



Moving towards Sahaja Sustainability

Salvatore Ruggiero, PhD

Cabella Ligure, 11/10/2022

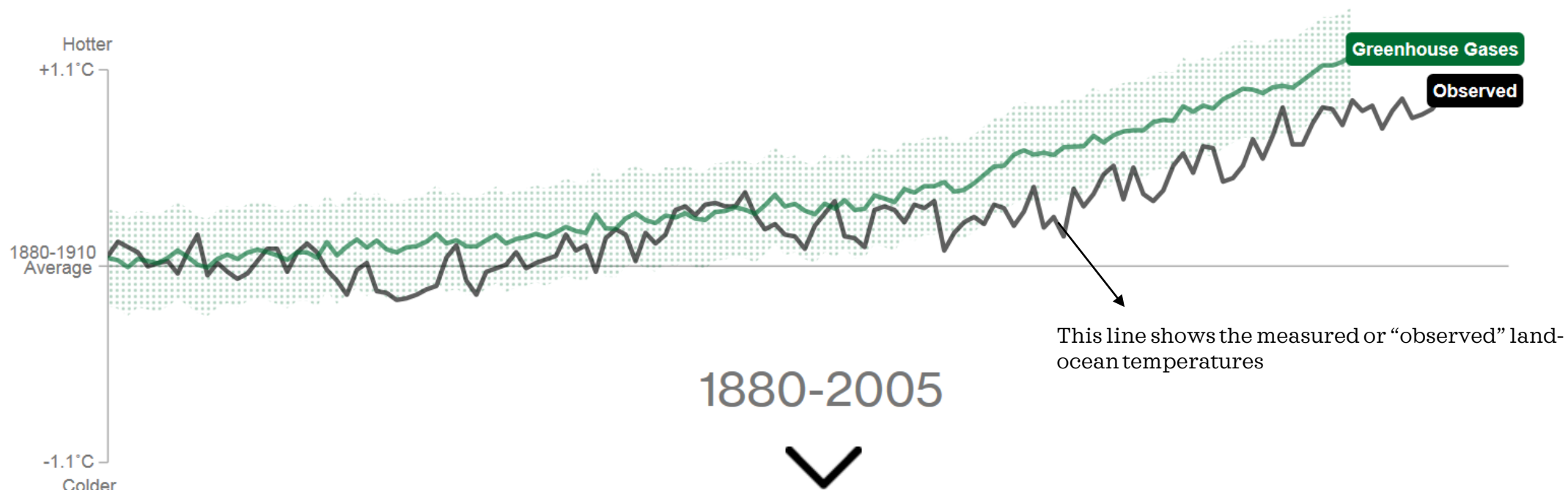
Agenda for today

1. Short meditation
2. Presentation: Basic concepts of sustainable development and consumption
3. Check-in: Our aspirations and objectives for a more sustainable future
4. Mind-map: Exploring areas of interest and possible ways to reduce the ecological footprint
5. Stakeholder mapping: Identifying people and organizations contributing to fulfilling goals
6. Setting our priorities: Where to start from?
7. Wrap-up and next steps

Human influence on earth's climate is clear

“Human influence on the climate system is clear. This is evident from the increasing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere....”

IPCC (2013)



Source: Bloomberg

The recent droughts in Europe once again made visible the "Hunger Stones" in some Czech and German rivers. These stones were used to mark desperately low river levels that would forecast famines.

This one, in the Elbe river, is from 1616 and says: "If you see me, cry"



12:49 PM · Aug 11, 2022



89.9K Reply Share

August 23, 2022
5:32 PM GMT+3
Last Updated a month ago

Europe

Europe facing its worst drought in 500 years - study

By Philip Blenkinsop

2 minute read





Getting inspired by Shri
Mataji's words

Outside reflects inside world

Whatever is outside is also inside. If you want to exploit your Mother inside, or if you want to trouble your Mother inside, you can also trouble this Mother Earth.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Shri Ganesha Puja, Cabella Ligure (Italy), 1997

Lack of balance

There's no balance and that's why we have gone into this problem of ecology and all that.*

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Interview With Greek Journalist And Talk With Sahaja Yogis, 1990

*Ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment.

