

Making it real; and inspiring hope.  
Sustainability reporting in a time of  
crisis

# 1. A case study in change



# Impetuous

If today is a typical day on planet Earth,... we will lose 116 square miles of rainforest, or about an acre a second. We will lose another 72 square miles to encroaching deserts, as a result of human mismanagement and overpopulation. We will lose 40 to 100 species, and no one knows whether the number is 40 or 100. Today the human population will increase by 250,000. And today we will add 2,700 tons of chlorofluorocarbons to the atmosphere and 15 million tons of carbon. Tonight the Earth will be a little hotter, its waters more acidic, and the fabric of life more threadbare.

The truth is that many things on which your future health and prosperity depend are in dire jeopardy: climate stability, the resilience and productivity of natural systems, the beauty of the natural world, and biological diversity. **It is worth noting that this is not the work of ignorant people. It is, rather, largely the result of work by people with BAs, BSs, LLBs, MBAs, and PhDs.** Elie Wiesel made a similar point to the Global Forum in Moscow last winter when he said that the designers and perpetrators of the Holocaust were the heirs of Kant and Goethe. In most respects the Germans were the best educated people on Earth, but their education did not serve as an adequate barrier to barbarity. What was wrong with their education? In Wiesel's words: "It emphasized theories instead of values, concepts rather than human beings, abstraction rather than consciousness, answers instead of questions, ideology and efficiency rather than conscience."

# An environmental audit



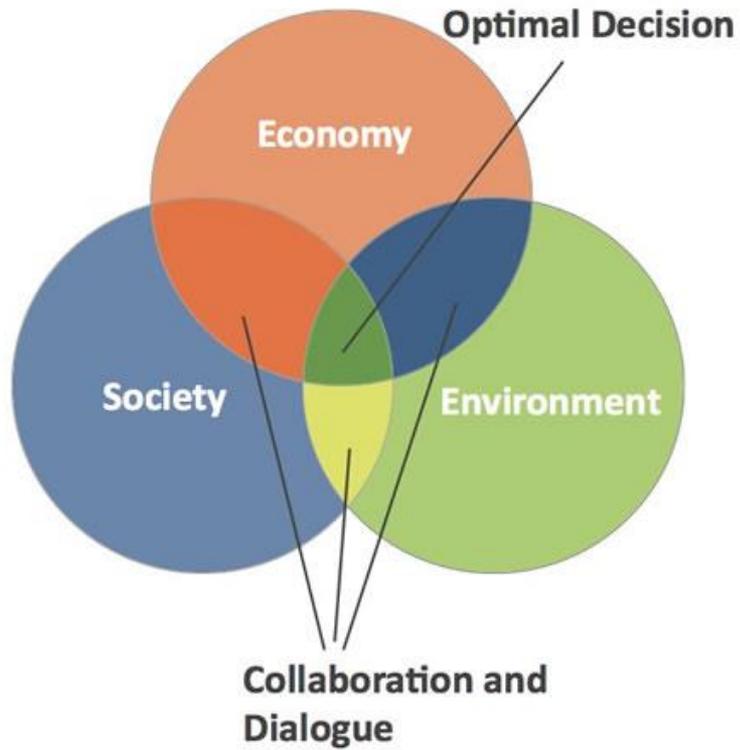
## **Preface**

There is often a feeling of inevitability associated with environmental degradation. It's human nature; a necessity for a healthy economy. People do not want to make sacrifices in the lives they've worked hard to build. The problems seem overwhelming, and often quick fixes appear the best way to deal with new environmental inconveniences. Yet sun screen will not fill the holes in the ozone, bottled water can not replace the polluted streams, and air conditioning is not the solution to global warming. The environmental situation is grave, but it will not be cured by band-aids. Environmental recovery is not a hopeless dream; it simply requires a dedication to live in harmony with the environment, and consider its protection as an integral part of one's life.

