

CONVERGE

Rethinking growth in the light of Contraction and Convergence

Simon Milton/Edina Vadovics
GreenDependent Institute, Hungary

grIndependent
Intézet



Contents

- About the CONVERGE Project
 - ‘Contraction and Convergence™’
 - Limits and Equity – ‘Just Sustainability’
- Research about Initiatives
 - Overview of initiatives studied
 - Some illustrative examples

grIndependent

CONVERGE

What is the CONVERGE project?

- ▶ Title: Rethinking globalisation in light of Contraction and CONVERGENCE
- ▶ Funded by the EU (FP7)
- ▶ 4 year research programme (2009-2013)
- ▶ Focusing on the exploration of **‘Equity within biological planetary limits’**
- ▶ 8 Partner organizations in 5 countries
 - ✓ UK – Schumacher Institute, University of Bristol
 - ✓ Hungary – Szent Istvan University, GreenDependent Institute
 - ✓ Sweden – University of Lund, The Natural Step
 - ✓ Iceland – University of Iceland
 - ✓ India – Social Change and Development

grIndependent

CONVERGE

The origins of CONVERGE project

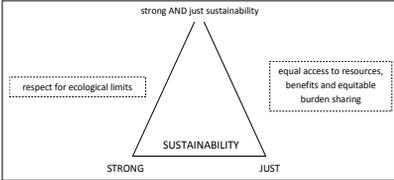
- ▶ Partly inspired by **Contraction and Convergence™**
 - ▶ Science-based, global climate policy framework
 - ▶ Proposed by Aubrey Meyer at ‘The Global Commons Institute’ (GCI) (Meyer, 2000)
 - A) Recognition of planetary limits - *Establishing a full-term contraction budget (a ‘cap’) for global emissions of CO2*
 - B) Equity-based burden sharing - *sharing of this budget as a pre-distribution of entitlements that result from a negotiable rate of linear convergence to equal shares per person globally by an agreed date*
 - *“Achieving the goal of the climate treaty [to stabilize Greenhouse gas emissions] inevitably requires Contraction & Convergence”* (Waller Hunter, UNFCCC Executive Secretary)

Combines recognition of limits with equity-based burden sharing approach

grIndependent

CONVERGE

Framework and rationale for CONVERGE project research

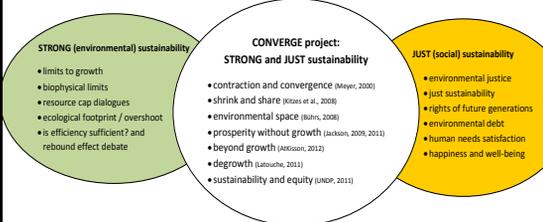


- ▶ *“The literatures on human development and sustainable development ...have long been separate”, and...*
- ▶ *“the majority of the sustainability discourse tends to neglect, if not outright ignore intragenerational equity issues”* (Hayward, 2006)

grIndependent

CONVERGE

Where does the CONVERGE project fit?



STRONG (environmental) sustainability

- limits to growth
- biophysical limits
- resource cap dialogues
- ecological footprint / overshoot
- is efficiency sufficient? and rebound effect debate

CONVERGE project: STRONG and JUST sustainability

- contraction and convergence (Meyer, 2000)
- shrink and share (Ross et al., 2008)
- environmental space (Wain, 2009)
- prosperity without growth (Jackson, 2009, 2011)
- beyond growth (Jackson, 2012)
- degrowth (Kallis et al., 2011)
- sustainability and equity (UNEP, 2011)

JUST (social) sustainability

- environmental justice
- just sustainability
- rights of future generations
- environmental debt
- human needs satisfaction
- happiness and well-being

grIndependent

CONVERGE

Summary – what is sustainability in this framework?

