






science, technology & innovation

Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Science Forum SOUTH AFRICA

10 YEARS OF IGNITING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SCIENCE 2025

SDCfA
Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa

HUMANEISING INNOVATION

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The Science Forum South Africa

2025 November 26

CSIR

International Convention Centre



- **The catalyst event**: Public Relationship with Science Conference on 26-27 March 2025, the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)
- **Follow-up**: panel discussion on ‘Who must do what to improve the relationship with science?’
- **Explore**
  - the findings presented on 26-27 March 2025 and
  - Develop actionable recommendations for implementation.
- How can various **role players**
  - fill the gaps and
  - improve the public’s relationship with science.



Current status

- Science (knowledge) is receiving scrutiny more than ever before
- The Fees must fall movement forced a national conversation on the dominant paradigm underpinned by scientific rationalism
- The excluded knowledge systems and paradigms were highlighted as key to an inclusive society
- The “decoloniality” and “decolonization” are receiving much attention in recent intellectual discourse and publications





Analysis

- Post-coloniality personality is interrogated and analysed
- Its essence and impact is interrogated against the backdrop of lofty ideals of post-Apartheid policy frameworks
- While the merits of questioning a post-colonial personality is laudable, it is its "tonic" that that needs closer scrutiny
- Such a tonic can have either lasting transformative impact or short-lived destructive effect with retrogressive consequences

Purpose

- The focus of this presentation is on the implications of the above picture for post-Apartheid Innovation Agenda





‘Genealogy’ of Innovation

- 16th - 17th centuries: Novelty (new, progressive) acknowledged in science between Imitation, invention (1st occurrence of idea) and then innovation (idea applied successfully)
- 20th century: technological innovation (commercialisation of technological inventions) – driven by natural sciences, economics, statistics and R&D alliance
- Little attention on non-technological innovation
- The dominant paradigm underpinning innovation operates within market selection environment





Key observations:

- Dominant model of innovation took the economistic turn in the 20th century when it defined innovation as commercialisation of technical inventions
- Innovation policies recognise & legitimise linear, R&D-driven and technology innovation at the expense of indigenous and non-technological innovations
- Absence of people agenda in dominant innovation policies will not achieve normative intentions of post-Apartheid South Africa
- Policies designed for market selection environments do not meet all human needs
- Excluded "non-measurables" need to be part of a humanistic 'measurement' framework
- Multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches hold potential to promote inclusivity and integration

