

Sustainability & Modern Society

- UCC Adult Continuing Education Seminar Series (Oct – Nov 2012)
- Economics & Politics, International Studies, Philosophy, Planning and Sustainable Development, Process & Chemical Engineering, Biological Earth & Environmental Sciences, Art & Design, Physics, Sociology, Government/Adult Continuing Education, Law



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- Status quo and (historical) context (Byrne, Chapman, Fitzpatrick)
 - over-production and over-consumption, finite global limits
 - “reductionist simple thinking”: over-specialisation in “world’ disciplinary silos”, “knowing more and more about less and less”
 - sustainability issues: supply of energy/water/food, climate change (problematic of greenhouse-gas/artificial micro-climate generation, e.g. CO₂/H/temperature) + limits of resources
 - environmental sociology: society–nature interactions
 - socio-metabolic transitions
 - cultural separation, inequality
 - science became a reductive economic knowledge
 - path theory
 - technology-economy-limited use of knowledge: e.g. GDP as measurement as measures of success

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- What is **lacking** / need for future change / (Byrne, Fitzpatrick, Gabuzda, Mullally, Ó Tuama, Parkes) – “real realisation”
 - transdisciplinary processes, integrate social triple-loop-learning
 - interconnections between different disciplines
 - shift from reductionism to complex system thinking: “dynamic self-eco-re-organisational systems” (Morin, 2005)
 - display important role of other disciplines apart from business and technology (missing parts)
 - space for “non-western” thinking / non-anthropocentric view
 - realising relationships, whole person “body and soul” engagement
 - realising natural limits of growth on planet earth
 - global ethic: Quakerism: critical approach to find equality, truth, integrity, peace, simplicity

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- **Challenges** (Brady, Byrne, Mullally)
 - over –production /-consumption
 - modern culture, impressed modernity paradigm, human environment replaced most of “real” nature
 - private behaviour: don’t forget the “fun factor” of individualistic persons where flows can change quickly vs. “serious” measures like economics / frame / structure / state / government are often not so dynamic
 - time, uncertainty, predictions
 - human urge to separate / simplify
 - ideal planning system: complex setting seems overwhelming if take into account “every”thing e.g. National Planning Policy
- **Good practices** / approaches towards strong global sustainability (Fitzgerald, Gabuzda, Mullally)
 - transition management approach (Dutch model) socio-technical-ecological systems
 - art with Nature: using visual media and art to show and change
 - transdisciplinary work: path breaking of “business-as-usual” e.g. NGOs, changes in behaviour
 - Transition Towns (Ireland)
 - Renewable self-supply-villages/municipalities (Austria)
 - Common Welfare Economy (Austria)
 - new economic system using measures of well-being in society, Environmental Sustainability Quakers (worldwide)

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- Personal overall reflections
 - involvement of public possible
 - more integrated/interactive than usual
 - better interlinked/embeddedness of different speaker contents
 - identifying an overlapping “heart of similarities“ through all disciplines
 - starting to identify strong ability to sustain, resilience (ecological, social, network, organisational, ...)