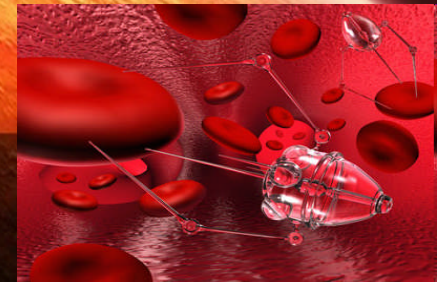
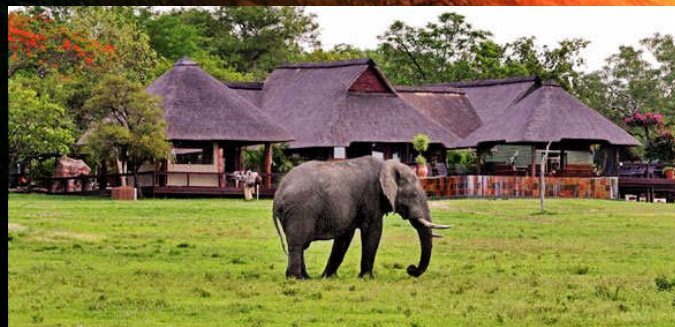


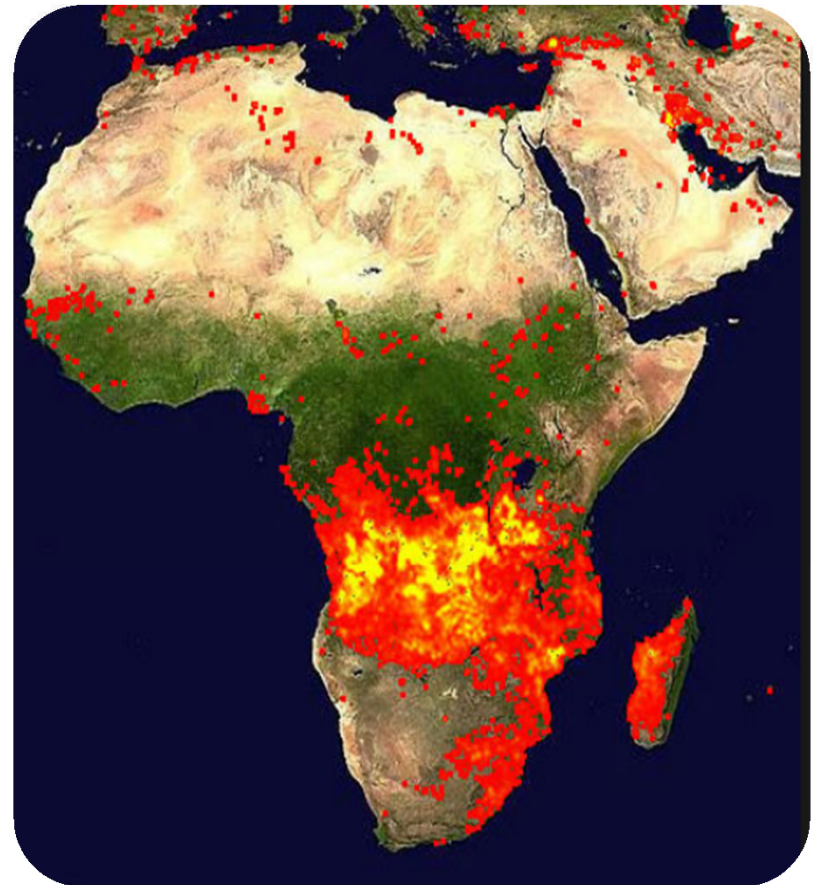
Novelty as a component of using the future (in Africa)

Tanja Hichert



The context

“The **convergence of crises**, from climate change to economic instability, inequality, poverty and the energy crunch, makes it necessary to **call into question the conventional development paradigm** based on exploitation of nature, continuous production and consumption and privatization of common resources. While this is imperative in ‘developed’ societies and in fast-growing economies, it is critical for nations ‘on their way’ to development.”



The context

“The voices that currently dominate the discussion tend to be from regions located mainly in the global North where there are well-resourced institutions of higher learning and relatively easy access to publication outlets.

This impoverishes the global discourses that shape the way futures and transition dynamics are anticipated. This raises challenging questions about what we imagine to be the key agents of change. Fresh voices tend to come exactly from such peripheral places and geo-political and socio-cultural interstices. In anticipation, we ask: Whose futures? .”



The convenors of this conference

“using the future”

a distinctive feature of
anticipation

Miller (2011-2014) Futures Literacy

Ways of 'using' the future

At a practical level there are three broad categories of conscious anticipation (ways of using the future):

