



Turning point 2020? Developing a post-growth strategy towards sustainability transitions

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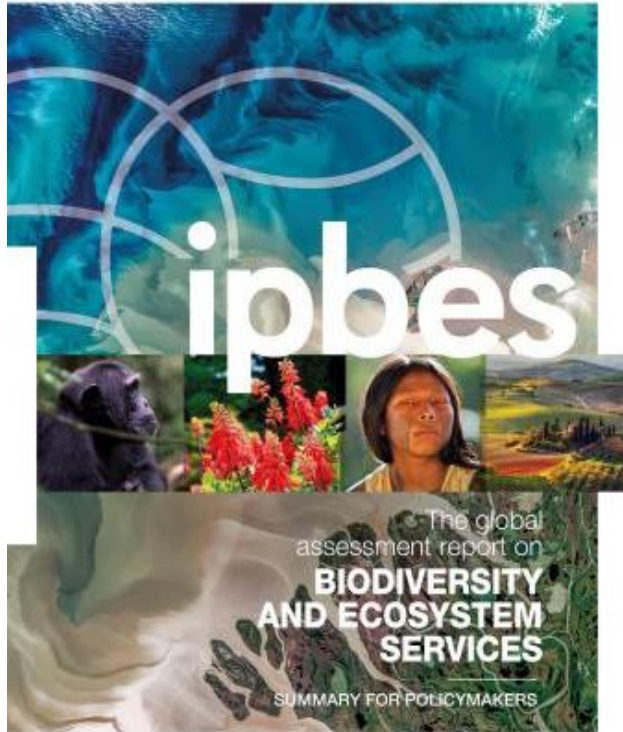
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A world in crisis

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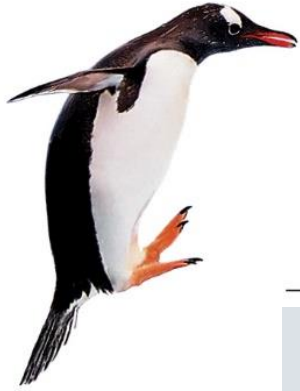




