perspective... I have been offered ... glasses through which I can interpret things ... so I have found kind of an own way of structuring the world.”

Person active in the 'Kohtuusliike' network





# THANK YOU!

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**TAH** TIINA AND ANTTI  
HERLIN FOUNDATION



Helsingin yliopisto, taloustieteen osasto

Waldemar von Frenckells stiftelse



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