



Life Beyond Growth

The history and possible future of alternatives to
GDP-measured Growth-as-Usual

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Growth in Transition Conference

Vienna, Austria

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ATKISSON

AtKisson Group
Stockholm, Sweden

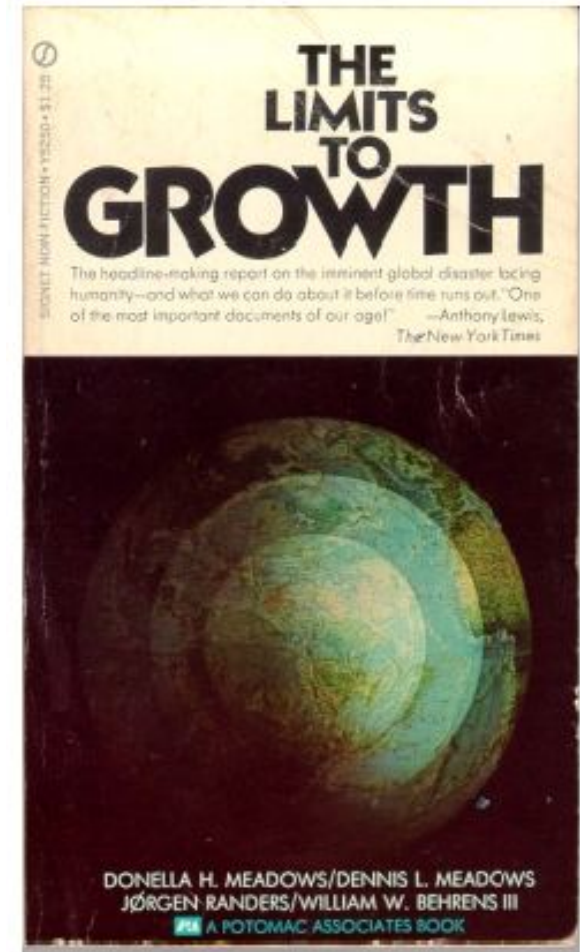


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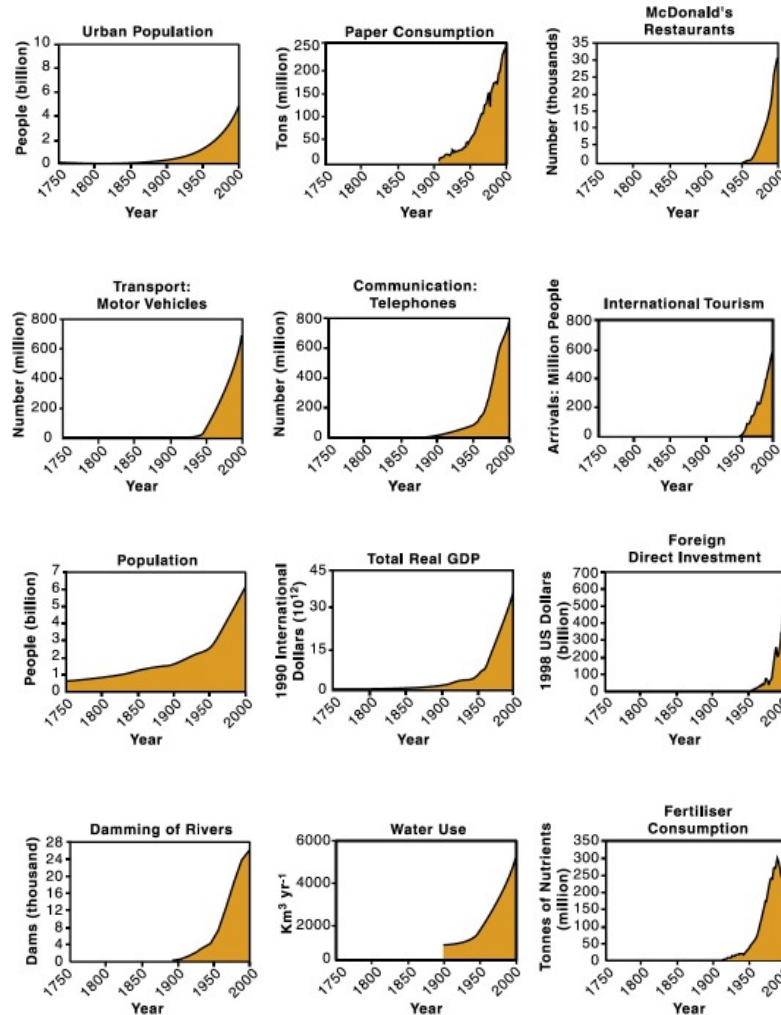
The short history of a
long debate

1972-2012: 40 Years of *Limits to Growth*

- Controversial when launched, generated global headlines, sold millions of copies
- Routinely attacked, on false grounds, for nearly 40 years
- Now widely acknowledged as an accurate analysis — even by former critics (e.g. Joseph Stiglitz)

