

How do food systems change (or not)?

Governance implications for system transformation processes

Cees Leeuwis (based on a paper with Birgit Boogaard & Kwesi Attah Kraah)

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How do food systems change (or not)?

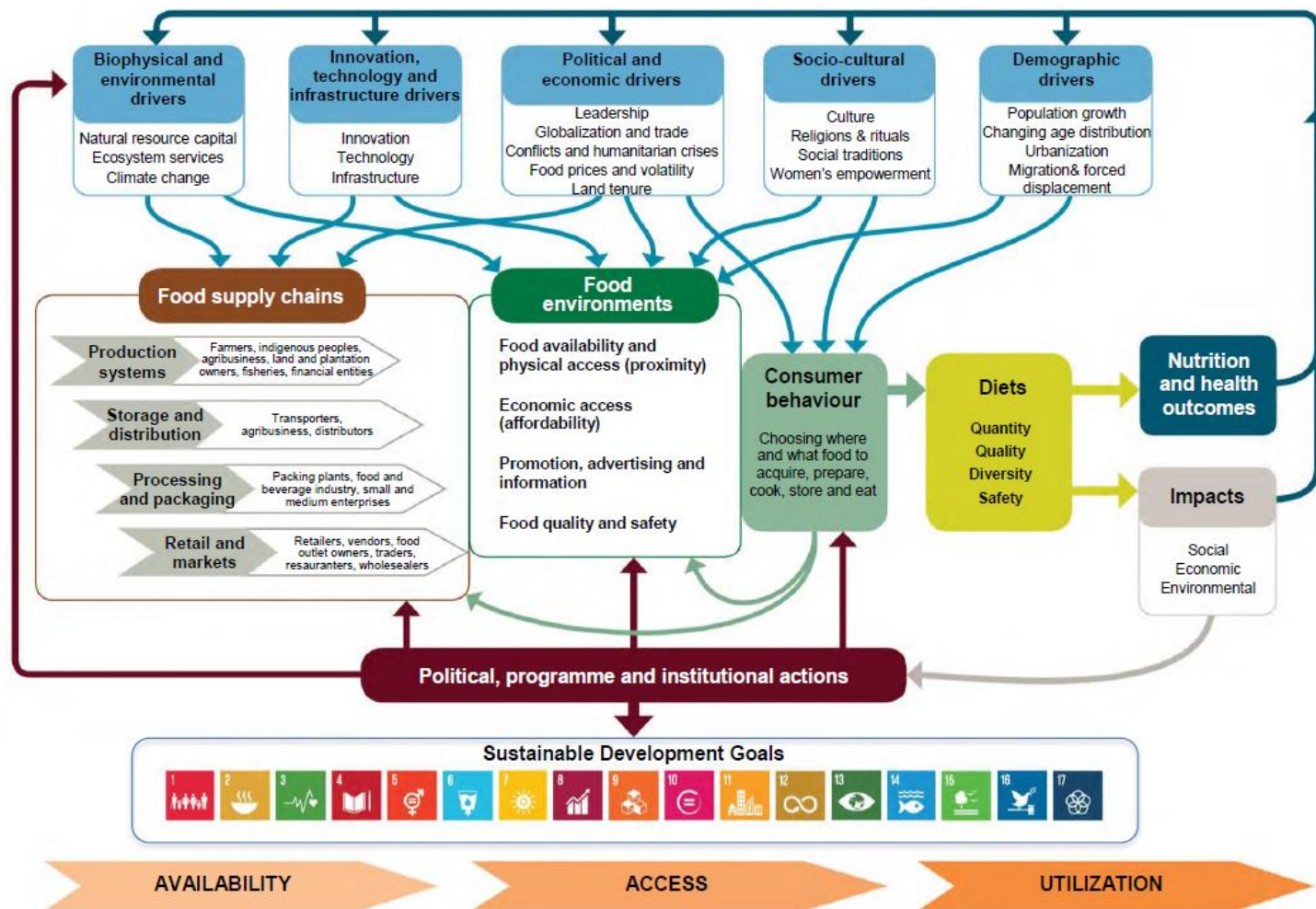
Governance implications for system transformation processes

- Food system features
- Systems thinking and system change
- Implications for policy & intermediaries