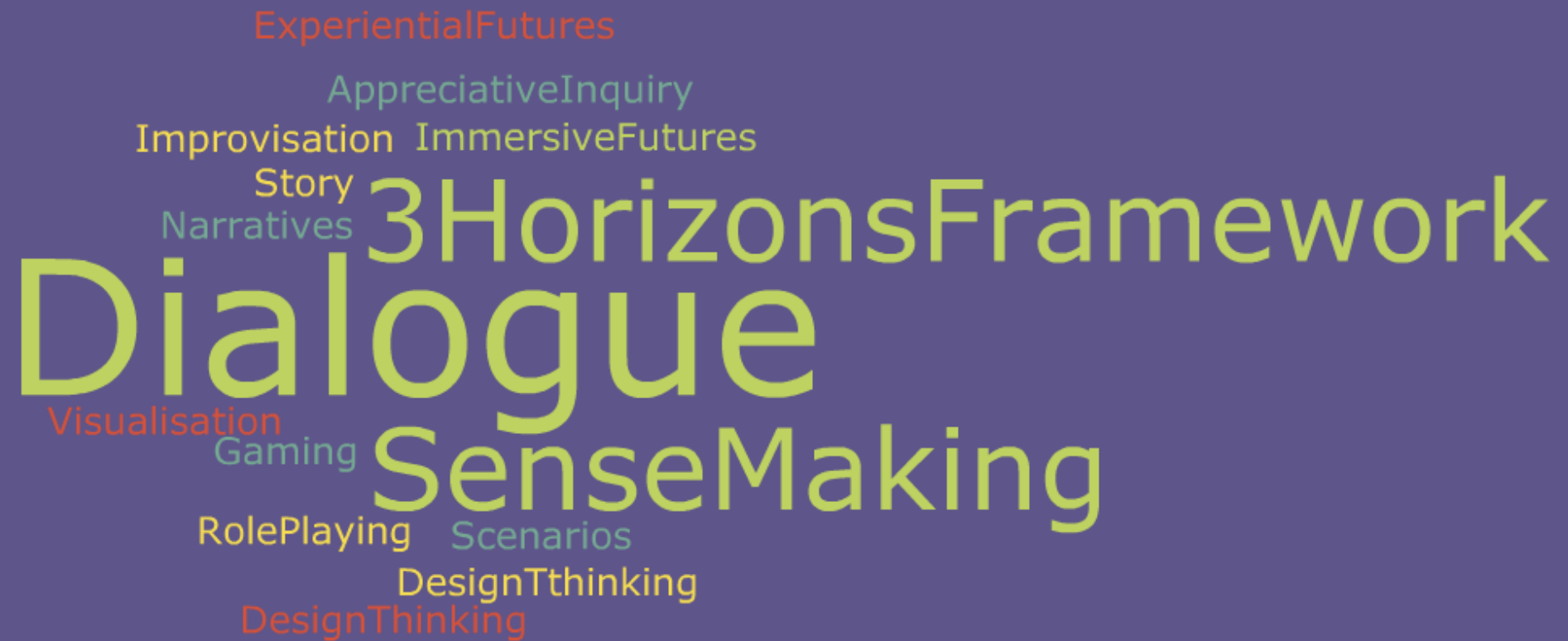
- optimisation (“planning”)
 - contingent (“preparation”), and
 - novelty (“invention”) processes.
-

Novelty

- Involves the invention of “open tomorrows”, otherwise known as “creative”
 - Novel futures can be used to make sense of differences that are not just unpredictable or random but fundamentally unknowable in advance
 - The future is in the present (The future is now)
 - Focus on ideas (concepts, values)
 - Focus on practices (behaviors, feelings, learning)
-

The future in the present, what does it mean for practice?

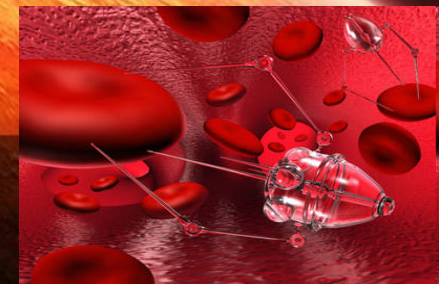
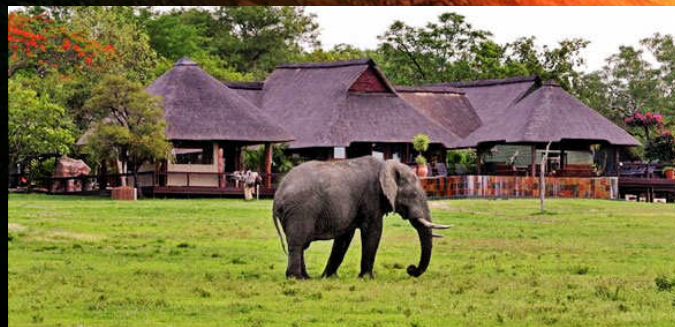




A word cloud on a dark blue background. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'Dialogue' and 'SenseMaking' being the largest. Other words include '3HorizonsFramework', 'AppreciativeInquiry', 'ImmersiveFutures', 'Story', 'Narratives', 'Improvisation', 'Visualisation', 'Gaming', 'RolePlaying', 'Scenarios', 'DesignThinking', and 'DesignTthinking'. The colors of the words are red, teal, yellow, and light green.

ExperientialFutures
AppreciativeInquiry
Improvisation ImmersiveFutures
Story
Narratives
3HorizonsFramework
Dialogue
Visualisation
Gaming
SenseMaking
RolePlaying Scenarios
DesignThinking
DesignTthinking