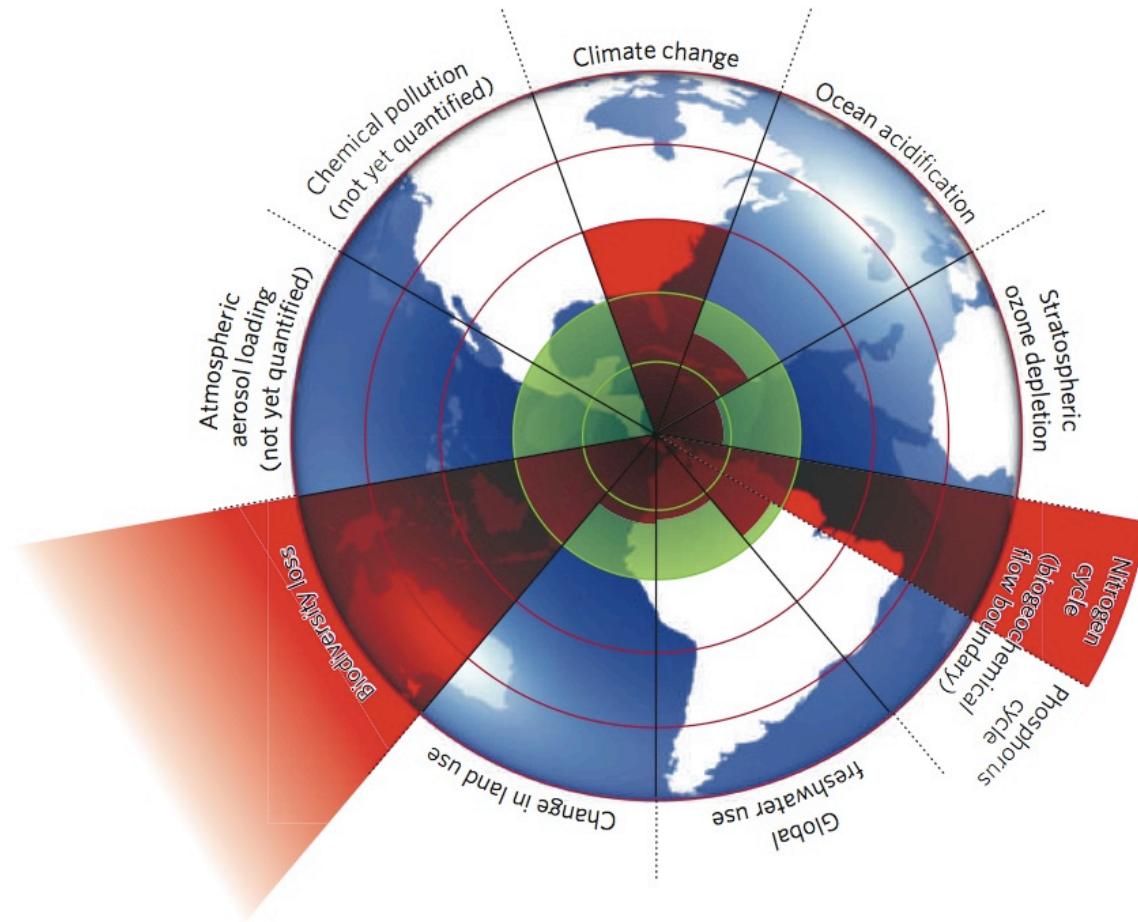


The “Great Acceleration”: Growth is the defining feature of our era



Growth of human activity (global scale) 1750-2000

2009: The “Planetary Boundaries”



Why have societies been in denial about the limits to growth for so long?

Answer: Resource substitution



At the Mad Hatter's tea party, when the cups got dirty, they just moved down to the clean ones ...

But the table is a closed system ...

The Growth Dilemma

Deeply rooted conflicts, global to local level:

- Clash of **goals** (environmental sustainability v. human prosperity and well being)
- Clash of **beliefs** (“Resources are finite” v. “Innovation always finds substitutes”)
- Clash of **world views** (“Nature is fragile” v. “Humans are supreme”)

Why has growth continued, despite incredible advances in efficiency and productivity?

Answer: The so-called “Rebound Effect”

*The more efficient we get,
the more we can consume ...
... so we do.*

(Also known as the Jevons Paradox, from William Stanley Jevons, *The Coal Question*, 1865)

THE
CONUNDRUM

How Scientific Innovation,
Increased Efficiency,
and Good Intentions Can
Make Our Energy and
Climate Problems Worse



DAVID OWEN

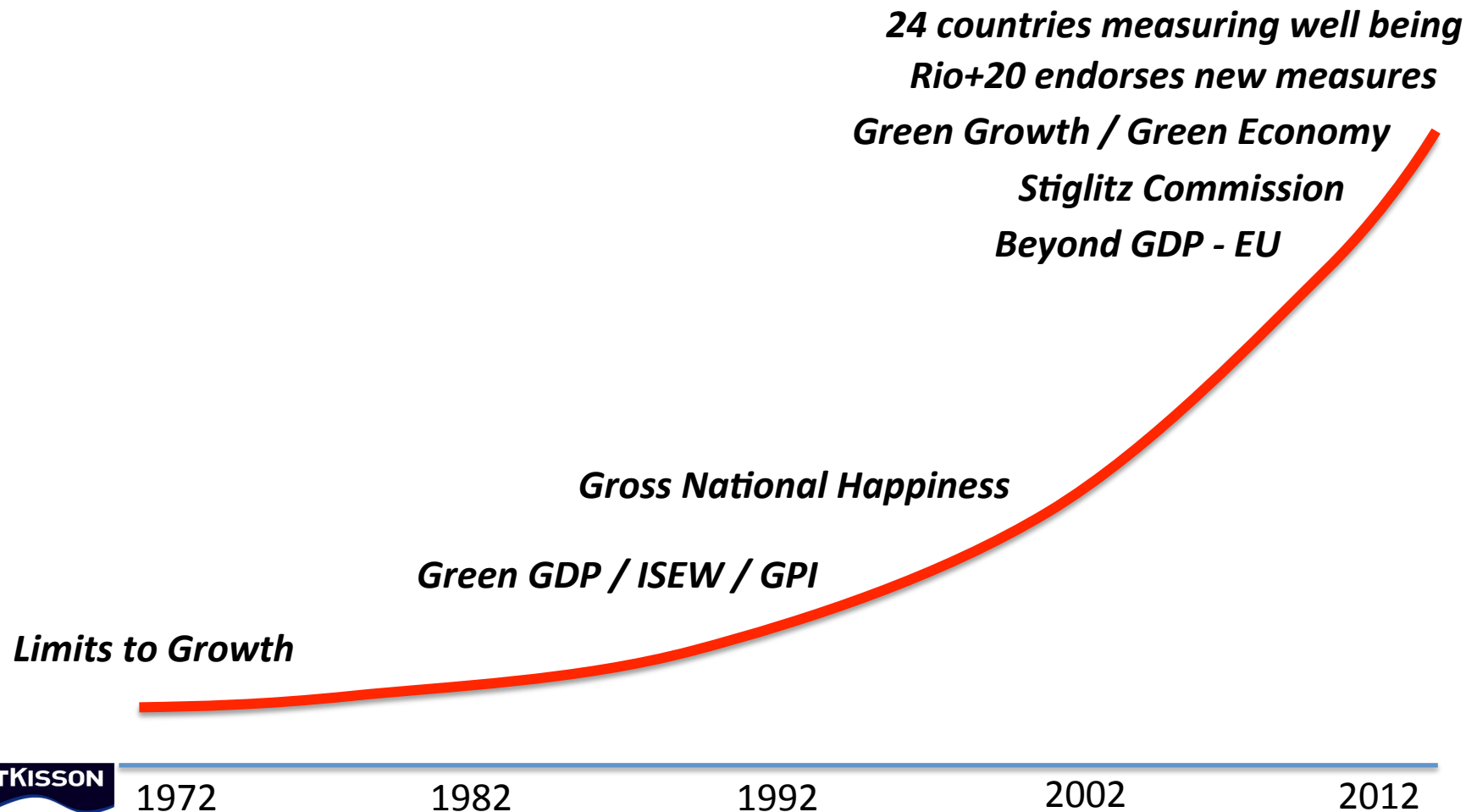
Author of GREEN METROPOLIS



Origins of “Life Beyond Growth”

