

# Economic interpretation of sustainability (weak vs strong approach)



#### Plateforme de durabilité

La HES-SO s'engage pour une durabilité forte. Elle mène de nombreux projets dans le but d'activer la transition vers une société durable.







# LA DURABILITÉ FORTE, QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST?

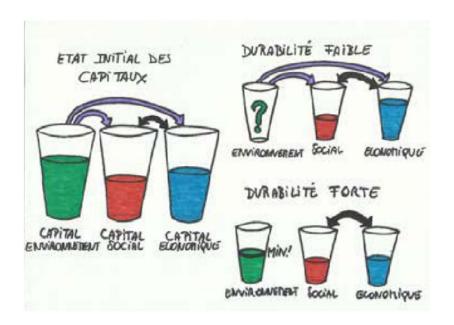
La durabilité est un mode de développement qui consiste à répondre aux besoins du présent sans compromettre la capacité des générations futures à répondre aux leurs. Afin d'identifier les différents besoins, la durabilité s'appuie sur trois piliers : l'environnement, l'économie, le social.

Lorsque l'on parle de durabilité forte, on part du principe que ces trois piliers ne sont pas interchangeables : on se doit de respecter les limites planétaires. Concrètement, cela signifie que dans un modèle de durabilité forte, il est inconcevable de détériorer l'environnement en compensant avec une plus-value d'ordre économique par exemple. L'environnement et le vivant constituent la condition de base sans laquelle aucun acquis social ou économique ne peut exister, et doivent ainsi être préservés en priorité.

# **VERS UNE DURABILITÉ FORTE** DANS LE TOURISME



## > «Weak» vs «Strong» sustainability» - illustration



A weak approach to sustainability is difficult to maintain in the tourism sector, since the attractivity of touristic sites or destinations is based in particular (not only) on a high-quality environment and landscapes.

For its viability on the long term, the tourism sector therefore needs strong sustainability, i.e. to maintain sufficient, high-quality environmental capital.

http://strategie.tourismewallonie.be/servlet/Repository/CGT\_CahierTourisme13.PDF?ID=37837



## Capital Stock Model (World Bank 1994)

SD in economics is linked with the concepts of :

- Economic income is the maximum amount that an individual can consume over a period of time, without depleting its wealth (Hicks).
- Wealth is a stock of capital, which represents opportunities

C Sustainability = C economic + C social + C natural

SD is respected when it is possible to live on the interest on the longterm without reducing the capital.

(Baranzini, 2018)



# > 2 interpretations of the model : «Weak» vs «Strong» sustainability

The capital stock model raises the issue of the exchangeability of capital stocks that characterises and differentiates sustainability approaches:

#### Weak

for SD, the <u>total capital</u> stock (total wealth) should not decrease

→ Substitution; monetary evaluation

#### **Strong**

for SD, the stock of <u>each form of capital</u>, especially the stock of natural capital, must be kept intact.

→ Complementarity; precautionary principle; no need for monetary valuation

(Baranzini, 2018 & FEE/SUB/FEA, 04/12)

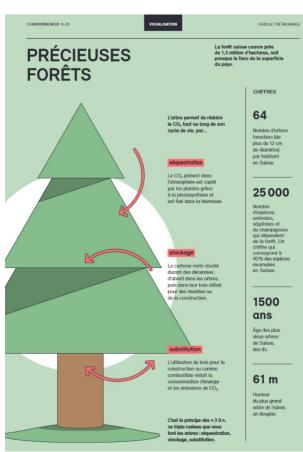


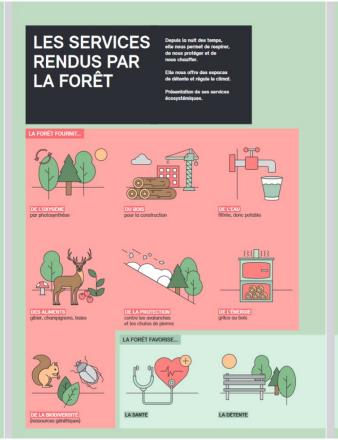
#### 4. Can we put a price on nature?

