



SOCIAL SCIENCES CONTRIBUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

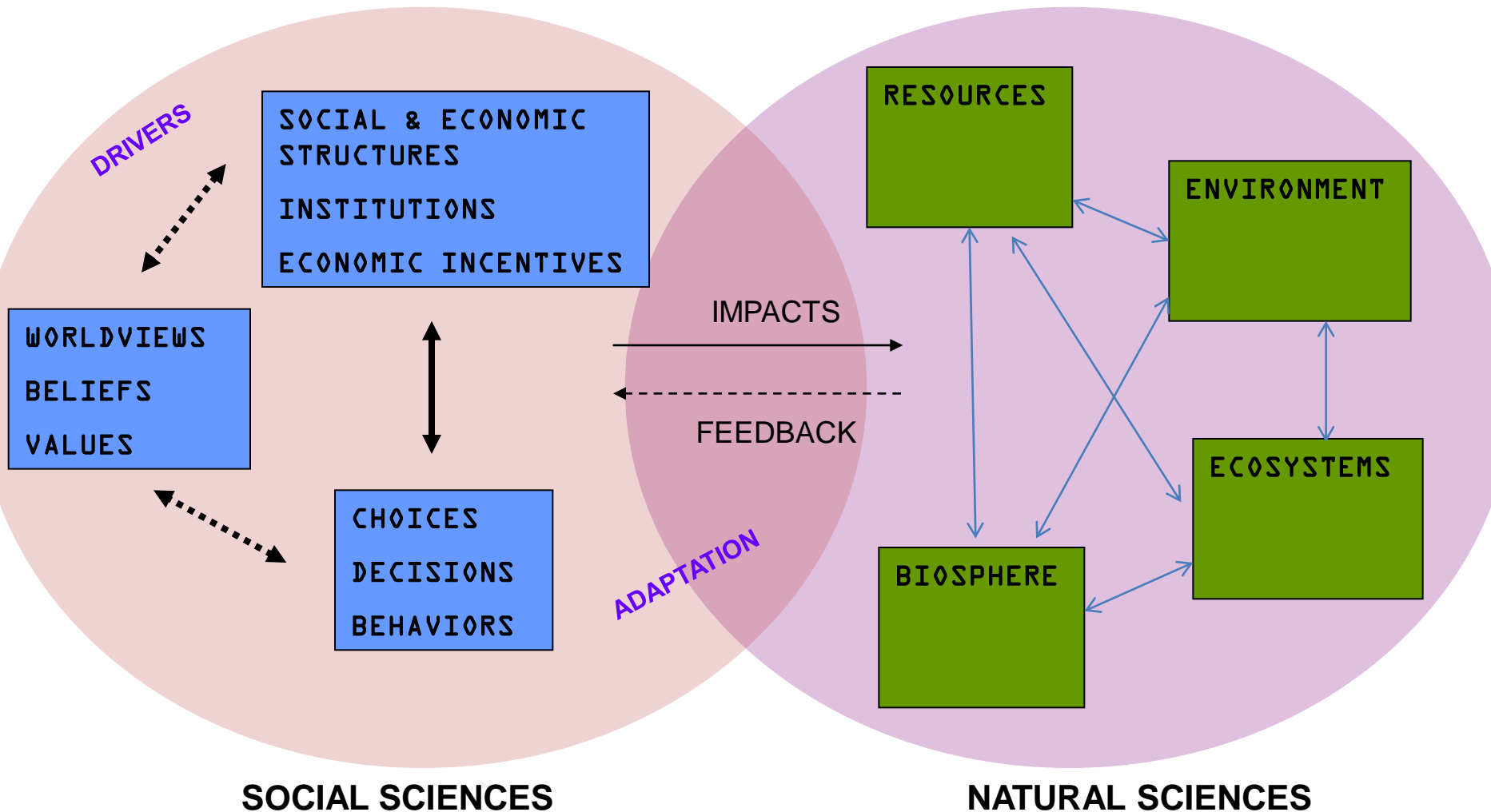
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COUPLED NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM





IPCC CALLS FOR MORE SOCIAL RESEARCH

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report “questions requiring further research”

- human behaviour evolution
- scenarios of how societies will develop in the future
- other social sciences topics



WHAT IS THE PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY?

