

Sociological Research Areas

(Research Committees of the International Sociological Association, ISA)

- Aging
- Agriculture and Food
- Alienation Theory and Research
- Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution
- Arts
- Biography and Society
- Childhood
- Clinical Sociology
- Communication, Knowledge and Culture
- Community Research
- Comparative Sociology
- Conceptual and Terminological Analysis
- Deviance and Social Control
- Disasters
- Economy and Society
- Education
- **Environment and Society**
- Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations
- Family Research
- Futures Research
- Health
- History of Sociology
- Housing and Built Environment
- Labor Movements
- Language and Society
- Law
- Leisure
- Logic and Methodology
- Mental Health and Illness
- Migration
- Organization
- Participation, Organizational Democracy and Self-Management
- Political Sociology
- Population
- Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy
- Professional Groups
- Rational Choice
- Regional and Urban Development
- Religion
- Science and Technology
- Social Classes and Social Movements
- Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change
- Social Psychology
- Social Transformations and Sociology of Development
- Sociocybernetics
- Sociotechnics, Sociological Practice
- Sport
- Stratification
- Theory
- Tourism, International
- Women in Society
- Work
- Youth

Sociological Research Areas

Sektionen of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS)

- Alter(n) und Gesellschaft
- Arbeits- und Industriesoziologie
- Bildung und Erziehung
- Biographieforschung
- Entwicklungssoziologie und Sozialanthropologie
- Familiensoziologie
- Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung
- Kulturosoziologie
- Arbeitsgemeinschaft Konsumsoziologie
- Land- und Agrarsoziologie
- Jugendsoziologie
- Medien- und Kommunikationssoziologie
- Medizin- und Gesundheitssoziologie
- Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung
- Methoden der qualitativen Sozialforschung
- Migration und ethnische Minderheiten
- Modellbildung und Simulation
- Ost- und Ostmitteleuropa- Soziologie
- Politische Soziologie
- Professionssoziologie
- Rechtssoziologie
- Religionssoziologie
- Soziale Indikatoren
- Soziale Probleme und soziale Kontrolle
- Soziale Ungleichheit und Sozialstrukturanalyse
- Sozialpolitik
- Soziologie der Kindheit
- Soziologie des Körpers und des Sports
- **Soziologie und Ökologie**
- Soziologische Theorie
- Sprachsoziologie: siehe Wissenssoziologie
- Stadt- und Regionalsoziologie
- Wirtschaftssoziologie
- Wissenschafts- und Techniksoziologie
- Wissenssoziologie (vorher: Sprachsoziologie)

Environmental Sociology: A Glimpse at its History

- **'Hidden' Environmental Sociology:** Reflections about the social embeddedness of nature/resources in the writings of early sociologists (e.g. Durkheim, Simmel, Weber...). _However: The search for establishing an autonomous sociological science includes a strict rejection of natural determinism (dominance of natural sciences).
- **Human Ecology:** Treating humans as organisms in their (social) environments. Important: F.E. Clements Plant Succession (1916) and G. Simmel (1858-1918). Most important: Chicago School.
 - After the big fire of 1871, the city grew rapidly (1860: 10,000; 1910: >2,000,000), mainly from European immigration (_W. I. Thomas & F. Znaniecki: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America: Monograph of an Immigrant Group* (1918))
 - “In these great cities, where all the passions, all the energies of mankind are released, we are in a position to investigate the process of civilization, as it were, under a microscope.” (Robert E. Park, *Human Migration and the Marginal Man*, 1928)
 - “Ecological studies consisted of making spot maps of Chicago for the place of occurrence of specific behaviors, including alcoholism, homicides, suicides, psychoses, and poverty, and then computing rates based on census data. A visual comparison of the maps could identify the concentration of certain types of behavior in some areas. Correlations of rates by areas were not made until later.” (Ruth S. Cavan, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, 1983)
- **'New Environmental Sociology':** Emerges together with the new environmental social movement of the 1960s/70s, and the public & political awareness of an environmental crisis, especially after the 'oil crises' of 1973 and 1979.
 - W. Catton & Riley Dunlap (1978/1979): Human Exemption Paradigm (HEP) versus New Ecological Paradigm (NEP)
 - Studies on New Social Movements (with the Environmental Movement being perceived as the vanguard (_Change from Materialist to Post-Materialist Values: R. Inglehart)
- **Today:** 'Post-Heroic' Phase, 'normalization', pluralization of approaches; merging with other research areas & approaches (e.g. Systems Theory, Mass Media Research).

Environmental Sociology: Some Key Issues

- **Environmental Attitudes and Behavior** (general, specific).
 - Well established (since 1970s), today often criticized as methodologically undercomplex (_social systems or lifestyles as more powerful explanatory concepts)
 - Intersections with (social) psychology
 - German standard source: BMU/UBA “Umweltbewusstsein in Deutschland” (most recent study: 2006). Research team leader: Udo Kuckartz (Marburg University).
- **Consumption and Lifestyle Research**
 - More recent area, but of growing importance (_food, mobility, housing)
 - Intersections with consumption & inequality research
- **Media Coverage & Public Discourses**
 - Attention & issue cycles, agenda setting, framing, interests, media system, impacts
 - Intersections with mass media research
- **Environmental Policy.**
 - From government to governance (multi-level, multi-actor); from social movements to organization research; environmental justice
 - Intersections with political sciences, sociology of organizations, (social) ethics
- **Global Environmental Change.**
 - Main issues: Climate change, biodiversity loss
 - Comparative & theory orientation, yet not well developed
- **General Diagnostics & Theoretical Issues.**
 - Realism vs. Constructionism (seems to fade away; synthesis possible)
 - Risk Society
 - Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

Environmental Attitudes and Behavior: A German Example

- “Umweltbewusstsein in Deutschland” (Environmental Consciousness in Germany) is a bi-annual representative study of the German population (n=2,034, telephone interviews).
- Carried out since the early 1990s; 50-60% of the questions remained constant, despite a shift in the research team in the late 1990s (from Preisendörfer to Kuckartz).
- Issues covered:
 - General attitudes towards the environment, relevance of environmental policy
 - Climate protection and energy
 - Environmental risks and health
 - Recent environmental policy and trust in actors
 - Living, city, transportation
 - Views of nature and biodiversity
 - Information about environmental issues
 - Participation, responsibility, equity



