

Prof. Dr. Philipp Lepenies
Latin American Institute
Faculty of Social Science

Governing by Numbers

The Role of Statistical Indicators in Transformation

Spring Campus - University Alliance for Sustainability
April 12, 2016

Sustainable Development = Transformation



Agenda 2030

Transforming Our World:
the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development

Observations

Transformation entails Redefinition of Progress and Well-Being

Modern Politics relies on Indicators

Transformation through Indicators

No Sustainable Development without Indicators

The Political Transformation to Sustainability is taking place at the national/communal level

The Role of Indicators

What we measure affects what we do....

....and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted

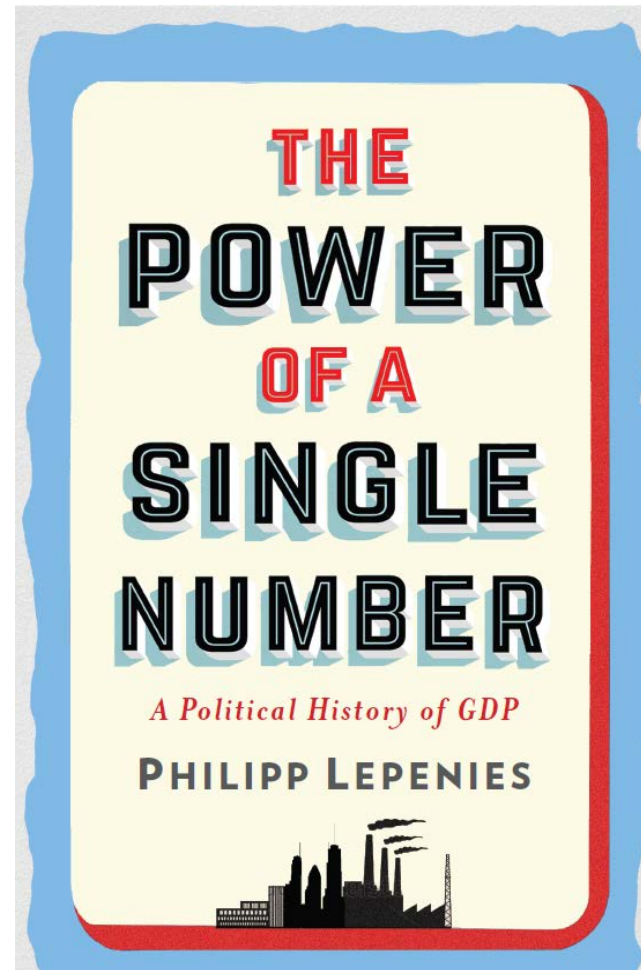
Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress
(Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission or Sarkozy Commission), 2009