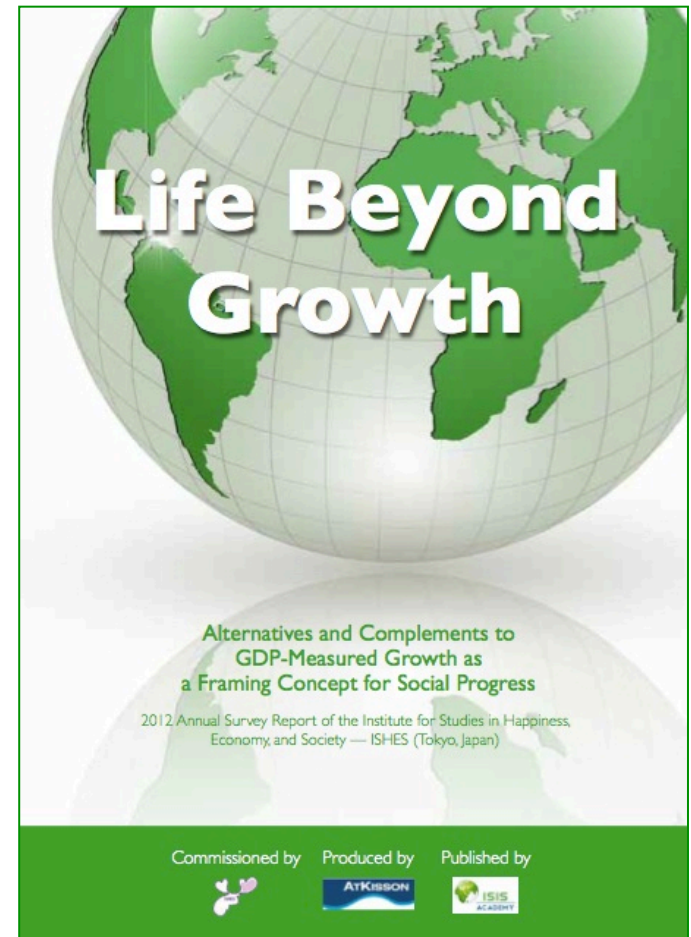
Why this report,
why now?

The Growth of “Beyond Growth”



“Life Beyond Growth 2012”

- Planned as an annual survey of the current “state of the alternatives” to Growth-as-Usual
- Considers only **concepts and indicators in active use by some government, somewhere in the world**
- Published in March 2012; Japanese book appeared in August



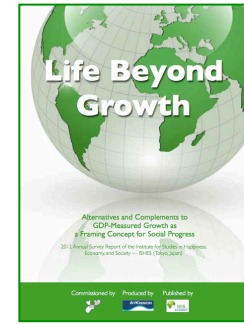
Junko Edahiro

Founder of “Japan for Sustainability” and the “Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy, and Society”



Concepts and indicators reviewed in Life Beyond Growth

Green Growth
Green Economy
Genuine Savings
Genuine Progress
Sustainable
Development
Gross National
Happiness
De-Growth
Better Life Index
Green GDP
Etc.