Encyclopedia Britannica

Humanity has to face its mistakes

Today now ecological problem's standing like a rakshasa before you. Now what do you do with him? So you face, then. Automatically you have to face yourself, your destruction. The introspection, if you do not do now, you'll face it at a time when it will be very late.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Navaratri Puja, Arzier, Geneva (Switzerland), 23 September 1990.

The play of Mahamaya

...through Mahamaya, things work out very normally, very normally and they should work out normally. For example, somebody can say, “Mother, there is atmosphere full of all these horrible ecological problems. Why don’t you clear them?” If it is cleared, people will go on producing. It is the problem of the human beings and if it is corrected by Me, they’ll take it for granted. They have to face those problems,. They have to change their habits. They have to understand that they are the ones who are destroying themselves. Otherwise, if somebody’s there just to cleanse it out, they will never change.

Sahastrara Puja, Cabella Ligure (Italy), 1994

Sahaja yogis must pay attention

We should be very conscious of ecological problems as Sahaja Yogis. [...]. How to fight this pollution? Is to be paying attention to the ecology. Are we producing all those things, which is spoiling the atmosphere? We are responsible, we have to do it. Who is going to do it? [...] We have to look after the atmosphere which is filled with all nonsensical things and take to a lifestyle, which lifestyle will be simpler, by which we don't use so many, so many vehicles and so many things which are creating problems.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Christmas Puja, Ganapatipule, 1994.

Linear thinking

When the mental projections we use they move in a linear directions and then they recoil because they cannot sustain themselves because the mental development or mental projection does not know how to keep the balance. For example, now you can see the greenhouse effect as they call it in the west that is causing so much problems of ecology.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Mental Projection Does Not Know How To Keep The Balance, Vienna (Austria), 1989

Unsustainable consumption

Our unnecessary demands on raw materials to feed our “choices” has meant that we have started consuming excessively and depleting the Mother Earth, creating terrible environmental problems for both the present and the future.

H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, Meta Modern Era, Chapter 2: Choices

Renewable energy

Shri Mataji Discusses Renewable Energy, 1983

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofgI2E7eBIQ>

An aerial photograph of a dense, vibrant green forest. A dark, winding river flows through the upper portion of the image. In the lower-left quadrant, there is a distinct, circular grassy clearing. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and ecological health.

Sustainability: the concept

What is the definition of sustainability?

There are hundreds of definitions of sustainability and sustainable development!

UN World Commission on Environment and Development: *“sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

Sustainable development is becoming less used due to its implicit assumption of continued economic growth

