

# THANCS – a process to address tensions that emerge in/with a transition towards sustainable development



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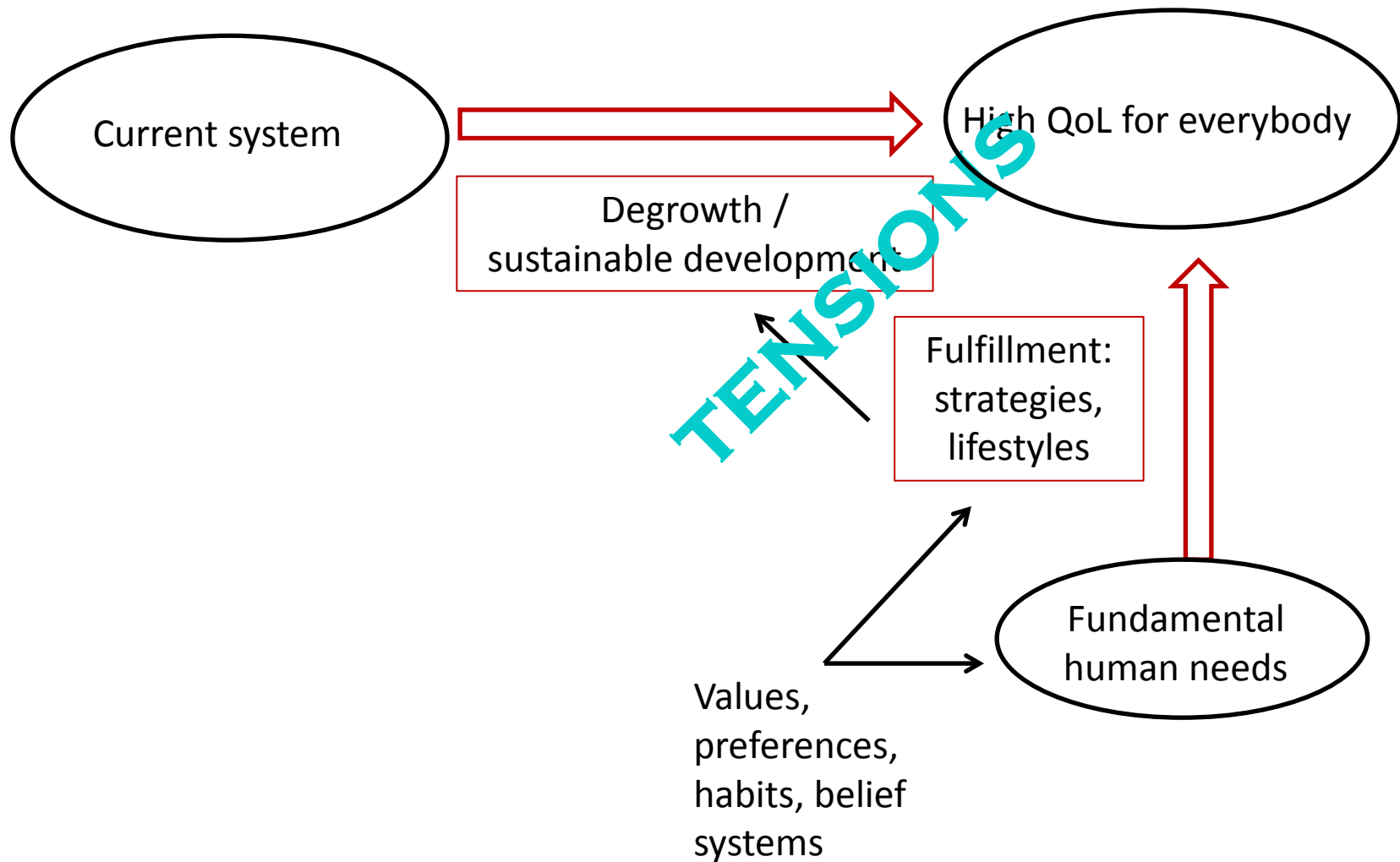
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# Content

1. Tensions related sustainable lifestyles
2. The inner dimension (needs, emotions, values)
3. THANCS – a process allowing to address the conflicts

# The relations we want to address



# Which level is addressed?

- NVC: individual level
  - THANCS: dealing with negative emotions as consequences of conflicts individuals have when pursuing the aim of SD
  - Conflicts can be intraindividual, intrasocietal or intergenerational
  - SD is a societal aim
- Presentation links individual to societal level, not yet to policy level

# Current situation ≠ sustainable

A great transition is needed to ?

