

# Identifying content for a sustainability-focused learning programme using the Viable System Model

Bryan Hopkins

# What is sustainability?

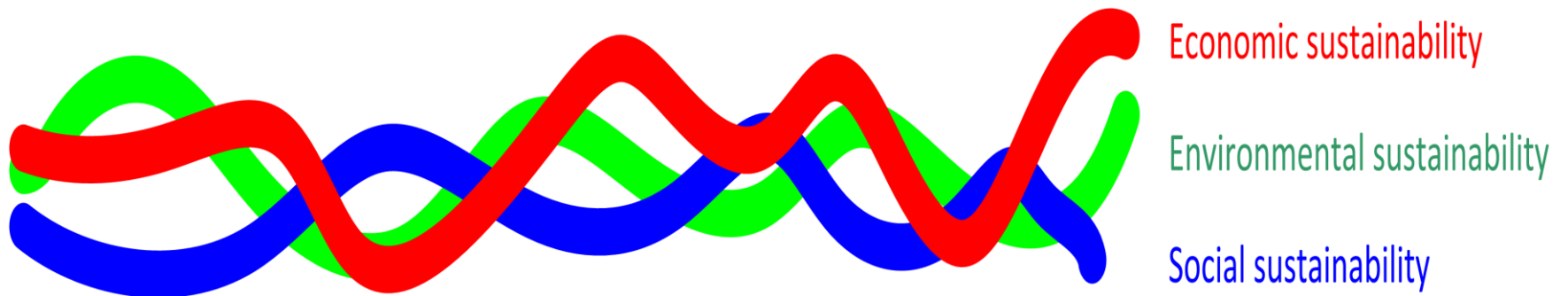
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Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

# Three dimensions of sustainability

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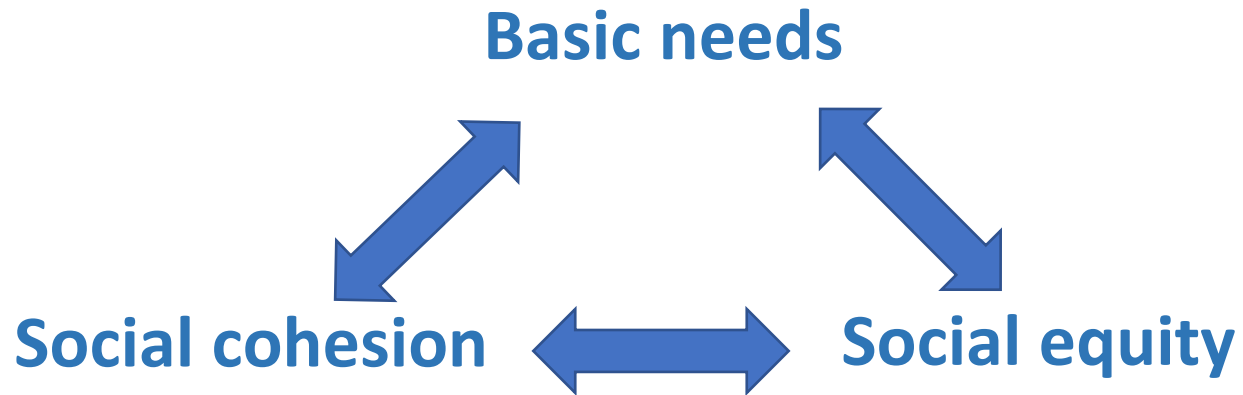