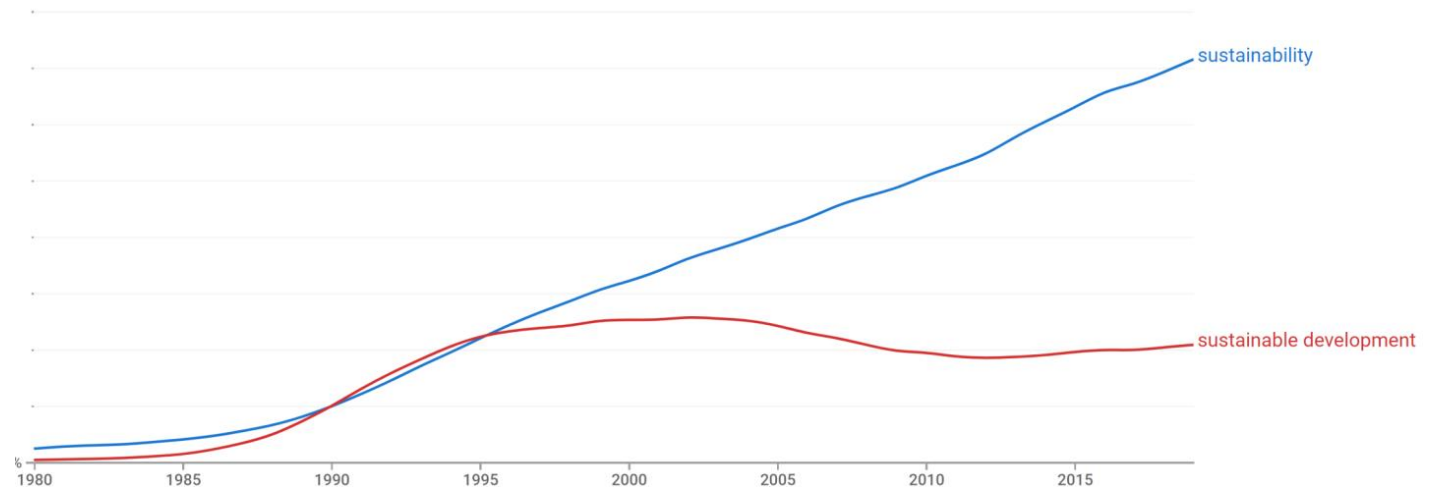


Fig. 1: Trends in the use of the terms sustainability and sustainable development

Sustainability: the origin

The concept of sustainability emerged in the 18th century, but it became popular only in the 1990s

