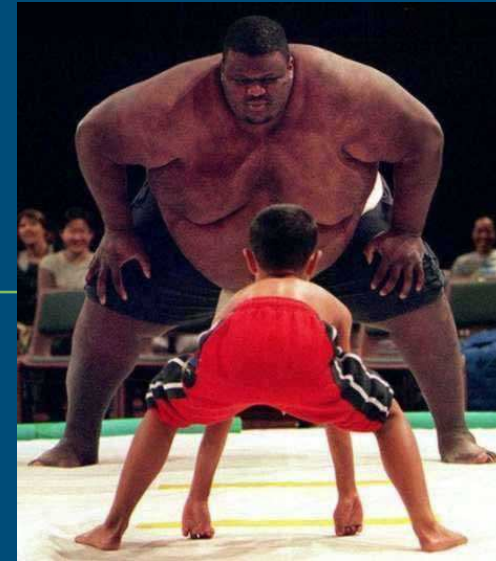


Dealing with incumbent regimes: *deliberateness and serendipity of rural innovation agency*

XXIII ESRS conference, Vaasa, 17-8-2009



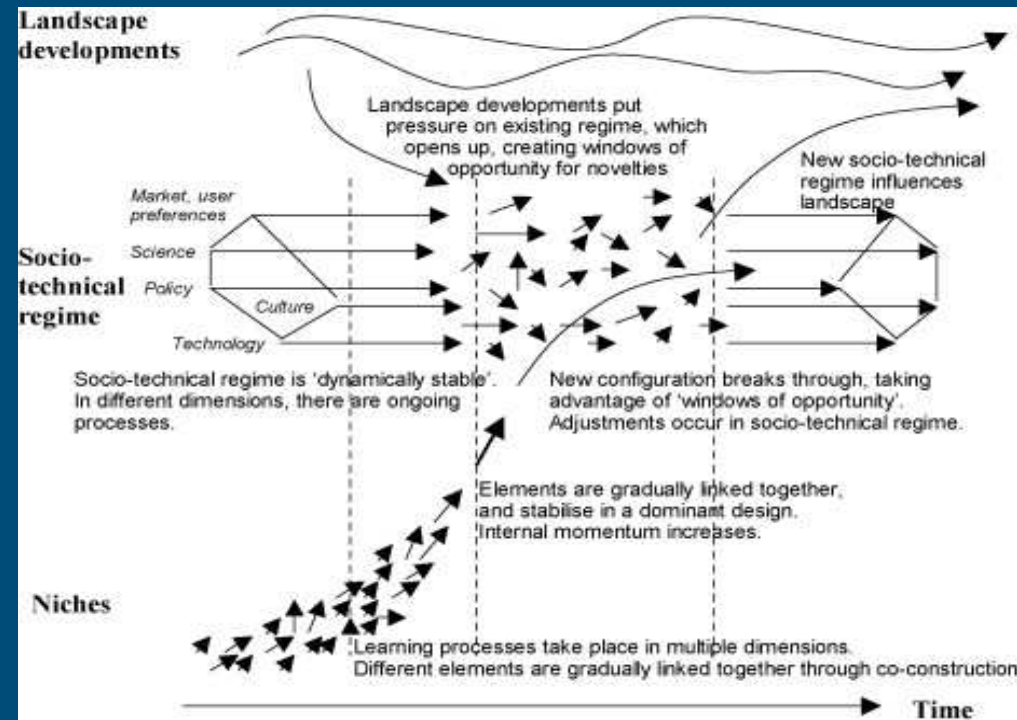
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The multi-level perspective on socio-technological transitions



Critiques on MLP and related approaches

- Dominant focus of MLP on meso and macro levels
- Coarse historical perspective of MLP
- Strategic niche management and transition management are criticized for trying to ‘manage the unmanageable’ – ‘pretentious and triumphalistic’
- Thus: calls for analysis of micro level agency in niche-regime interaction – ‘effective reformism’



Structuration theory and niche-regime interaction

- Agency: the ability to take action and make a difference over a course of events, thereby reducing uncertainties
- Giddens' structuration theory: “structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize”
- Idea of ‘circular causality’ between niches and regimes



