Social Sustainability

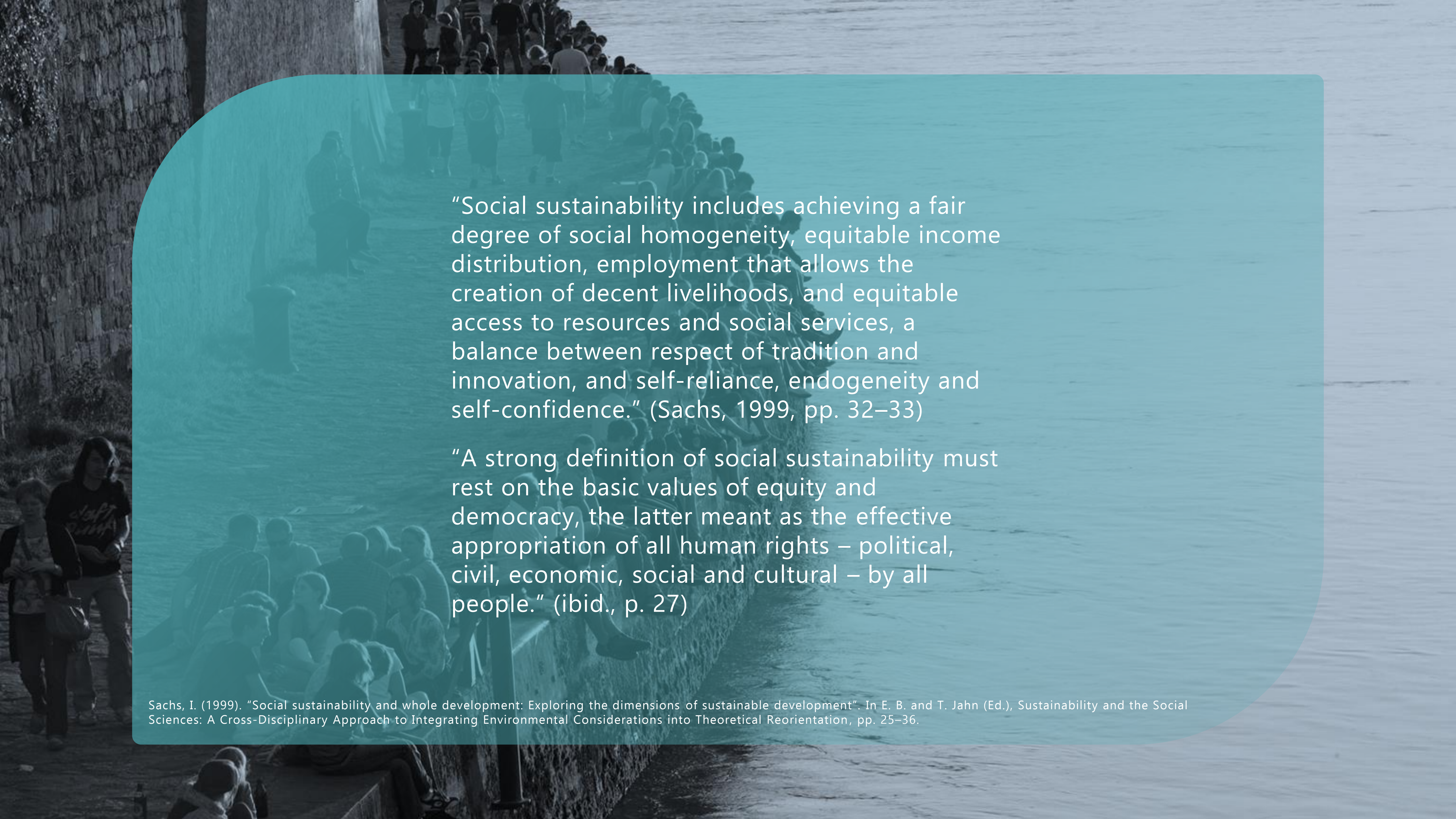The Importance of Social Sustainability
in Times of Dynamic Change Processes