Umweltbewusstsein in Deutschland 2006

Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Bevölkerungsumfrage



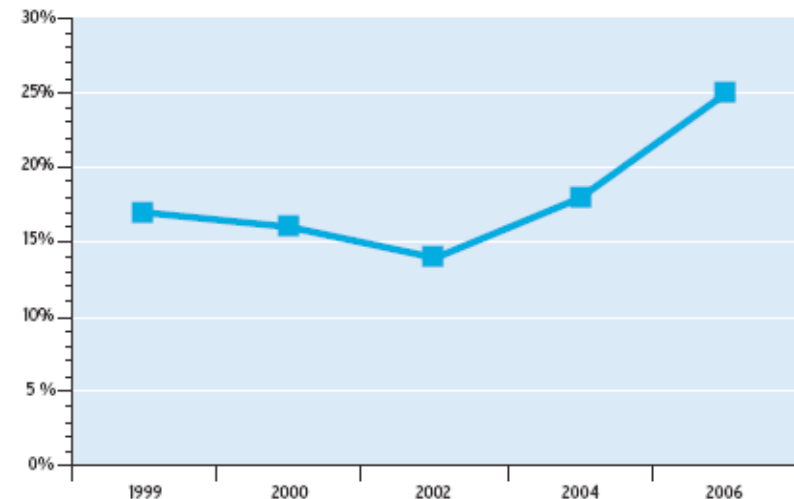
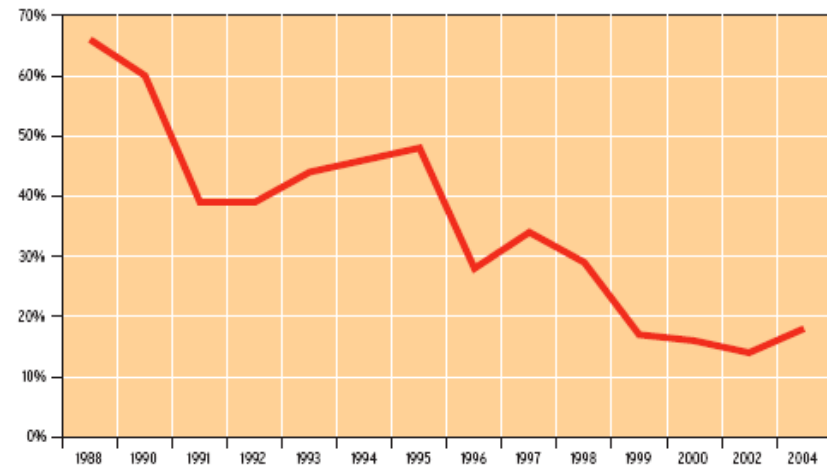
| Reihe Umweltpolitik |



Prof. Andreas Troge
German Environment Agency

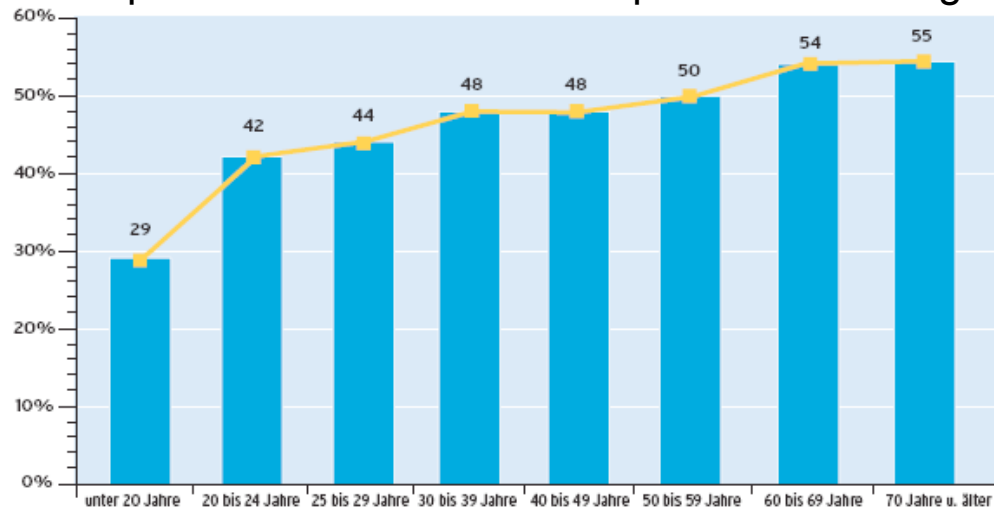
General Attitudes towards the Environment

- “What, do you think, is the most important problem our country is facing today?” (Open question)
- In the late 1980s, two thirds of the (West) German population assumed that environmental protection was the most pressing problem (_Nuclear power conflict, Chernobyl, Chemical industry, ‘Waldsterben’).
- After unification in 1990, the environment lost in significance (_Restructuring of the East, monetary transfers from the West, economic crisis since the mid/late 1990s, Hartz IV...).
- Since 2002, the environment is slowly regaining ground (_Effect of the former red-green government? Climate change as a perceived reality, energy prices & politics)



Results (Cont'd.)

Importance of environmental protection and age



Result: The older people are, the more they are concerned about the environment

Hypothesis 1: The more experienced (or the closer to death) you are, the more you are concerned about the environment ((a): as a luxury good; (b): as a necessary good)

Hypothesis 2: Environmental concern has been an issue of the green movement, which has grown old today.