A representation of a Food System

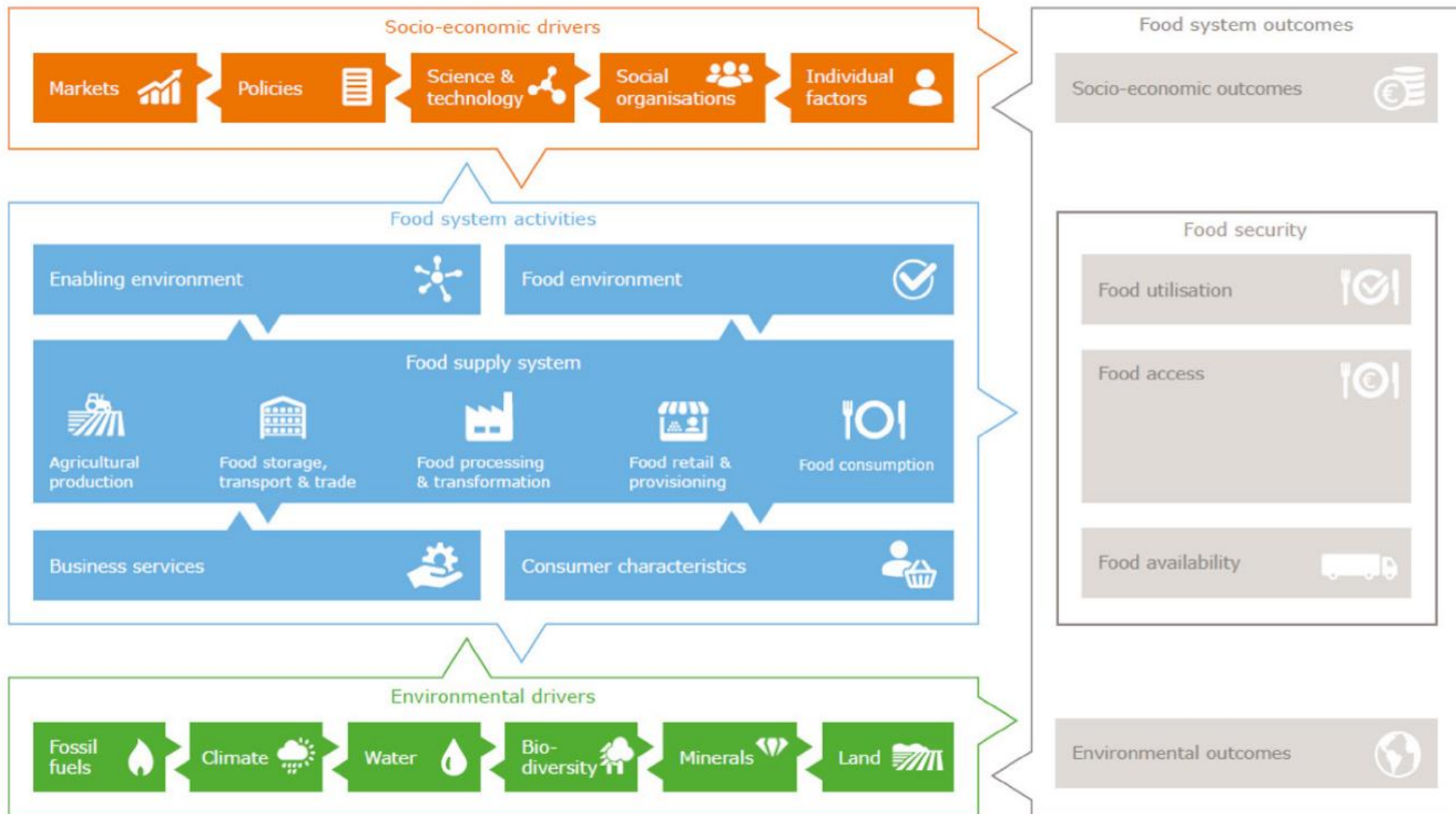
By: High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) / UN Committee on World Food Security (WFS)

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of food systems for diets and nutrition