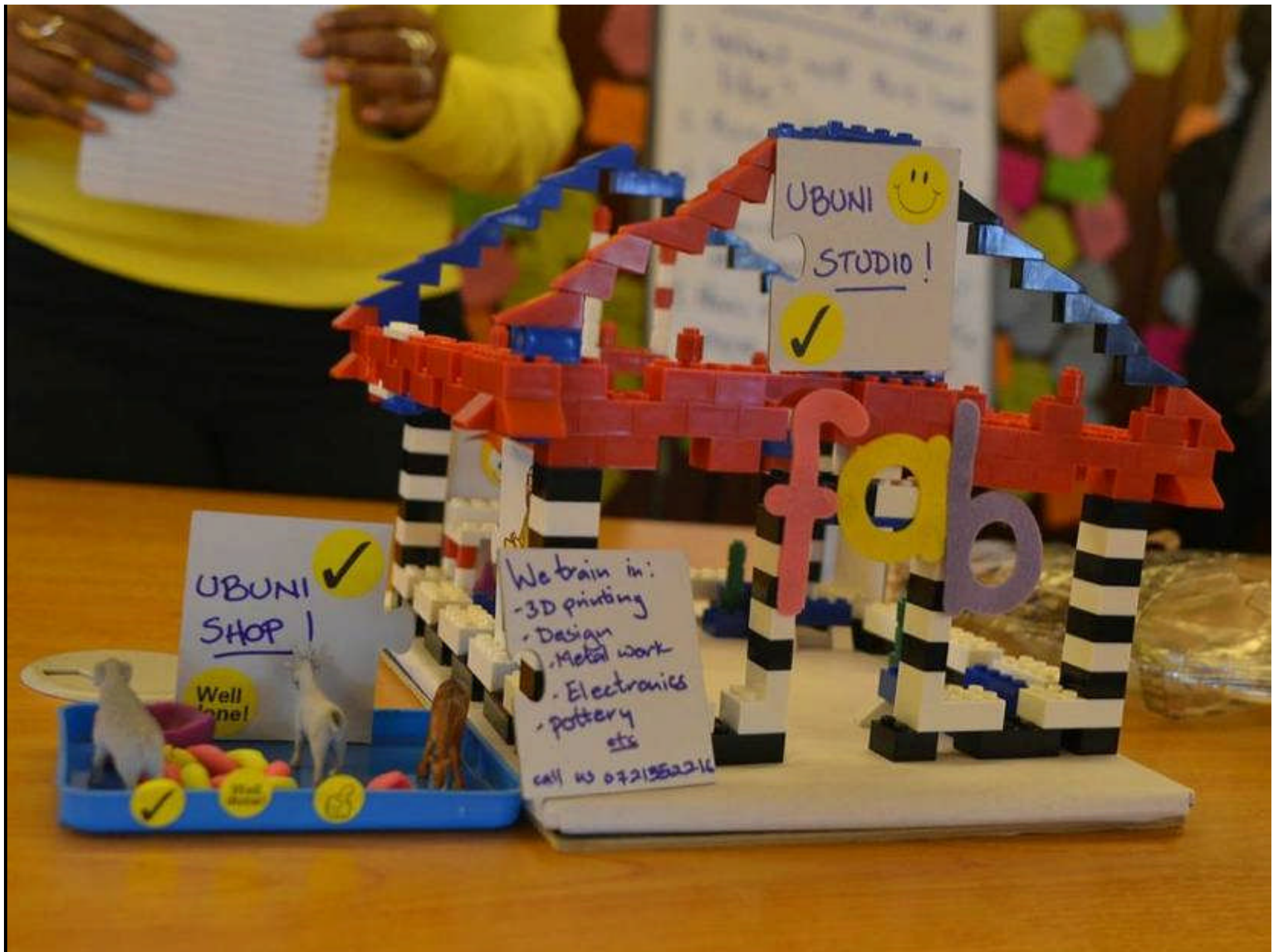
Some examples



Integrating scenarios and
design to produce
interventions which build
resilience and equity for
Nairobi's informal sector









Applying Transdisciplinary (TD) Case Research in African contexts

Informality & stakeholders
Building capacity through co-production
Facilitation skills for process work
Sensemaking – mass qualitative research
Anticipatory thinking – evolutionary
potential of the present



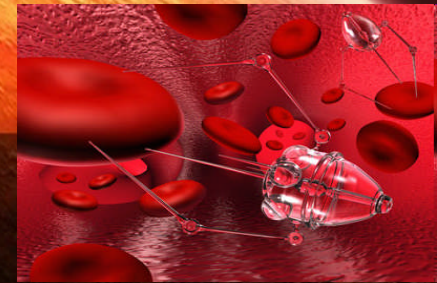
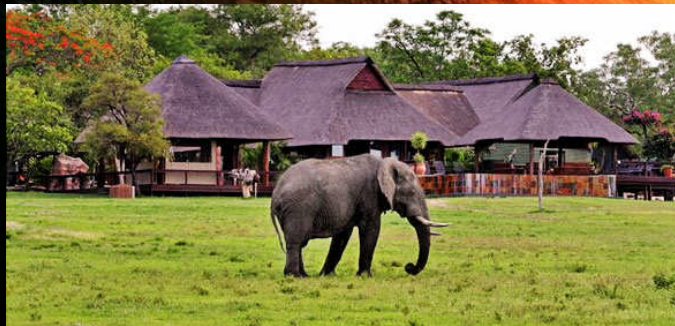
**Rethinking incremental urbanism:
co-production of incremental informal settlement upgrading strategies**

Look for 'emergence',
'bottom-up',
experimental, exploratory,
new ways of understanding
and doing....
Complexity and trans-
disciplinarity

'Seeds' of a 'Good Anthropocene' initiative



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Goal of the GA Initiative

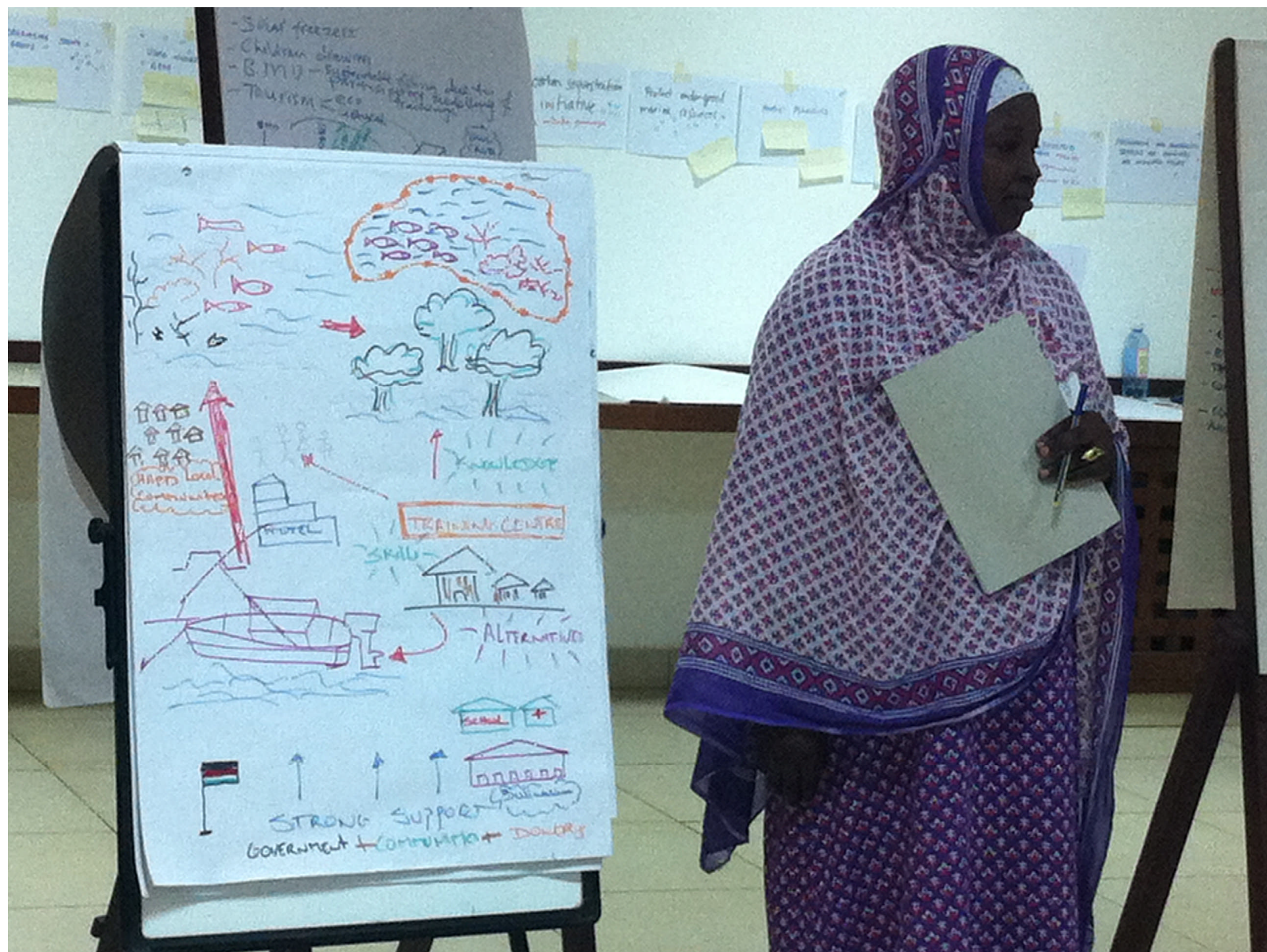
Explore and start developing a narrative around what
different “**Good Anthropocenes**” might be like
specifically from a southern African perspective