Perceived environmental quality and distance

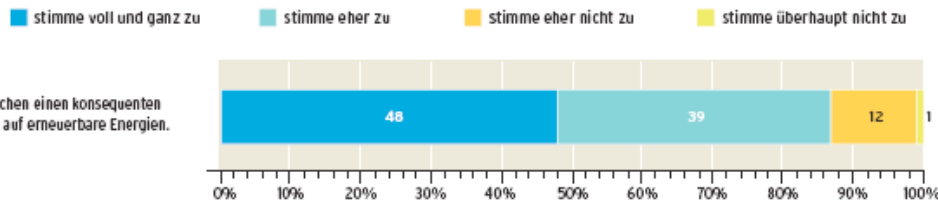
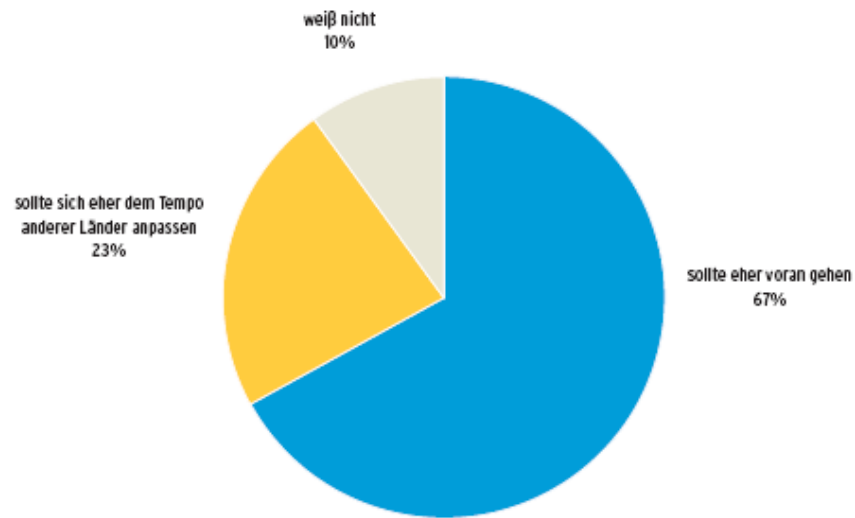
Angaben in %	Erhebung 2006				
	sehr gut	recht gut	eher schlecht	sehr schlecht	Mittelwert*
... insgesamt die Umweltqualität in Ihrer Stadt, Ihrer örtlichen Gemeinde beurteilen?	11	73	15	1	2,07
... insgesamt die Umweltqualität in Deutschland beurteilen?	3	63	33	1	2,33
... insgesamt die Umweltqualität in Europa beurteilen?	1	28	64	7	2,76
... insgesamt die Umweltqualität weltweit beurteilen?	1	8	55	36	3,26

Result: The more distant a place, the worse the perceived environmental quality.

Hypothesis 1: People are self-centered. In order to cope with everyday life, they perceive their neighborhood as basically o.k.

Hypothesis 2: Germans correctly reflect objective differences in environmental quality across the world

Results (Cont'd.)



Angaben in %	Erhebung 2006			
	sollte ausgebaut werden	derzeitiger Anteil reicht aus	ist zu groß	habe dazu keine Meinung
Der Anteil der Windenergie an der Stromversorgung in Deutschland	62	29	4	6
Der Anteil der Solarenergie an der Stromversorgung in Deutschland	88	8	1	4
Der Anteil der Biomasse - z.B. Holz und Bioabfälle - an der Stromversorgung in Deutschland	73	15	2	10

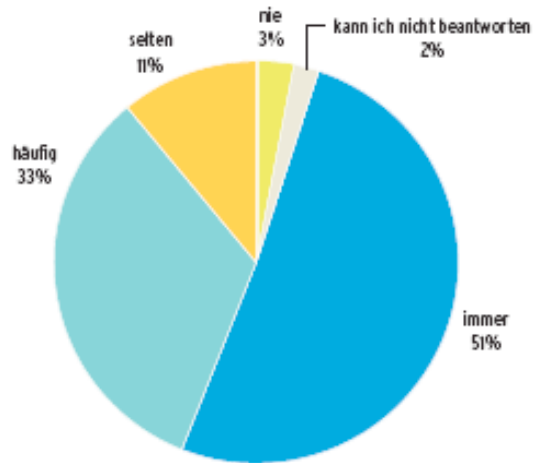
- A large majority of Germans (67%) thinks that the country (government) should try to play a **vanguard role** in international climate policy. _Cf. Angela Merkel and Sigmar Gabriel reacting on the EU Commission's protest against German emission goals.

- Support for **renewable energy** in Germany is high.

However, in the case of **wind** energy, a slight resistance to further installation of wind parks is perceivable.

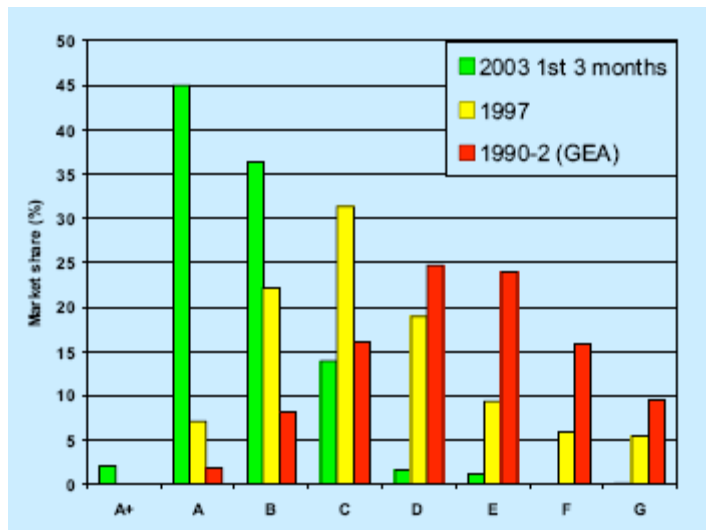
- Solar energy** and, to a lesser degree, energy from **biomass** have high public backings. Biomass seems to be less known.

Relevance of energy efficiency in purchase of household goods



Result: A majority of Germans does consider energy efficiency 'always' (51%) or 'often' (33%) when purchasing household goods.

Development of refrigerators after introduction of the European energy label (source: Stern Review 2006)



A*=most efficient; G=least efficient

Hypothesis 1: People lie. More energy efficient appliances are more expensive, and people don't spend more on the environment (despite saying they would).

Hypothesis 2: People are correctly reporting their behavior. There is a change in values and social norms going on, supported by technological learning & price reductions by producers.

Results (Cont'd.)