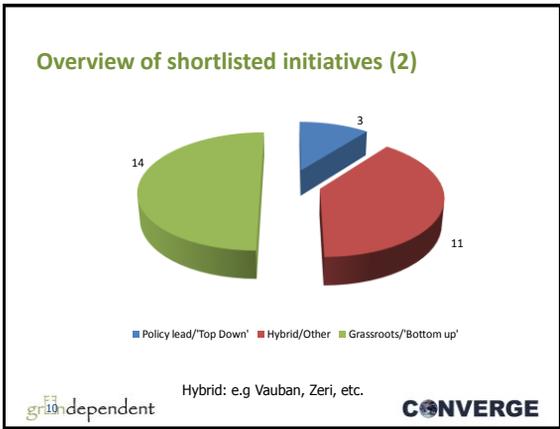
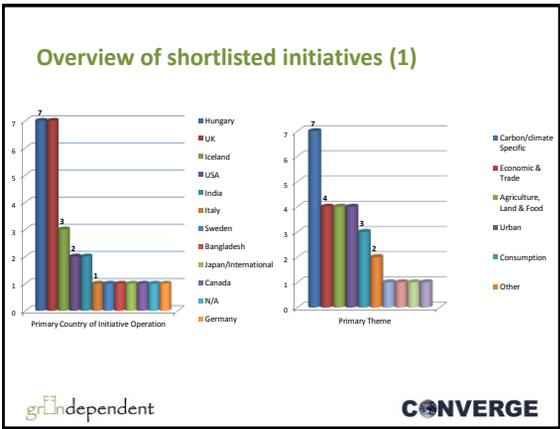
- ▶ **Shrink and share:**
„Sustainability is the possibility of all people living rewarding lives within the means of nature.“
- ▶ **Environmental space:**
„...recognition of limits and a strong equity principle (people living now and future generations)...“
- ▶ **Prosperity without growth:**
„The vision of sustainable development in terms of a strong, healthy and just society able to flourish within the ecological limits of a finite planet...“
- ▶ **Beyond growth:**
„...everyone, in every country, has the opportunity to experience quality of life, happiness, and well-being while living within the boundaries of what our planet can physically sustain...“
- ▶ Recent (2011) **Human Development report** by UNDP: Sustainability and Equity

grIndependent **CONVERGE**

GreenDependent’s work in CONVERGE: initiatives illustrating Contraction and Convergence

- ▶ Aim:
 - ✓ Identify and analyze initiatives illustrating contraction and convergence from around the world, and
 - ✓ Through them show how contraction and convergence works in practice (if at all)
- ▶ The aim was not to assemble a representative database of initiatives but to illustrate variety:
 - ✓ Developed and developing
 - ✓ Top-down and bottom-up
 - ✓ Themes (carbon specific, faith based, agriculture, corporate, etc.)
- ▶ Number of initiatives studied:
 - cc. 200 on initial list
 - 51 selected for initial study
 - 28 selected for detailed study

C&C criteria
C&C criteria, scope and impact



GreenDependent’s Research

- ▶ Studying the initiatives from a variety of perspectives
 - ▶ Themes/governance/beneficiaries and participants/scale/barriers/evolution, etc.
- ▶ Most importantly: Contraction and convergence aspects
 - ▶ An index was developed to evaluate the ‘contraction’ and ‘convergence’ elements of our shortlisted initiatives (based on Agyeman’s “Just Sustainability Index”).

grIndependent **CONVERGE**

Example initiative 1: The Converging World (UK)

- ▶ What is it about?
 - ✓ UK based charity (2007)
 - ✓ Started from a community project (Chew Magna)
 - ✓ CO₂ offsetting and donations channelled to developing country projects (e.g. wind turbines)
 - ✓ Profit generated used for further sustainability work
 - ✓ Aim of connecting communities
- ▶ C&C elements

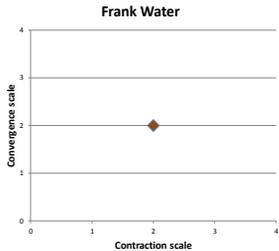
The Converging World is plotted at approximately (3.5, 3.5) on the graph.

