



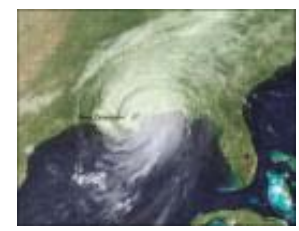
Sustainability and politics in Germany: theoretical perspectives and empirical insights



The challenge of unsustainability and sustainable development

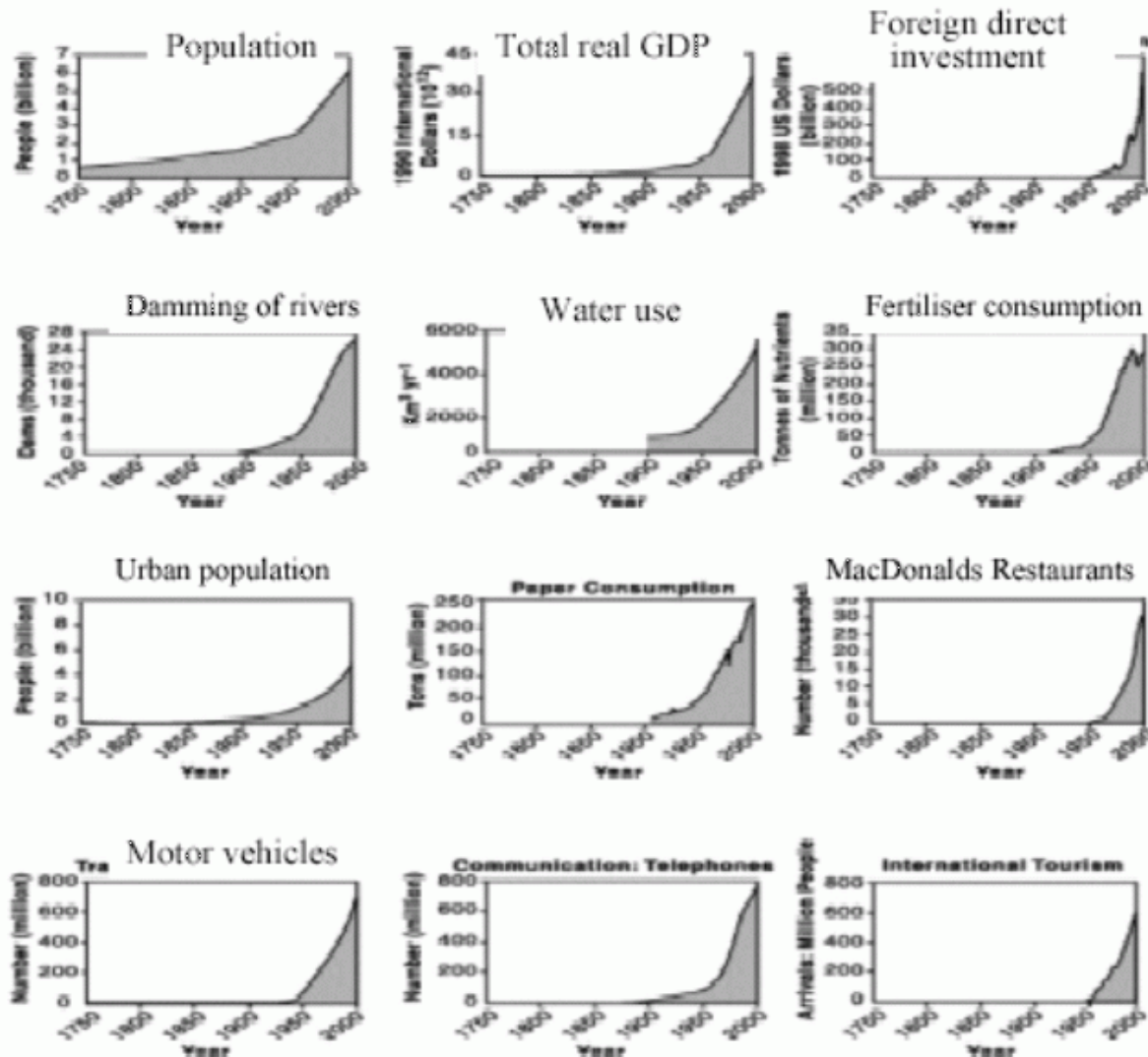


Global Developments: Multiple crisis and unsustainability