TODAY: Specifically Urban perspective

Linked to global initiative to scope
positive & possible futures

1. Regional, place-based workshops
2. Online campaign
goodanthropocenes.net





At the heart of it all is...

di·a·logue

/ˈdīə,læg,ˈdīə,lôg/

verb NORTH AMERICAN

1. take part in a conversation or discussion to resolve a problem.

"he stated that he wasn't going to dialogue with the guerrillas"

A 'discipline' of collective thinking and inquiry, a process for transforming the quality of conversation, and in particular the thinking that lies beneath it.

"... a meaningful interaction and exchange between individuals and/or people of different groups (social, cultural, political and religious) who come together through various kinds of conversations or activities with a view to increased understanding."

... and Futures orientation / thinking

Just as there is no singular perspective and/or narrative that can adequately capture all of the complexities of the past (history), the same is true of the future (hence, futures). Pluralizing the future(s) is simultaneously and intentionally a means of decolonizing the future(s).

While challenging the normative political structures, systems, and institutions of the present, futures studies does not inherently promote any particular ideology, agenda, and/or telos. However it does strive to enable greater participation in discourses about what the futures can and might be.

When it comes to the complexity and context of a topic such as 'Good* Anthropocene', it can be much more effective to plan, design and facilitate dialogues that are experiential, and where the emphasis is placed on futures-orientation, participation, creativity and experiments.



* Never imposing criteria on what is “good” is

SEEDS OF GOOD ANTHROPOCENES

Identifying socially-ecological bright spots that could grow & connect to produce a better anthropocene



[about](#) / [seed collection](#) / [contribute a seed](#) / [map of seeds](#) / [about the anthropocene](#) / [contact us](#)

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This project is a collaboration between the Stockholm Resilience Centre and "Bright Spots – Seeds of a Good Anthropocene" a FutureEarth funded project. Visit the 'About' page to find more project details and the 'Who we are' page find out more about us. The project was initiated in 2014 and will continue until 2016 and beyond.

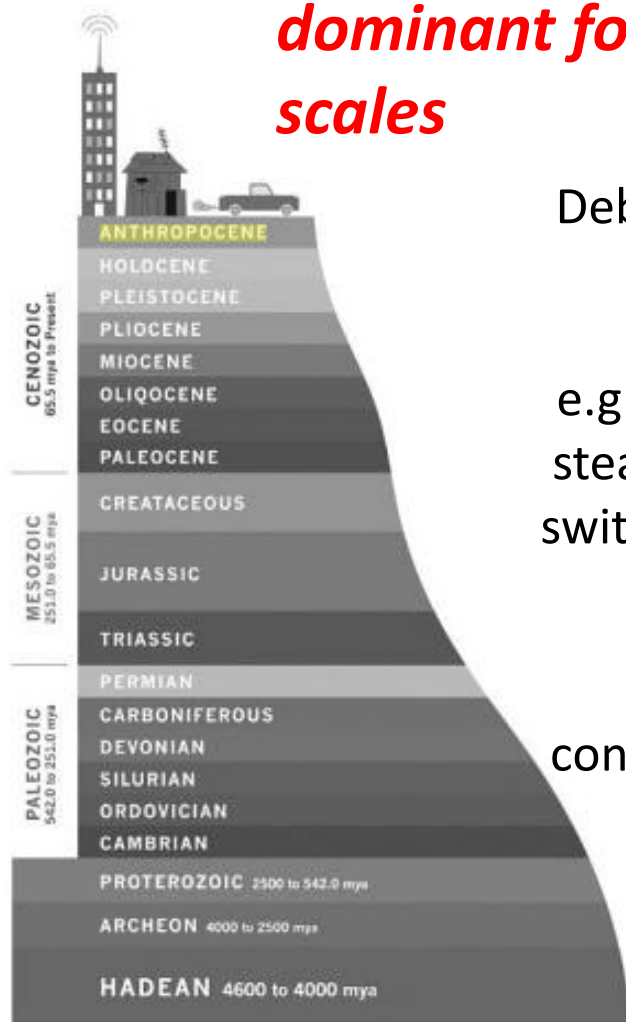


CAPE FLATS NATURE PROJECT

30 September, 2015

Navigating transformations in the “Anthropocene”

A new geological era where human activity is a dominant force shaping ecosystems at global scales