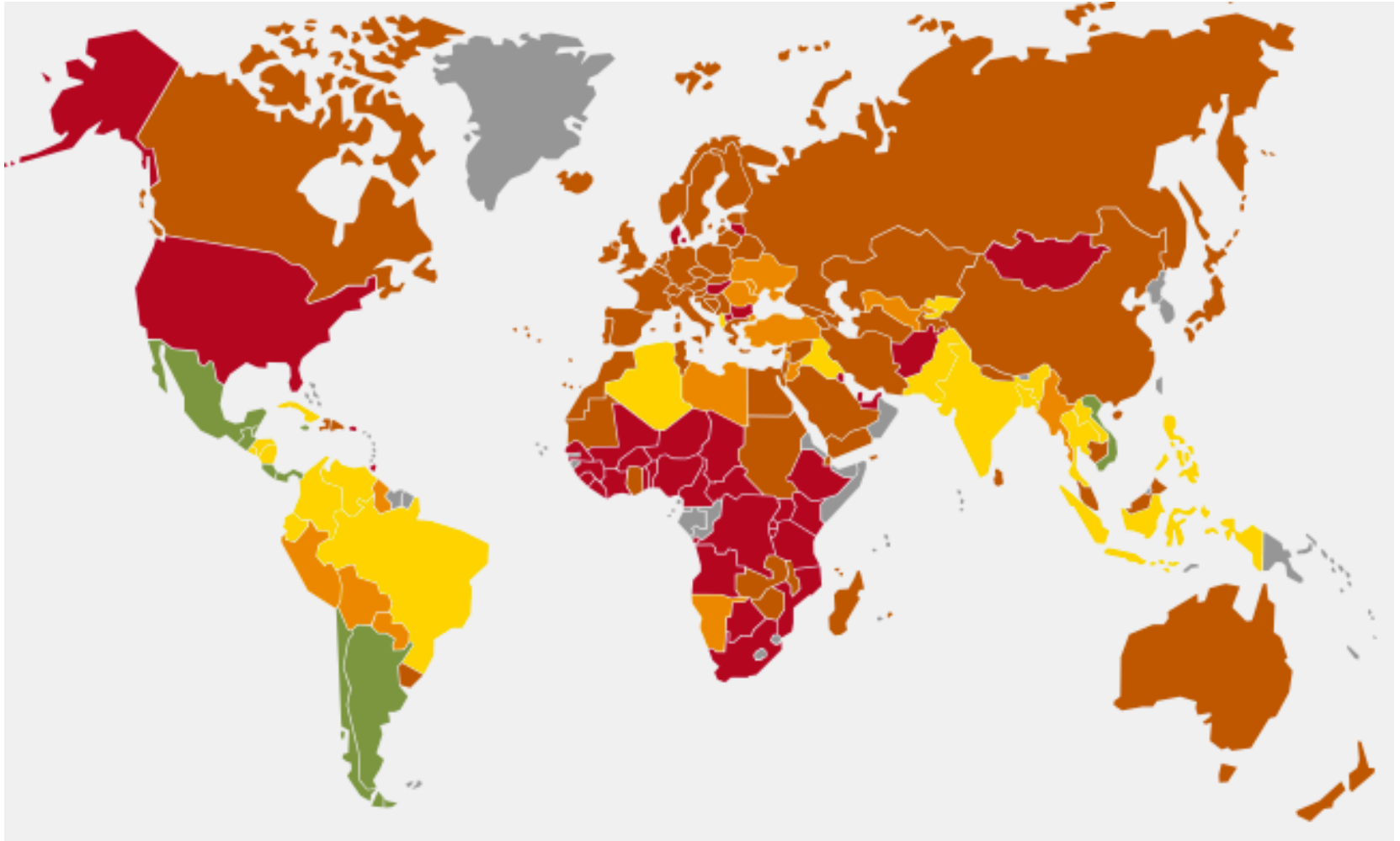


GREEN economy

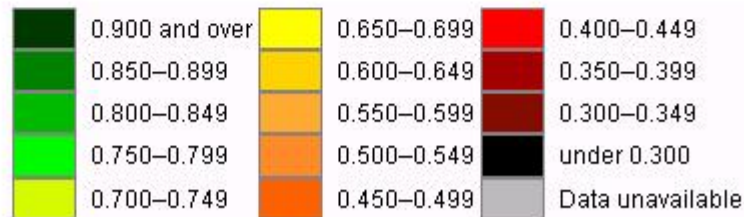
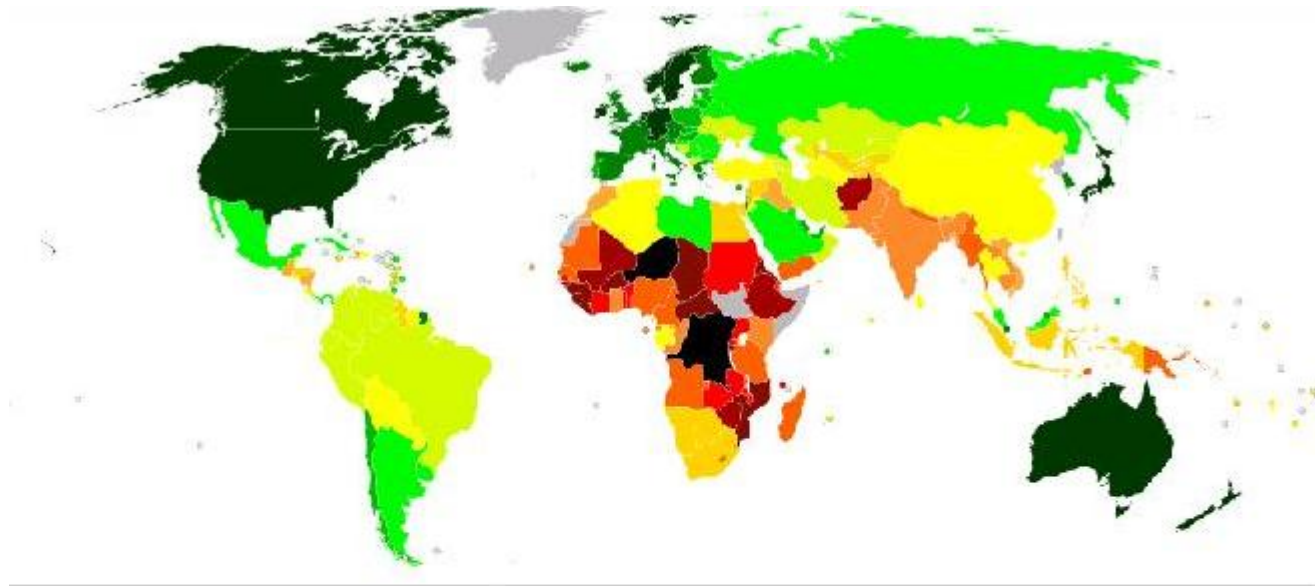
De-Growth



Un Happy Planet Index



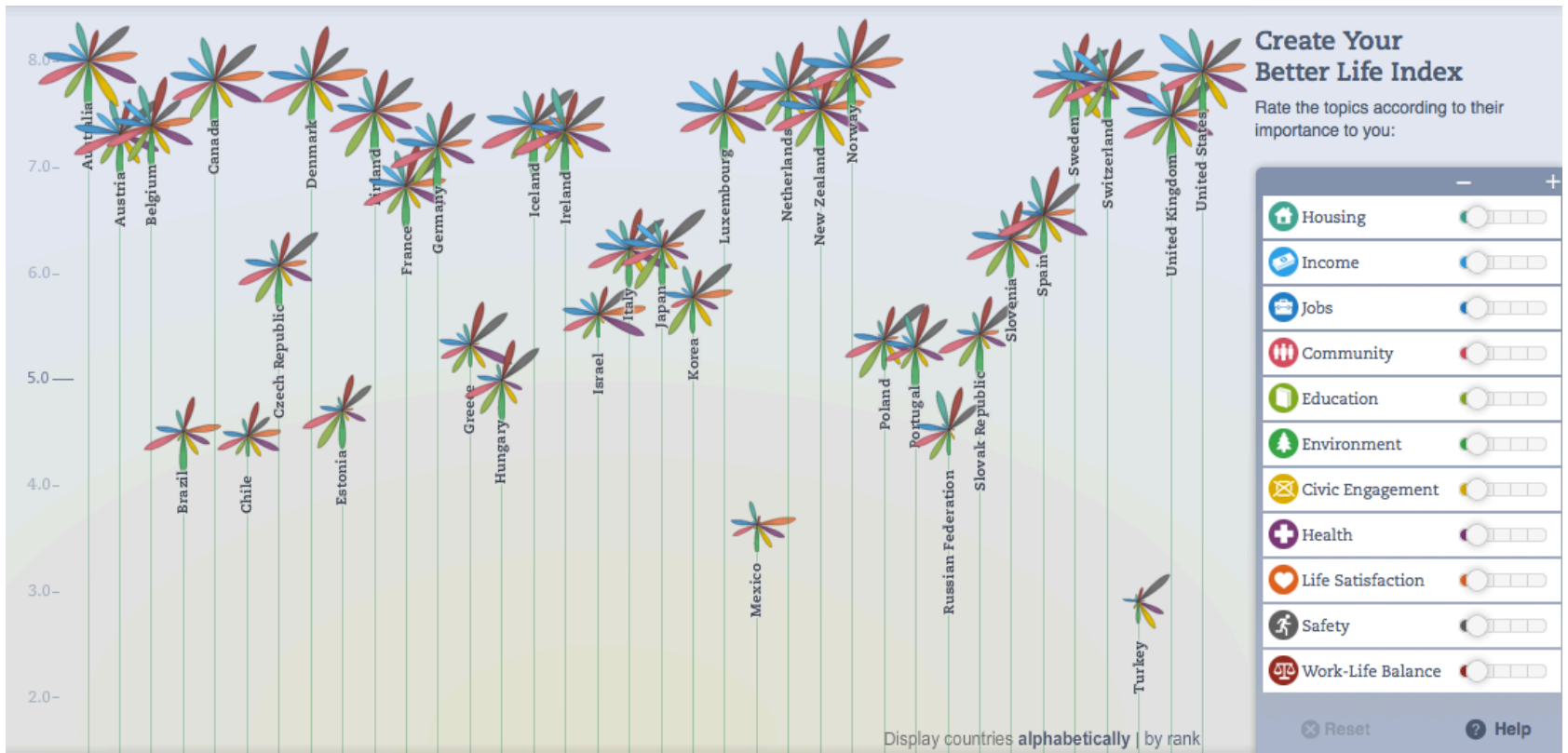
Human Development Index




2011-11-02 22:37

picture: en.wikipedia.org

Your Better Life Index





The realpolitik of alternatives to growth

What drives movement toward
or away from change?

