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Wuppertal Institut



Sustainable development requires an integrated approach to policy and science because many of the issues it raises cannot be addressed within a single department or using the tools of individual scientific disciplines. This is where the Wuppertal Institute's research programme begins—by taking an interdisciplinary approach and working towards systems understanding. Designing transitions to a sustainable development at local, national and international level is the Wuppertal Institute's stated mission. Its research focuses on the resources, climate and energy related challenges and their relation to economy and society. Special emphasis is put on analysing and stimulating innovations that decouple economic growth and wealth from natural resource use.

Research focus are the transition processes towards a sustainable development. This requires an integrated approach to policy and science because many of the issues it raises cannot be addressed within a single department or using the tools of individual scientific disciplines.

Since 2010 Professor Uwe Schneidewind has been President of the Wuppertal Institute. The Institute was founded in 1991 by Professor Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker who directed it until 2000.

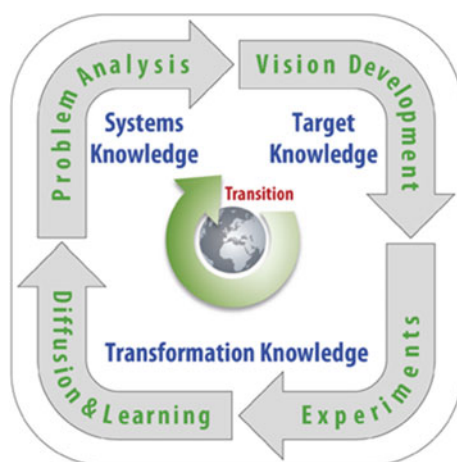
Professor Peter Hennicke headed the Institute from 1 November 2000 until the end of January 2008. Until the appointment of Professor Schneidewind, as from March 2010, the Vice President Professor Manfred Fischedick provisionally headed the Institute's research. The Business Manager is Brigitte Mutert-Breidbach. The institute's seat is in Wuppertal. It is represented in Germany's capital by its Berlin Office since 2004.

An scientific International Advisory Board supports the Institute in defining fundamental research strategies as well as ensuring the quality and independence of its research.

The Wuppertal Institute has the legal status of a non-profit limited company (gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung, according to German law) and receives basic funding from the Land North Rhine-Westphalia. Third-party funding supports most of the Institute's budget and projects.

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Wuppertal Institut's Research Focus on Sustainability Transition



Sustainable developments require integrated policy and economy approaches. Questions regarding developments that are fit for the future can most likely not fully be answered or addressed within departments or individual science disciplines. That's where the Wuppertal Institut's research programme with its transdisciplinary and system knowledge oriented approach begins. As part of a transformative science, it is aimed at designing transitions towards a sustainable development.

Transformative research contributes to solving societal problems and is characterized by an explicit aspiration to get involved: The aim is to catalyse processes of change and to actively involve stakeholders in the research process. In this way, transformative research generates “socially robust” knowledge needed for sustainability transitions. Research at the Wuppertal Institut thus follows a transdisciplinary concept of knowledge: it does not only serve to generate “systems knowledge” (e.g., technological or resource-oriented systems analysis), but also integrates stakeholders in the process of generating “target knowledge” (visions and guiding principles) and “transformation knowledge” in concrete settings of urban or sectoral transitions to sustainability.

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The quality of transformative research must be measured on the basis of its own aspiration to catalyse societal change for sustainability. Assessment schemes for transformative research thus include not only academic quality criteria, but also new forms of measuring societal impact. At the Wuppertal Institut, transformative research approaches and innovative methods of assuring their scientific quality are being developed. This is done in cooperation with leading national and international institutions in the field of transdisciplinary sustainability research.

See at: <http://wupperinst.org/en/research/transformative-research/>.

About the Author



Dr. Maja Göpel is head of the Berlin Office of the Wuppertal Institut. For the past 20 years she has been following the quest to find out why humans collectively do not create the sustainable societies that they individually state to wish for. This took her back and forth between theory and practice, reflection and change making in different sectors. She visited six universities in four countries for a Ph.D. in global political economy and a diploma in media and communications and still enjoys lecturing and learning. For several civil society organizations she served as a campaigner, advocate, and expert in world trade, climate change, financial reform, and sustainable development. From 2006 to 2012 she helped start up the *World Future Council*, created its *Future Policy Award* celebrating integrated policy solutions and the Future Justice programme tackling today's short-termism in politics and economics.

This enabled work with change leaders from all walks of life, took her around the world and into EU and UN policy-making. In 2013 Maja went back to research with the *Wuppertal Institut* where her work focuses on the role of mind and paradigm shifts in transformation processes and the translation of large system change analysis into local change maker strategies. She is a member of the Club of Rome and the Balaton Group and currently serves on the steering committee of the German Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the scientific advisory boards of *terre des hommes Germany* and *Development and Peace Foundation*. Her daughters are 1 and 4.