A world in crisis

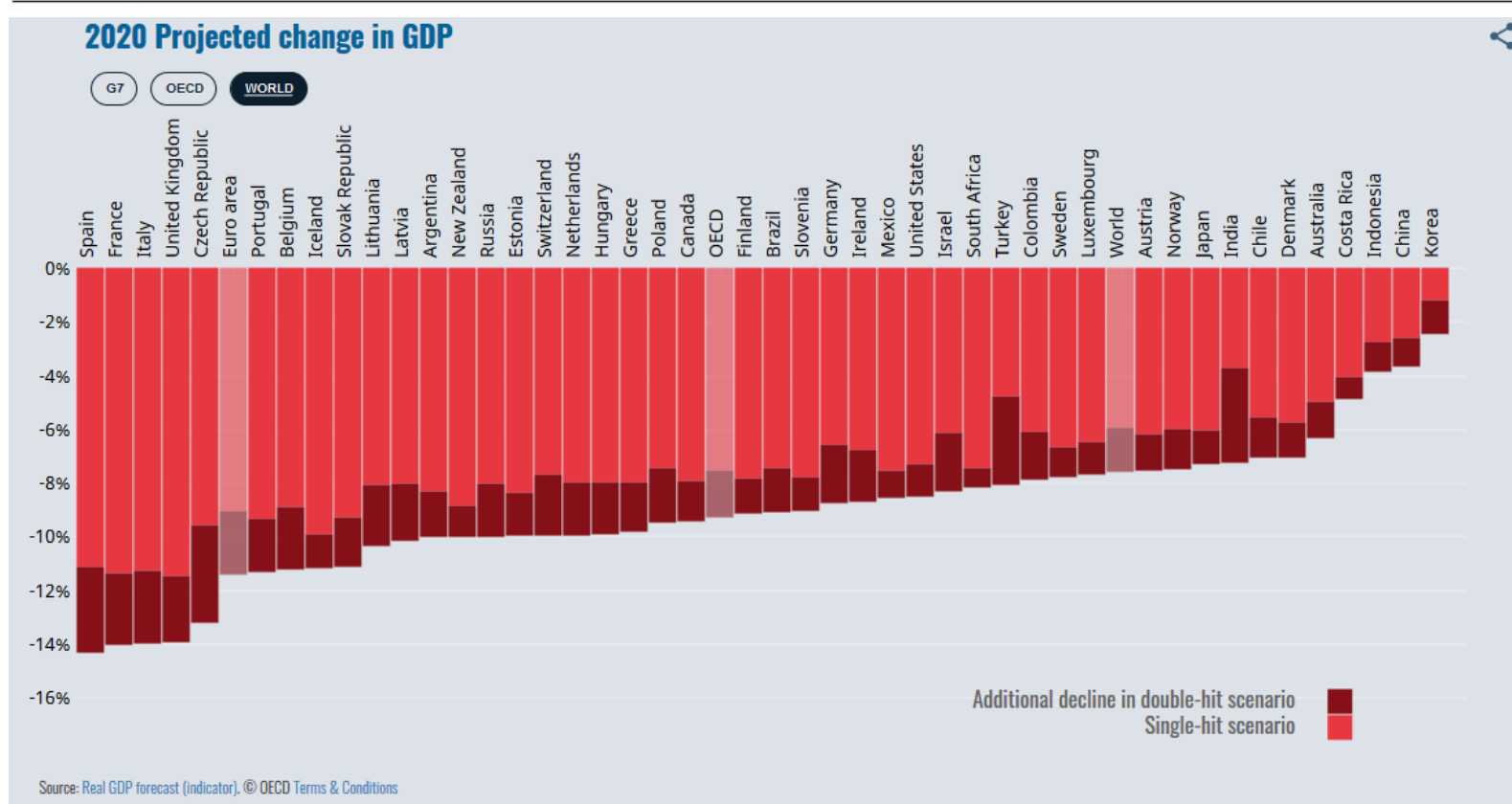
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Turning point 2020?



Political response to the pandemic & recession:

- 1) Transformation towards more sustainable economic and societal systems?
- 2) recovery/business as usual/back to the growth path asap?

Currently proposed policies mainly cement status quo; ‚scaling back environmental goals‘?

→ Growth obsession persists (‚culture of growth‘, Mokyr 2016), reinforcing path dependencies, resistance to transformative policies



