



Locking in or helping shift? Trends and developments affecting sustainable resource use and degrowth

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Overview

- ▶ Why analysing trends?
- ▶ How did we do that?
- ▶ Relevant trend clusters identified
- ▶ Interlinkages and feedbacks
- ▶ Implications for resource policy and degrowth



Why analysing trends?

“Essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful” (George P. E. Box)

- ▶ Scan the horizon for emerging issues
- ▶ Analyse and extrapolate from past/current developments
- ▶ Gather evidence and outline plausible development trajectories
- ▶ Enabling early warnings and identifying intervention points for precautionary/corrective action
- ▶ No predictions, rather fact- and expert-based assumptions



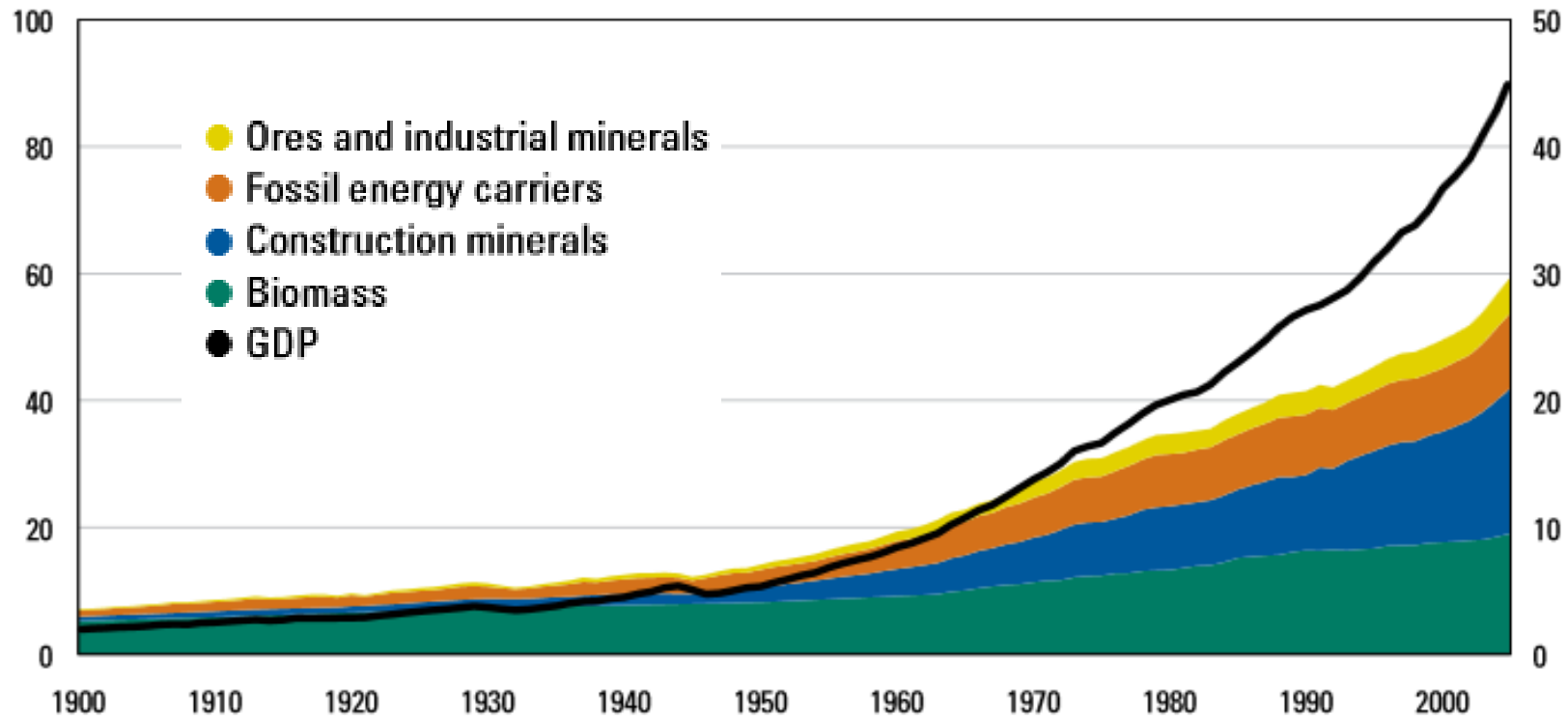
Why analysing trends?