Among the selected English publications are:

“Shifting paradigms: unpacking transformation for climate action; a guidebook for climate finance and development practitioners, working paper, Wuppertal Institute, 2014, at: <http://epub.wupperinst.org/frontdoor/index/index/docId/5518>;

“Navigating a new agenda: questions and answers on paradigm shifts and transformational change, working paper, Wuppertal Institute, 2014, at: <http://epub.wupperinst.org/frontdoor/index/index/docId/5517>;

“The Responsibility to Prevent: Early Warning Systems to Protect Future Generations”, in: M.C. Cordonier Segger, S. Jodoin (Eds.) *‘Sustainable Development, International Criminal Justice and Treaty Implementation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013);

“The Tragedy of our Growth Saga”, in: F. Hinterberger, E. Pirgmaier, E. Freytag, M. Schuster (Eds.): *Growth in Transition* (London: Earthscan, 2011): 147–153;

“Shared responsibilities and future generations: beyond the dominant concepts of justice”, in: Council of Europe (Ed.): *Towards a Europe of shared social responsibilities: challenges and strategies*, Trends in social cohesion No. 23 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2011): 135–155, at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Trends/Trends_23_EN.pdf;

“Guarding our Future: How to Protect Future Generations”, in: *Solutions*, 1,6, 2011: 62–70: <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/821>;

“Formulating Future Just Policies: Applying the Delhi Sustainable Development Law Principles”, in: *Sustainability*, 2,6 (2010). 1694–1718; reprinted in *Indian Economic Journal*, 57,4 (2010), at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/2/6/1694/pdfhttp://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/2/6/1694/>.

Her recent German publications include:

“Warum wir der Zukunft einen Platz am Verhandlungstisch geben sollten: zukünftige Generationen in der Post-2015-Agenda”, in: Michéle Roth (Ed.): *Globale Trends 2015* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2015): 155–160;

“Vordenker einer nachhaltigen Gesellschaft: Karl Polanyi und die “Große Transformation”, in: *Gaia*, 23,1 (2014): 70–72, at: <http://epub.wupperinst.org/frontdoor/index/index/docId/5276>;

“Ombudspersonen für zukünftige Generationen: Diktatoren oder Bürgervertreter?”, in: Bernward Gesang (Ed.): *Kann Demokratie Nachhaltigkeit?* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014): 89–108;

“Mitweltkommunikation 2030 als Beitrag zur Bürgerbeteiligung: Themen, Akteure, Methoden”, in: Paul Bellendorf (Ed.): *Nachhaltigkeit gestalten: Trends und Entwicklungen in der Umweltkommunikation* (München: Oekom, 2014): 359–367.

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About this Book

Sustainable development is the 21st Century's wicked problem. For over 40 years, the world has known about ecological limits to economic growth and social limits to economic inequality. Yet, our attempted solutions—mostly more efficient technologies—have reversed few unsustainable trends. So sustainability advocates now call for a *paradigm shift*, *Great Transformation*, *radical change* or *system innovations*—changes which evolve the current design of incentives, policies and institutions.

This book describes the path ahead. It combines system transformation research with political economy and change leadership insights when discussing the need for a *great mindshift* in how human wellbeing, economic prosperity and healthy ecosystems are understood, illustrating its nature through mapping pioneering practices and their commonalities.

Maja Göpel places individuals and their world views centre stage and shows why empowering individual's through *transformative literacy* is essential for the Great Transformations ahead to lead to more sustainability. She presents the case for *radical incremental strategies* in the socio-ecological-technical systems which humans shape the planet's future.

This book

- Combines a scientific critique of what needs to change and why (here: the economic paradigm) with an equally scientific discussion of how this change can happen and who can engage in it (here: system transformation theory).
- Brings a political economy lens into sustainability transition research that highlights how system innovations cannot be understood without addressing economic drivers, vested interests and power relations.
- Puts human transformative literacy centre stage when proposing radical incremental transformation strategies for large-system change.
- Showcases empirical assessments of pioneering movements working for a recoupling of economic processes with nature and human wellbeing.
- Provides an easily accessible introduction to system transformation research and key aspects of an emerging new economic paradigm for sustainability.

Contents

1 Introduction—2 What Political Economy adds to Transformation Research—
3 Why the Mainstream Economic Paradigm Cannot Inform Sustainability
Transformations—4 Mapping an Emerging New Economic Paradigm in Practice—
5 How to Work a Great Mindshift for Sustainability Transformations

Wuppertal Institut—About the Author—About this Book

On this book: http://afes-press-books.de/html/SpringerBriefs_APESS_02.htm