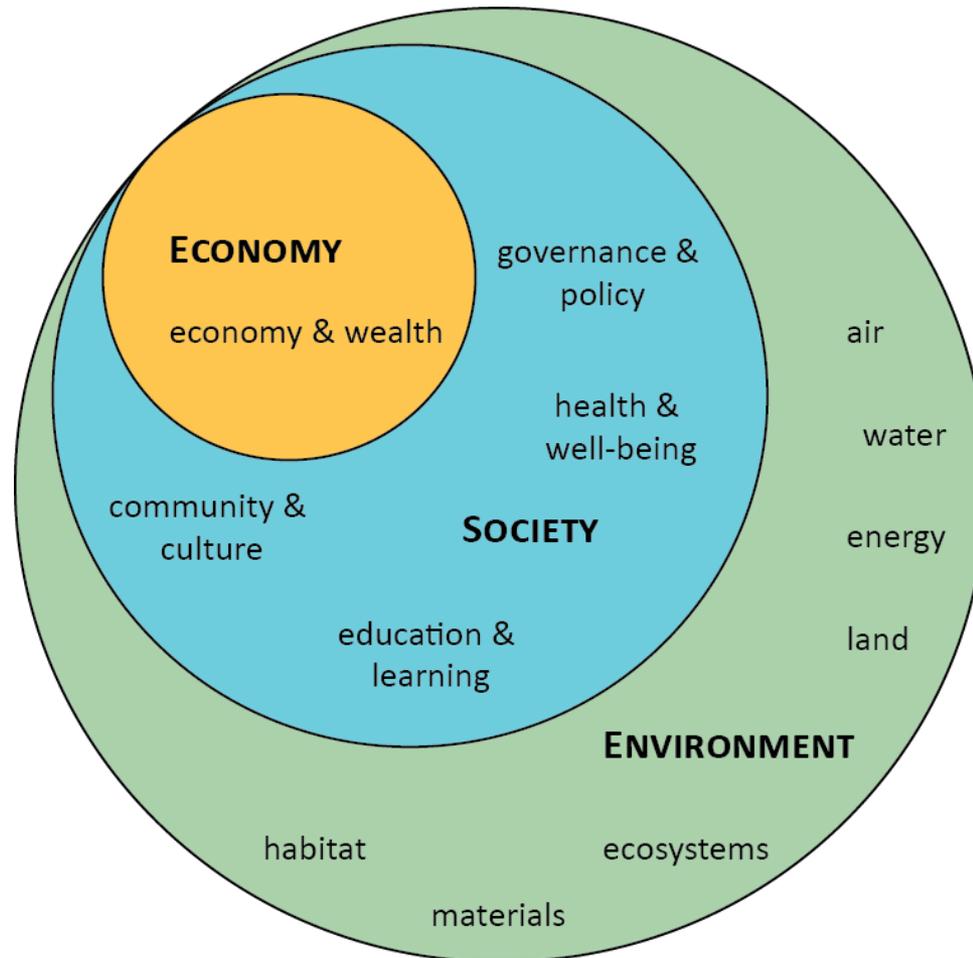
When it comes right down to it, environmentalism is simply common sense. The earth does not exist for the sole purpose of exploitation by human beings. Humans are but one species out of millions on the planet and our dependency on the environment is far greater than the environment's dependency on us. For these reasons everyone must treat it with respect. Each person must take responsibility for the choices they make and the outcomes of those choices.

This audit outlines the choices made by individuals at the University and by the University as an institution. It outlines the effects that these choices are having on the surrounding ecosystems and makes recommendations on how to decrease their environmental impact. The audit is not about guilt or sacrifice. It is about making the right choices. The right choices are those that consider not only the students of Mount Allison, but also the well being of the environment and its protection for future generations.

# A sustainability approach



# A sustainability approach



# A sustainability assessment



2003

# Campus Sustainability Assessment Framework

## PREFACE

A day in the life of a sustainable Concordian	P18
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Introduction	P22
Concordia University at a glance	P29

 health + well-being P33	 community P65	 knowledge P113	 governance P153	 economy + wealth P177	 water P227	 materials P247	 air P289	 energy P315	 land P341
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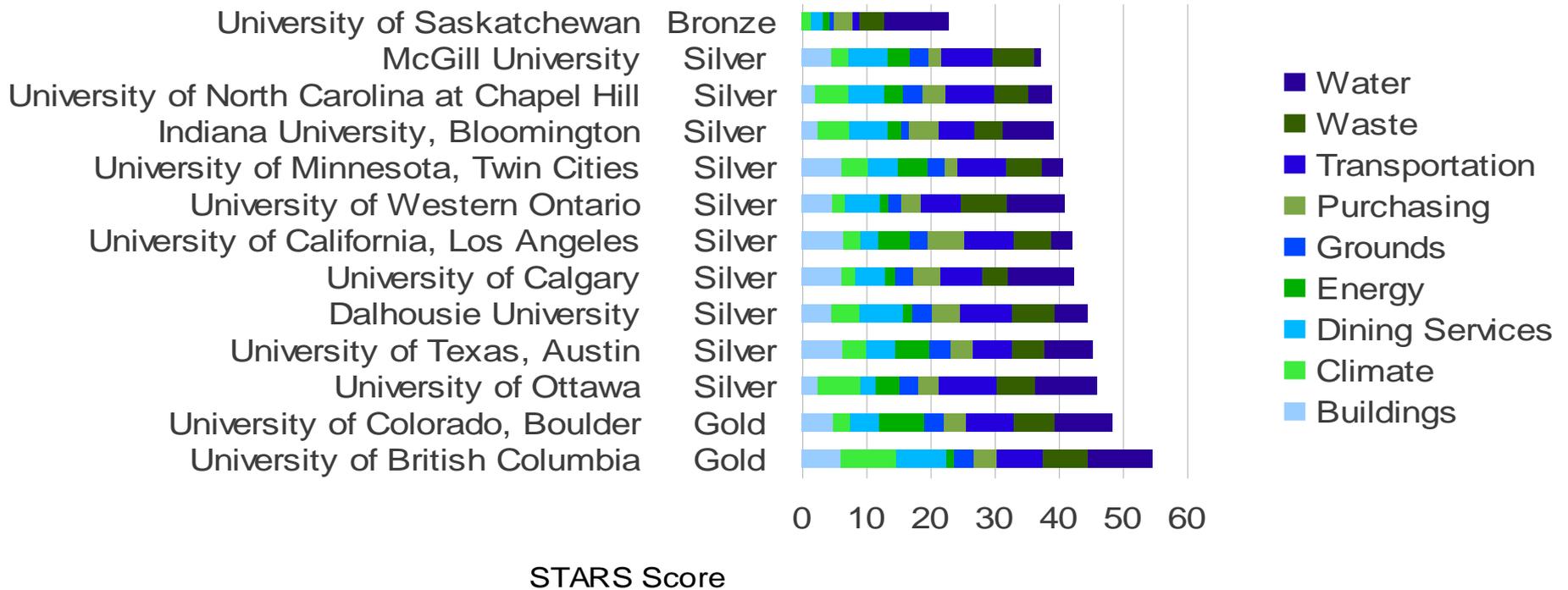
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING		COMMUNITY		KNOWLEDGE		GOVERNANCE		ECONOMY AND WEALTH		WATER		MATERIALS		AIR		ENERGY		LAND	
Recreation	P40	Involvement	P70	Training	P120	Policy	P160	Individual	P184	Consumption	P234	Buildings	P254	Indoor	P296	Sources	P322	Managed	
Food	P42	Diversity	P81	Research	P125	Implementation	P169	Institutional	P197	Management	P237	Paper	P262	Outdoor	P302	Intensity of Use	P325	Greenspace	P348
Safety	P48	Services	P90	Curriculum	P132	Monitoring	P173			Storm and Wastewater	P239	Food	P266			Management	P329	Natural Areas	P350
Health Services	P50											Equipment	P267					Intensity of Use	P351
Environment	P55											Waste	P286						