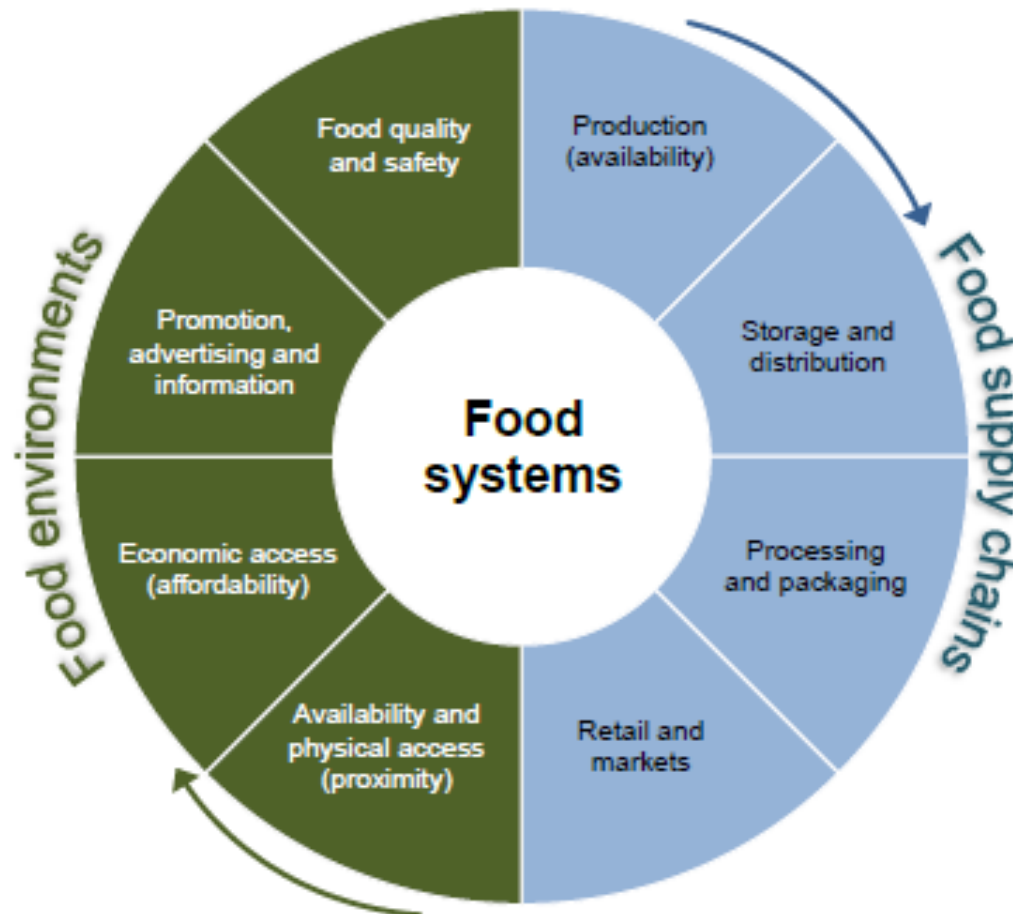
Another representation of a Food System

By: Van Berkum et al., 2018



Another representation of a Food System

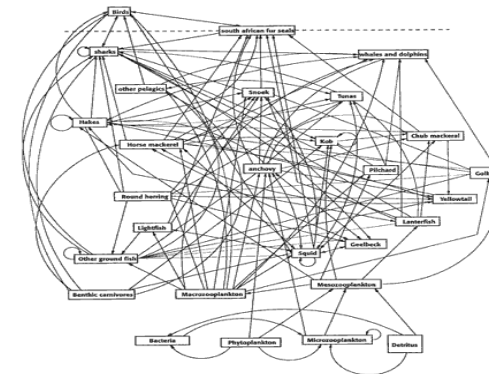
Figure 3 Food supply chains and food environments