Purchase of green electricity (time series)

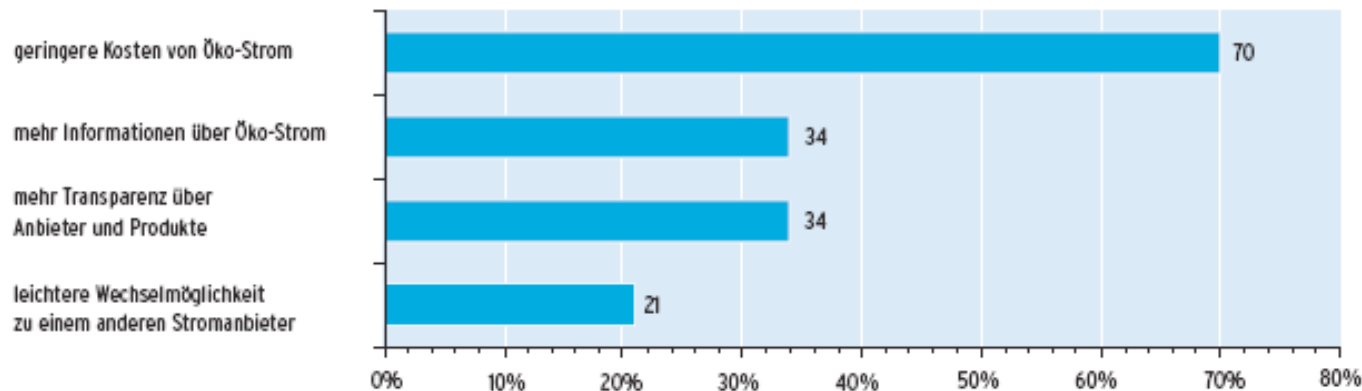
Angaben in %	Erhebung		
	2002	2004	2006
Ich beziehe bereits Öko-Strom.	3	3	5
Ich beabsichtige, Öko-Strom zu beziehen.	8	9	7
Vielleicht werde ich zukünftig Öko-Strom beziehen.	45	38	48
Nein, ich werde keinen Öko-Strom beziehen.	44	50	40

Result 1: Green electricity is still purchased by a (growing?) minority of Germans (5%).

Result 2: Most Germans think that green electricity is more expensive than conventional—although this is not true.

Hypothesis: Social habits, perceived risks and a lacking 'normality' (social diffusion) are main obstacles.

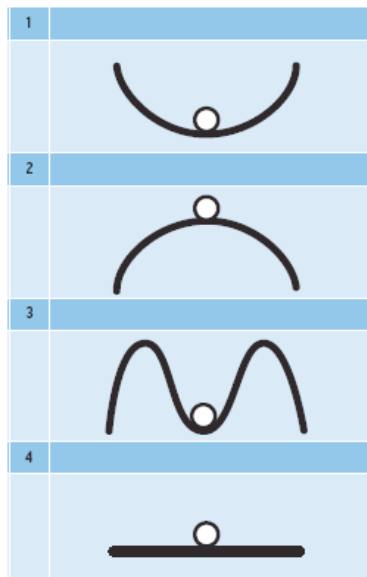
What would help to further promote green electricity?



Results (Cont'd.)

	Erhebung 2006					
Angaben in %	volles Vertrauen				kein Vertrauen	Mittelwert*
Umweltschutzorganisationen und -verbände	18	49	26	5	2	2,25
Bürgerinitiativen	15	44	29	9	3	2,41
Verbraucherberatung/Verbraucherverbände	11	40	35	11	4	2,58
Staatliche Umweltschutzbehörden	6	30	46	13	6	2,82
Kirchen	2	15	33	26	23	3,54
Gewerkschaften	1	10	35	32	22	3,62
Industrie	1	7	26	33	33	3,90
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	12	35	25	13	15	2,83
SPD	2	18	43	21	16	3,31
CDU/CSU	4	15	35	23	22	3,45
FDP	1	8	35	31	26	3,72
Linksparteien (PDS, WASG)	1	8	27	29	35	3,87

Result 1: Germans trust environmental and consumer organizations and the Green Party when it comes to environmental protection. They distrust industry, trade unions, and the church. Governmental organizations are in between.



Nature benign/stable
6% **Market Liberal**

Nature fragile
20% **Egalitarian**

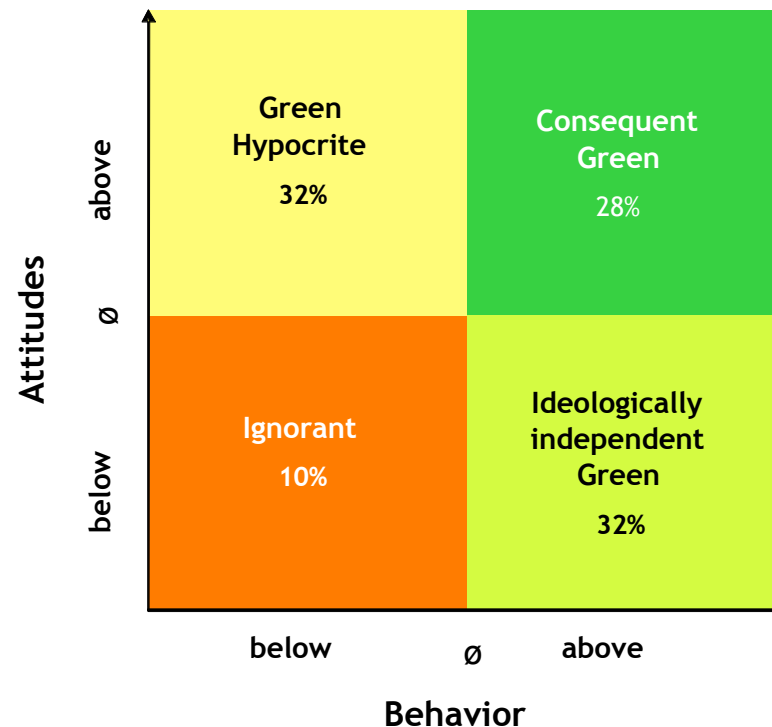
Nature tolerant/stable within limits
52% **Hierarchist**

Nature unpredictable
22% **Fatalist**

Result 2: A majority of Germans believes in the 'nature tolerant within limits' 'myth of nature'. The 'fragile' myth is on decline, the 'unpredictable' myth gains ground. (_Cultural Theory: Fatalists?)