- Reach sustainable development
- Get out of growth spiral
- Live in a „degrowth world“
- ....
- For me: to allow for a high quality of life for everybody now and in future

All humans strive for happiness (Aristotle)



But degrowth (reduction of production and consumption in industrialized countries by simultaneously supporting human well-being) lifestyles might lead to fear and uncertainty (see Felix' input)

# Quality of life?



„Quality of life ...defined as subjective well-being  
and  
personal growth in a healthy and prosperous  
environment“ (Lane 1996)

Quality of life has two determinants:

- Objective: opportunities one person has to fulfill his/her needs (resources, institutions, income, talents...)
- Subjective: perception of the fulfillment of these *needs* (wellbeing, human flourishing)

# Subjective wellbeing

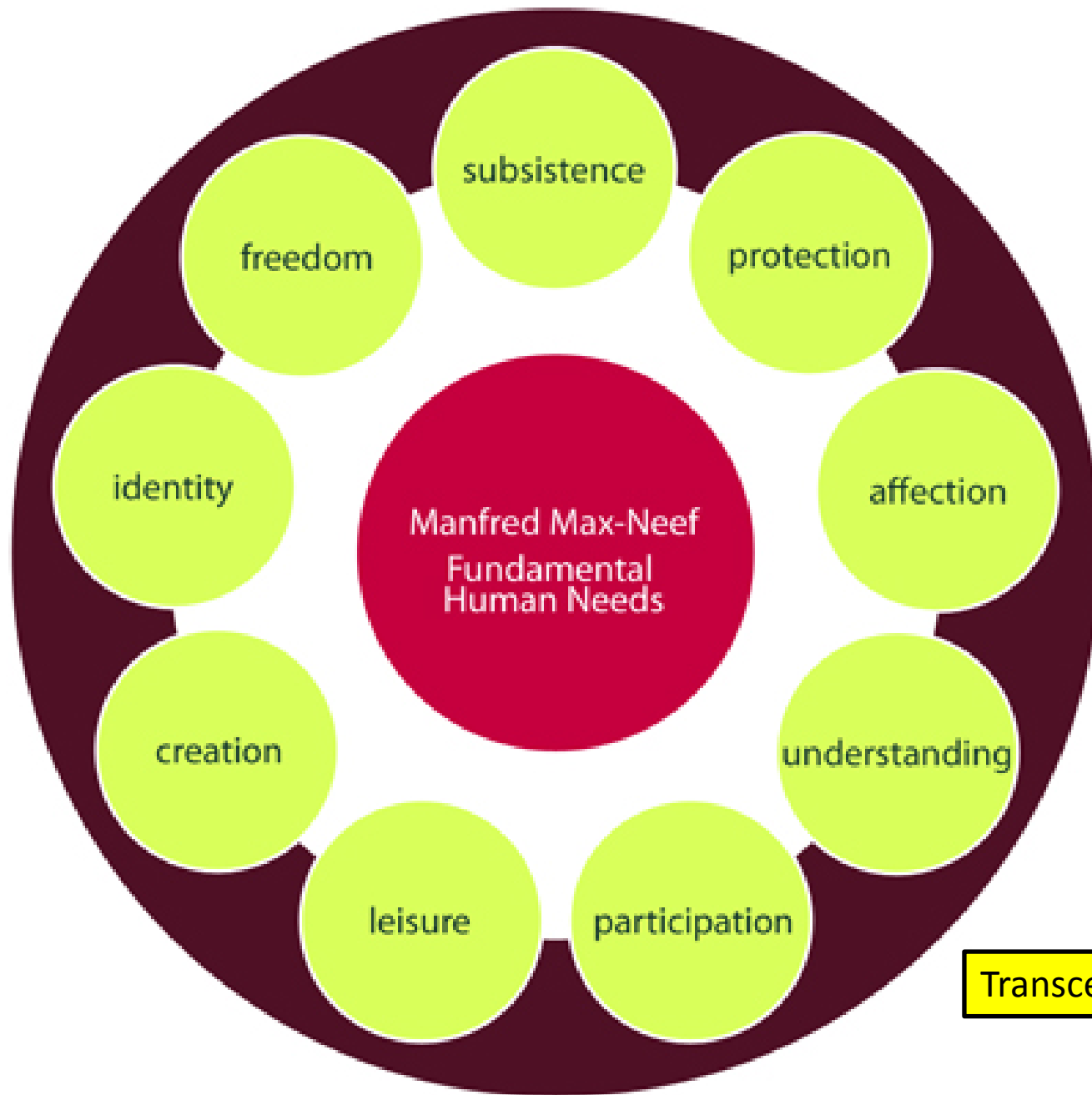


- Its hedonic part reflects the pleasure experienced and is linked to emotional wellbeing,
- Its eudaimonic part reflects the striving to realize one's personal and social potential; it gives meaning
- Both can be seen as the subjective experience of one's fulfillment of needs



# Short repetition

- NVC offers a method to look at the needs behind (negative) emotions
- By recognising them and finding ways to formulate them for oneself or to another person (with whom one might have the conflict) requests can be formulated or strategies can be developed
- Needs are the most fundamental dimension of human flourishing; non-negotiable
- Essential for health/wellbeing of individual



Transcendence

# List of needs and satisfiers

(based on Max-Neef 1993)

<b>NEEDS</b>	<b>Being (Qualities)</b>	<b>Having (Things)</b>	<b>Doing (Actions)</b>	<b>Interacting (Settings)</b>
<b>Subsistence</b>	Physical and mental health	Food, shelter, work	Feed, clothes, rest, work	Living environment, social setting
<b>Protection</b>	Care, adaptability, autonomy	Social security, health systems, work	Co-operate, plan, take care of, help	Social environment
<b>Affection</b>				
<b>Understanding</b>				
<b>Participation</b>	Receptiveness, dedication, sense of humour	Responsibilities, duties, work, rights	Co-operate, dissent, express opinions	Associations, parties, churches, neighbourhoods
<b>Freedom</b>	Autonomy, passion, self-esteem	Equal rights	Dissent, choose, run risks, develop awareness	anywhere
<b>Idleness</b>				
<b>Creation</b>				
<b>Identity</b>	Empathy, reflection, awareness	Knowledge, information	Being a member of initiative, living a dematerialised life	Governance frame, institutions, social setting of trust
<b>Transcendence</b>				

# Strategies



- Strategies serve to fulfill one's needs
- They are chosen depending on values, culture, preferences, resources and chances for realisation (determine lifestyles)
- Basic (subsistence) needs ask rather for materialistic strategies
- Other needs: also immaterial strategies possible (link to degrowth)
- Choice of strategies can lead to (un)sustainable development (use of resources)
- Strategies are negotiable, concrete but not universal

# Assumptions

- Degrowth lifestyles accompanied by high wellbeing are possible!
- Preconditions:
  - Knowing what matters to you and what makes you feel well/not feel well
  - Being able to reflect about yourself and thus to detect possible conflicts and tensions that might emerge
  - Developing new strategies
  - Adequate set of alternatives (responsibility of society, politics, governance...)

# Characteristics of sustainable (degrowth plus high QoL) strategies

- They meet the needs of those applying them
- They are a basis for a high QoL
- They do not restrict others to meet their needs

which means:

- resources may only be used up to a certain limit (planetary boundaries)
- ecosystems must not be destroyed / altered over a certain threshold
- absorption capacity of natural systems must not be exceeded

→ Not so easy to really know which strategies are sustainable!

Examples: conviviality, slow food, co-housing, time banks...

# Why don't we start changing our behaviour, although we know enough?



One possible reason:  
Trade offs between values or needs  
might emerge  
(nature/future protection vs. idleness for  
instance)



# Tensions emerging in sustainable lifestyles



- Intra-individual tensions

*A sustainable strategy can be in conflict with other values recommending an unsustainable strategy.*

Examples: using a car in everyday life; flying on holidays/conference; ...

- Intra-societal tensions

*The sustainable strategies of any individual or societal group can be in conflict with unsustainable strategies chosen by others.*



Examples: eating meat or vegetarian food; bringing kids to school by car/bike...

- Intergenerational tensions

*A certain societal strategy may support caring for next generations, but inhibit current needs and vice versa.*

Examples: flying to conferences/business meetings; using resource intense goods (IT facilities...)





# THANCS (Thriving for Awareness for Non-Conflicting Strategies)

4. Starting a process of creativity to **find ways of dealing or even overcome the tensions**

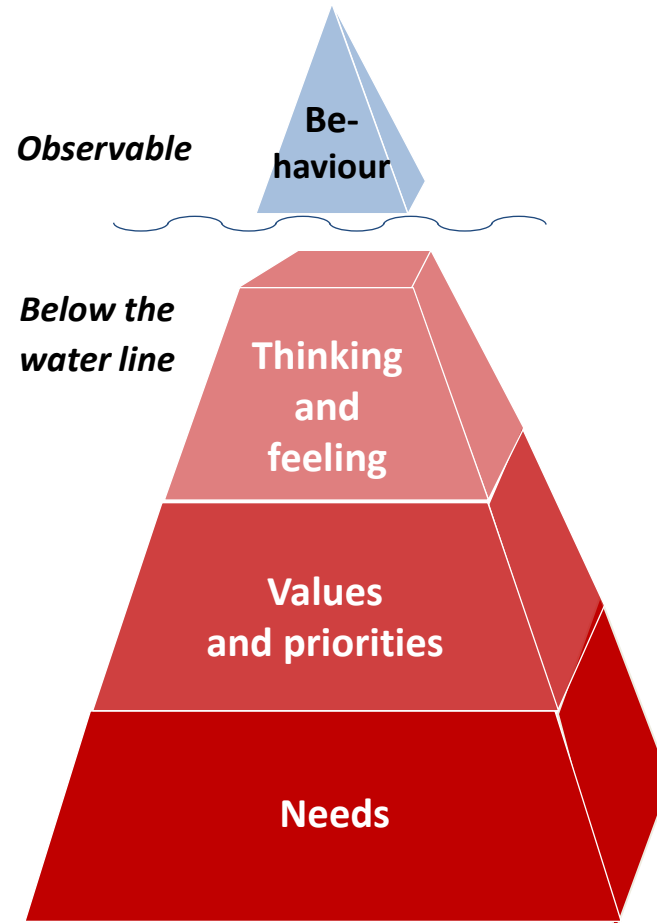
3. **Communicating** the reflection results to the persons affected from the tension, if possible

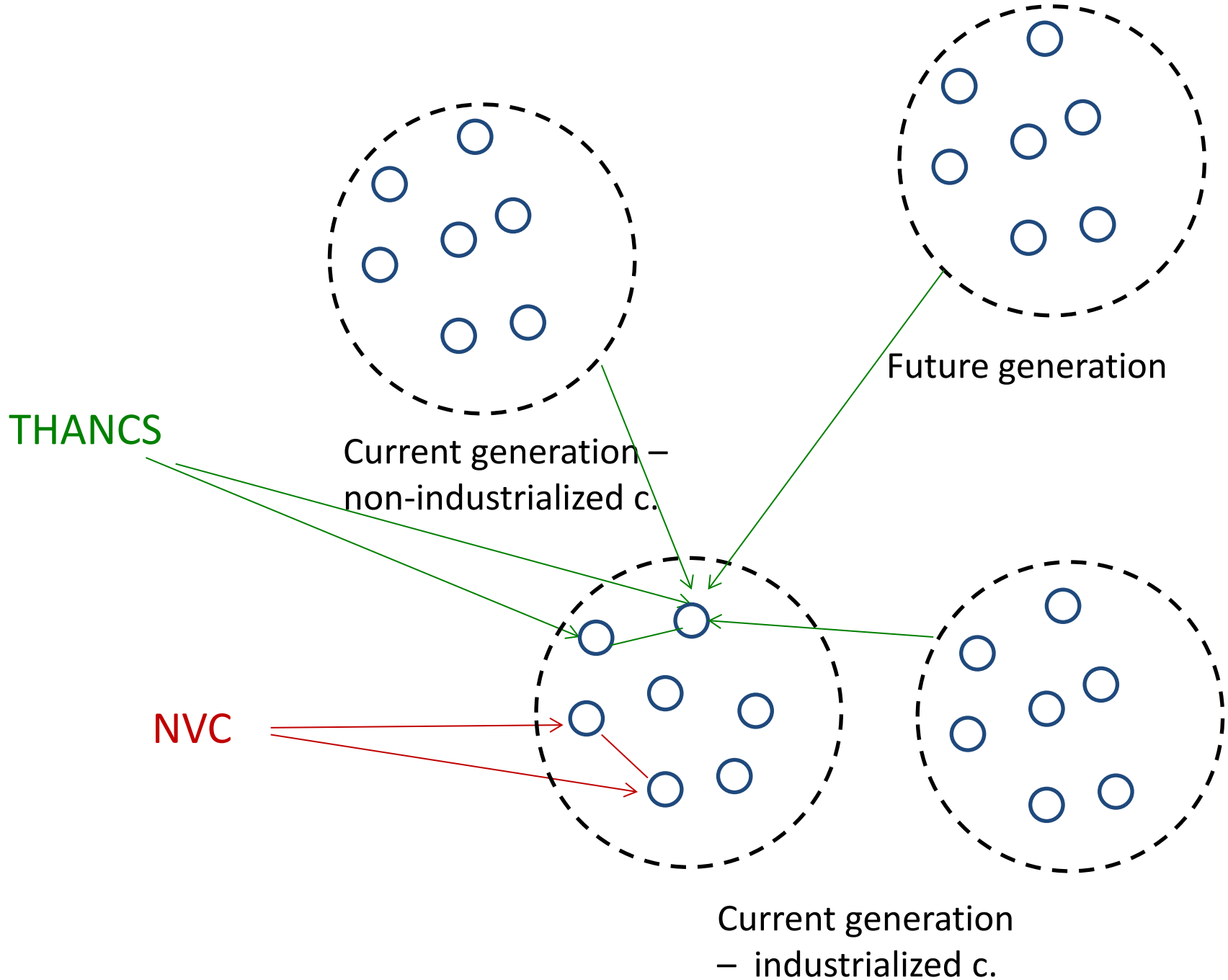
2. **Reflecting upon the iceberg** underneath the tensions