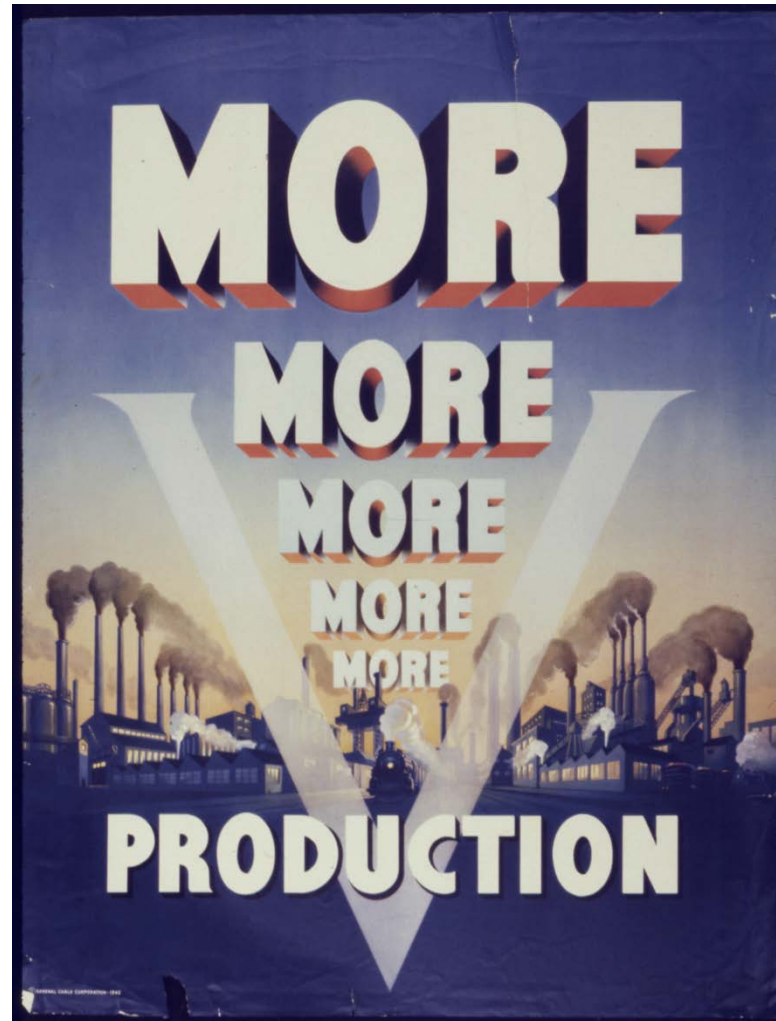
Statistical Indicators in Politics

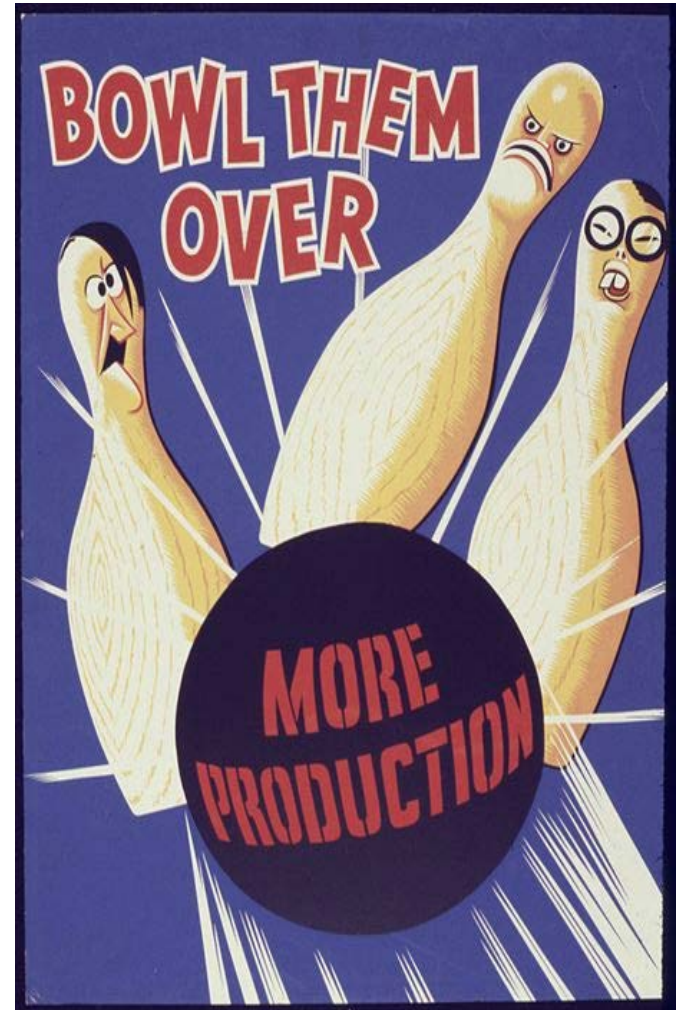
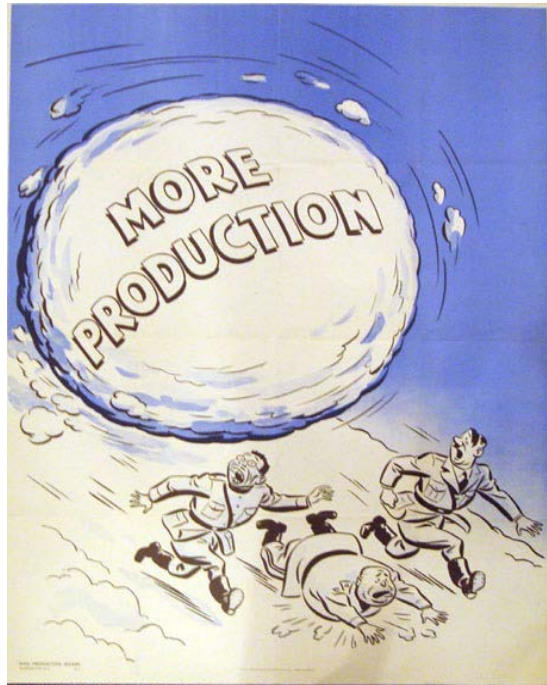
- **Performance Orientation**
- **SDGs and MDGs**
- **Results-Based Management**
- **Public Choice**
- **Neo-Liberalism**
- **Advances in Measurement (subj. Well-being)**
- **Success of GDP**