# A movement builds



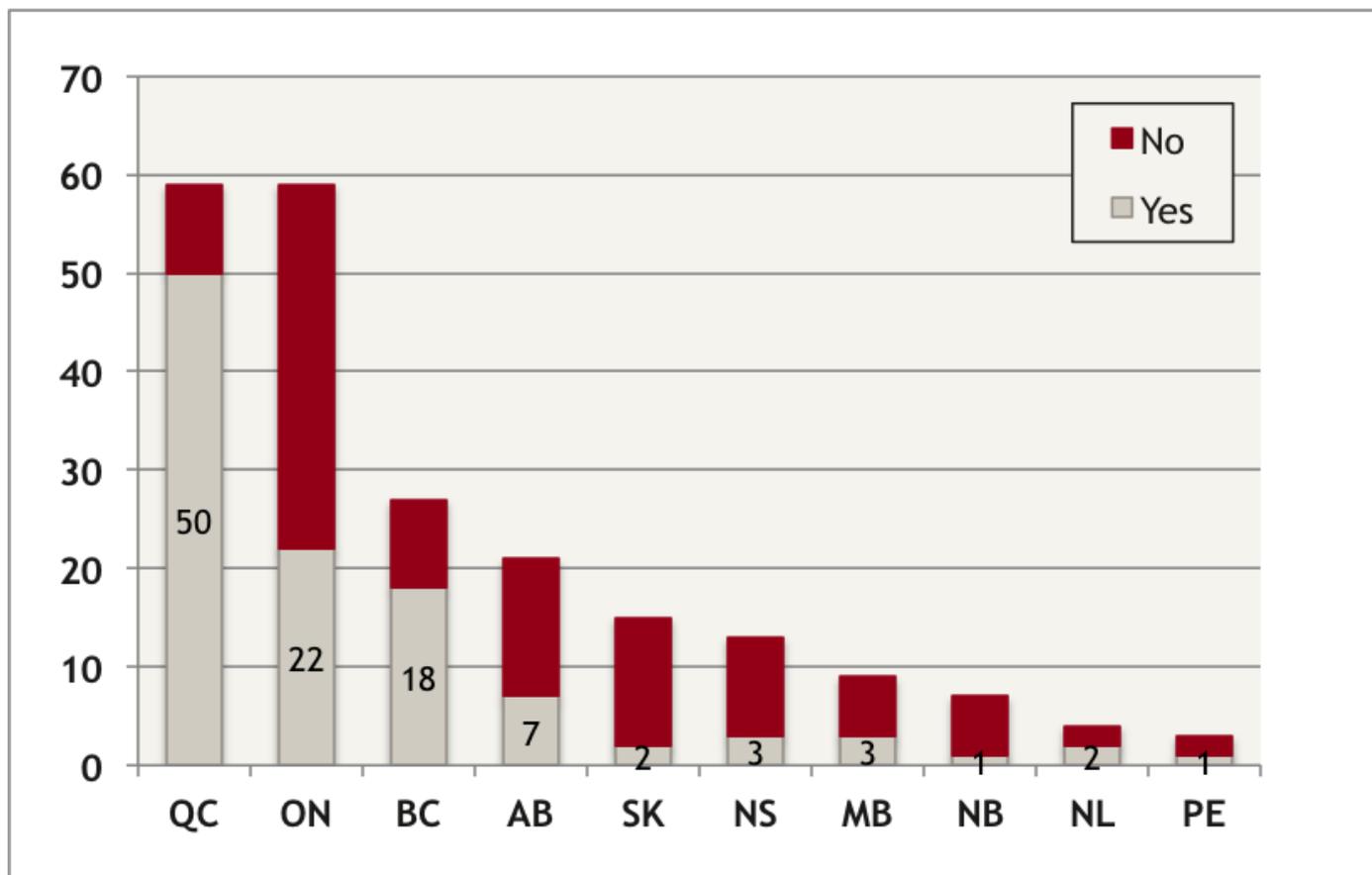
# Benchmarking

## STARS- Operations

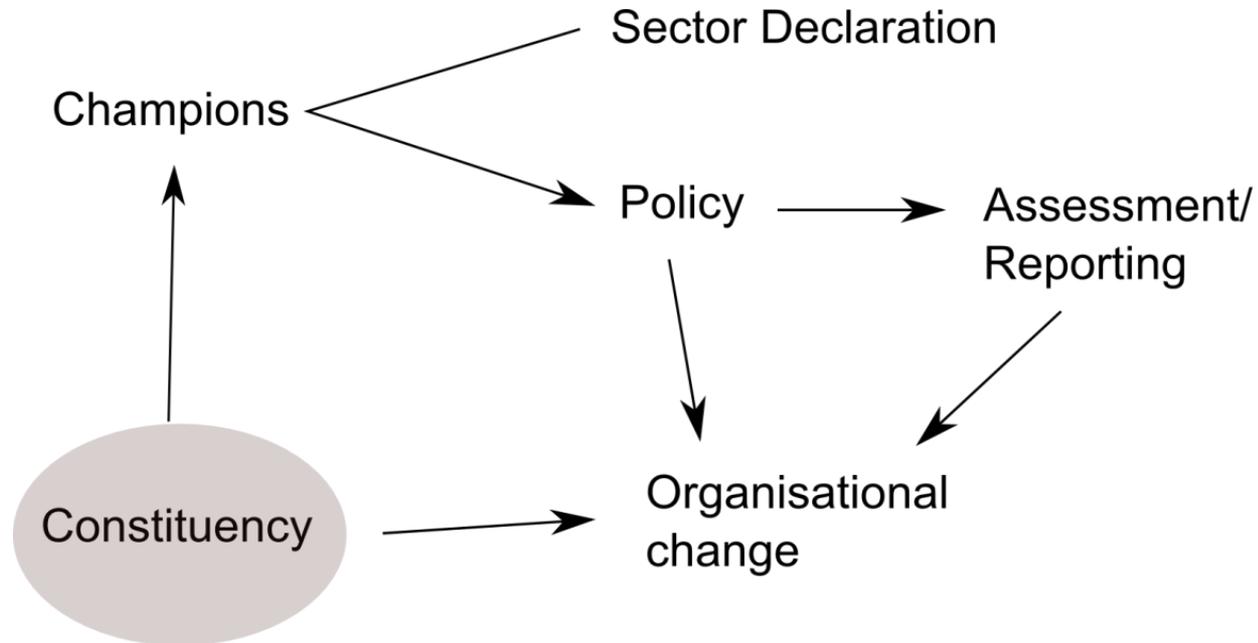


# Census

Presence of environment/sustainability policy



# The ingredients for change



## 2. Cooperatives and sustainability



# Co-operatives and sustainability

An investigation into the relationship