Recent quotes

- "We should seek better and more-direct measurements of economic well-being, the ultimate objective of our policy decisions."
 - Ben Bernanke
US Fed Reserve
- [Measuring well being is] "a statement of the bleeding obvious" and "a waste of taxpayers' money."
 - Michael Dugher
Labor Party, UK

Recent quotes

- Confronted with evidence that the Brazilian economic growth this year will not be much more than 2%, President Dilma Rousseff downplayed GDP, noting that it is not the most appropriate indicator for international comparisons. “A great nation should be measured by what you do for your children and for your teenagers.”

(Summary from Wikiprogress)

A Spectrum of Alternatives

DE-GROWTH

GROWTH
AS USUAL

A Spectrum of Alternatives

Frameworks

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

A Spectrum of Alternatives

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

HUMAN
WELL BEING

GREEN
ECONOMY

GREEN
GROWTH

GROWTH
AS USUAL

A Spectrum of Alternatives

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

HUMAN
WELL BEING

GREEN
ECONOMY

GREEN
GROWTH

GROWTH
AS USUAL

GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS

GDP

Indicators

A Spectrum of Alternatives

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

HUMAN
WELL BEING

GREEN
ECONOMY

GREEN
GROWTH

GROWTH
AS USUAL

GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS

GENUINE
PROGRESS

GENUINE
SAVINGS

GREEN
GDP

GDP

Indicators

A Spectrum of Alternatives

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

HUMAN
WELL BEING

GREEN
ECONOMY

GREEN
GROWTH

GROWTH
AS USUAL

GDP

GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS

GENUINE
PROGRESS

GENUINE
SAVINGS

GREEN
GDP

GDP

Indicators

HAPPY
PLANET
INDEX

BETTER
LIFE
INDEX

HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT
INDEX

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENTS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENTS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

**GLOBAL
POWER
SHIFTS**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENTS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

**GLOBAL
POWER
SHIFTS**

**POVERTY
ALLEVIATION**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENTS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

**GLOBAL
POWER
SHIFTS**

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ALLEVIATION**

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UNITED
NATIONS**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

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ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENTS**

**DISASTER
RECOVERY**

**GLOBAL
POWER
SHIFTS**

**POVERTY
ALLEVIATION**

**ARMED
CONFLICT**

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UNITED
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Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

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GROWTH**

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AS USUAL**

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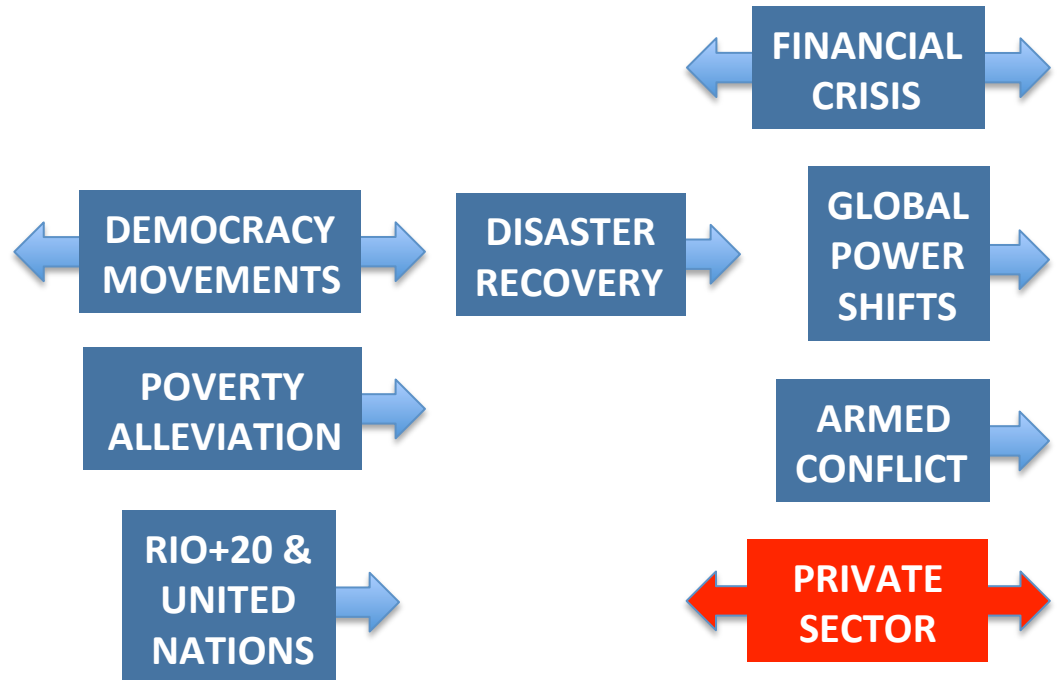
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SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators



Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

**GREEN
ECONOMY**

**GREEN
GROWTH**

**GROWTH
AS USUAL**

**GROSS
NATIONAL
HAPPINESS**

**GENUINE
PROGRESS**

**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

Indicators

**RESOURCE
CRISIS**

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS**

**DEMOCRACY
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**DISASTER
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POWER
SHIFTS**