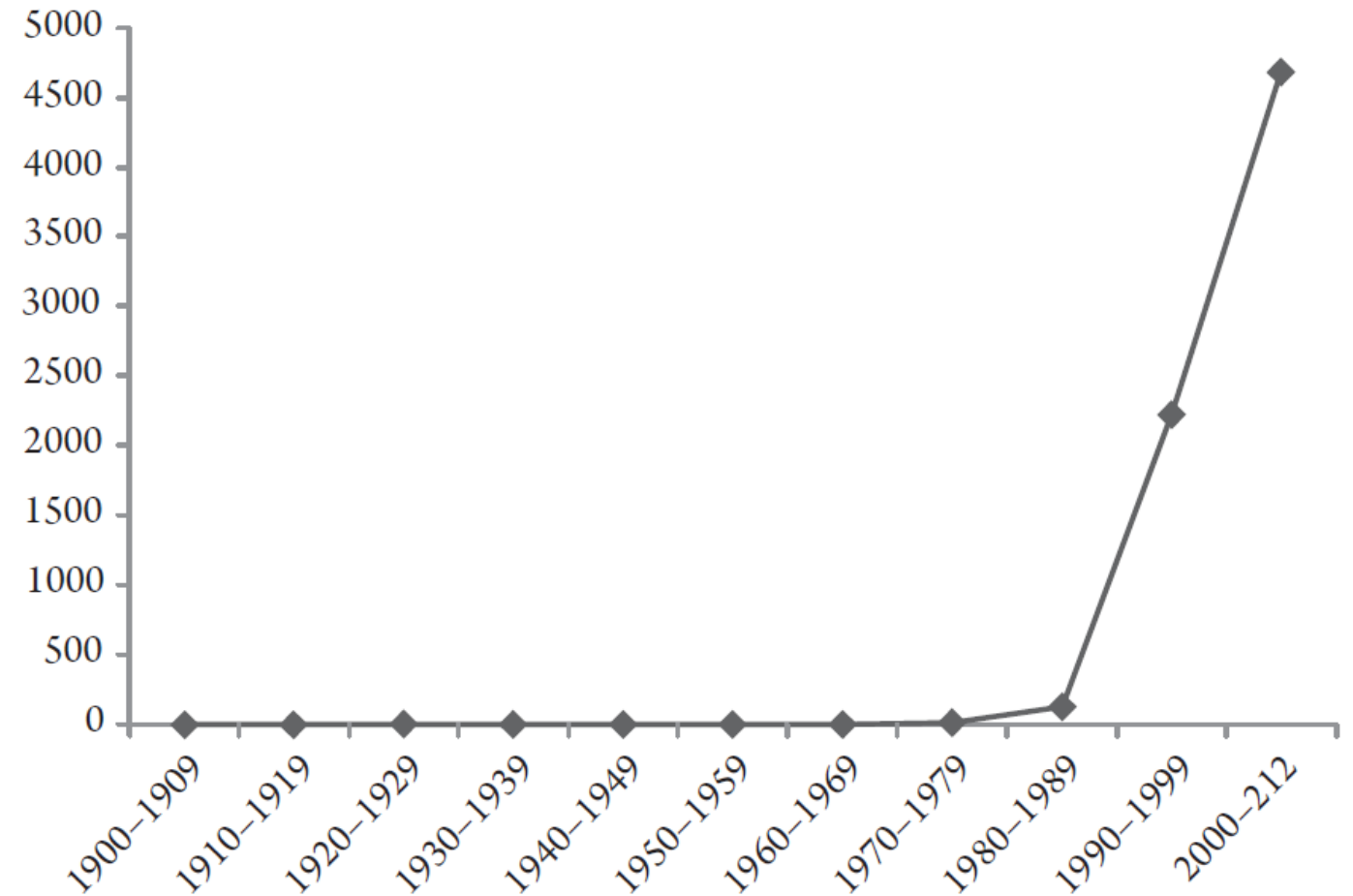


Figure 2 Books with the word "sustainable" or "sustainability" in the title, 1900-2012.

Sustainability: a recent concept with a long history

Greco-Roman antiquity caused the deforestation of large parts of the Mediterranean due to shipbuilding and the excessive use of firewood in the thermal baths.

Other known environmental problems were overgrazing, erosion of the land, pollution, and agricultural decline





Indigenous wisdom

“We fish on our side, you fish on your side and nobody fishes in the middle.”

(Name given to a lake by the Native Americans)

Sustainability for the indigenous people was a survival strategy, a sense of responsibility and respect for natural resources, a way to live in harmony with nature and neighbors.