# Method



1

Identify  
sustainability  
'DNA'



2

Compare co-op  
principles and  
sustainability  
'DNA'



3

Compile co-op  
samples



4

Analyse  
co-ops against  
sustainability  
'DNA'

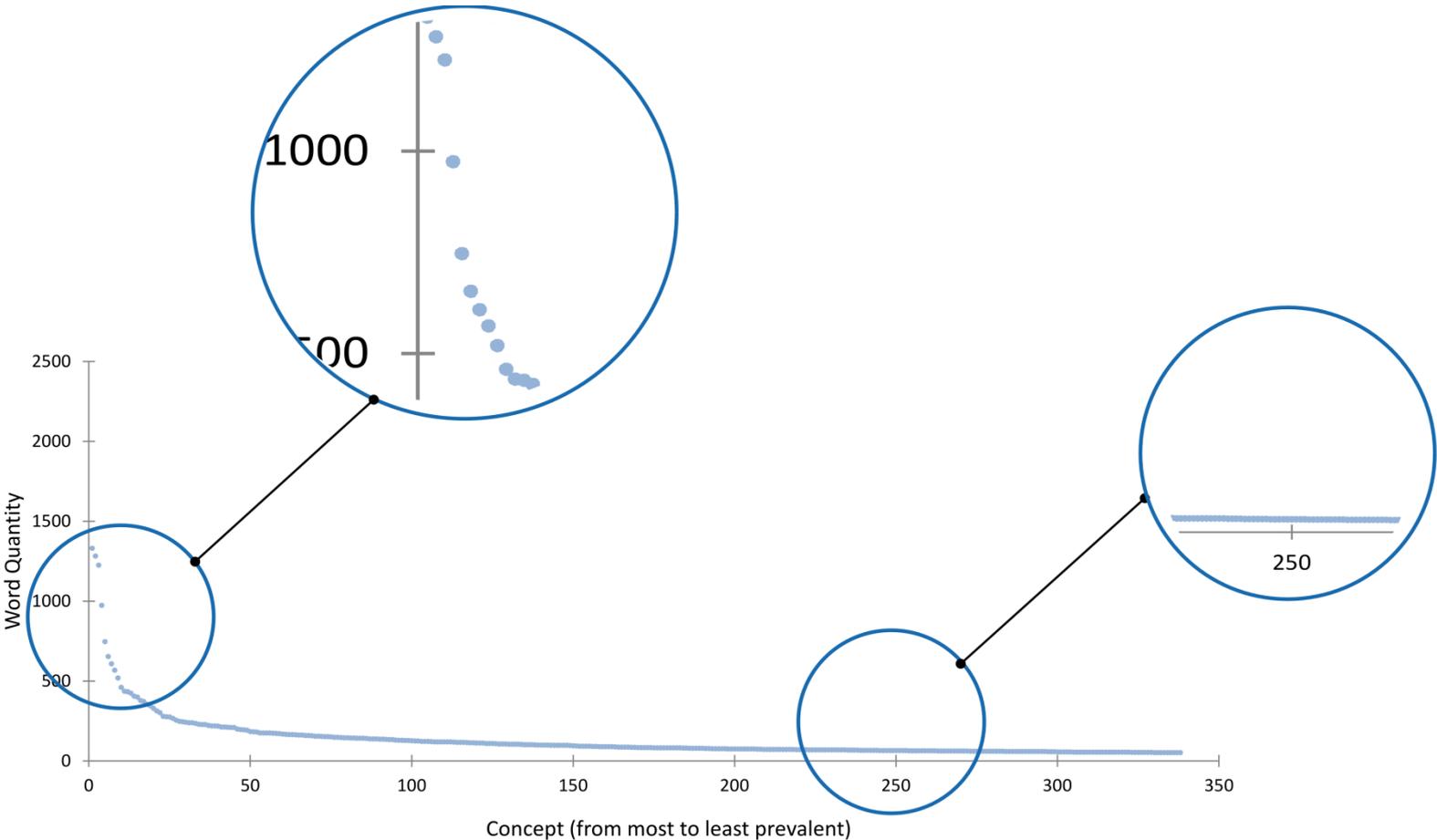
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Team  
meeting