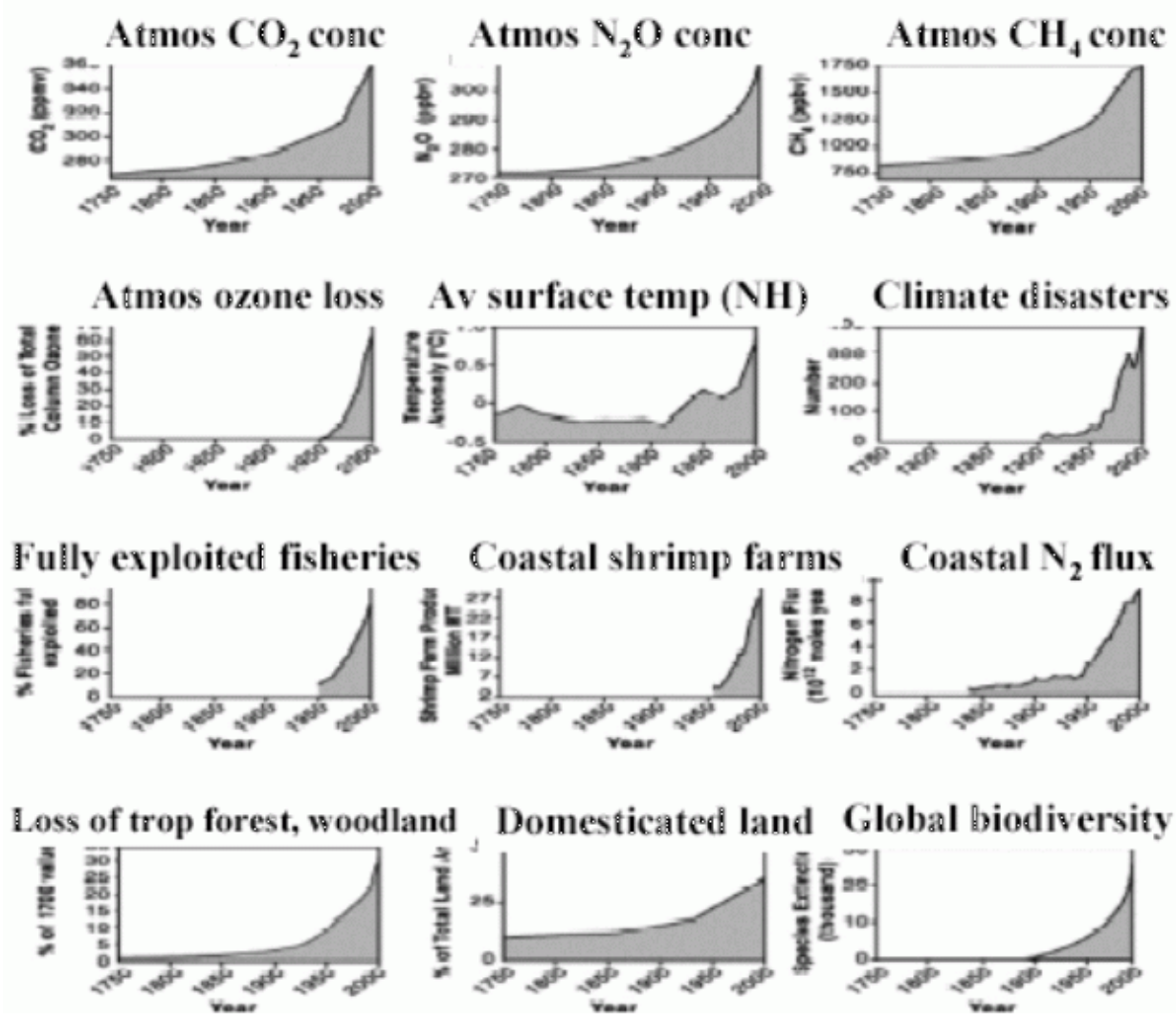
Long-term socio-economic dynamics



Steffen et al. 2004



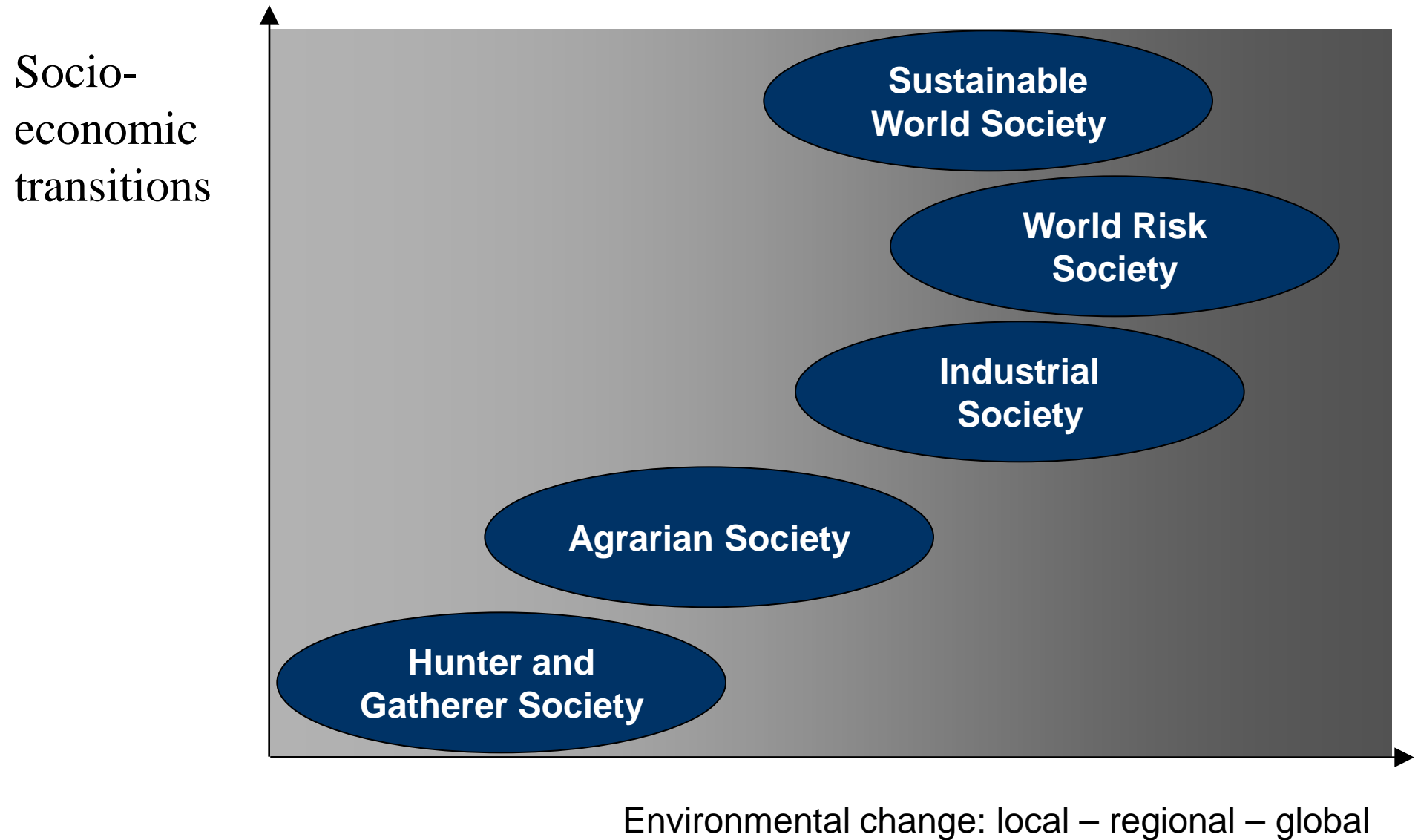
Long-term natural dynamics



Steffen et al. 2004



Challenge: sustainable development





International Context: institutionalization of sd

- Stockholm-Conference on the environment (1972)
 - Brundtland-Commission report (1987)
 - Rio-Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
 - Johannesburg Conference (2002)
 - Rio-Conference on “Institutions for Sustainability” and “Inclusive and Green Economy” (2012)
- capacity building, institutions, instruments, programs