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ALLEVIATION**

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CONFLICT**

**RIO+20 &
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NATIONS**

**PRIVATE
SECTOR**

Frameworks

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DE-GROWTH

**HUMAN
WELL BEING**

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ECONOMY**

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**GENUINE
SAVINGS**

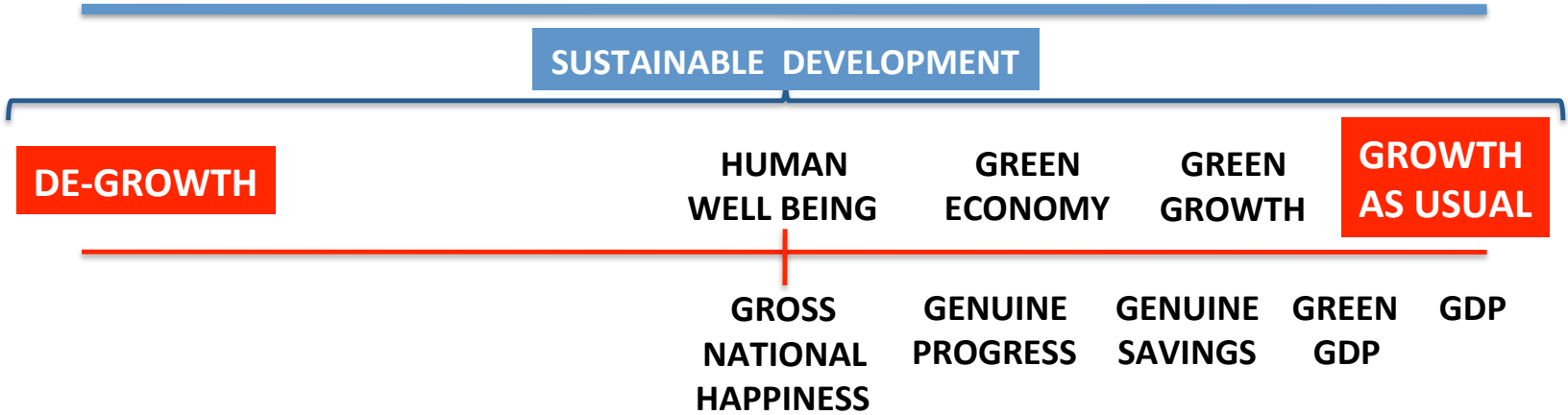
**GREEN
GDP**

GDP