Structure

Search Trend of Social Sustainability in Google

Measurably Increasing Presence of the Concept in Public Discourse due to the Accumulation of Negatively Perceived Change and Developments
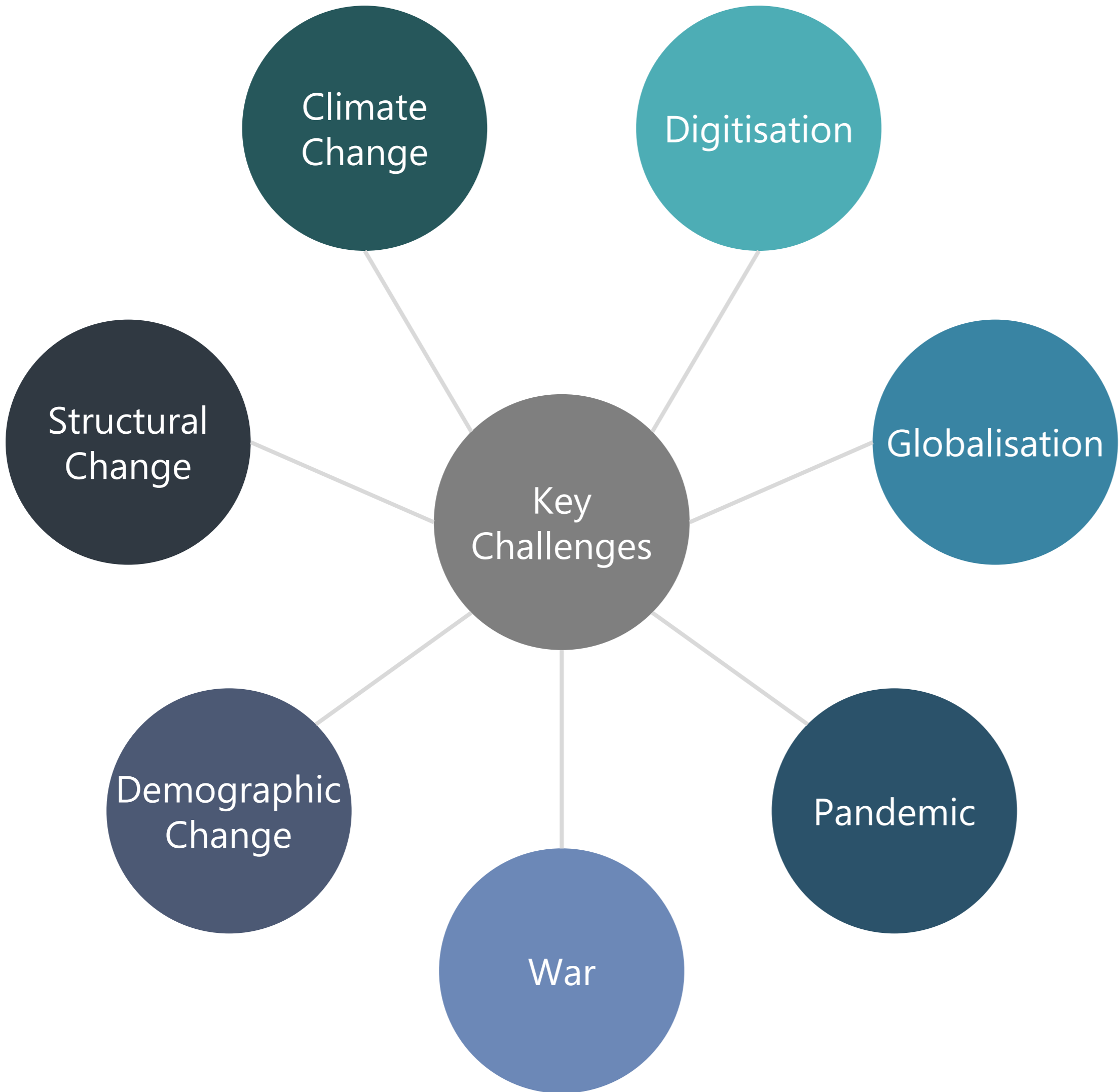
"Social sustainability includes achieving a fair degree of social homogeneity, equitable income distribution, employment that allows the creation of decent livelihoods, and equitable access to resources and social services, a balance between respect of tradition and innovation, and self-reliance, endogeneity and self-confidence." (Sachs, 1999, pp. 32–33)

"A strong definition of social sustainability must rest on the basic values of equity and democracy, the latter meant as the effective appropriation of all human rights – political, civil, economic, social and cultural – by all people." (ibid., p. 27)

Sachs, I. (1999). "Social sustainability and whole development: Exploring the dimensions of sustainable development". In E. B. and T. Jahn (Ed.), Sustainability and the Social Sciences: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach to Integrating Environmental Considerations into Theoretical Reorientation, pp. 25–36.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Influence on Society

We live in complex systems, that are characterised by ambiguity.