Limits to the Attitude-Behavior-Approach

- Focus on individuals (household/private consumption) tends to neglect consumers as citizens, contexts, and consumption-production networks.
- Implicit assumption: everybody has to become a consequent green consumer, and then the sustainability transition is complete. Neglects social pluralism and the more complex reality of social change (cf. right figure).
- Measurement tools (e.g. ISSP, but many more) imply that the sustainability transition will be:
 - Expensive (WTP, taxes)
 - Laborious (time, effort)
 - Altruistic (nature, future generations, developing world)
 - Morally ambitious (self-interest seems bad)
 - Contra growth (tradeoff)
 - Contra technology (incompatibility, tradeoff lifestyle changes)
- Given (1) the long-term character of a sustainability transition, (2) the plurality of changes required (and underway), (3) the possible synergies between growth, technology and necessary lifestyle changes, and (4) the dynamism of lifestyle changes in the developing world, the approach and its underlying assumptions less and less measure correctly the social aspect of the sustainability transition.



Climate Change Discourse Analysis

- **Discourse:** Texts and meanings in spoken and written statements, interactions and debates.
- **Background 1:** The **use of language** is a **social process**, serving various explicit or implicit purposes of the social actors involved. (_Late Wittgenstein, Speech Act Theory, Habermas)
- **Background 2:** ‘Language games’ are **power plays** as well: (a) power differentials between actors (_not explicit by discourse alone, additional social interaction and systems analysis required); (b) hegemonic discourses (_cultural values & norms, dominant themes, exclusions). (Main author: Michel Foucault)
- Main Foci of ‘**Warm Words**’ Study:
 - Who is talking about climate change in the UK?
 - How is cc framed? What linguistic repertoire is used? (cf. ‘terrorist’ vs. ‘freedom fighter’)
 - What are dominant, what marginal discourses?
 - What tensions and problems in the public discourse do exist?
 - What could be done in order to improve the discourse (i.a.: to raise more individual and collective action)



Warm Words

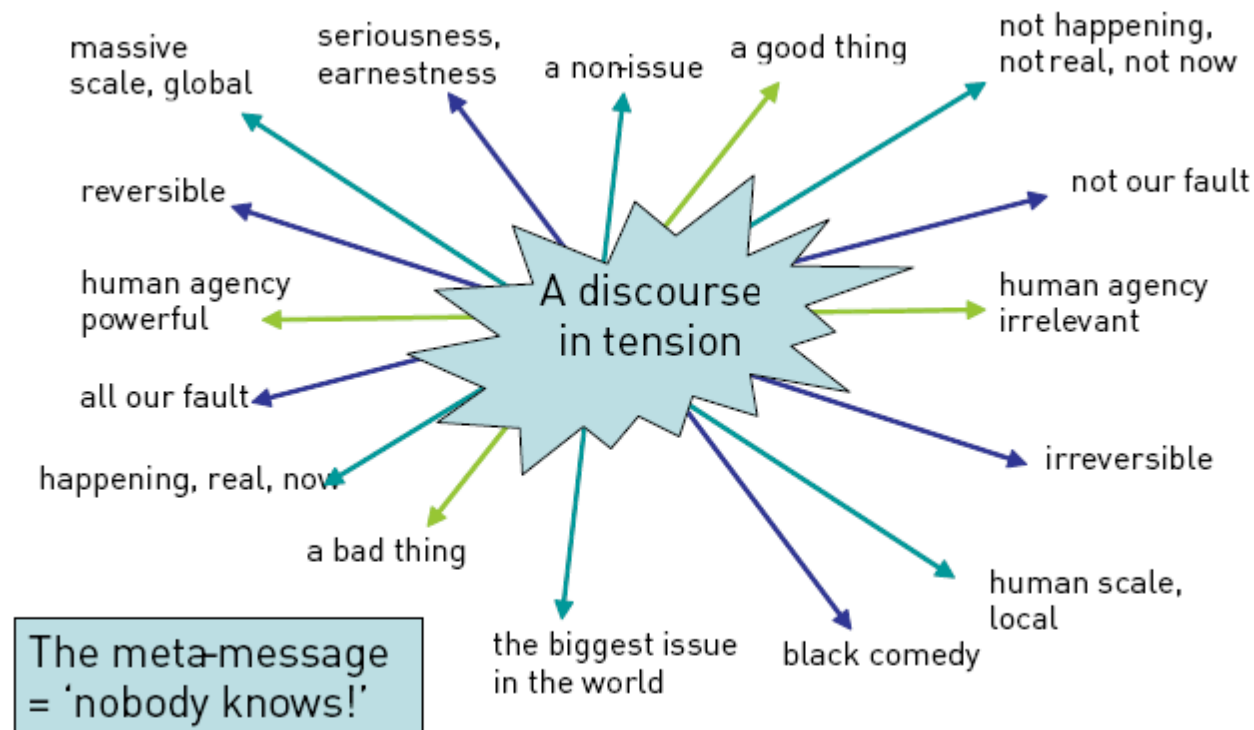
How are we telling the climate story
and can we tell it better?