# Environmental sustainability



# Social sustainability

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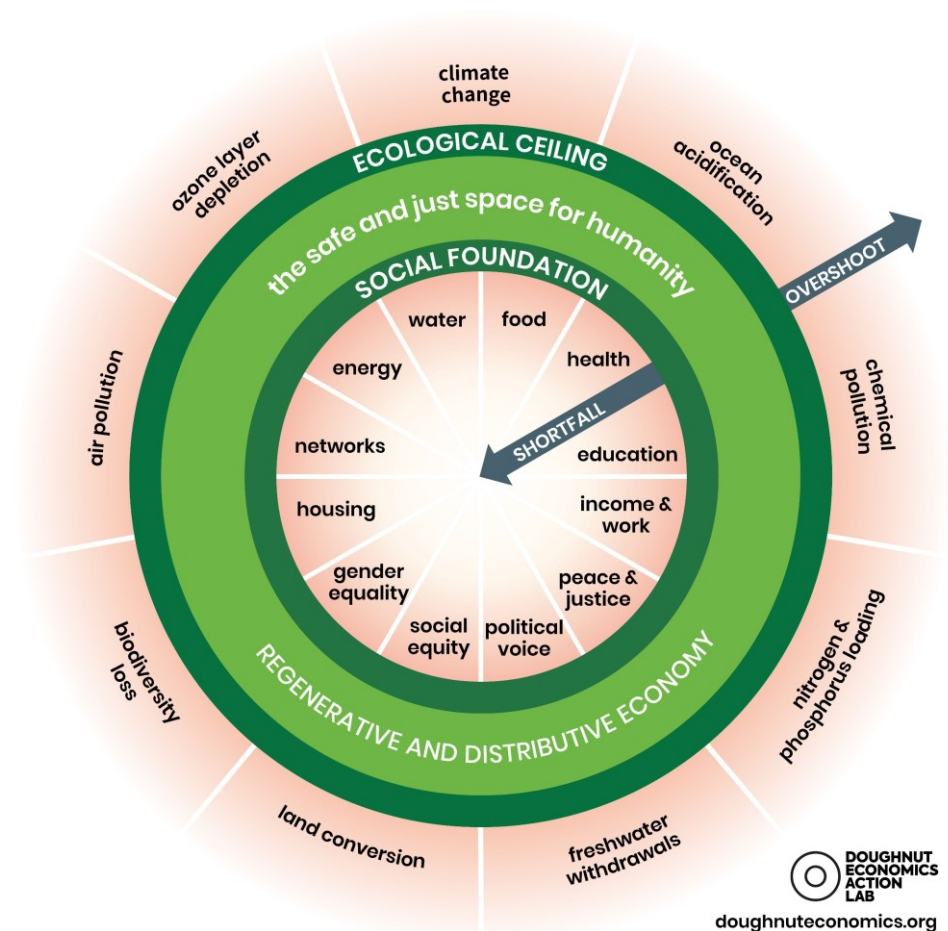
# Economic sustainability

