Accelerating Sustainability Transitions

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16.06.2016 INFORMED CITIES FORUM, Dresden
What happens when diverse transition initiatives emerge in a city-region?
Upscaling is the growth of members, supporters or users of a single transition initiative in order to spread these new ways of thinking, organizing and practicing.

Replicating is the take up of new ways of doing, organizing and thinking of one transition initiative by another transition initiative or different actors in order to spread out these new ways.

Coupling is the pooling and/or complementing of resources, competences, and capacities in order to exploit synergies between these new ways.

Instrumentalising is tapping into and capitalizing on opportunities provided by the multi-level governance context of the city-region in order to exploit synergies between these multi-level dynamics.

Embedding is the alignment of old and new ways of doing, organizing and thinking in order to integrate them into city-regional governance patterns.
Collection of empirical data:
- desk work to scan ‘Initiative landscape’ (up to 100) and ‘literature review’
- between 10 and 15 Local Transition Initiatives (LTI) per case (criteria)
- ideally up to 3 semi-structured interviews per LTI – triangulation (2015)
- additional interviews with ‘helicopter people’ (2014/2015)
- participation local events, meetings, workshop etc.
Upscaling is the growth of members, supporters or users of a single transition initiative in order to spread these new ways of thinking, organizing and practicing.

**Findings:**
- upscaling processes in all regions, but differs across domains
- food initiatives are upscaling in every city region
- is not a universally shared goal in initiatives (tensions occur)

**Implications:**
Upscaling as mechanism is reasonable for single cases
In most cases there is a clear ‘limit of growth’
‘Replicating’ as way out
Replicating is the take up of new ways of doing, organizing and thinking of one transition initiative by another transition initiative or different actors in order to spread out these new ways.

Findings:

- Replication mainly happens across city-regions as well as within
- Replication has many ways it occurs (copy-paste, hybridisation)
- Single “transitioneurs” (agency) often with a key role

Implications:

Replicating contributes to an increased diversity of innovations due to adaptations/modifications in diverse contexts

National, transnational, European networks are a key for replicating
Replicating

Green Wedges
Coupling is the pooling and/or complementing of resources, competences, and capacities in order to exploit synergies between these new ways.

**Findings:**
- great variety of ways of coupling, **tensions** with core activities
- rather **within domains** and **within sectors** than across
- ‘network initiatives’ and “**transitioneurs**” (translation) are keys,

**Implications:**
- Connecting innovators leads to **new ideas**
- **Platforms** of initiatives at city-level, national level (etc.) allow sharing and aggregating of advocacy at higher levels
Instrumentalising is tapping into and capitalizing on opportunities provided by the multi-level governance context of the city-region in order to exploit synergies between these multi-level dynamics.

Findings:
- is in place, but differs across regions (*national context matters!*)
- tension: dependence on **external funding vs. autonomy** of the TI
- Tendency of ‘projectification‘ / tension with core activities

Implications:
Transition initiatives are also **instrumentalised by political agendas** that can be critical for their authenticity

Looking for ways to **ensure a durable income** is (still) the best way to stabilize transition initiatives
Embedding is the alignment of old and new ways of doing, organizing and thinking in order to integrate them into city-regional governance patterns.

Findings:
- Not a universally shared goal (being different = motivation)
- Different ‘system-logics’ (compartmentalisation / cross-cutting)
- ‘stretch and transform’ vs. ‘fit and conform’ (A. Smith)

Implications:
City administration and governments are well advised to create interfaces to community led initiatives

Initiatives are well advised to learn more about opportunities and limits of public officials and politicians
Acceleration Mechanisms

- Upscaling
- Replicating
- Coupling
- Instrumentalising
- Embedding