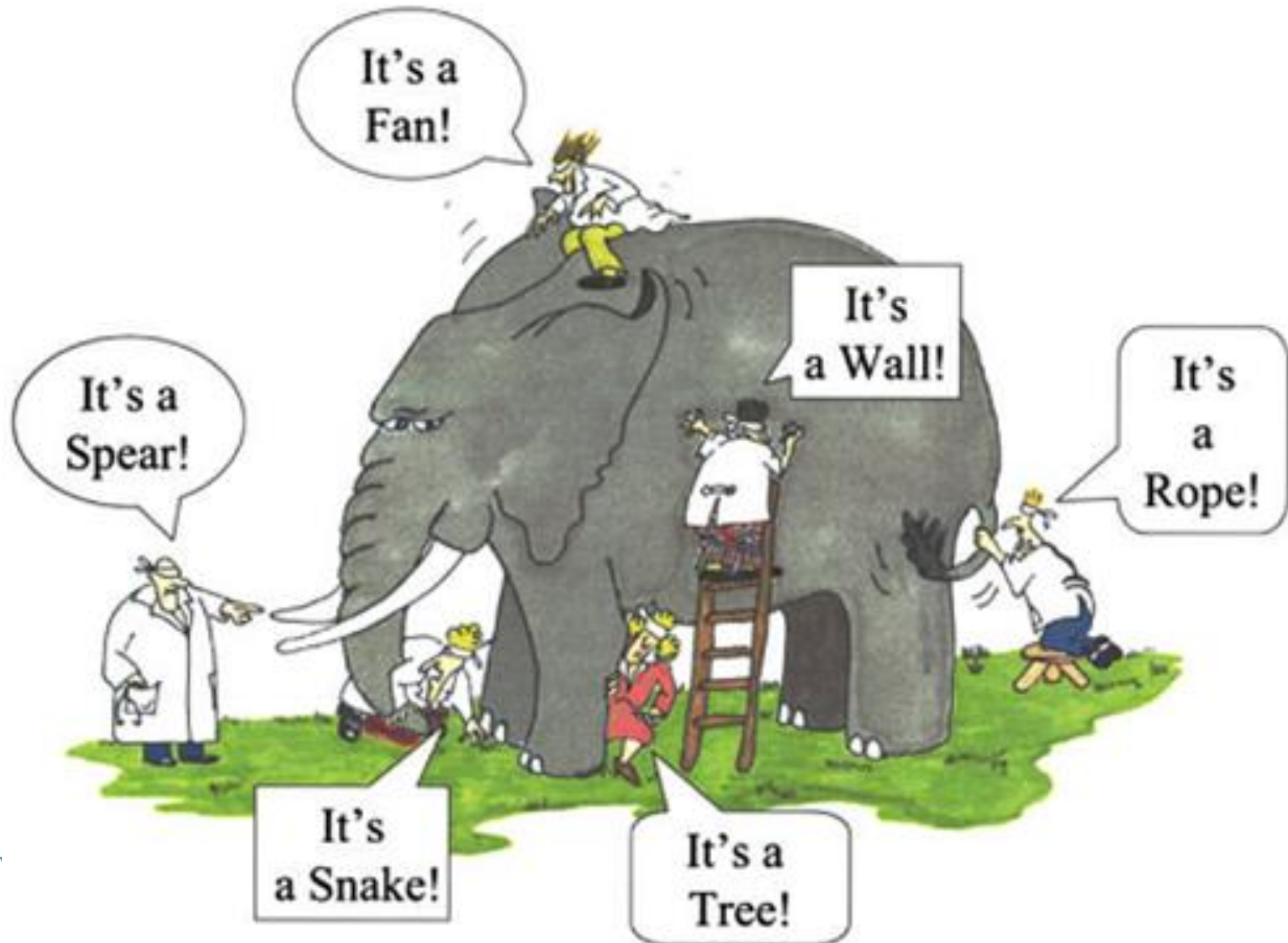
Source: Adapted wheel concept from Ranganathan *et al.* (2016).

What can we learn from this?

- We are dealing with complex wholes
 - Composed of different entities: Actors, Activities, Organisations, Technology, Drivers, Regulations, Policies, Processes, Behaviours, Chains, Environments, Outcomes, Impacts etc.
- We use 'systems thinking' to make them more tangible
- We can think about systems in different ways!



This is also true for stakeholders who constitute the system!



Systems thinking: interactions result in 'emergent properties'

- Systems: 'The whole is more than the sum of the parts'