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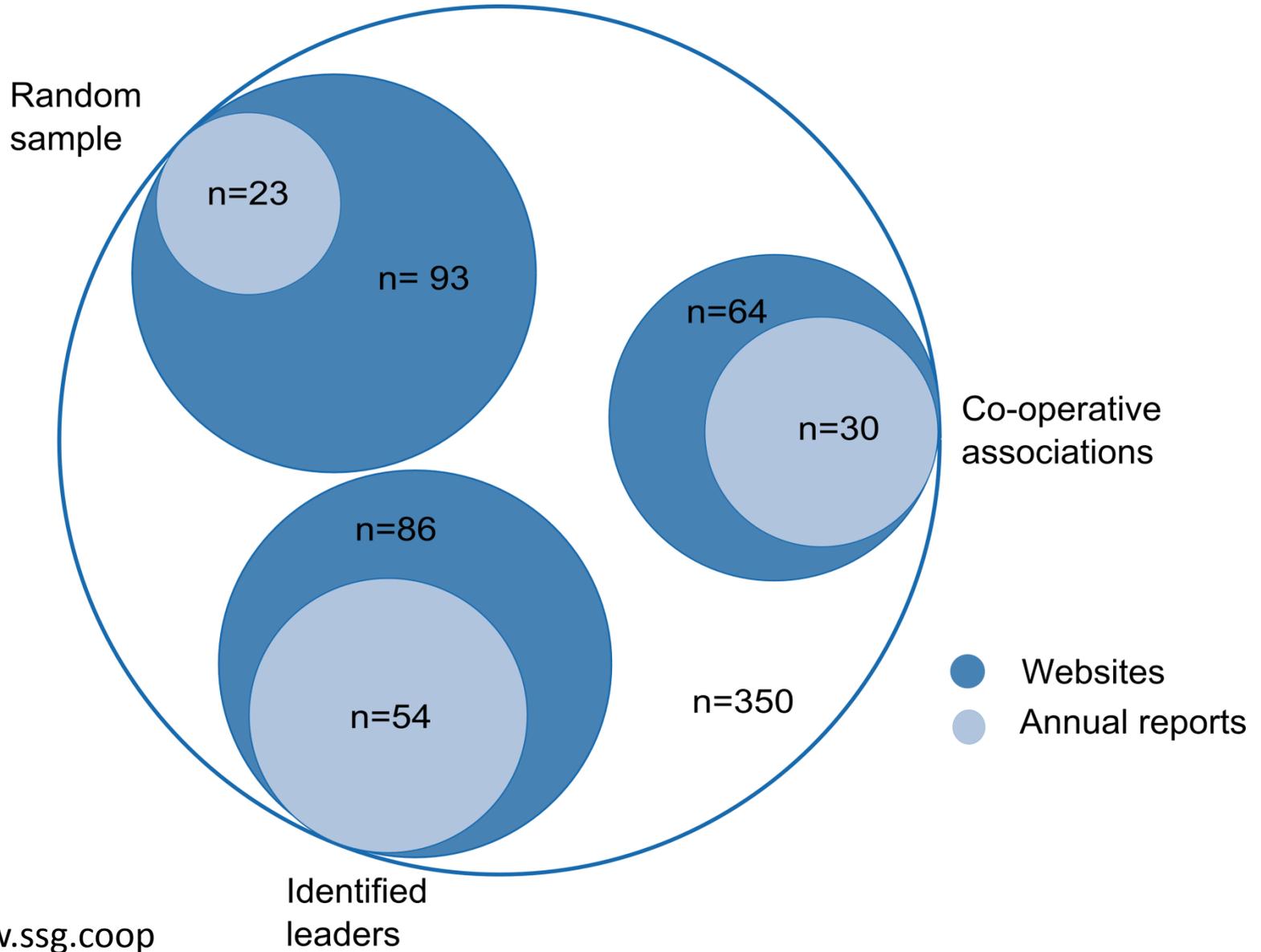
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# Frequency curves

