Transition management

Transformative or transforming environmental policy?

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DRIFT

• Dutch Research Institute For Transitions, Rotterdam with 22 action researchers

• Established 2004 as part of the national transition research program KSI

• Aims to achieve social and scientific impact through engaged research

• (international) fundamental and applied research, consultancy, academic/postgraduate education

• Operates across domains and levels of scale
Key messages

• Transitions are happening and necessarily bring along chaos and turbulence

• Existing (national) policy regimes and approaches are primarily optimising and enhancing lock-in

• Transition management provides a concept and toolbox for transforming policy and transformative governance
TRANSITIONS?
Symptoms of unsustainability
Transitions

Long-term (one or two generations) fundamental change of structure, culture and practices in a societal (sub)system

- culture: collective set of values, norms, perspectives (shared orientation), paradigms
- structure: physical infrastructure, economic infrastructure, institutions, rules, regulations, collective routines
- practices: behaviour, operation, implementation

→ Periodic, non-linear systemic shift common in ecological and socio-economic systems
→ Paradigm to analyse and influence complex societal change

Dutch Research Institute For Transitions
Build-up *and* break-down

Based on Rotmans et al, 2001
Evolutionary revolutions

• Revolution at systems level on the long term
• Evolution on the short-term: multiple and reinforcing small steps
### A change of era’s

#### Drivers of modernity
- Population growth
- Specialisation
- Efficiency
- Optimisation
- Technological innovation
- Capitalism
- Representative democracy top-down

#### Emerging drivers
- Stabilisation
- Integration
- Effectivity
- System change
- Social innovation
- Values
- Participative governance bottom-up and top-down
Impact across society

- Sectors will radically change or disappear
- Power and decision-making will be distributed differently
- Organisations will run into existential questions
- Uncertainties and resistance will grow
- Knowledge and authority will democratize
Energy transition

Sustainable Energy System

Fossil
Centralized
Top-down

Renewable
Reliable
Affordable

Mixed
Unreliable
Affordable

Mixed
Unreliable
Unaffordable

Pre-development
We are here
Acceleration

Time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Germany vs The Netherlands</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strong societal movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity build up</td>
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<td>External accelerator</td>
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<td>Policy breakthrough</td>
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<td>Market creation</td>
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Characteristics of transitions

• Inherent uncertainties and unpredictability
  – Wicked or unstructured problems

• Emergence, co-evolution and self-organisation
  – As typical dynamics underlying systems change

• Unmanageable, ambiguous and contested
  – They are mainly about behavioral, institutional, cultural change

• Transitions most likely do not automatically lead to sustainability
  – It is about the process of sustainable development rather than the end goal
GOVERNANCE IN TRANSITIONS
<table>
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<th>Transitions...</th>
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<td>Are not...</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Manageable</td>
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<td>• Makeable</td>
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<td>• Engineerable</td>
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| Can be... |
| • Anticipated |
| • Influenced |
| • Guided |
| • Accelerated |
Transition governance principles

• long-term thinking as the basis for short term policy
• thinking in terms of multiple domains (multi-domain), different actors (multi-actor), different levels (multi-level)
• learning as an important aim for policy (‘learning-by-doing’ and ‘doing-by-learning’)
• orient governance towards system innovation besides system improvement
• keeping options open, exploring multiple pathways
• selective participation focusing on frontrunners
Why transition management?

Env./sust policy
- Increase
  - Recycling
  - Efficiency
  - Technological innovation
- Decrease
  - Emissions
  - Waste
  - Use

Transition management
- Develop
  - Circularity
  - Effectivity
  - Social innovation
- Disrupt
  - Worldviews
  - Interests
  - Routines
Transition Governance Framework

- Problem structuring, shared sense of urgency, guiding visions
- Monitoring, evaluating and learning
- Institutional and structural changes, new networks/coalitions
- Breakthrough actions, projects and initiatives, new organisations
Transition arenas

Regular arenas
- Short term
- Peloton
- Incremental change
- Problem- and goal oriented

Transition arenas
- Long term
- Frontrunners
- System-innovation
- Problem- and goal searching
In Rotterdam, the process of inner-city densification has been taking place for decades. Take the prize-winning urban renewal project at Kop van Zuid, for example. Initiated in the eighties, this top-down process ultimately resulted in an attractive living environment with high levels of cultural amenities. But in the current economic climate, this kind of master planning, however successful in its day, no longer suffices. Inner-city densification in the coming decades will be dependent on small-scale, bottom-up initiatives. Visionary heads of individuals and collectives are already realising exemplary buildings that meet their specific desires. This trend-based approach is also being led by exploring the physical potential of the city for further densification, combined with reusing examples of what has already been realised.

For the Rotterdam example, seven densification strategies have been identified and explored in terms of their spatial potentials. It is not the aim of this exploration to regenerate a master plan for densification of the inner city. Based on the above-mentioned principles, this exploration demonstrates that there is more available space in the inner city than one may think, and that in potential doubling the number of inner-city inhabitants is totally realistic without diminishing the existing quality. On the contrary, when combined with an increase in the quantity and quality of green networks, an intelligent mobility strategy, the overall quality of life in the inner city could dramatically improve for all.

DENSIFICATION + GREEN = SUSTAINABLE CITY
7 DENSIFICATION STRATEGIES

TRANSFORM GUR
DEPOT
SPOONED BASE
HOLLY
OLY
GET YOURSELF

Visionen und Wege

Wir schaffen die Energiewende in Ludwigsburg
Transition arena Ghent (Belgium)

- Ghent, great place to live
- Locally creating added value
- Energetic city, intelligent cycles
- Ghentenaar home in the city
20 cultural organizations > 100,000 visitors

Climate arena Ghent (Belgium)

Inspiration to political parties

Support for SMEs

Assessment of potential for ESCO’s

CWG Art Sector

Research biogas from biodegr.

CEIP meets GMS

Transition University Ghent

Climate arena

Mobility arena

KWG mobiliteit

CWG Urban Farming

KWG Valorisation waste water and biodegradable

CEIP meets GMS
Transition management 1.0

• Framing a transitional challenge
  – Interdisciplinary analysis and shared language/discourse

• Empowering transition networks
  – Mapping and facilitating transition agency

• Enhancing impact of (social) innovation
  – Assessing innovation journeys and enhancing strategy

• Structuring social learning
  – Reflexive monitoring and reflexive action

→ Transdisciplinary activist research, scientivism
Elements of accelerating transition

• **Scale-up infrastructures**
  – Knowledge, training, communication, skills, financial and judicial instruments

• **Phase-out strategies**
  – Pathways, financial compensation funds, internalisation externalities, niche-regime platforms/agendas

• **Guidance and reflection**
  – Multidisciplinary knowledge networks, participatory monitoring/evaluation, strategic transitions arenas

• **New institutions and cultures**
  – Promoting behavioral change, new tax regimes, cross-departmental organisation, market transition strategies
Transformative energy policies?

- Feed in (economic)
- Phase out (political)
Transformative environmental policies

• Helps accelerate transformative social innovation?

• Helps destabilise, disrupt and downscale incumbent interests, routines, structures

• Disrupts environmental policy regime?
Summarizing...

• We are living through times of fundamental, chaotic and disruptive changes

• Achieving sustainability transitions requires reflexive collective action

• Existing (env)policy regimes are not effective and transformative

• We need transformative policies that help accelerate transitions
Thank you for your attention

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