grIndependent **CONVERGE**

Example 2: Frank Water (UK)



- What is it about?
 - UK based charity (2005)
 - Focuses on sale of 'ethical' bottled water/water related products in the UK
 - profits go to fund new clean water facilities in villages in India
 - Aware of environmental sustainability issues and phasing out sales of bottled water in favour of free-fill scheme
- C&C elements



Frank Water

Convergence scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

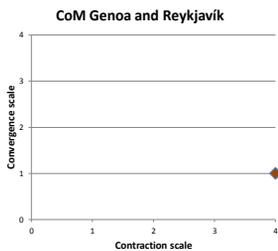
Contraction scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

grIndependent

Example 3: Covenant of Mayors (I, HI)



- What is it about?
 - European Commission Policy initiative
 - Each signatory city makes a voluntary commitment to reduce its CO2 emissions beyond the target of 20% by 2020.
 - Requires that cities submit a Sus. Energy Action Plan
 - Measures typically involve local transport, public and private buildings, renewable energy sources and innovative technologies
- C&C elements



CoM Genoa and Reykjavik

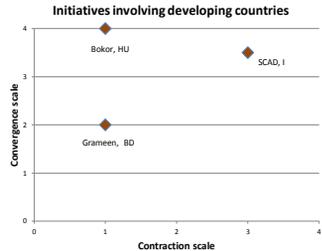
Convergence scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

Contraction scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

grIndependent

Some initiatives involving 'developing' countries

- Within developing: Grameen Bank, SCAD kitchen gardens
- Connecting developing and developed: Bokor (faith based)
- Common challenge: need for growth, but with limits in mind



Initiatives involving developing countries

Convergence scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

Contraction scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

grIndependent

Conclusions

- Contraction and convergence: often appear separately in initiatives – “cross-fertilization” is needed, promotion of both aims are necessary
- Contraction and convergence do **not mean the same in developed and developing countries** (developed: mostly contract, developing: grow but with limits in mind)
- Contraction and convergence needed **across scales**, i.e. it is needed at all levels: within communities, towns, regions, countries, ... at the global level (even within EU research projects... 😊)




THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

THERE IS AN ELECTRONIC **CONVERGE** BOOK COMING...

Contact details:
Project website: www.convergeproject.org

Author emails:
Edina Vadovics: edina@greendependent.org
Simon Milton: simon@greendependent.org




References Used

- Agyeman, J., Bullard, R., and Evans, B. (Eds) (2003). Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World Urban and Industrial Environments. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Atkisson (2012). Life Beyond Growth. 2012 Annual Survey Report of the Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy, and Society. Available from: <http://alanatkisson.wordpress.com/2012/02/29/life-beyond-growth/>
- Bühns, T. (2008). Institutionalising Environmental Space at the Global Level. Forum on Public Policy. Accessible from: <http://forumpublicpolicy.com/summer08papers/archivesummer08/buhns.pdf>
- Hayward, T. (2006). Human Rights vs Emissions Rights: Climate Justice and the Equitable Distribution of Ecological Space. Ethics and International Affairs, 21(4), 431-450.
- Jackson, T. (2009). Prosperity without growth. Economics for a finite planet. Earthscan books. ISBN-10: 1844078949, ISBN-13: 978-1844078943.
- Kites, J., Wackernagel, M., Loh, J., Peller, A., Goldfinger, S., Cheng, D., & Teo, K. (2008). Shrink and share: humanity's present and future Ecological Footprint. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, 363(1491), 467-475.
- Latouche, S. (2010). Farewell to Growth. Polity Press, UK, ISBN: 978-0-74564-617-6, 180pp. (Hungarian translation: 2011)
- Meyer, A., (2000). Contraction and Convergence: The Global Solution to Climate Change, Schumacher Briefings 5, Green Books, Schumacher Society.