The three pillars of sustainability and respective SDGs

Economic Pillar

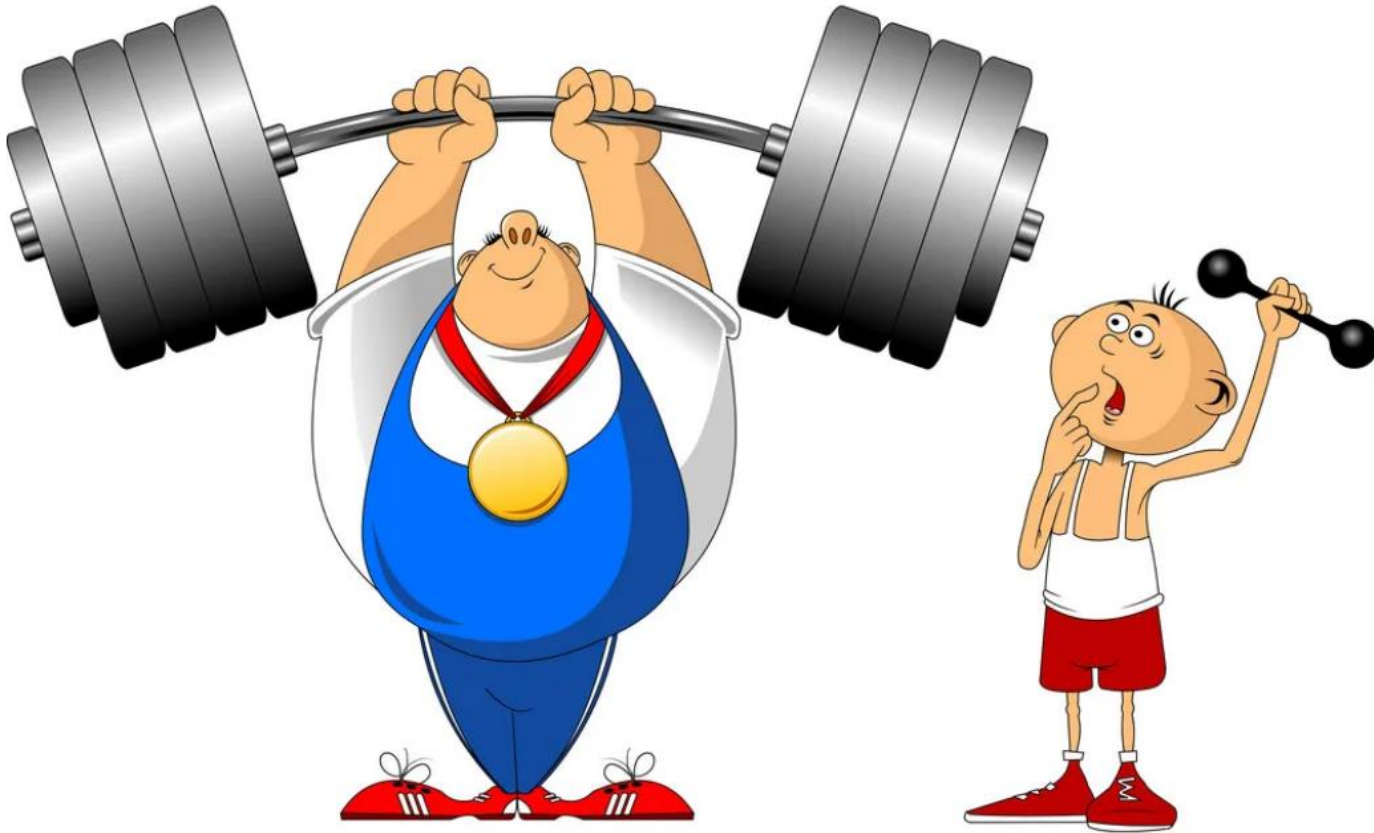


Environmental Pillar



Social Pillar





Weak versus strong sustainability

Keeping general production capacity of the economy constant vs maintaining essential functions and capacities of the environment intact over time

Environmental preservation or economic development?



Sustainable consumption: the concept