Pollution
Climate change
Poverty
War

- Emergent properties can be desirable or undesirable



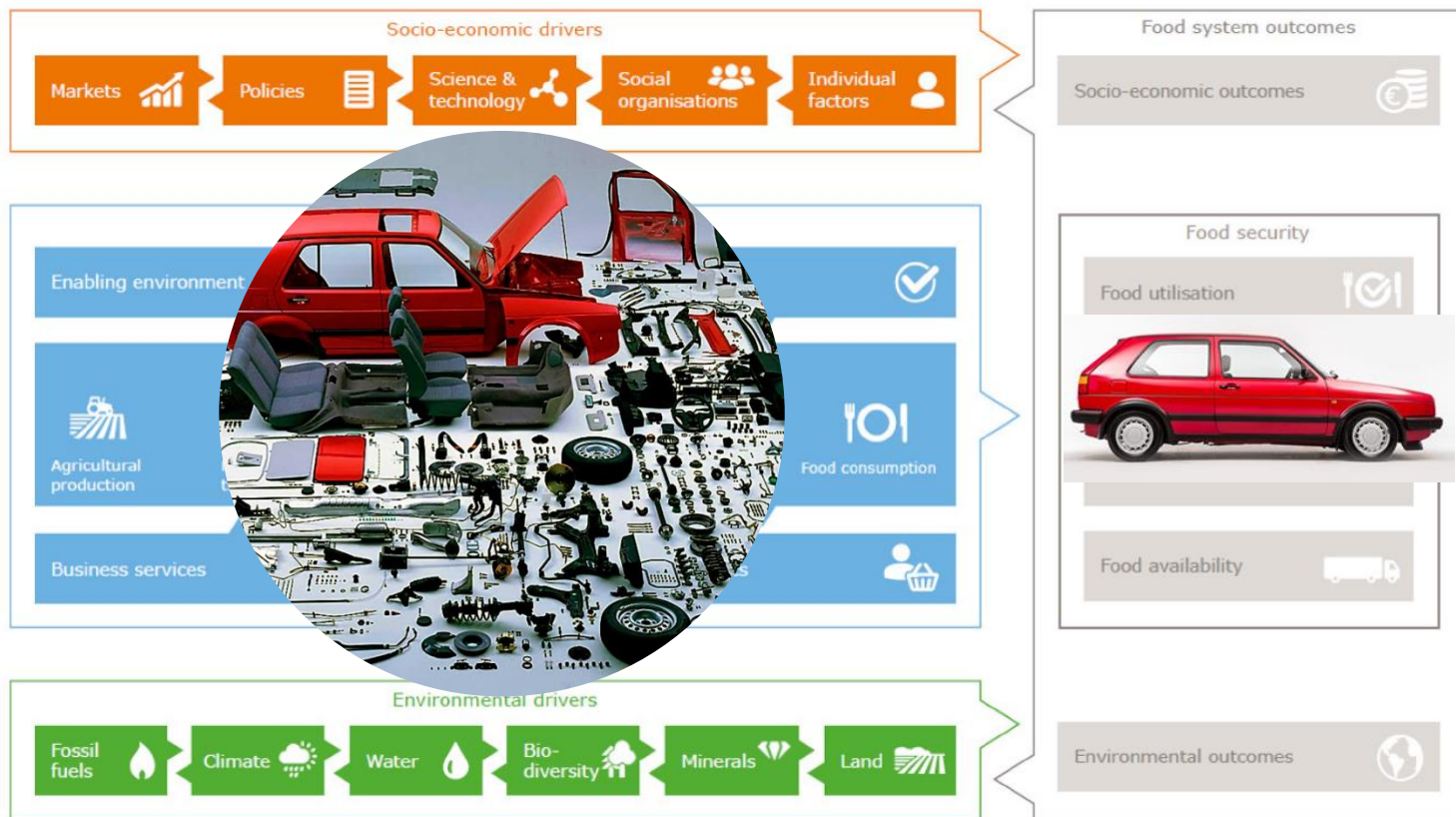
synergy



disergy

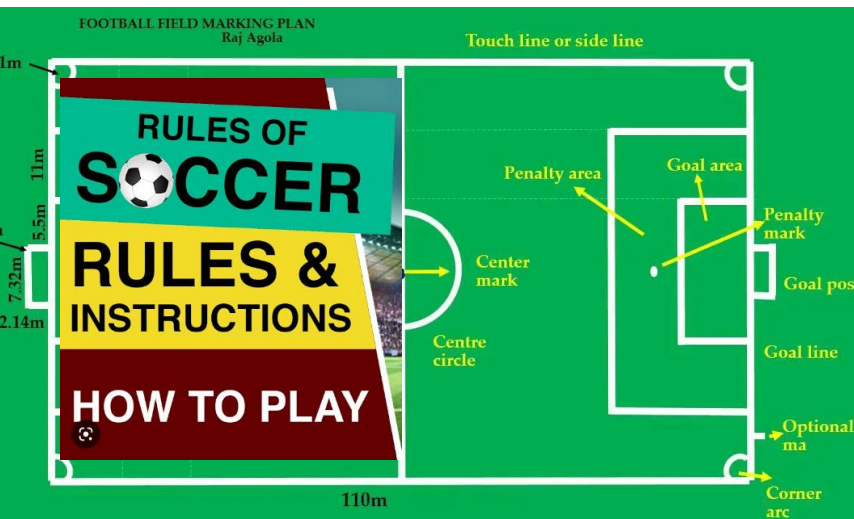
Systems thinking: interactions result in 'emergent properties'

- How do systems develop 'emergent properties' that are more desirable?



Transformative system change – e.g. towards market-based economy / integrated HDP funding & action

- Reconfiguring the existing 'rules of the game' that govern interactions (or even: change the game!)
 - procedures, regulations, markets, policies, incentives
- To alter coordination and alignment between actors/players



Historians: system change emerges from interactions between

- Initiatives for change that start small and need to mature (niches) ...
Commercial livestock pilot / Integrated HDP pilot
- ... before they can compete with and replace the existing dominant system (regime) ...
Subsistence economy / Siloed HDP
- ... with wider global trends potentially serving as pressures and opportunities for change (landscape)

Climate change
Geo-political tensions
Population growth
Globalisation
Digitization