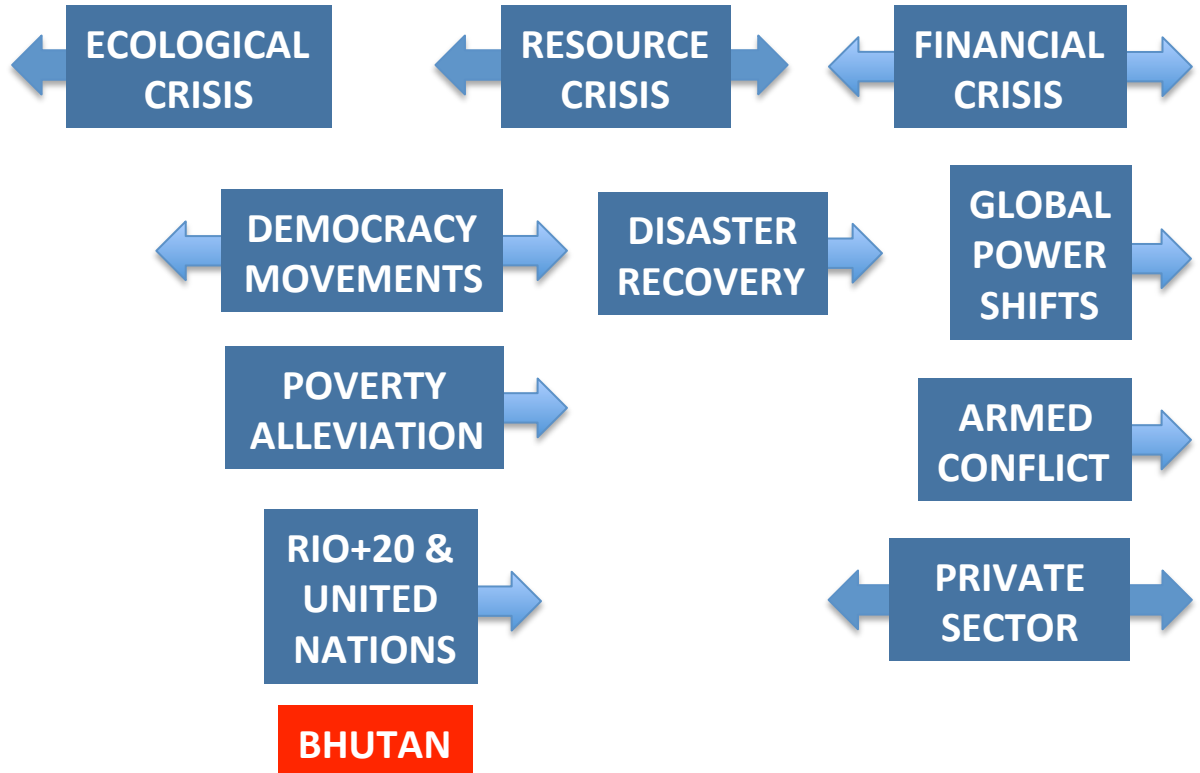
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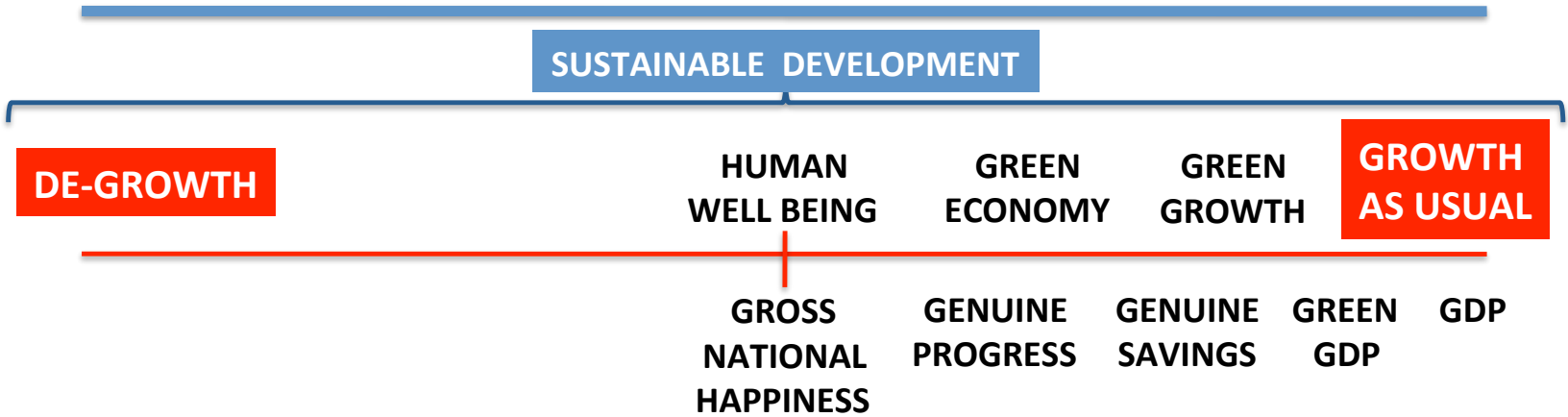
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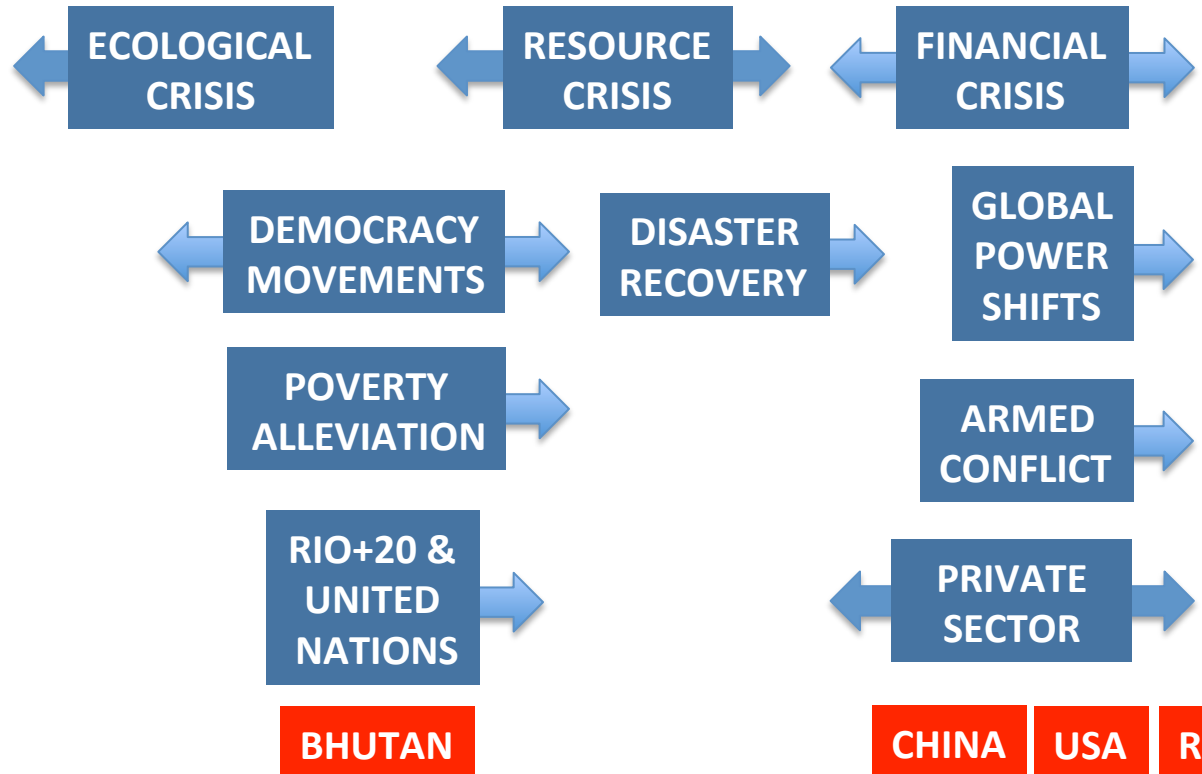
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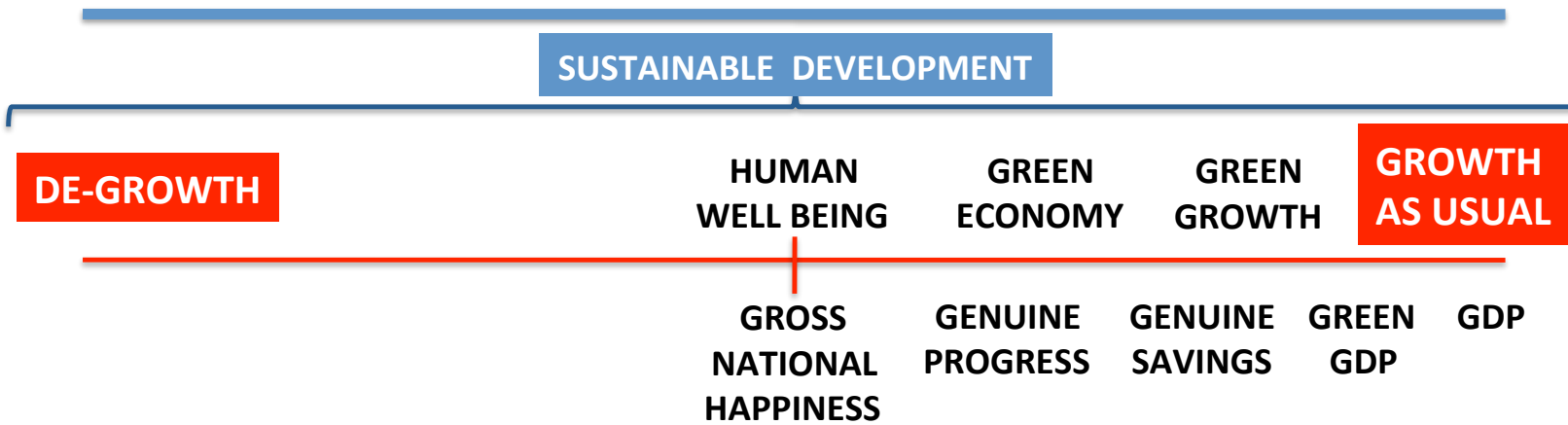
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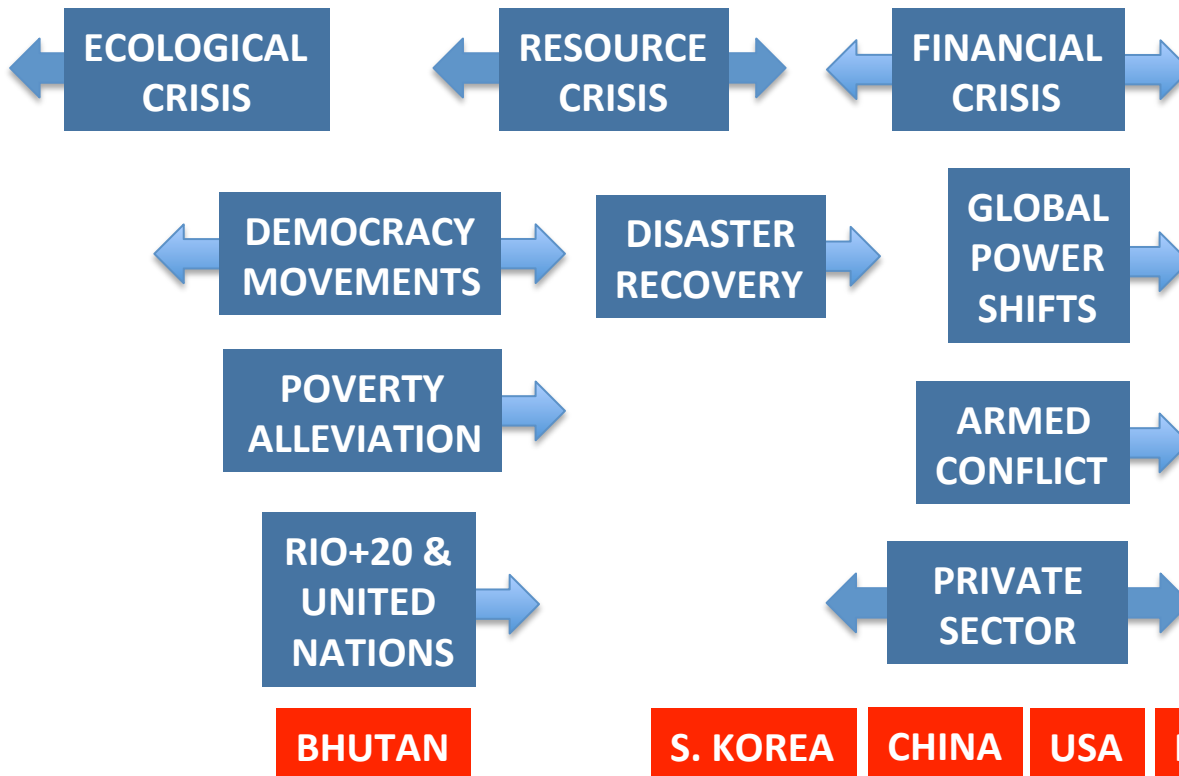
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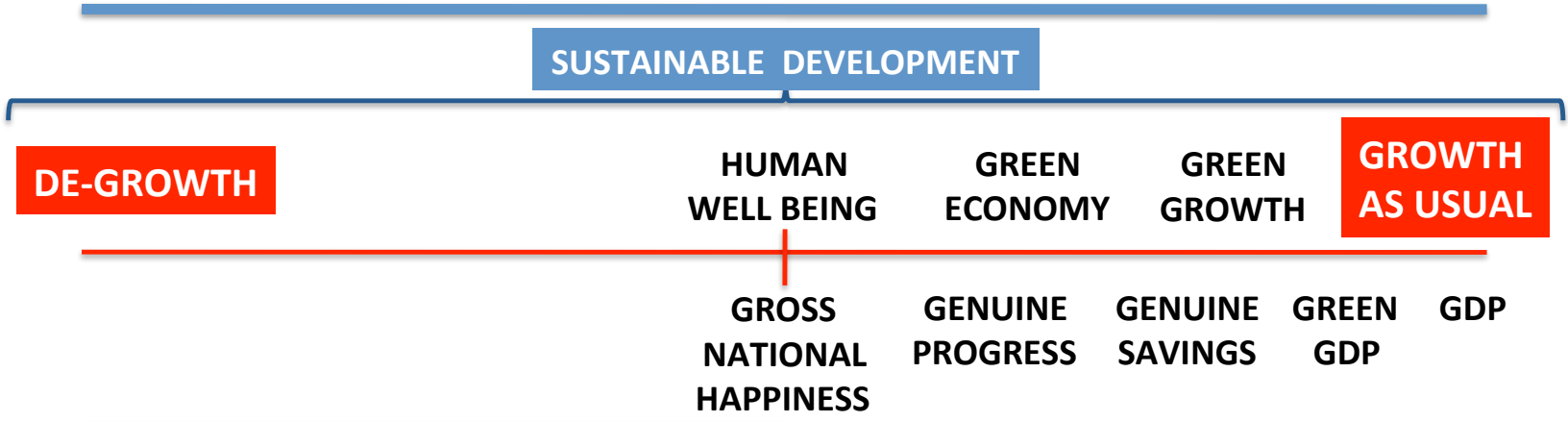
Frameworks