Little research on the interconnections between:

- altered beliefs and values
- changing social and economic structures
- new behaviours
- socially and environmentally sustainable societies



NORMATIVE QUESTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

- What should be the goal or intended outcome of any transition?
- Based on which values and priorities?
- To what extent should the objectives of any societal changes be a consideration of efficiency and stability, or of equity and justice?
- Who gets to decide?



HOW CAN SOCIAL SCIENCES FILL THE GAPS?

- ❖ Frame questions and research agenda on the social system from within the social sciences
- ❖ assess, synthesize, and apply already-existing academic findings on these topics
- ❖ acknowledge that any discussion of societal change and transition toward sustainability or a “Green Economy” is normative, and requires wide-ranging discussion to identify the desired endpoints

Living in Denial

Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life

Kari Marie Norgaard

EXAMPLE:

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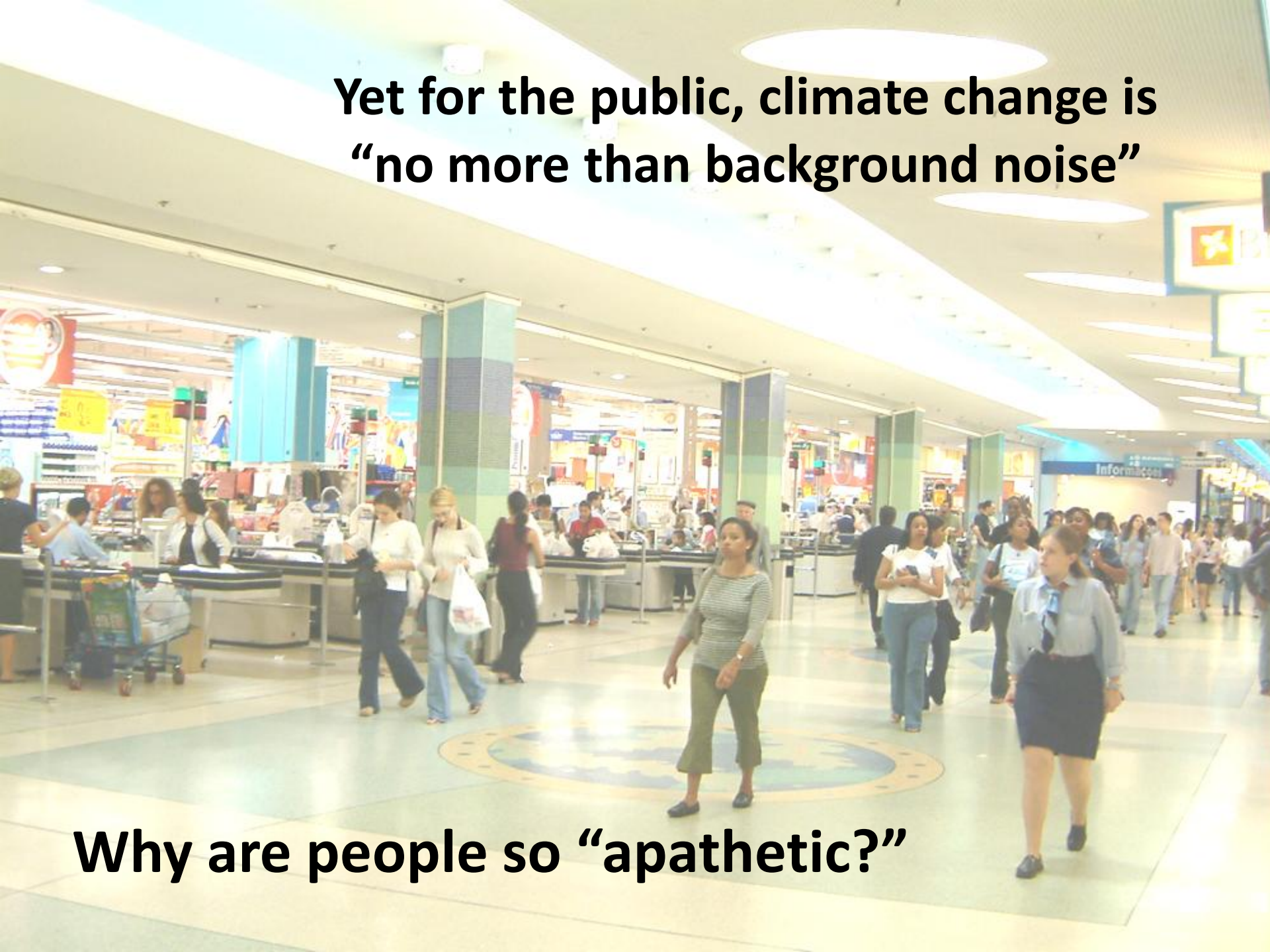
PARADOX

- Dramatic alterations to ecological systems identified by climate scientists
- Significant social consequences
- Urgency and consensus increase throughout 1980s and 1990s



**Yet for the public, climate change is
“no more than background noise”**

Why are people so “apathetic?”



