The Great Mindshift
How a New Economic Paradigm and Sustainability Transformations Go Hand in Hand

Dr. Maja Göpel
1. If the changes envisioned by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda are supposed to be transformational in quality, how do we work toward this quality?

2. If the transformations envisioned are supposed to support sustainable development, what are the key leverage points to unlock unsustainable path dependencies?
1.1 Ontology: Patterned Freedom of Intentional Actors

“Humans make their own history... but under circumstances transmitted from the past.”  - Karl Marx
1.2. Intentional Agency in the Multi-Level-Perspective (big S)

Worldviews, Visions, Paradigms

Earth System

Mind

Meta / Narratives

Macro / Landscape

Meso / Regime

Socio-Ecological-Technical Systems

Micro / Niche

Mini / Me & You

Science

Policy

Market Patterns

Social Practice

Technology
1.3 Intentional Agency as a Capacity (small s)

Institutional Literacy:
multi-dimensional view on what drives system dynamics

Environmental Literacy:
see human activity as part of planet Earth and its webs of life

Transformative Literacy: 5 P's that make SETS tick
1.4 Transformation: Repurposing of Systems

**Surface layer:** listening to system feedback and adjusting environmental pressures maintains progress

**Mid layer:** using the right rules and incentives can create structural change and significantly influence key drivers

**Deep layer:** shared mindsets translate into vision, goals and collective action

Source: UNEP GEO 5 Report, based on Donella Meadows: Leverage Points 1999
1.5. Paradigm Shifts as Radical Incremental Change Strategies

Source: Ray Ison, 2016, Social Learning Approach
### 2. Which Paradigm Shift for Purpose of Sustainability?

**Table 3.1:** Mainstream economic paradigm effects on searching for sustainable development. 
**Source:** Own overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding the world by</th>
<th>Main concepts human needs</th>
<th>Main concepts nature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... dividing into pieces</td>
<td><strong>utility</strong> by consumption</td>
<td><strong>natural capital</strong> by extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... quantifying &amp; monetizing</td>
<td><strong>willingness to pay</strong></td>
<td><strong>market prices</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>... tracking accumulation</td>
<td><strong>more happiness</strong> through more consumption</td>
<td><strong>more growth</strong> through more (efficient) exploitation</td>
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<td>... comparing and ranking</td>
<td><strong>cost–benefit</strong> thinking</td>
<td><strong>capital substitutability</strong> thinking</td>
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**Effects on governing the world:** Blind to real qualities of developments & lost in financialization
19th Century economics mindset not fit for purpose!
21st Century Mindshift: 
Re-coupling human and natural wellbeing
2.2 Emerging New Sustainability Purpose?

Recoupling Cases: Transition Towns; Beyond GDP; Commoning; Common Good Businesses

- **Progress** not output measured by aggregated money, but equitable and balanced progress of the whole SETS as measured by differentiated social, environmental, and cultural indicators.

- **Freedom** not absence of obstacles to individual purchasing desires, but human security and sufficiency: freedom from fear (in race for resource accumulation), and freedom from (culturally created endless) want.

- **Prosperity** not ever more consumption choices, but holistic and adaptive human needs served by resilient access to diversified need-satisfier strategies.

- **Growth** not end in itself, but different types of economic activity grow, stay steady, or also de-grow as means to the end of securing well-being within Planetary Boundaries.
Broken hegemony and emerging new paradigm as window of opportunity