Statistics = Problem and Solution

Unique Role of GDP





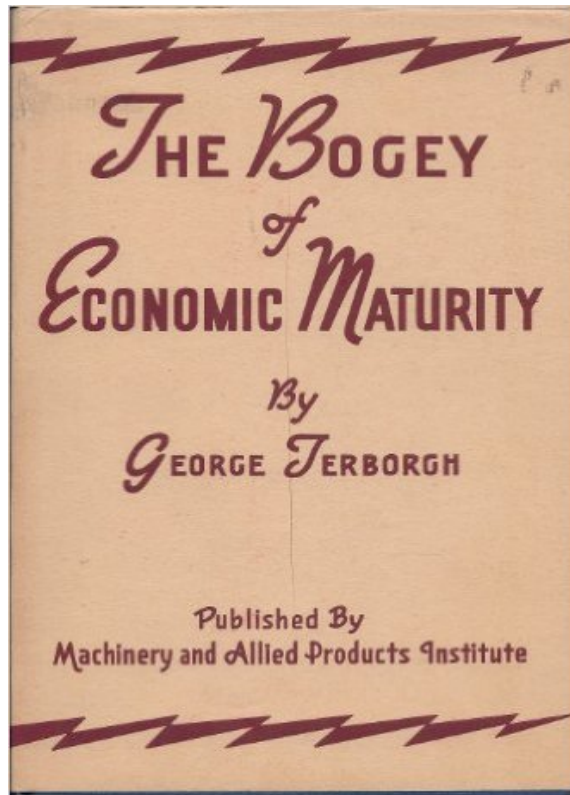


The Multiple Usefulness of GDP/GNP

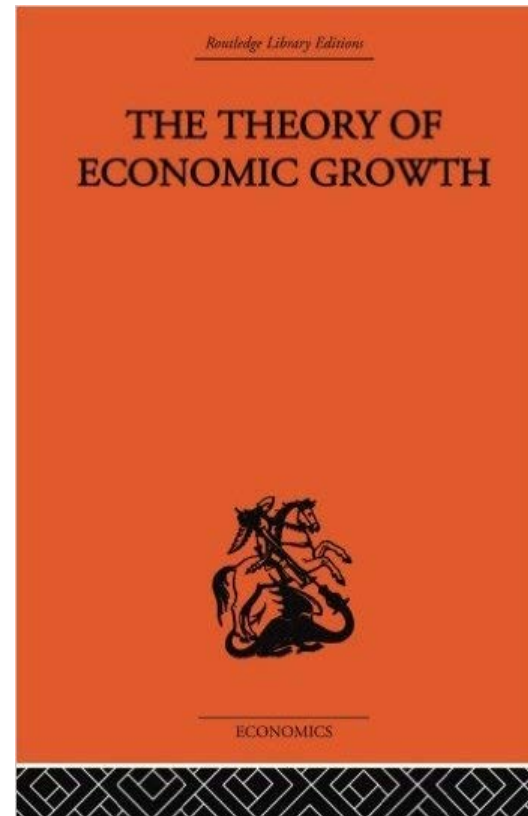
- Economic Strength
- Employment
- Material Living Standard = Well-Being
- Progress
- Development / Modernization / Democratization
- Military Power
- Geopolitical Strength (G7)
- Idea of International Convergence
- Inequality no longer an issue

But: Positively sanctions unsustainable behavior and resource depletion

GDP: Political Acceptance before Theory



1947



1955

The New Momentum

Istanbul Declaration


OECD World Forum – Statistics, Knowledge and Policy 2007

- „emerging consensus...to undertake **measurement of societal progress** in every country, going beyond ...measures as GDP“
- „encourage communities **to consider for themselves** what **progress** means in the 21st century“
- OECD „Global Project on Measuring the **Progress** of Societies“
- EU „**GDP and Beyond** – Measuring **Progress** in a Changing World“



Measuring national well-being

Measuring what matters



MEASURES OF AUSTRALIA'S PROGRESS 2010

IS LIFE IN AUSTRALIA GETTING BETTER?



*Mitmachen und mitreden –
beim Bürgerdialog der Bundesregierung!*

www.gut-leben-in-deutschland.de

Ergänzung des BIP



Progress and Participation



Highlights

- Normative Debates on the World and Life we want
- Multidimensionality of Sustainability Debates
- Importance of Fairness, Happiness, Inequality, Equity, Chances
- Importance of Social Cohesion
- Influence of specific disciplines (Happiness and Behavioral Economics)
- Nation-State as Unit of Action and Analysis – Accountability, Real Change
- Even: Community-based
- Public Participation – less influences of theory/ideology

Thank you for your attention!

Philipp.lepenies@fu-berlin.de