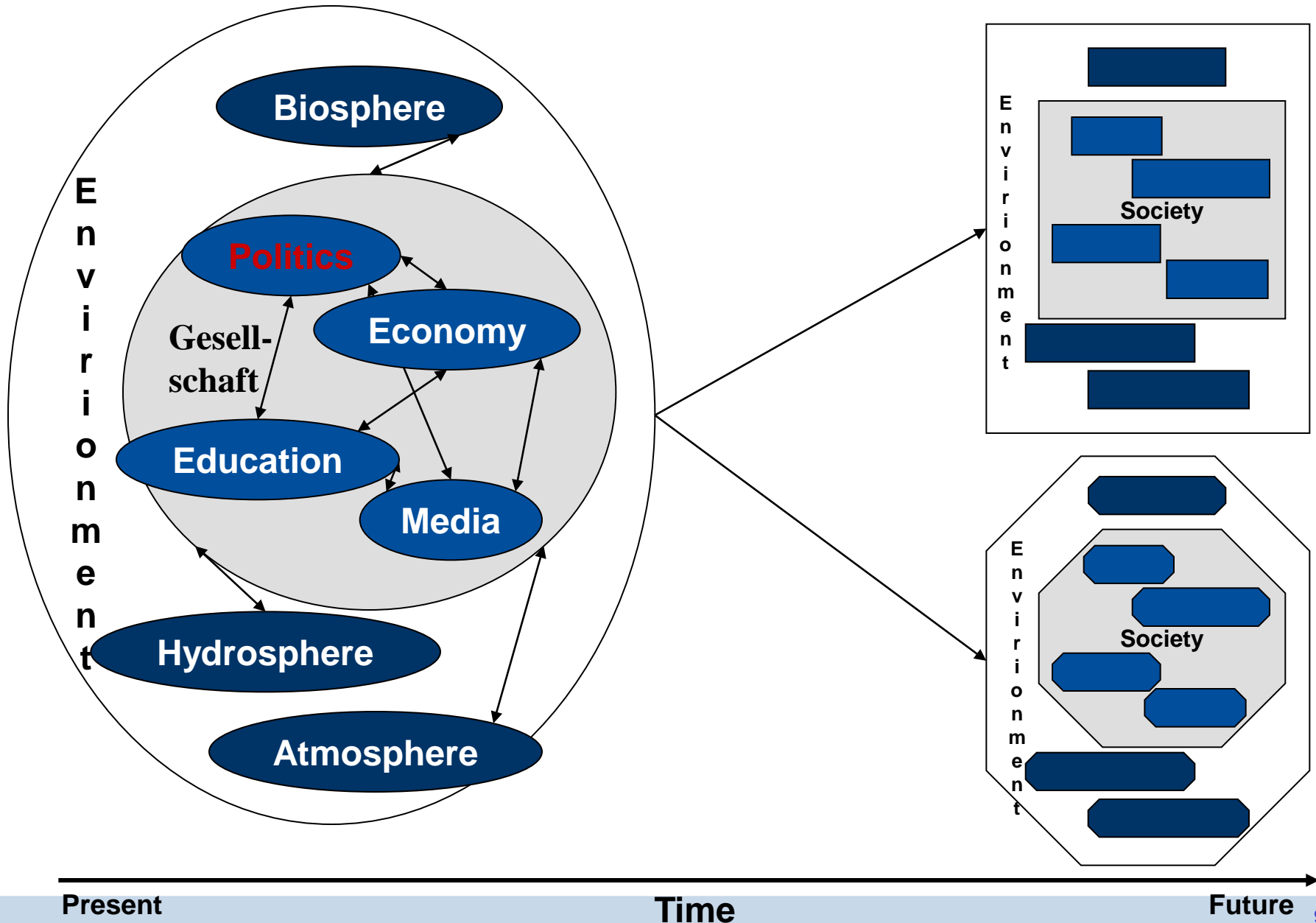


International context: shared understanding

- Regulative idea (comparable to ‘democracy’):
 - “Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (*WCED (ed.; 1987): Our Common Future. Oxford, New York*)
 - Anticipatory co-optimization of ecological stability, social justice and economic development.