Neoliberalism v  
Sustainability  
economics

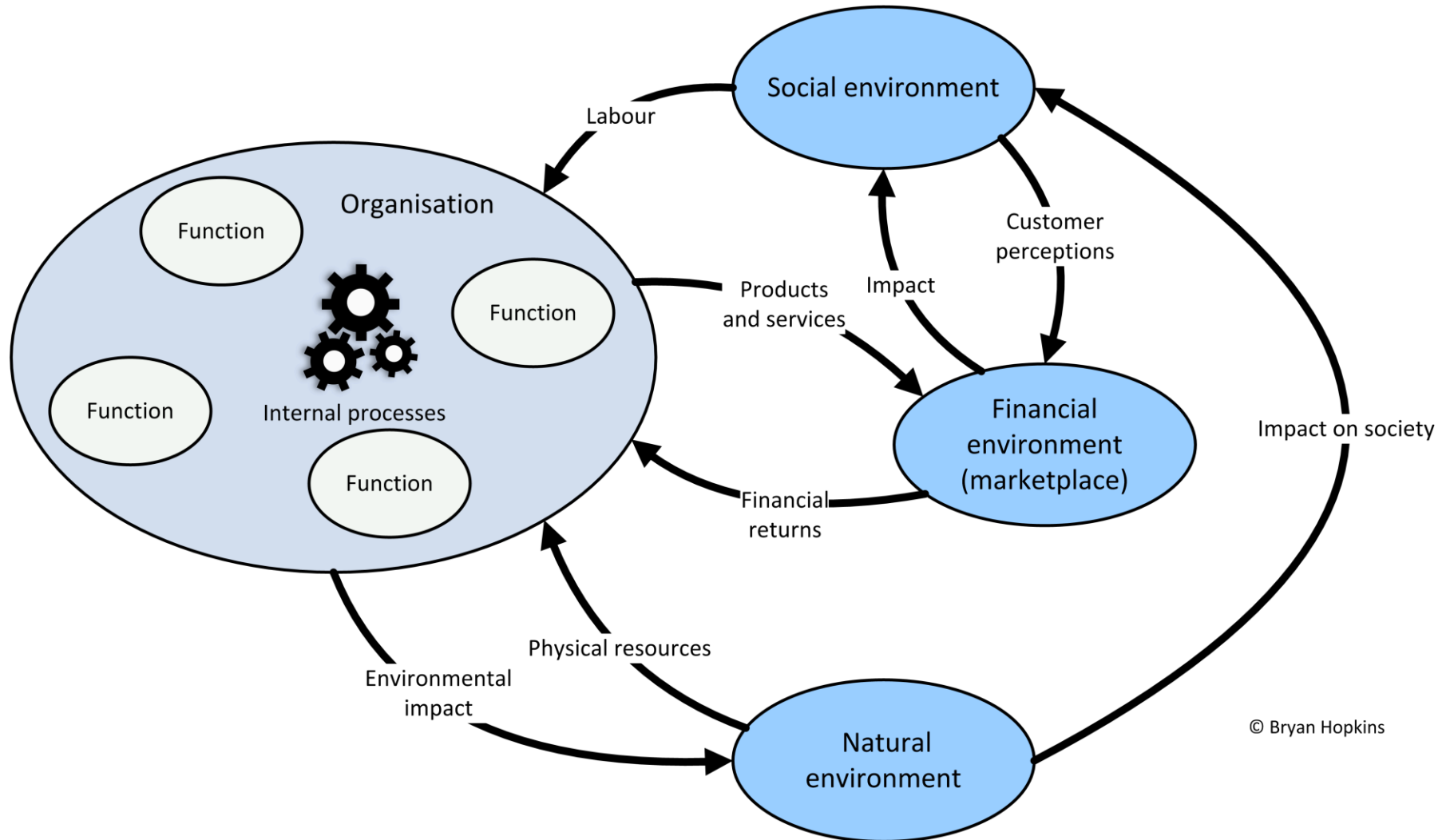
Growth v Steady state

Green New Deals

Doughnut economics



# Organisations as systems



# Organisations and economic sustainability

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Internal



Viability

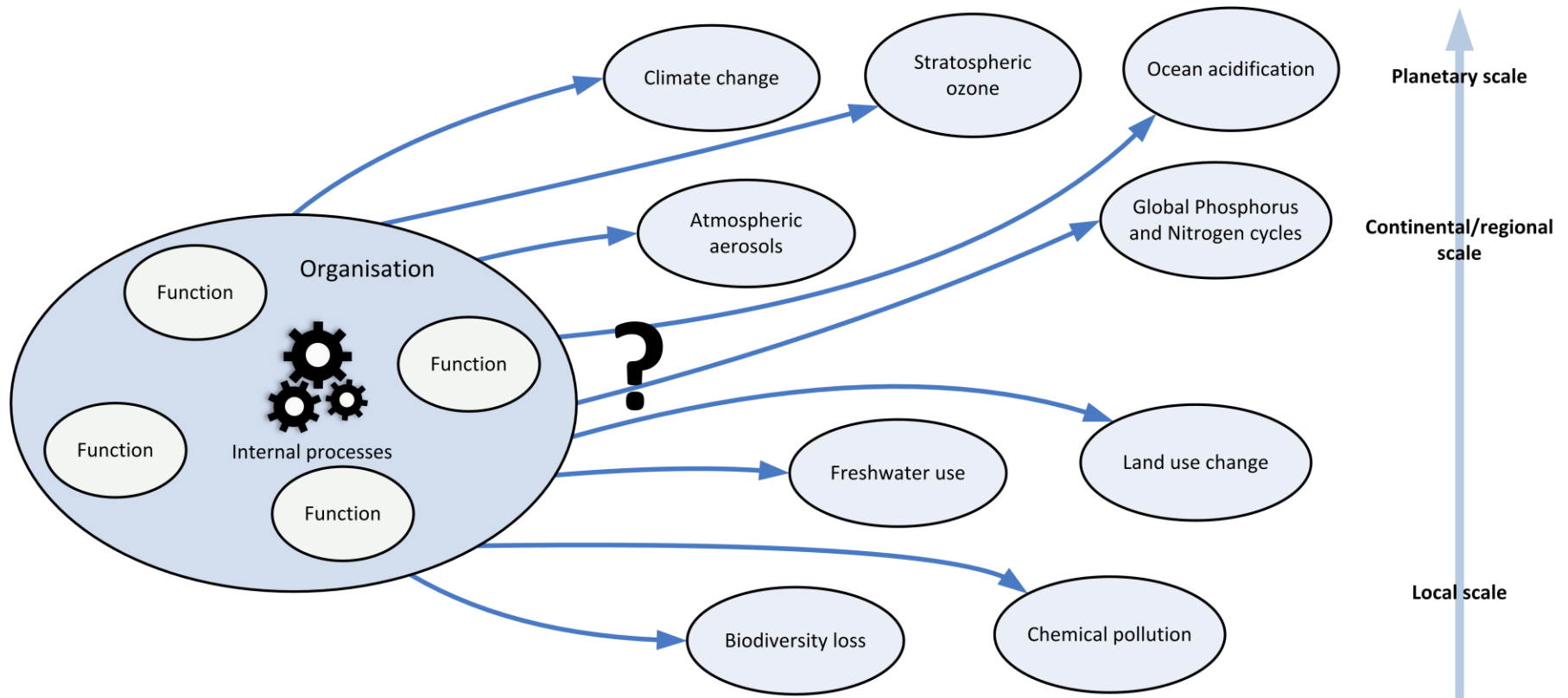
External



Impact on external  
economy

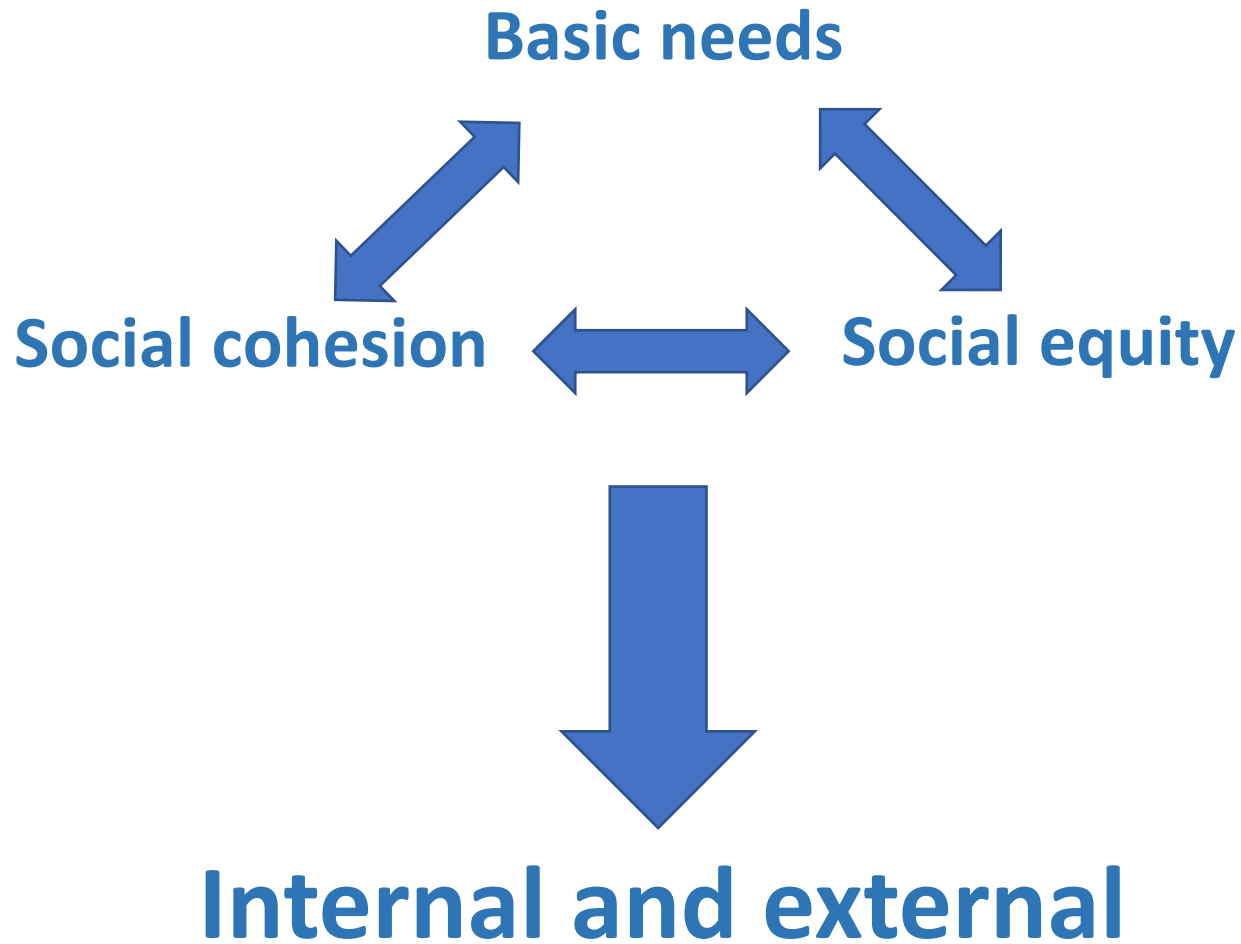