Figure 2. Global material extraction in billion tons, 1900–2005

Material extraction
Billion tons

● Biomass
● GDP

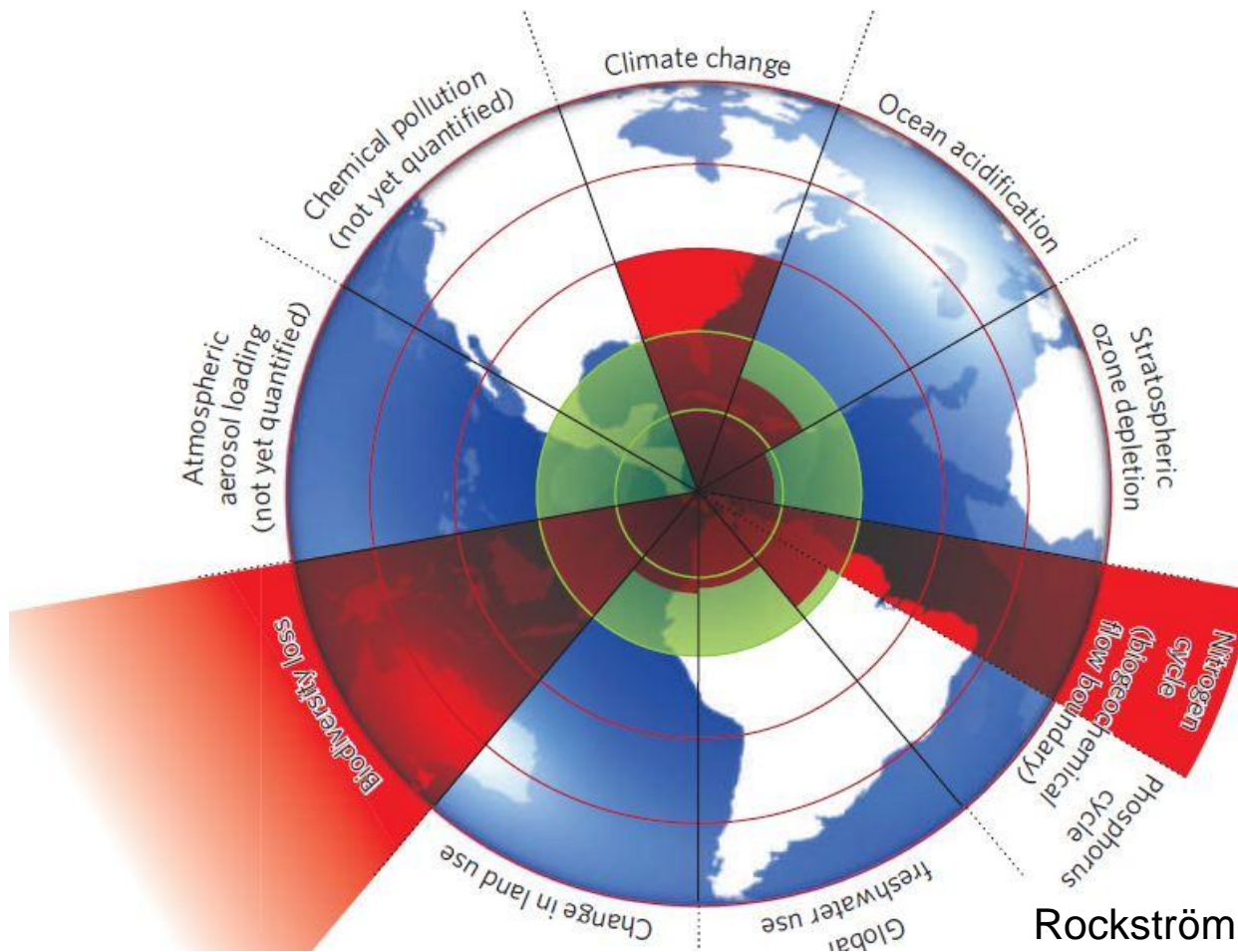
GDP
trillion (10¹²) international dollars