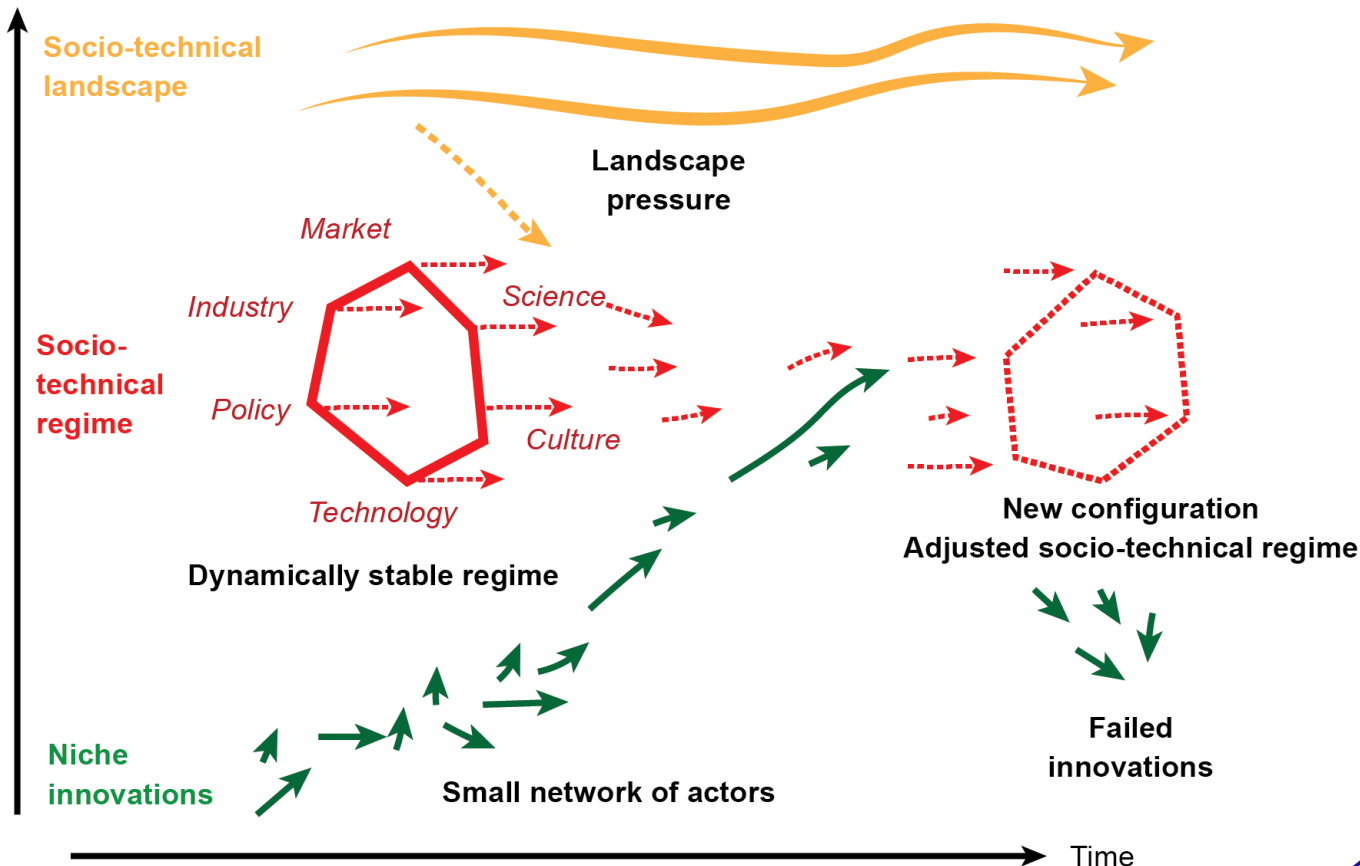
Historians: system change emerges from interactions between

(Geels, 2002)

Increasing structuration of activities in local practices

'The Multi-Level Perspective (MLP)'

Co-evolution: variation, selection, retention



What kind of processes to support?

Creating and supporting variation



Creating and supporting variation

- Joint technical experimentation
- Joint institutional experimentation

Alternative:

- market incentives
- regulations
- taxation
- business models
- pricing systems
- land tenure
- cooperative models
- certification



What kind of processes to support?

Capturing & supporting existing diversity

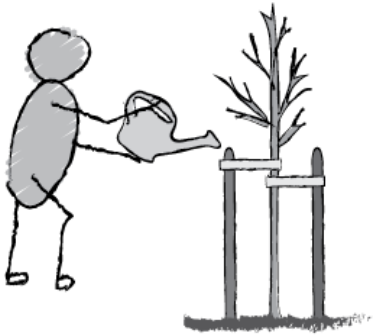


- Existing initiatives
- Local solutions
- Positive deviants
- Self-organisation



What kind of processes to support?