Debate about the start

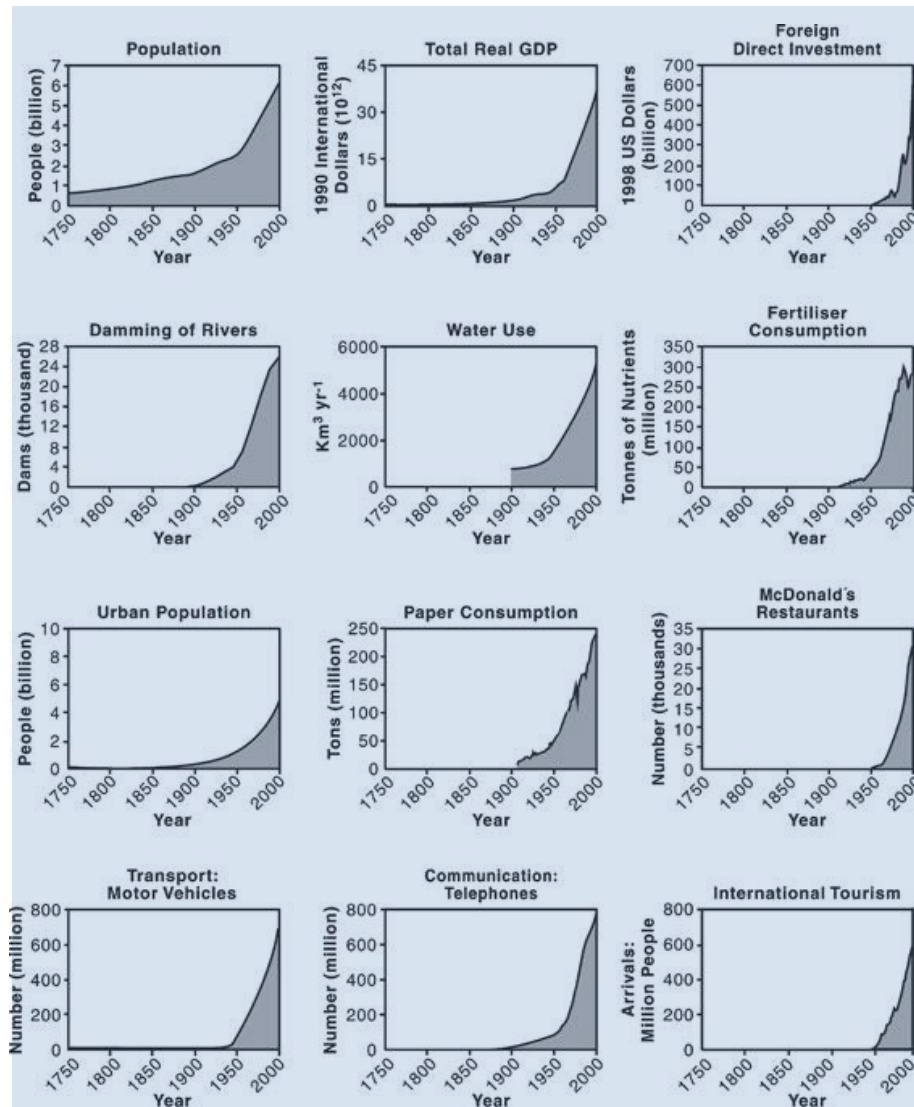
e.g when the first steam engine was switched on in 18th century

Developing consensus around the 1950s

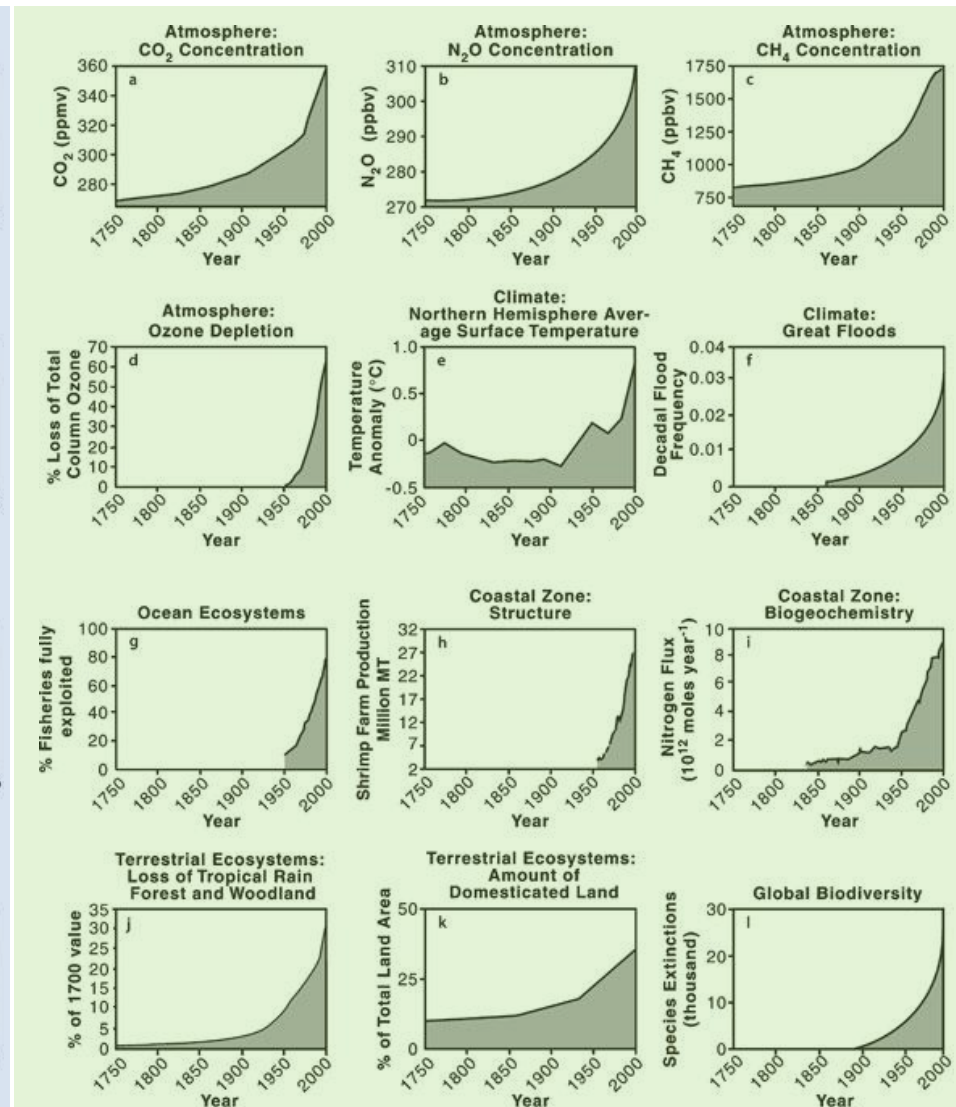


“Great Acceleration” since 1950s

Social & Economic Change



Ecological Change



Challenges of the Anthropocene

These changes have greatly increased the material well-being of very many people (1900: 1.6 billion -> 2014: 7.2 billion people)

- Through use of **ecosystem services** eg fresh water, food production, timber



These new dynamics have produced new threats, risks, and problems and these issues dominate popular and scientific forecasts