Krausmann et al. 2009



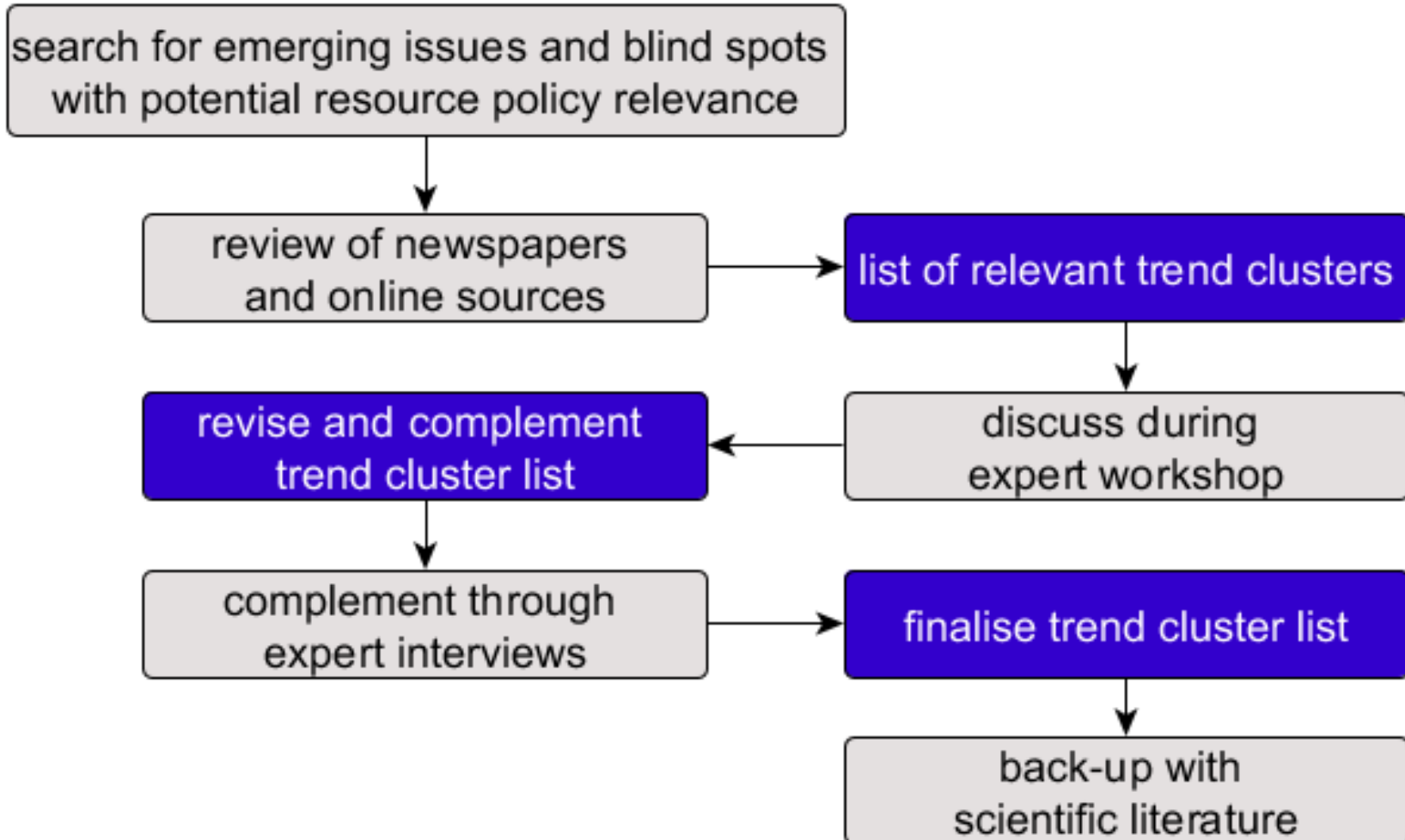
Why analysing trends?



Rockström et al. 2009



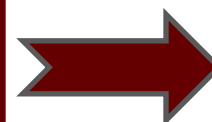
How was the analysis done?