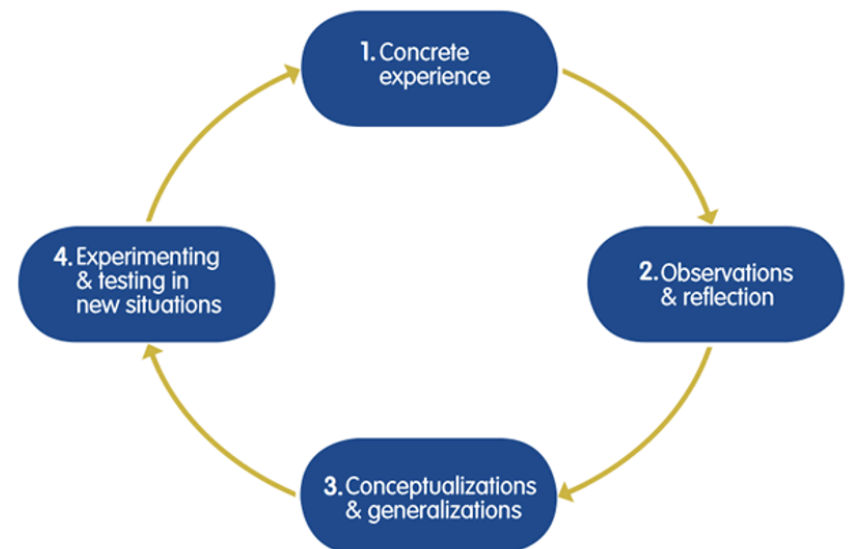
Temporary protection of niche initiatives



Temporary protection of niche-level initiatives

= Allowing initiatives to mature and compete

- Investments
- Insurance
- Safe space for learning from 'failure'



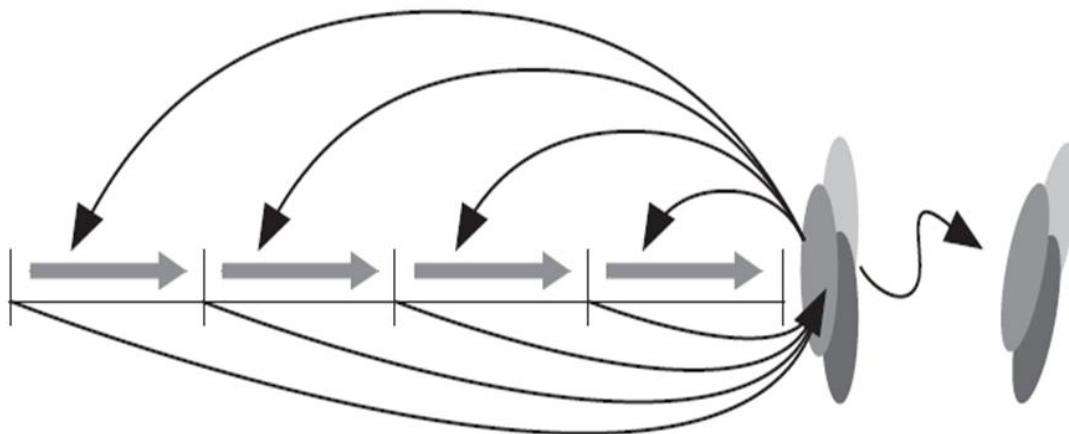
What kind of processes to support?

Analysis of landscape trends and visioning



Analysis of landscape trends and visioning

- Past trends
- Future projections
- Overlapping long term goals
- Desired properties
- Visioning
- Backcasting

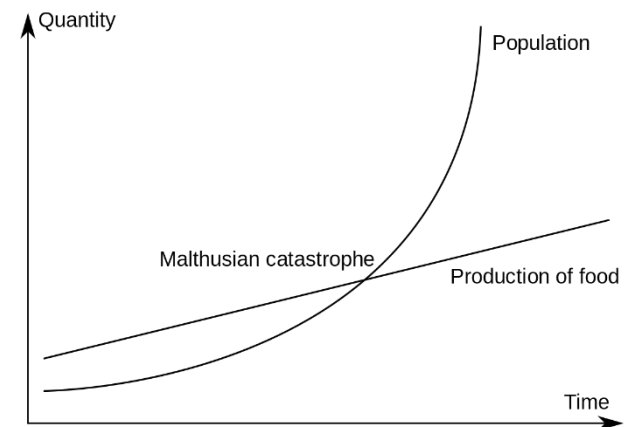


What kind of processes to support?