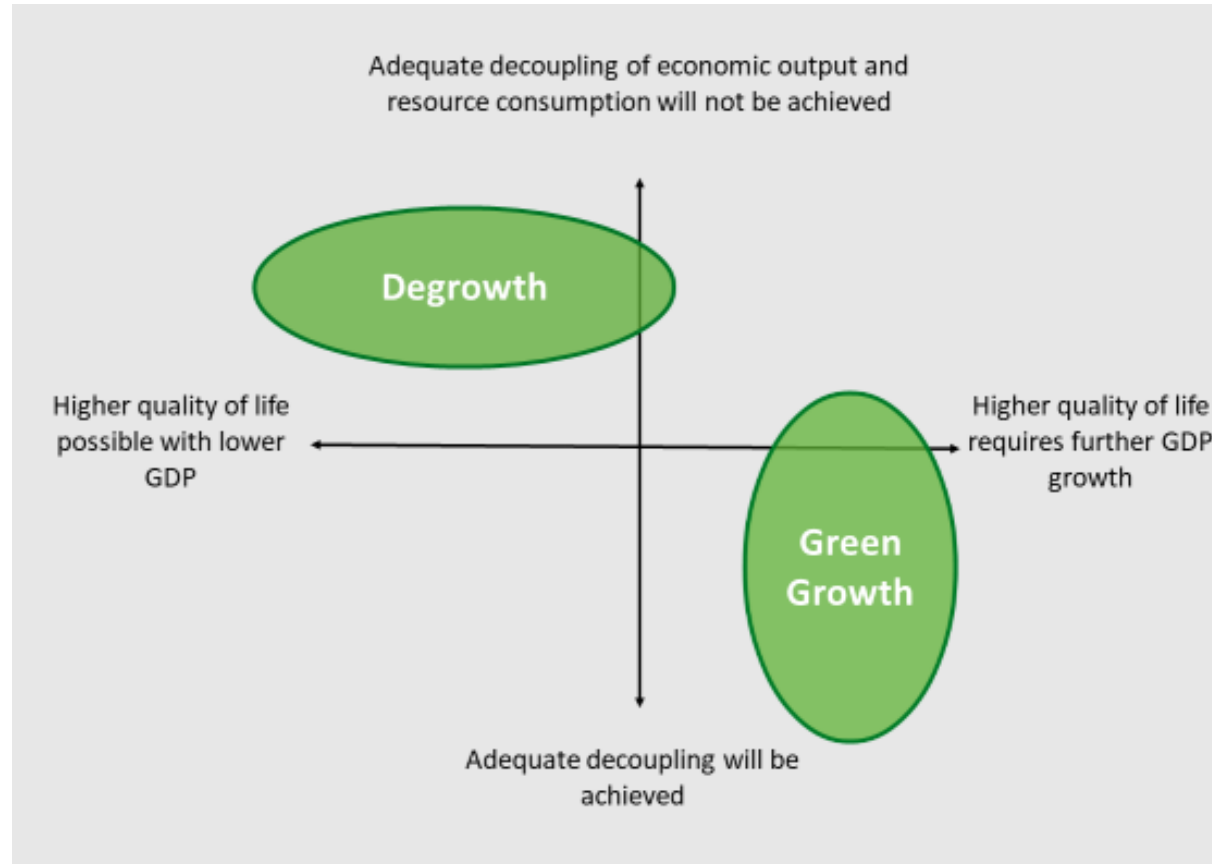
Revisiting the question of economic growth



- Long standing debate whether economic growth is compatible with environmental protection (Meadows et al. 1972)
- First IÖW conference 1985: “Ways out of the industrial growth dilemma”
- So far: No absolute decoupling of environmental pressures from economic growth
- growth is strongly linked to the functioning of fundamental social institutions that enable components of a good life
- Two very entrenched positions: green growth versus degrowth