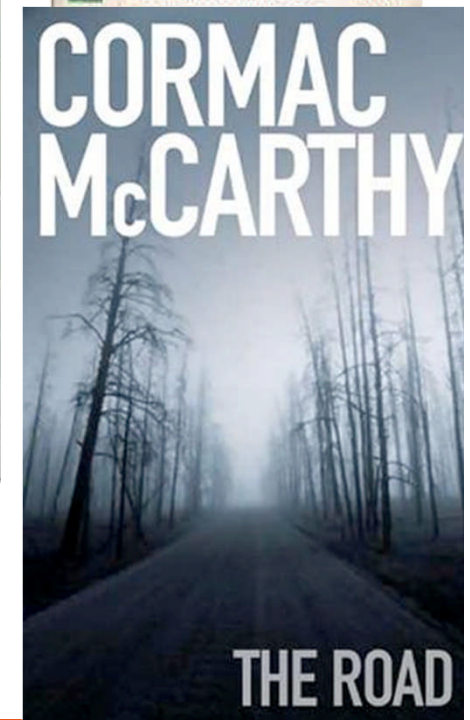
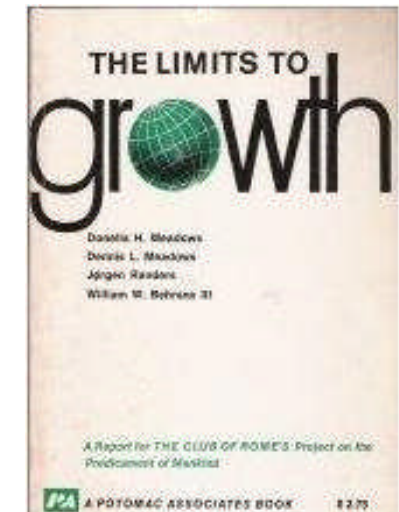
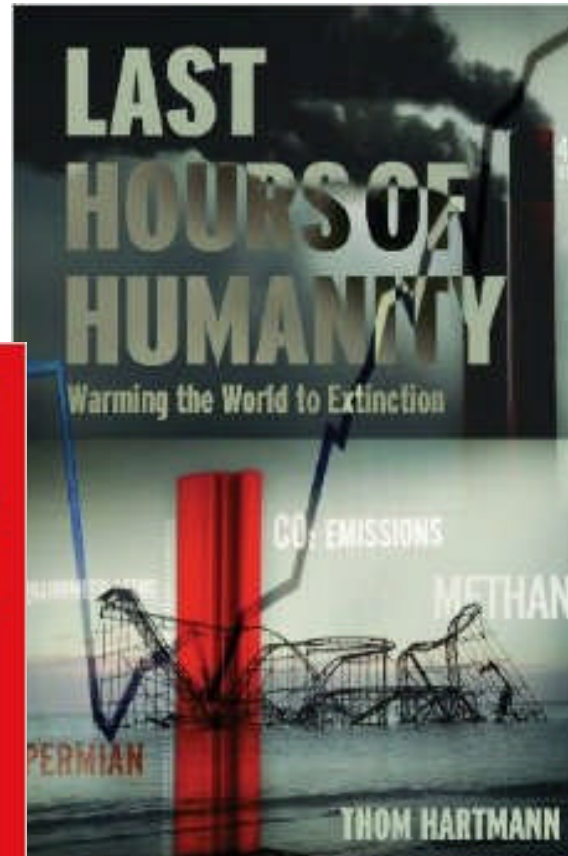
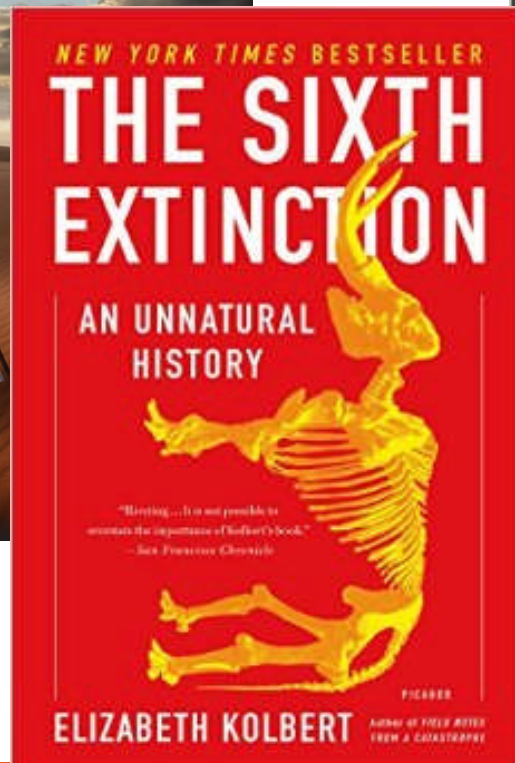
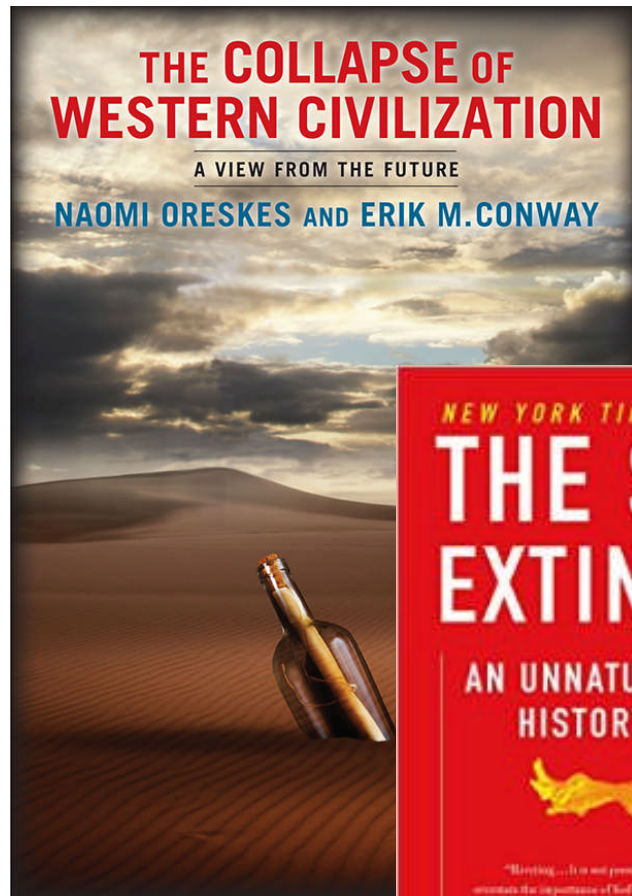
Challenges of the Anthropocene

Growing evidence that current trajectory unsustainable

- Many **ecosystem services** are degrading or insufficient for projected future demand eg climate regulation, fresh water
- Massive **inequalities** : wealthiest 20% account for 77% of private consumption; poorest 20% account for 1.5% of private consumption



These challenges have led to many dystopian stories of the future



Stories are powerful things: they create our reality as much as they explain it.