Gill Ereaut and Nat Segnit

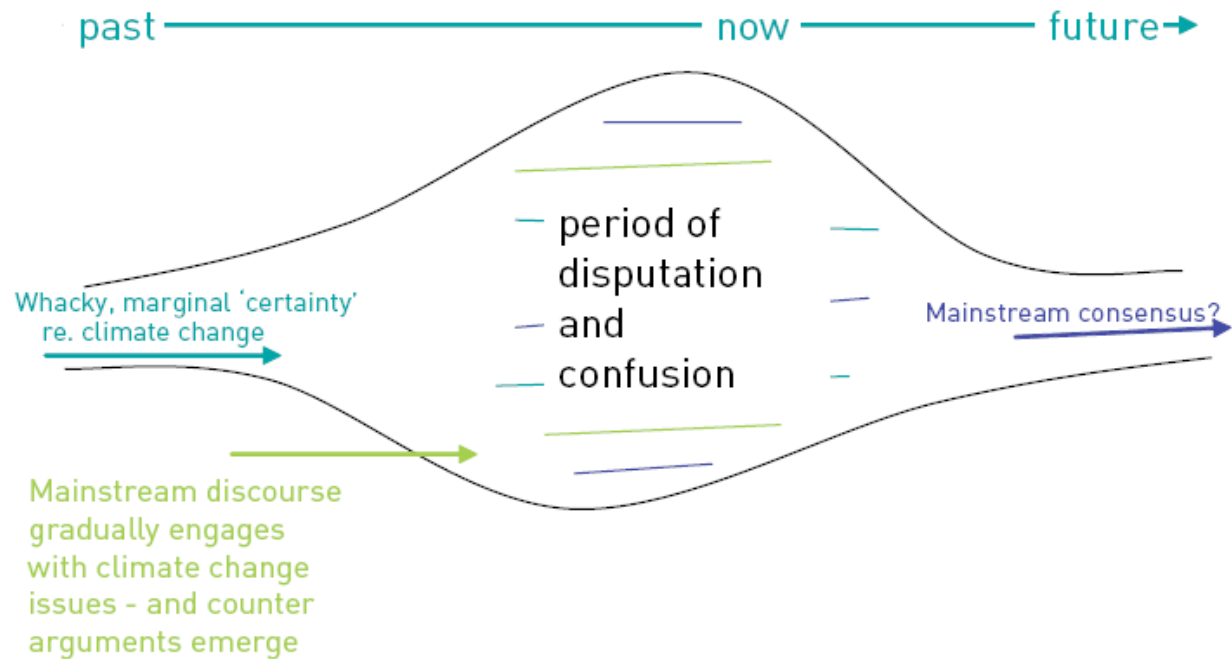
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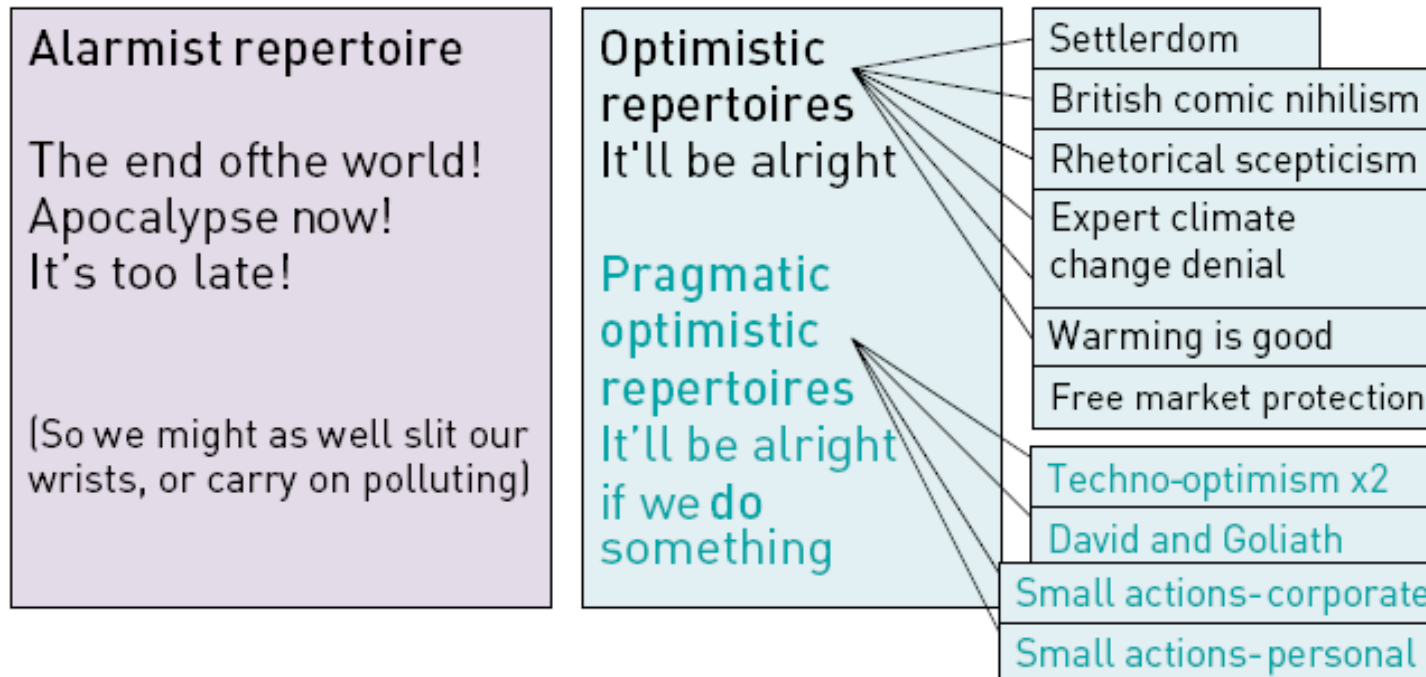
The overall picture: confusion