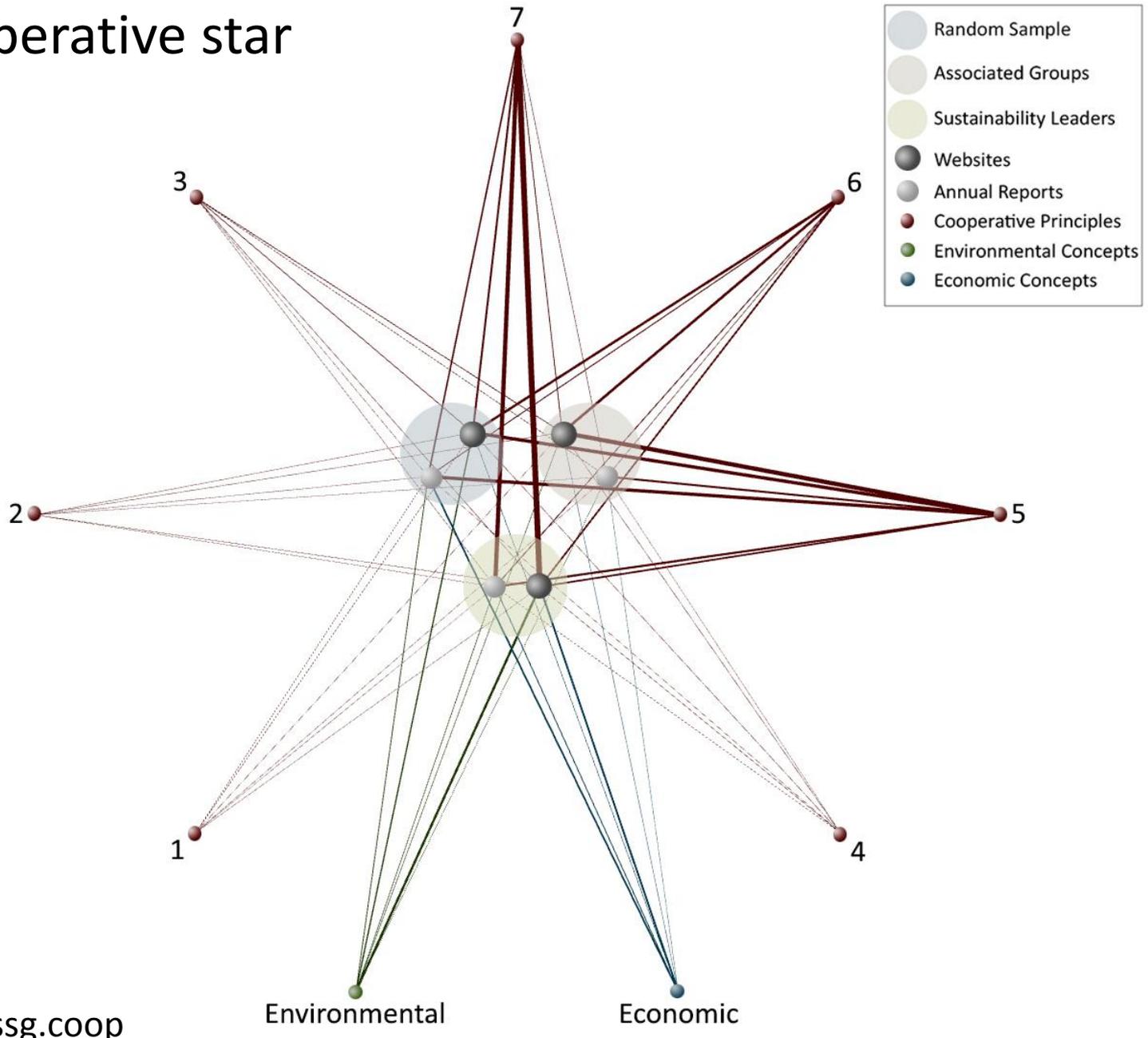




# The sample



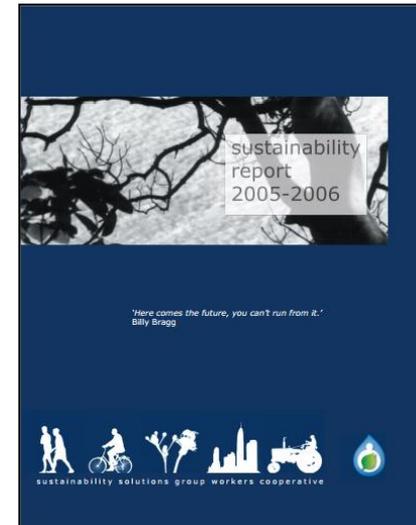
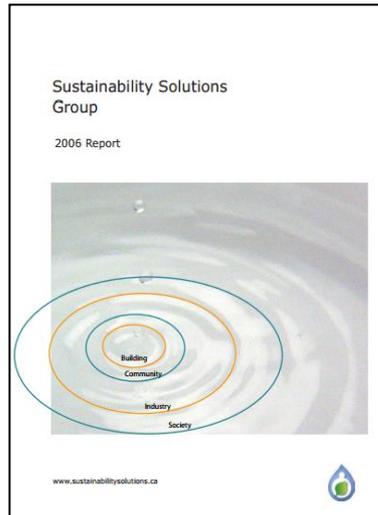
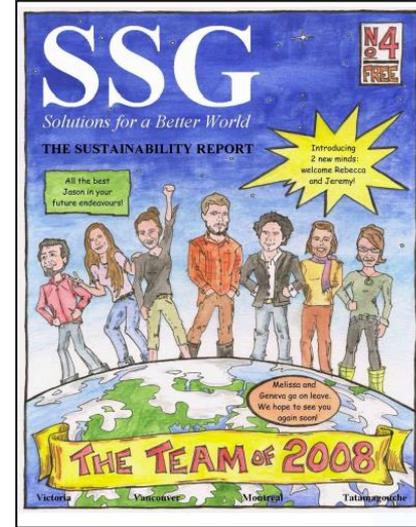
