

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Nuanced views*Ecol. Econ.* **161**, 41–49 (2019)

Credit: Bloomberg / Contributor

Most major surveys of attitudes towards economic growth and environmental protection have generally framed the two in diametric terms, which can lead to results that don't allow respondents to engage with or express the nuances of these outcomes that may not be completely mutually exclusive. Such viewpoints, and their support, matter greatly in the context of ongoing discussions over limits to growth and the possibility of 'steady-state economics'.

Drawing upon Canada's public perception as an environmental leader, Maria Fernanda Tomaselli of the University of British Columbia and her colleagues surveyed a thousand Canadians to ask a range of questions about the desirability and feasibility of continued economic growth (both in itself and in conjunction with ecological impacts), whether technology can solve problems with resource scarcity

and environmental degradation, and the interdependence of humans and nature. Respondents fell into three groups, which the authors label as the Assured, who are confident that technology and growth can be managed with the environment (41.1%); the Concerned, who are more sceptical about growth and technology (22.6%); and the Ambivalent, who expressed little conviction about these topics (36.3%). While the Assured may feel that current environmental fears are exaggerated, they do support statements about interdependence nearly as much as the Concerned respondents, providing some added context for how both ecological and economic discourses might proceed in coming years.

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Published online: 11 June 2019
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-019-0318-y>