Schematic History of Climate Change Discourse

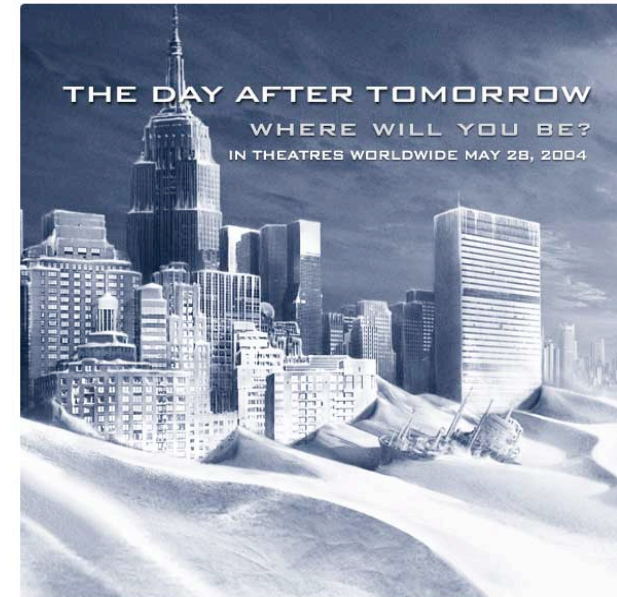


Basic Voices & their Repertoire

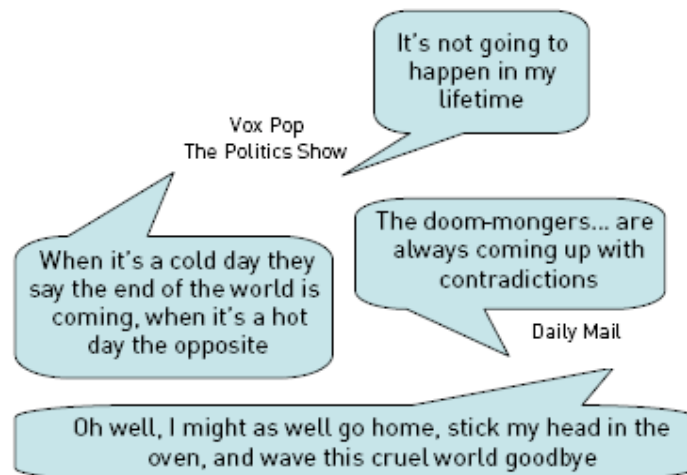




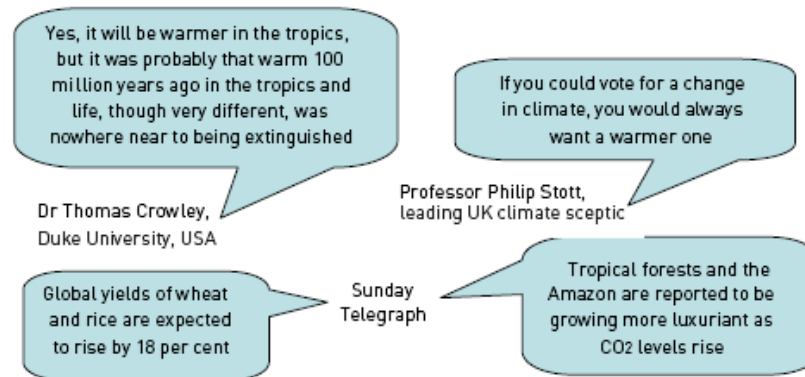
Alarmism



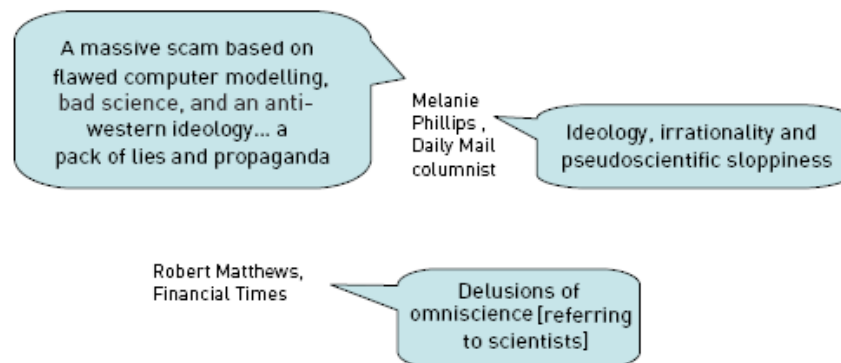
Lay Denial



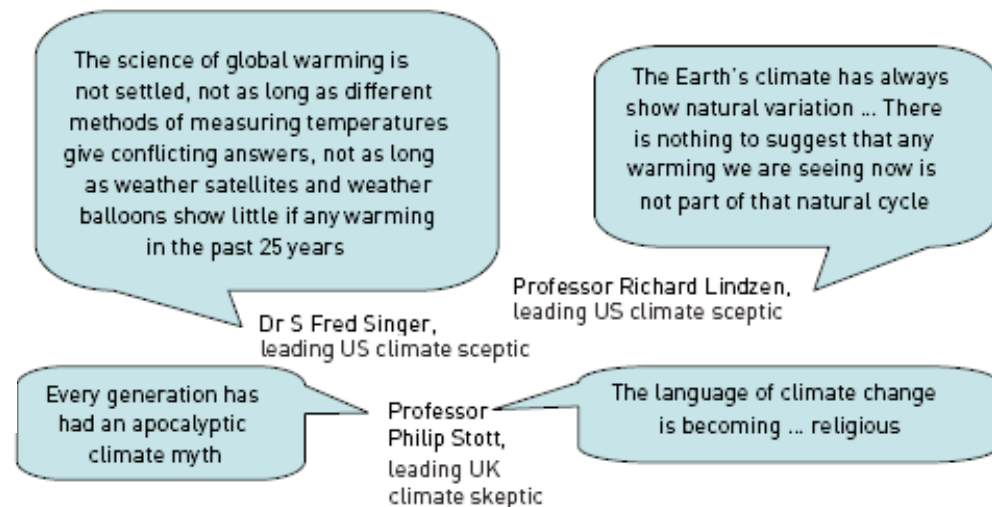
'Warming is good'