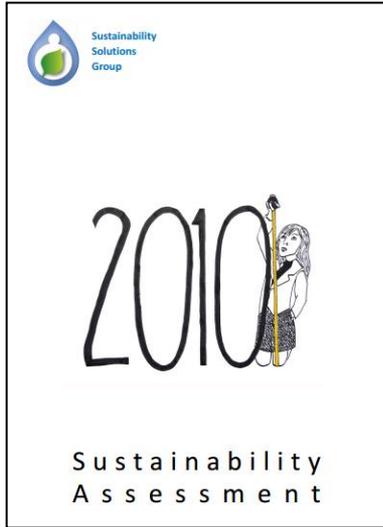
# Co-operative star



# A sustainable cooperative



# 3. Cooperatives and sustainability reporting





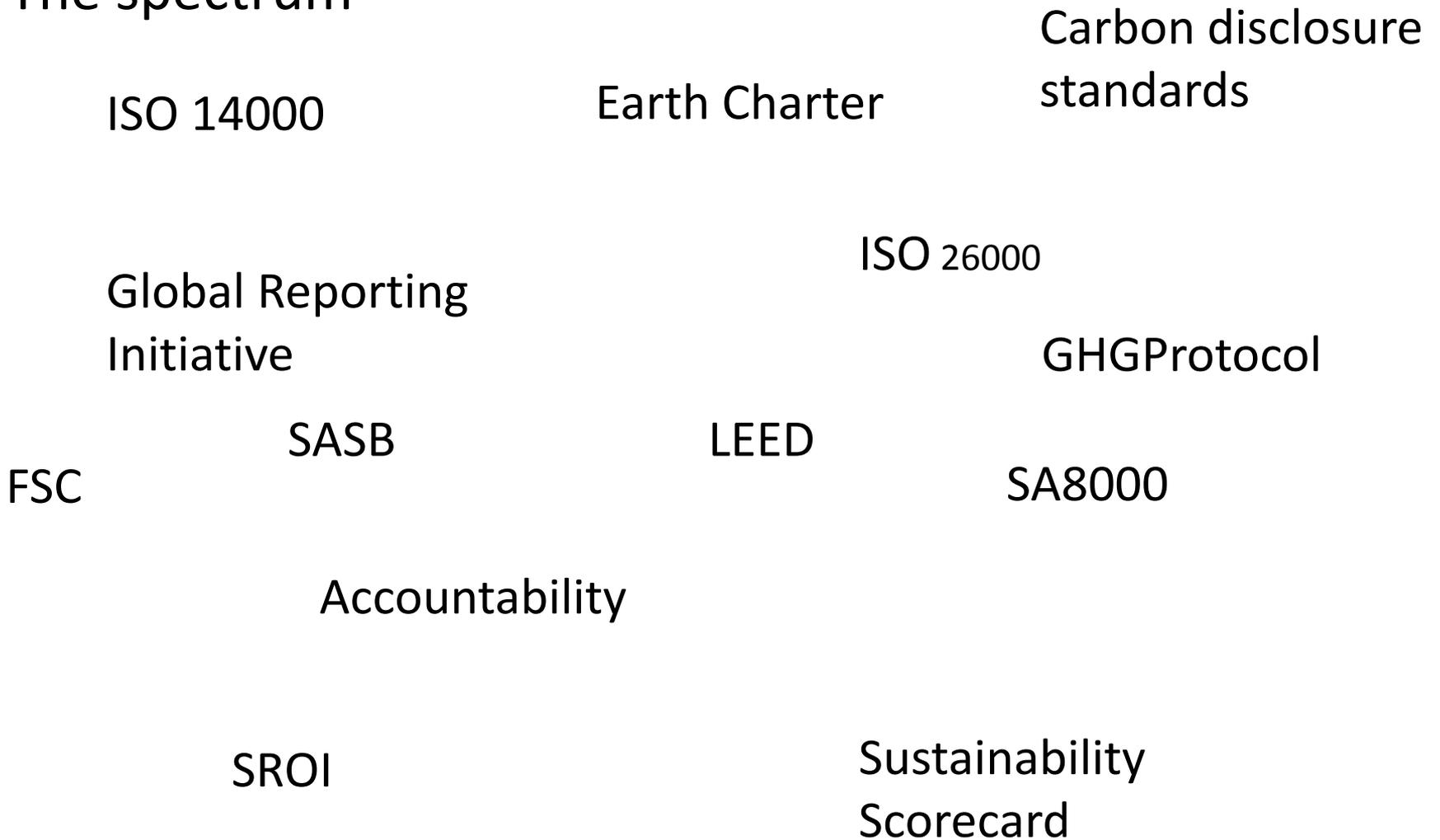
Why?