Indicators



Frameworks



Indicators



GREECE

SPAIN

BHUTAN

S. KOREA

CHINA

USA

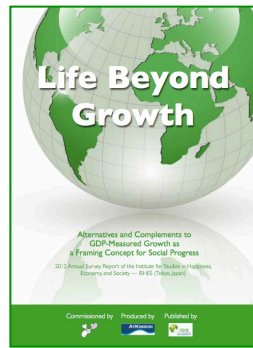
RUSSIA



Opinions and Reflections

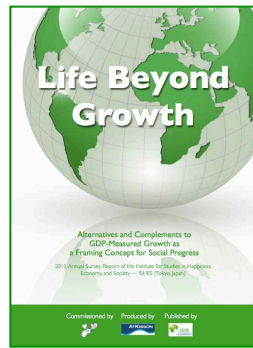
Emerging patterns in the
“Life Beyond Growth”
global dialogue

I. “Green Growth” is emerging as the new mainstream



- Policy makers are sometimes using the phrase Green Growth ***in place of growth*** ... and also in place of sustainable development
- GG does not mean exactly the same thing as SD, but it ***fills the same space*** in policy discourse — this makes SD people worried

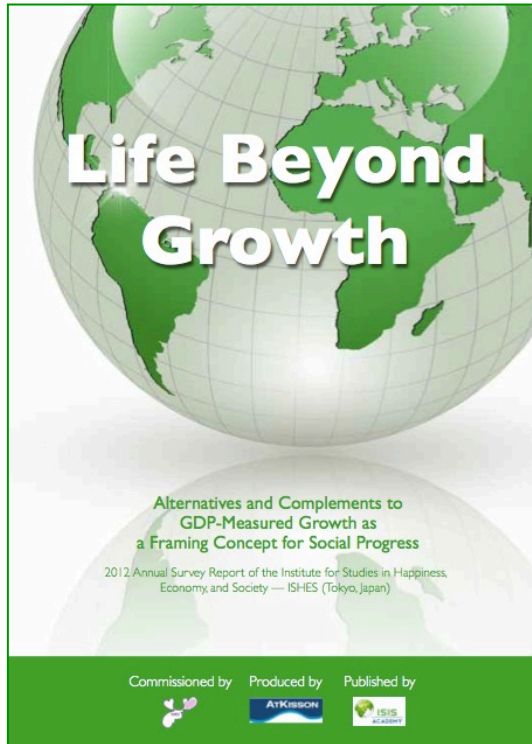
2. “Green Economy” is better than “Green Growth”



- “Green Economy” includes ecological limits and human well being more explicitly than GG
- But the concepts are bound up with their champions — each with an ideological “charge” (GE with UNEP and the NGOs, GG with McKinsey and World Economic Forum)

3. “Green Economy” + “Gross National Happiness” = Sustainable World

- These concepts are increasingly well defined, in scientific terms, with robust metrics
- Taken together, they could provide the world with the first new, comprehensive, common political-economic goal since the establishment of peace after WWII



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