

Jugendreport Natur '06

# Young People and Nature in Germany

Some Results of the Survey "Jugendreport Natur 2006"

Rainer Brämer 7/2007

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Science by different methods

## Nature sociology

Topic:

The <u>subjective</u> relationship of human beings to their natural environment

Key question:

Which rôle does nature play in everyday life?

Key factors:

knowledge, experience, attitudes, behaviour



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### **Basic conditions of nature sociology:**

# Living in a glassmenagerie

#### behind the glass

living, working, learning spare time, sports, consumption, in cars, buses and trains

#### in front of the glass

TV, PC, gameboy, internet, mail, mobile, ...

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### Reaction of adults

## Back to nature

booming outdoor sports, hiking, gardening

Reaction of young people?



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#### The answer:

## "Jugendreport Natur"

(Young People's attitude towards nature)

1997: "The Bambi-syndrome"

2.500 pupils, 10 - 17 years old, all kinds of schools

2003: "Sustainable alienation from nature"

1.400 pupils, 11 + 14 years old, all kind of schools

2006: "Nature obscure"

2.200 pupils, 11 + 14 years old, all kind of schools

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Young people have

# much contact with nature several times per week:

68% in the garden 47% in fields and meadows 38% in the forest

well tended nature

61% can reach the next forest within 5 minutes

I have often done that before:

66% climbing a tree 53% balancing on a log 45% walking alone in the forest



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## Activities in forests during the last summer

I was

67% Hiking (girls 77%, boys 53%) 47% Biking

37% Playing

I did

12% play forest games 9% visit educational forest trails

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## Good bye nature (1)

15 y.

27%

Teenagers like doing this 12 y.

> climbing a tree 40% 13% moutaineering 40% 23%

> canoeing 14% 8% hiking adventure 75% 56%

> wilderness 46% 36%

37%

**Is nature** only interesting for children?





## Good bye nature (2)

#### I like doing this:

2002 2005 canoeing 55% 32% climbing 46% 32% walking 30% 17% 28% hiking 11%

Is nature out?

#### I have never done this before:

23% watching a roe in field or forest 33% catching a butterfly or a beetle 61% working on a farm 63% working in a forest

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Living in one's own artificial world

## "Cocooning"

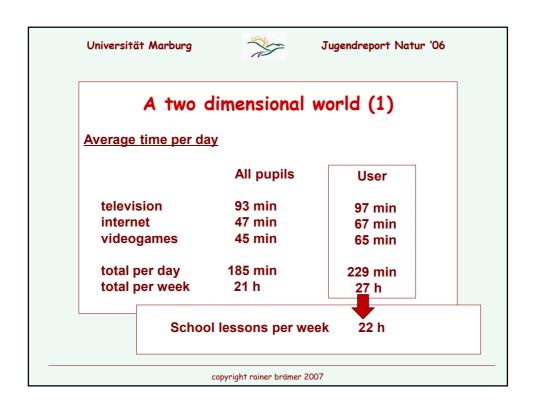
Home is like an island with connections to the outside world through pictures and sound

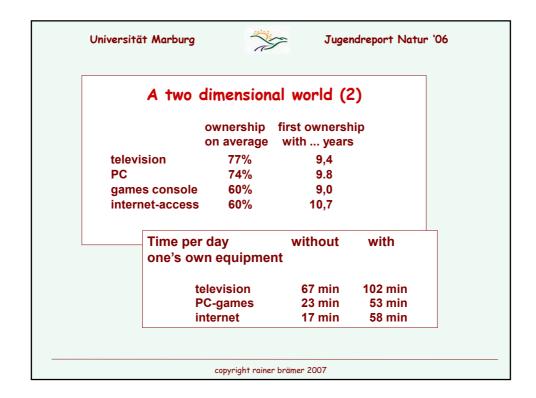
with full supply of everything needed, accompanied by an acoustic wallpaper