Socio-economic acceleration

Westernised growth models and lifestyles spread
Pace of technological development increases
Profit maximisation prevailing as business model
Personalised and ubiquitous advertisement
Economisation of the educational system
Global capital flows increase and accelerate



> Planting cravings and desires
 > Conspicuous consumption
 > per capita resource use
 Planned obsolescence > Waste generat.

may
trigger

may counteract

Emergence of more sustainable world views, shared economy business models, enlightened consumers



Digitalisation

*Digitalisation of all aspects of living (e.g. smart homes)
eCommerce and mobileCommerce increase
Digital behaviour enables personalised advertisement
More options for online participation & empowerment
Vulnerability to sabotage and manipulation raised*



> Lowered buying thresholds
< Impulse buying
> Resource needs for ICT
Digital work may reduce travel needs

may
increase

may counteract

Availability of information; options for sustainability
oriented online business ratings via social media



New mental models and world views

Transition initiatives spread within niches

Demand for meaningful jobs increases

More conscious eating and mobility decisions (in parts of society)

Common welfare economics on the rise in niches

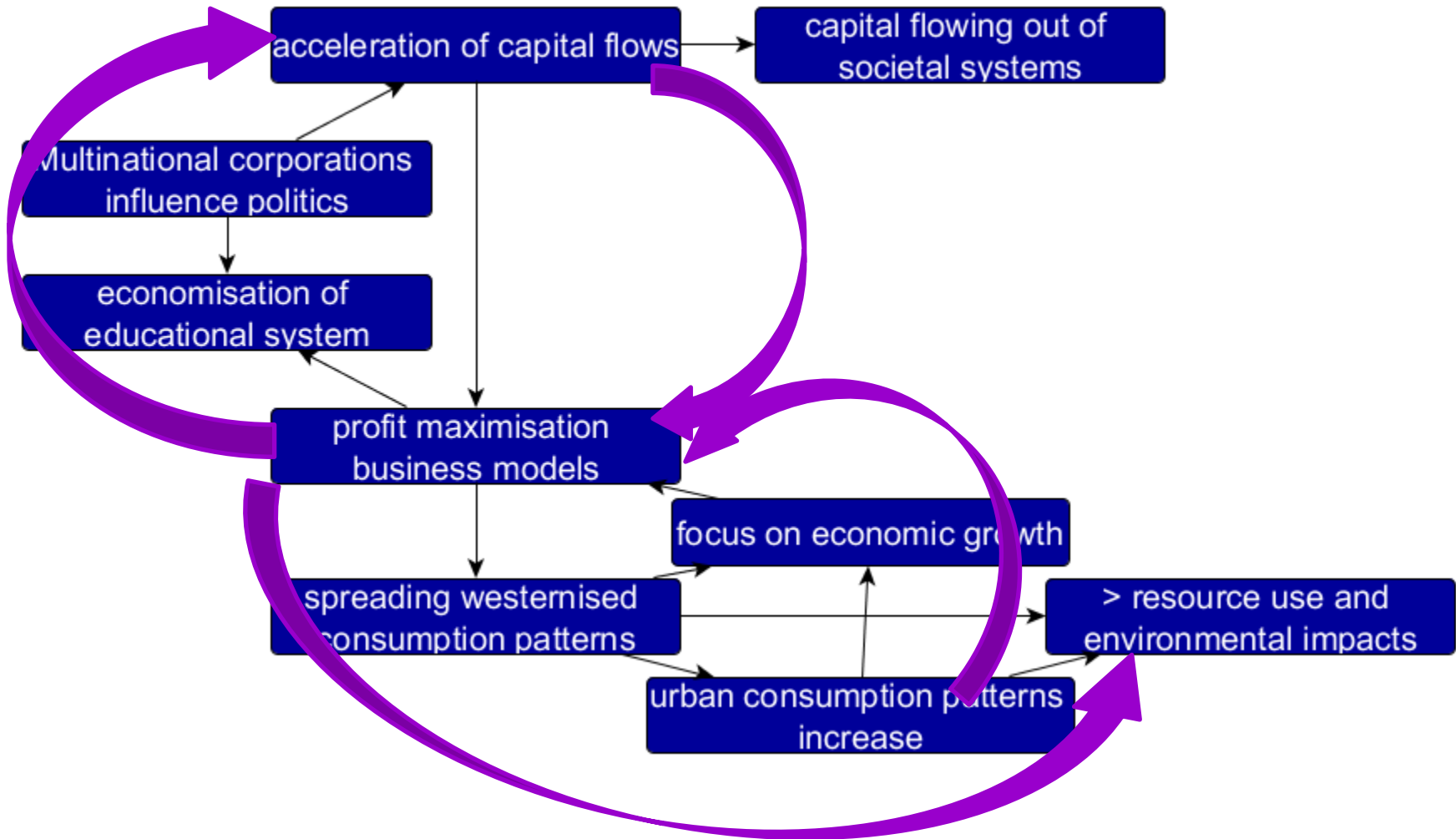


Mainly niche phenomena
Can upscaling be achieved?