# Purpose

- Asks how companies can be less unsustainable
- Bedrock of a serious CSR management system,
- Motivates management to tackle inconvenient ethical or environmental problems
- Redefine corporate value and value creation
- Provides a better understanding of the dimensions of the problems we face
- Understanding non-financial risks and opportunities
- Conversation, debate and engagement
- Reflect on past performance and a view of the future

Source: What's the purpose of sustainability reporting? Guardian Sustainable Business blog- interviews with experts

# The spectrum



# Drivers

Stock exchanges

WBCSD

Not cooperatives

Prince's Trust

Global Compact

nef

Accounting firms

CERES

“corporate”  
ENGOs/NGOs

# Stepping back

“Remedies for social justice that merely affirm a group’s status or entitlements within an existing order must be distinguished from remedies that transform the world in ways that abolish underlying generative mechanisms of injustice”

Nancy Fraser in Carroll (2006), p. 19.

# The existing order

**Neoliberalism.** “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

While the classical liberalism, liberal-democratic project and order took care of human rights and liberties, neoliberalism is . . . a form of conservative revolution whose actors want to sink and dissolve, in a cold water of calculation, all relationships and institutions of solidarity among people (Mitrovic, 2005, p. 41).

**Hegemony.** “A social condition in which all aspects of social reality are . . . supportive of a single class or group” (Livingstone, 1976, p. 235).

## A contested space

Through “accumulation by dispossession,” Harvey (2004), neoliberalism seeks to expropriate the commons in order to extend the market.

# GRI

GRI would never have made any progress had it directly challenged the primacy of profit maximization, the legal rights of shareholders, the autonomy of corporate management, or the conventional US corporate board structure that excludes representatives of the community, the environment, or labor

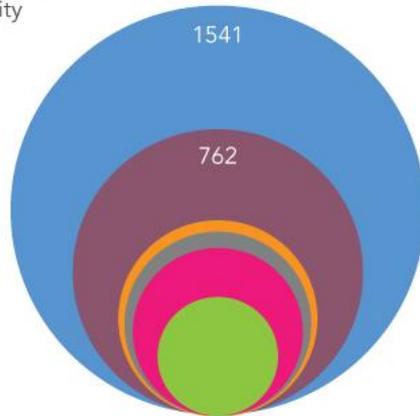
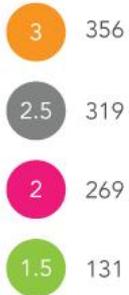
The GRI standard setters took “efforts to shape GRI as complementary to corporate and financial market needs. The strategic risk, of course, is that GRI would be co-opted and assimilated within these structures rather than transforming them. This does appear to be the emerging outcome.

Levy et al, 2010

# Losing sight of limits

Comparison of listed reserves to 50% probability pro-rata carbon budget

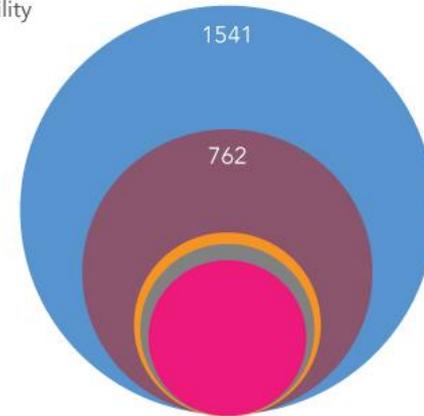
Peak warming (°C)  
50% probability



Potential listed reserves Current listed reserves

Comparison of listed reserves to 80% probability pro-rata carbon budget

Peak warming (°C)  
80% probability



Potential listed reserves Current listed reserves

© Carbon Tracker & Grantham Research Institute, LSE 2013

# A call for leadership

- The acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability
- The model preferred by people
- The fastest growing form of enterprise

Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade

# The growth dilemma

- Growth is unsustainable; not contributing to well-being
- No growth is unstable- Declining consumer demand leads to rising unemployment, falling competitiveness and a spiral of recession.

# A beacon of hope

Instead of affirming the social Darwinian prescriptions of greed and individual gain in the market place, which is at the heart of neoliberal ideology, genuine cooperatives affirm the opposite norms; human solidarity, economic democracy and collective endeavor. (Satgar, 2007, p. 74)

Within capitalist societies, the democratic structure of many worker cooperatives simultaneously embodies a critique of the dominant organization of production found in most conventional enterprises, and puts forth an outline of what an alternative society can look like. (W. Evans, 2007, p. 37)

# Return of the citizen

Consumers who together develop a critical awareness of their role as consumers and then take action to transform this relation to the world is an emancipatory process which Freire has termed *conscientizaca*, or *conscientisation* (Freire & Macedo, 1993, p. 10).



To GRI or not?

A strategic question...