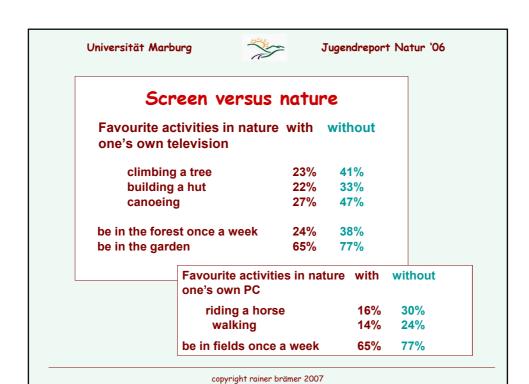
"stay-at-home" is no insult

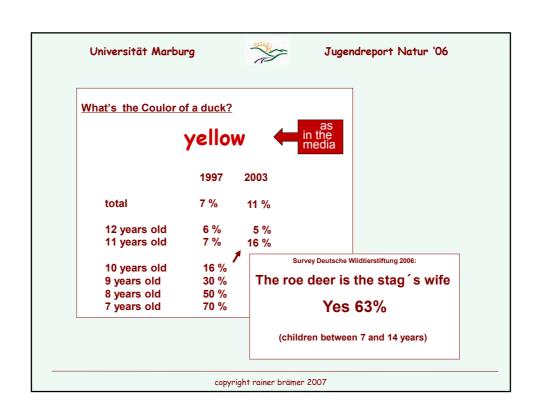
House arrest is no punishment, Social network without obligation to time or place:

90% of teenagers own a mobile and spend 50% of their budget on it.











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**Youthreport 1997/2003** 

## The "Bambi-syndrome"

#### The teenagers' view

nature is important, positive, beautiful and harmonious

animals and plants possess a soul you have to protect nature

you have to keep nature clean and must not disturb it prohibition signs are good, walking across the forest is bad

planting trees and feeding birds is very important felling trees is bad and killing animals is murder

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#### Someone has told me:

## Moral behaviour in the forest (1)

In the forest you shouldn't

throw away litter 85% make a fire 83%

catch an animal 79% not pluck a plant 47%

Instead you should

be quiet 52% stay on the paths 49% not camp 26%





#### Someone has told me

### Moral behaviour in the forest (2)

#### supervisors

parents 53% teachers 38% forest wardens 21%

conservationists 17% hunters 12%

Hunters set priorities in:

be quiet don't camp stay on the path

mp Do not disturb

Conservationists set priorities:

don't cycle don't climb trees

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Teenagers themselves are convinced of this

## Moral rules in nature

That will harm nature: 2005 2003

felling (tall) trees 85% 73% hunting (roe deer) 72% 56%

picking wild flowers 27% mountainbiking 22%

Walking across the forest 8% 45% staying outdoors at night 3% 39%



## The taboo of economics

#### Teenagers ...

forget about the necessity of utilization of nature by human beings

know little about the natural resources of common products

are not interested in farm animals or plants

ignore the connection between planting an felling trees("slaughter-house-paradox")

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## Nature as a means of production

Teenagers' experiences

	often	never
working in the forest	12%	63%
working on a farm	16%	61%
seeing an animal being slaughtered	17%	60%

Natural resources in everyday life

 $\label{eq:constraints} \mbox{don't have a clue what this is made of:}$ 

cream 20% raisins 54% china 90% pudding 27% cooking oil 60% plastic 93%



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## Use and protection

Teenagers who are interested in nature and the environment

- · have more knowledge about resources
- · are more often outdoors in their spare time
- · have more often worked on a farm or in forest

Using nature is not contrary to protecting it

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## Hypothesis

Without knowledge about the necessity of an intensive utilization of nature

the demand for sustainability does'nt make any sense



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## 2003: Open-end question about elements of sustainability

## The vast majority didn't understand what sustainability means

54% had no idea

35% were completely wrong 9% had just a faint idea 2% did know core elements

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### Morale instead of reason