# Organisations and environmental sustainability

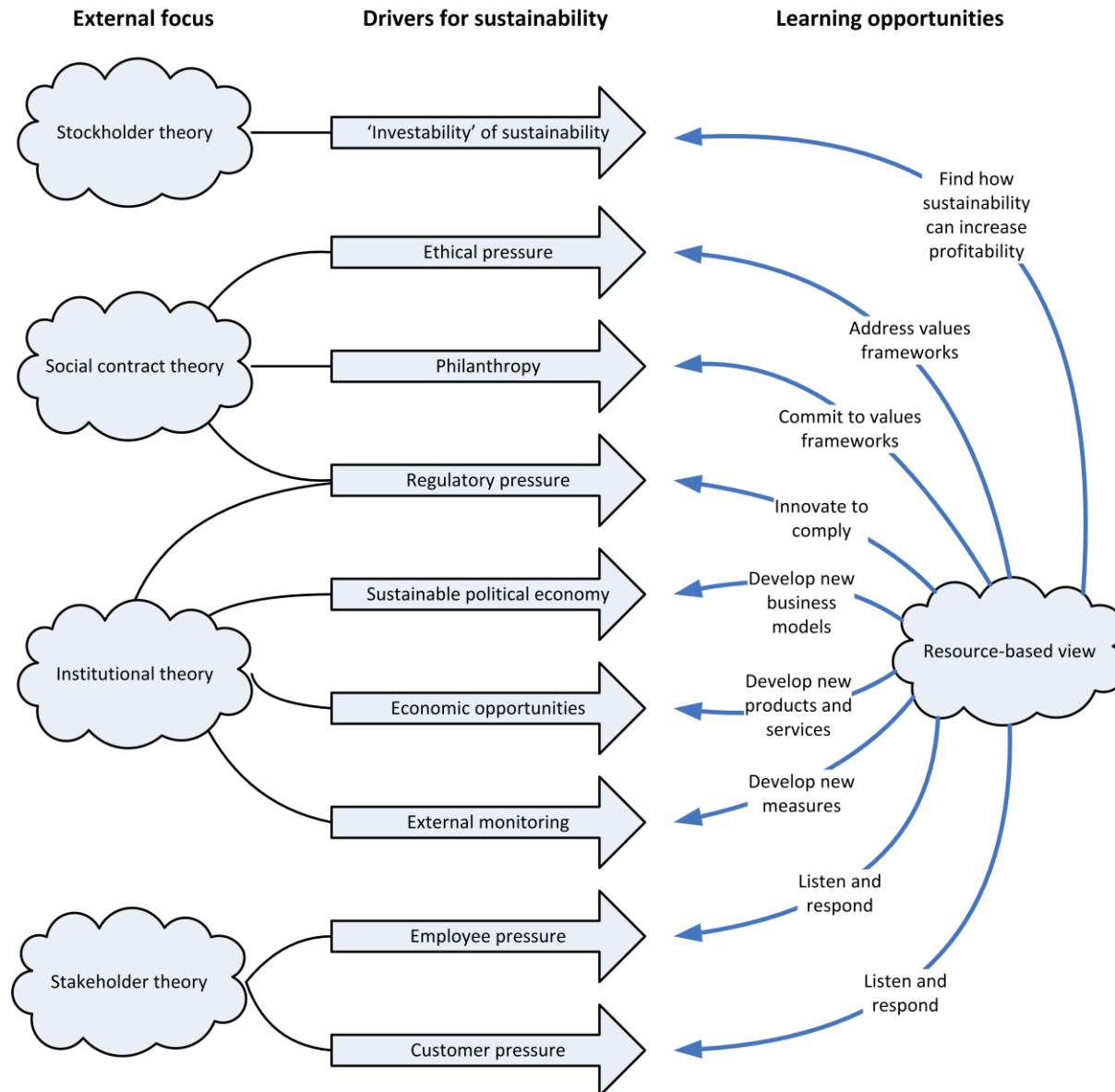


# Organisations and social sustainability

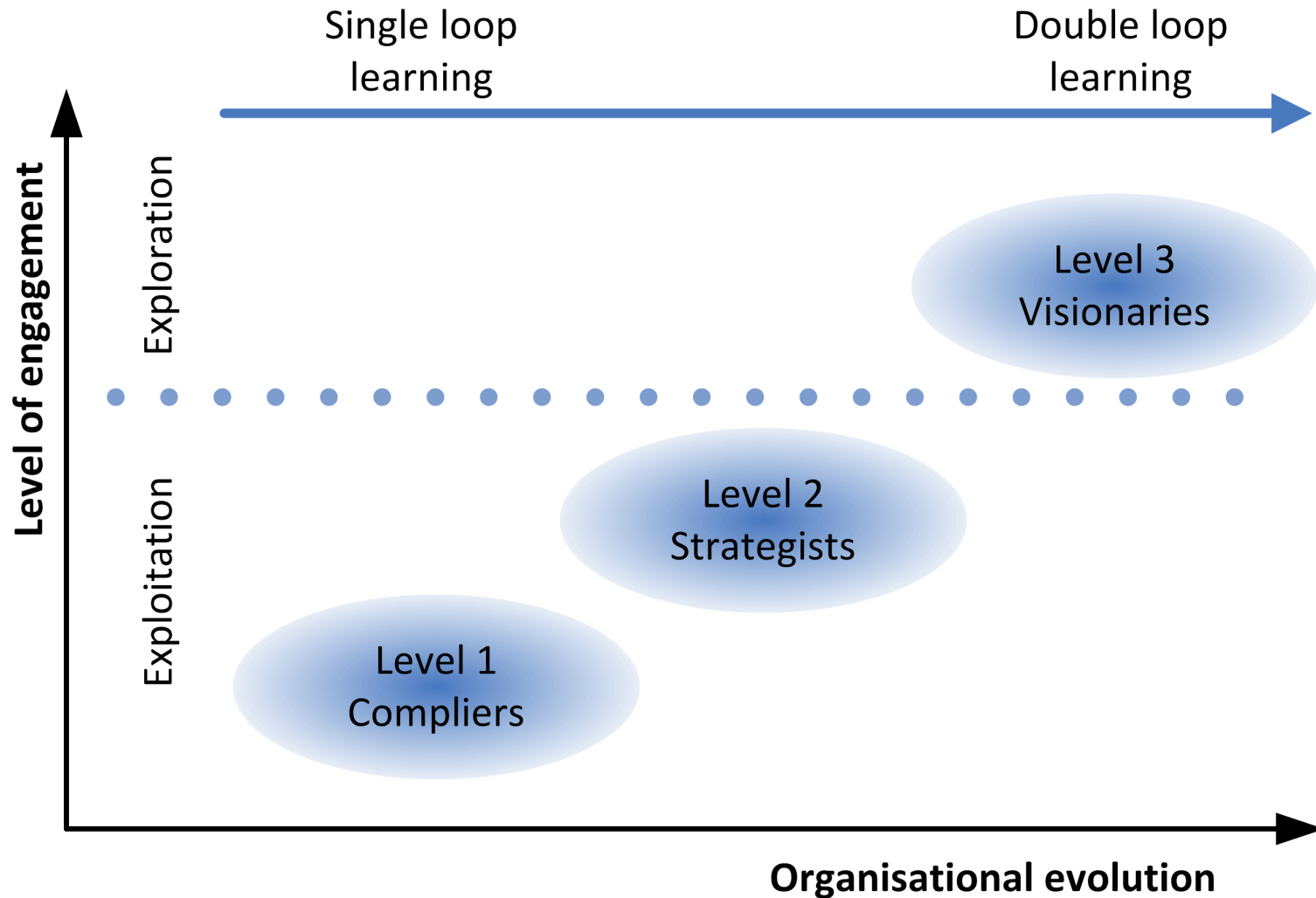
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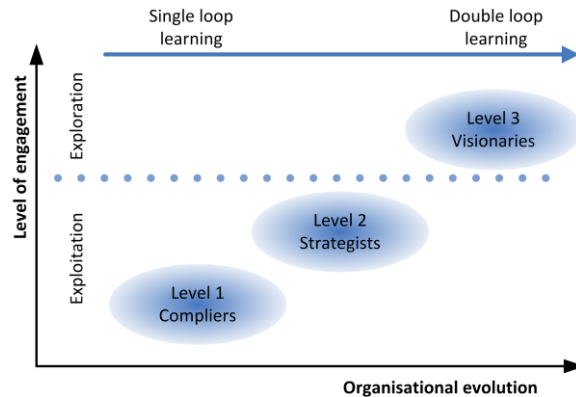
# Drivers for organisational sustainability



# Patterns of organisational sustainability



# Bringing it all together



## Structuring organisational information analysis through Viable System Model knowledge domains

Gary Preece & Duncan Shaw