INFORMATION AS LIMITING FACTOR

- “If people only knew”
 - complex science
 - media framing
 - media corruption
- “If people only cared”
 - Individualism
 - Greed



DENIAL

“People want to protect themselves a bit.”



A series of Troubling Emotions:

- Guilt
 - Individual and national identity
- Fear of the future
 - Ontological security
- Helplessness
 - Self efficacy, identity

INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

- “Various self-theories suggest that people's self-conceptions are valued and protected and that a low self-evaluation (on criteria that matter) is an uncomfortable condition which people are motivated to avoid.” Geckas and Burke(1995).

Climate change poses threats to both *individual* and *national* identity.





SOCIAL SCIENCES SURVEY RESULTS

Are there sufficient incentives for research on social dimensions of global environmental change?

	All	% of those who answered
Yes	225	22,3
No	496	49,2
Not sure	287	28,5



SOCIAL SCIENCES SURVEY RESULTS

What incentives would help facilitate social sciences research on global environmental change?

	All	%	Soc Sci	%	Env IT Eng	%
<i>The opportunity to help frame questions and research agenda in this field</i>	378	48,9	184	50,7	150	50,3
<i>Funding for research in this field</i>	679	87,8	320	88,2	268	89,9
<i>Professional recognition for the researchers engaged in this research</i>	402	52,0	191	52,6	159	53,4
<i>Better access to colleagues working on similar issues</i>	317	41,0	154	42,4	114	38,3
<i>The opportunity to form or join collaborative research projects in this field</i>	490	63,4	224	61,7	194	65,1
<i>Better access to training</i>	302	39,1	126	34,7	118	39,6
<i>Unlikely that any incentives could encourage greater participation</i>	13	1,7	5	1,4	4	1,3
<i>Additional incentives are not needed</i>	9	1,2	2	0,6	2	0,7



SOCIAL SCIENCES SURVEY RESULTS

Top issues identified:

- (1) Equity/equality; wealth/resource distribution;
- (2) Policy; political systems/governance; political economy;
- (3) Economic systems; economic costs and incentives; and
- (4) Globalization; social and cultural transitions



SOCIAL SCIENCES SURVEY RESULTS

- support for social sciences Assessment: 88 – 92%

	All	%	Soc Sci	%	Env IT Eng	%
Yes	877	90,0	413	92,2	320	88,2
No	97	10,0	35	7,8	43	11,8

- Interest in participating in Assessment:

	All	%	Soc Sci	%	Env IT Eng	%
I am interested	480	54,9	222	54,1	181	56,7
I would consider it	288	33,0	139	33,9	104	32,6
I am not interested	106	12,1	49	12,0	34	10,7



SOCIAL SCIENCES & GEC ASSESSMENT

- IHDP will conduct a thorough assessment and synthesis of existing social sciences research findings as related to global environmental change.
- Will look at relationships between
 - world view, beliefs and values
 - socioeconomic structures and incentives, behaviours
 - mechanisms of societal transition in the context of global environmental change
- Will develop culturally relevant policy recommendations on the social dimensions of societal response and adaptation.



ASSESSMENT STEPS

1. Build a network of concerned stakeholders representing governmental, policy, NGO, civil society, business, labour, communities of faith, and other interests.
2. Put together large, representative science steering committee (academics) to undertake scoping process & define questions
3. network with academics globally to undertake Assessment; set up regional offices to ensure representation
4. Conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of existing research on the social, economic, psychological and cultural drivers of behaviour and societal change, and move the science forward with a synthesis showing what it means for the questions of human adaptation to global environmental change.
5. Initiate an inclusive, multicultural global dialogue process on the relevant values and desired endpoints for any cultural and social change toward sustainability



THANK YOU!



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