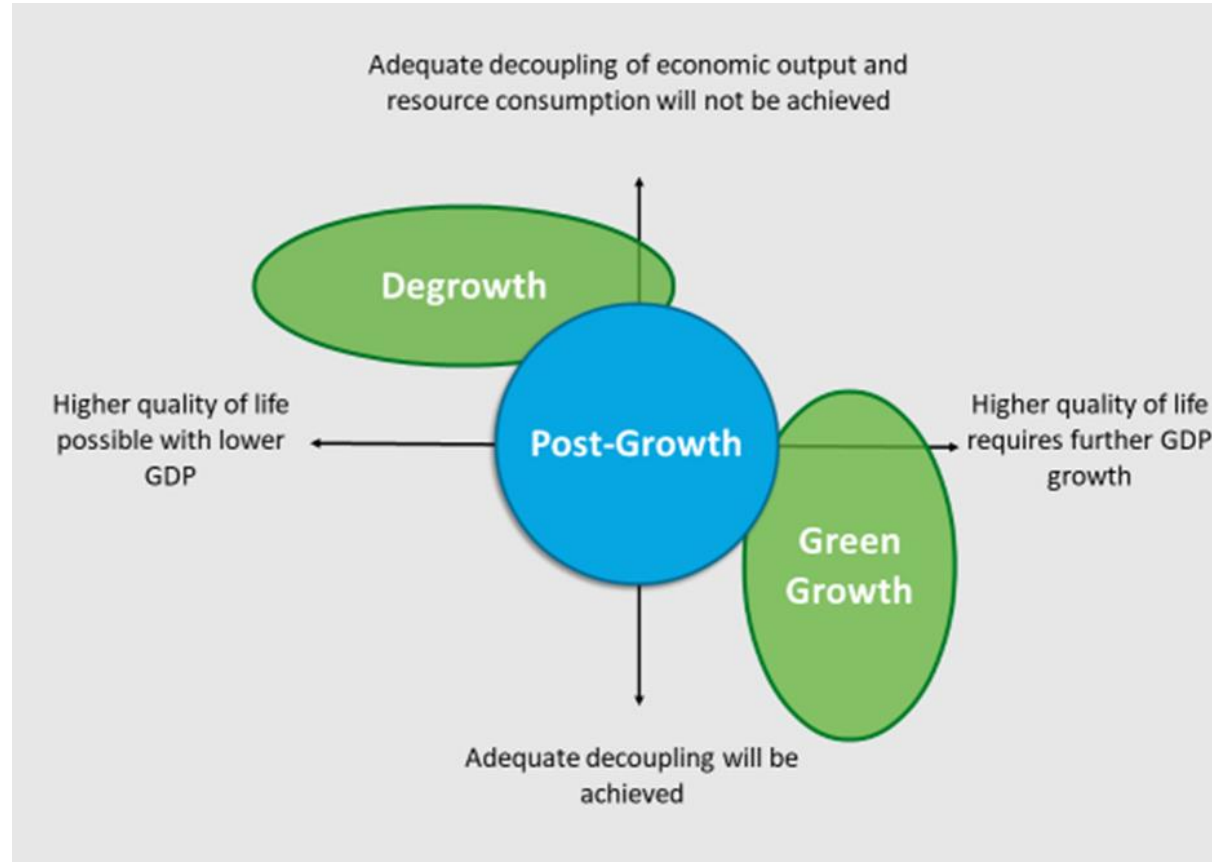
Green growth vs degrowth



(Petschow et al. 2018, 2020)



Our proposal: The precautionary post-growth position



(Petschow et al. 2018, 2020)

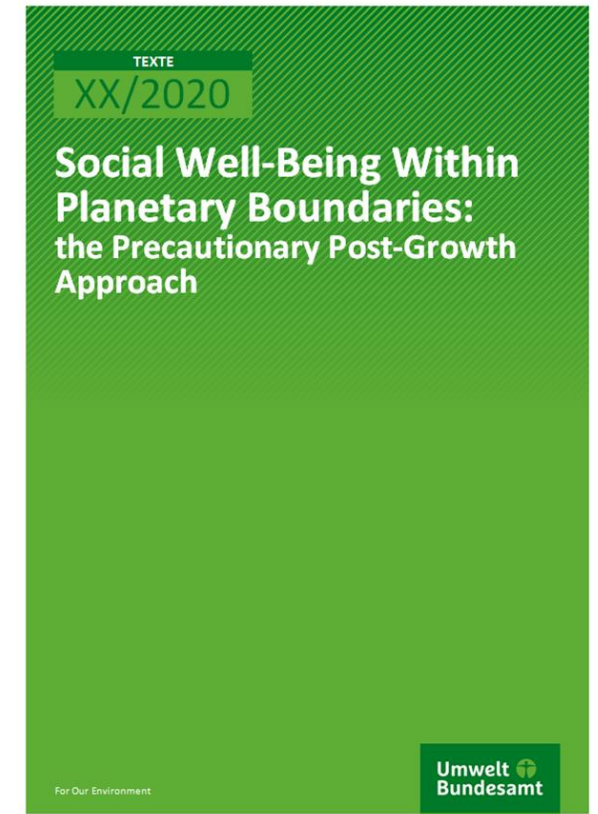


Recommendations from the precautionary post-growth position

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- 1 Promote cultural change: From ‚Culture of Growth‘ (Mokyr 2016) to ‚Culture of Sustainability‘
- 2 Setting effective economic framework conditions
- 3 Experiments: Exploring new paths of societal development through participatory search processes, experimental spaces and new approaches to innovation and research policy
- 4 Growth independence: Making social institutions and processes less dependent on growth and thus reducing the path dependencies





Developing the precautionary post-growth position further



- a) Complementing focus on precaution with attention to resilience

- b) Integrating insights from the sustainability transitions literature about processes of systemic change



Further developing the precautionary post-growth position: resilience



a) Complementing focus on precaution with attention to resilience

Aim: develop post growth resilience strategy which includes economic, environmental and social objectives

- Corona crisis showed vulnerability of current economic and societal system to disruption
- Need to transition to more resilient systems: but how?
- No answers but ideas to build on: foundational economy, socio-ecological transitions, ...