To cite this article: Gary Preece & Duncan Shaw (2019) Structuring organisational information analysis through Viable System Model knowledge domains, *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 70:2, 338-352, DOI: 10.1080/01605682.2018.1442131

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01605682.2018.1442131>

*Systems Research and Behavioral Science*  
Syst. Res. 19, 223-241 (2002)  
DOI: 10.1002/sres.440

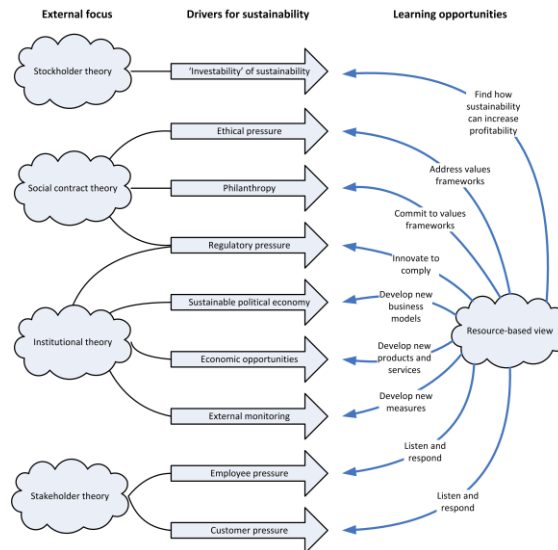
### Research Paper

## Managing Viable Knowledge

Jan Achterbergh\* and Dirk Vriens

*Nijmegen School of Management, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

In this paper, Beer's Viable System Model (VSM) is applied to knowledge management. organization should support the diagnosis, could make and keep in Wiley & Sons, Ltd.