Translation and anchorage

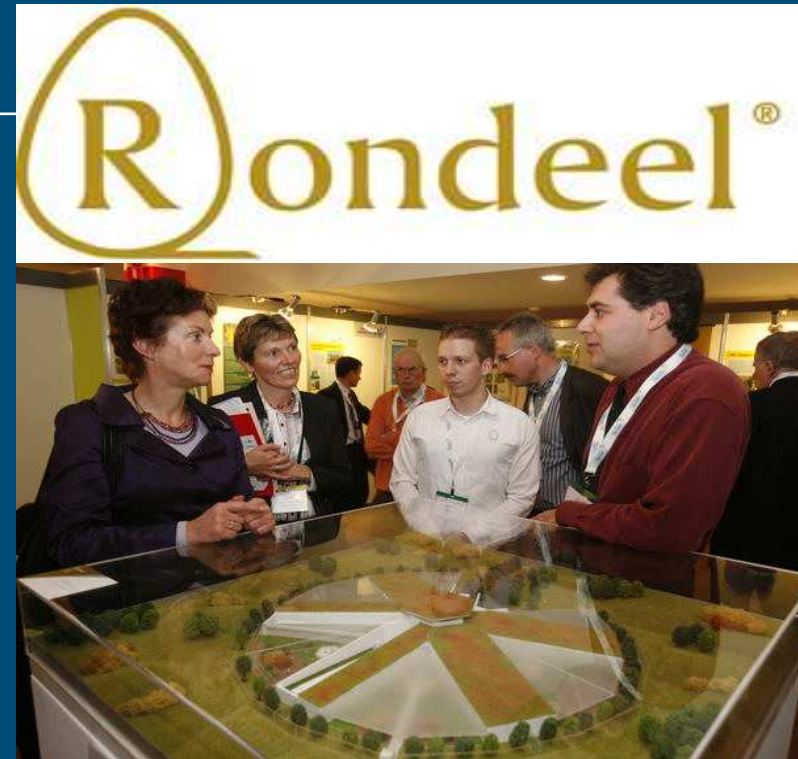
Translation	Anchorage
Translation of problems	Technological anchorage
Translation that adapt lessons	Network anchorage
Translations that alter contexts	Institutional anchorage

- Concrete activities, e.g.:
 - Engagement with multiple actor groups
 - Use of visions to 'sell the story'
 - Use of boundary spanning advocates
 - Using expert authority



Two 'innovation journeys'

- Sjalon: joint scale increase in co-operative farm
- Rondeel: welfare innovative husbandry concept producing 'in-between' segment of eggs



Niche-regime interfaces in Sjalon and Rondeel

■ Sjalon:

- Obtaining financing: Sjalon vs. banks
- Land tenure issues: Sjalon vs. Treasury Department
- Participant recruitment: Sjalon vs. farmer community

■ Rondeel:

- Technical permits: Rondeel vs. regulatory bodies
- Obtaining risk financing: Rondeel vs. risk funding agencies
- Obtaining societal approval: Rondeel vs. Animal Protection Society



Niche strategies

- Framing niche objectives within regime rules, outright or as a reaction to serendipitous events: reproducing parts of the regime to establish recombinant newness
- “Guerilla tactics”: building up pressure by looking for new entries to the regime, confronting it, or bypassing it



Importance of hybrid actors and objects

- Essential role of informal and formal 'hybrid actors' as boundary spanners: champions, godfathers, and innovation brokers
- Instrumental role of 'tangible' visions in selling the story: scale models, business plans



Niches and regimes

- Much 'horizontal' interaction (niche-niche; (sub)regime - (sub)regime) and 'diagonal' interaction (niche or regime is influenced by dynamics in other niche-regime interactions)
- Niche and regime purposive action and serendipitous events can induce both positive interaction cycles (decreasing uncertainties) and negative interaction cycles (increasing uncertainties) occur that influence the agency of prime movers.



Implications and further research

- For transition management: attention to the multiplicity of 'hybrid actors'
- For MLP scholars: the fuzziness of niches and regimes
- The dynamism and flexibility of visions as strategic tools in innovation



Thank you for your attention!

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