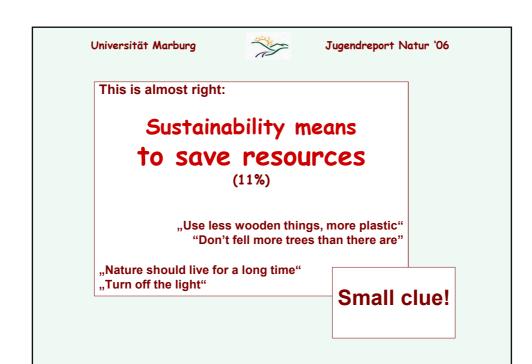
This is what teenagers think of sustainability if they answer spontaneously

"Don't disturb animals" / "Don't litter forests" / "Don't play so much in forests"

"Don't destroy anything" / "Don't pick flowers"
/ "Don't kill an animal or a plant"

"If you water and cultivate flowers" / " To build frog-protections at roads" /"To barricade forests"

Bambi-syndrome blocks comprehension for sustainability





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## Is latent knowledge better than spontaneous knowledge?

Find 5 correct out of 15 answers for sustainability

Quote of answers: 80%

**But: Quote of guessing at least 50%** 

independent of age, education or urban/rural area

Guessing dominates





#### Above average agreement

Don't litter forests Treat nature with respect Don't disturb animals Keep nature clean



### below average agreement



Don't spend a lot of time in nature Stay on the path in forests Support Greenpeace

## Education for sustainability with little effect

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### **Instead:**

## The aesthetics of cleanliness

#### Teenagers agree on this:

Don't disturb the forest Keep the forest clean

silence and order

### The rubbish-phobia

Moral rules in the forest Rank No. 1 Don't litter Good deeds for nature: Rank No. 1 Pick up rubbish

Bad deeds in nature: Rank No. 1 Litter
Attribute of sustainability: Rank No. 1 Don't litter



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### Young contryside dwellers:

- + less electronical equipment
- + more contact with nature
- + more experience with nature
- Same impression of nature
- Little knowledge about natural resources
- Little awareness of sustainability

No connection of experiences and moral values

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## Participants of environmental activities Members of nature protection groups:

- + More desire for adventure
- + More experience with nature
- + More working experience
- + More contact with nature
- + More moral perspective on nature
- They have picked up much more rubbish
- They have listened to more instructions
- Same impression of nature
- Same moral horizon
- Little awareness of sustainability

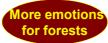
The awareness of sustainability is replaced by the aesthetic of cleanliness



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## **Frequent visitors of the forest:**

- + More contact with nature
- + More experience with nature



- + More rational attitude to nature
- + More desire for activity and adventure
- + Electronic media 2h less per day than someone who does not have any contact with the forest

Has the forest a socialising element to avoid alienation from nature, lack of exercise and addiction to TV, PC etc.?

- Less awareness of sustainability

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## **Summary:**

#### Sustainable alienation from nature

### **Although**

- + nature is near by
- + having tried everything
- Less interest in nature
- Less experience with nature
- Growing distance because of puberty

Is nature boring?

- Moral standard of nature is not relevant
- Higher taboo to use nature economically
- Elements of sustainability are only guessed
- Non realistic impression of nature



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Is there any way out?

# Experience with nature as a value on its own

- + More nature instead of natural science in school
- + Experience with nature without pedagogical intentions
- + More space, freedom and emotions in nature
  - + Experience of ones own nature

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Just a beginning:

# More nature in everyday life

- + Nature-kindergardens
- + Nature-days in full-time-schools
- + Hiking in schools more attractive
- + More offers of nature activities outside school time
  - + Forest Youth Hostels
  - + Farms for young people
  - + voluntary ecological service



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Is there a

## Right to nature?

- + Nature as an appropriate human environment
- + Release of stress caused by the media
- + Nature allows the free development of our personality
- + Consolidation of one's own nature in the nature outside

Students Report on Nature 2001

"Each person has a right to a free access to nature" Yes: 90%

**Youthreport Nature 2003** 

"Each person has a right to nature"

Yes: 93%

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More details in:

