

# ***The SDGs as a claim to Universities***

Georg Gratzner

Institute of Forest Ecology  
Centre for Development Research  
BOKU University  
Wien, Österreich



# The world in 2030

... is free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, it is a world where all life can thrive.

... is free of fear and violence.

... provides universal literacy and equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured.

(Introduction of the UN Resolution: „Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

# The world in 2030

... has universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination;

... respects race, ethnicity and cultural diversity;

... provides equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity

(Introduction of the UN Resolution: „Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

# The world in 2030

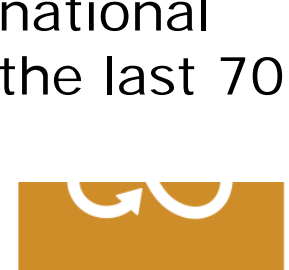
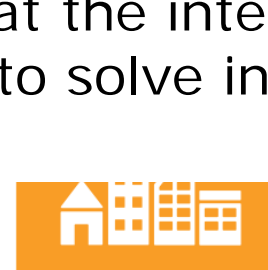
... enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all.

... has consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources – from air to land, from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas – that are sustainable.

(Introduction of the UN Resolution: „Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Die SDGs encompass „all economic, social and peace political problems that the international community has attempted to solve in the last 70 years“ (Köhler, 2015)



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

„swabbing the deck of the Titanic?“ (Rivera 2015)





## The SDGs don't

Analyse the root causes of global inequality, poverty, environmental destruction and their underlying power relations;

Explicitly establish an overall narrative articulating how the goals will lead to broader outcomes for people and the planet (ICSU 2016);

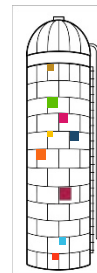


The SDGs are

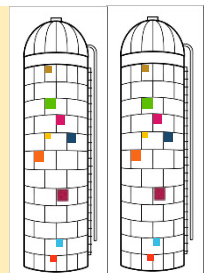
Encompassing and  
indivisible

Intertwined and cross  
cutting

The complexity  
challenge



The silo  
challenge





# SDGs – could they work?



Too many goals, too complex, incoherent?

## GOALS SCORING

The influence of one Sustainable Development Goal or target on another can be summarized with this simple scale.

Interaction	Name	Explanation	Example
+3	Indivisible	Inextricably linked to the achievement of another goal.	Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is indivisible from ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.
+2	Reinforcing	Aids the achievement of another goal.	Providing access to electricity reinforces water-pumping and irrigation systems. Strengthening the capacity to adapt to climate-related hazards reduces losses caused by disasters.
+1	Enabling	Creates conditions that further another goal.	Providing electricity access in rural homes enables education, because it makes it possible to do homework at night with electric lighting.
0	Consistent	No significant positive or negative interactions.	Ensuring education for all does not interact significantly with infrastructure development or conservation of ocean ecosystems.
-1	Constraining	Limits options on another goal.	Improved water efficiency can constrain agricultural irrigation. Reducing climate change can constrain the options for energy access.
-2	Counteracting	Clashes with another goal.	Boosting consumption for growth can counteract waste reduction and climate mitigation.
-3	Cancelling	Makes it impossible to reach another goal.	Fully ensuring public transparency and democratic accountability cannot be combined with national-security goals. Full protection of natural reserves excludes public access for recreation.

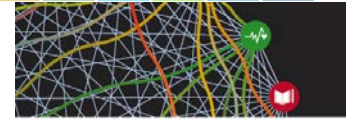
Nilsson et al. 2016. Nature

# SDGs – could they work?

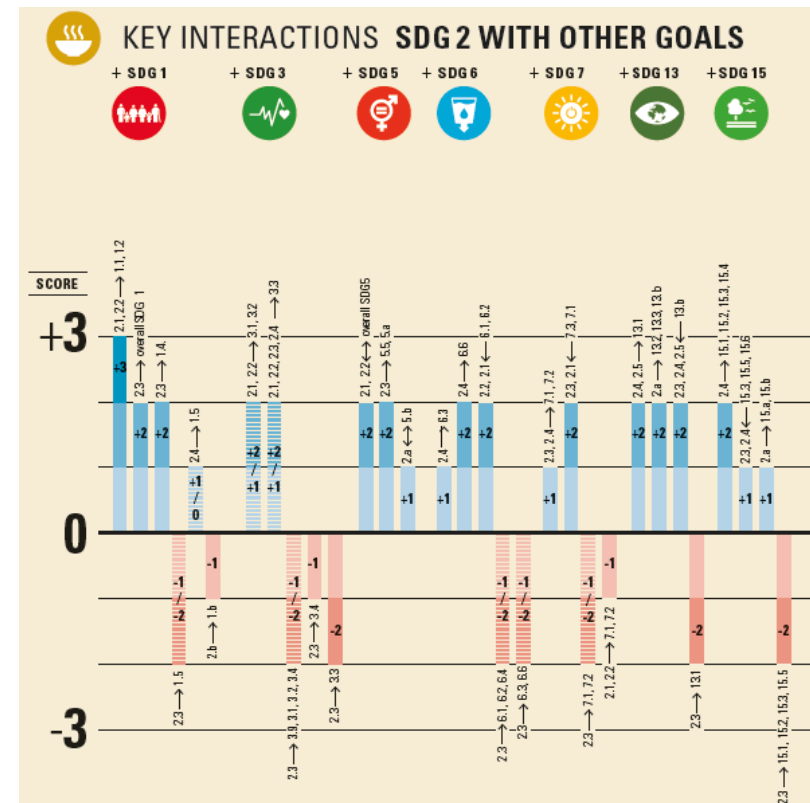
316 target-level interactions  
238 positive  
66 negative  
12 neutral

no fundamental incompatibilities  
between goals

„Potential constraints and  
conditionalities identified – mainly  
for interventions to shelter most  
vulnerable groups and provide  
equitable access to services...”



A GUIDE TO  
SDG INTERACTIONS:  
FROM SCIENCE  
TO IMPLEMENTATION





The multitude of goals are a strength rather than a weakness

Incoherence is not a hindrance for implementation but a challenge that needs to be explored



Hypothesis: the bigger trade offs may not come from the trade off economic growth versus sustainable environments but from trade related power relations, e.g. EPAs and their effects



A **universal, transformative** agenda – all countries are developing countries – diffusion of „old“ boundaries, acknowledgement of „new“ boundaries

A local agenda – implementation strategies need to be developed at national levels

# Why to transform?



*Sustainable Development*  
*Sust. Dev.* (2016)  
Published online in Wiley Online Library  
(wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/sd.1647

## The Imperatives of Sustainable Development

Erling Holden,<sup>1\*</sup> Kristin Linnerud<sup>2</sup> and David Banister<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department for Engineering and Science, Sogn og Fjordane University College, Sogndal, Norway*

<sup>2</sup>*CICERO Center for International Climate and Environmental Research-Oslo, Norway*

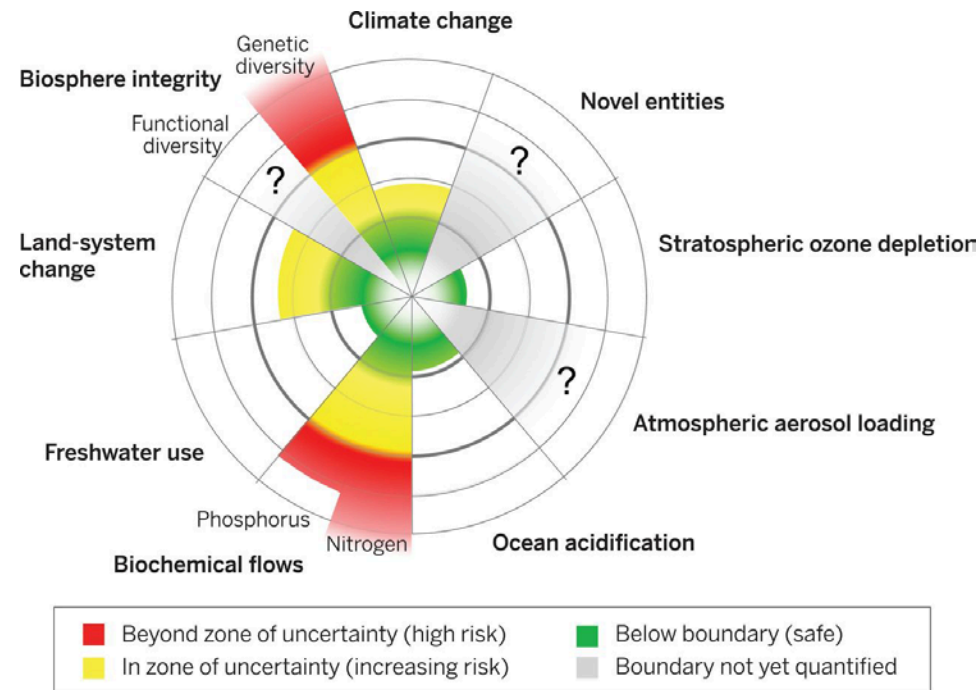
<sup>3</sup>*Transport Studies Unit, School of Geography and the Environment, Oxford University, Oxford, UK*

“...these targets have ended up as vague, weak, or meaningless...” (Holden et al. 2016)

# Why to transform?

Transform (just) before or soon after crossing the planetary boundaries...

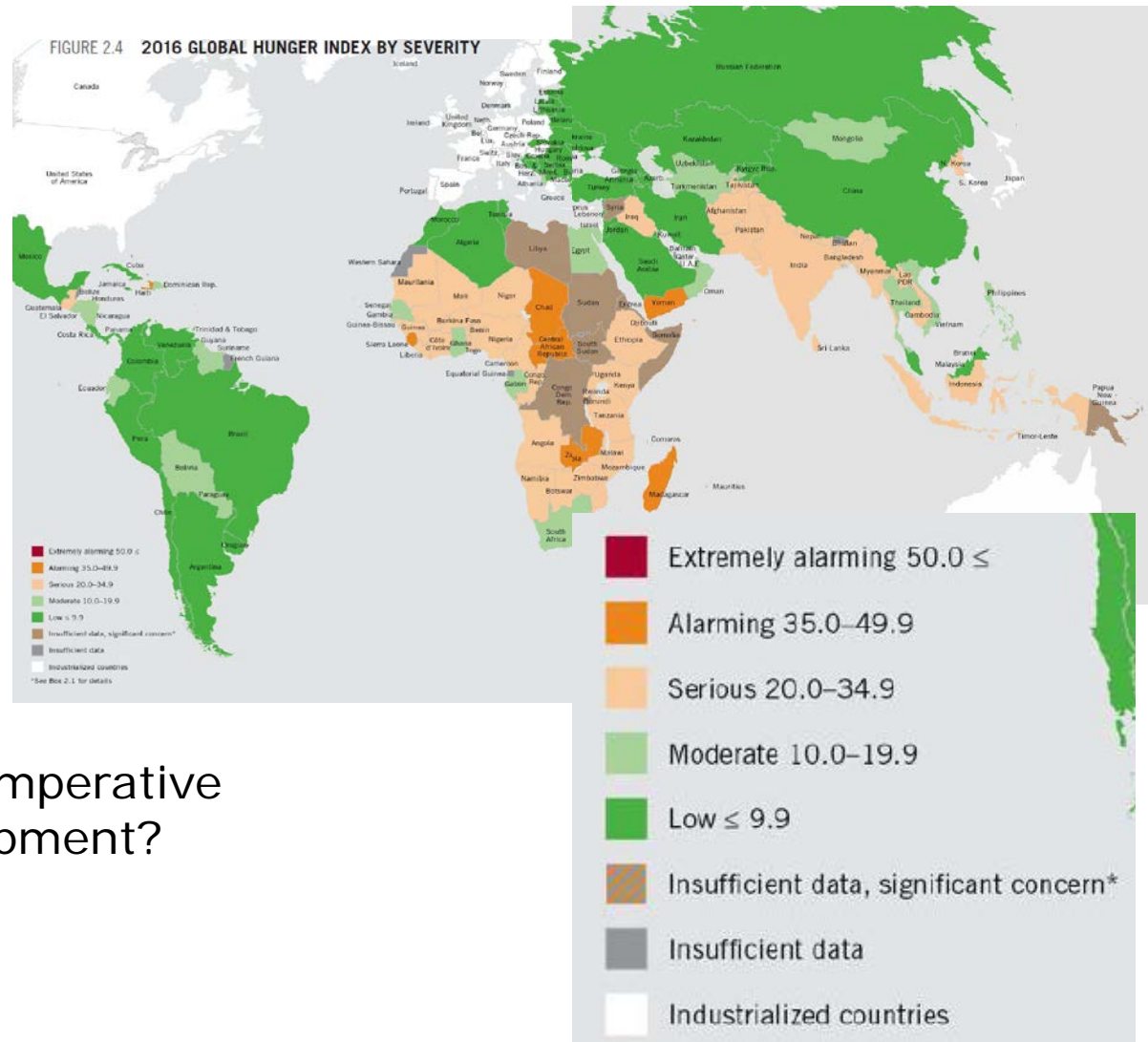
No need for a moral imperative of sustainable development?



(Steffen et al. 2015)

# Why to transform?

## What about social challenges...?



No need for a moral imperative  
of sustainable development?

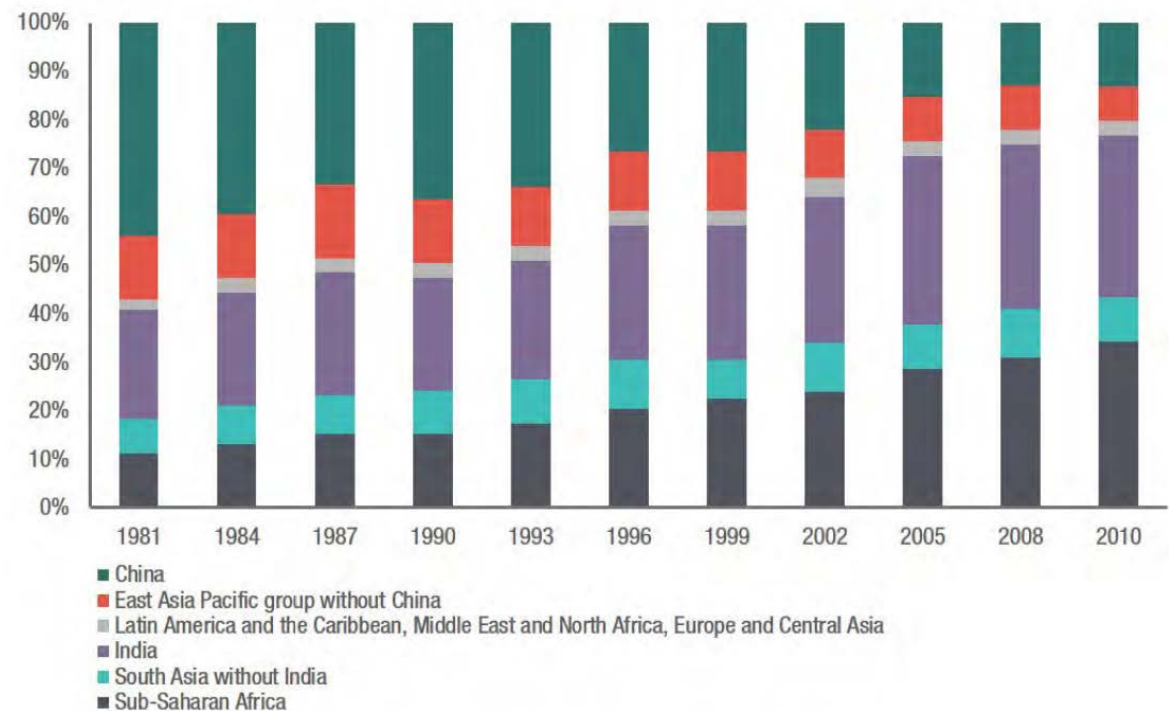


# Why to transform?

## What about social challenges...?

No need for a moral imperative of sustainable development?

Figure 1: Regional shares of the world's extreme poor population (%)



(Olinto and Uematsu 2013)

# Why to transform?



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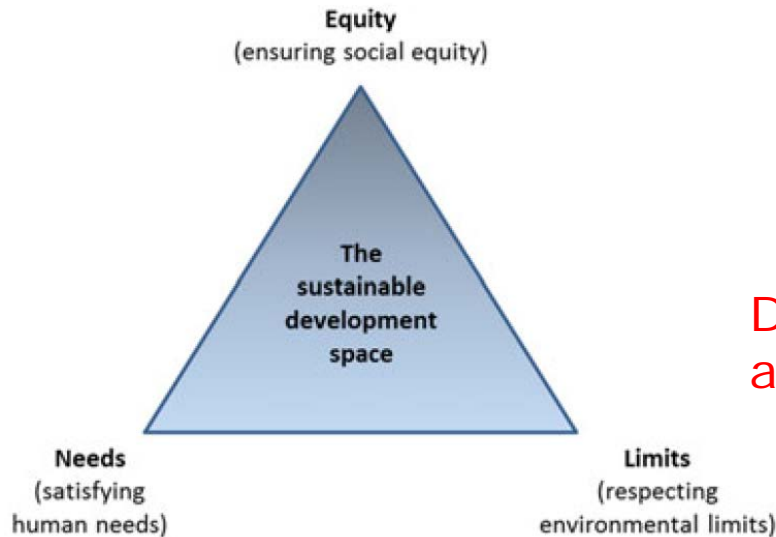
## The Imperatives of Sustainable Development

Erling Holden,<sup>1\*</sup> Kristin Linnerud<sup>2</sup> and David Banister<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Transport Studies Unit, School of Geography and the Environment, Oxford University, Oxford, UK



Does not answer **why** we should care about global equity, needs and limits...

## The Moral Imperatives of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a normative value system, on a par with human rights, democracy and freedom (and it is closely interlinked with all these systems). Thus, sustainable development is essentially a strong ethical, or moral, pronouncement as to what should be done. We call such a pronouncement a moral imperative.



## The ethical or moral pronouncement of the SDGs

(sensu Holden et al. 2016)

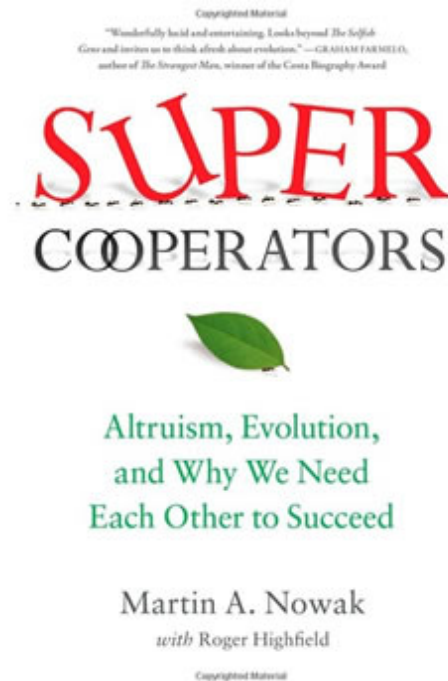
Overarching and unifying:

Cooperation and altruism

# Why to transform?



## The ethical or moral pronouncement of the SDGs (sensu Holden et al. 2016)



### LETTER

doi:10.1038/nature13530

#### Cooperating with the future

Oliver P. Hauser<sup>1,2\*</sup>, David G. Rand<sup>3,4\*</sup>, Alexander Peysakhovich<sup>1,3</sup> & Martin A. Nowak<sup>1,2,5</sup>

#### REVIEW

#### Five Rules for the Evolution of Cooperation

Martin A. Nowak

#### Uncalculating cooperation is used to signal trustworthiness

Jillian J. Jordan<sup>a,1</sup>, Moshe Hoffman<sup>b</sup>, Martin A. Nowak<sup>b</sup>, and David G. Rand<sup>a,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06511; and <sup>b</sup>Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, Harvard

Edited by Susan T. Fiske, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, and approved June 14, 2016 (received for review January

NAS



## The ethical or moral pronouncement of the SDGs (sensu Holden et al. 2016)



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Mindfulness and Compassion: An Examination of Mechanism and Scalability

Daniel Lim, Paul Condon, David DeSteno\*

Department of Psychology, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America

\* [d.desteno@gmail.com](mailto:d.desteno@gmail.com)

### Neuron Report

#### Linking Brain Structure and Activation in Temporoparietal Junction to Explain the Neurobiology of Human Altruism

Yosuke Morishima,<sup>1,\*</sup> Daniel Schunk,<sup>1</sup> Adrian Bruhin,<sup>1</sup> Christian C. Ruff,<sup>1</sup> and Ernst Fehr<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Laboratory for Social and Neural Systems Research, Department of Economics, University of Zurich, Blümlisalpstrasse 10,

“Human altruism shaped our evolutionary history and pervades social and political life” (Morishima et al. 2012)  
– it proved to be successful

#### Compassion Training Alters Altruism and Neural Responses to Suffering

Helen Y. Weng<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Andrew S. Fox<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>, Alexander J. Shackman<sup>4,5</sup>,  
Diane E. Stodola<sup>2</sup>, Jessica Z. K. Caldwell<sup>1,2,6,7</sup>, Matthew C. Olson<sup>2</sup>,  
Gregory M. Rogers<sup>5</sup>, and Richard J. Davidson<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin–Madison; <sup>2</sup>Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior, University of Wisconsin–Madison; <sup>3</sup>Center for Investigative Healthy Minds at the Waisman Center, University of

Psychological Science  
24(7) 1171–1180  
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## The ethical or moral pronouncement of the SDGs (sensu Holden et al. 2016)

### Avoiding the apolitical trap:

Cooperation and altruism are (also) political categories (e.g. solidarity)

Cooperation and altruism can be trained – they are not „given“ or „private“ but a responsibility of societies

Need for a global discourse on „who and what first?“



## Preconditions for political transformations (Turowski and Mikfeld (2013):

- A positive, mobilising idea – a model of a society after the transformation or a central promise that overcomes fear
- Ideas, solutions, innovations and projects which move from niches into the centre of society
- Change agents, pioneers of change
- Societal alliances which cross classical political and cultural boundaries
- A state which takes action, formulates guiding principles and goals and is open for political participation



## The need for a narrative

**„Widely shared narratives** are of outstanding importance of for the activity orientation of actors“ (Turowski and Mikfeld 2013)

They

- reduce complexity;
- create orientation for future action strategies
- are a basis for cooperation between actors
- foster reliability of expectations





## The need for a narrative

The SDGs carry the potential for a new narrative on how to live in global and intergenerational fairness (WBGU, 2016).

This calls for „narrating the narrative“



## Global transformation – who should transform?

“All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.” (Preamble to the UN resolution)



What is the role of Universities for implementation of the SDGs?



## Fields of action



1. Drive and support political and societal transformation by direct interventions in the policy process;
2. Realise their mission as stated in goal 4, particularly 4.7;
3. Identify implementation bottlenecks and suggest solutions;
4. Transform Universities (ourselves)



Drive and support political and societal transformation by direct interventions in the policy process:

Work at the science policy and science-society interface

Identify **implementation bottlenecks**, carry out research and suggest solutions:

Be aware of the temptation of complexity

Transform Universities (yourself):

Create structures fostering interdisciplinary sciences; work at the science-policy and science-society interface; get sustainable in your operations.



## Universities and political transformations

- A positive, mobilising idea – a model of a society after the transformation or a central promise that overcomes fear
- Ideas, solutions, innovations and projects which move from niches into the centre of society
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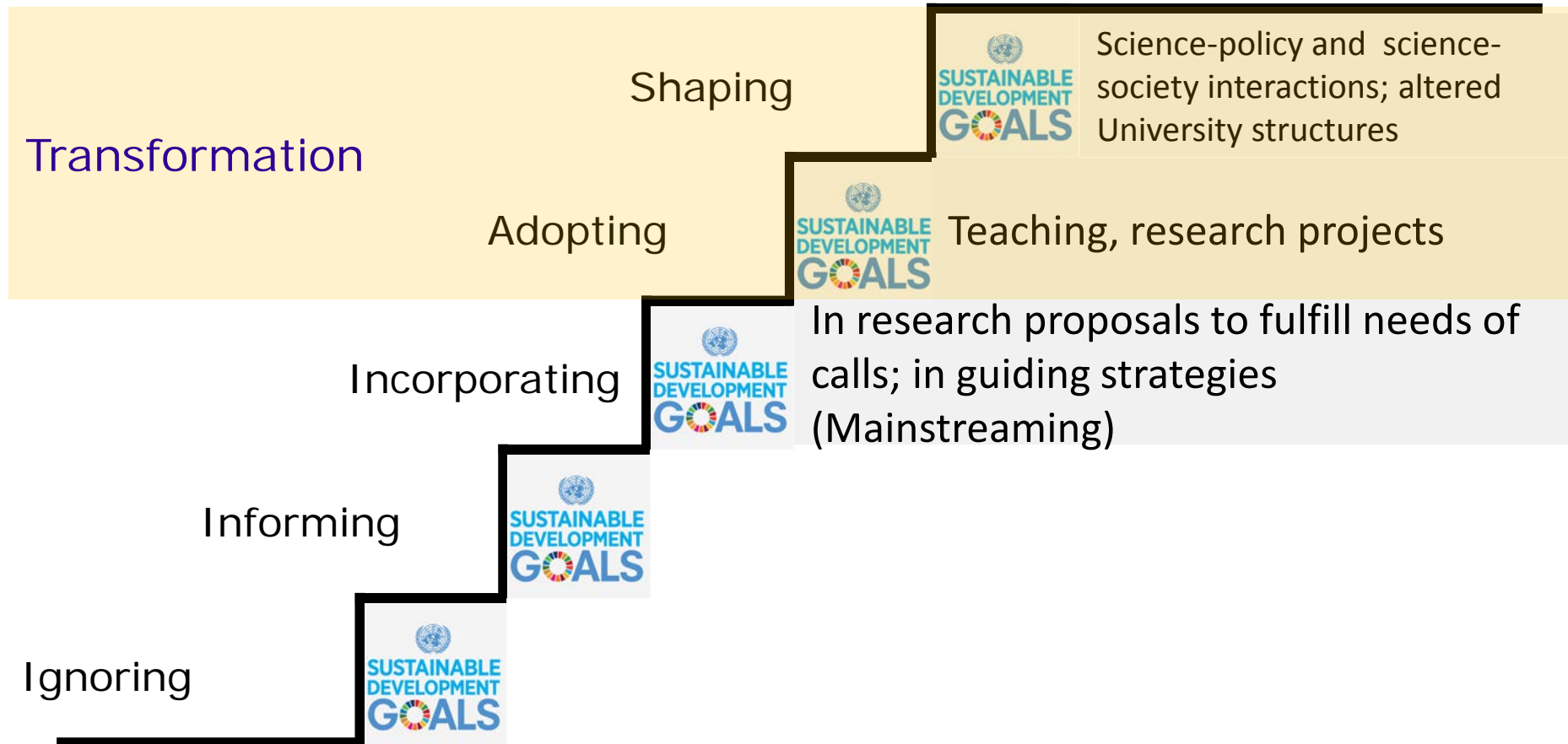
Direct influence possible

indirect influence

(changed from Turowski and Mikfeld (2013))




## The University SDG staircase





Many thanks for your attention

SDG Film BOKU

# BOKU International Airport

**Ankunft Arrivals** 

 **Arrival**  
 **Baggage**

Flight for 2016	From	Gate	Expected	Remarks
SDGs	UN	CDR	landed	Connecting flights on time

5:55 / 6:09

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXS98CqEgtA&vl=en-GB>