The rise of the consumer society

Since 1950s, happiness, consumerism and economic growth (GDP) have become intertwined

Central to consumerism was the idea of acquisition and consumption as means of achieving happiness

Ever-extendable consumer desire became synonymous of "progress" and economic growth

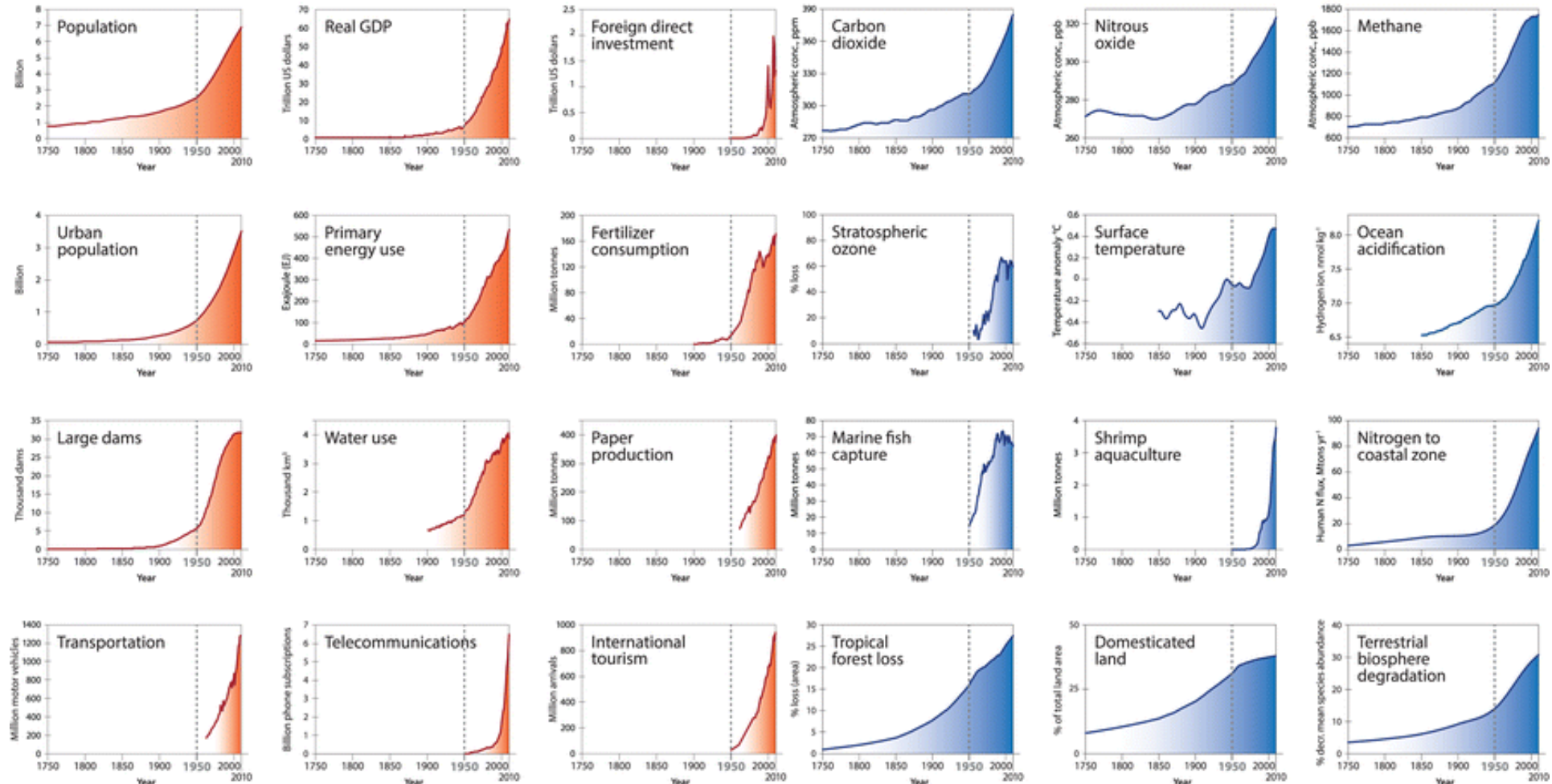
"Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption" (Victor Lebow, 1955)