If the stories we reach for when everything seems to be coming apart, are ones that lead on themes of disaster, fragmentation, and breakdown, and that offer no hope of making it over the chasm to safety, then it becomes much more likely that we'll find ourselves confronting just such a scenario.

If, on the other hand, we have stories, visions and signs, including weak signals – the so-called “pockets of the future in the present” – that are positive, inspiring and purposeful, they could have the power to drive a different, and much more hopeful, kind of transformation.

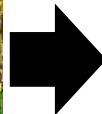
Alex Evans (paraphrased)

Underlying premise

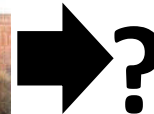
Meeting the “Anthropocene Challenge” may require a change in order of the shift from Medieval to Industrial times



Medieval



Industrial



Fundamental shift in underlying worldviews, assumptions and values that shape individual choices and societies

Why Seeds ?



“The future is already here; it’s just unevenly distributed.”
William Gibson

Seeds as pockets of the future in the present



Including pockets
of the “past” in
the present



Connecting seeds
to create stories of
the future through
dialogue and
workshop model



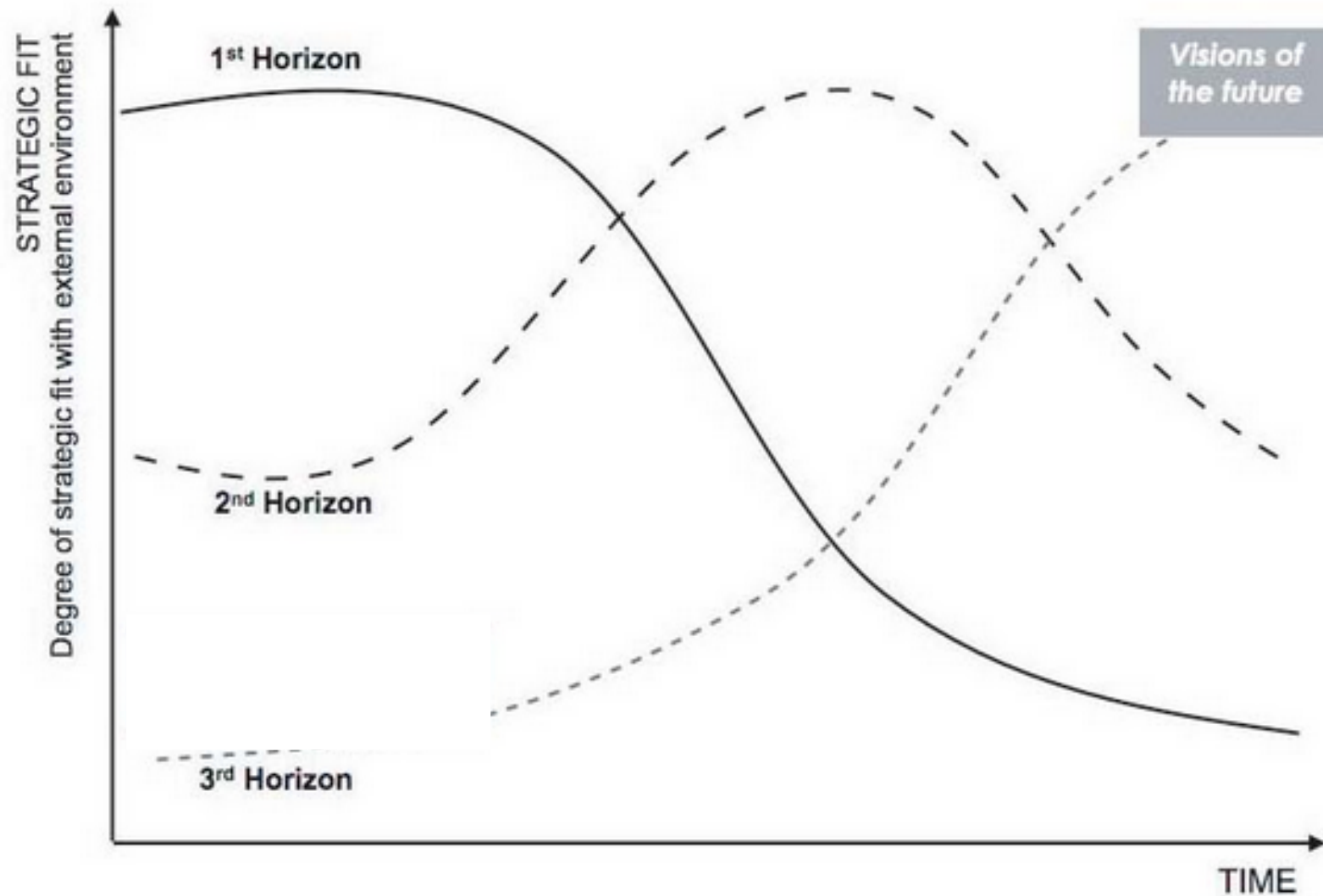
Why focus on Seeds ?

