

RESCUE *Task Force*

Challenges of the Anthropocene

Contributions from Social Sciences and Humanities

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The Economist

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Economist.com

Getting Spain's protesters off the plazas
Obama, Bibi and peace
The costly war on cancer
How the brain drain reduces poverty
A soft landing for China

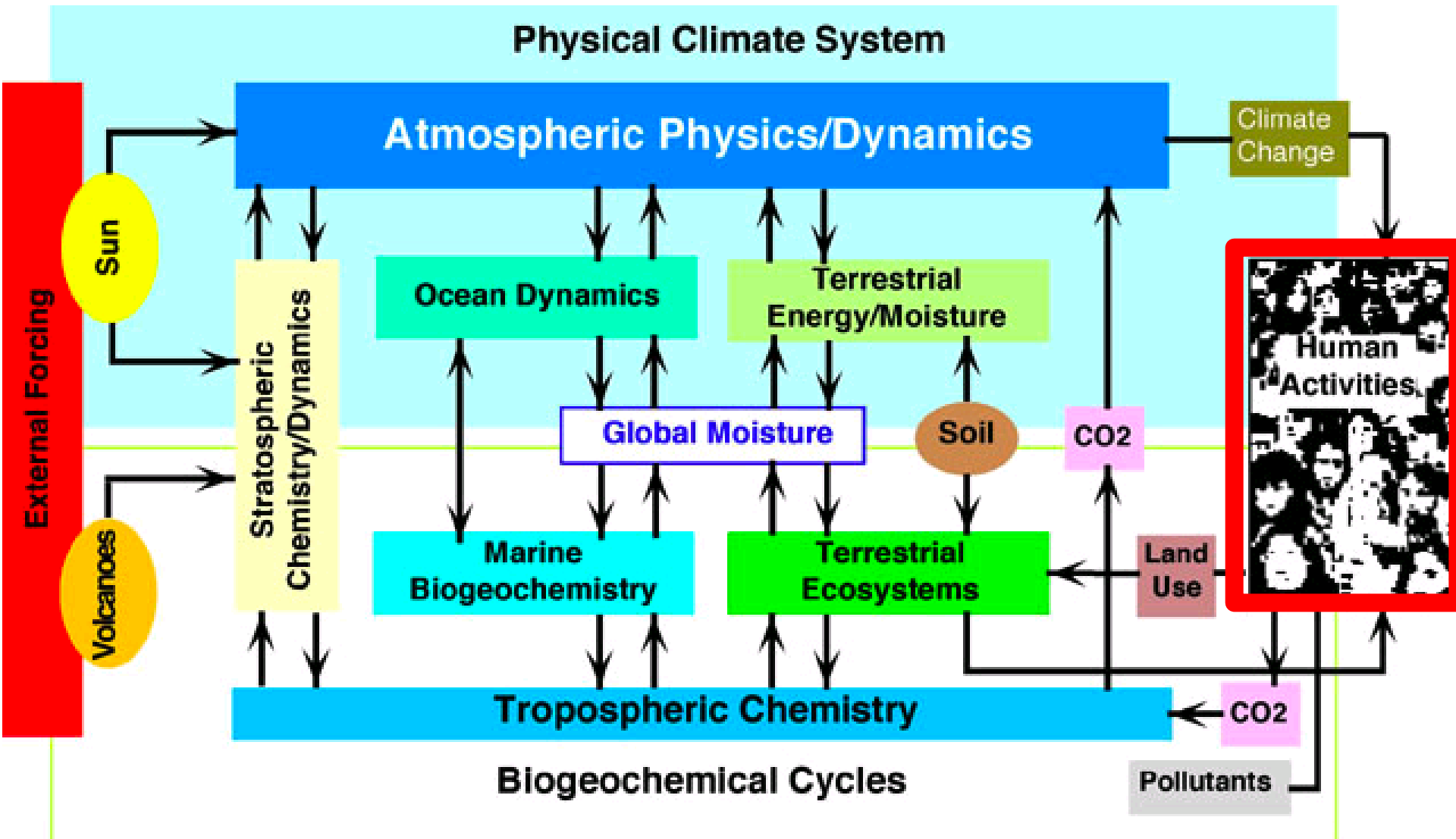
Welcome to the Anthropocene



Geology's new age

Key ‘take home’ message

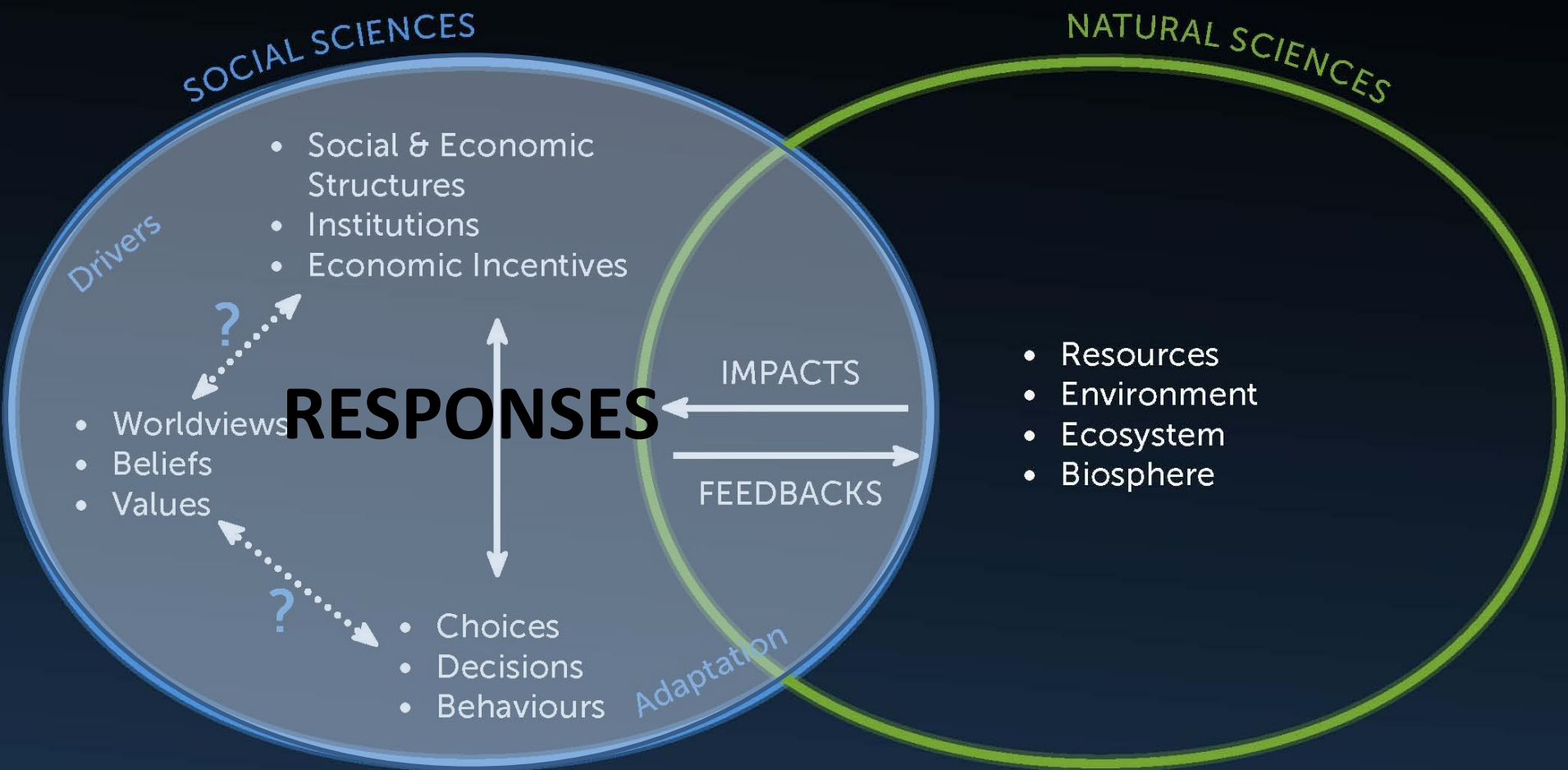
- ✓ Growing recognition that what matters now, first, is our **capacity to respond** quickly and efficiently to environmental problems and sustainability challenges
- ✓ Global change’s causes and impact are increasingly related to **human activity**
- vitally important to study human behaviour, social arrangements, and human-environmental interactions **on a much grander scale** than ever before.



(from Earth System Science: An Overview, NASA, 1988)

The Bretherton diagram (simplified version). Source: NASA (1988).

Understanding Human Values, Institutions, and Behaviours on a Changing Planet



Beyond the Bretherton diagram. Source: *International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change* (2010).

Key SSH research themes

- ✓ **Anthropocenic society: conditions and demands**
- ✓ **Values, justice, and behaviour**
- ✓ **Rethinking “growth”**
- ✓ **Exploring futures, defining “limits”**
- ✓ **Inherent tensions, capitalism, “bubbles”, inequality**

A few observations: This is happening **now!**

- ✓ ESF & COST: RESCUE initiative
- ✓ SAMKUL (Norway, 2011-): a major programme on 'cultural roots of contemporary social challenges'
- ✓ EU: [Grand] Societal Challenges (2010-)
- ✓ New FP: "Horizon 2020", 2014-2020
- ✓ Stanford Environmental Humanities project (2010-)
- ✓ New Journal (Australia, 2012-)
- ✓ Environmental Humanities Laboratory, Sweden (2012-)



**Earth as Home of People
→ Anthropocene**