Social Cognitive Model of Career Choices for Sustainability

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We have a problem!

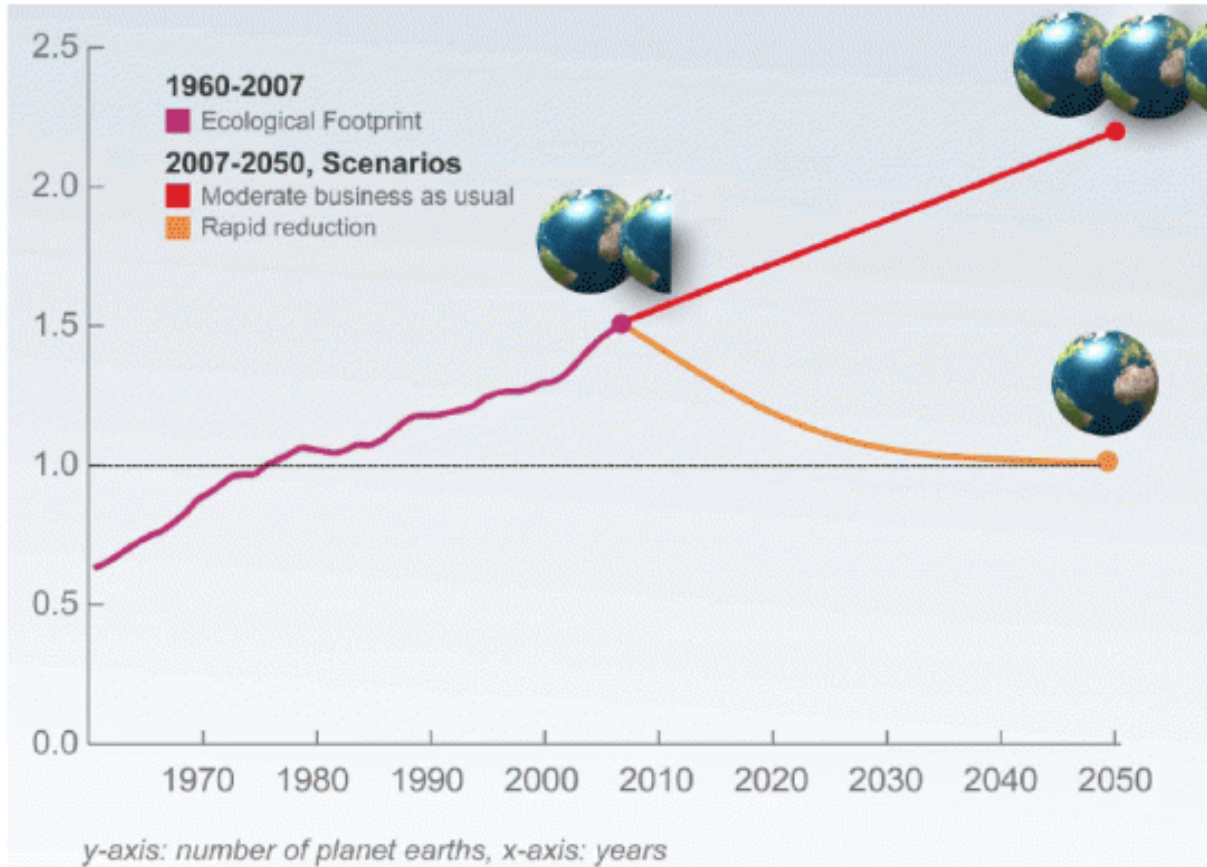y-axis: number of planet earths, x-axis: years

Figure 1: pathways into the future. How long can overshoot be sustained? What's the cost and benefit of each path?

Today we are using the equivalent of 1.6 planets to provide for the resources we use and to absorb our waste!

Growth dilemma

- if we don't resist growth we will collapse socially and economically ↔ if we pursuit it, we will kill the planet

green growth

- ***decoupling*** or continuation of economic growth with a parallel decline in material throughput

degrowth

- downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions and equity on the planet

Most of the occupations are serving the economy of endless economic growth. Work that we use to (re)create social world we live in will have to change in order for our economy to remain within the carrying capacities of our society and the environment!