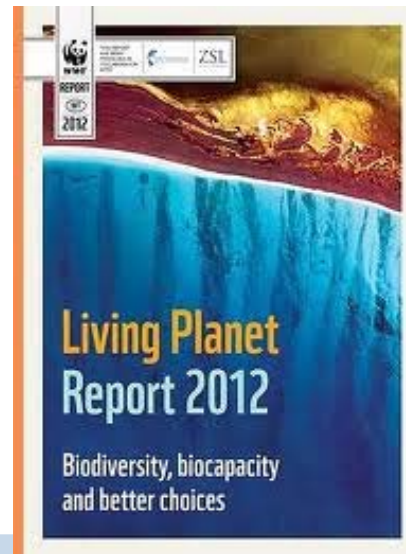
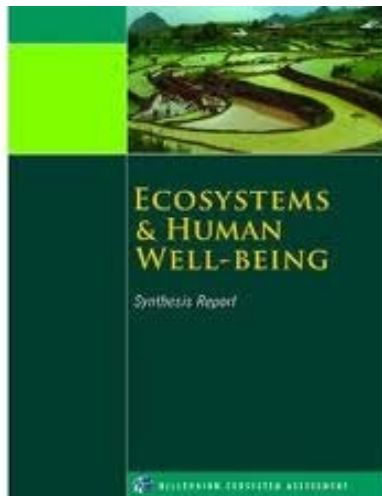
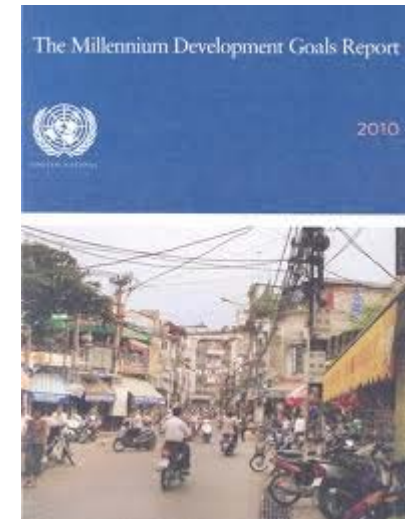
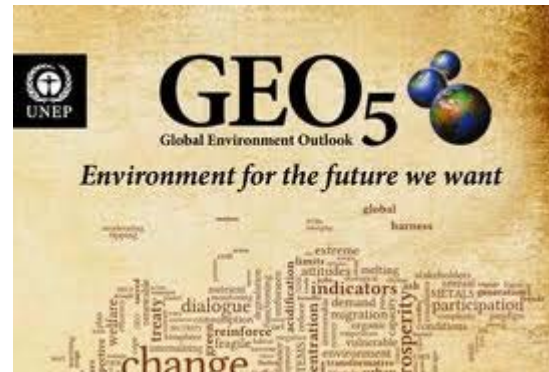
- SD is analytically based and normative endeavour in which all sectors of society need to be involved

- SD as societal self-transformation





State of the world: unsustainable developments keep on going...





Sustainability and politics in Germany



National sustainability policy (1)

Sustainability strategy – progress report 2012: partly successful regarding mid term goals

Sustainability as guiding principle of the government

„For the German government, sustainability is a guiding principle: comprehensive implementation of sustainability leads to societal and political progress.“
(www.bundesregierung.de)





National sustainability policy (2)

State secretary commission on sustainable development

Parliamentarian committee on sustainable development

Council for sustainable development

Sustainability assessment

Sustainability departments in ministries

Sustainability in rules and procedures of ministries



Barometer of sustainability policy

1. Which status and relevance does sustainability policy have in political decision-making at the national level?
2. How is sustainability implemented as cross-cutting and long-term topic?
3. Which relevance has sustainability in executive and legislative in everyday practice?