## Organizing for sustainability: a cybernetic concept for sustainable renewal

Markus Schwaninger

*Institute of Management, University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland*

### Organizing for sustainability

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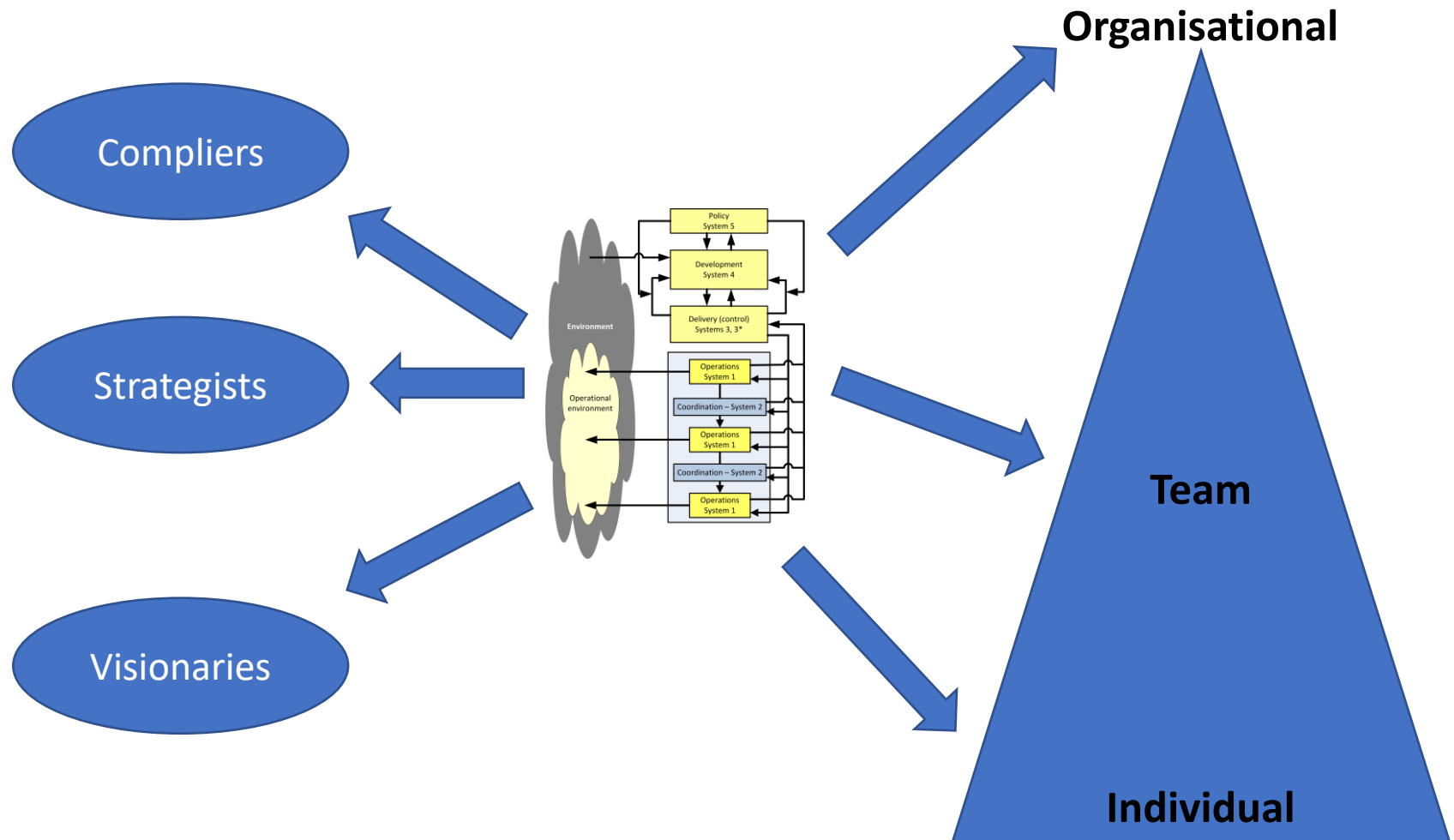
### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to propose a holistic structural framework for a sustainable renewal that embraces all relevant contexts – individual, organizational, local regional and worldwide. This should help humanity achieve a future in which society, economy and ecology are united in an evolutionary process based on multiple symbiosis.