Sustainable development

- development that is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987)

Economy

Society

Environment

Strong Sustainability

# Sustainable development and the world of work

- consequences for occupations required to sustain these new economic activities (Dierdorff et al., 2013):
  - increase in demand for existing occupations
  - increase in requirements for training and further skills development of existing occupations;
  - creation of new occupations.

Dexter Philip / Trinidad Express

Career guidance (CG) and goals of SD

- understanding the context of 'relations of production' is a key issues for sustainability (Uzzell, 2010)

- CG *could* have a significant role in these processes

- but this depends on the context/ideology of public policy under which CG operates (Watts, 1996)
  - focus on the individual dominates CG practices (liberal/progressive)

- role of CG practicioners should change - have social and environmental impact of their advices in mind

- Green guidance (Plant, 1999, 2014)
  - besides raising awareness and establishing training opportunities can also support informal economy (LETS)
    - action research oriented approach

- principles of social justice (Irving & Malik, 2004)

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT)
(Lent et al., 1994)
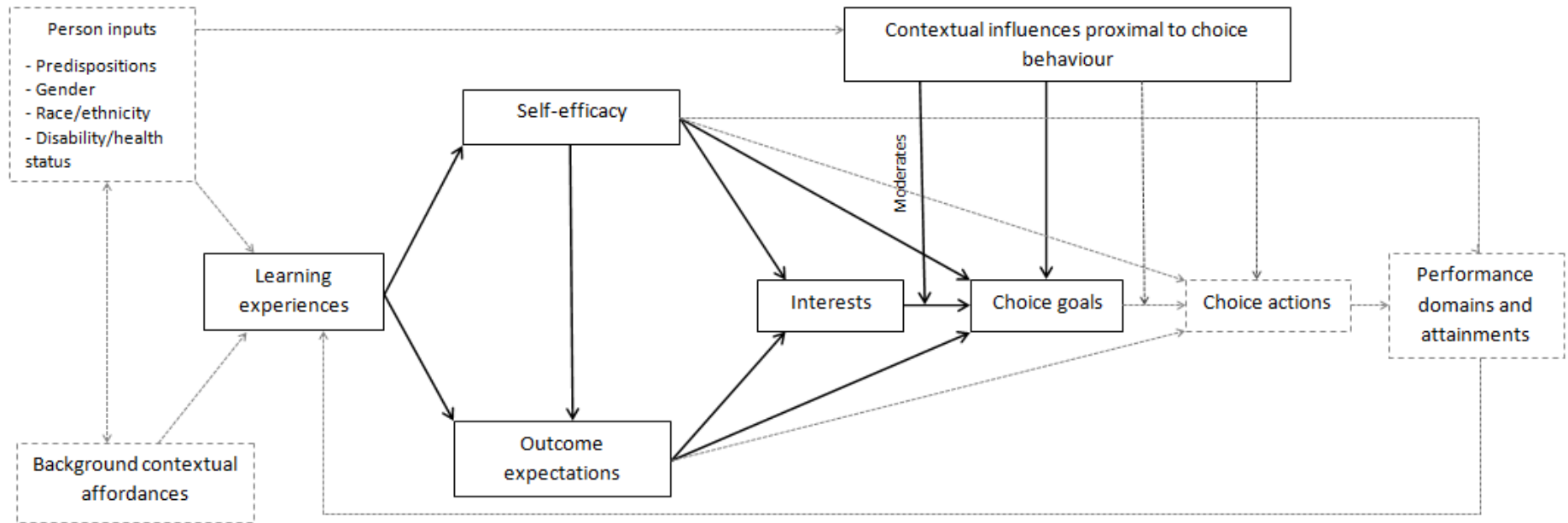
self-efficacy → beliefs about one's ability to successfully perform particular career activity

outcome expectations → beliefs about the consequences of career choice

interests → extent to which an individual likes a particular activity or occupation

career choice goals → intention or plan to pursue certain career path

Empirical support for SCCT

- several studies supported overall SCCT choice model (Lent et al., 1994; Sheu et al., 2010)

- indirect role of *contextual supports and barriers* in career choice was channelled through
  - self-efficacy (Sheu et al., 2010; Lent et al., 2001)
  - learning experiences which influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Williams & Subich, 2006)

SSCT in domain of sustainability?