Further developing the precautionary post-growth position: transitions



b) Integrating insights from the sustainability transitions literature about processes of systemic change

Sophisticated understanding of mechanisms of change

Developed strategies for how to promote transitions (strategic niche management, transition management, transformative innovation policy, transformative environmental policy)

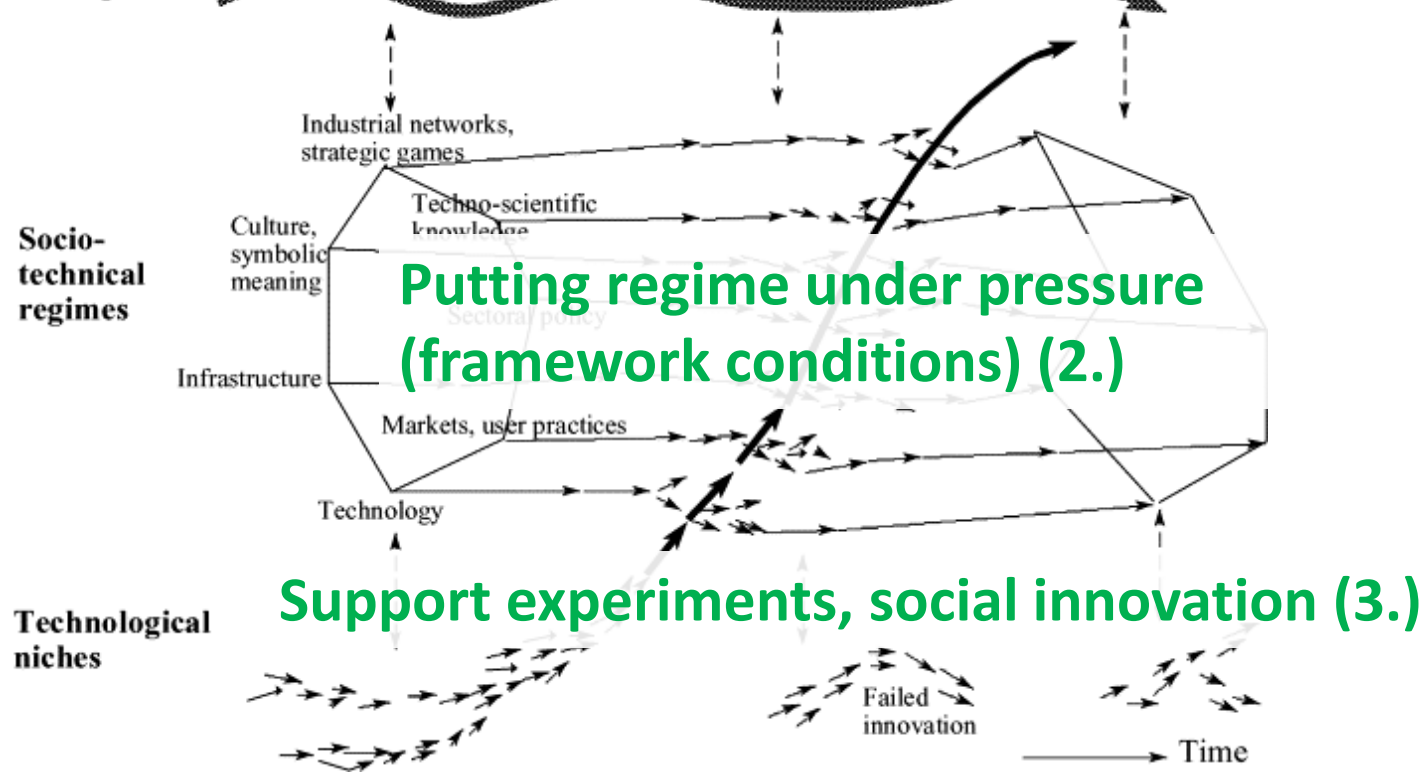
fruitful linkages with our first 3 recommendations: cultural change, framework condition and experiments

grassroots innovation (Smith & Ely 2015) and transformative social innovation (Avelino et al. 2019)



