Accelerating and Rescaling Transitions to Sustainability

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What is a transition?

Current systems of provision are complex, interconnected and difficult to steer away from unsustainability (Frantzeskaki and Loorbach 2010; Meadowcroft 2009)

Facing the social, environmental and economic crises, incremental solutions or quick-fixes are not enough to steer clear from them. (Kern and Smith, 2009; Brown et al 2013; Nevens et al 2013)

Fundamental change in the way a societal need is fulfilled; transformative change in structures, cultures and practices (Rotmans et al 2001; Frantzeskaki and De Haan 2010; Frantzeskaki et al 2012)
Contemporary Sustainability Transitions

**Multi-Actor Processes that require a new governance focus**
Multi-actor processes that entail changing roles and shifts of responsibilities and power between them. Complex to be steered top-down. (Avelino and Wittmayer, 2014; Avelino and Rotmans 2010)

**Multi-Sector Effects of Interventions and Innovations**
Changes in one sector create pressure for change in other sectors; institutional change drifts from one sector to another creating a multi-sector transformation effect. (Frantzeskaki, Grin and Thissen, 2015)

**Cross-Scale Connections enabling quick transfer of effective practices**
Scaling of sustainability practices is realised via networks created for transfer and uptaking and via existing networks across geographies and institutions. (Spira, Frantzeskaki and Loorbach 2014)

**Multiple Innovation Processes require a new governance approach**
Diversity of innovation processes are at play (technological, social and governance) with the potential to renew governance. (Seyfang and Smith, 2010; Frantzeskaki and Tilie, 2014; Haxeltine et al 2014)
Research Mission

How can local transition initiatives accelerate sustainability transitions in their city-region?

Identify the mechanisms and local governance conditions for accelerating sustainability transitions, develop strategies and instruments to assist their acceleration and assess them with dynamic modelling approaches.
Transition Initiatives

A locally-based activity which drives transformative change towards environmental sustainability of existing societal systems in multiple dimensions across multiple domains.

multiple dimensions: infrastructure and technologies, rules and norms, routines and practices.
The initiative aims to transform the way that basic services are currently provided, through the renewal or replacement of infrastructures and technologies, rules and norms, routines and practices, and so on.

Low-Carbon Domains
Energy, Transport and Mobility
Water, Food
Resource Management
Build Environment
Nature conservation and restoration
Knowledge development for sustainability
**Acceleration Dynamics**

*Acceleration* is conceptualized as an **increase in the pace of change, the scale of change and diversity of changes** in multiple domains as a result of lessons learned in transition initiatives.

How can *interactions* between transition initiatives across domains and across scales influence them to accelerate sustainability transitions in their city-region?

How do *local conditions* and/or dynamics enable/hinder local initiatives to accelerate sustainability transitions?

How can local transition initiatives **leverage acceleration**, yet ensure inclusivity?
Let's think again......
Why mapping characteristics?

- Understand the nature of initiatives to select with whom to co-produce knowledge on how to accelerate sustainability transitions

- What researchers can learn about initiatives

- What initiatives can learn from the mapping and need from the research
Transition Initiatives

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Who leads?

Who leads?

Community-led, Business-led or Public sector-led
Mixed-leadership

Domain-focused OR Multi-Domain
(e.g. food, greening, recycling, energy, mobility)

Where to look for impact?

Where to look for impact?

How old are you?

How old are you?

Longevity of Initiatives
Infants or Teenagers?
> 3 years of operation
Who are your friends?

Ties and/or collaborations with other initiatives, and/or with businesses (SMEs) and/or local government

Who do you avoid?

Stay away from other initiatives (competition?), businesses (frenemies?) and/or local government (game of shadows?)
Who needs the mapping of transition initiatives?

How can this mapping inform action?
How lessons from these initiatives can be drawn for broader transitions to sustainable low-carbon societies within Europe?
Get involved!

- follow our activities
  - www.acceleratingtransitions.eu
- read and comment on our publications
- join and contribute to our events
- share your experience

Are you working on similar issues in your community or in your research work? We want to hear from you.
Thank you

www.acceleratingtransitions.eu
How to achieve synergy, and yet maintain diversity?

How to leverage acceleration, and yet ensure inclusivity?

How to exploit multi-scale relations, and yet remain context-sensitive?

How to secure dissemination and enable social learning?

How to achieve synergy, and yet maintain diversity?
Interested in transition initiatives in cities? Check our research project: www.acceleratingtransitions.eu

Interested in greening initiatives in cities and what they mean for urban environmental governance? theurbesproject.org

Our OPEN ACCESS special issue in AMBIO: http://link.springer.com/journal/13280/43/4?wt_mc=alerts.TOCjournals

Interested in transition management? Check out our MUSIC project and the transition management manual: http://www.drift.eur.nl/?p=2796