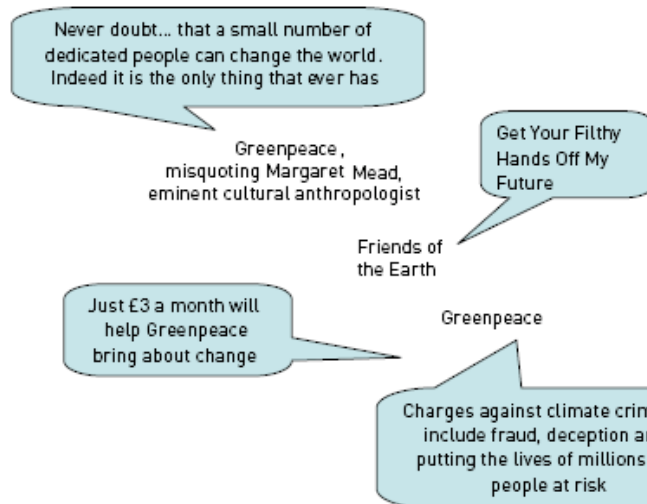
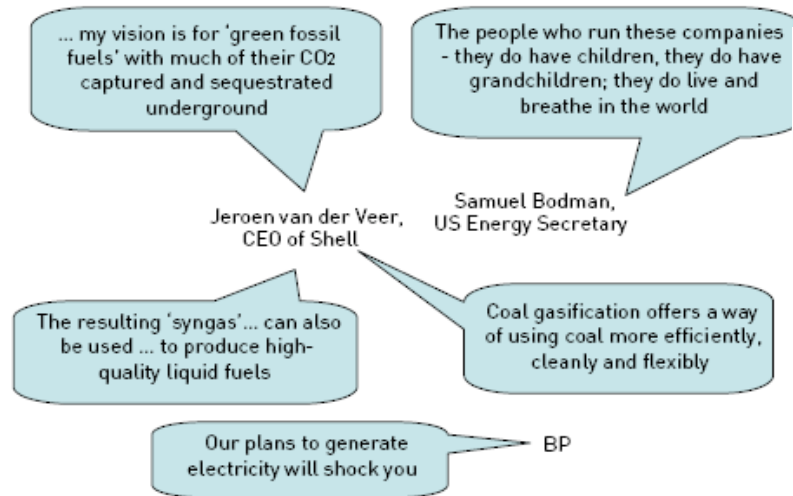
Rhetorical skepticism



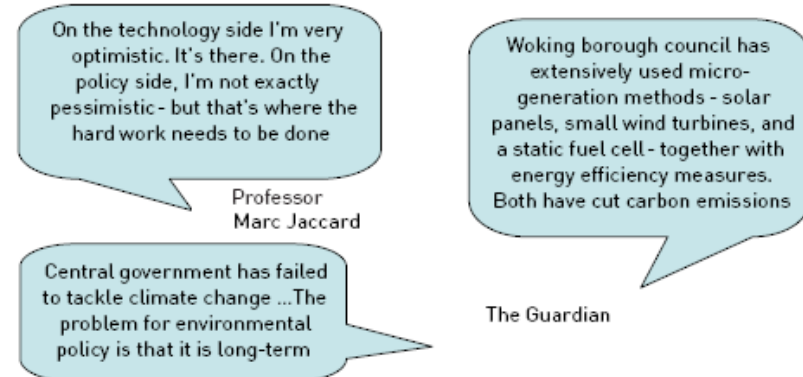
'Expert' Skepticism



Establishment Techno-Optimism

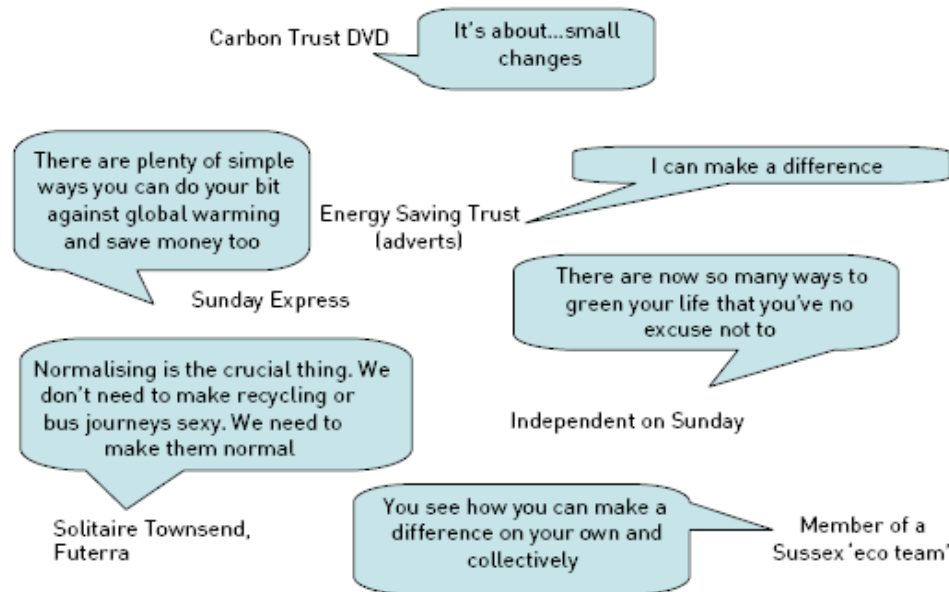


Non-Establishment Techno-Optimism

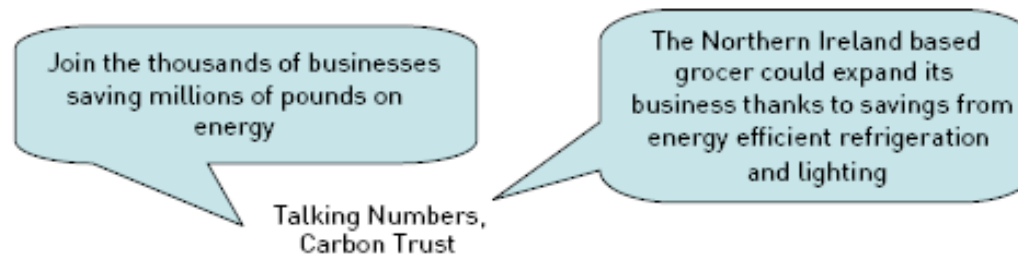


David and Goliath

Individual Small Actions



Corporate Small Actions



Main Problem & Possible Solution

- The two dominant repertoires in British climate change discourse are 'alarmist' and 'small individual actions', often combined ('20 tips to save the planet').
- Contradiction: alarmism focuses on the large scale and the impossibility to do something, while small action focuses on the small scale and gets lost in triviality.
- Possible way out: 'ordinary hero myth'.
 - Don't talk risks & uncertainties, talk self-evident normality.
 - Don't be alarmist with the problem, don't trivialize solutions.
 - Create linkages by ordinary heroes (Dunkirk...)
 - Positive campaigns, solutions, mainstream