1. **Recognizing the tensions**

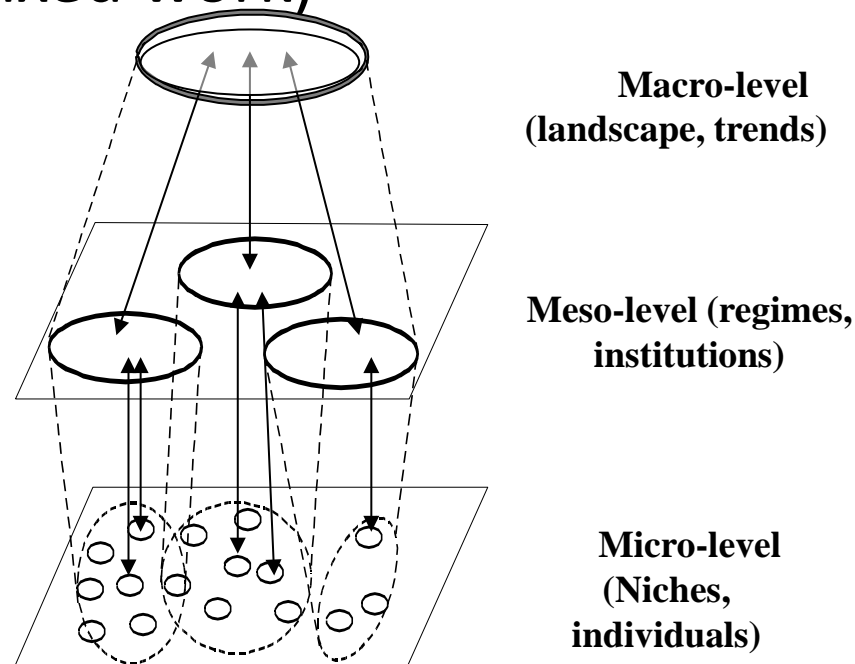


# The Iceberg model: internal roots of behaviour



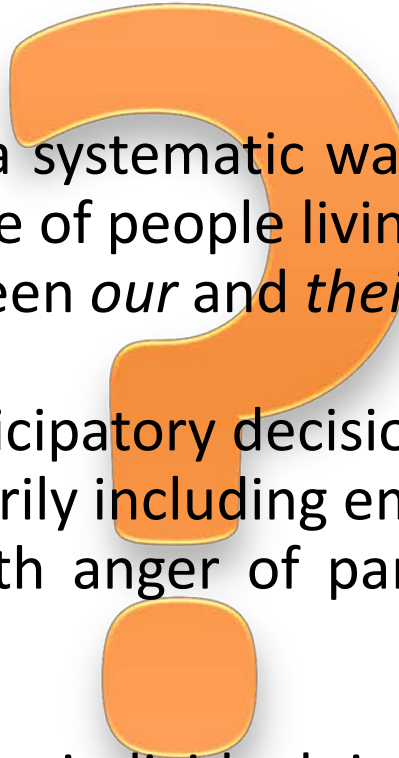


- But the individual level is NOT sufficient for a transition!
- The meso- and the macro-level are needed as well: integrating bottom-up and top-down approaches (Ex: basic income, alternative currencies, mixed work)



# Challenges

- How to develop a social policy based on a rather individual concept of needs?
- How to integrate in a systematic way the needs of future generations and those of people living far away?  
A first distance between *our* and *their* strategies is there.
- How to organize participatory decision processes based on this concept, necessarily including emotions?  
Implying: dealing with anger of participants not sharing the value of SD!
- Which place to give to individual, intra-societal and inter-generational tensions necessarily appearing?  
Voting or weighing seems inappropriate



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Thank you!

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