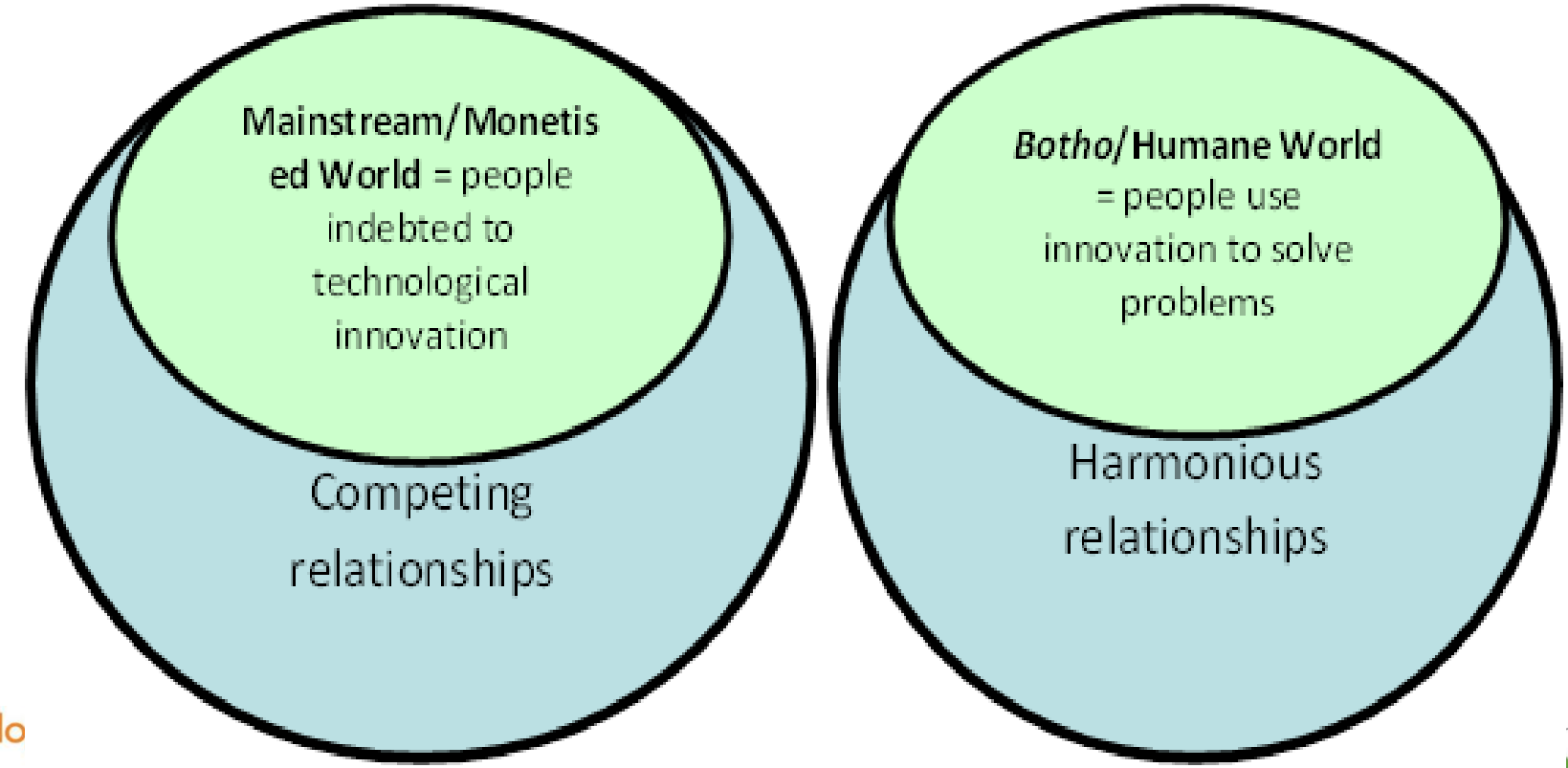




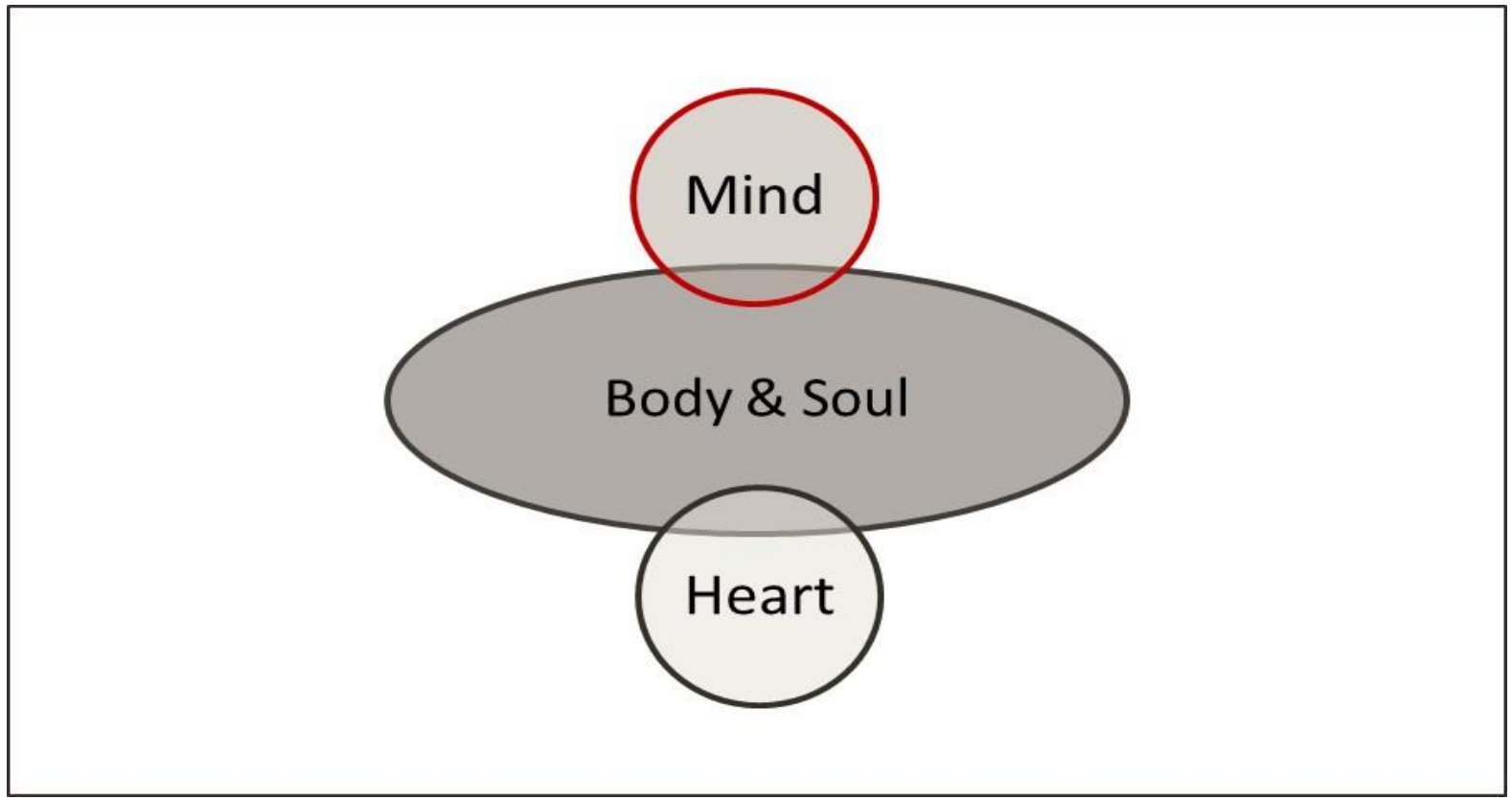
The dominant innovation paradigm

- Disproportionate influence of the natural sciences;
- Objectivist world-view;
- Commodified knowledge;
- Commercialisation;
- Greco-Roman legal framework;
- Technological and R&D-driven innovation;
- Science-military-industrial nexus;
- Economistic measurement of the tangibles; and
- Viewing people as means to an end.

The dominant paradigm versus an alternative inclusive, humaneistic paradigm



Towards an inclusive and humaneistic paradigm





In conclusion

- The dominant innovation paradigm needs to be transformed into a new humaneistic paradigm
- This requires change in constitutive rules and not just regulatory architecture (reformation)
- New coalitions need to be established to drive the grounds up transformation of the dominant paradigm into Humaneising innovation

Dankie
Enkosi
Ha khensa
Re a leboga
Ro livhuwa
Siyabonga
Siyathokoza
Thank you



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