- 3 models for predicting willingness to pursue career which support environmental, social and economic sustainability

- Hypotheses:
  - direct relationship among SCCT variables in predicting career goals in sustainability will hold for 3 domains of sustainability (H1)
  - indirect relationships in SCCT model will hold for 3 domains of sustainability (H2)
  - exploratory H3: contextual supports and barriers will have a direct (H3a) or indirect (via self-efficacy and/or learning experiences; H3b) role in promotion of sustainability career goals

Participants, procedure & instruments

- 582 secondary school students (413 F + 169 M) enrolled in their final grade (age 17-18)

- secondary schools from different fields of work (variability of vocational interests and future educational aspirations)

- on-line

- Instruments
  - variables of SSCT were conceptualised and measured on a very general level
  - each measure tailored to cover three domains of SD – environmental, social and economic

Instruments

Self-efficacy

I believe I would be successful in occupations dealing with environmental problems [α=.89]

I think I would be good in occupation where one needs to help other people [α=.77]

I think I would be successful in occupation dealing with protection of consumers [α=.79]

Outcome expectations

I am certain that my professional engagement could contribute to reduction of climate change [α=.86]

I think I could contribute to promotion and protection of human rights through my work [α=.85]

I believe I could contribute to socially responsible activities of businesses through my work [α=.80]

Interests

I like work activities with which I can contribute to sustainability of natural resources [α=.91]

I would like to work on ensuring equal educational opportunities and health care for all [α=.87]

I would like to devote myself professionally to reducing exploitation of workers and improving working conditions [α=.84]

Choice goals

I will choose a career in the field of environmental protection [α=.89]

I will professionally engage with social justice issues [α=.85]

I will pick a career that can have influence on reduction of workers' exploitation and improvement of working conditions [α=.91]

Learning experiences = Performance accomplishment (PA)+ Verbal Persuasion (VP) + Vicarious Learning (VL)

 I use cloth or paper bags instead of plastic when shopping (PA) [α=.80]

 Friends encourage me not to buy products from companies that do not care about their workers or the environment (VP) [α=.73]

 While growing up my parents pointed to the vanity of consumer behaviour (VL) [α=.66]

Contextual supports [α=.72] and barriers [α=.68]

- *It will be difficult to find a job in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development*

- *Friends support me in my desire to work in environmental protection and sustainable development*

Model fit

	Absolute fit indices		Incremental fit indices		% explained variance of choice goals
	χ^2	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	
ENV	42.518 (p<.001)	.189	.972	.860	62%
SOC	22,901 (p<.001)	.136	.987	.933	54%
ECON	32,794 (p<.001)	.165	.973	.867	48%

H1 & H2: direct & indirect relationships in SCCT for 3 domains of sustainability

- Environmental sustainability
  - all β for direct effects sig. at .001 except SE → PG (n.s.)
  - all indirect effects sig. at .01 except LE → PG (p< .05)

- Social sustainability
  - all β for direct effects sig. at .001 except SE → PG (n.s.)
  - all indirect effects sig. at .01 except LE → PG (p< .05)

- Economic sustainability
  - all β for direct effects sig. at .001 except SE → PG (n.s.)
  - all indirect effects sig. at .05

exploratory H3: role of contextual supports and barriers in promotion of sustainability career goals

- results are not the same accross 3 domains of SD

- environmental sustainability
  - supports and barriers did not moderate INT → PG
  - supports and barriers did moderate LE → SE as well as SE → INT and SE → PG

- Social sustainability
  - supports and barriers did moderate INT → PG
  - indirect role of supports and barriers via LE and SE was not shown

Conclusion

- SCCT model is applicable for career guidance in 3 domains of SD

- LE, SE, OE have significant contribution for development of career interests and intentions to pursue career in 3 domains of SD

- significant (in)direct effect of contextual infleunces

**It is important that CG practicioners also work on
a policy level in removing barriers and fostering
learning experiences in sustainability**