It's estimated that 25% of plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. Would putting a price on nature help protect biodiversity? <u>Video here.</u>

#### Forest ecosystem services and the intrinsic value of nature are difficult to quantify









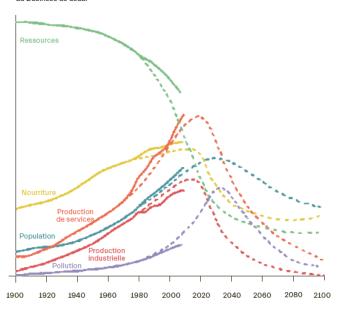


# The misuse of gross domestic product (GDP) to measure well-being or quality of life: Main limitations

#### **Economic Growth**



Halte à la croissance : le scénario standard du Rusiness as usual



Le rapport du Club de Rome modélise les conséquences possibles du maintien de la croissance économique sur le long terme. Différents sofhanis sont conçus, dont celui du Business as usual, très proche de la situation actuelle et qui, en franchissant les limites physiques de la nature, amène à l'effondrement de la société humaline. Réel (jusqu'à 2010)

Growth makes it possible to raise the standard of living and consequently the well-being of the population.

#### **BUT**

This is accompanied by issues related to the use of natural resources and climate change

(Ferro Luzzi et Weber, 2021, p. 4)

# **Gross Domestic Product (GPD)**



Traditionally, growth is measured by the increase in GDP

GDP is the total value of all final goods and services produced within a region (country or canton) during a given period (usually a year or a trimester).

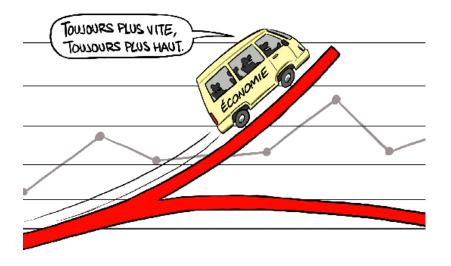
Synthesizes in a single figure the value in monetary terms of economic activity 

measures the value of production over a given period

The growth rate is the rate of variation between gross domestic product (GDP) at the start of the period and GDP at the end of the period.

### Limitations of GDP as a measure of well-being and quality of life (1)





Since GDP measures the market value of goods and services, anything that does not have a market value is excluded

**2.** Focuses on the quantity of goods and services and much less on quality

Image: lexpress.mu

### Limitations of GDP as a measure of wellbeing and quality of life (2)



- 3. Does not give importance to the value of the national heritage in general and of natural resources in particular, on the contrary ...
- **5.** Does not allow to approximate the well-being of a territory because it does not take into account the mobility of production factors.

**4.** do not provide any information on the **distribution of wealth.** No information on inequalities.

Does not measure the things that contribute to well-being, but somehow measures the ability to obtain the things necessary for well-being.

# From an SD perspective, the focus is on the measurement of well-being.

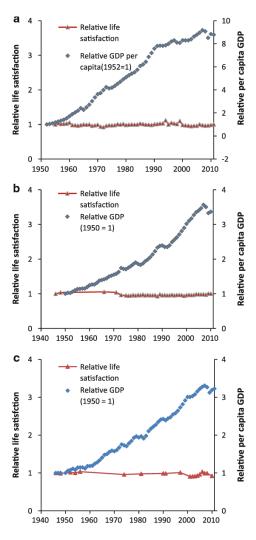
The graphs on the right show the evolution of GDP per capita and life satisfaction.

a: Japan (1952-2011)

b: UK (1946-2011)

c: USA (1946-2011)

(Pretty J. (2013: «The consumption of a finite planet.» Environmental and Ressource Economics 55, 475-499, cité dans Baranzini, 2018)



M. Rodier



### > Current considerations

In recent years, there has been a willingness to use other indicators

- Not exclusively based on monetary dimensions
- Who do not measure only the general level
- Are taking into account <u>inequalities</u>
  - Verticals: between the top and bottom of social classes
  - Horizontal: between groups in society (e.g. men and women)
- Which take into account <u>environmental impacts</u>

(Ferro Luzzi et Weber, 2021, p. 4)

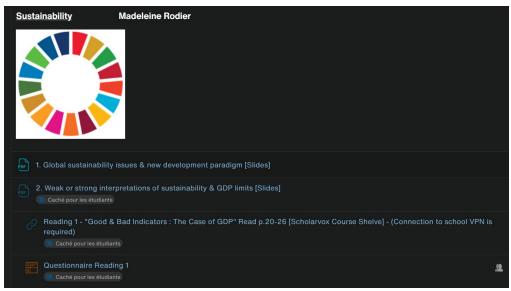
# MEASURING TOMORROW

Accounting for Well-Being, Resilience, and Sustainability in the Twenty-First Century





#### Mandatory reading and questionnaire for next course





# > Fondamental question

Should we grow? And if so ...What needs to grow?

# **Workshop indicators**



At the country level, what would be the indicators allowing you to assess the sustainable development or well-being of population?

#### To do:

- Determine 10 indicators
- Place them on the SD scheme
- At least 1 per area

#### Organisation:

- 7 groups (as per in Finances)
- Fill group corresponding scheme in Teams
- Time available 15 minutes
- Shared feedback