Theoretical-conceptual framework

Basic Understanding of sustainability

Sustainability and democracy theory

Sustainability and bureaucracy theory

Sustainability and political steering/governance theory



Basic understanding of sustainability

One-column-model:

Ecological sustainability

Multiple-column-model:

Ecological, economical, social dimensions – additiv

Integrative model:

Interdependencies between ecological, economical and social dimensions

→ Long-term and cross-cutting perspective



Sustainability and democracy theory

Election cycles, interest groups, negotiation processes

Societal search, learning and shaping process

High relevance of societal participation

Adaptation of process for will-building and political decision-making

- Institutionalization of long-term- and cross-cutting-orientation in democratic structures and processes
- Participative expansion of representative democracy



Sustainability and bureaucracy theory

Rational form of legal power: specialization, hierarchy, rule litigation, documentation

Adaptation to changing contexts and problem constellations (New Public Management, New Public Governance)

Sustainability as challenge for integration and coordination and learning bureaucracy:
topics, actors, time horizons

Integrative sustainability steering/governance



Sustainability and political steering theory

Steering theory: steering subject and object; rule making and implementing state

Governance theory (i.n.s.): network (self-)steering

Governance theory (i.w.s.): hierarchy, market, networks – steering and self organisation

Unequal distribution of power, societal/political functions/positions, actor intention as challenge for governance theory → neo-liberal bias?

„Enlightend“ steering theory: state responsibility – staat as „primus inter pares“



Method:

Qualitative empirical social research, supplemented by quantitative document analysis:

- 18 interviews (13 executive, 5 legislative); „theoretical sampling“
- Interviews: 33 - 96 minutes
- 2432 codings, software-based analysis (WinMax)
- Key documents and party programs
- Protocols of parliaments (national, states)
- Generation of key- and sub-indicators, five-stage evaluation
- Peer Review of empirical results



Key indicators of executive and legislative

Strategic planning

Individual factor

Policy-steering

Sustainability goals and evaluation

Prioritization of sustainability

Goal conflicts

Institutionalization

Cooperation with civil society

Vertical policy-integration

Coordination

Cooperation with other state actors

Locations of sustainability

Biodiversity



Results: No rain, but no sun either

Overall barometer: unsettled

Positive tendency:

- Policy-steering (Mix)
- Cooperation with (civil-)society
- Sustainability goals (legislative/PBNE)

Negative tendency:

- Individual factor
- Sustainability goals (executive)
- Coordination (executive)
- Evaluation of programs (ex-ante/ex-post)
- Vertical policy integration





Results: Sustainability policy does not match the need

1. Relevance of sustainability policy – limited relevance
2. Institutionalization and coordination of tasks – insufficient implementation
3. Prioritization and goals – to often ignored
4. Sustainability assessment of measures – not sufficiently consequent
5. Training and personal development for sustainability – hardly existing
6. Sustainable public procurement – potential not used

→ discrepancy between claim and reality
→ discrepancy between reality and necessity



Recommendations: More political will and power for a sustainable future

1. Take over of leadership
2. Strengthening sustainability competences
3. Collaborative shaping of sustainability
4. Assessing sustainability
5. Democratizing sustainability
6. Implementing sustainability
7. Organizing professionally sustainability
8. Integrate sustainability
9. Alleviate sustainability
10. Demand sustainability



Outlook: National sustainability policy in supra- and subnational context

UN: global sustainability council and global sustainability goals → symbolic or substantial?

EU 2020-strategy: intelligent, inclusive and sustainable growth → mainstreaming or displacing sustainable development?

Germany:

State level: few pioniers, many laggers → departure or deadlock?

Local level: some efforts, growing interest → dynamisation or incrementalism?

National level: election 2013 → new opportunities to make further steps on the long and winding road to sustainable development; show case: sustainable energy transition?



Summary:

Sustainability and politics in Germany: theoretical perspectives and empirical insights

Despite twenty years of (many) words and (some) action, the transition towards sustainable development has not been reached. On the contrary: multiple studies of the United Nations (e.g. UNEP/Geo5, IPCC reports, Millennium Assessment Report on Biodiversity, reports on the Millennium Development Goals), of civil society organizations (Club-of-Rome-Report, Living-Planet-Report of WWF), or scientific institutions around the world, show accelerating challenges. The current financial and economic crisis makes this situation even more difficult. Against this background, we analyzed over the past two years the current state of sustainability and politics in Germany. The lecture will put for discussion theoretical perspectives of democracy, bureaucracy and governance as conceptual framework for analyzing the topic and present empirical data on the current state of sustainability in politics and administration in Germany. The lecture aims at stimulating a debate on the relevance of the analytical framework for a better understanding on sustainability and politics and the relevance of the topic. At the end options to foster sustainability in policy-making shall be developed.