Creating landscape level pressures

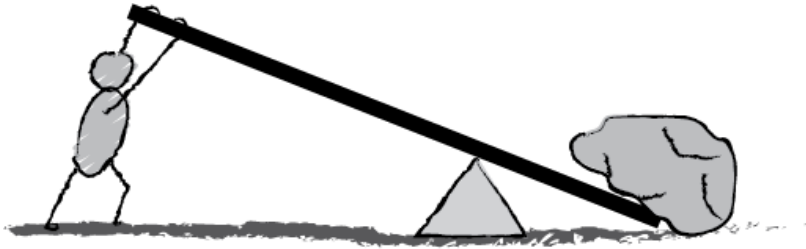


- Advocacy campaigns
- Support pressure groups
- Creating urgencies
- Imposing deadlines



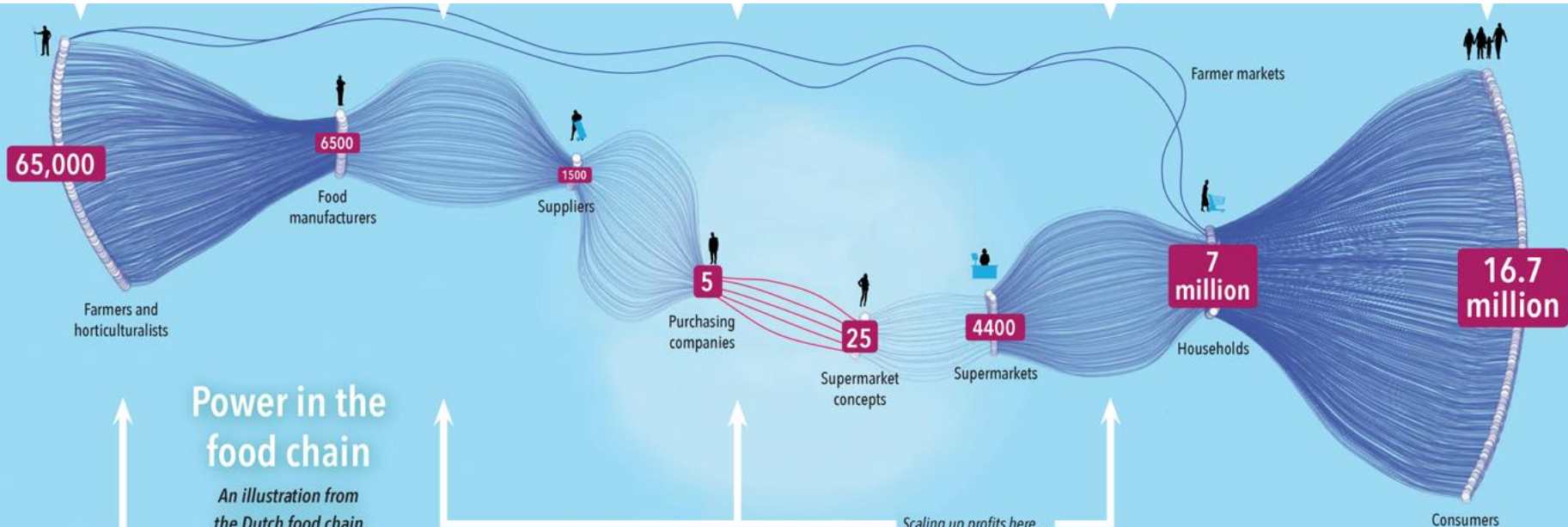
What kind of processes to support?

Identifying plausible leverage points



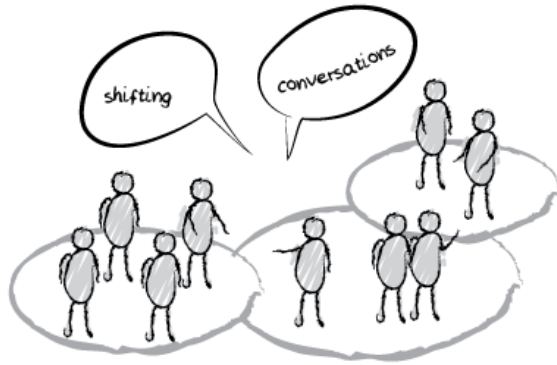
Identifying plausible leverage points

- Where is the power? What are key bottlenecks?
- What changes have leverage over others?



What kind of processes to support?

Building (discourse) coalitions



Process investment in coalition building,
collaborative research and media presence

Connecting to
existing initiatives
and movements



- Enrolling parties who feel interdependent
- Conflict management & collaborative research
- Developing & sharing narratives

Concluding remarks

- Fostering conducive conditions (pressure, variation, strong coalitions) may require new types of interventions
 - dealing with social, political, institutional dimensions
- Research can become a vehicle for change
- Powerful public and private actors are likely to be part of the counter-coalition



Thank you for your attention!