Sustainability transitions

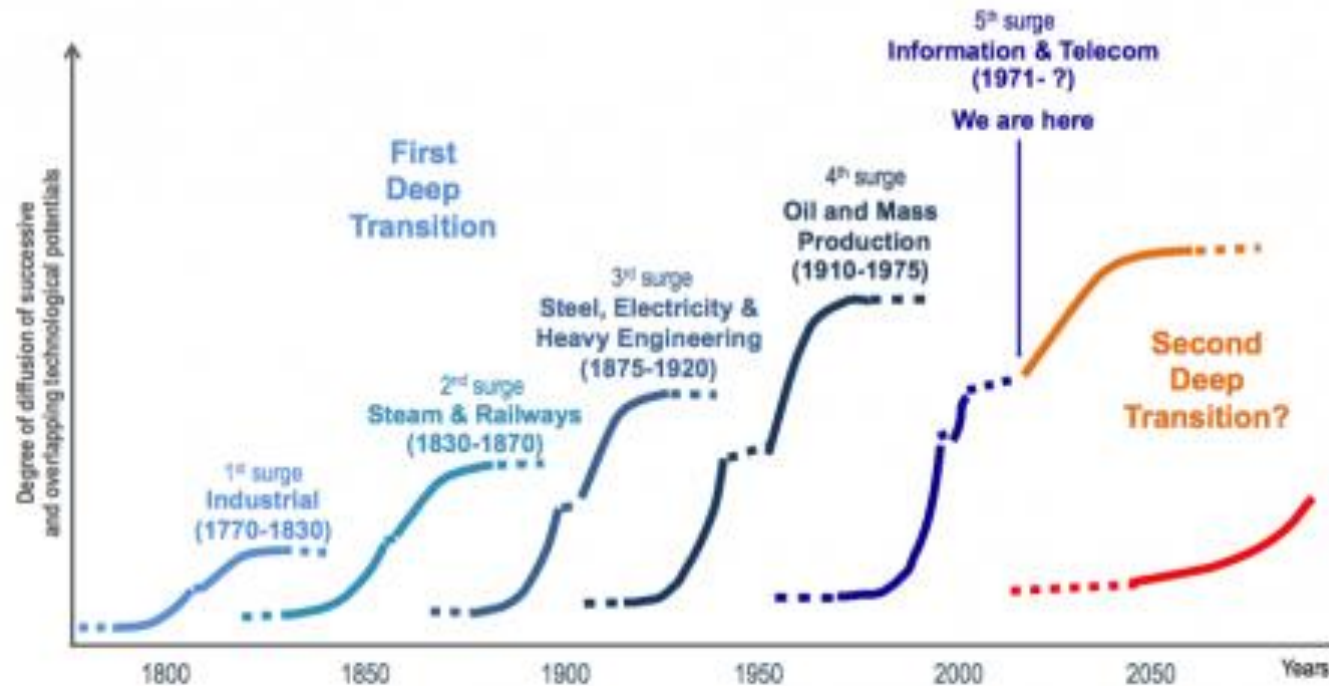
Landscape development: **Cultural change (1.) & growth independence (4.)**





Sustainability transitions

First and Second Deep Transitions



Source: SPRU, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/spru/research/projects/deeptransitions>



Conclusions



1. World is in crisis. Need to act now!
2. Decoupling uncertain → precautionary post growth position
3. Position needs to be developed further: a) broader resilience strategy, with b) insights into dynamics of change processes from sustainability transitions lit
4. New knowledge & more effective strategies for transitions to more resilient, sustainable economic and societal systems for policy makers, activists & civil society



Thank you very much



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