While changes in the past occurred in a rather gradual way, current challenges intensify the dynamics of transformation processes, which causes insecurity and leads to change in social values and reassessment of living together .

Therefor the topic of "sustainability" is becoming more important.

COMMUNITY-BASED ACCESS

Intangible and Religious Heritage

People in the Church (© Matthias Ripp).

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

"This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development."

UNESCO, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris 2003.

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

"Recognized the role played by religious communities in the creation, maintenance, and continuous shaping of sacred places, and the custodial role played by them in caring for these as living heritage.

Reaffirmed the vital further role of religious communities in conveying, expressing and sustaining spiritual identity, meaning and purpose to human life, considering that these offer significant opportunities in a fast developing and globalizing world, as well as presenting serious challenges."

UNESCO, Statement on the Protection of Religious Properties within the Framework of the World Heritage Convention, Kyiv 2010.

Davos Declaration

Towards a high-quality *Baukultur* for Europe

"[...] recognising the crucial contribution that a high-quality built environment makes to achieving a sustainable society, characterised by a high quality of life, cultural diversity, individual and collective well-being, social justice and cohesion, and economic efficiency [...]."

"Culture enables and drives economic, social and environmental sustainability. It shapes our identities and defines our legacies. Therefore, culture must be placed at the centre of development policies and its contribution to the pursuit of the common good must be emphasised. There can be no democratic, peaceful and sustainable development if culture is not at its heart."

"High-quality *Baukultur* fosters vibrant and mixed-use neighbourhoods. It creates built environments which embrace contemporary cultural expressions while at the same time respecting cultural heritage. It provides sustainable living conditions and strengthens social resilience by producing decent, affordable, and accessible housing."

Initiatives & Projects

Good Examples for High-Quality *Baukultur*

New European Bauhaus

Bundesstiftung Baukultur

Verband für Bauen im Bestand e. V.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

In recent years, alongside the concept of sustainability, the concept of resilience has become increasingly popular in the context of urban research, but also of cultural heritage. In order to be able to apply both concepts in a differentiated manner, it is indispensable to first trace their semantic development.

While sustainability aims at the preservation of resources and overall follows a rather linear logic with a limited number of parameters and uncertainties, resilience is a systemic approach that refers to complex systems with a high degree of uncertainty.

Concept	Sustainability	Resilience
Background	Forest Management. Example: 18th-century Germany	Psychological Resilience: the ability to bounce back from a stressful or adverse situation. Theoretical basis developed in the United States in the 1950s
Objective	To maintain the overall natural resource base	To make systems flexible enough to deal with changes without changing their principal character
Definition:	Premise: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on the natural environment. Process: To create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, thereby enabling the fulfilment of the environmental, social and economic requirements of present and future generations	The ability of a system to respond flexibly to situational changes and negative factors without changing the essential state
Type	Primarily linear	Dynamic system
Trend	To enable economic development without damaging the natural resource base	To stimulate flexibility, adaptability and risk-preparedness in order to deal with sudden or long term changes
Complexity	Fair	High
Level of integration	Semi-integrated	Integrated
Parameters involved	Limited number	High number
Implementation	Management and Development Plans, management mechanisms, etc.	New governance models. Change of attitude and values. Empowering communities. Prioritisation of cross-cutting topics, initiatives and developments

Source: Matthias Ripp

Strategic Solutions

Achieving Social Sustainability Through Uncertainty Competence

ACCEPTANCE
Change as Constant in Human Existence

MINDSET
Make a big impact with our professional slides and charts.

SKILLS
Necessity of Specific Knowledge and Competences

Agile Governance in Cultural Heritage Management

REFRAMING
Meta-Viewing of Change

INVOLVEMENT
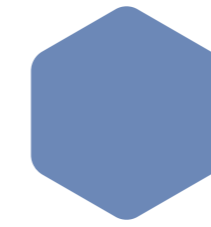"Real" Participation, Transparency and Community-Involvement

SHORT-TERM
Short-Term Responses to Change

CONCLUSION

Current Challenges do have impact on society and therefore on the Intangible and Religious Heritage!

In a systemic understanding of ‚Heritage' there is no strict separation between Tangible and Intangible Heritage.

Especially in times of rapid change the systemic perspective enables a better understanding of the complex processes and a real integration of participants and communities.

In order to deal with this change, uncertainty competence is needed. Therefor the mindset has to be constantly reviewed, because a rigid role model is limited in systems.