New ways of using seeds as a tool for thinking
about the future

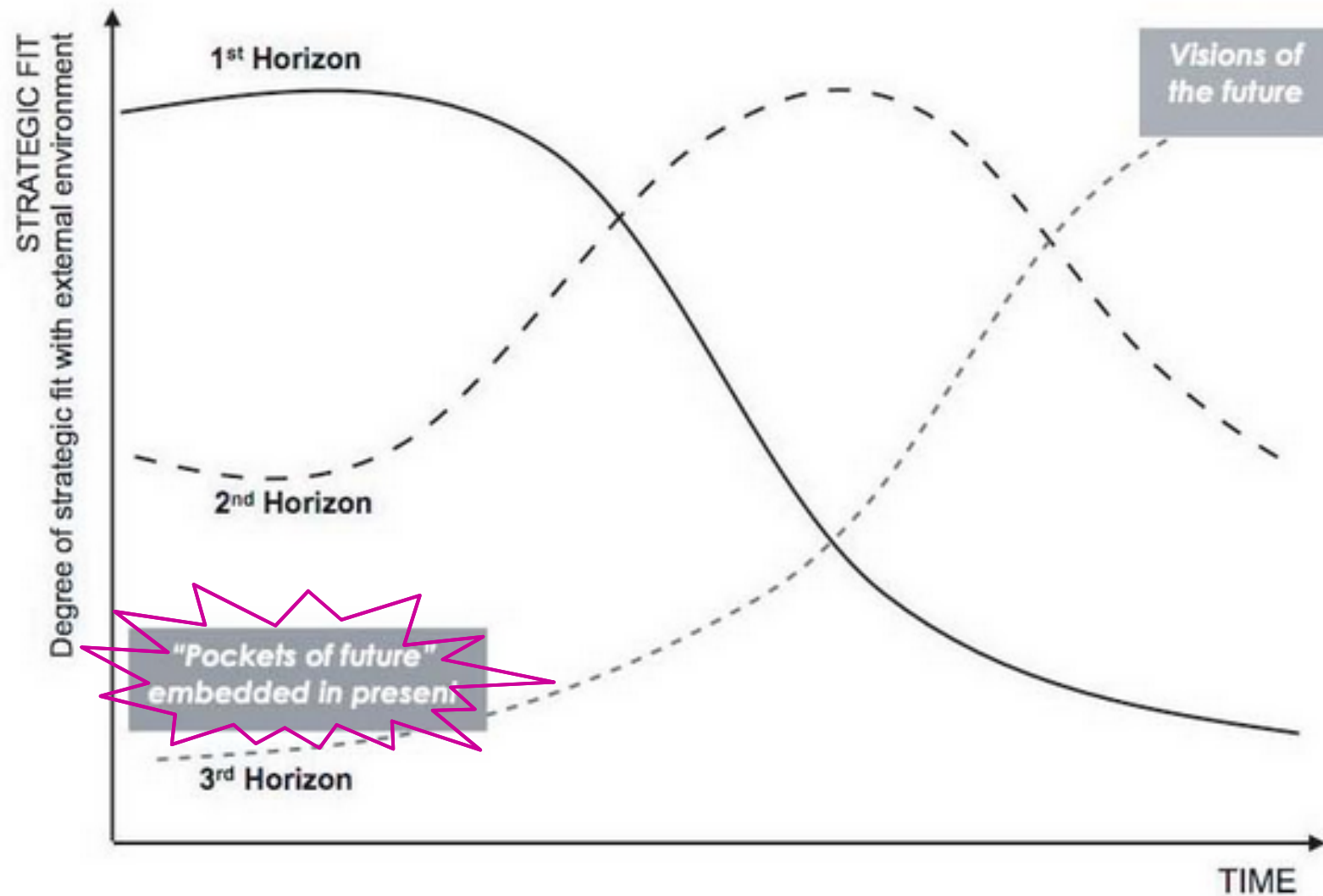
Notion of seeds: pockets of the future in the present
through **experiments** that are present long before radical
change occurs.

Rather than developing scenarios (“whole pictures”)
of the future (which are limited to what we can imagine)
we aim to survey a wide variety of **innovations** and
experiments, which if fostered, could potentially develop
and combine in unimaginable ways to contribute to a **Good
Anthropocene**

Three Horizons Framework



Three Horizons Framework



What is a seed?

- A way of thinking, doing, institution, technology
- Exists at least partially or in prototype form already
- Exists at the margins; not yet dominant/mainstream
- Can contribute to creating a positive future
(at least according to someone)



What is a “Good” Anthropocene? Defined by who? Good for who?

- Leaving it undefined
 - Want to explore the **values** and **assumptions** underlying the seeds people identify
 - Particularly interested in points of **convergence** and **divergence**
 - Very interested in alternative views from the usual “sustainability” discourse
- Believe multiple “**Good Anthropocenes**” are possible
 - Trajectories of positive development and change for many people
 - Social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability

Commonalities

- Connecting people to people
 - Knowledge sharing
 - Collaboration
 - Community
 - Connecting people to nature
 - Build hope
 - Often bottom-up
 - Social-ecological
 - Experimental and fleet-footed
-

In discussing futures literacy, Miller (2011) argues that “the challenge is not finding ways to know the future, but rather to find ways to live and act without knowing the future”. Yet, the futures of Anthropocene will be the outcome of today’s collective choices, and science has a strong role to play in guiding such choices.

To fulfill this task, science needs to have closer and different relations with practice, where science is co-designed and co-produced with societal stakeholders, and where science not only informs practice but also learns from practice.

Outcomes

- Form of **sensing & meaning-making** (not modelling the future)
- Learning how to **anticipate different futures**
- Scoping the **patterns** that emerge
- Creating spaces for **co-learning** and **cross-sector collaboration**
- Fostering a **network of change agents**
- Learning to find out what **novelty** means and what **underlying values** are driving the need to innovate

Conclusion

*Ultimately the challenge of transitioning to sustainable futures does not only ask questions of what humanity can do to save the earth or to make the Anthropocene more habitable, but the challenge is rather framed in terms of the question of **what kind of (human) beings do we need to become to re-tell and re-imagine many different possible 'charming' (Buck 2015) or 'abundant Anthropocenes'** (Collard et al 2015).*

Here the role of telling and sharing our different stories to each other is an important component in this journey of navigating a shared future.

Morin (2008:97) puts it this way: "... complex thinking is not omniscient thinking. It is, on the contrary, a thinking which knows it is always local, situated in a given time and place. Neither is it a complete thinking, for it knows in advance that there is always uncertainty. By the same token, it avoids the arrogant dogmatism which rules non-complex forms of thinking.

Complex thinking, however, does not lead to a resigned scepticism, since, by completely breaking with the dogmatism of certainty, it throws itself courageously into the adventure upon which, from its birth, humanity has been embarked."

Questions Discussion



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