The 'great acceleration' from 1950s

Socio-economic trends

Earth system trends

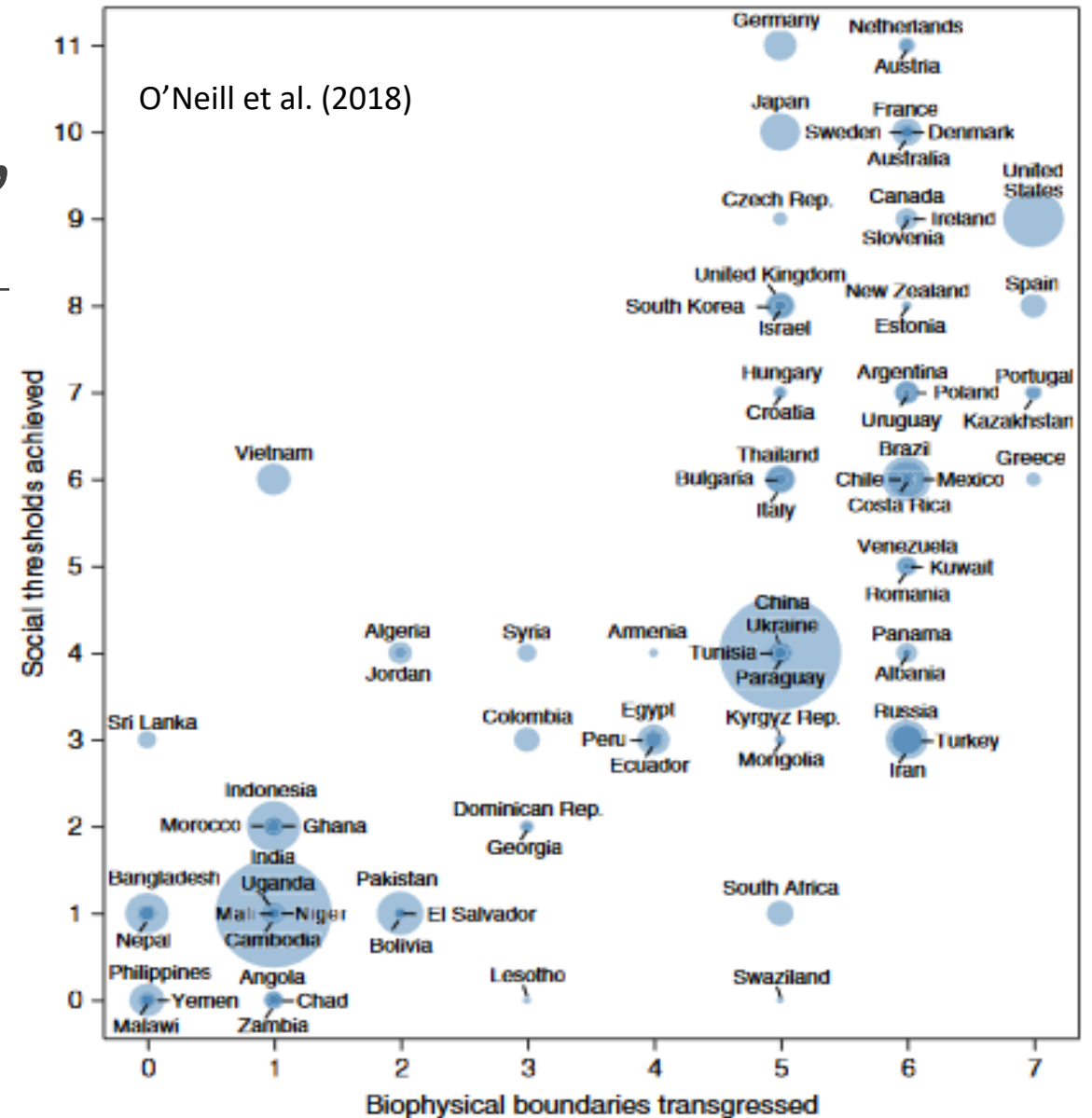


Steffen et al. (2015)

The cost of a 'happy life'

Many wealthy nations have achieved high standards of life (health, education, income), but at a level of resource use that is far beyond the biophysical boundaries

Countries need to move beyond the pursuit of GDP growth to embrace new economic models (e.g. Doughnut economy) and change the linear model of material use to a circular one



Sustainable consumption

Sustainable Consumption is “the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations”

The Oslo Symposium, 1994

Ecological footprint

The ecological footprint measures a population's demand for and ecosystems' supply of resources and services.

Exceeding the planet's regeneration rate of natural resources and services results in an ecological overshoot

Humanity's ecological footprint exceeded the biophysical capacity of the planet in the 1970's and continues growing.

Earth Overshoot Day in 2022 was on 28 July

Calculate your ecological footprint:
<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/home/en>





How to address sustainability within our
Sahaja Yoga community in Cabella?

THE ICEBERG

A Tool for Guiding Systemic Thinking

EVENTS

What just happened?
Catching a cold.

React

PATTERNS/TRENDS

What trends have there been over time?
I've been catching more colds
when sleeping less.

Anticipate

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES

What has influenced the patterns?
What are the relationships between the parts?
More stress at work, not eating well, difficulty
accessing healthy food near home or work.

Design

MENTAL MODELS

*What assumptions, beliefs and values do people hold
about the system? What beliefs keep the system in place?*
Career is the most important piece of our identity,
healthy food is too expensive, rest is for the unmotivated.

Transform

Moving from
reaction to
transformation

Sustainability strategy

Strategy is the agreed priorities that form part of a longer-term plan

Any organization's strategy is based on a vision, mission, and values

A sustainability strategy:

Is a set of actionable steps that an organization takes to improve their impact on the community and the environment

Steps in creating a sustainability strategy

1. Engage stakeholders and build a compelling 'business case' (e.g. cost reduction, risk minimization, reputation, etc.)
2. Define a list of sustainability topics that matter most for the organization: What is important to our stakeholders?
3. Establish a sustainability team to coordinate the work.
 - Incubates new sustainability ideas and integrate them across the organization
 - Engages the board of directors to develop and define a sustainability agenda
 - Communicates and reports to the stakeholders
4. Co-design sustainability projects with stakeholders: actions motivate more than words!
5. Measure and report: collect the needed data, choose a suitable set of metrics (e.g. ecological footprint)



Thank you for you attention

Jay Shri Mataji!!