



Towards Strong Sustainable Consumption

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Sustainable consumption teaching series

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(Mis-) Understandings of Sustainable Consumption

If different people talk about Sustainable Consumption it appears they have a different understandings what “consumption” stands for

- Household consumption (consumption habits, electrical equipment)
- Consumption in economic terms (private consumption + public consumption)
- Resource consumption (business and industries are also consumers)

Sustainable Consumption has to reflect *RESOURCE* consumption

→ if not discussions and the suggestions for solutions might get lost in marginal instead of relevant impacts

(Mis-) Understandings of Sustainable Consumption

very typical suggestions – but if at all a little bit less unsustainable

- switch off the light and stand by appliances
- buy energy efficient appliances, smart metering
- avoid plastic bags, buy products with eco-label

less typical suggestions – but still less unsustainable only

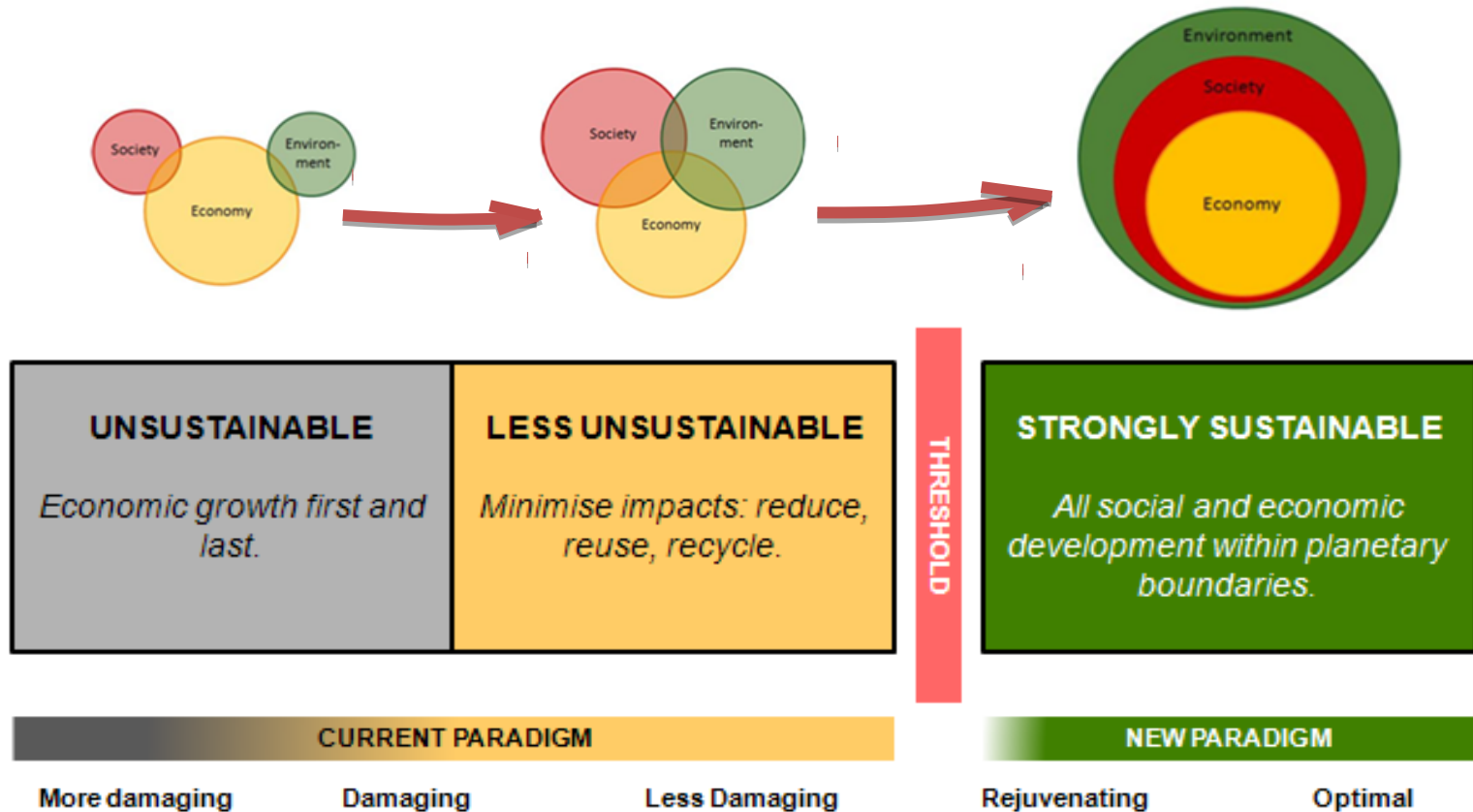
- care for good isolation
- take a shower not a bath
- lower/higher room temperature

rarely considered but much more important

- live on less m²
- reduce animal products
- avoid car use and flights

(Mis-) Understandings of Sustainable Consumption

We urgently have to move beyond the less unsustainable



Adjusting the focus: from weak to strong Sustainable Consumption

Weak Sustainable Consumption (Green Consumerism)	Strong Sustainable Consumption
Technological solutions	Technological and social innovation
Relative decoupling	Absolute reductions within sustainability limits
Corporate responsibility	Corporate accountability
Efficiency	Sufficiency and efficiency
Prices solve shortage of resources	Reallocation of resources towards basic needs
Peanuts – small changes	Big Points – most important areas
Supporting Sustainable Consumer Procurement	Limiting unsustainable options
Demand side management (markets greed)	Supply side management (available resources)
Green products	Sustainable life styles (and sustainable livelihoods)
Market activities count	Including non-market activities
Quality of life (hurry for better life)	Basic needs (contentedness and search for good life)



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