- > sufficiency, simplified lives
- < per capita consumption of resources
- < CO2-emissions
- < waste generation

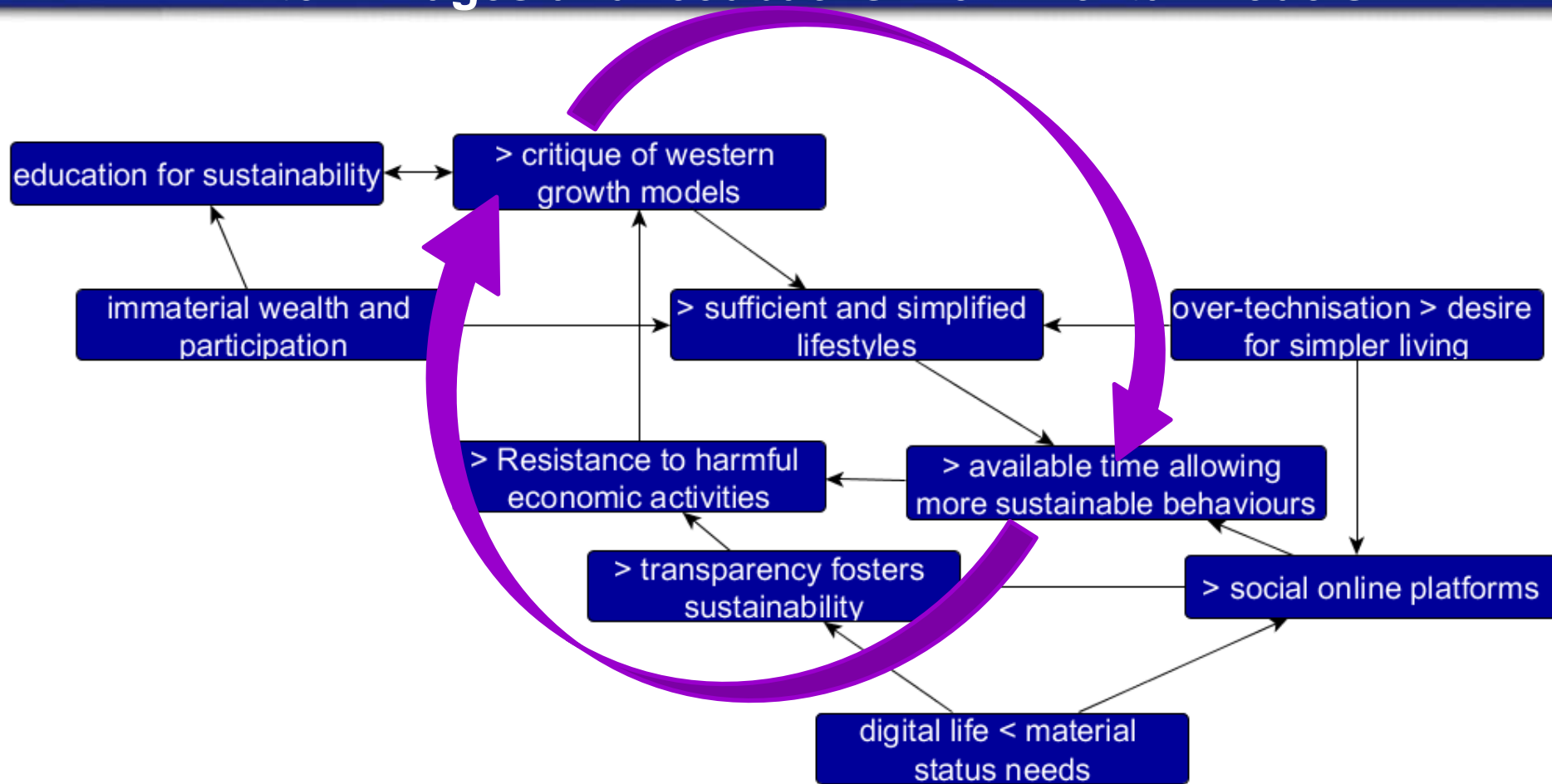


Interlinkages and feedbacks: socio-economic system



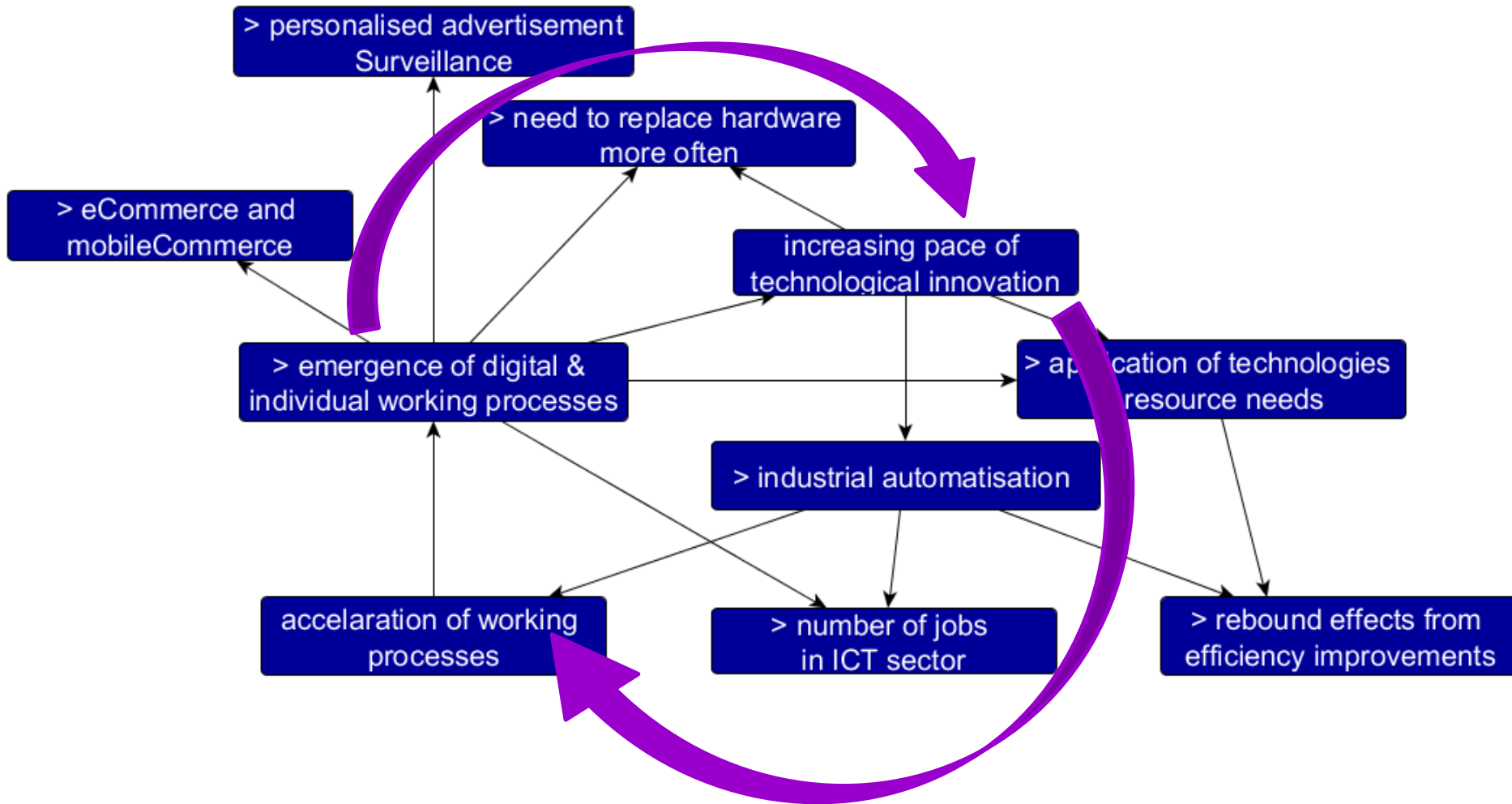


Interlinkages and feedbacks: new mental models



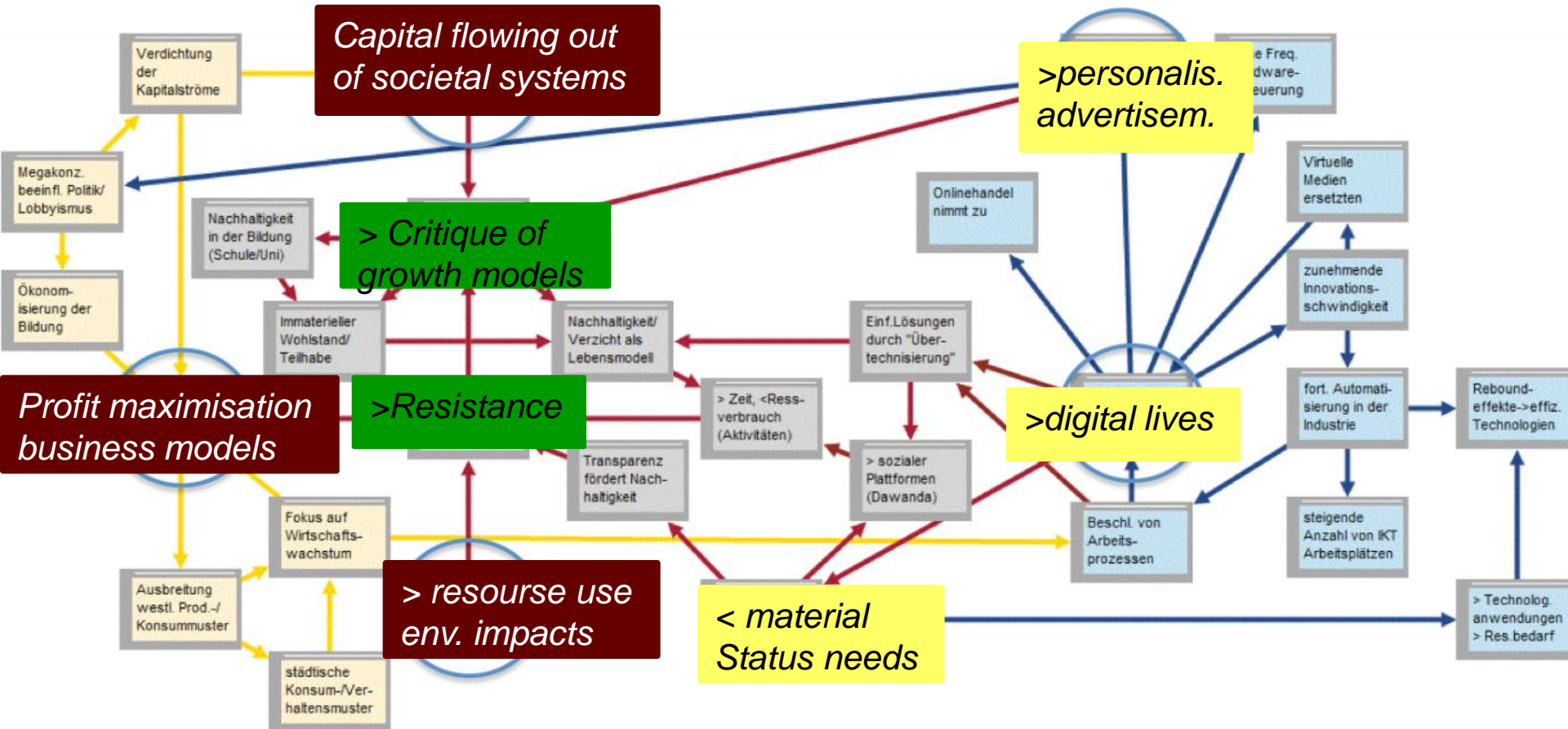


Interlinkages and feedbacks: digitalisation





Implications for degrowth pathways





Implications for degrowth pathways

- ▶ Accelerating trends dominate in the short- and medium term (long term?)
- ▶ All trend clusters entail sustainable counter-trends in niches
- ▶ Financial market trends poorly understood in relation to resource use
- ▶ Intervention points should
 - ▶ create conditions conducive to counter-trends
 - ▶ slow acceleration down
 - ▶ remove blind spot on financial markets
- ▶ Degrowth momentum may just be the needed tipping point for breaking trends



Thank you for listening.

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