**Design/methodology/approach** – An integrative concept for sustainable renewal is presented, based on Beer's Viable System Model (VSM). The core of that concept is a recursive structure, which organizes the tasks necessary for such renewal. The approach is both analytical and synthetic, proposing a design for the levels of recursion, making up a coherent whole.

**Findings** – A structure is developed that enables agents at all recursive strata to generate variety in balance with the complexities they face. The organizational architecture based on the VSM applied to

# Mapping content to VSM



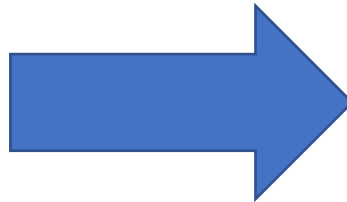
# Rounding off the strategy

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Content

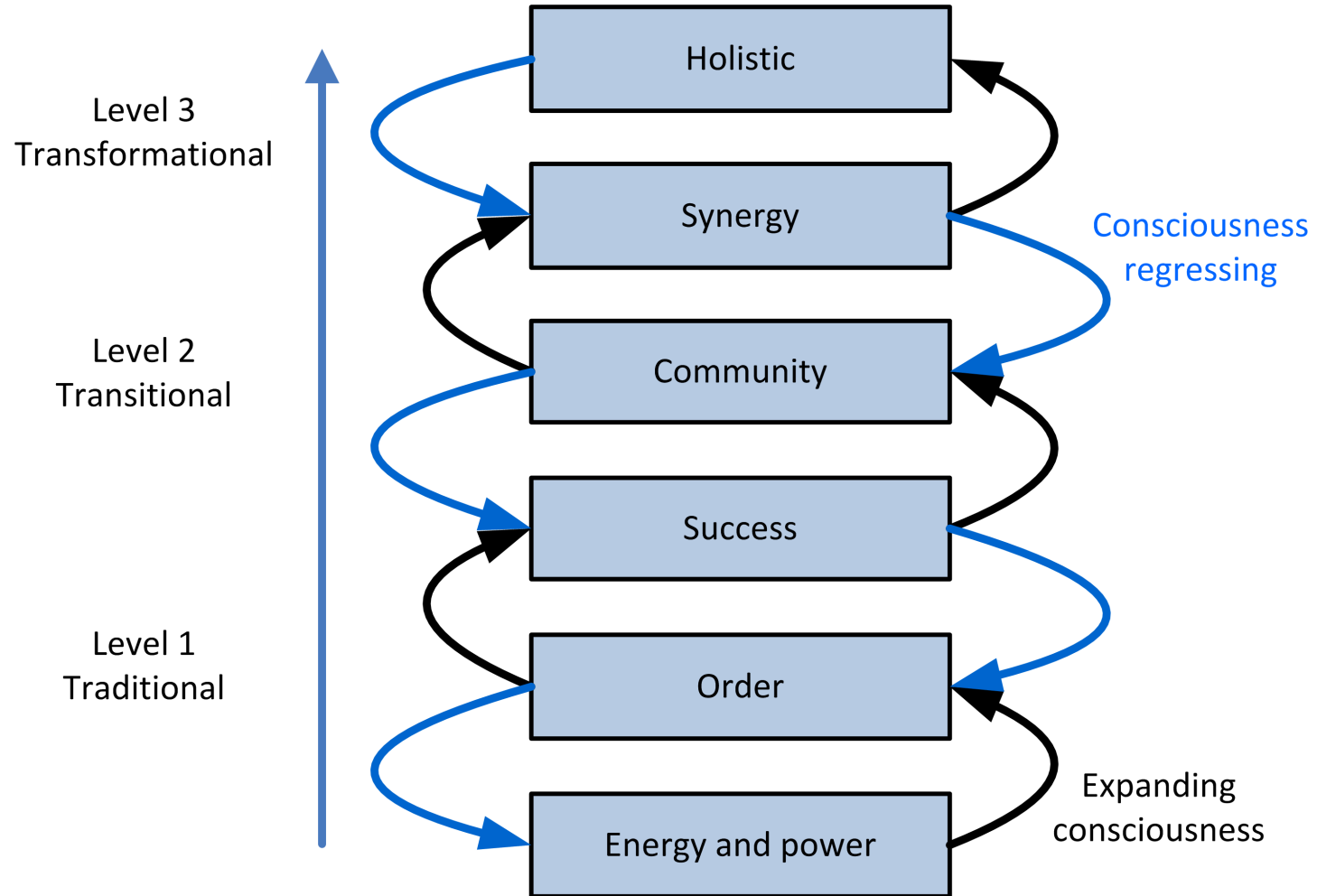
Mechanisms

Principles



**Boundary  
judgements —  
Critical Systems  
Heuristics**

# Developing sustainable values



The European Corporate Sustainability Framework



# Questions

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**Thank you**